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The Equipping Paradigm of New Testament Fivefold Leaders for Parishoner- Based Ministry

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THE EQUIPPING PARADIGM OF NEW TESTAMENT

FIVEFOLD LEADERS FOR

PARISHONER-BASED MINISTRY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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PORTLAND, OREGON

APRIL, 2006

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NEW TESTAMENT FIVE FOLD LEADERS FOR
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To Karen,
My best friend, confidant, wife, fellow parent and grandparent,
who shares my heart for the King and His Kingdom

...to a mature man, to the measure of the stature
which belongs to the fullness of Christ

Ephesians 4:13

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	
The Decline of Moral Influence from Christianity	2
The Decline of the Institutional Church	10
Conclusion	22
Thesis and Solution	23
Chapter Overview	24
2. CONSTRUCTION OF A BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP MODEL	26
Introduction	
Old Testament Spiritual Leadership	27
The Priest	27
The Prophet	33
The Sage	36
Conclusion	46
New Testament Spiritual Leadership	46
Jesus – Redeemer and Spiritual Leader	46
Jesus – the Training of Leaders	54
Living with Jesus – Joining in the Journey of a Divine Life	55
The Example of Jesus – <i>Imitatio Christi</i>	58

Chapter

The School of Jesus	62
The Empowerment of Jesus – Releasing Ministry	64
From Disciples to Equippers	66
Leaders Who Minister With Jesus in the World and Church	67
Leaders That Serve in Their Unique Gifting	69
Leaders Who Replicate Their Unique Gifts in Others	72
Conclusion	76
3. SYNTHESIZING ANCIENT AND CONTEMPROARY LEADERSHIP PARADIGMS	78
Introduction	
The Fivefold Equipping Ministries	82
Apostle	82
Prophet	83
Evangelist	84
Pastor	85
Teacher	86
The Leadership Paradigm of the Apostle Paul	87
Paul the Apostle	88
Paul the Prophet	90
Paul the Evangelist	92
Paul the Pastor	93
Paul the Teacher	94

Chapter

Paul, a Model for Congregants	96
Local and Universal Church Leadership Paradigm	100
The Ecclesial Fruit of the Apostles	103
From Apostleship to Episcopate	104
The Continual Rise of the Episcopate	107
The Ecclesial Failure of the Reformation	110
21 st Century Leadership Paradigms	112
Conclusion	118
4. EQUIPPING MINISTRY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY	120
Introduction	
New Testament Leadership	121
Local Church Leaders	122
Universal Church Leaders	123
The Historical Fate of the Fivefold Leaders	124
The Role of Parishioners	126
Transitional Realities	127
The Essence of Equipping Leadership for the 21 st -Century Church	129
A New Role for Leaders: Being Living Examples	129
A New Role for Parishioners: The Advent of Ecclesial Ministry	135
Developing a Fivefold Equipping Ministry	137
Essentials for a Fivefold Leader	137

Chapter

Fivefold leaders in the House	. . . . .	139
An Equipping Prospectus	. . . . .	142
Conclusion	. . . . .	145
5. THE FIVEFOLD CHRISTIAN	. . . . .	147
Introduction		
The Call for Radical Reformation	. . . . .	148
The Fivefold Christian	. . . . .	155
Missional: an Apostolic People	. . . . .	156
Incarnational: a Prophetic People	. . . . .	158
Reconciling: an Evangelistic People	. . . . .	162
Pastoral: a Shepherding People	. . . . .	164
Rabbinical: a Teaching People	. . . . .	165
Conclusion	. . . . .	166
WORKS CITED	. . . . .	168
APPENDIX	. . . . .	ix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several key people I need to acknowledge for their critical role in this work.

Thank you, Jules Glanzer. You were an indispensable first-reader that brought the perfect balance of challenge and support to this project. Without question, your contribution helped produce a better product in the end. Thank you, Larry Asplund and Lanny Hubbard, my accountability partners who encouraged, believed and prayed for me all along the way. I never felt alone on the journey. Finally, I want to thank my family who understood in those times when husband, dad or grandpa was not available. I love you all and had you all in mind and heart throughout this project.

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the need for a more equipping oriented leadership model to engender parishioner based ministry in the church and community. The study begins by recognizing the steady national and ecclesial decline in morals, ethics, marriage and family in America. This decline reveals the waning influence of the church in American culture. At the same time, there is evidence of a significant departure from the institutional church, in great part by Christians that want to “be” the church rather than just attend church. I propose that one possible solution is to return to a more equipping role for ecclesial leaders that could create and release effective ministry from parishioners, ultimately producing a more first-century ecclesial experience.

In Chapter 2 of this study, I construct a biblical foundation for an equipping leadership paradigm. I begin by considering three groups of Old Testament leaders, the priests, prophets and sages, and their ministerial roles in Israel. Though initially ministers in their particular offices, they ultimately served to equip the nation to become priestly, prophetic and sagacious. Their failure necessitated a revolutionary form of leadership instituted by Jesus Christ: Servant-leaders whose primal purpose was to equip others for ministry.

In Chapter 3, I attempt to synthesize the New Testament leadership paradigm with current secular leadership movements. I first consider the ministry of the Apostle Paul, specifically addressing the fivefold equipping gifts of Ephesians 4:11, as they are

revealed in his own ministry. I propose that these five aspects of ministry were as well present in the ministry of Christ and are definitive of Christ like ministry. I then address the paradigm shift that occurred in the second-century church that served to create a more hierarchal, clergy ministry based ecclesiology and the failure of the Protestant Reformation to remedy it. Finally, I consider contemporary secular leadership paradigms that reflect the New Testament servant-leader equipping model.

In Chapter 4, I consider the possible impact of the fivefold equipping leaders on the first-century church, and then view them in contrast to present ecclesial leadership. In doing this, I present the context from which both minister and the ideological shifts that must occur to accommodate a more first-century equipping model for today. Finally, I present an equipping prospectus for implementing the fivefold equipping leadership model.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I consider the ultimate product of fivefold equipping leaders, the fivefold Christian. I first address the need for radical reform in order to accommodate a more first-century leadership and ecclesial model. Then I consider the impact of equipping leadership upon the Christian as he or she become functional in the fivefold ministries of Christ: becoming more missional (apostle), prophetic (prophet), reconciling (evangelist), pastoral (pastor) and rabbinical (teacher).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Self-assessment is rarely a pleasurable experience. Even when an organization is healthy, where every major indicator is positive, a good hard look into the proverbial mirror inevitably reveals a flaw that can be disconcerting. Just a cursory look at the New Testament church reveals multiple flaws that first-century leaders had to confront. There is a voluminous amount of material presented in the epistles that address “issues” of the early church. However, it is the letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation that best reveal the attempts of Christ himself to identify, confront, and mitigate ecclesial and theological issues (Rev 2-3). Its inclusion, as well as those in the epistles, reveals both a church prone to straying off course, and a Savior committed to helping the church return to its divine path. We should not be surprised that twenty centuries later, both the church and Christ are engaged in the same enterprise.

The Problem

In the first century, successfully mitigating these issues ensured a church that would continue to glorify God, effectively minister to itself, and keep on penetrating its pagan society with his kingdom. The twenty-first century church must now face contemporary theological and ecclesial issues that keep it from being the significant influence it once was in its culture. Throughout the brief history of America the faiths of

Judaism and Christianity have served as major societal influencing factors. Some today might disparage that influence, but few, if any, would deny it. However, the last several decades have seen that influence wane, as America began a cultural revolution, profoundly evidenced by philosophical, moral, and religious paradigm shifts. Finding its origin in the modernist movement of the late nineteenth century, this shift furthered the challenge of the historical biblical worldview, and the role of God and his church in society. Today, the American culture reflects many of these shifts.

The Decline of Moral Influence from Christianity

There are several organizations that work hard at evaluating the contemporary state of the American culture. One of the most respected is The Barna Group, in Ventura, California. George Barna, author of over three dozen books, most of which address societal trends, leadership, and church health, uses advanced methods of research to reveal current changes in the American culture and church. With this data, he has become remarkably accurate at assessing the contemporary cultural and spiritual trends and predicting where they might take the nation. As a result, the Barna Group has established itself as a credible resource for both the secular and religious realms. For purposes of this study, we will begin by considering Barna's research on the recent moral state of America and the condition and role of the Christian faith community.

A strong indicator of the waning influence of the church is the ongoing decay of Judeo-Christian morals in America.¹ The Barna Group recently researched the current

¹ *Morality*, in the strictest sense of the word, deals with that which is innately regarded as right or wrong. The term is often used to refer to a system of principles and judgments shared by cultural, religious, and philosophical concepts and beliefs, by which humans subjectively determine whether given actions are right or wrong. These concepts and beliefs are often generalized and codified by a culture or

American positions on ten moral behaviors. The results were startling evidence of a continued departure from Judeo-Christian morals by the secular world, other faiths, and even the church. Barna assesses the results:

Of the ten moral behaviors evaluated, a majority of Americans believed that ... three activities were “morally acceptable.” Those included gambling (61%), co-habitation (60%), and sexual fantasies (59%). Nearly half of the adult population felt that two other behaviors were morally acceptable: having an abortion (45%) and having a sexual relationship with someone of the opposite sex other than their spouse (42%). About one-third of the population gave the stamp of approval to pornography (38%), profanity (36%), drunkenness (35%), and homosexual sex (30%). The activity that garnered the least support was using non-prescription drugs (17%).²

Percentage of Adults Who Consider A Behavior To Be “Morally Acceptable”

	All Adults	Evangelicals	*Born-again	Other Faith	Atheist Agnostic
Gambling	61%	27%	45%	69%	75%
Living with someone of the opposite sex without being married, sometimes called co-habitation	60%	12%	49%	70%	87%
Enjoying sexual thoughts or fantasies about someone	59%	15%	49%	71%	78%
Having an abortion	45%	4%	33%	45%	71%
Having a sexual relationship with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not married	42%	7%	35%	47%	69%
Looking at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior	38%	5%	28%	49%	70%
Using profanity	36%	7%	29%	46%	68%
Getting drunk	35%	8%	24%	44%	61%

group, and thus serve to regulate the behavior of its members. See, *Morality*, [Internet] (Wikipedia, 2006, accessed January 2 2006); available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality>.

² Used by permission: *Morality Continues to Decay*, [Internet] (The Barna Group, 2005, accessed December 1 2005).

Having a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex	30%	5%	20%	41%	55%
Using drugs not prescribed by a medical doctor	17%	6%	11%	25%	38% (Base: 1024 adults) * indicates born-again Christians excluding evangelicals

Clearly America continues to move away from the moral absolutes upon which the nation was founded.³ Barna observes, “This is reflective of a nation where morality is generally defined according to one’s feelings. In a postmodern society, where people do not acknowledge any moral absolutes, if a person feels justified in engaging in a specific behavior then they do not make a connection with the immoral nature of that action.”⁴ Barna has succinctly articulated the impact of the major philosophical and ideological shift in the American culture from religious moralism to existential relativism.

What is alarming is that this same ideology appears to have crept into the church. The survey results indicate that aside from Evangelicals, which represent only seven percent of the faith community,⁵ the rest of Christianity, typified as born-again (but not Evangelical) in this survey, hold, for the most part, moral positions statistically midway between Evangelicals and other religions (including atheists and agnostics). For

³ “Compared to two years ago, just half as many Americans believe that absolute moral truth exists, dropping from 38% in January 2000 to only 22% in November 2001.” See, *The Year's Most Intriguing Findings, From Barna Research Studies*, [Internet] (The Barna Group, 2005, accessed December 1 2005).

⁴ *Morality Continues to Decay*, (accessed).

⁵ *Annual Barna Group Survey Describes Changes in America's Religious Beliefs and Practices*, [Internet] (The Barna Group, 2005, accessed December 3 2005).

example, forty-nine percent of all born-again Christians believe that having sex with someone of the opposite sex before marriage is morally acceptable. Thirty-five percent would condone adultery and twenty percent would accept homosexuality as morally acceptable. These are moral positions in full opposition to biblical teachings that reveal a significant departure from long-standing moral absolutes of the Judeo-Christian faith.

This begs the question, who is influencing whom?

One indicator that things may not get any better is the great difference in moral viewpoints from one generation to another. The two younger generations, Mosaics (18-19 years old) and Busters (20-38 years old) were far more likely to deem the ten moral behaviors surveyed as acceptable than the Baby Boomers (38-57 years old) and the Elders (58 and older).⁶ In fact, the difference between the Mosaics and the Elders is significant. For example, forty percent of Mosaics (18-19) embrace homosexuality as moral and only fourteen percent of Elders (58+). As well, fifty-four percent of Mosaics condone adultery where only twenty-four percent of Elders do. This indicates that a great moral shift has occurred in a relatively short amount of time, and if this timeline is any indicator, then this shift must be addressed soon. The Barna Group concludes with a dire prediction:

The data trends indicate that the moral perspectives of Americans are likely to continue to deteriorate,” predicted researcher George Barna. “Compared to surveys we conducted just two years ago, significantly more adults are depicting such behaviors as morally acceptable. For instance, there have been increases in the percentages that condone sexual activity with someone of the opposite gender other than a spouse, abortion (up by 25%), and a 20% jump in people’s acceptance of “gay sex.”⁷

⁶ The Barna Group, "Morality Continues to Decay," (Ventura, California: The Barna Update, 2003), 3.

⁷ Ibid., 5.

These sobering statistics speak not only of a nation in the midst of moral decline, but of a church that appears to be powerless to influence it. Sadly, as the nation continues its moral slide, there seems to be a growing disparity in the faith community between one's confession of belief in God and one's biblical moral standards. This is evidenced by the large number of "born-again" believers who fall morally halfway between the Evangelical Christian and the non-Christian.⁸ As such, at a time when the culture is in desperate need of moral influence, there is evidence that the church has, in fact, suffered influence from its culture.

The rise of the megachurch gives the appearance that the church in America is alive and well. The vast majority of megachurches are Evangelical,⁹ which do hold Judeo-Christian morals. However, as stated previously, they only represent about seven percent of American adults and many of these churches avoid addressing moral issues from the pulpit. In an attempt to remain "user-friendly," many megachurches have deferred much of their moral voice and actions to parachurch/political watch guard organizations that forward the Evangelical moral agenda outside the institutional church. In this way they can advance their religious message without the entanglements of a moral stance that is in opposition to its culture.

⁸ Barna's surveys categorize people as born-again if they say they "have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in my life today" and also contend that after they die they will "go to heaven because I have confessed my sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior." Barna's surveys indicate that these represent forty percent of the adult population. See, The Barna Group, "Annual Barna Group Survey Describes Changes in America's Religious Beliefs and Practices," (2005).

⁹ "Nearly all megachurches have a conservative theological orientation. An overwhelming majority would be considered Evangelical, Charismatic, or Fundamentalist. Even the megachurches from moderate and liberal denominations often stand out as having a more conservative theology than do their counterparts" Scott Thuma, "Exploring the Megachurch Phenomena," in *Hartford Institute for Religion Research* (Hartford Seminary, 2000).

Even more disconcerting may be the church's lack of involvement in other moral/ethical areas. From its inception, the church was engaged in caring for the widow, the orphan, the poor, the sick, and the disenfranchised. It was known for its spirit of charity and this distinguished it from the Greco-Roman culture. Today, these needs are predominantly the responsibility of parachurch organizations and/or the government. That was not the case in America's past. Hospitals, orphanages, and practical care for the poor were once birthed and borne, for the most part, by the church. The largest orphanage in America today is Bethesda Orphanage, started by George Whitefield in 1740. At a time when the mortality rate in America was at its highest, Whitefield responded by providing a place for destitute children.

A vast majority of all hospitals today are non-profit, originally founded by church organizations. One of the very first hospitals in America began as an "almshouse" and was started by William Penn in Philadelphia.¹⁰ Almshouses began in the middle ages by the church to provide for the impoverished. Sickness was akin to poverty, and inevitably, medical care was eventually added. The almshouse/hospital became an ecclesial "place" for the practical and medical care of the needy. In light of the churches' current lackluster support for philanthropic causes, President George Bush is fighting for governmental reform that allows faith-based philanthropic organizations to more easily gain government funding.¹¹

¹⁰ *Hospital, History*, [Internet] (Wikipedia, 2006, accessed January 3 2006).

¹¹ His "Faith-based Initiative" calls for the removal of complex governmental regulations that complicate the process for these organizations to receive federal funding. The needs exceed the means of these organizations, due in part to the lack of financial support from churches. As a result, the government has become a viable alternative for resources. However, these faith-based organizations may become government-dependant for their future survival. See George W. Bush, *Faith-Based and Community Initiatives* [Internet] (The White House, 2005, accessed January 3 2005).

The American church's response to the AIDS epidemic has been at best anemic.

A report by the World Council of Churches in the mid-nineties suggested that the church may have actually made things worse. This report revealed that whatever good was done was tainted with discrimination, which only added to the suffering of AIDS victims.¹²

The Roman Empire had its pandemics and the early church became known for its care of those with terminal diseases that others had cast aside:

The heathen behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treated unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease; but do what they might, they found it difficult to escape.¹³

The ancient church responded with personal involvement. In contrast today, one would be hard-pressed to meet a parishioner who is presently actively involved with the care of an AIDS victim. This may be due to the fact that for the most part, this particular disease is connected to moral behavior abhorrent to most Christians. However, many ancient diseases were as well due to amoral behavior. In reality, the modern church is not involved simply because it has distanced itself from the needy and subsequently is ill-equipped to meet their needs. As a result, it looks to parachurch organizations and governmental programs to address these issues. From Christ's perspective, this would not be the moral or religious (spiritual) thing to do: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison, and

¹² "Churches Urged to Unite in AIDS Battle," *Christian Century* 113, no. 28 (1996).

¹³ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), 83.

you came to Me. (Matt 25:35, 36).” “This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father. To visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (Jas 1:27).”

We could go on and address other significant issues such as the homosexual, the modern disenfranchised. The early church was a haven for Rome’s slaves, impoverished, and the oppressed and apparently the place of hope for the homosexual:

Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:6-11)

Sadly, the only ecclesial experience for the homosexual may be from churches that condone the behavior or churches that directly confront them as they strive to arrest the homosexual agenda. Neither would be morally acceptable in the early church. What is morally needed is for the church to befriend and forgive homosexuals, like Jesus did with adulterers (Jn 8:1-11). Recently, a Biola University student befriended a homosexual AIDS victim as his practicum assignment for college. After months of being a friend, the man died. This was his conclusion to evangelical Christianity’s response to the homosexual:

Maybe too many evangelicals have faced homosexuality without coming face to face with homosexuals. Theology, morality, and politics have an essential place. But if these don't make room for simple love and friendship with homosexuals, how will we be instruments of redemption? Gays will not be reached with the love of Jesus without being touched by loving Christians.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Jonathan David Taylor, "Smuggling Cats for a Gay Celebrity," *Christianity Today*, October 1, 2004.

Racism, the love of money (or worse, fortune), the care of elderly and many other moral issues are indicators of a church that has lost its compassion and ability to meet genuine moral issues in the community.

The Decline of the Institutional Church

The size of megachurches may also lead some to believe that church attendance is expanding. In fact, the opposite is true, remarkably at a time when the interest in spirituality is on the rise. Political scientist Ronald Inglehart, one of the authors of the *World Values Survey* conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan concluded:

Although church attendance is declining in nearly all advanced industrial societies, spiritual concerns more broadly defined are not. In fact, in most industrial societies, a growing share of the population is spending time thinking about the meaning and purpose of life.¹⁵

There is much debate on the issue of church attendance in America. Some place attendance as high as forty-four percent of the population, while others, who contend that many folk are unwilling to reveal their lack of participation in religion, put attendance as low as twelve percent. The following surveys reveal an overall estimate of around forty percent:

- 38% by the *National Opinion Research Center*
- 44% by the *Institute for Social Research's World Values survey*. This institute is located at the University of Michigan.
- 41% by the *Barna Research Group*. Attendance over the previous week dropped from 49% in 1991 to 41% in 1999.
- 40% by *National Election Studies*. Their poll shows that in 1996, 25% of adult Americans claimed to attend church, synagogue or temple every week; 12% almost every week; 16% once or twice a month; 18% a few times a year; and 30%

¹⁵ Diane Swanbrow, "Study of Worldwide Rates of Religiosity, Church Attendance," (University of Michigan, 1997).

never. Assuming that "almost every week" means 3 weeks out of 4, then this data indicate 40% attendance.

- The *Gallup Organization* measured attendance at 41% during May of 2001.¹⁶

Of concern is not just the actual percent of those attending church, but the fact that this percentage is shrinking. The strongest evidence of waning church attendance, even in light of the surge of megachurches, is revealed by the Barna Research Group. Their surveys reveal an eight percent drop in church attendance from 1991 to 1999, what many consider the decade of the megachurch. Though thousands may be flocking to the megachurches, thousands are leaving the church as well.

Alan Jamieson, a trained sociologist and pastor in New Zealand, explored a recent phenomenon in Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches, some of the fastest growing denominations. This work became the subject of his doctoral dissertation and the basis of a new book, *A Churchless Faith – Faith Journeys Beyond the Church*. What he found was a significant departure of believers from these three faith groups (EPCs), from which the majority of megachurches arise. In his research of what Jamieson calls the “leavers,” he was surprised to discover that for the most part, these believers were still quite committed to their spiritual journeys.¹⁷ In fact ninety-four percent had previously been church leaders (deacons, elders, teachers, etc.) and thirty-two percent were former full-time ministers.¹⁸ Another startling revelation was that many left churches not because they had lost their faith, but did so in order to save it.

¹⁶ *How Many People Go Regularly to Weekly Religious Services*, [Internet] (Religious Tolerance Organization, 2005, accessed December 12 2005).

¹⁷ Alan Jamieson, "Churchless Faith: Trajectories of Faith Beyond the Church from Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic Church to Post-Church Groups," *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 365 (2003): 1.

¹⁸ Alan Jamieson, *A Churchless Faith: Faith Journeys Beyond the Churches* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002), 13-15.

Jamieson identifies four categories of “leavers.” The first is “disillusioned followers,” which are individuals that were either hurt due to a lack of care, or left angry and in disagreement with either the vision or leadership. Surprisingly, according to Jamieson, these only represent about eighteen percent of all leavers.¹⁹ As well, a vast majority of these displaced followers continue strong in their faith journey. For the most part these leavers are not “backsliders” or “rebellious.” Many remain quite strong and bold in their faith and though they no longer attend a local church, they stay connected and accountable to the wider EPC community.

The second category is “reflective exiles.” These are believers that have left congregational churches after long periods of patiently enduring what they would consider, the irrelevance of the church to their personal lives. Jamieson considers them reflective because they contemplate and question ecclesial and personal faith issues. He calls them exiles because they simply do not fit nor are they content with the status quo and subsequently they become self-exiled from the community. These represent the largest group, about thirty percent of those surveyed.

The third category he entitles “transitional explorers.” These are folk highly confident in their faith, who desire to consider a broader spectrum of the faith experience. These are the “emerging” believers that want to incorporate both time-tested (ancient), contemporary, and newly explored approaches to spirituality. They represent almost eighteen percent of all leavers.

The final category of leavers is “integrated way-finders.” These are similar to transitional explorers in that they have also considered multiple facets and expressions of

¹⁹ Ibid.,51.

Christianity. Only, “integrated way-finders” have fully evaluated and integrated them into their spiritual journey. He utilizes “way-finder” to describe a very complete work of integration of both old and new, that then provides the believer a “way” of spiritual and ecclesial life outside the context of the congregational church. Integrated way-finders represent about twenty-seven percent of the leavers he studied.

Each of these leavers was looking for something they were not able to find in the local church. Jamieson identifies two key elements that every leaver wanted. To best define the first, he employed the Maori word, “Turangawaewae,” which means: a place of belonging or standing.²⁰ Quite simply, leavers felt they did not fit in the narrow ecclesial context of the local church and they left, longing to find where they would fit. Jamieson notes, “Although EPC church leavers are abandoning their church, the majority are still keen to meet with others who are traveling a similar path. In fact, sixty-five percent of the people...interviewed were involved in such a group since leaving their church.”²¹ Jamieson found that most encountered this extra-church experience either in the home or marketplace.²² For the most part, they did not find their place to belong, they created it.

The second element leavers were looking for was a “safe place.” They discovered that the institutional church was not a safe place to discuss topics that were ‘out of court’ in the EPC church. These topics included discussions of such things as foundational theology, beliefs, practices, and worldviews of the EPC church. Often these discussions

²⁰ Alan Jamieson, *In Search of Turangawaewae* (Reality Magazine, 2005, accessed 2006).

²¹ Jamieson, “Churchless Faith,” 4.

²² The home refers to house churches or small group meetings where intimate worship, study, spiritual relationships, accountability are fostered. Remarkably, these same kinds of meetings occur in the marketplace and are currently the fastest growing extra-church activity.

were interpreted more as challenges than pure engagements in discovery. In the city where I live there is a local megachurch in which these kinds of discussions are frowned upon. As a result, a year ago an unofficial church blog was established, creating a format in which parishioners and ex-parishioners could voice opinions, challenge existing conventions, and even question and criticize leadership decisions and actions. This blog recently celebrated its first year anniversary. Within that year it logged over 80,000 hits with anonymous contributors in the hundreds and was the subject of an unsolicited article by a local newspaper. The blog creators have been scorned and called to repentance by church leadership who initially branded them as bitter and ultimately as rebellious.

Jamieson discovered that the vast majority of leavers were individuals longing to continue their spiritual journey, but simply could not do so in the context of the EPC church. Craig Bird summarizes the essence of the frustration of the leavers Jamieson interviewed: "They grow tired of the endless buffets and entertainment, the carefully designed activities, or the captain who makes all the decisions about the ship's speed and direction."²³ They want to experience something deeper, in a sense, the exhilarating danger that is only experienced by traveling uncharted waters. As a result, many believe they must leave, just to rescue their faith. Sadly, Jamieson also believes that these same leavers are the best equipped to help post-modern seekers understand God and laments that they are lost to the EPC churches that so desperately need them. As a result, Jamieson believes we have now entered into a post-congregational era where a vast

²³ Craig Bird, *A Churchless Faith* [Internet] (Mercer University, 2005, accessed December 1 2005).

number of believers are living their spiritual journey outside the context of the institutional church.

George Barna's recent book, *Revolution*, addresses this same trend. He believes that the church is in the midst of an ecclesial revolution (note, not reformation) that is evidenced by a mass migration of believers away from the institutional church.²⁴ He calls these believers "Revolutionaries:"

There is an enormous and growing, body of Christians in this country who love God and want more of Him in their life, but they cannot satisfy that need through the local church or the other means they have relied upon. Consequently, they put together a series of relationships that enable them to get more of God in their life, and to be the Church, rather than simply go to the church.²⁵

Barna believes these folk are very different from those of the emerging churches, in which he suggests that "all that has changed is they switched out the chandeliers for candles, the pews for couches, choirs and bands for acoustic music, and the stale church-made coffee for premium Starbucks blends."²⁶ Revolutionaries desperately want to fully experience God and be involved in helping others do the same. They desire to be equipped and engaged in ministry: "we have seen in our research that millions of Revolutionaries are, in fact, driven by a desire to be more intentional and hands-on in ministry."²⁷ Barna contends they have no desire in closing down local churches, but re-

²⁴ Barna typifies this movement as a revolution, not reformation. A reformation implies change from within an institution whereas a revolution is the full rejection of the institution for something radically different. "Millions of devout followers of Jesus Christ are repudiating tepid systems and practices of the Christian faith and introducing a wholesale shift in how faith is understood, integrated, and influencing the world." See, George Barna, *Revolution* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 11.

²⁵ *Interview with George Barna on the Book Revolution (Tadical Changes Among US Christians)*, [Internet] (Free Republic, 2005, accessed December 1 2005).

²⁶ Ibid.(accessed).

²⁷ Ibid.(accessed).

orienting them. They leave because the congregational church is entrenched in organization and programs that often do not engender deeper faith, more meaningful spiritual relationships, and opportunities for hands-on ministry. They leave because the local church will neither consider nor accommodate a radical reorientation.

The dramatic departure of Revolutionaries currently represents millions of believers and those that study this movement believe it will continue. Barna predicts that “twenty five years from now, many of today’s megachurch campuses will be strip malls or public buildings used for non-religious purposes.”²⁸

Why are these committed, born-again Christians leaving the church in such massive numbers? Barna cites what he calls seven passions that every Revolutionary possesses: intimate worship, faith-based conversations, intentional spiritual growth, servanthood, better resource investment, spiritual friendships, and a family faith experience.²⁹ In reference to “intimate worship,” the Revolutionary does not require a “worship service,” per se, as they desire to engage in intimate worship as much privately as they do in a public service. As well, they are not interested in being emotionally moved by instruments and carefully choreographed programs. They do not want to be entertained; they simply want to experience a relationship with God in an intimate way.

In reference to “faith-based conversations,” Revolutionaries want to engage others in conversations about God and their journey with him. They desire both the ability and platform for genuine exchange of their faith to the non-believer and Christian alike. In regards to “intentional spiritual growth,” they endeavor to experience the Christian faith,

²⁸ Ibid.(accessed).

²⁹ Barna, 22-25.

very much like the first-century Christians. They want Christ central in their lives and believe their faith will give their lives meaning and purpose. Revolutionaries long to continue to mature in their spirituality and they have concluded that it cannot happen passively in the pew.

Revolutionaries want to regain the “servant” perspective as modeled by Christ. Christianity for them must have its context in selfless service. For them, life is about serving others, not being served. In concert with this, Revolutionaries desire better management of resources (“resource investment”). They hold to the biblical perspective that no one really owns anything and understand that stewardship of what God has given them is a fundamental maxim. They see all resources within the context of servanthood and desire to maximize those resources for the betterment of others. Thus, the Acts 2-4 church is their primal model for proper stewardship of resources.

Another passion of Revolutionaries is “spiritual friendships.” Literally, they desire genuine friendship relationships that are founded upon God. At the core of these friendships are a shared love for Christ, mutual encouragement in the faith, and spiritual accountability. The final passion of Revolutionaries is “family faith.” At a time in American history when the family is severely fragmented and dysfunctional, they long for family to be a faith community in itself. Very much like the early church, they see the home as another appropriate place for church.

These seven passions are deep-seated values in Revolutionaries and they are looking for both the skills and place where these can be accomplished. Revolutionaries have come to the conclusion that the local church is neither the way nor the place. As a

result, they are leaving the church in mass and forming alliances with others in an effort to create a venue where these seven values can be realized.

Ironically, Barna believes that the failure of the local church is reflected in all seven of these passions. Barna found that most Christians confess that the worship service in the local church is generally their only worship experience and eight out of ten are not experiencing a personal encounter with Christ (“intimate worship”) in ecclesial worship. As well, his surveys reveal that a typical parishioner in the local church will die without leading one person to Christ (“faith-based conversations”).³⁰ His research also shows that only nine percent of born-again adults have a biblical worldview and the same typically do not consider their spiritual life as definitive of a successful life (“intentional spiritual growth”). He also discovered that the average Christian only gives about three percent of their income (“resource investment”) and only twenty-five percent of congregants will serve others during the week, and the majority of that service is volunteering in church programs with little to no serving those outside the church (“servanthood”).³¹

Equally alarming, Barna found that only one out of every six parishioners has a relationship that incorporates spiritual accountability (“spiritual friendships”). Finally, the divorce rate for parishioners is identical to those outside the faith community and a large majority of congregational church families rely on the church, rather than the family, for the spiritual development of both the family and marriage (“family faith”).³²

³⁰ Ibid., 32.

³¹ Ibid., 34.

³² Ibid., 35.

It is not difficult to conclude that the present mode of congregational church is failing the parishioner. As a result, literally millions of godly congregants are leaving the institutional church for the hope of something better.

In the end, “leavers” and “Revolutionaries” want to “be” the church, not just attend church.³³ The current ecclesial paradigm fails to serve that purpose, as for the most part, the church has become more of an event that one passively experiences and less of a ministering environment where all can participate. As such, the church experience is evaluated very subjectively by how the event impacts the parishioner’s life. Thus, the worship, the sermon, liturgy, etc. are all important elements of the subjective experience. If that experience is positive to the individual, then “church” was a positive experience. This second century ecclesial paradigm, originally conceived in the context of Roman and Jewish polity, is now being played out in the context of a democracy and a free market society. It is a one dimensional approach to “church” that places the burden on leaders and programs to insure the kind of experience that will draw parishioners and keep them.

This approach is tragic in two ways. First, the full burden of ministry is borne by the senior leader and his or her team. The success of “church” weighs heavily upon the experience they are able to offer. This approach is generally personality and program-dependant and failure in either area directly impacts the “success” of the church. In general, it demands that the senior leader have certain pulpit abilities in concert with highly developed management skills to direct church programs and staff that meet the personal needs or desires of the congregants.

³³ Ibid., 39.

Very much like a shopping mall, the products are what draw in the customers, and the number of consumers is what determines the success of the company. Thus, the leader and his or her team, must continually provide a product (with all the appropriate packaging) that parishioners desire. Like a commercial endeavor, the number of consumers/parishioners a church is capable of drawing and/or keeping, determines its level of success. This is a consumer driven system. In a way, in this system, the consumer is the leader, demanding that the church provide a product that is conducive to their desires.

The second reason this approach is tragic is that by placing the burden of ministry upon the clergy, it denies the full ecclesial ministry (priesthood) of the believer. From this paradigm, there is neither an expectation that ministry will arise from the parishioner, nor a strategy to equip and empower them for ministry. The simple role of the parishioner is to be faithful recipients of the ministry from clergy, and to honor them with fiscal support.³⁴ This is something for which “leavers” and “revolutionaries” are unwilling to settle. They desire to be active participants in ministry.

The current ecclesial paradigm has been in place for almost two millennia. Even though the twenty-first century version is expressed in a different context, it still remains fundamentally the same; clergy/laity based. Because of its longevity, a support system is firmly in place that propagates the system. Thus, Bible Colleges and Seminaries develop programs and curriculum that produces ministers (clergy) to serve the church (laity). These institutions focus their courses on the ministry capacity of the clergy. As a result, leaders are sent into the field prepared to minister, instead of prepared to equip others to minister. The New Testament concept of ministry predominantly being borne by the

³⁴ Honor used in this context refers to both fiscal support and respect. See 1 Tim 5:17, 18.

parishioner barely exists. Equally tragic is the lack of facilitating the ministry of parishioners, by means of equipping and empowering.

In the spring of 2005, I surveyed the full-time ministerial staff of the aforementioned local church.³⁵ The church has a paid staff of about 125, many of whom serve in areas of pastoral ministries (district pastors, small groups pastor, missions, youth, etc.), education (K-12; Undergraduate Bible College), and evangelism/assimilation. I surveyed the staff of the three main departments of the church; Pastoral, Teaching/Education, and Evangelism/Assimilation, and a fourth miscellaneous group that included those engaged in pastoral ministry, but who were not officially a part of a ministerial department.

The objective was to survey those currently involved in “ministering” in the fivefold “equipping” ministries (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher) of Ephesians 4:11. The survey was to reveal how much “equipping” was being done in the lives of the staff and the staff’s participation in the equipping of others. The desired response to the survey was +6 to +12 which would reveal that there was the heart desire, understanding, ability, and opportunity for staff to equip others and that they themselves were being equipped for their personal lives and ministries. The results were dramatic. With regard to the amount of equipping being done in the lives of those surveyed, and the amount of equipping they were doing in others, the numbers were very low (ranging from -1.8 to +5.42). However, the survey did reveal a strong desire to equip others in almost all of those surveyed. Several respondents commented on the frustration of wanting to do more equipping, but their current ministry responsibilities permitted little to no time to do so. Due to its second century ecclesial orientation, this church is very “program-

³⁵ See, Appendix I

oriented.” As such, most of these leader’s energies are given to making their own programs successful, leaving little time for developing the ministry of others.

This church has, for the most part, successfully imparted a heart and desire to equip others for ministry. However, little equipping for ministry is actually occurring by the staff and possibly even less by the supervising pastors to the staff. As a result, most of the efforts are put toward “doing” ministry, instead of equipping others to do ministry.

Conclusion

“Doing” ministry is the default mode of the present church leadership paradigm, and I confess as a pastor, it is what I was trained in and am most comfortable doing. To consider leadership and church from a different paradigm is both foreign and unnatural. However, I propose that a new paradigm is desperately needed. Clearly we cannot stay the course of a system that is not working, for the leadership, parishioners, and the lost. The burden on leaders to bear the ever-increasing responsibilities of ministry and the success of the church is too much. The combination is contributing to an increasing occupational attrition rate.³⁶ Church attendance continues to decline across the nation as congregants that long to “be” the church instead of just attend, are leaving in great numbers. Our nation suffers the pangs of a church that is no longer an influencing agent, while it continues its societal downward spiral without an effective Christian witness in the marketplace.

When a system is failing, it is time to reconsider. To stay a course that is marginally effective is unwise. Christ instituted a leadership system that propelled the

³⁶ “clergy attrition rates have increased because of the rise of expectations of congregations, obsolescence, fatigue, and frustration.” George K. Brushaber, “The Coming Clergy Dearth,” *Christianity Today*, February 11 1991.

church into its Greco-Roman culture with profound effectiveness. As well, the New Testament church was an effective ministering body to itself. The need of the church and world today is not for more gifted “ministries” of pastors, evangelists and teachers. The great need is for a spiritual army of equipped parishioners with the abilities of these leaders. Modern leaders must embrace the ancient role of serving the ministries of others.

Thesis and Solution

I propose that the present, predominantly second-century leadership and ecclesial paradigms, are failing to produce a church that is effectively penetrating its culture, equipping the priesthood of the believer, and empowering the body of Christ for ministry. I believe that the solution is to implement a more New Testament paradigm of church leadership, instituted by Jesus Christ. He established an equipping model that conceives of leadership in terms of serving the ministry potential of others.

Both the Old and New Testament’s reveal God employing teams of servant-leaders to minister to and equip those in their charge. Specifically in the New Testament, the teams were comprised of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These fivefold leadership gifts (Eph 4:8-11) were fully evidenced in the ministry of Christ and are given to equip the church for ongoing Christ like ministry through its members. I contend that these five “gifts” are unique God-given abilities, given initially to leaders so that they can, in the context of their giftedness, model and ultimately, enable (equip) parishioners to engage in the same ministry. When the abilities of all five “gifts” are given to every parishioner, it will produce a body of believers that will effectively bring the ministry of Christ to the church and the community.

Chapter Overview

We must begin to conceive of leadership, the church, and the mission to the world from a new perspective; a more Kingdom perspective. In Chapter Two of this study, I will lay a biblical foundation for a kingdom paradigm, evidenced in both Testaments, that reveals God's plan for the people of God, their leaders, and the world. I will initially consider three Old Testament leadership "teams" of the priests, prophets, and sages. Through these leaders, Yahweh desired a nation that would become priestly, prophetic, and sagacious to its self and other nations. In light of the failure of these leaders, I will then consider the radical approach to leadership employed by Jesus. He initiated a new leadership paradigm that held equipping and empowering others for ministry as the primary function of leadership. Jesus passed this model on to his disciples and it became the leadership economy of the New Testament church.

In Chapter Three, I will consider this ancient model of leadership, specifically within the context of the fivefold equipping gifts of Ephesians 4:11-16. I will then consider these fivefold gifts as evidenced in the life of Paul and ultimately realized in the life of New Testament believers. The ultimate fruit of this leadership paradigm saw the extension of the kingdom of God throughout the Roman Empire. This was achieved not as much by leaders, but by parishioners that were equipped, empowered, and released for ministry.

I will then consider the historical ecclesial journey to the present paradigm. I will address the significant polity shift from the first century to the second-century that laid the foundation for our current paradigm and the need for an ecclesial reformation.

Finally, I will consider current leadership models employed in secular companies that reflect the New Testament model of leadership and then synthesize the two.

In Chapter Four, I will consider the operation of the fivefold equipping leaders in their first-century ministry context, view them in contrast to the present leadership paradigm, and ultimately generate a prospectus from which to implement an equipping leadership paradigm for the twenty-first century church. The overall objective is to first, contextualize the first-century paradigm within its ancient path. Then consider the transitional journey for the leader and parishioner, from the first to the twenty-first century. Finally, the prospectus will provide the basis from which a working, transitional model can be constructed.

In Chapter 5, I will consider the ultimate product of fivefold equipping leaders, the fivefold Christian. I first address the need for radical reform in order to accommodate a more first-century leadership and ecclesial model. Then I consider the impact of equipping leadership upon the Christian as he or she become functional in the fivefold ministries of Christ: becoming more missional (apostle), prophetic (prophet), reconciling (evangelist), pastoral (pastor) and rabbinical (teacher).

CHAPTER 2

CONSTRUCTION OF A BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

Introduction

The biblical narrative is, in great part, the record of the intentions and actions of God with his people. Be those actions creational, salvific, or purely relational, all were juxtaposed amidst the kingdom of God as it encompassed the realm of humankind. In this kingdom context, God called forth men and women to roles of spiritual leadership with the ultimate purpose of growing others in their relationship with God and their ministries. As such, God chooses certain folk to partner with him to accomplish his purposes for others. For example, Abraham is used by God to birth a nation that would experience a unique covenantal relationship with him. Moses was used to provide the means of salvation for that nation. Kings, priests, prophets, and sages were all called to shoulder the burden of spiritual leadership of the same. Clearly God chooses to involve people in the spiritual growth and development of others.

In this chapter, I will initially consider the primary spiritual leadership models of the Old Testament: the priests, prophets, and sages. Each represented groups of leaders that provided fundamental spiritual leadership to Israel. Then I will give careful consideration to the spiritual leadership introduced and implemented by Christ and afterward continued through the apostles and other leaders of the first-century church. Of

importance is the significant paradigm shift that Christ initiated in leadership development that stood in stark contrast to the training of leaders in his day. I will consider his use of discipleship in the formation of spiritual leadership. Finally, I will address the significant role of the fivefold ministry. These gifts served to equip the first-century church to reach maturity in Christ and become effective ministers. This will lay the foundation for building a first-century paradigm that will serve to further define spiritual leadership for the twenty-first century church.

Old Testament Spiritual Leadership *Priest, Prophet, and Sage*

It would be tempting to consider the giants of the Old Testament as models of spiritual leadership. These great men and women of God accomplished amazing, divine assignments that profoundly impacted the lives of others. However, for the populace of Israel, spiritual leadership in those ancient days was predominantly accomplished through teams of ministers: the priests, prophets, and sages. Of significance to this study is that God called and commissioned these groups of ordinary folk to serve as teams of leaders to accomplish the care and ministerial development of Israel. Each of these will be briefly discussed here.

The Priest

The presence of priestly ministry is evident in the most ancient of biblical history. In a sense, Yahweh acts as the first priest as he sacrifices animals to clothe Adam and Eve in skin garments, to mitigate their nakedness (Gen 3:21).¹ The patriarchs, much like

¹ Note, all biblical references cited for this study will be from: *The New American Standard Bible*, trans. The Lockman Foundation, 9th ed. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1977).

priests, built altars and sacrificed to and worshiped Yahweh, commemorating covenants (Gen 8:20; 12:7) and special encounters with him (Gen 12:8; 13:4; 28:18, 22; 35:7). The priest-king Melchizedek is the first official priest recognized, as he is called, "...a priest of God Most High" (Gen 14:19). Melchizedek provides the earliest view of the functions of a priest by bringing bread and wine² (14:18), blessing Abraham (14:19) and Yahweh (14:20), and receiving tithes from Abraham (14:21).

The deliverance of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt necessitated instituting a formal priesthood that would enable the nation to better serve Yahweh (Exod 7:16). This service was best articulated by Moses to Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1, "And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go that they may celebrate a feast to me in the wilderness.'"

Aaron, the brother of Moses, and his tribe, the Levites, were commissioned by Yahweh to serve as priests for Israel so the nation could serve Yahweh in worship. They acted as intermediaries for the nation, insuring the wellbeing of its relationship with Yahweh. Albert Vanhoye captures the overall role of the priest to Israel: "The role of the priest is to open to the people the possibility of communion with God and communion with all humanity, since the one necessarily involves the other. In other words, priesthood is to be defined as an under taking of *mediation*."³

² These same elements are presented by Christ to the disciples as symbols of his body and blood which removes the stain of sin. They are the center of the Eucharist, which has been perpetually celebrated since the inception of the church. The author of Hebrews connects the priesthood of Melchizedek with Christ citing the prophetic words of David, "Thou art a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4).

³ Albert Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Testament Priest According to the New Testament*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard (Petersham: St. Bede's Publications, 1980), 31.

This ministry of mediation provided a means by which the nation of Israel could continually celebrate their relationship with Yahweh. The meditative role of the priests was reflected in their responsibilities.

The foremost role of the priest (*kohen*) was to facilitate the carrying out of religious rituals. This included celebration of festivals (Lev 23), with the receiving and subsequent offering of sacrifices. Some of these rituals provided a means to mitigate sin and in part, accessibility to a holy God. The Day of Atonement served as the central festival in which the high priest would, by means of laying on of hands; place the sins of the nation upon a sacrificial animal (scapegoat). Other rituals and festivals celebrated the goodness of Yahweh to create (Sabbath), provide (First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Trumpets), and deliver (Passover, Tabernacles) Israel.

A second essential function of the priest was to educate. Gustave Oehler considered the priest role of interpreter and teacher of the law as the second of his two primary roles for the nation (the first was addressed above).⁴ The priest was to teach and explain the law throughout the nation. They were required to read the entire law before Israel every seven years (Deut 31:9-13). "The purpose of the reading was in order that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord."⁵ Other responsibilities included ritual purification, giving of oracles and blessings, divining (Urim and Thummim), administration, judging, and liturgical worship.⁶

⁴ Gustav Friedrich Oehler and George Edward Day, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 8th ed. (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls company, 1883), 209.

⁵ Timothy Lehman, "The Role of the Priest in the Education of Post-Exilic Israel: Educational Insights from the life of Ezra" (M.Div. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1984), 25.

⁶ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*, Library of ancient Israel (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 95.

In a very general sense, the Levitical priesthood was given the charge to spiritually lead Israel. They interceded on behalf of the nation to Yahweh. As the priestly role evolved, it began to embody the fundamental elements of a spiritual caregiver:

Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant may continue with Levi, says the Lord of hosts. "My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him as an object of reverence; so he revered Me, and stood in awe of My name. True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. (Mal. 2:4-7)

The priests were called to reflect the very essence of God in their care for Israel. Alfred Edersheim notes, "The Levites, the special property and election of the Lord, were to be scattered among all the other tribes, to recall by their presence everywhere, the great truths which they symbolized, and to keep alive among the people the knowledge and service of the Lord."⁷ Thus, the priest was the contemporary and human representation of Yahweh before the people.

Because the priests were responsible for the spiritual care of the nation, some today believe they were the Old Testament equivalent of the modern-day pastor. Paul Schrieber attempts to construct this comparison:

Both consist of men who are called into the office (pastors however, not by birth); both need to meet certain qualifications and restrictions; both receive their living from the people's contributions; both have concern for the people in distress and sickness; both lead in public worship; both administer "Sacraments;" both deal with confession and absolution; both are to lead sanctified lives; both pray for themselves and the people under their care;

⁷ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 40.

both teach and preach the Word of God publicly; and both bless in God's name and place God's name upon the people.⁸

At question for this study is not whether this comparison is accurate, but if it is sufficient for either role. Joseph Blenkinsopp's closing comments on his treatise on the priesthood make this astute observation: "Ironically, Christianity, which began as a lay movement within Palestinian Judaism – a movement that had prophets but no *priests* – evolved quite rapidly in the direction of a hierarchical and clerical structure...."⁹ Thus, the pastoral role in the New Testament was, in the beginning, not priestly in the Old Testament sense. It was in fact more of an equipping ministry (Eph. 4:11, 12) and this will be further developed later in this chapter.

It appears, then, that by the second-century, the new paradigm for spiritual leadership instituted by Christ evolved back into more of the old priestly paradigm. Ironically, this New-Testament-equipping role may have been the ultimate divine intention for the Levitical priesthood. There is some evidence that equipping was anticipated as a responsibility of the priest, for some texts suggest that the ultimate intention of Yahweh was that Israel would become a nation of priests: "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5, 6). Note the dual vision that Yahweh had for Israel. Yahweh clearly intends Israel to be holy unto Him ("a holy nation") and it is that holiness that we tend to attribute as the primary priestly responsibility. But it is evident

⁸ Paul L. Schrieber, "Priest Among Priest: The Office of the Ministry in Light of the Old Testament Priest," *Concordia Journal* 14, no. 3 (1988).

⁹ Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 114.

that something more than piety is in his heart as he reveals a clear intention for Israel to become a ministering nation (“kingdom of priests”). Who would be better than priests to produce a nation of priests? This must be seen in the mind of Yahweh as an additional priestly responsibility. The prophet Isaiah echoed the same divine intention, “But you (Israel) will be called the priests of the Lord; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God” (Isaiah 61:6).

The priests then, were to facilitate the potential priestly ministries of the entire nation. They were to reproduce their ministries in the people. Aelred Cody captures the essence of this transference of ministry:

It is the priests and Levites who may exercise their proper *function* because they are *holy*, and if Exodus 19:6, which is not in a specifically ritual or cultic context, speaks of ruling power that is priestly and a people that is holy, this may be because the religious mentality behind the text envisaged the ritual holiness inherent in the priestly ruling power as something flowing down to affect the people ruled—the ideas of corporate personality and of fluidity between one and the many being in operation here.¹⁰

This fluidity would encompass both the holiness and the function of the priest. In the same sense that the priests were to be a priestly influence to Israel, so Israel was to be a priestly influence throughout the world. This of course was never realized with the Levitical priesthood and subsequently the nation did not reach their ultimate spiritual destiny. Sadly, the priests not only failed to equip the nation for priestly ministry, they often failed to reflect the holy God they served, as they frequently fell away from Yahweh, leading the nation with them. In the end, Israel repeatedly suffered the pangs of captivity from foreign invaders due to the failure of these spiritual leaders and, as stated previously, never realized their potential as a nation of priests. The failure of the

¹⁰ Aelred Cody, *The History of Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 192.

Levitical priesthood facilitated the need for God to initiate a new paradigm for leadership.¹¹ Jesus came to remedy the failure of Israel's spiritual leaders and initiate this new paradigm.

The Prophet

Within their historical context, the failure of the priests often necessitated the ministry of the prophets. Yehoshua Gitay, in his work, *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship*, notes, "The survival and success of the community depend more on the righteousness of the nation, than on the cultic activities of the priests or the military/socio-economic exploits of the king and his coterie."¹² Maintaining the righteousness of the nation was the responsibility of the priests. When the priests neglected this aspect of their ministry, the nation was vulnerable. The prophets served as the divine watchmen that sounded an alarm to a nation in spiritual crisis.

The Old Testament prophets were distinct from the priests in their call and purpose. The priest was born into his office and obtained it in part by means of membership in a tribe, and his commission was consistent in its prescription of spiritual care to the nation. However, the prophet was called to his/her office for a specific, often individualistic commission. Yehoshua Gitay observes, "The prophet is distinguished from other religious specialists, the priest in particular, being called to a mission rather

¹¹ The priests may have suffered from a lack of spiritual care themselves. Though there are articulated multiple requirements under the law for the practical care of the priesthood (housing, food, properties, etc.; they may very well have been very wealthy), there was not one requirement for their spiritual care. This is in sharp contrast to the disciples who left homes, lands, properties, and families to follow Christ (Lk. 5:11, 28). Jesus concentrated far more on spiritual care than practical provision.

¹² Yehoshua Gitay, *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997), 68.

than simply occupying an office.”¹³ The responsibility of the prophet was to warn, admonish, exhort, and direct the people. In essence, the prophet was the “...proclaimer of the divine will.”¹⁴

Kathleen O’Conner likens the prophetic calling to “a tree with three interrelated roots. This calling has its origin and nourishments from the realities of the world, from a steadfast relationship with God, and from the particular circumstances of a historical community.”¹⁵ These three succinctly articulate the dynamics at play in the ministry of the prophet. In God’s desire to preserve the community (Israel), he calls an individual, initially to a deeply personal relationship with him (often incorporating a theophany¹⁶), and eventually to a commission that addresses the specific need of the community. The prophet then becomes the vehicle through whom God speaks specifically to the need(s) of the community within the context of their contemporary circumstance (Deut 18:18). Thus, “succinctly defined, a prophet is an intermediary.”¹⁷

The prophet’s job was also to take the contemporary spiritual issue(s) to task. Yehoshua Gitay observed, “the battle against idolatry and apostasy was waged unremittingly throughout the whole biblical period, and the leaders in the struggle were the prophets.”¹⁸ The prophetic word was their primary weapon and they “never ceased to

¹³ Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 116.

¹⁴ David Arthur, *A Smooth Stone: Biblical Prophecy in Historical Perspective* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 8.

¹⁵ Kathleen M. O’Conner, “The Prophet Jeremiah and Exclusive Loyalty to God,” *Interpretation* 59, no. 2 (2005).

¹⁶ Brian Britt, “Prophetic Concealment in an Biblical Type Scene,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2002).

¹⁷ Arthur, *A Smooth Stone*, 9.

¹⁸ Gitay, *Prophecy and Prophets*, 9.

propound the elementary and basic truths about the biblical religion and the relationship of God to his people.”¹⁹

There is evidence that the same divine destiny for the priests (i.e., that all of Israel would become priests) was intended for the prophets as well. Consider the words of Moses to Joshua after learning that two others, besides him, had the Holy Spirit and were prophesying in the camp: “But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!’” (Nu 11:29). Quite possibly the office of prophet and the resultant school of the prophets could have realized this great vision.

However, Israel often rejected and abused their prophets. The prophet Amos spoke of a day when the prophetic voice would fall silent:

Behold the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord...(and) they will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. (Amos 8:11, 12)

Some believe that shortly after this fifth-century BC prophecy, the prophetic word fell silent and the office did cease.²⁰ The fall of the prophetic office gave further rise to the ascendancy of the scribes and priests and even though their emphasis was placed on scripture, which gave a sense of stability, as the scripture did not change, a great need for

¹⁹ Ibid., 9, 10.

²⁰ Recently, this allegation has been challenged. The current contention is that there were no longer any prophets like the prophets of old. For additional material on this see: A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 58. See: John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel After the Exile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 105-116. This position does not negate the vacancy of true prophets at the time of Christ. Consider also Tosefta Sotah 13:2; Zech 13:2-6; Ps 74:9; 1 Macc 4:44-46, all referring to the demise of the prophet.

the prophetic voice remained.²¹ As such, there was expectancy in the hearts of Israel for the coming of “the” prophet. It was in the midst of this divine silence and messianic expectation, that Jesus Christ, the prophet as prophesied by Moses (Deut. 18:15; Jn 7:40), was born. Through Christ, the prophetic office was restored once again. However, this time the community that God was to address would be His church, and it would be in that context that the prophetic office would flourish (1 Cor 14:29-31). It is this community that the Apostle Paul admonishes all to seek specifically, the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1). The church appears to be the community in which both the priesthood and prophethood of the believer is to be realized.

It should be noted that much like the priest, the Old Testament prophet was predominantly a ministering role.²² However, the New Testament prophet appears to be both a ministering and equipping role (Eph 4:11) so that the entire church can minister prophetically (Eph 4:12).

The Sage

The final Old Testament spiritual leadership office considered for this study is the sage (*hakam*). Of the three, the sage is the most difficult to assign to a particular people (Levitical priesthood), a specific commissioned assignment (prophetic call), or an official institution or leadership class. Both the priest and the prophet have been easily accepted as professional classes serving the spiritual care of the nation. But, the existence of the sage as an office has been often debated. In his work *The Intellectual Tradition in the*

²¹ Arthur, *A Smooth Stone*, 388, 389.

²² This does not dismiss the school of the prophets that was active at times in Israel’s history. The predominant thinking regarding these schools is that they served the development of future prophets, not the general populace of Israel, as may have been the case for the NT prophetic office.

Old Testament, R. Norman Wydbray concludes that there is not enough evidence in biblical literature that directly attests to the sage as a professional class in Israel.²³

Clearly Wydbray is correct, in the sense of direct evidence. Although there are multiple allusions to foreign sages (Gen 41:8; Ex 7:11; Is 19:11-12), Jeremiah 18:18 provides the only direct address of the office of *hakam*, in the Old Testament.²⁴ “Then they said, ‘Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah. Surely the law is not going to be lost to the priest, nor counsel to the sage, nor divine word to the prophet! Come on and let us strike him with our tongue, and let us give no heed to any of his words.’”

On the other hand, in Joseph Blenkinsopp’s book *Sage, Prophet, Priest; Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*, he suggests that though *hakam* probably referred initially to individuals possessing unique insight into life, over time, as these insights were recorded and taught, a class of *hakamine* (plural) arose. Gerhard von Rad agrees and maintains that the use of *hakam* in Proverbs does as well allude to a sagacious office. He cites several biblical references that appear to describe individuals “who are professionally occupied with teaching and the collection of instructional proverbs.”²⁵ Agur (Prov 30), whose Hebrew name means “assembler,” may be an example of such a sage. Joseph Blenkinsopp further contends that the ultimate evidence of their existence is their literary contributions: “The main point is that these writings can serve to identify

²³ R. N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1974).

²⁴ The only possible New Testament reference to the sage is Matt 23:34 – “Therefore I am sending you prophets, and wise men (σοφοὺς) and scribes....” Note that the use of wise *men* infers a company of similarly gifted individuals, as does prophets and scribes, suggesting that these *wise men*, much like the others, may be of an official office of spiritual leadership.

²⁵ Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. James D. Martin (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1972), 20. He cites Prov 13:14; 15:12; 22:17; 24:23.

and characterize an intellectual tradition, and their authors can be taken to belong to a particular type of intellectual leadership within that tradition.”²⁶ Given that the wisdom literature books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticles, and the apocryphal wisdom books) are a significant contribution to Israel’s tradition, those who wrote, gathered, edited, and taught these texts should be considered as significant as well.

The ministry of the sage appears to encompass the broader aspects of life. Whereas the ministry of the priest was precisely laid out in the law, involving distinct religious and ceremonial responsibilities, and the prophet had a specific prophetic commission, the sage was focused on the fundamental aspects of life in general (i.e., wisdom). The responsibility of the sage was to engender and facilitate godly living in the community. The sage provided sagacious guidance for daily living. In Murphy’s comparison of the sage to the other offices he concludes, “...counsel is associated with the wise (*hakam*, sage), just as the word belongs to the prophet and (the) Torah to the priest.”²⁷

James Crenshaw also believes there is little doubt that the sage was a distinct professional class that contributed to the spiritual formation of the community.²⁸ However, who could be a sage was less definitive. In theory, a sage could be anyone who wanted to pursue wisdom in a disciplined manner. In practice, those of wealth, status (royalty, etc.), and those given to formal study (scribes) made up the professional class of sages primarily, because they possessed the lifestyle and fiscal means to give

²⁶ Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 11.

²⁷ Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 4.

²⁸ James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: an Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 28, 29.

themselves to the pursuit of wisdom. The populace, for the most part, was focused on survival. Murphy does point out that both the father and mother played major roles in the dispensing of wisdom to the family, and should be considered as unofficial sages (Prov 10:1; 15:20; 20:20; 23:22).²⁹ Much of the first nine chapters of Proverbs reflect the sagacious counsel of a father/mother (Prov 1:8) to their posterity within the context of multiple, life situations. However, the source of much of that parental counsel must, in some manner, be attributed to the efforts of the sage.

Gerhard von Rad makes an attempt to identify whom these sages might have been. His study of the wisdom literature texts led him to identify two official governmental offices deeply associated with the professional class of sage:

If one examines the great number of references with a view to determining whether some of them are not rooted in the institutional sphere, thereby providing us with a lead, then it is noticeable that there were always two offices, the holders of which are credited, in what is already almost a conventional way, with being wise, namely the king and that of his highest counselors.³⁰

In the search for identifying those who would fill the official office of sage, one must consider the office of *king*. The title *malek* (king) initially means to “possess or reign,” but it can be further defined as “one who provides counsel and judicious ruling.”³¹ Thus, the king in Israel was understood by constituents to be a sagacious office.

In Proverbs, Solomon is revealed as the quintessential sagacious king. He sought out wisdom (Prov 4:3-5), collected it (Prov 1:1), and taught it (Prov 3:1). In Ecclesiastes

²⁹ Murphy, 3.

³⁰ Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 21.

³¹ William Gesenius, *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 477.

he is the self-proclaimed preacher (*Qoheleth*) with the authority (office bearer) to call an assembly (*Qahal*; 'assembly') and teach wisdom to those gathered.³² Those teachings dramatically reveal the sagacious role of a king to his people. The union of wisdom with monarchical responsibilities was essential for the godly rule of a nation. A sagacious king would be both sovereign in political power and instructive in godly living, providing for Israel a way (Prov 4:26) of life that insured divine favor (Prov 3:4; 8:35).

As well, Lemuel (Prov 31) may have been a royal sage whose mother gave profound advice as to how to rule as a king and identify a virtuous wife. Though not identified as a sage in the biblical text, Lemuel is regarded by rabbinical commentators as a contemporary sagacious king along with Solomon.³³ Hezekiah, a prominent king of Judah, commissioned men to collect the proverbs of Solomon (Prov 25:1). If not a sage himself, certainly those who collected and transcribed these proverbs would be considered scribal sages, or at least they carried on the sapiential tradition. However, though some kings were sagacious, they did not make up the class of sages.

Quite possibly the most prominent group that could be considered sages in Israel were the judges. Moses is the first to arise as a judge in Israel as he addressed the disputes of a newly delivered people, from morning until evening (Ex 18:14). His father-in-law Jethro advised him to create a company of judges that would resolve these disputes, allowing Moses more time to teach the nation "the way in which they are to walk..." (Ex 18:20). These judges were established as sagacious leaders over groups of

³² Derek Kidner, *The wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes: an introduction to wisdom literature* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 90.

³³ James Hastings and others, *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1909; reprint, 1994), 540.

thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens (Ex 18:21), and insured mitigation at the smallest level. They ruled intermittingly over Israel and the Book of Judges records their contributions. However, for the most part, the judges avenged the enemies of Israel and purged Israel of its idolatry.³⁴ When the prophet Samuel, in his later years, appointed his own corrupt sons as judges over Israel, then Israel cried for a king (1 Sam 8:1-9). Whether or not judges were official sages, they clearly engaged in sagacious tasks that helped to preserve and guide the nation as a covenant people.

The pursuit, collection, and teaching of wisdom were the responsibilities of the sage. The ultimate fruit of their endeavors was godly living; what Derek Kidner typifies as “a life well managed (spiritual, familial and societal).”³⁵ For the sage, in contrast to the forensic scribe, life was more important and successful living, the ultimate goal. The sage did not discard scholarship; he or she simply regarded it as a tool that served in the acquisition of wisdom. Where the priest served the spiritual needs of the community, safeguarding its righteousness, the sage served the day-to-day aspects of life in the community, safeguarding it from folly.³⁶ As such, the sage was essential to the spiritual, moral, and physical wellbeing of the community.

Although there is no evidence of the office of sage in the New Testament church, there was nonetheless a very important place for wisdom. For example, the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 begin with the gift of the word of wisdom (v. 8). The

³⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary On the Whole Bible*, 6 vols., vol. 5 (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1994; reprint, Third), Vol 2, 94.

³⁵ Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 18.

³⁶ Folly to Israel was far more than simple foolishness. It was abhorrent sin that led to the degradation of the individual and society as a whole. See Derek Kidner, 19-22. He delineates the multiple facets of folly and the subsequent effects that are recorded in the first nine chapters of Proverbs.

Apostle Paul prays continually for a spirit of wisdom (Eph 1:17; Col. 1:9) on the church and his treatise on wisdom to the Corinthians serves as the basis for Christian wisdom (1 Cor 2:6-13), possessing the thoughts (wisdom) of Christ through the indwelling Spirit of God (v. 10-13). As well, wisdom in the epistle of James is a predominant theme and throughout the text he appeals to the church to seek and employ it (Jas 1:5-8; 3:13-18). Ultimately, the office of the sage, as with the priestly and prophetic offices, was to be fully realized in the church by all of its members. In other words, wisdom was obtainable for the entire church so that it could live and minister effectively in the kingdom of God, the home, the faith community, and the world.

Spiritual leadership in Israel as represented by the priest, prophet, and sage, should have provided a holistic system of spiritual care for the needs of the nation. The priest was to provide the spiritual example (this will become even more important in Christological leadership) and the atoning ministry of Yahweh to maintain national piety. The prophet served as an intermediary voice to call the community back to Yahweh and holiness in times of spiritual crisis. The sage provided wisdom to the community for day-to-day godly living. These leadership teams should have not only produced a spiritual ministry to the nation, but a model of leadership of which the nation could replicate.

Sadly, by the time of Christ, the priesthood was stained with such spiritual compromise that Jesus called for the prophets and sages to return to Israel to confront their sin (Matt 23:34). As well, Christ entered a world where the prophetic voice, for the most part, had fallen silent for nearly five hundred years. Finally, by the time of Christ,

there is no evidence that the sage, as an official office, even exists in Israel.³⁷

In this spiritual leadership vacuum, God comes, incarnate. The miserable state of Israel's priesthood necessitated the coming of God as priest. The author of Hebrews explores this aspect of the ministry of Christ, revealing a priest far superior to the Levitical priest. As Patrick Gray observes in his essay on the high priestly role of Christ: "Hebrews offers Jesus' priesthood as a superior alternative to Israel's Levitical Priesthood"³⁸ In fact, Hebrews strives to reveal Christ not only as a superior priest, but "the" high priest from a pre-Aaronic lineage. Fredk. A. Tatford's exposé on the great High Priest provides a brief synopsis of the superiority of Christ's priesthood to those of the Levites as articulated in Hebrews:

- He came after the order of Melchizedek - a superior and earlier order.
- Due to this order, Christ's priesthood was eternal - the Levites suffered mortality, Christ's high priestly ministry continues forever (Heb 7:24, 25).
- His was a pure, sinless priest - it was necessary for the Levitical priests to first offer sacrifices for themselves due for their own sin. Christ offered himself once, and then not for himself, but for the sins of his people.
- He entered once and offered his own blood, once, and for all sin (Heb 1:3; 10:10, 12) - the Levitical high priest needed to enter annually.
- He is the High Priest of a *heavenly* priesthood, exercising his sacerdotal ministry in a heavenly sphere on behalf of a *heavenly*-oriented people.³⁹

Thus Jesus, the superior High Priest, becomes the remedy for a failing priestly ministry.

He is the High Priest who not only fully resolves the sins of humanity, but serves as a

³⁷ Everett Ferguson holds that the scribes were actually the sages of the day, others that they were more given to the law (lawyers), formal education (teachers), and literal scribes (recorders). Jesus does delineate the sage and scribe in Matt. 23:34, suggesting he saw these as two distinct offices. For more on scribes, see Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 112, 113, 401.

³⁸ Patrick Gray, "Brotherly Love and the High Priest Christology of Hebrews," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, no. 2 (2003): 336.

³⁹ *The Church a Symposium*, ed. J.B. Watson (London: Pickering and Inglis LTD, 1951), 97-100.

model of priestly ministry, and replicates himself in the lives of believers, fulfilling God's ultimate desire to have a nation of royal priests (1 Pet 2:9).

The great prophetic silence that had fallen upon Israel (Ps 74:9) was invaded by the incarnate Christ, the very Word of God (Jn 1:14). Unlike the Old Testament prophets who were mere conduits of the word of God, Christ was the very Word of God. Frans Jozegf van Beeck captures the prophetic essence of Christ: "In the person of Jesus, Only Begotten God, Temple and Torah Embodied, the Invisible God in person addresses the world (John 1:14;18)."⁴⁰ This divine "address" brings an end to centuries of heavenly silence. But in contrast to the previous prophetic office, Jesus the prophet embodies the words of the Father with amazing authority that not only exposes the ills of the nation, but possesses the grace and means to remedy them. Morna D. Hooker explores the prophetic office of Christ in *The Signs of a Prophet: the Prophetic Actions of Jesus*. She appeals to the work of C.H. Dodd that lists fifteen features that affirm Christ's role as a prophet: his authoritative teaching, calling, divine insight, and symbolic actions are among those that reflect his prophetic role.⁴¹ Each of these work in concert to reveal the overall salvific message of God, in and through Christ. As such, Jesus as prophet not only ends the divine silence, but ends the human dilemma caused by sin and broken relationship with God. As "the" prophet (Deut 18:18), he calls a people to return to God and presents himself as the way for right relationship with God (Eph 1:7). Through Christ, the prophetic office is restored to such a degree that it has a significant and normative role in the Church (1 Cor 14:1, 29-32).

⁴⁰ Frans Jozef van Beeck, "Who Do You Say That I Am?" *Commonweal* 124, no. 12 (1997).

⁴¹ Morna Dorothy Hooker, *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus*. ed. (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 16, 35-54.

Finally, the absence of the sagacious office in Israel necessitated a Messiah that could provide a divine way of living. In Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman (Prov 1:20; 2:43:15-18; 4:5-9), and those who lack wisdom are exhorted to seek her. As well, wisdom is presented as a way in which one walks or lives (Prov 3:17, 23; 4:10-13, 18, 26; 5:21; 8:2, 20, 32). There is captured both the person and the way of wisdom in the Messiah. Jesus came as the sagacious king being the “Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jn 14:6). Ben Witherington III in his work, *Jesus the Sage*, asserts “Jesus presented himself as Wisdom in person; the very wisdom of God.”⁴² This is much more than an Old Testament sage that pursued, collected, and passed on wisdom. This is the embodiment of God in the person of Jesus Christ that manifests the wisdom of God not due to human effort, but divine essence.⁴³ Evidence of this divine wisdom is recorded throughout the gospels in the form of parables, sayings, authoritative teachings, as well as the very life and acts of Christ. The invitation of Christ to his disciples was not to embrace a “way” or “truth” or “life” that he had somehow obtained; it was to embrace Jesus as the “Way,” the “Truth,” and the “Life,” God himself. Wisdom then is obtained by being in Christ and living by the Spirit of Christ in us (1 Cor 2:11, 16). In a time when the Old Testament sage no longer sought wisdom, Jesus came as Wisdom, being the very personification and source of wisdom. Those who followed Jesus were often called the “followers of the Way” (Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).⁴⁴ Christ the wise king instituted a new kingdom and lived a godly and sagacious life to a

⁴² Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 147. 201.

⁴³ Ibid., 208.

⁴⁴ Michael Griffiths, *The example of Jesus*, The Jesus library (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 52.

lost and foolish world. This monarchical and sagacious influence continued in the life of the church as seen in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians as he lists the word of wisdom as the first of a series of spiritual gifts given to edify the church (1 Cor 12:8).

Conclusion

The offices of the Old Testament priest, prophet, and sage were to serve Israel to be a holy and godly nation. It also appears in Yahweh's mind, they were also to equip Israel's populace to be a fully ministering community. Clearly, these offices fell short of this goal. However, each office was entirely fulfilled in the person of Christ. The coming of Christ was not just to atone, but to establish the reign of God and endow new leaders with *charismata* to expand that kingdom throughout the earth and accomplish what the previous Old Testament leaders did not; the priesthood, prophethood, and sagehood of every believer. It is to these leaders that he entrusted this immense mission and it is incumbent that the new spiritual leadership paradigm introduced by Christ be considered.

New Testament Spiritual Leadership *Jesus, Discipleship, and Equippers*

Jesus – Redeemer and Spiritual Leader

The spiritual leadership environment that Christ was born into was at best desolate. As previously noted, the priesthood was clearly failing, and along with other so-called spiritual leaders they were condemned by Christ (Matt 23:1-33) as hypocritical (v. 4), egocentric (v. 5-7), spiritually separated from Yahweh (v. 13), greedy (v. 14), nothing more than showmen (v.14), discipler's of hell (v.15), blind guides (v.16, 24), over-reliant

on gold and religiosity (v. 16-22), heartlessly legalistic (v. 23), fully hypocritical (v. 25-32), and nothing less than a brood of vipers, i.e., snakes (v. 33).⁴⁵ In other words, complete failures as spiritual leaders. As we discussed earlier, the prophetic office was almost non-existent and the sage seemingly shared a similar fate.⁴⁶ At this time the nation reflected the same spiritual condition of its leaders and subsequently was suffering under captivity of the Roman Empire. The nation needed redeeming and a new kind of leadership to equip it for successful spiritual living.

Without question, the coming of Christ served this salvific purpose and more. Christ did come to redeem mankind from sin, but in addition he initiated a new order of spiritual leadership. He did this, in part, to resolve the failure of the previous spiritual leadership, and also to facilitate the expansion of the kingdom of God throughout the earth. To understand this new spiritual leadership, it is necessary to consider the kingdom of God, its incarnate king, and the anthropological ramifications.

In a true sense, the incarnation of Christ was a divine invasion of God into his created world and the governments he ordained (Ro 13:1). This invasion served to initiate God's ultimate rule in man, by means of taking on humanity. Elizabeth Johnson attempts to capture the divine perspective of the incarnation, "What else does this mean

⁴⁵ I attempted here to interpret Christ's description of the state of the spiritual leaders (scribes and Pharisees) of the day. He portrays a completely failing leadership system and Christ's words are quite acidic. Verses 37-39 conclude this discourse ending upon a note of compassion (v. 37), judgment (v. 38), and future hope (v. 39) for the center of Judaism, Jerusalem. Note that Jesus addressed the scribe and the Pharisee. The Pharisees and Sadducees were the predominant spiritual leadership of the day. Each had scribes who could be priests or non-priests. In Israel's early years, only priests could be scribes, but with the advent of the Diaspora and the subsequent need for synagogues, more non-priests were admitted into service. The Pharisees were one of the leading religious orders of Christ's day.

⁴⁶ There is some evidence of both prophetic and sagacious activity during this period of time. "Scholars think that prophets may have continued to be minor functionaries attached to the Temple." As well, Yeshua ben Sira wrote *Ecclesiasticus*, a collection of wisdom passed on through his family in 132 B.C.E. For more see: Pheme Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher*, Understanding Jesus today (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 9, 16.

but that God is no longer satisfied to be with the Earth in word only but, through the power of the Spirit, chooses to become one of the human species in the flesh.⁴⁷ As a result, his incarnation facilitates his intimate involvement in his creation.

There is considerable work already written on the implications to divinity in the incarnation (Phil 2:7, 8; 2 Cor 8:9). Noteworthy here is that divinity gains an anthropological orientation for eternity.⁴⁸ But what is the impact of incarnation on humankind and even more, the corresponding reign of the kingdom of God? How does this serve to produce spiritual leaders distinct from their predecessors?

Through Christ mankind has the opportunity to escape the damages of sin and death (Ro 6:23), and become alive again (Ro 5:21) as new creatures (2 Cor 5:17). I propose that this new creature is a fundamental difference between Old and New Covenant spiritual leaders. As post-Pentecost believers, we might naturally default to the unique role of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) operating in the lives of the New Testament leaders to distinguish them from their Old Testament counterparts. However, Scripture records that the Holy Spirit filled and enabled leaders in the Old Testament. The artisans of the Mosaic tabernacle were called, gifted, and filled with the Holy Spirit (Ex 31:1-11; 35:31). Yahweh takes the Holy Spirit that was placed upon Moses and places the same on the seventy elders of Israel, and they all prophesy (Nu 11:25). Joshua is filled with the Spirit and commissioned to lead Israel into the Promised Land (Nu 27:18). Even Balaam

⁴⁷ Elizabeth A Johnson, "The Living God in Cosmic Perspective," *Sewanee Theological Review* 48, no. 3 (2005).

⁴⁸ Orientation is admittedly inadequate to address the full implications of incarnation for divinity. The intent here is to capture one aspect that reveals the eternal consequences of God becoming human. This change in orientation is also reflected in humanity as believers become θεός oriented by means of regeneration. Whereas God is not less by taking on ἀνθρώπος, humanity is enhanced by taking on divinity. The early church considered this process deification – see St. Irenaeus, on recapitulation and St. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*.

was the recipient of the Holy Spirit (Nu 24:2), of whom Peter employs as “the” model of spiritual leadership failure for a prophet (2 Pet 2:15). The Old Testament record is replete with many others examples of leaders having the Holy Spirit.

In no way am I attempting to minimize the significance of the work of the Holy Spirit on spiritual leaders. That would be an injustice to Scripture and the Spirit. However, regeneration must be considered as a key distinction between Old and New Testament leaders (inclusive with the reign of God in the believer, to be discussed later). Regeneration is a grand mystery regarding that which was once dead, and by means of the resurrection of Christ, becomes fully alive and new again: “The regenerate man has forever ceased to be the man he was; his old life is over and a new life has begun; he is a new creature in Christ, buried with him out of reach of condemnation and raised with him into a new life of righteousness.”⁴⁹

There is a distinct difference between *Imago Dei* (old creature originally made in the image of God, subsequently damaged by sin) and *Imago Christi* (new creature made in the image of Christ). The difference is discovered in the nature of the regenerate believer: “He (Christ) must be in us...having communicated His own nature to us in the new birth.”⁵⁰

This new creature is the result of the righteousness of Christ (Ro 6:4), of which the believer becomes a participant, by being united in his death, producing loss of the old life wrought with sin and death, and united with his resurrection, a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit (Ro 6:5-10; 8:9-11). This new creature, born of the Spirit (Jn 3:3) reflects

⁴⁹ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 7th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 924.

⁵⁰ James Stalker, *Christ Our Example* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 28.

the very essence of θεος; the nature of Χριστος, to the degree that the believers in Antioch are called Χριστιανους; ones who appear in spirit, word, and deed, just like Christ. It is this new creature that is so radically different from the Old Testament believer, and it serves as the foundation for the New Covenant spiritual leader.

Having the nature of Christ, the new creature becomes the appropriate place of habitation for the presence of God. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to safeguard their human vessels, for they house the very Spirit of God (1 Cor 3:16, 17). Peter goes even further by affirming that believers have been given God's divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) and power (2 Pet 1:3), which fully enable them to add to their lives integral elements of the divine walk (moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, etc.).⁵¹ As such, the believer is given the inclination (divine nature) and ability (divine power) to fully realize his or her potential as a new creature.

In concert with regeneration is the reign of God. Because the presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit lives within the believers, they are under the direct government of God. This government is a divine monarchy and was an essential economy to the spiritual leadership of New Testament leaders.⁵² This was the government that Yahweh desired for Israel. But Israel rejected God as king, wanting a

⁵¹ 2 Peter 1:3-11

⁵² Much biblical evidence could be cited to reveal the divine monarchy as a primary economy of NT leadership. To note just a few examples: Peter is commanded by God to eat what he knew by the law to be unclean. This opened the door for ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 20:13-16). Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, he followed the direction of the Holy Spirit, even when ministry is forbidden (Acts 16:6, 7). Peter, Paul and James begin their epistles by identifying themselves as a δουλος (slave) of Jesus Christ. NAS correctly translates δουλος as bond-servant. A cursory study of Exodus 21:1-6, reveals that a bond-servant is an individual that chooses to be indentured to his master for life, bearing the sign of a pierced ear, symbolizing full obedience to the commands of the master.

human monarchy in his stead (1 Sam 8:7). Jesus came to establish his divine monarchy and he spoke of it often:

But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God...for I was sent for this purpose." (Lk 4:43)

And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him. (Lk 8:1)

And He said (to his disciples), "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God...." (Lk 8:10)

But the multitudes were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God.... (Lk 9:11)

This kingdom economy is foundational to the life and ministry of Jesus. In relationship to the Father, Christ is fully submitted to his divine authority:

I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world...I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak the things as the father taught me, And He who is with Me; He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him. (Jn 8:26-29)

For I did not speak on my own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me. (Jn 12:49, 50)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. (Jn 14:10)

Jesus preached and lived the Kingdom of God, which revealed a ministry with remarkable authority. This authority often stunned those who listened to his messages (Mt 7:28, 29). In contrast, the authority of the priestly ministry was founded upon the Torah (Law) whereas Jesus' ministry was founded upon a greater authority, the very one that gave the law. Emerito P. Nacpil observes:

For Jesus the more original, immediate, overwhelming, and inescapable reality is not the law, but the kingdom of God. His experience of God is more directly of God actively exercising His royal power to rule, that is, God reigning, which is a reality more primal than the law itself. In fact it is God as King exercising His royal prerogative which is the primal basis and source of the Law. It is the reality of God as active royal sovereign and ruling power, and not merely the authority over the Law, which is basic faith to Jesus.⁵³

Nacpil correctly concludes that the ministry of Jesus was faith-based solely upon absolute submission to the will and word of the Father, even when it required the severest of submission and obedience (Mt 26:39; Phil 2:8). The kingdom-directed life of Christ was to be an example of the most primal aspect of Christianity. We can conclude that just as divine sovereignty was united with Christ's incarnation, so it must also be united with the believer's regeneration. In other words, if Christ was fully surrendered to the kingdom of God as incarnate son, so also ought every disciple to be. When projected upon the matrix of spiritual leadership in the church, this economic principle must be even more applicable, and we see this in the gospel text. This kingdom reign of God is fundamental to Christianity. The church was foreseen as the community in which the kingdom would ultimately be realized. As Alfred Loisy notes, "Jesus foretold the kingdom, and it was the church that came."⁵⁴ The context of this kingdom reign was discipleship.

In the calling of his disciples, Jesus required that they be fully submitted to his authority as he was to the Father. Jesus' invitation for discipleship is wrought with monarchical implications. The disciples are called to "deny themselves" (Lk 9:23) and

⁵³ Emerito P. Nacpil, *Jesus' Strategy for Social Transformation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 30.

⁵⁴ Alfred Firmin Loisy and Christopher Home, *The Gospel and the Church* (London: Isbister and Co., 1903), 166.

completely “follow” (Mt. 8:22).⁵⁵ Karl Barth masterfully unveils the implications of the self-denial Christ required:

Self-denial in the context of following Jesus, involves a step into the open, into the freedom of a definite decision and act, in which it is with a real commitment that person takes leave of himself or herself, of the person of yesterday, of the person she or he once was; in which one gives up the previous form of one’s existence, hazarding and totally compromising oneself without looking back or considering what is to become of herself or himself, because what matters is not now oneself but that one should do at all costs that which is proposed and demanded, having no option but to decide and act in accordance with it – cost what it may.⁵⁶

This kind of perilous and total abandonment of self is mandatory for one to surrender to the sovereignty of the kingdom of God and the cross is an appropriate metaphor to capture the experience.⁵⁷ We see evidence of this in the lives of the disciples as they leave occupations, homes, families: everything for Christ (Mt 19:27).

The denial of self is the precursor to “follow”. Richard Peace concludes that self-denial and the cross experience “enable a person to “follow after” Jesus, i.e., to become a disciple.”⁵⁸ Where self-denial is the willful loss of one’s personhood, to “follow” is the willful choice to obtain the new self that is gained by means of being with/in Christ. It is the choice of total obedience to the will and way of the master (Mt 10:24, 25).⁵⁹ This will

⁵⁵ For more in-depth development of this dual requirement see: Richard V. Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament Paul and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 254-256.

⁵⁶ Karl Barth, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and K. C. Hanson, *The Call to Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 24.

⁵⁷ The cross, the literal means of death for Christ, was a symbol of both a curse (Gal 3:13) and death to the Jew and in its application, is representative of the total annihilation of the old person.

⁵⁸ Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, 256.

⁵⁹ In this text Jesus appeals to two common social relationships in the Israeli culture: the disciple/teacher and the slave/master. Matthew Henry observes, “Jesus Christ is our Master, our *teaching* Master, and we are his disciples, to learn of him, our *ruling* Master, and we are servants to obey him....” See, Henry, 116.

be further developed later as we consider *Imitatio Christi*. The choice to deny oneself and follow, allowed common folk like fishermen and tax collectors to become disciples and ultimately, extremely effective spiritual leaders. It is in the context of discipleship that the spiritual leadership of Jesus is revealed.

Jesus – Discipleship and the Training of Leaders

Discipleship must be understood as a fundamental element of the Kingdom of God. In no way can it be delineated from salvation, sanctification, our eschatological hope, or any other benefit of the kingdom. Boyd Luter addresses the key role discipleship plays in kingdom living:

The summons to discipleship is as genuinely historical to Jesus as his call to repentance and faith. In fact there is an inner essential relationship between them so that the occurrence of one necessarily entails the other. It is this threefold response of faith, repentance, and discipleship that brings a person directly into the sphere of the reign of God in Jesus....⁶⁰

In other words, discipleship is as integral to kingdom living as faith and repentance. One might conclude that faith would be the posture for absolute trust, and repentance, the posture for deep-seated change that permits discipleship to occur. Without question, discipleship is in the mind of Jesus as a primal experience to kingdom living and he spoke of it often:

And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of God is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.” (Matt 13:52)

If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and

⁶⁰ Boyd Luter and Kathy McReynolds, *Disciplined living: What the New Testament Teachers About Recovery* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996), 99.

come after me cannot be my disciple. (Lk 14:26, 27)

So therefore, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. (Lk 14:33)

The fact that Jesus had disciples was not unusual for the day, for there were many rabbis, philosophers, and secular teachers who had disciples.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the discipleship experience afforded the believer remarkable access to the teacher. In his book on discipleship, Greg Ogden observes: “Disciples...are the product of intimate and personal investment.”⁶² Of significance to this study is the uniqueness of the discipleship experience within this intimate and personal encounter with Christ. For that very experience was in part, replicated by the apostles in the lives of their own disciples. Giving thought to some of the twelve’s experiences, may serve to gain a better understanding of the development of New Testament spiritual leaders.

Living with Jesus – Joining in the Journey of a Divine Life

At its very base, discipleship meant living with Jesus. This may sound a bit simplistic until one considers that this experience was with the divine person, “in Jesus’ call to discipleship, one’s whole person is drawn into engagement with the full reality of Jesus as the person he is.”⁶³ To paraphrase, this would be all of me, coming into contact and fully surrendered, with all of Christ. This level of encounter would inevitably impact human lives. One can ill afford to minimize this experience and its potential effect on the disciples and their future ministry. As A.B. Bruce notes, “Eye and ear witness of the

⁶¹ Griffiths, *The example of Jesus*, 15.

⁶² Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 20.

⁶³ Luter and McReynolds, *Disciplined Living*.

facts of an unparalleled life was an indispensable preparation....”⁶⁴ The very being and life that Christ lived was essential to the personal and ministerial formation of the disciples. Christ provided training in the context of his own life.

The ramifications of this to the twelve are considerable. By living with Jesus, they inevitably became like him: “It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher...” (Matt 10:25). This is what Jesus anticipated for his disciples. However, this is more than a student role of learning the truths and/or principles taught by Christ. It is a personal encounter, the fruit of which is becoming like the person of Christ. Herman Horne, in his work, *Jesus the Master Teacher*, addresses the benefits of being a disciple or what he calls an “intimate” learner, “...intimate learners, or disciples...learn not so much the *lessons*, as the *way* of their teacher....”⁶⁵ Consider the words of the elders, rulers, scribes, Annas the high priest, and others regarding Peter and John: “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus” (Acts 4:12).

The implication of their statement is that formal training was not evident in the lives of these men, but what was evident, was their having been with Christ. Was it simply their bold confidence that revealed this? This could be deduced from the text. More likely it was as well their spirit, compassion, mannerisms: Even the way they spoke that likened them to Jesus. As Charles Spurgeon preached, “(they) have been with Jesus... taught of him...(become) like him...caught the very idea of the holy Man of

⁶⁴ Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971), 41.

⁶⁵ Herman Harrell Horne, *Jesus The Master Teacher* (New York: Association Press, 1925), 143.

Nazareth, and expands it out into (their) very life and every day actions.”⁶⁶ The classroom for discipleship was the life of the Master; his words, deeds, acts, etc. The result of this was the impact of the divine, upon the life of the follower.

Consider the single encounter of Christ on the life of Saul. The revolutionary change in this man’s life did not arise from teaching, reasoning, or effective apologetics. The change occurred because of a personal encounter with Christ. Compare that to the long-term impact of the person of Jesus after two years of being with him day and night and we might get a sense of the disciples’ life-changing experience. A cursory review of the gospel record reveals a bold drama of the King and his kingdom played out upon a human and terrestrial canvas. As a result, each event is replete with Kingdom of God economics and the interplay of the supernatural in the natural world. The words of Jesus are pregnant with divine wisdom, understanding, and power. The authority of the King is poised against demonic dominions (Eph 6:12) and the mercy and love of God are revealed to humanity in benevolent acts. John Hendrix states it succinctly, “They saw. They heard. And they perceived something about the quality of life in the Kingdom of God.”⁶⁷ Because they lived with Jesus, they changed and inevitably came to realize that their own spiritual leadership would be far more about who and what they were in Christ than what they said or did for him. The fruit of this experience is still evident in the lives of the apostles as they served the church, even in the post-resurrection disciples. For example, Paul almost over emphasizes the significance of being “in Christ” and the

⁶⁶ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Sermons*, 10 vols., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 254.

⁶⁷ John Hendrix and Lloyd Householder, *The Equipping of Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977), 30.

benefits gained from this station in the first two chapters of Ephesians. To the Philippians, he is even stronger: “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing knowledge of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him.” (Phil 3:8. 9).

The value of encountering, knowing, living, and being in/with Christ is the central focus and goal of Paul’s life. He held this above the very Torah he once so adamantly served. As W.D. Davies states: “In a real sense conformity to Christ, his teaching and his life, has taken the place for Paul of conformity to the Jewish Torah. Jesus himself – in word and deed or fact is a New Torah.”⁶⁸ This economy, first received by the twelve, is still alive in the post-resurrection apostles and other spiritual leaders of the church. The encounter and experience with Christ is foundational to kingdom living in the early church.

The Example of Jesus - Imitatio Christi

Within the context of Christ’s life was his intentional example to the disciples. His daily acts, choices, attitude, dependence on the Father, prayer life, teachings, etc, modeled spiritual leadership and separated him from all other rabbis. Christ’s example was divine, kingdom-oriented, and came with the expectation that his disciples would follow the example he lived (Jn 13:15). He called them to become fishers of folk, just as he was (Mt 4:19), to humbly serve the needs of others, as he did (Matt 20:25-28), to suffer as he would (Lk 9:22-24), to do miracles, as he did (Jn 14:12). In heart,

⁶⁸ W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 148.

motivation, deed, and word, Jesus served to be the example that the disciples were to imitate.

In his book *The Example of Jesus*, Michael Griffiths considers the origins of imitation and following Christ's example, for the disciples. He contends that imitation was initiated by Christ as he imitated the Father; which inevitably led the disciples to follow Christ in like manner. He concludes, "And so the Son's imitation of the Father leads to the disciples' imitation of the Son."⁶⁹ This being the case, Christ's imitation was an intentional imitation, not just to direct his ministry, but for the purpose of modeling imitation for his disciples. E.J. Tinsley explores this further, "If his life was an imitation of the Father, their life as disciples was to imitate him. Thereby they would realize *sonship*: loving their enemies as he did and praying for their persecutors, they would behave as sons of their Father in heaven."⁷⁰ In other words, they ultimately realized "child of God" (being just like the Son), due in great part to Christ adequately exempling "Son of God" (being just like the Father). So then, central to discipleship, is not only to be or have something someone else can imitate, but modeling imitation itself – specifically imitation of Christ, which is the ultimate model for all imitation.

How important is imitation? Griffiths concludes, "We form our mental pictures of what a Christian should be like more from living models than theoretical expectations."⁷¹ We are looking for living models to imitate. And yet today, many of the "greats" of Christianity merely platform their public lives, building entire ministries upon skilled

⁶⁹ Griffiths, *The example of Jesus*, 43.

⁷⁰ E. J. Tinsley, *The Imitation of God in Christ; an Essay on the Biblical Basis of Christian Spirituality*, The Library of history and doctrine (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 61, 62.

⁷¹ Griffiths, *The example of Jesus*, 137.

pedagogy, not living examples. Often these same spiritual leaders are discovered to have private lives that negate their public ministry. Jesus and his first-century predecessors invited their disciples into their private, day-to-day journey. “He called the twelve not to memorize precepts about him, but to experience him; not to intellectualize his teachings, but to see and hear them as he lived out the truths of the kingdom day by day.”⁷² And this access was unrestricted:

All his experiences in life such as eating, drinking, sleeping, working, talking, traveling and every other phase of personal life were in the presence of the twelve. They were along with him in all this. He did not have a personally private life of His own except His communion with the Father. Even in this exercise, the disciples had access.⁷³

Paul replicates the same kind of spiritual leadership and says with confidence, “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.”⁷⁴ In Acts 20:4, Luke lists seven men who are accompanying Paul on his third missionary journey. These men are identified as being from various key cities or regions where Paul had ministered. It is apparent that they had traveled with him, and experienced at least for a season, full access to Paul’s life and ministry: preaching, evangelizing, dangers, arrests, persecutions, hardship, miracles, boldness, etc. (2 Cor 11:23-33). These were his disciples, learning from his example, the daily Christian walk and living model of spiritual leadership. For most of these men, Paul was their first look at a Christian and a Christ like leader. He provided for them his imitation of Christ (1 Cor 11:1) and confidently exhorted his followers to imitate him as he

⁷² Hendrix and Householder, *The Equipping of Disciples*, 30.

⁷³ P.T. Chandapilla, *The Master Trainer* (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1974), 18.

⁷⁴ Phil 3:17

imitated Christ. The multiple exhortations of Paul to imitate him reveal how important imitation was to him:

I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me. (1 Cor 4:16)

Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1)

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. (Phil 4:9)

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess 1:6)

It is worthy to note at this juncture that not all have embraced imitation, the most notable being Martin Luther. He felt that imitation implied a doctrine of works (the results of human accomplishment) over and above a doctrine of grace (faith in the divine accomplishment). Thus, instead of *imitatio*, he preferred *conformitas*, a work of the Spirit to conform the believer to the image of God.⁷⁵ However, similar to his problem with the book of James, Luther improperly combines the way of salvation with the reality of the sanctified walk. As well, he tends to resist any predilection to human effort (i.e., works). Thus, conformity is more to his liking because the burden of accomplishment is on the Spirit who conforms us to the image of Christ (Ro 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18). I would hold that both are necessary and in fact work together to create the total Christian experience. To deny imitation, one would have to deny the natural tendency of humans to imitate.⁷⁶ At issue is not the effort of folk to work their way to holiness, but to provide spiritual

⁷⁵ Tinsley, *he Imitation of God in Christ*, 45.

⁷⁶ It (imitation) is an extremely important and widespread phenomenon, accounting at least in part, for most of our behavior patterns, attitudes, and interests. Even though we add our unique touch to all of our experiences, there is little doubt that we owe our use of language, our manners, motor skills, sex roles and other roles, preferences, prejudices, and aspirations to this process - Robert M. Goldenson, "*Imitation*," in *The Encyclopedia of Human Behavior* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970), 598.

leadership that models holy living, giving the believer a view of that which is already the desire of his/her heart; that is, to be like Christ.

The School of Jesus

Thus far we have considered the life of Christ and the need to imitate that life. It is important as we consider the teaching of Christ that we do not delineate it from his life, for "His teaching cannot be understood apart from participation in his life."⁷⁷ It is in the context of his own life that Jesus chose to teach: along the way (Lk 24:13-27), among the multitudes (Lk 18:35, 36), on hillsides (Matt 5:1, 2), in the temple (Jn 7:14; 8:2), etc. His life and journey were the context for his teaching. There is little or no record of sterile classrooms with highly developed curriculum. There apparently was not for Jesus, a school of Tyrannus, where Paul taught for two years in Ephesus (Acts 19:9, 10). The biblical record only reveals teaching in the context of Jesus' day-to-day life as he advances the kingdom of God.

It should be no surprise then, that a primary teaching tool of Jesus was the parable. The parable insured that learning happened in the context of a life story, and the stories that Jesus chose were contemporary and fully applicable to his audience. Arthur Zannoni believes that there is clear intent in the use of the parable. "When Jesus is teaching in parables, he illustrates ideas about the kingdom of God by examples 'thrown beside' the story drawn from everyday experiences."⁷⁸ Jesus masterfully discloses kingdom of God principles in the context of terrestrial living and makes them directly

⁷⁷ Hendrix and Householder, *The Equipping of Disciples*, 31.

⁷⁸ Arthur E. Zannoni, "Jesus: Storyteller and Teacher of His Time and Ours," *Catechist* 38, no. 1 (2004): 5.

applicable to the human drama, specifically, their lives with or without God. Josephine Griffiths identifies these stories (parables) as pure wisdom, “which, sophia-like, he preached in the streets and in the market place.”⁷⁹ This is theology proper: knowing God and his kingdom in the context of everyday life.

Often, the parable gave Jesus the opportunity to reveal the godhead in the context of our world. It also allowed the listener to interject himself or herself into the story. For example, the parable of the prodigal son allows God to be there in the person of the father, and the listener to be there in the person of either son.⁸⁰ As such, the parable facilitates a God/human encounter that touches upon the reality of God (essence, nature, etc.) juxtaposed amidst the issues of humanity (sin, need for God, etc).

However, it was not just literary stylization that made the parable an effective teaching tool. It was the divine empowered life that these parables rose from. What differentiated Jesus from other rabbis or masters, was the remarkable authority that was married to his teaching: “The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Mt 7:28, 29). This authority revealed a life and power behind the words that scribes, who simply interpreted or explained the law, did not possess. Ben Witherington attempts to capture this authoritative distinction; “Jesus did not merely announce the inbreaking of God’s dominion (kingdom of God) on earth, he believed that he brought it, and thus in some sense even embodied it.”⁸¹ This statement

⁷⁹Josephine Griffiths, "Jesus The Wisdom Teacher," *The Catholic World* 236, no. 1411 (1993): 4.

⁸⁰ Zannoni, "Jesus," 5.

⁸¹ Witherington, *Jesus the Sage*, 204.

may not be strong enough, as the Apostle John goes so far as describing Christ as the very incarnate Word of God (Jn 1:14). But Witherginton does acknowledge the source of kingdom authority in Jesus. It is this authority that empowers the teachings of Christ and subsequently elevates them from just being informative or revelatory, to being commanding. Karl Barth calls the words of Christ, grace in the form of a command: “The grace that comes to them requires that they should do something.... It is thus a grace that commands.”⁸²

This “grace that commands” was the core of Jesus’ teaching to the twelve and the working of the miracles of Christ. It was this same “command” that solicited people to follow him (Mk 10:17, 18) and drove out unclean spirits (Mk 9:25), and it was the “command” that Peter solicited in order to walk on water (Mt 14:28). The authority in the words of Jesus brought miraculous change to the bodies, souls, and spirits of those who encountered him. As such, one cannot separate his teachings or words from the authority of God that empowered them. It is these teachings and authority that the disciples learned under, and, it should be no surprise, they ministered under as well.

The Empowerment of Jesus – Releasing Ministry

The final aspect to be considered in the spiritual leadership of Christ is the empowerment and release of the disciples for ministry. This was initially done in the middle of their discipleship experience, as they were sent out two by two ahead of Jesus (Mk 6:7; Lk 10:1), and then again at the end of Jesus’ ministry (Mt 28:18-20; Jn 20:22; Lk 11:29). Clearly evident in the gospel record is the intent of Jesus to prepare his disciples for their own ministries. This is apparent in their initial call: “Follow Me and I

⁸² Barth, Bromiley, and Hanson, *The Call to Discipleship*, 7.

will make you become fishers of men” (Mk 1:17), and final commission. Throughout the course of their training, specific instruction, within the context of ministry, is given to this end. But along with this training, Jesus provides the power and ability to accomplish the ministry to which they were commissioned.

For the twelve:

And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. And he sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and to perform healing. (Lk 9:1, 2)

For the Seventy:

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. (Lk 10:1)

And the seventy returned with joy saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall down from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you.” (Luke 10:17-19)

Training and empowerment for ministry are elemental to the discipleship program of Jesus. Both are required for New Testament leadership to be realized. We have already discussed the work of regeneration in the life of the believer that results in a new creature for a life with God. Discipleship builds upon that foundation, allowing development of, and empowerment for, ministry to arise out of the new creature. As such, the ongoing work of grace in the believer is for ministry, specifically; the ministry of Christ through his body (Eph 4:12, 16). The result is a disciple who is a new creature (2 Cor 5:17; Ga 6:15), possessing the nature of Christ (2 Pet 1:4; Eph 4:24; 1 Jn 3:9, 10), trained (Mk 1:17), and uniquely gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:8; 1 Cor 12:28; Acts 1:8).

Of import is the ultimate goal of Christ in discipleship. He does not gather and train disciples to further his own personal ministry per se. His objective is greater service to the Father (Jn 17:1-26) and the expansion of the kingdom of God (Lk 9:1). From the beginning of his ministry he foresees his crucifixion and he prepares the disciples for this inevitable event (Mt 16:21; Mk 8:31). He knows that his ministry must be turned over to others. So, he prepares the twelve and the seventy, sends them out, and then celebrates their success (Lk 10:18). He entrusts the future ministry of the church into the hands of his disciples. Releasing the ministry of others is at the very core of his strategy for discipleship. His expectation for them is successful ministry, with the anticipation that their ministry will exceed his own (Jn 14:12), and he does everything possible to insure that. This is the heart of every true Christian leader.

From Disciples to Equippers – the Fivefold Leadership Gifts

The clear intent of Christ was to equip his disciples for ministry. It was not enough that they should simply learn from him. His plan was to spiritually reproduce himself in the lives of faithful people and produce leaders who both could further the work of the kingdom of God by ministering as he did, and equip others for comparable ministry. Jesus established a new precedence for spiritual leadership. The Old Testament leader was called by God for a specific function of ministry; priest, prophet, sage, etc. In contrast, Christ made leadership about the development of others for ministry. In other words, he came not just to minister (heal, reconcile, etc), but to equip others for ministry. This leadership precedence was passed on to his disciples, and it became the matrix through which they understood leadership. Those that took up this new leadership paradigm followed in the leadership footsteps of Christ. They ministered,

trained future leaders (disciples) in the context of their own lives and ministries (Acts 20:4; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 1:6), and equipped “the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” (Eph 4:12). Thus, the New Testament leadership paradigm was three-fold: as *disciples*, they were called to minister along with Christ to the church and the world; as uniquely *gifted leaders*, they served the faith community and at large within the grace of their gift; and as *fivefold leaders*, they equipped the church for ministry (Eph 4:11).

Leaders Who Minister with Jesus in the World and the Church

The final words of Christ in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, commission the disciples to: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation...” (Mk 16:15), and “make disciples of all the nations” (Mt 28:19). They spent over two years with Jesus ministering throughout Israel and now they were being sent out to the world to continue ministry with him. This commission was fundamental to their role as apostles and spiritual leaders. They were called to advance the kingdom of God throughout the world. As they did, they lived a precedence of this commission before the church. Paul reminded the elders of Ephesus of this when he met with them for the last time in Miletus:

You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink back from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Acts 20:18-21)

This precedence of leadership is evident throughout Paul’s ministry and is reflected in the churches he planted. On his second missionary journey, Paul spent but a few months in

Thessalonica.⁸³ Yet, his model for ministry was so compelling that it was readily replicated by the new believers:

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth.... (1 Thess 1:6-8)

Paul was not the only apostle who was this effective. The record in the Acts of the Apostles reveals remarkable growth of the early church, which may be indicative of the precedence set by all the apostles, and embraced by the entire church.⁸⁴ As the leaders lived and fulfilled the great commission, the church followed and did the same.

Of special note was the seemingly broad spectrum of the apostle's ministry. The New Testament seems to indicate that the apostles were given as much to minister to the world as they were the church. As previously cited, Paul's ministry in Ephesus was to both the Jews and the Greeks (Acts 20:20, 21), from house to house (church), and in public (*agora* i.e., marketplace). This was evident as well in the early ministry of Peter as he ministered in the house churches (Acts 2:42) and preached boldly in the portico of Solomon (Acts 3:11-26). As a result, the New Testament church embraced the same parameters for ministry, ministering to both the world and the believing community. By engaging in ministry in the world and the church, the apostles provided a vital model of the Jesus-lifestyle that the church could replicate.

⁸³ It actually may have been shorter: Acts 17:2 records that he remained in Thessalonica for "three Sabbaths."

⁸⁴ See "Sharing the Work of Jesus," Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 133.

Leaders that Serve in their Unique Gifting

Paul lists five leadership gifts given to the church to equip the church for the ministry to others (Eph 4:11). These are: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.⁸⁵ It is not the ultimate purpose of this study to explore in-depth the function of each of these leadership offices. However, to fully understand the implications of these gifts for equipping the church, it is important at this stage, to briefly define each gift. I propose the following definitions, primarily taken from Gerhard Kittel:

- Apostle – αποστολος - at its etymological core, an apostle was one who was sent. At the time of the first century church, its meaning had evolved to one who was sent with a message i.e., a messenger.⁸⁶ In the context of ministry, it refers to the message of the gospel, a message of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:20). His/her overall scope of responsibility was advancing the Kingdom of God, and overseeing the welfare of the Christian community.
- Prophet – προφητης - the root of this word means to “say” or “speak.” Thus the prophet was one who would speak or proclaim on behalf of a divine other.⁸⁷ The prophet served as an intermediary between God and man. The prophet, in the NT context, spoke on behalf of God.
- Evangelist – ευαγγελιστης - a word only used three times in the NT (Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5); “the one who proclaims the glad tidings (Ro 10:15).”⁸⁸ The evangelist, in the messianic sense, is called to “preach the gospel to the poor... proclaim(s) release of the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind...” and “set(s) free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the

⁸⁵ There is some debate over the actual number of equipping leadership gifts prescribed by the New Testament. Due to grammatical construction some (Granville Sharp) holds to four-fold, combining the pastor-teacher as one gift. Still others (H.B. Swete) appeal to the three-fold leadership gifts given by Paul in 1 Cor 12:28: *apostles, prophets, and teachers*, see Henry Barclay Swete, *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1918), 64-68.; *Fivefold Definitions: Why a Clear Definition is Needed*, [Internet Site] (Global Accrediting Commission For the Fivefold Ministry, 2006, accessed March 7, 2006). For this study, I will consider the fivefold equipping gifts of Ephesians 4:11 (apostle prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher) and isolate each gift to identify the specific contribution each makes toward the equipping of parishioners for ministry.

⁸⁶ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), Vol 1, 407, 408.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Vol 6, 783.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Vol 2, 737.

Lord...” (Lk 4:18, 19). They were gifted to effectively bring the good news of Christ and his redemption to the unknowing.

- Pastor – ποιμην - a very common title given to those who herd and watch over sheep; a shepherd. It evoked a sacrificial loyalty to those under their charge, for the shepherd understood the burden and inevitable hazards in caring for sheep.⁸⁹ It involved feeding, watering, protecting, medicinal care, etc. Jesus commissions Peter to shepherd the church as he admonishes him to, “Tend my lambs,” “Shepherd my sheep,” and “Tend my sheep” (Jn 21:15-17).
- Teacher – διδασκαλος - “master of instruction,” “school master,” a rabbi. In the NT Jewish setting, it “denotes the expositor of the Law (1 Tim 1:7) who makes possible a right fulfillment.”⁹⁰ For the church, it refers to those who impart instruction, teachings, and lead by word and deed of the Way of Christ.

Throughout church history there has been a great deal of discussion over the understanding and interplay of each of these gifts. Much of the contemporary debate is over the cessation of some of these leadership offices, specifically apostle and prophet.⁹¹ This particular debate will not be taken up in any depth in this study. What will be considered is the potential impact of these gifts to the first-century world and church.

The apostle was called to a mission from God. This mission was central to his/her ministry, and incorporated advancing the kingdom of God. For the original twelve disciples, the mission was to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations, teaching them the ways of Christ (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19, 20). For Paul, it was to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 13:46, 47; 18:8; 22:21). Incorporated with this mission for all the apostles was the oversight of the faith community (2 Cor 11:28). Paul declared that the apostles were foundational for the church (Eph 2:20). They were watchmen and protectors of the church and its doctrine (Acts 15:6). In a sense, the apostles were

⁸⁹ Ibid., Vol 6, 490.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Vol 2, 157.

⁹¹ See: Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, Rev. ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000), 227-252.

paternally responsible for the overall welfare of all the churches. They disciplined (1 Cor 5:1-11), administered, sacrificed (1 Cor 4:9-13), very much as a parent would his or her own children. Thus, Paul admonishes the Corinthians as his “beloved children” and defends his actions, “I became your father through the gospel” (1 Cor 4:14, 15).

The prophet spoke, by means of charismata, on behalf of God. The New Testament prophet was engaged in both foretelling and forth-telling. In foretelling, they delivered the intentions of God before they were realized. The prophet Agabus told of a famine that would occur in Israel and of the inevitable arrest of Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27; 21:10, 11). The Apostle John functioned as a prophet in his apocalyptic work, the Book of Revelation. In forth-telling, the prophet spoke the word of the Lord for the church “for edification and exhortation and consolation...” (1 Cor 14:3). They spoke messages that built up (1 Cor 14:4) and instructed (1 Cor 14:19) the church.

The evangelist brought the message of redemption to a broken world. They were to declare the good news that God looked favorably and redemptively (Lk 4:18, 19) upon their plight. They brought the message and ministry of reconciliation to folk who desperately needed it (2 Cor 2:20, 21). For the person without God, suffering from spiritual separation, they delivered the good news of God’s reconciling actions toward them.

The pastor was uniquely gifted to care for the church. Like a shepherd’s oversight to the sheep (1 Pet 5:2), the pastor was to watch over the welfare of the faith community. The pastoral scope given to Peter in John 21:15-17, included tending and shepherding. The shepherd/pastor was involved in insuring the health and welfare of the flock/church, especially against predators (Acts 20:29).

The teacher instructed and trained disciples. Very much like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, they explained, and taught out of Scripture, the Christian life. Paul wrote of elders who were gifted to preach and teach (1 Tim 5:17) and the additional honor due them. The teacher served to bring believers to knowledge about God and his kingdom and how to successfully live in the church and community.

Leaders Who Replicate Their Unique Gifts in Others

We now come to the core dynamic of the fivefold ministry to the church. As believers, these leaders ministered to the world and the faith community (Acts 6:5, 8) much like any other member of the body of Christ. As gifted parishioners, they ministered within the scope of the grace of their distinct gift (Ro 12:3; 1 Cor 3:10). But as leaders, their foremost responsibility to the church was best articulated by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians: “And he gave gifts to men... And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:8, 11-12).

Paul states that the primary purpose of these gifts was for equipping believers for spiritual service. In other words, their chief role, in the function of their leadership gift, was not to minister in the gift, but to equip others so that they could effectively minister. This aspect of their ministry reflected the leadership paradigm established by Jesus, who replicated himself and his ministry, in the lives of his disciples. They, as Jesus, understood that ministry must happen through others, and for that to come about, they needed to reproduce their unique leadership grace/gift in others. Through the fivefold gifts, Jesus’ leadership pattern continued. Equipping was the means for this impartation.

The word that Paul employs in Ephesians 4:11 for the noun “equipping” is καταρτισμος. Its root, αρτιος, has been defined as, “adequately fitted, complete, or perfect”.⁹² It is only found in 2 Tim 3:17: “that the man of God may be adequate, equipped (*fitted*) for every good work,” and is used in reference to the effectiveness of Scripture to αρτιος folk, for ministry (i.e. every good work). Rare in Koine Greek, its broad secular use ranges from defining proper speech in appropriate situations, to (as a medical term) describing newborns that have all their faculties.⁹³

The word most commonly used for the verb “equip,” is καταρτιζω. It is used nineteen times in the Septuagint and thirteen times in the New Testament.⁹⁴ Its core meaning is to “mend or repair,”⁹⁵ and “entails restoring what was broken and correcting what was out of place so that it can return to its original intended function.”⁹⁶ It is used in Scripture for mending nets (Mt 4:21; Mk 1:19), repairing and completing faith (1 Thess 3:10), shaping worlds by the Word of God (Heb 11:3), and even adjusting the speech of infants, predisposed to be self-serving, so that praise can come forth (Matt 21:16).

The last major verb used for equip is, εξαρτιζω. It is much stronger than καταρτιζω in that it has two meanings: “to finish, complete and to connect perfectly, fit

⁹² G. G. Wilkes and C. L. Willibald Grimm, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. John Henry Thayer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 75.

⁹³ Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), Vol 2, 18.

⁹⁴ Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1990), 99.

⁹⁵ Wilkes and Grimm, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 336.

⁹⁶ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 101.

to perfection.”⁹⁷ As a result, it is used in Acts 21:5 to note that the allotted time for unloading and reloading Paul’s ship was fully up. It is also used with *αρτιος* in 2 Timothy 3:17 to suggest that the work of *αρτιος* is capable of fully outfitting one for ministry.

Greg Ogden, in *The New Reformation*, has built a three-dimensional approach to equipping upon these three key words. His approach captures the multiple dimensions of the words for equip, to fully accomplish equipping. He illustrates these with a triangle, utilizing each side as one aspect of equipping, with one building upon the other. The first side of the triangle he entitles “Mend/Restore” (*καταρτιζω*) which is equipping that restores full use or function by means of mending and repairing. For example, *καταρτιζω* is used in the Septuagint in the record of Nehemiah and the work he commissioned to repair the walls of Jerusalem. For the walls to function as originally designed, they would need to be repaired. Ogden gives three levels of mending/restoring that he gleans from *καταρτιζω*: to fix what is broken, to bring back to proper alignment, and to supply what is lacking.⁹⁸ He concludes that the initial task of equipping is a restorative work that prepares individuals to be further outfitted for ministry.

Once the believer is restored, Ogden then employs the second side of the triangle, “Establish/Lay Foundations” (*αρτιος*). This aspect of equipping is focused on building solid foundations for ministry. He again provides three aspects for laying this foundation: *Jesus Christ*, the true foundation: the Word of God, inherent power, and

⁹⁷ Spicq and Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Vol 2, 18.

⁹⁸ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 103-104.

modeling, the incarnational way.⁹⁹ It is easy for most twenty-first century believers to acknowledge Jesus Christ and the Word of God as foundational to ones' faith experience and these remain fundamental to modern equipping. However, equipping by means of discipleship (modeling) is almost lost to American Christianity. "Ninety percent of believers have never had someone take them under their wing and make sure that the basic disciplines, doctrines, character qualities, or ministry issues have been inculcated in their lives."¹⁰⁰ This is a clear failure of the majority of modern equipping leaders that struggle to adequately model and reproduce that model in the lives of others.

The final side of the triangle is "Prepare/Train" (εξαρτιζω). It is at this stage that believers are fully equipped for the work of service. Though this paper primarily focuses on this aspect of equipping, it must be acknowledged that this stage cannot be successfully implemented without the previous two stages. As such, the first two stages are to be considered in concert with "Prepare/Train." As with the other two stages, Ogden proposes three aspects to "Prepare/Train:" discovery of one's spiritual gift(s), defining ones' unique call, and specialized training for that call.¹⁰¹ This is where Ogden and I depart. Though I believe it is vital to seek spiritual gifts and understand and further define on one's call, I propose that neither directly relates to fivefold equipping. However, they do relate to the uniqueness of each individual's ministry. I propose fivefold equipping is for all believers equally, regardless of gift(s) or calling. In the end, one can conclude that equipping is a process and each stage of the process necessary for the next. For the most part, modern equippers are engaged at some level in Ogden's first

⁹⁹ Ibid., 108-114.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 114.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 115-116.

two stages. As a result, much of their efforts are given to mending/restoring (salvation, counseling) and establishing Christ as foundational to believers' lives. However, the final stage of equipping is both misunderstood and sorely neglected.

We have already briefly addressed the distinct characteristics of the fivefold gifts. If these leadership gifts were to reproduce themselves as Jesus did with his disciples, then what was reproduced in the lives of parishioners was apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, and rabbinical. In other words, the apostle deposited apostolic elements in parishioners: prophets, prophetic elements, and so forth. If this was the case, then there would be evidence of each of these abilities (gifts) in the ministry of every parishioner. As a result, every parishioner would have a mission and a sense of responsibility over that mission because of the apostle. Every parishioner would be equipped to hear God and to speak his word for edification, due to the prophet. Every parishioner would be able to bring good news of God's desire to redeem and liberate, because of the evangelist. And every parishioner would be able to care and feed others because of the pastor and teacher. For example, fathers and mothers would be missional to their families, they would hear and speak God's word effectively and they would be redemptive and provide spiritual care and nutrition, all because of the equipping ministry of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher in their lives.

Conclusion

The Old Testament leadership of the priest, prophet, and sage was fully given to the implementation of their own ministries and the development of others that shared the same giftedness. How successful they were at their own ministry is debatable. By the time of Jesus, the state of each was indeed sad. However, what each office completely

failed at was reproducing their ministries into the lives of the nation. As a result, Israel never fulfilled God's desire for them to become a nation of priests, prophets, and ministers of the Lord (Is 61:6).

In this historical context, God sent his Son to redeem humanity and implement a new paradigm for ministry. This paradigm included the replication of ministry from the Father to Jesus, and Jesus to the apostles. This was so successful that Jesus could say that if you have seen the Son, you have seen the Father (Jn 14:9). As well, the apostles and early believers were identified as being like Christ (Acts 4:13; 11:26). The final iteration of this paradigm was the fivefold leadership gifts reproducing their ministries in the lives of parishioners. These groups of leaders, in contrast to Old Testament leaders, were specifically called to equip the church for ministry. Thus, because of the apostles, the body of Christ was "brought together by a common calling and vocation to be a sent people," i.e., missional.¹⁰² Because of the prophets, the church ministered with the word of God. Because of the evangelists, the church was a reconciling agent in the faith community and the world. Finally, because of the pastors/teachers, the church cared for and trained others. These penetrated their culture with apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, and rabbinical abilities. It was this church, not just these fivefold leaders, which so profoundly impacted the world. This leadership paradigm utilized unique leadership gifts given by God (Eph 4:8), for the ministry of others (Eph 4:12, 16). What resulted, were the priesthood, prophethood, and sagehood of the believer.

¹⁰² Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 81.

CHAPTER 3

SYNTHESIZING ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP PARADIGMS

Introduction

From the very beginning, Christianity was far more of a community movement than a leadership movement. In his study of the church as an organism, not an institution, Greg Ogden concludes, “Christianity is essentially a lay movement.”¹ It is important to remember that the post-resurrected Christ not only revealed himself to the twelve, but as well, to over 500 believers at one time (1 Cor 15:6). Probably many of those were of the 120 who met in an upper room to be a community empowered by the Holy Spirit for bold witness (Acts 1:8). What arose from this was a faith community upon which God entrusted the advancement of his kingdom. In his book *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power*, Hans Campenhausen sees this faith community as the locus for the overall Christian witness: “Above all, it was from the primitive community that there came a decisive witness on which the whole of Christendom was built....”² It is tempting, given the New Testament record, to place an undue emphasis on the accomplishments of leadership, i.e., apostles, prophets, etc. However, the community, its faith and deeds, were the basis of Christianity's cultural penetrating witness and ministry. This witness

¹ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 84.

² Hans Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 12.

is still evident in the mid-second century as revealed in the Epistle of Mathetes to

Diognetus:

For the Christians are distinguished from other men.... They marry, as do all; they beget children; but do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but are the citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are spoken evil of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless....³

In the primitive church the congregants were the agents of ministry and leadership, the emissaries of influence. Almost immediately, this influence was discernible, as the Jerusalem church reflected the lifestyle of the twelve. They sold all of their properties and possessions (Acts 2:45), held all things in common, took meals together, and gave to the poor (Acts 2:44-46). This was the very economy and lifestyle of the original twelve disciples when they left all to follow and live in community with Jesus. As previously noted, Stephen, a simple disciple until made a humble deacon, who worked signs and wonders is reputed as being full of faith and strong in the Spirit, (Acts 7:5, 7). This again is reflective of the influence of leadership and the subsequent bold ministry of a congregant. Paul's leadership reveals no less influence and resulted in profound ecclesial ministry. The church in Thessalonica ostensibly ministered just as Paul did (1 Thess 1:6-8). Paul encouraged, fostered, and facilitated this in his churches (Eph 4:15-16). In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul addressed the need for order due to the abundance of ministry that occurred from believers, not leaders (1 Cor 12-14). In fact leaders appeared to take a more overseer type role. For example, Paul encourages

³ *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*, [Internet] (Calvin College, 2005, accessed December 12 2005).

all to minister when the church meets (v. 26 - “each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue...” and though there is a call for the prophets to speak (v. 29), their additional role is to oversee the prophetic utterances of others (v. 32). Paul encourages all to prophesy (v. 31), but only two or three prophets may speak (v. 29). Why? I propose the prophets are there to model, then release and finally oversee the prophetic ministry of others. It is the ministry of the parishioners that is the ultimate goal of leadership in the apostolic church (Eph 4:11, 12). P.T. Forsyth captures this leadership/church dynamic: ‘The one great preacher in history, I would contend, is the church. And the first business of the individual preacher, is to enable the church to preach.’”⁴

It should be noted that there was a divine government in place that facilitated parishioner ministry. Unlike Judaism, or the Greco-Roman religions of the day that had a strong formal clerical presence, the apostolic church was far more divinely governed. Niles A. Dahl called this form of government, a *pneumatocracy*.⁵ In his study on the structure of the New Testament Church, Hans Schwarz defines *pneumatocracy* as “God in his Son and through his Spirit, as the empowering, guiding, and sustaining force of the new Christian community.”⁶ In other words, it is a Spirit-governed community, whereas its members are gifted (1 Cor 12:4-11; Ro 12:6-8, etc.), empowered (Acts 1:8) and directed (I Cor 12:7-11) to minister. The activities of the church were led by the Spirit as

⁴ Peter Taylor Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (London: Independent Press, 1949), 53.

⁵ Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes; eine Untersuchung zum Kirchenbewusstsein des Urchristentums* (Oslo: I kommissjon hos J. Dybwad, 1941), 183.

⁶ Hans Schwarz, *The Christian Church: Biblical Origin, Historical Transformation, and Potential for the Future* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 49.

is evidenced in leaders (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 16:6, 7) and parishioners (Ro 8:14; Gal 5:18). This left as the primal responsibility of the fivefold ministry to equip the faith community for Spirit-led service.

In similar contrast, the church did not meet in temples, synagogues or structures specifically designed for liturgical or ceremonial services. It met in homes, what Peter Richardson calls “a place of their own.”⁷ Gone were the clerical priests and ceremonial liturgy of the temple. Gone were the sacrifices and festivals. In their stead was a close-knit group of believers ministering in a strong familial setting. Elders, deacons, and the presbytery served multiple families in homes. Some have estimated these house-churches at no larger than forty to fifty people.⁸ If so, then both ministry and equipping occurred within a small and potentially intimate setting.

It was within this setting that the church flourished. It was a church without clergy or better, as R. Paul Stevens proposes, a church where all were clergy: “... the true ministerium, a community of prophets, priests and princes and princesses, serving God through Jesus in the power of the Spirit seven days a week.”⁹ This being the case, then ministry is, as Greg Ogden concludes, “...the province of the entire body of believers.”¹⁰ The role of leadership in this ecclesial paradigm was to engender, equip, facilitate and release the church for ministry (Eph 4:11-16). Due in part to the large

⁷ Richard N. Longenecker, *Community Formation in the Early Church and the Church Today* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 36.

⁸ Daniel J. Harrington, *The Church According to the New Testament* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 51.

⁹ R. Paul Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 39.

¹⁰ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 61.

volume of his ministry in scripture, Paul provides the best model of this leadership paradigm.

The Fivefold Equipping Ministries

Paul employs five ministerial offices for the task of equipping the church for ministry (Eph 4:11-12). Each of these were well known and understood by New Testament parishioners as unique gifts that by their very function, served to further the kingdom of God. Quite possibly, in some means or manner, their lives had received “ministry” from each one of these gifts. However, in his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul makes it clear that these are equipping gifts that are to serve the development of the ministry of parishioners. Clearly, New Testament believers understood the ramifications of each of these gifts on their lives and future potential of their own ministries from equipping accomplished by the same. As such, it is important that we gain an understanding of their first-century meaning and significance.

Apostle

The most elemental meaning of *αποστολος* is “one who is sent.” It has also been translated as “messenger.” However, the secular, first-century meaning of apostle was much more than simply being a messenger. “Apostle” was a common governmental title given to admirals (military) and ambassadors (governmental representatives) that were sent by the Roman Empire to establish new colonies. Thus, the apostle had the authority and power to advance the empire into new territories.¹¹ They were given and wielded, the authority of Rome in their assigned charge. To accomplish this, they embraced both the risk and responsibility of their assignment. As such, they endured the elements,

¹¹ David Cannistraci, *The Gift of Apostle* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1996), 85.

conflicts with preexisting governments, military campaigns, ever-changing circumstances and the ongoing burden of overseeing and managing the new colony. The first-century use of apostle was understood to be one of service to governmental sovereignty, without concern for personal comfort or benefit. Its ultimate purpose was to advance the empire into new territories. Whenever this term is employed in Scripture (79 times), it is at least in part understood within this context.

Prophet

In the same sense that “apostle” could be narrowly defined as one who is “sent,” “prophet” can be defined as one assigned to “say” or “speak.” The prophet was called upon by God and given a divine message to a specific audience. Simply put, prophets/prophetesses were intermediaries.¹² However, the prophetic ministry was fraught with relational complexities. At its core was the dynamics of interrelationships among God, the prophet and the intended audience. The prophet was uniquely juxtaposed between God, whom he or she enjoyed a contemporary relationship with, and the targeted audience with whom the prophet shared some level of connectedness. This tri-relational feature was also reflected through the ecstatic message as it generally came in the form of a proclamation (prophet), solicited appropriate feedback (audience) and was accompanied by a supernatural confirmation (God).¹³ The prophet was an individual able to receive a message from God and communicate it effectively to others, with predictable results anticipated by God and the prophet.

¹² At this juncture it becomes more efficient to allow the term “prophet” to encompass both genders.

¹³ Thomas W. Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy: The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 22.

Evangelist

The word εὐαγγελιστής (“one who announces glad tidings”¹⁴) is quite rare in the New Testament. Luke employs it as a ministerial title for Phillip (Acts 21:8) and Paul uses it only twice: when he exhorts Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5) and in his list of equipping gifts (Eph 4:11). All other uses are found in the Septuagint. It is in the Old Testament usage (*karaz* – to make proclamation; *karo*z – herald) that the meaning of the word is probably best understood. The most applicable English word for its biblical use is “herald,” defined as “a royal or official messenger” (Dan 3:4)¹⁵. However, his status and authority lay only in his commission to communicate specific good news. The Philistines employed heralds to take the heads of King Saul and his sons to their pagan houses of worship to announce the good news of Saul’s death and Israel’s defeat (1 Sam 31:9). In the Psalms, David calls for the heralds to declare the good news of Yahweh’s kindness. But Isaiah calls for all of Jerusalem to be heralds to declare the coming of the Lord: “Get yourselves up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voices mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God” (Is 40:9).

The full appreciation of εὐαγγελιστής can be defined by three things: the profound goodness of the message, the great joy from which it is declared, and the divine commission to declare it. The New Testament herald (i.e. evangelist) brings the good news of the gospel of Christ (Lk 4:18-19) in the joy of the Lord under the supervision of

¹⁴ H. K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 172.

¹⁵ *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York: Gramercy Books, 1989), 662.

the Holy Spirit. Each of these elements was required for evangelism. For example, because of the greatness of the message, Paul, on his first missionary journey, wanted to preach the good news everywhere. But he could only do so where permitted by God (Acts 16:6-7).

Pastor

The ποιμην was a caretaker of sheep or goats. The mission of the shepherd was to watch over those in their charge and insure their overall wellbeing.¹⁶ This included leading, watering, feeding, protection from predators: everything necessary to produce and preserve a healthy flock. Though a seemingly a low station today, in the near east, this profession was often used metaphorically to embody the responsibilities of political sovereigns.¹⁷ It is no surprise then that Moses, David and especially Jesus utilized this occupation to define their roles and responsibilities in the care of people.

The ecclesial use of "shepherd" refers to the guardians and caretakers of human souls. Jesus is the consummate model of the shepherd, and is endowed with the title of Chief Shepherd (Is 63:11; Jn 10:11; 1 Pet 2:25; Heb 13:20). As Chief Shepherd he oversees the care and development of under-shepherds, and the proper care of the flock. "It is up to him to see to it that the flocks are grazed in the best pastures, that the shepherds are remunerated, that the rent is paid, that the animals entrusted to his care are returned."¹⁸ The under-shepherds are to replicate the same care and concern that the Chief Shepherd has for the flock.

¹⁶ Spicq and Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Vol 1, 206.

¹⁷ M. J. Seux, *Epithetes Royales Akkadiennes et Sumeriennes* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1967), 244.

¹⁸ Spicq and Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 208.

The prophetic indictment of Ezekiel (34:1-6) against the shepherds of Israel reveals the antithesis of the role of a shepherd. These so-called shepherds fed themselves instead of the sheep (v.2), clothed and fed themselves from the fat of the flock (v.3), neglected the sick, broken and lost (v.4) and dominated the flock with force and severity (v. 4). As a result of the failure of these shepherds, the sheep were scattered and became food for wild animals (v. 5); they wandered off to all parts of the earth and had no one to rescue them. From this disparaging account, we glean the profound significance of the shepherd in the lives of parishioners.

Teacher

There are three words used in the New Testament for teacher, and they are only used together in Matthew 23:8-10. Each adds a particular nuance to the understanding of the teacher. In the midst of his terse indictment against the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus turned aside to his disciples and said: "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; For one is your Leader, that is Christ."

The first word, *ραββι* (*rabbi*), is a title of honor given to teachers reflective of their authority and social status in Jewish culture. Jesus admonishes his disciples to not call anyone *rabbi*, for they have one *διδασκαλος*, "one who is fully fitted to teach."¹⁹ It is *didaskalos* that captures the functional meaning of "teacher," for the word defines one who possesses the knowledge, ability and students necessary for teaching. In the Jewish

¹⁹ Carl Ludwig Wilibald Grimm and others, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*, Corrected ed. (Wheaton, IL: Evangel Publishing Company, 1974), 144.

culture (as well as Greco-Roman), the teacher was selected by the student. Thus, a teacher was identified by his or her knowledge and the recognition by potential students of his or her skills in sharing that knowledge. In the purest sense of meaning, *didaskalos* refers to an exchange of knowledge and life between the teacher and the pupil. The final word employed in this text is καθηγγητης. This is the only place where this word is found in Scripture. It is translated “leader” in the New American Standard Translation of the Bible, which attempts to capture the sense of authority associated with the station. It could also be translated “guide, master,” or even “tutor.”²⁰

Consideration of the two latter words yields an overall definition of “master-teacher.”²¹ The master-teacher was more than just an individual who dispensed knowledge; he or she also imparted guidance, and that authoritatively. The teacher of Ephesians 4:11, was uniquely gifted by God to inform, influence by example, and guide in the “Way.” He or she imparted by means of equipping, the knowledge (διδασκαλος) and leadership (καθηγητης) of the teacher to first-century believers.

The Leadership Paradigm of the Apostle Paul

The New Testament record is replete with the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. As such, there is much that can be gleaned regarding his leadership style that may reflect upon the ecclesial leadership in the first century as well as the subsequent ministry of the church. In a sense, Paul is somewhat of a second-generation apostle. He was not a disciple under Christ, as the twelve were. He did not witness first-hand his ministry, miracles, and message in the same context as the disciples. He did not truly encounter

²⁰ Ibid., 313.

²¹ Spicq and Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 233.

Christ until his journey to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6). Yet his leadership reflects very closely the *fivefold* leadership ministry of Jesus.

Paul the Apostle

Just a cursory review of Paul's life readily reveals the *fivefold* ministry. He is an apostle (Ro 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1), in that he is called and sent by God to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 13:46; 18:6; 22:21). As an apostle, he was both missional, in extending the kingdom of God, and parental, in his care and authority over the church.²²

Being missional, he reflected the leadership of Christ which Darrell Gruder correctly observes, "Missional leadership is shaped by the revelation of Jesus Christ."²³ Like Christ, who was "sent" from the Father (Jn 5:24), Paul perceived his life and ministry within the context of his mission (Acts 9:15; 26:16). In Walter Schmithals' work *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church*, he contends that, "The commission of the apostle consists in the fact that the mission is entrusted to him."²⁴ In other words, the mission is core to the function of apostle. However, he does not believe that the mission defines apostleship, otherwise any missionary would be considered an apostle. Paul would seem to agree, as he addresses some of the defining signs of a genuine apostle:

I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. (2 Cor 12:11-12)

²² Schwarz, *The Christian Church*, 41.

²³ Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 185.

²⁴ Walter Schmithals and John E. Steely, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 22.

For Paul, these “signs” included being missional (coming to Corinth), prophetic (the declaration of an apostolic message), *charismata* (ministry attested to by the Spirit with signs and wonders), and paternal (fatherly oversight a new congregation).

Being parental, he reflected authoritative yet benevolent oversight of those under his care. For Paul, this authority did not rest solely upon his office as an apostle. It was “derived from his position as founding father of his churches.”²⁵ This paternal role did not wield authority as much as it appealed to believers, as a father would to a son or daughter. As such, he writes to the Corinthians, not as one more tutor or teacher, but as a spiritual father (1 Cor 4:15). He employs the same metaphor to define his relationship to the churches of Philippi (Phil 2:22) and Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:11). Equally significant, he embraces the role of father in the spiritual and ministerial formation of men like Timothy (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2) and Onesimus (Philem 10).²⁶

In his book *Apostles: The Fathering Servant*, Bill Scheidler identifies four areas of paternal responsibility of the apostle: the fathering of believers, ministers, churches and other leaders.²⁷ This four-level parental responsibility is reflected in the apostolic ministry of Christ. As a redeeming parent, he longed to gather the “children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings...” (Matt 23:37). As a training parent, he called the twelve and the seventy into discipleship and released them to ministry. As an ecclesial parent, he gave birth to, and continues to build, the church (Matt 18:18; Eph

²⁵ Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 657.

²⁶ Paul’s implementation of the paternal metaphor is threaded throughout his epistles. He speaks of his fatherly love for the churches and utilizes both the maternal (1 Cor 3:1-3; 1 Thess 2:7, 8; Gal 4:18, 20) and paternal (1 Cor 4:14-16) aspects to describe his heart and care for them. *Ibid.*, 654-656.

²⁷ Bill Scheidler and Dick Iverson, *Apostles the Fathering Servant: A Fresh Biblical Perspective on Their Role Today* (Portland, Or.: City Bible, 2001), 84-86.

2:10). As a leadership parent, he calls, equips, empowers and sends out leaders for the kingdom. We see the same parental activity in the life of Paul as he reproduced his apostolic ministry in such post-ascension leaders as Timothy, Silas, Titus and Epaphras. Paul simply modeled the same parental and missional paradigm of Christ as an apostle (Jn 17:3; Heb 3:1).

Paul the Prophet

Although overshadowed by his call as an apostle, Paul ministered very much like a prophet. In a paper by Sheila E. McGinn entitled *Paul: Prophet or Apostle*, she contends that Paul's missionary endeavors were extremely prophetic as, much like Old Testament prophets, Paul spoke the message given him by God, even at the cost of his own freedom. She doesn't negate the apostolic office of Paul, but she does acknowledge his significant role as a prophet and appeals to the original titles given to Paul (Saul), as a prophet and teacher (Acts 13:1). She concludes from her study of Acts:

Paul has duties which correspond to those of the classical prophets, and the character of his ministry has many similarities. The content of his message reflects some of the major prophetic themes, and the results of the message are portrayed as being almost identical to the prophets of old.²⁸

Ben Witherington echoes McGinn's position, but narrows Paul's prophetic ministry to a specific prophetic genre. He calls Paul an "eschatological prophet."²⁹ He bases this predominantly upon Paul's apocalyptic messages regarding the Day of the Lord and his treatise on the resurrection from the dead. However, the breadth of Paul's prophetic gift may be far greater. In his epistles, Paul's prophetic voice is so prevalent that he only

²⁸ Sheila E. McGinn, *Paul: Prophet or Apostle* (John Carroll University, 2000, accessed).

²⁹ Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 154.

identifies the few times when he is not being prophetic, i.e., his opinion not the Lord (1 Cor 7:6, 25, 40; 2 Cor 8:8). In all other cases, he speaks as it were, on behalf of Christ. In fact, he is bold and confident enough as a prophet to say that he has the very mind or thoughts of Christ (1 Cor 2:16).

Jesus quite possibly spoke of Paul as he heralded the coming of the prophets that he would send: "...behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city..."(Matt 23:34). Paul's life was a literal fulfillment of this prophecy (2 Cor 11:23-24). Jesus, "the" prophet (Matt 24:5; 21:11), not only anticipated the coming of a select group of prophets, but a church that would prophesy (Acts 2:17). Paul supported this divine intention as he promoted prophecy as vital to the edification of the church, and he challenged all parishioners to seek to prophesy (1 Cor 14:1). Thus, "the prophet" gave prophets to the church, to help facilitate a prophetic voice for ministry of the church to itself (1 Cor 14:5) and the world (1 Cor 14:24-25).

Possibly the best insight given to the church for the prophetic process is provided by Paul in 1 Cor 2:2-16. In his letter to the Corinthians, he addresses the specific wisdom given to him by God that comprises his prophetic message (v.2-11). He then describes the spiritual processes of prophecy:

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words." (1 Cor 2:10-13)

Very much like the Old Testament prophets, the Spirit of God plays a vital role. In the case of the New Testament believer, the Spirit indwells, bringing the very thoughts of God to the human mind. These “God” thoughts and words, the Spirit illuminates (teaches), of which the ultimate outcome is divine wisdom and words (message) that are prophetic. Paul was not just prophetic, but taught the way and means to become prophetic (i.e. equipped others on how to hear God).

Paul the Evangelist

Paul was clearly an uncompromising evangelist, and yet was not identified in the New Testament as holding the office. Immediately after his conversion he engaged in evangelism, often at great personal cost. He boldly proclaimed the gospel in synagogues, marketplaces and from house to house (Acts 18:26; 20:20). His evangelistic message was one of reconciliation to God:

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor 5:18-21)

Paul saw his task as an evangelist to declare and bring to estranged folk the reconciling word and work of Christ that restored their relationship with God. For Paul, the good news was far more than just an evangelistic message, it was something he was willing to live:

I am telling you the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the

covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (Ro 9:1-5)

Paul was not only passionate to minister the word of reconciliation, but was willing to be an agent of reconciliation by being accursed himself for the reconciliation of his countrymen to God. What a remarkable leadership example for evangelism.³⁰

Evangelism was central to Paul's ministry as an apostle. Possibly the core of his evangelistic message was revealed in his witness to Felix, the governor of Caesarea (Acts 24:10-27). Aside from his personal testimony, Paul gave to Felix and his wife Drusilla a threefold evangelistic message of, "righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come" (Acts 24:25). Righteousness addressed the salvific works of Christ; self-control, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit; and the judgment to come, the apocalypse, the great and terrible day of the Lord (2 Pet 3:7, 10-13). These three brought good news about the remedy of past sin that separated folk from God, the ways and means to live pious and victorious lives in the Spirit, and the eschatological hope that believers have in Christ.

Paul the Pastor

The epistles of Paul are clear evidence of his ministry as a pastor.³¹ They reveal a true pastoral concern and care for both the churches he started and the universal church. They are replete with encouragement, foundational doctrine, site-specific instruction, and pastoral correction. Above all, they reveal a true pastor's heart for the sheep:

³⁰ Paul exemplified the role of reconciliation that was to be modeled by the church. The ultimate goal was that the whole church would be "agents of reconciliation." See Arnold B. Come, *Agents of Reconciliation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 29-50.

³¹ Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, 654.

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. (2 Cor 2:4)

Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! (2 Cor 11:11)

For the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere heart. (1 Tim 1:5)

Paul's often-called "Pastoral Epistles" provides a unique look at his pastoral care for the church and its leaders. These epistles were directed to two of Paul's co-workers, Timothy (Ephesus) and Titus (Crete) and addressed their ecclesial responsibilities. They were probably written in the later years of Paul's ministry and reveal the ongoing pastoral ministry of Paul to church leadership and its congregants.³² These epistles are rich in theology and wisdom as they remind these leaders of foundational creedal truths while simultaneously provide ecclesial wisdom in directing the affairs of the church.

Finally, the pastoral heart and ministry of Paul is wonderfully revealed in his counsel to the elders of Ephesus in Miletus and it is his expectation that the overseers of Ephesus will replicate his pastoral care for the saints in Ephesus:

Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. (Acts 20:28-31)

Paul the Teacher

One could hold that Paul's first official ecclesial office was that of a teacher (Acts 13:1).³³ He and Barnabas were serving the church as teachers in Antioch, when the Holy

³² Harrington, *The Church According to the New Testament*, 32.

³³ John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), 113.

Spirit set them aside for missionary work (Acts 13:2). In Paul's missionary journeys, teaching in the synagogues, the market place and in homes played a major role in extending the kingdom of God and deepening the faith of parishioners.

Paul was professionally taught as a rabbi (teacher) by one of Israel's finest teachers of the law, Rabban Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3). His epistles are packed with doctrinal teaching. For example, the first half of his letter to the Ephesians is pure foundational theology, of which he endeavors to secure the believer's position "in Christ" and unveil the subsequent benefits therein. These chapters reveal Paul's depth of theological and ecclesiological understanding of Christ and his church. Paul taught theology with ecclesiology, for theology was not his ultimate endeavor, but theology proper, realized in an ecclesiological setting. Thus, Ben Witherington concludes: "Paul's hermeneutic was christologically determined and focused, the Christ event being the lens through which all must be seen and understood, but it was ecclesologically directed."³⁴

And yet Paul did not limit his teaching to just doctrine and the church, for the final half of the same epistle served to instruct folk on how to live as Christians in a secular world (Chapter 4), in marital, familial, and occupational relationships (Chapter 5, 6), and in a world that is wrought with spiritual resistance (Chapter 6). This balance between the mystical/doctrinal and practical/pragmatic can be discovered in all of his epistles. He was a master of instructing folk in vital doctrinal truths that served to construct a theological basis for a life of faith in Christ, and provide practical instruction

³⁴ Witherington, *The Paul Quest*, 262.

for living in community with others. Because of Paul, the church throughout the ages has had a source of solid doctrinal truth and sagacious insight, for all aspects of daily life.

Paul, a Model for Congregants

We have already discussed the principle of modeling by example (imitation) in Chapter Two. Paul exhorted the saints to “Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor 11:1). Arnold B. Come provides a holistic interpretation of Christian imitation: “To be a Christian means that the form of life beheld in Jesus takes shape in (a persons) own life, individually and corporately.”³⁵ In other words, the whole of who and what Jesus is (essence, ministry, etc.) shapes the life and ministry of the believer.

With this in mind, it is incumbent to consider the imitation of Christ by Paul within the context of the fivefold ministry. I propose that the fivefold ministry evident in the life of Paul is in fact five distinct aspects of ministry reflected in the life and ministry of Christ. As such, these are evident in Paul’s life because he imitates Christ, and is able to do so, in part, due to equipping by fivefold gifted leaders. Evidence of each one of these fivefold ministries are easily seen in the life of Christ as he births, builds and with divine authority oversees the church (Heb 3:1 - apostle), is the very Word of God incarnate (Jn 1:14 - prophet), spreads the good news of deliverance to the captive while being the very agent of reconciliation (Lk 4:18-19 - evangelist), self-sacrificially serves the wellbeing of the sheep as a self-declared shepherd (Jn 10:11 - pastor) and instructs in the way of kingdom life (Jn 3:2 - teacher).

In the context of all of these fivefold ministries the primary ministerial functions of Christ are revealed. I propose that the ministry of Paul reflected these same ministerial

³⁵ Come, *Agents of Reconciliation*, 47.

functions, and did so within the context, or at least the inclusion of, all the fivefold ministries of Christ. In this ministerial sense, Paul imitated Christ. In other words, being Christ like ultimately involved all of the attributes (unconditional love, self-sacrifice, divine compassion, grace, mercy, benevolent care, etc) and all of the fivefold ministries of Christ. These fivefold ministries simply provided the context through which the attributes of God could manifest. If this premise is true, then the believer can ill afford to lack either the attributes or ministries of Christ.

Of concern for this study is that Paul possibly saw these as indivisible and the fullness of the Christian life was to encompass both. As a result, a primal responsibility of the fivefold equipping gifts was for the maturation of the parishioner “to the measure of the stature, which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Eph 4:13). In other words, they served to equip parishioners to minister like Christ: to be missional and paternal, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and rabbinical. God provided regeneration (divine nature/power) and the fivefold equipping gifts to accomplish Christ likeness. The gospels (Jn 13:12-15; 15:5, 16) and Paul’s epistles (Ro 12:3-21) appear to reflect this economy.³⁶

The invitation given by Paul for others to imitate him is very discipleship-oriented. In his work, *Paul and His Converts*, Ernest Best observed that Paul, “...only

³⁶ This appears to be reflected in the life of Christ. Consider John 14:10-11 – “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative but the Father abiding in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.” There appears to be a symbiosis between the attributes of God (essence) and the works (ministry) of Christ that fully evidences the Father in Jesus based upon both essence (divine attributes) and ministry (divine works) displayed in his life. Consider Paul’s union of the love of God (essence) with the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor 13. He concludes that ministry without *αγάπη* is worthless. In a similar vein, the Apostle James alludes to a symbiosis between faith and works (Jas 2:14-26). He contends that one cannot exist without the other. Works (ministry) is necessary for faith to be ultimately expressed or realized.

calls churches which he had founded to imitate him.”³⁷ He notes that Paul does not give the same invitation to the Romans, even though he does exhort them to imitate Christ (Ro 15:2, 3). His point is that imitation is an interpersonal encounter with another’s daily behavior: “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil 4:9). This is of course no less applicable to believers’ imitation of Christ as they encounter and walk with him daily (Ro 15:2, 3).

Paul’s daily walk with Christ is ultimately the point, for it is because of his journey with Christ that Paul can exhort believers to imitate him as he imitates Christ. Essentially, he invited them to join him in his journey with and in his imitation of Christ. What these believers witnessed was Paul living like Christ because of his walk with Christ. Ernest Best suggests this experience surely exceeded in significance a mere “story” of the Christ: “A recital of incidents in the life of the historical Jesus could not convey the meaning of his behaviors with the same force as someone living at least partially like him.”³⁸ His journey with Christ became their opportunity to imitate real life, not just pedagogy. His functioning in all of the fivefold ministries with Christ provided a living example to encourage them in the same. As a result, his imitation of Christ, as it reveals the attributes and fivefold ministry of Christ, beget the same in those that imitated him. This is a vital element of New Testament ecclesial leadership: to lead by living example and Paul’s living example is replete with the attributes and ministries of Christ.

³⁷ Ernest Best, *Paul and His Converts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 68.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

This of course does not negate specific gift(s) in Paul's life that are truly fivefold for equipping purposes. In fact, the only one that Paul himself acknowledged as his gift, was apostle (Ro 1:1; 1 Cor 1:11; Eph 1:1). Though he functioned as a prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, he recognized only his role as apostle as his gift portion of the fivefold equipping gifts. In so doing, he is an excellent example of the fivefold ministries functioning in the life of a believer who just happens to be uniquely called and gifted by God in one area of equipping, apostleship. By calling others to imitate him, he ultimately expects them to reflect the Christological attributes and all of the fivefold ministries of Christ. His role as an apostle is in addition to this primal role as a Christian. It is as a Christian that the attributes and ministries of Christ are revealed. As an apostle, he serves to equip the saints for ministry for apostolic function: to be missional (one who is sent) and paternal (one who possesses fatherly authority and responsibility).

The fruit of this leadership paradigm was the birth of believers and development of other leaders that imitated Paul as he imitated Christ. This resulted in churches (congregants) that were apostolic (1 Thess 1:8), prophetic (1 Cor 14:1), evangelistic (Acts 12:24), pastoral (1 Cor 12:25) and rabbinical (1 Jn 2:27). It was this New Testament church, possessing the attributes and ministries of Christ, which effectively ministered to itself and extended the kingdom of God throughout the Roman Empire. Leaders served to model and equip parishioners for the same holistic ministry of Jesus. They bore the attributes (nature) of Christ due to regeneration and the ministries of Christ due to equipping-leaders who were uniquely gifted in the fivefold ministries of Christ. To ensure the realization of the priesthood ministry of believers, equipping gifts were given by God to the church.

Local and Universal Church Leadership Paradigms

There is little extra-biblical and not much more biblical record of New Testament church leadership structure. Daniel Harrington attempts to explain: “While Jesus and his disciples had ‘positions’ in the Jesus movement, from the perspective of the first-century Jewish society they held no recognizable office.”³⁹ Leadership offices in the New Testament were far less about station, status or title and far more about service to others. Jesus spoke of those who made leadership more about authority than service and then set in place a kingdom of God understanding of servant-leadership:

And calling them to himself, Jesus said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and there great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but who ever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mk 10:42-45)

Ben Witherington identifies Christ as Paul’s source for his servant leadership perspective: “As prophet and apostle, Paul modeled himself after the Master; the ultimate servant leader.” This perspective is revealed in his second letter to the Corinthians: “Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy, for in your faith you are standing firm” (2 Cor 1:24).

The New Testament record seems to reveal three groups of servant-leaders. First were the apostles and other fivefold leadership gifts. I propose that these were given, for the most part, to the universal church for oversight, administration and equipping for

³⁹ Harrington, *The Church According to the New Testament*, 160.

ministry. These were more mobile ministries, going from one community to another.⁴⁰ Second, was what Richard Longenecker calls delegated authorities or coworkers. These included such leaders as Barnabas (1 Cor 9:6), Silas (2 Cor 1:19), Apollos (1 Cor 3:4-9), Timothy (1 Thess 3:2-6), Titus (2 Cor 2:13, and as many as 100 others named in the epistles with varying titles, who served the apostles for the ongoing development of the church.⁴¹ These served the universal church, carrying letters from apostles to churches (Ro 16:1-2; Col. 1:7-8; 4:12) and the local church, as they were at times left behind or sent to churches by the apostles, for additional ecclesial tasks (Titus 1:5). Finally, there was purely local leadership that oversaw the spiritual care and the practical needs of the local church. These elders (ἐπισκοποι) were spiritual care-givers and watchmen, to ensure the ongoing spiritual health of parishioners (1 Pet 5:1-4) and the deacons (διακονοι) served the practical needs of the local church (Acts 6:1-6). This ingenious system of servant leadership was fully focused on the wellbeing and ministry capacity of the church. Local leaders (level three) were in place to oversee the practical and spiritual health of congregants. Periodically, other leaders (level two) would serve the local church to further the fivefold work and establish and oversee local leadership. Finally, the fivefold gifted leaders (level one) served to equip local churches for ministry. All were servant-leaders with one purpose: to serve the actualization of the priesthood ministry of every believer. This is what Gary Ogden proposed as a “bottom-up view of

⁴⁰Swete, *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, 64. Swete narrows mobile leadership ministries to a triad of equipping offices: apostle, prophet and teacher (1 Cor 12:28). He contends that the pastoral role office was actuated and realized by the presbytery and that the use of evangelist in Eph 4:11 is a later broadening of the apostolic office. As well, he proposes that “apostles, prophets and teachers belong to the universal church, while bishops, presbyters, and deacons belonged to the local community which they were appointed to serve” (76). It is questionable in New Testament times whether lines this distinct would have been drawn.

⁴¹ Longenecker, *Community Formation in the Early Church and the Church Today*, 84.

the church.”⁴² In other words, the wellbeing and ministry of parishioners was the goal of all of leadership.

It is good to note at this point that clear universal/local church lines and a hierarchal system of leadership are quite difficult to establish. Because of a strong kingdom ideology in the New Testament church, *ecclesia universalis*, and δούλος oriented leadership in all probability were the precedents. This may be evident at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-6) where both apostles (first level of leadership – v. 2), others (second level – v. 2) and elders (third level – v. 4, 6) from multiple churches are gathered to the Jerusalem church to address and decide together theological issues pertinent to the universal church. Though James articulated the final proposition, it was the consensus of these multi-church, multi-group spiritual leaders that finalized it (Acts 15:22).

It is not until the mid to latter part of the first century that hierarchal “offices” began to arise. Campenhausen addresses the lack of hierarchal control in the apostolic church: “The most striking feature of Paul’s view of the Christian community is the complete lack of any legal system, and the exclusion on principle of all formal authority with the individual congregations.”⁴³ The apostles fought to preserve this form of ecclesial polity that preserved a servant-leadership paradigm (1 Cor 3:5-7).

⁴² Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 54. See also: Come, *Agents of Reconciliation*, 98-124. In this chapter Come calls for the return to a more New Testament ecclesial ministry paradigm where clergy and laity do not exist and ministry is understood to arise out of the priestly ministry of every believer. He contends, “every member of the body of Christ must be regarded as having some gift of grace from Christ...some contribution to make, some service to perform, for the building up of the body” (p. 103) and one must see that “the whole life of the congregation... is the means through which Christ imparts his truth and life to his body, the church” (p.121).

⁴³ C.f. Campenhausen, “Recht und Gehorsam in der Alten Kirche,” *Theologie Clav* 20 (1941).

The Ecclesial Fruit of the Apostles

The ecclesial impact of spiritually healthy parishioners equipped for ministry was both a blessing and a problem and the New Testament record appears to bear this out. In Ogden's work, *The New Reformation*, he touches upon the dynamics of a living, healthy church: "...ministry...spontaneously erupts out of the organism."⁴⁴ As a result, the gospel went forth with such success that Jewish leaders were jealous (Acts 5:17) fearful that Christianity would overtake Judaism (Acts 6:7). This resulted in persecution against the church. Equipping facilitated parishioners to teach and prophesy and eventually the church was troubled by errant teachers that rose up and undermined vital theological foundations (Acts 20:29; Col 2:8, 16-19). This introduced heresy in the church. The congregants of Corinth, zealous to operate in the spiritual gifts, had to be exhorted by Paul to do so in an orderly fashion and with charity as its primary motive (1 Cor 12-14). Paul had to stem the tide of pride and selfish ambition that entered the church.

The apostles served to mitigate these issues. They instructed the church on how to endure persecution (Jas 1:2-5; 1 Pet 4:12-14), to identify false teachers (2 Pet 2:1-22) and to maintain humble and benevolent perspectives regarding ministry (1 Cor 12-13). They were the first to be persecuted, the defenders of sound doctrine and Christ like models of humble and servant leadership. Due in part to the faithfulness of these godly leaders, the faith community continued to realize its witness and ministry to the world and even in the context of persecution and hardship, the church spread throughout the Roman Empire. The passing of the apostles left a significant leadership void for the church.

⁴⁴ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 76.

From Apostleship to Episcopate

As previously mentioned, the first enemies of the apostolic church were persecution and heresy. From the very beginning, the Jews were the primary source of persecution (Acts 4:1-3; 6:8-15; 8:1-3). Eventually, local governments, and Rome itself joined in,⁴⁵ for the most part, to secure civil order (Acts 16:20), and later due to the real or potential threat Christianity posed to pagan religions (Acts 19:34).⁴⁶ However, even with persecution, the church continued to grow. Ramsay MacMullen attributes the failure of persecution to stay Christianity to the application of Roman ideology upon the polity of the church. Rome believed that similar to the other empires they had conquered, by dispatching the leaders, the church would collapse, i.e., conquering from the top down.⁴⁷ This was a colossal misunderstanding of the church. Rome failed to understand that Christianity was fundamentally a community movement, not a hierarchal organization.⁴⁸ As a result, leaders were arrested and even martyred, but the church continued en masse to bear witness of their faith.

Of equal concern was the invasion of heresy in the church. Again, the apostles served as the vanguards for doctrinal purity, and, as Paul predicted, their departure opened the theological floodgates for errant teaching (Acts 20:30). Local leaders had to

⁴⁵ Justo L. González, *Church History: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 26.

⁴⁶ Roman emperors Nero, Domitian, and Marcus Aurelius instigated persecution against Christendom in the first two centuries. The Roman persecution under Domitian was an attempt to strengthen Roman culture and the populace's allegiance to Roman gods, both of which the Christian 'cult' had rejected. The final great Roman persecution was under Emperor Diocletian in 303 AD. See Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 102-108.

⁴⁷ Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 129.

⁴⁸ Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 208.

take up the cause. These leaders needed to be uniquely gifted and astute in the doctrines of the church, with enough authority to successfully defy and drive out the heretics.

Raymond E. Brown addressed the goal of these leaders: "The authoritative guidance of these men was to preserve the local church communities against disintegration."⁴⁹ In the latter part of Paul's life, the preservation of local churches was foremost in his mind.

Paul understood that the presbytery played a major role. As a result, he was committed to establish elders in all of his churches. Consider Paul's instruction to Titus on the isle of Crete. The first issue to be addressed in this small epistle is the appointment of a presbytery (Titus 1:5). After articulating the qualifications for these elders, he cites one of their immediate assignments:

For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. (Titus 1:10-12)

The presbytery had to possess enough authority to stem the tide of heresy.

Eventually, this same presbytery evolved into hierarchal offices, requiring a significant change in church polity to accommodate the greater authority. The models for this change arose from two very well-known sources. Jewish Christians had a familiarity with the synagogue model that incorporated both elders and the priest. It was natural for them to default to this system acknowledging the presbytery as a ruling body of elders with a ruling super-elder as a priest-like leader. In similar fashion, the Gentile Christians were familiar with the hierarchal political structure of their Greco-Roman world. It was

⁴⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 32.

natural for them to default to that system, seeing the presbytery as an authoritative body of leaders and one episcopate, or bishop, as ultimate authority.⁵⁰ Near the end of the second half of the first-century, the church was already moving in that direction.

Hans Campenhausen's study of this period in church history addresses this critical ecclesial change in the church and its leaders: "there is no mistaking the fact that we are now moving into the sphere of a community-structure built on lines fundamentally different from those of Paul's, and of a different understanding and rationale of spiritual power or authority."⁵¹ The community that once was typified by, "anyone may have a psalm, teaching or revelation" (1 Cor 14:26) changes:

In time, however, the number of persons actively participating becomes smaller, and the group of "leading" helpers and ministers consequently stands out more clearly from the crowd. Furthermore, the conceit of the "spiritual" men and the tendency to pay them excessive respect, both features which had given Paul a great deal of trouble, are once again becoming noticeable.⁵²

By the start of the second century the full impact of these clerical "ministers" is being felt. The operation of the abundance of spiritual gifts and body ministry, once common to the apostolic church, are significantly restricted. There is less ministry arising from parishioners and more from gifted leaders. Preaching becomes the primary mode of

⁵⁰As to the logic employed to justify a change in church polity: "...it was necessary to organize a vigilant defense for the flock against the 'wolves' without the fold, and also within, namely, the heretics. The work of defense proves to be more ready and vigilant when placed in charge of a single person....Moreover, the pagan institutions and the Jewish communities are as a rule inclined to choose a presiding officer or chairman in order to secure unity of action on the part of the whole group, and to symbolize, as it were, its union." In Charles Guignebert, *Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Christianity* (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1961), 133.

⁵¹ Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 75.

⁵² Ibid., 71.

leader-centered ministry, and parishioners are largely given to deeds of hospitality and benevolence.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that the congregation as a whole is now thought of in terms of a new model. It is no longer a unified cosmos of differing, 'organically' cohering gifts, but it is organized, or rather, stratified in such a way that the relationship of the 'young' to the governing 'elders' is like that of children to their parents.⁵³

A new ecclesial philosophy was now in place.

The bishop became a type of old covenant priest in that he was the leader of worship, the one who served the Eucharist (i.e. sacrifice) and interceded on behalf of the congregation.⁵⁴ He became the primal ministering agent in the church and the role of ecclesial leadership dramatically changed from the primitive apostolic model.

Campenhausen masterfully articulates this change: "There was a significant paradigm shift from fivefold leaders that at one time understood their primary role as equippers for ministry within their own giftedness and leaders that begin to showcase their own giftedness."⁵⁵ This was a critical turning point in ecclesial history. From this shift emerged the formation of official and hierarchal ministerial offices, and the "seeds" of a clergy and laity, both of which ultimately led to the abandonment of the primitive ecclesial model.

The Continued Rise of the Episcopate

In the midst of the war against heresy and ecclesial subversion, Clement, the third bishop of Rome, wrote to the Corinthians around 95 B.C. and he called for total

⁵³ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁴ Eventually a formal liturgy evolved for the bishop. The first document to give detail to this liturgy and the role of the bishop is the Didache (100 C.E.). For more see: Bart D. Ehrman, *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 323, 324, 343, 344.

⁵⁵ Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 76.

subjection from the heretics to the presbytery: "Ye therefore, who laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction as to repent, bending the knees of your hearts. Learn to be subject, laying aside the proud and arrogant self-confidence of your tongue."⁵⁶ But it is Ignatius of Antioch that institutes the final phase of the hierarchal leadership paradigm, what Campenhausen calls "an advanced stage of hierarchical order..."⁵⁷ Walter Wagner provides a simple chart of this order:

HEAVENS (or Cosmos)	EKKLESIA (or Congregation)
God	Christ
Christ	Bishop
Councillor Angels	Presbyters
Serving spirits	Deacons
Humans	Members ⁵⁸

A cursory review of this chart reveals that Ignatius saw the role of the bishop on earth in line with that of Christ in heaven. So he prescribed an appropriate allegiance due such status: "See that ye follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father...."⁵⁹ With that allegiance, Ignatius required what he considered, an appropriate honor: "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Clement, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," (Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Calvin College, 100 C.E.), Chap 57.

⁵⁷ Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 97.

⁵⁸ Arthur, *A Smooth Stone*, 151.

⁵⁹ Ignatius of Antioch, "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans," (Christian Ethereal Library at Calvin College, 108-117), Chap viii.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Chap ix.

Ignatius demanded from the church an honor that appeared to be equal to that which was to be given to Christ. In his letter to the Trallians he called for a similar reverence for the deacons and presbyters: "In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles."⁶¹ This created a distinct tri-level local church clergy of a single bishop, the presbytery and deacons. This triad of clerical leadership remains today, the remnant of the Ignatian ecclesial model of leadership.⁶²

Daniel Harrington calls the rise of the single ruling bishop a *monepiscopate*, or *monarchical episcopate* and describes his role: "One bishop in any given place who is given almost absolute authority over the local church and is said to be God's representative."⁶³ The shift in power from a group of elders or presbytery, to a single "super-elder" (bishop) was complete. This new station empowered the bishop to drive out the heretics and restore order to the church. Many historians attribute the survival and further propagation of the church to this ruling clergy. However it was costly, the ultimate price being the priesthood of the believer. Campenhausen may be a bit strong, but his evaluation of these new leaders and their impact on the church has a core of truth:

⁶¹ Ignatius, "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans," (Christian Ethereal Library at Calvin College, 108-117), Chap iii.

⁶² "From the fourth to the sixteenth centuries, the clergy-lay distinction deepened. Laity were those on the bottom of the clerical ladder. After his conversion (AD 312), Constantine appointed bishops as civil magistrates throughout the empire, organized churches into dioceses along the pattern of Roman regional districts, and consistently used 'clerical' and clerics' as a privileged class." Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity*, 44.

⁶³ Harrington, *The Church According to the New Testament*, 163.

“They are the Christian cultic officials, and the cult now requires that a clear distinction be drawn between ‘priests’ and ‘laymen.’”⁶⁴

The Ecclesial Failure of the Reformation

The power of the presbytery and especially the bishop continued to evolve through the centuries. The Reformation, though focused on the priesthood of the believer, did little to remedy the ministerial gulf between the clergy and laity or to initiate any major ecclesial reform. This prompted R. Paul Stevens to correctly conclude that, “The reformation was more concerned about soteriology (salvation) than ecclesiology.”⁶⁵ In Arnold B. Come’s work, *Agents of Reconciliation*, he dedicates an entire chapter, “Grounds for a New Reformation,” to the failure of the Protestant Reformation to bring about ecclesial reform. Subsequently, he renews the call for ecclesial reform: A reformation “more radical than the Reformation of the 16th century, because the pressure both of the Spirit and of the world are upon us to rethink and reshape the response to the divine calling of the church.”⁶⁶ Come primarily directs his salvos against the present clerical system, especially the role of the pastor: “The church, therefore, must shatter the traditional image of the pastoral minister as *the* minister.”⁶⁷ With the destruction of the contemporary pastoral role, he calls for the church to arise again as the primary ministering agent: “We must now see that the whole life of the congregation and denomination is the means through which Christ imparts his truth and life to his body the

⁶⁴ Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 92.

⁶⁵ Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity*, 45.

⁶⁶ Come, *Agents of Reconciliation*, 98.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

church.”⁶⁸ He gave this radical call for reformation in 1960. However, since then, little substantive ecclesial polity change has taken place in the American church.

Greg Ogden’s *The New Reformation* echoes the call of Come. He sees the church in need of liberation from the institution that propagates the clerical system: “If a revolution is to be unleashed that sets God’s people free, we must first see how thorough our bondage is to institutionalism.”⁶⁹ He sees this as far more than just a battle over church polity. To him, it is a spiritual battle: “For the church to be unleashed, we must engage in spiritual warfare.”⁷⁰

James Dunn more directly admonishes a return to the more charismatic-led community of the first century: “Now it is time to reaffirm the root of all ministry as the charismatic spirit given variously to the members of the body.”⁷¹ Ogden agrees: “In a day of reformation we must look back again to the life of the New Testament community as normative, even though not as final.”⁷² Along with this new ancient perception of the church, Ogden appeals to the ancient role of the spiritual leader: “A far healthier model views the pastor not as the caretaker of those who can’t fend for themselves, but as the *equipper* who encourages and provides a context to train all God’s people for ministry.”⁷³ In the end, it is not enough to embrace the ancient ecclesial and leadership models

⁶⁸ Ibid., 131.

⁶⁹ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 55.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ James Dunn, “Ministry and the Ministry: The Charismatic Renewal’s Challenge to Traditional Ecclesiology,” 10.

⁷² Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 109.

⁷³ Ibid., 95.

because they are ancient. One must conclude that they are in fact the best model, initiated by Christ, to accomplish the purpose of God in extending his kingdom by means of servant-leaders that impart their unique giftedness, so that equipped parishioners can realize their full ministerial potential.

21st Century Leadership Paradigms

Remarkably, many new secular leadership paradigms reflect the ancient New Testament model of leadership. Such books as *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*, by Laurie Beth Jones and John Maxwell's plethora of books on leadership are but a sampling of the many leadership studies that employ biblical leadership principals for 21st-century leadership. Some blatantly disregard modern approaches to leadership, such as Steven Sample's *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*. In this work, Sample challenges modern leadership conventions by simply reversing their approach. He shares that his first introduction to real leadership came from advice given to him by George Clements, a highly successful businessman, who at the time was the director of academic affairs for the Illinois Board of Higher Education:

Steve, let me give you some basic advice about leadership. You should spend a small amount of your time hiring your direct reports, evaluating them, exhorting them, setting their compensation, praising them, kicking their butts and, when necessary, firing them. When you add all that up, it should come out to about 10 percent of your time. The remaining 90 percent of your time should be spent doing everything you can to help your direct reports succeed. You should be the first assistant to the people who work for you.⁷⁴

This advice launched Sample into becoming a servant-leader. This leadership perspective embodies the essence of Christ's, who came not to be served, but to serve the

⁷⁴ Steven B. Sample, *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 121.

betterment of others (Matt 20:28) and Sample is almost brutal about those who see leadership any other way:

If a would-be leader wants glamour, he should try acting in the movies. However, if he in fact wants to make a consequential impact on a cause or an organization, he needs to roll up his sleeves and be prepared to perform a series of grungy chores which are putatively beneath him, and for which he'll never receive recognition or credit, but by virtue of which his lieutenants will be inspired and enabled to achieve things.⁷⁵

This sounds very Pauline in its prescription for leadership. Consider Paul's admonition to the Corinthians regarding his role as an apostle:

For, I think, God has exhibited us as apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become the scum of the world, the dregs of all things even until now. (1 Cor 4:9-13)

John Maxwell, a well-known expert on leadership and prolific writer of the topic, advocates a similar approach. He contends that being a leader is far more than just getting people to follow. To him, true leadership is serving the transformation of those who follow into major contributors to the cause: "My goal is not to draw a following that results in a crowd. My goal is to develop leaders who become a movement."⁷⁶ The Apostle Paul appeared to take the same approach as he birthed churches that became penetrating movements within their own communities. As well, Maxwell believes this kind of transformation cannot occur through just training someone, it requires equipping. He differentiates the two by defining training as teaching a skill and equipping as being

⁷⁵ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁶ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 1995), 3.

outfitted: “The ideal equipper is a person who can impart the vision of the work, evaluate the potential of the potential leader, give him the tools he needs, and then help him along the way at the beginning of his journey.”⁷⁷ He uses a mountain climber to illustrate the “outfitting” aspect of equipping. He concludes that it is not enough just to train or teach someone about mountain climbing. He or she must condition, be outfitted, trained, mentored and eventually they must even come to think as a mountain climber. He believes that equipping is the only context in which this can be achieved.

This perspective of leadership requires that the leader be more others-focused and less self-focused. In Jim Collin’s best-selling book, *Good to Great*, he articulates five levels of leadership styles present in companies across America. Companies that grew from good companies to great companies had CEO’s that were what he entitles, Level-Five leaders. These leaders were renowned for their humility, their desire to grow the institution, and their ability to reproduce their leadership in others:

Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It’s not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious-but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves.⁷⁸

Level 5 leaders understand the need for a team and scorn the ideology of what Collin calls the “genius” leader. Fundamentally, the genius-style leader sounds very bishop-like: “The *geniuses* seldom build great management teams, for the simple reason that they don’t need one, and often don’t want one. If you’re a genius...you just need an

⁷⁷ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁸ James C. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York, NY: Harper Business, 2001), 21.

army of good soldiers who can help implement your great ideas.”⁷⁹ Collins contends that with the genius style of leadership, there is no conception of an organization as a system; all that is required is the implementation of one person’s single discipline. Thus, there is no need to equip others for their own ministries, only to hire skilled folk who can accomplish the assigned tasks of the genius. Collins concludes these kinds of leaders may build good institutions, but can never lead them to greatness. This may describe the church in the twenty-first century that is good, but far from great.

The call to return to a more New Testament model of leadership is sounding forth. A remarkable book by James C. Hunter records the teachings of Len Hoffman, a former CEO of Southeast Airlines. In *The Servant*, Hoffman describes the need to radically change the leadership paradigm used in most companies. He explains the traditional institutional hierarchal pyramid with the CEO at the top, then the board, then front-line supervisors, then employees and finally at the base, the customer. He prescribes turning this hierarchal pyramid upside-down:

Let’s just imagine an organization where the focus was serving the customer on top. Imagine, as the upside-down pyramid depicts, an organization where the front-line employees are truly serving the customers and ensuring that their legitimate needs are met. And just suppose the front-line supervisors began seeing their employees as their customers and set about the task of identifying and meeting their needs. And so on down the pyramid. That would require each manager to take on a new mind-set, a new paradigm, and recognize that the role of the leader is not to rule and lord it over the next layer down. Rather, the role of the leader is to serve.⁸⁰

By taking this approach, it makes leadership primarily about serving the abilities of others and the success of the organization, based upon the capable functioning of each

⁷⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁸⁰ James C. Hunter, *The Servant: A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership* (Rocklin, Calif.: Prima Publishing, 1998), 62.

employee. This is an equipping model of servant-leadership that enables and empowers the entire organization to accomplish the corporate vision. It looks very much like the equipping paradigm of the New Testament church.

Today there are many churches that have taken up the New Testament mandate for equipping. *The Equipping Church* by Sue Mallory recounts the transition of the Brentwood Presbyterian Church to an equipping church, and is an invaluable tool for understanding the processes to facilitate change from an old paradigm to a new one. Sadly, it is weak in solid ecclesiology and one must weed through the processes to find any. Mallory does acknowledge the significant need for the fivefold gifts: “The more I go back to the Scriptures, the more I find that they (fivefold gifts) describe what we long to experience in Christ’s body. The terms we are talking about are among the essential roles in the church.”⁸¹

However, she does not conceive the entire church functioning in each of these gifts (abilities), and as such, implements a process of “discovery” for identifying each individual’s unique gift(s): “In our equipping church model *discovery* has become the term we use to describe the adventure of finding out the scope of each person’s gifts, talents, and experience. We note what this person is prepared to contribute to the whole.”⁸² Once these ‘gifts, talents, and experience are discovered, equipping is employed to further develop them. Ideally, with this approach multiple gifted and equipped individuals will be present in every church, to fully accomplish body ministry. Thus, some will be apostolic, others evangelistic and still others pastoral, etc.

⁸¹ Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 102.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 106.

Theoretically, this insures that the entire body must function, due to some level of ministerial inability in all of its members. As a result of this perspective, no single member is equipped to function in all fivefold ministries.

In his book on equipping, R. Paul Stevens continues to foster this fundamental misunderstanding: “The plurality, really the *pleroma* (fullness), of ministry gifts given to the body means that each member has a fraction of the ministry of Christ, like one color of the full spectrum comprising white light.” Stevens limits the potential impact of the fivefold gifts, which as a whole are designed to equip the saints for total Christ like ministry. By doing so, he denies the biblical model and limits the ministerial expectations for believers.

I submit that this is in stark contrast to Paul’s intention that all be fully able to minister (Eph 4:13). Mallory and Stevens conceives the fivefold as distinct ministering gifts (in contrast to equipping gifts), of which parishioners receive one or more but never all. Once these gifts are identified, further equipping by leaders is needed for the gifted parishioners to become competent in their particular fivefold gift. As a result, one becomes equipped only in their unique gifting. Paul seems to indicate that these fivefold gifts are not given to the body, but to leaders (Eph 4:8) for purposes of equipping (Eph 4:12) the church for holistic Christ like (Eph 4:13) ministry (Eph 4:12). In other words, these divine gifts are given to leaders to uniquely enable them to fully equip parishioners for fivefold ministry: the end product being the “proper working of each individual part...” (Eph 4:16).

Conclusion

The fivefold gifts of Ephesians 4:11 are equipping gifts given to servant-leaders in the church to enable every believer to minister in all five areas of ministry. We see evidence of these ministries in the life and ministry of Christ and the Apostle Paul. As a result of these gifts, the early church was equipped to be missional, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and rabbinical in the church, the home and the community. It was this same faith community that was an effective ministerial force that swept across the Roman Empire, bearing witness in word and deed of Jesus Christ.

The departure of the apostles opened the door for a new leadership paradigm that significantly departed from the Pauline model. Almost two thousand years later, the residue of that ecclesial model remains:

Still for too many, life is lived in a contemporary version of the medieval model that focuses on buildings and clergy. Then it was the cathedral and chapel, bishop and priest. Now it is the church building, pastor and staff. For many churchgoers, all they have known is an academic/spectator form of Christianity.⁸³

The Protestant Reformation failed to provide the ecclesial change that would restore the ancient roles of leadership and the ministry of the saints. Over the last few decades, several church leaders have recognized the need for change.

Ironically, the business world has as well looked to a more New Testament model of leadership. They have grown to understand that servant-leaders who equip employees to be successful in their areas of responsibilities, ensure that the institution will achieve its potential. The Saturn automobile company revolutionized the way automobiles were constructed by training those that build their cars in every aspect of the construction

⁸³ Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 154.

process. As a result, the employee can stay with the car throughout its construction as they are fully competent in all aspects of automobile assembly. In a sense, this is the ultimate goal of fivefold equipping leaders.

Though some church leaders have taken up the call to return the church to a more apostolic leadership/ecclesial paradigm, there is much more to be done. The church must realize that the fullness of the fivefold ministry can be imparted to parishioners by means of equipping. I propose that believers can be functionally missional, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, and rabbinical and could realize the fullness of the ministry of Christ to extend the kingdom of God throughout the earth.

CHAPTER 4

EQUIPPING MINISTRY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Introduction

Thus far we have considered two leadership paradigms from the Testaments. In the Old Testament, the study of the priests, prophets and sages introduced multiple leadership teams, called upon by Yahweh to serve the spiritual oversight and wellbeing of Israel. The primary role of these leaders was priestly, prophetic and sagacious ministry to the nation. However, there is some evidence that these leaders were to replicate their ministries in the populace of Israel, in anticipation of a nation of priests, prophets and sages. The failure of these leaders necessitated a new leadership paradigm, initiated by Jesus Christ, one whose primary leadership function was to disciple, commission, empower and release others for ministry. This kind of leader provides abilities and opportunities for the ministries of others and joyfully anticipates that their ministries will exceed his or her own (Jn 14:12). Jesus passed this model of leadership on to his disciples and they, in turn to their disciples. This New Testament paradigm placed an emphasis on equipping and releasing others for ministry, within the area of one's own unique divine gifting.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the operation of the fivefold equipping leaders in their first-century ministry context, view them in contrast to the present

leadership paradigm, and ultimately generate a prospectus from which to implement an equipping leadership paradigm for the twenty-first century church.

To fully understand the function of these ancient equipping leaders, they must be seen in the context in which they ministered—the New Testament church. Many of these equipping roles have evolved or in some cases even disappeared over the centuries. This makes it more difficult in our day to understand how these equipping leaders cooperatively functioned with other ecclesial leaders, and parishioners, for the wellbeing and development of the church. As well, we must consider how these equipping leaders compare to modern church leadership and the ideological shifts necessary for the twenty-first church to accommodate this New Testament leadership paradigm. Finally, a workable prospectus must be put forth so that the “functions” of these equipping leaders (if not the leaders themselves) can be developed and deployed into the church again.

New Testament Leadership

Before applying the New Testament leadership roles of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (APEPT¹) to the twenty-first century church, it is upon us that we revisit these leadership roles within the context of other first-century ecclesial leaders. Scripture does not provide a definitive prescription of church polity. Many hold that this is intentional, leaving the modern church with the freedom to construct multiple polity models, and a great variety are present in the church today. However, I will demonstrate that there is enough scriptural record to build a possible leadership structure

¹ APEPT is an acrostic for Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher employed by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. They contend that APEPT leadership is the remedy to the current hierarchal model of leadership that empowers certain leaders while disempowering the majority of Christians. See, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come; Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 166, 225.

from which, at least in general, first-century leadership functions can be derived. It is important to be reminded again at this juncture, that fundamental to the leadership paradigm instituted by Christ, is servanthood. The leadership roles we are about to discuss were fellow servant roles, not hierarchal authority roles. Thus, all servant-leaders served the wellbeing, development and ministry realization of the saints. For the New Testament church, leadership was about the saints, not the leader:

Jesus:

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling; and is not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them away and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me. Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (Jn 10:11-15)

Peter:

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; not as yet lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. (1 Pet 5:1-3)

Paul:

For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the gospel. (1 Cor 4:15)

My Children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you— (Gal 4:19)

Local Church Leaders

I propose that the primary resident leadership in the New Testament church were the elders and deacons. These were teams of leaders, committed to minister to the

spiritual (elders) and practical (deacons) needs of the congregation. They were “in-house” leaders that ministered and modeled Christ like care to their flock.² They lived in the community and faithfully served the local church. They may have literally lived in the “house church” they were given charge to oversee. These were the level-three leaders, as addressed in Chapter Three.

Universal/Local Church Leaders

In support of these ministries were the leaders (level two) juxtaposed to the fivefold equipping leaders (level one) and the local care leaders (level three). These were men like Barnabas (1 Cor 9:6), Silas (2 Cor 1:19), Apollos (1 Cor 3:4-9), and Timothy (1 Thess 3:2-6 and they appear to be both itinerant and in-house. In other words, they traveled to various communities in order to minister for extended periods of time to local churches. They served under the leadership of the apostles (1 Cor 16:12; Phil 2:19; Titus 3:12, 13) to further the work of the church and develop, establish and support local leaders (Titus 1:5).

Finally, the fivefold leaders served the universal/local church. In stark contrast to modern pastors, the fivefold leaders were probably, for the most part, peripatetic.³ They most likely went from house church to house church and from community to community,

² Christ’s ministry was spiritual and practical in its application. He forgave, taught, etc. (spiritual) as well as fed the multitudes and healed the sick (practical). These dual aspects of care are replicated by the elders and deacons.

³ Peripatetic is a way of teaching made famous by Aristotle. He taught philosophy while walking about in the Lyceum of ancient Athens. This style of teaching was as well modeled by Christ as he traveled from place to place teaching as he went; on hillsides, in boats, on the road, from house to house, etc. One would be right to expect that his disciples would teach in this same itinerant way. This mode of ministry insured that the gospel continued to spread, and the “universal” church (not just a local church) is the recipient of these fivefold gifted leaders. There is some evidence that the apostles and prophets are present in local communities for extended periods of times. However, even while resident in a community, in all probability, their ministry was not to a single house church, but from house church to house church and to the city at large.

ministering to and equipping parishioners with their own unique giftedness. They worked in concert with local elders and deacons who provided in-residence, on-going spiritual and practical care. As a result, the fivefold role, though functioning in ministry in their particular gift, was primarily an equipping role. The main spiritual and practical care of each church was the direct responsibility of the local leaders: the elders and deacons. As such, Peter admonishes the elders of house churches to “shepherd the flock among you....”⁴

I suggest that the modern pastor/teacher role has become more like the first-century elder role. As previously noted, the elder was the spiritual “overseer” (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1) of a local congregation (house church). The rise of the bishop in the second century elevated one elder to a primary leadership position over multiple house churches. The office of bishop eventually became, in Protestantism, the role of senior pastor. Over the centuries, this pastoral role has more and more reflected a preaching-elder type ministry (1 Timothy 5:17) and less a fivefold equipping ministry (Eph 4:11). To support this change, individual house churches were abandoned for basilicas, then cathedrals, and today, sanctuaries to accommodate this predominantly “ministering” role. As a result, contemporary churches reflect this ministry paradigm with pews that face toward a primary minister, the senior pastor.

The Historical Journey of the Fivefold Leaders

According to a sizable portion of the twenty-first century Protestant church, the office of apostle ceased with the death of the New Testament apostles. There is currently a new interest in the apostolic ministry in some circles of Protestantism, but it is far from

⁴ 1 Pet 5:2

being fully accepted as a contemporary office in the church today. The prophet suffered the same fate as the apostle, as prophecy was deemed complete at the formation of the canon. Only in recent times has this ministry/office begun to rise again in the church, but it does so under significant controversy.⁵ The evangelist, like the pastor and teacher, still remains today. But the ministry of the evangelist is more parachurch, with its presence all but absent from local congregations. As well, the evangelist's primary function is no longer to equip but to evangelize. An example of this is the Billy Graham organization. Their primary ministry is evangelistic crusades that platform the profound evangelistic ministry of Billy Graham. A secondary goal of this organization is to equip leaders to be more evangelistic in their ministries. However, they have never made equipping parishioners for evangelism, a primary task.

Pastors, like evangelists, have survived the ages. But as stated previously, the position has evolved into more of a preacher/teacher-elder role where spiritual care and feeding are its primary tasks. In some of the large megachurches, this position has evolved even further as terms like "gifted communicator" and CEO often typify the roles of these pastors.

Teachers have survived as well and may be the only fivefold leadership role that still remains a predominantly equipping role. Much like evangelists, gifted and trained teachers operate for the most part in parachurch organizations (Bible colleges,

⁵ The heart of the controversy over the prophetic office lies in the authority given to prophetic utterances. Those in opposition conclude that subsequent prophetic utterances would be extracanonical (i.e. adding to the canon). Those supporting prophetic ministry today contend that prophecy is God continuing to speak an ongoing ecclesial or personal message that neither challenges nor adds to the canon, as they would hold that all contemporary prophecy must ultimately be subject to the canon. See, Donald G. Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 106-108.

seminaries, etc.), and as such, are more engaged in equipping leaders than parishioners.⁶ Given that they teach others to minister, they accomplish the ultimate goal of an equipper: equipping the saints for “ministry.” Ironically, their present job description is to train leaders (i.e., “equippers” - evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.) for the church. In fact, what many do is train ministers (the work of first-century saints) instead of equippers (the work of first-century fivefold leaders). This propagates the current paradigm of leaders being ministers instead of equippers for the ministry of others. In order to facilitate a more biblical model, Bible colleges and seminaries must include curricula to train future equipping leaders to equip parishioners for ministry or to put a finer point on it, to teach those seminarians to reproduce their ministries in the lives of their congregants.

The Role of Parishioners

For centuries, much of the ecclesial role of congregants has been the role of being recipients of ministry from either the elders and deacons or the pastor/teacher. Granted, they may share their faith at times and care for folk, but most feel inadequate to minister to others at the level of their pastor. So they readily defer to ecclesial leadership when ministry to others is needed. Or worse, they are frustrated by the desire to minister (evangelize, pastor, teach, etc.) in the church, but are not equipped or empowered to do so. As such, the twenty-first century parishioner understands church as a place or event that one attends. At church, one is ministered to, and for the most part one does not substantially minister to others.

⁶ I am distinguishing teaching that occurs in training future leaders from teaching that occurs in the church for purposes of instructing in the faith. This should not diminish the teacher’s role in the church.

The first-century ecclesial experience was quite different. The saints were maturing ministers to the church and world (Eph 4:13, 16). They came expecting to be agents of ministry as the apostles taught them:

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Ro 12:4-8)

What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. (1 Cor 14:26)

As a result, we are no longer to be children....but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from which the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body, for building up of itself in love. (Eph 4:14-16)

In these first-century ministry texts, very little is spoken of regarding the role of leaders. At best they appear to have equal, not superior, status for ecclesial ministry. The locus for ministry seems to be on every parishioner. Church happened with the expectation that spiritual (gifts, ministry and effects; 1 Cor 12:4-6) and practical (Ro 12:7) ministry arose from parishioners. One can only imagine what this must have looked like and why it gave cause for Paul to give order to it all (1 Cor 12-14).

Transitional Realities

In order for the modern church to embrace the new role of the fivefold leader, it must as well embrace its role as maturing ministers. There is a kind of codependent relationship in both the old and new paradigms. The New Testament leaders were

dependant upon the body of believers to be ministering agents to each other and their communities. They knew that Christ purposely chose to function through every member of the church and that equipping was necessary for congregants to be effective ministers. The parishioners were then equally dependent upon both the ministering leaders (elders, deacons) and equipping leaders (apostles, prophets, etc) for their spiritual health and maturity so they could effectively minister in the home, church, and community.

In a similar manner, the modern parishioners are engaged in a codependent relationship with their leaders. They have been taught that ecclesial ministry is predominantly leader-based (clergy), and that their role is to be willing and obedient recipients (laity⁷). These ministering leaders need parishioners who remain immature recipients,⁸ in order to insure their ministry in the church. This codependent relationship secures the place for clergy so that they must be present for substantial and proper ministry to occur, and the parishioner, in that they remain ill-equipped to minister and are thus, clergy dependant.

⁷ *Laity*: λαος - "people" in contrast to κληρος - "lot" (clergy) referring to the selection of Matthias that was chosen by lot for apostolic ministry. Thus, laity were those not called to specific ministry. Over time it grew to distinguish between non-professionals and professionals. Thus, Webster defines laity as "the people outside of a particular profession, as distinguished from those belonging to it: those lacking professional knowledge of a specific subject." The New Testament church understood that ministry was for everyone: none were to be outside or ill-equipped for ministry. For more on "laity" see, David W. Bercot, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs: A Reference Guide to More Than 700 Topics Discussed by the Early Church Fathers* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 161. Richard Shelley Taylor, Joseph Kenneth Grider, and Willard H. Taylor, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), 305. *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, 802.

⁸ I employ two terms to define the ultimate product of each paradigm. The New Testament paradigm produces what I call "maturing ministers." These are parishioners who receive ministerial care (elders, deacons) and equipping (fivefold leaders) for their own ministries. They are maturing because they both receive and give ministry. For the modern paradigm I employ "immature recipients" in that they receive ministerial care (preaching/teaching elder) but are neither equipped nor empowered to minister at the level of the clergy. They remain immature, very much like a child whose only responsibility is to receive care, as they have not been allowed to mature to the point of caring for others.

In order for the modern church to engage in the ancient ecclesial paradigm, it must break itself away from the present codependent system. Fivefold leaders must no longer see themselves as primary ministers, but as models of Christ like ministry and equippers for the ministry of others. In concert with this, parishioners should no longer see themselves as immature recipients, but as maturing ministers. This ideological shift must occur for modern leaders and their churches, to embrace the New Testament equipping paradigm. This shift is not so much about uniquely-gifted leaders working themselves out of a job as much as embracing a new job of being living examples and equipping leaders for the ministry of others. In truth, there are millions of congregants waiting to be equipped and there are homes, churches, and communities that are at a loss without the ministry of these congregants. When successfully employed, The New Testament equipping paradigm will unleash the fivefold ministry of Christ, through his entire body, to the world.

The Essence of Equipping Leadership for the 21st-Century Church

A New Role for Leaders: Being Living Examples

In Chapters Two and Three, careful consideration was given to the concept of imitation. I propose that imitation is a major aspect of New Testament ecclesial leadership that is missing today. Imitation implies that something of substance exists within a leader that, when modeled, can be imitated by another. Being a true leader is living and modeling something that influences others to live themselves.⁹ It is being a living example that takes “someone to a place where he or she could not go by himself or

⁹ μιμητης - transliterated *mimetes*, from which the English word *mimic* is derived. Inherent to the meaning of the word is the capacity to mimic. Thus, something must be modeled that is possible to imitate. Kittel observes, “In a series of references Paul holds up himself as a model whom his congregations should imitate. See, Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. IV, 667.

herself...to the place where God wants them to be.”¹⁰ The essence of Christian leadership is influencing others by way of instruction and living example, both replete with the attributes and fivefold ministries of Christ.

Modeling incorporates the very life of the individual, which can be imitated by another. This was evidenced in the life of Jesus as the living Word of God and the profound impact of his life on his disciples and church. It is more than leading by rhetoric, it is leading incarnationally. In other words, it not about persuasion by means of words as much as those words (or better, the Word) being lived in the life of the leader. As a result, true leaders are like the ancient poets, who lived their verse.¹¹ At issue for today’s leaders is whether they live (model) something in ministry, which can be subsequently lived (imitated) by others.

Part of the present leadership crisis in the modern church is a crisis of example. Many look to the megachurch as the model of ecclesial success and its leader as the consummate example of successful leadership. They measure that success by the number of congregants the leader gathers. However, this leadership paradigm cannot be imitated by the parishioner. For example, what congregant can preach the sermon on Sunday morning, or give an altar call or lead worship? If the parishioner’s primary exposure to leadership is the public worship setting, then very little can be imitated. The everyday congregants do not have a church or pulpit from which to minister. They do not have an

¹⁰ Jules Glanzer, “A Strategy for Leadership Development at Faith Community Church” (D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000), 12.

¹¹ Ancient poets were traveling storytellers who gave witness to their adventures in eloquent fashion. They were more than just wordsmiths, as their stories arose from personal life experiences. James refers to these “poets” (ποιητης) as doers or performers and their verse as the record of their lives. His admonition to the saints was to no longer be just hearers of the word, deluded into thinking that hearing is enough, but doers (Jas 1:22). This can apply to leaders today that place the locus of their ministry on what they say over and against what they do.

altar where they can make public appeals for salvation. Nor do they have a team of trained leaders to help folk come to salvation. As a result, they make no attempt to imitate the leader, for they conclude it is impossible to do so. The leader frees them from their natural inclination to imitate, by providing a model that no one other than the leader can live.

In stark contrast the Apostle Paul provided a model for the New Testament church that was within the realm of livability:

You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink back from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:18-21)

Paul's testimony of his ministry to the Asians is rich with leadership modeling. First, he modeled the very "character" and "heart" of New Testament spiritual leadership: humility (v. 19), compassion (tears), perseverance (trials), and boldness (v. 20). His humility provided a living example of a proper spiritual posture before others (1 Cor 4:5, 10) and God (2 Cor 4:10, 11), in the service of other folks' spiritual growth. His compassion modeled the heart of Christ to those estranged from God (v. 19). His perseverance modeled the tenacity needed under the inevitable trials that come with a bold public witness and the day-to-day burden of ministry.

Second, he modeled the "ministry" of New Testament Leadership. Note the locations and recipients of his ministry, "teaching you publicly, and from house to house...." The first location Paul lists for his ministry is to nonbelievers (public). For Paul, this encompassed the agora (market place) for the Gentiles, and the synagogue for

the Jews (Acts 17:2-4, 17). These were places where the members of his churches first encountered Paul. His public witness of faith was an important model for these congregants. We must remember that Paul's public ministry was rarely "safe." When he taught in the synagogue, he proclaimed Jesus as Messiah, to those who rejected Jesus (Jews). When he taught in the marketplace (public), he did so in the midst of pagan religions, for all to hear (Gentiles).¹² As a result, his public ministry brought great trials to his life. However, these trials do not seem to detour him. At times he appears to run to opportunities for public witness of his faith. When a great riot broke out in Ephesus, due to the success of the gospel, the rioters flooded the theater.¹³ Paul wished to enter the theater and address the assembly, but his disciples stopped him for fear of his life (Acts 19:30). He modeled a ministry free from the fear of opposition. It appears this model was successful, as the church replicated his bold witness (1 Thess 1:6-8) and joined Paul as fellow-sufferers in Christ (2 Cor 1:6, 7).

Paul's ministry to the church was no less taxing as he goes from "house to house" teaching and equipping the saints for ministry. For Paul, there was no basilica or sanctuary with seating for hundreds or thousands, so that the saints could come to him.

¹² Public marketplaces in the Roman Empire were often lined with statues in honor of the plethora of local gods. Luke gives an account of Paul debating with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in the marketplace (Acts 17:16-18). He is invited by them to speak to those gathered at the Areopagus and there he mentions the idols he saw in the agora (market place): "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of worship, I also found an altar with the inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you..." (Acts 17:22, 23).

¹³ The Amphitheater in Ephesus sat about 25,000. See, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas, vol. 1 (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980), 441.

He went to the parishioners' homes: house churches. In cities like Ephesus, this could have been a considerable endeavor.¹⁴

Paul's public and ecclesial ministries were dynamic examples for the church. They allowed parishioners to see ministry in the full context of life. His evangelism to the lost engendered a heart for those outside the church and the boldness to reach them. His faithful service to the church brought ministry into the context of the home. It made ministry a part of the familial experience. In both, Paul modeled ministry in such a manner that others could imitate, just as Christ modeled ministry in such a way that his disciples could imitate. Thus, Paul admonished believers, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."¹⁵ In this simple statement, Paul maintains Christ as the ultimate leadership and ministerial model for the church and provides himself as evidence that Christ like (attributes and ministries) imitation is achievable.

Paul's leadership example stands in stark contrast to the modern leadership example. For the most part, the contemporary pastor is out of the public venue and has settled into a relatively safe place in the church. Sadly, this removes a potentially strong witness of Christ in the community and deprives parishioners of a model they could imitate (1 Thess 1:6-8). As well, the modern pastor, for the most part, has removed him- or herself from the homes of parishioners and conducts ministry almost exclusively in the sanctuary. Thus, parishioners must come to the leader for ministry and the home is no longer the primary place for church. Though the recent cell or small group movement

¹⁴ Paul labored in this city for over two years. He evangelized in the synagogue for three months and then daily in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9) for two years. As well, he taught parishioners from house to house. The gospel spread throughout the city, accompanied with signs and wonders. The church grew to the point that the pagan temples were threatened with extinction (Acts 19:27). Paul's ministry in homes may have been extensive. See, Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, 239-253.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:1

has returned the church to the home, the fivefold leader, especially for equipping purposes, has yet to return.

So, why do modern-day leaders not embrace the Pauline model? First, they have inherited a different paradigm. The second-century leadership paradigm was modeled to them and became their natural default mode of operation. Second, the Pauline model is not a safe or convenient mode of leadership. Paul himself bears witness of this. In defense of his apostolic leadership Paul provided the following witness of his journey as a Christ like fivefold leader and reminded leaders and parishioners throughout time, of the cost of fivefold ministry:

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers from false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches. (2 Cor 11:23-28)

To make the transition from the modern to the first-century paradigm requires that leaders be willing to “pay a price” that will inevitably involve greater personal sacrifice (ego, comfort, safety, lifestyle, etc.). They must be willing to model the attributes and ministry of Christ. They must be willing to return to the public forum and bear the injustices that might occur. They must be willing to share the ministerial spotlight with other ecclesial leaders. They must place the lives and ministries of others above their own. Finally, they must see their primary role to the church as equippers of other people’s ministry in order for the church to again fully realize its potential as the Body of

Christ. They must view “church” as a system that requires every member to minister and themselves to be facilitators of those ministries.

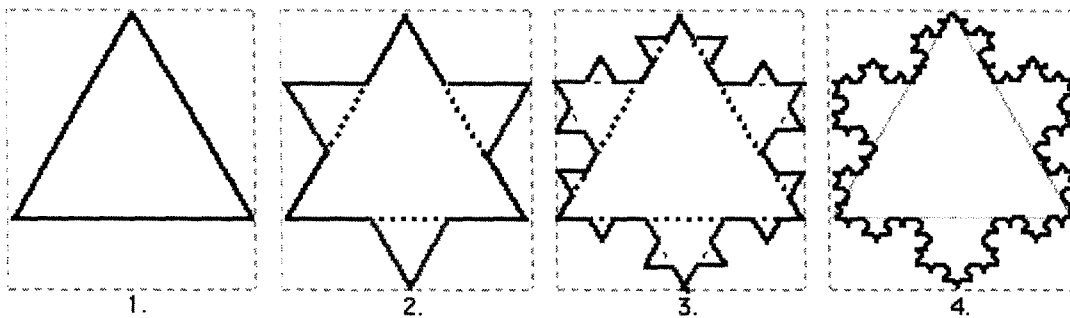
A New Role for Parishioners: The advent of Ecclesial Ministry

Consider what the church might have looked like when all five equipping ministries were available to the church. Each leader would be imparting to congregants the unique abilities of his/her own gift. Every congregant could function at some level as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. As a result, parishioners may have conceived of their ministry to the community, home and church as missional, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and rabbinical. This was possible because of leaders that were uniquely gifted to equip others.

In the late nineteenth century, a German mathematician, Felix Hausdorff, challenged Euclidean principles of geometry. His theory encompassed the concept of “self-similarity.” In 1979, Benoit B. Mandelbrot, a French mathematician, coined the term “fractals” to describe mathematical objects composed of “self-similar” convoluted lines or surfaces that remain consistent.¹⁶ According to the theory, fractals exist throughout the physical universe and may be the foundation upon which it is built. Consider the patterns observable in a seashell, or the irregular edges of a sea shore for that matter. Each reveals a pattern of self-similar shapes that repeat themselves consistently. The very words of our Creator might be definitive of the most elemental aspects of creation, self-similar reproduction: “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind...’” (Gen 1:24)

¹⁶ Mary Ann Connors, *Exploring Fractals* (Department of Mathematics and Statistics University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2004, accessed December 28 2005); available from <http://www.math.umass.edu/~mconnors/fractal/fractal.html>; Internet.

Application of fractal theory to the church helps to illustrate the impact of leaders who reproduce their ministries in their congregants. In an attempt to illustrate the use of fractal theory, Helge von Koch used an equilateral triangle, replicated over and over again. In doing so he reproduced the construction of a common snowflake.¹⁷ Each element of a snowflake is self-similar in shape and is reflected in its parts and as a whole. If just one fivefold leader equipped parishioners with his or her unique God-given abilities, then the result would look very much like the snowflake constructed by von Koch.



In panel 1, the equilateral triangle represents one fivefold leader. The following panels reveal the replication of that leader into the lives of parishioners until there is a congregation of folk who reflect the unique ministry of that leader.¹⁸ Add the other fivefold leaders and, not to sound too simplistic, you end up with a blizzard of parishioner ministry that closely replicates its leaders and more important, Christ. Christian A. Schwarz, head of the Institute of Natural Church Development, contends

¹⁷ Eric W. Weisstein, *Koch Snowflake* [Internet] (MathWorld, 1999, accessed December 28 2005); available from <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/KochSnowflake.html>.

¹⁸ "Fractals can be most simply defined as images that can be divided into parts, each of which is similar to the original object.... In many cases, a fractal can be generated by a repeating pattern, in a typically recursive or iterative process." In Christianity, Christ is the original object from which all other believers replicated. See, *Fractals*, [Internet] (Wikipedia, 2006, accessed January 2 2006); available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractals>. See also: Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 128, 129.

that reproduction or better, multiplication, is the natural product of a healthy leader.¹⁹ As such, healthy leaders naturally will be reproducing their ministries in others.

If this kind of reproduction occurred, then instead of having a congregation of passive recipients gathered to receive ministry from one leader, there would be a congregation of equipped, maturing ministers ready to minister to all who gathered. This most closely reflects the ecclesial experience revealed in the New Testament.²⁰ In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, he clearly puts the burden of the ministry capacity of parishioners on the shoulders of leadership; specifically fivefold equipping leadership. Though Paul put the initial burden upon the leaders, he still ultimately recognized that the full burden of ministry was to be borne by the entire church. As such, fivefold leadership's primary role is to equip the parishioner to accomplish the ministry of Christ through the church. Paul conceived of the church as the "body" through whom Christ would continue his ministry (1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:22, 23; Eph 4:12; Col 1:18, 24) and fivefold leaders as servants that partner with him to further equip the body for ministry.

Developing a Fivefold Equipping Ministry

Essentials for a Fivefold Leader

Before journeying into the world of equipping leadership, it would be prudent to revisit the basic ingredients of what is foundational for an equipping leader. As previously considered in this study, I submit the following:

¹⁹ Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 68, 69.

²⁰ Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor 12-14; Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16.

- *Imago Christi* – **Regeneration**; the cessation of the former person and the birth of a new creature, created Christ like in its nature. This new creature (2 Cor 5:17), bears many of the attributes (love, grace, mercy, etc.) of Christ (2 Pet 1:4).
- *Imitatio Christi* – **Sanctification**; by means of the Holy Spirit, believers replicate the ministry of Christ. They live by Christ's example, are kingdom-of-God centered, directed and empowered to accomplish Christ's ministry.
- *Servanthood* – **Orientation**; a perspective that elevates the ministerial needs of others above one's own ministry. The servant's primary task is to serve the needs of others, making this perspective vital to the equipping role.
- *Unique Giftedness* – **Ability**; believers who possess one of the unique equipping gifts of the Holy Spirit (APEPT) that enables them to both minister in an extraordinary grace and equip others to minister in kind.
- *Reproduction* – **Multiplication**; uniquely gifted believers who can reproduce the ability of their ministry gift in others. Reproduction is the ultimate fruit of equipping leadership.

It is obvious that the first three attributes are common to all believers. In this study, additional emphasis was put on *imitatio Christi*, in that the intent of the sanctified life is for all believers to fully imitate the life and ministry of Christ. The equipping ministry simply facilitates the believer to that end. The Apostle Paul set this as a primal goal of leadership: "And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we might present every man complete in Christ."²¹ The conclusion of Paul's endeavors was that all parishioners be fully fitted in Christ. The purpose of the fivefold leadership gifts, and their primary task, was and is to equip believers to function in the fullness of Christ like ministry, which is reflected in the fivefold gifts.

The last two attributes of fivefold leaders are distinct to their servant-leader call. What qualifies the leader to fivefold status is a unique divine gift of a fivefold ministry of

²¹ Colossians 1:28

Christ. It is a gift that should not engender pride or elevated status, but humility and additional service to the church. This ability distinguishes them from congregants only in that they possess skills given them by God for the benefit of the kingdom of God and the development of the Christ like ministry of others. Previously in this study, we identified Paul's self-confessed fivefold gift of apostle. As noted, there was evidence of all of the other fivefold ministries in his life (Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher), but those were reflective of *imitatio Christi*, not unique giftedness. His unique call and grace gift, was apostle (Ro 15:15; Gal 2:7-9; Eph 3:2-8; 4:7).

The final attribute of fivefold leaders are their ability to reproduce their unique ministry gifts in others. I propose this as the defining attribute of fivefold servant-leaders. The leader's ability to function in their gift, does not distinguish them as a fivefold leader even though that has been the job description for such modern leaders as pastors, teachers, evangelists and even prophets in some ecclesial circles. What allows a fivefold leader to fully complete his/her unique calling is the skill of imparting to others his/her unique gift-given ability.

Fivefold Leaders in the House

Given that these fivefold leaders are to serve the church's capacity for Christ like ministry, must they be present in the local church today for this to be accomplished? This is a critical question given the controversy surrounding some of the fivefold gifts. In *The Shape of Things to Come*, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch contend that all fivefold offices must be present in the local church: "Only when all five roles are operating within the leadership of a local congregation, and the congregation as a whole has

embraced the five functions within its corporate life, can one say that an APEPT (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher) version of leadership is occurring.”²²

Their support for this position arises from their interpretation of the context of Ephesians 4:1-16:

The Pauline logic that asserts the church is gathered around *one Lord/faith/baptism* is the same logic that says that God has specifically and deliberately (and with purpose) placed this pattern of ministry/gifting in his church. We therefore claim that this text is grammatically, theologically, and thematically indivisible.²³

In other words, the context demands that if the local church embraces “*one Lord/faith/baptism*,” then they as well must embrace all of the fivefold equipping ministries. To them, the fivefold leaders are as indivisible from one another in the church, as the indivisibility of one Lord, faith and baptism. This rhetorical defense has merit in determining the need for unity of these gifts for the church. The problem with their defense is they may be negating the universal ecclesial context from which Paul wrote. The New Testament church was as much universally understood as local. When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he wrote to multiple house churches. His epistle to the church in Ephesus may have been directed to hundreds of house churches and the record of his ministry in Ephesus (Acts 20:20) reveals him going from “house to house.”

To Paul, the church was always universal and local in function.²⁴ As such, he postulated the theological positions and ecclesiological offices in Ephesians 4:1-16, in the context of both. We must conclude that Paul was thinking universal church as well,

²² Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 225.

²³ *Ibid.*, 168.

²⁴ In Paul’s mind, the universal/local church may have been as indivisible as one Lord, one faith, one baptism. His heart and ministry appear the same for churches he served in (Antioch), founded (Corinth,, etc.) and had no part in founding (Jerusalem, Rome, etc.).

when this was penned. In other words, these fivefold leaders were God's gift to the universal church (Eph 4:8, 11), and their equipping responsibilities were to multiple local churches, not just one local church. Herein is an added complication for the modern church. In terms of function, the American church tends to be more local and autonomous than universal. This may be why Frost and Hirsch took a more local church interpretation of this text.

Of importance in their initial statement regarding the fivefold ministries is the need for the congregation to embrace all five of these equipping ministries in order for the church to realize its mission. In reference to their overall significance to the church, they are right to conceive of these as a whole. In this understanding lies the heart of this study. In some form or manner, the church must accept these five aspects of ministry as essential to the mission Christ gave to the church. Each gift contributes an essential element to the ministry of the congregant and the loss of even one would be detrimental to the ministry potential of the church.

Because Frost and Hirsch hold that all APEPT leaders must be present in the local church to have any hope of APEPT ministry from its congregants, they call for the return of the apostle, prophet and evangelist and contend that their absence is at the heart of the present dilemma faced by the American Church:

Perhaps the fact that APEPT has not been intentionally nurtured and practiced might have something to do with the immaturity we find in the Western church that inhibits fulfillment of its mission... We think it is to the detriment of the mission of the church that the role of evangelist has been marginalized and made itinerant rather than localized. And we see it as even more concerning that the functions of prophet and apostle have been ignored by mainstream churches altogether. But we reiterate our belief that only when all five are operating in unity or harmony can we see effective missional engagement begin to occur.²⁵

²⁵ Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 169.

Frost and Hirsch have correctly identified the missing leadership roles in the local church and concluded that the church is at a loss without them. However, they may be thinking of these roles more in terms of ministry, rather than equipping. They allude to the nurturing and practicing (ministry?) of the evangelist, prophet and apostle, which in all probability would impact parishioners. Sadly, the church has had the presence of the pastor and teacher ministries for centuries, yet little evidence exists that they have significantly replicated their ministries in parishioners. This is for the most part because of their roles as ministers instead of equippers. As well, Frost and Hirsch tend to dismiss the itinerant nature of the evangelist, and in part I agree. The local church needs extended periods of time for true equipping from the fivefold leader to be accomplished. Still, I contend that the fivefold leaders were gifts to the universal church, and for the most part, served multiple congregations throughout their ministries.

An Equipping Prospectus

Given the present twenty-first century context, what would be the prescription for implementing the fivefold leadership equipping paradigm? I propose two possible alternatives. First, as Frost and Hirsch have suggested, there needs to be a renewed effort toward the recognition, development and deployment of the apostle, prophet and evangelist in the church.²⁶ This would necessitate, at some level, re-embracing these roles for ministry in the contemporary church. These leaders, as well as the pastor and teacher, would need to adopt a more equipping role, as distinct from a ministering role, in

²⁶ In reference to the fivefold equipping ministries, and distinct from the elder/deacon ministries, when the term “church” is employed, it refers to both the universal and local church.

the church. To facilitate these new leadership roles, seminaries and Bible colleges must develop curricula that would serve to develop these specific ministries. Additionally, they need to recognize these fivefold leaders as important equipping ministries, and supplement their programs accordingly with equipping curricula. Finally, the church would need to think more universally in the application of these ministries, to ensure that the universal church had access to these gifts.

Even though this was the original model, it remains the most ideal. A significant emphasis has been placed on the value of imitation in this study, and living examples provide the best models for imitation. Since mentoring and discipleship are essential to the equipping ministry, having equippers in-house would be a great advantage. Having all five would ensure a holistic approach to equipping the saints for Christ like ministry.

For many Protestant denominations, there are multiple caveats for this option. First, some would not accept the apostle and prophet as leaders for today. Doing so would defy centuries-old ecclesiological convictions. Second, many would struggle with the three-level concept of leadership that places much of the local ministry responsibility on the shoulders of the elders and deacons. The current single pastor/teacher-elder role would become one of five equipping roles. The pastor would no longer be the primary minister, but instead, an equipper for the ministry of others. Leadership would be conceived of in terms of teams, composed of servant-leaders. Third, leadership in the local church (level one) would be inclusive with universal church leadership (level two and three), quite possibly from other denominations. Instead of a single fivefold gift with membership in a single local church, there would be multiple gifts from various expressions of the church, equipping multiple churches. Finally, church autonomy would

at some level be sacrificed. Churches within a community would begin to see themselves as more connected and dependent upon one another. All of this is a very large ecclesial pill to swallow. There may need to be an intermediate approach that would serve the church to transition to a more first-century paradigm.

One alternative is for the existing pastor/teacher leader to model, teach, engender and empower the ministries of the fivefold leaders in the church. This would entail intentional imparting of key aspects of each fivefold gift which in its application could, at some level, grow parishioners to be missional, paternal, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and rabbinical.

There are several challenges to this option. First, it is a monumental task for one fivefold leader. It would be within the gift range of a pastor to equip others for pastoral ministry. But for a pastor to equip parishioners for areas of ministries that are beyond his unique gifting, would be challenging. Given that all believers are to imitate Christ in all of his ministries, this may be possible. It would mean that an advanced level of competency needs to be developed in all five ministries. However, the teams approach to equipping remains the best option. To achieve this in the present paradigm would entail partnering with other universal church fivefold leaders at new levels. Second, in order to accomplish this, the senior pastor's role must change from primary minister to full-time equipper. The first-century role of the elder and deacon provided the ministerial care that released the fivefold leaders to equip. The elders and deacons would need to take a more active role in ministerial care for this to happen. Third, fivefold instruction would need to be continually present in the church. In lieu of the on-going presence of fivefold leaders, the principles of the same would need to be ever-present. All five must be the

foundation for ministry training and development for every member of the church.

Finally, each of these would have to be lived and modeled by those who teach these ministries.

The first option may not be practically feasible at this time in church history.

Until there are gifted and trained leaders able to equip by being present, the foundational principles that embody the APEPT ministries need to be taught by present ecclesial leaders.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered the first-century equipping leadership paradigm in the context of the first and twenty-first centuries. It became evident that leadership and parishioner roles of these two paradigms are very different. Church polity, organizational structure, and functional systems, were developed to accommodate each paradigm. In order for the contemporary church to embrace a more first-century model, it must be willing to facilitate the changes that permit the ancient model to function. The existing systems must change. The modern church will not be able to remain the same. Present church leadership functions must change. The role of parishioners must change.

The final chapter of this study will consider the ultimate product of a New Testament leadership model (servant-leader/equipper), the fivefold parishioner. I will first address the need for radical reform in order to accommodate a more first-century leadership and ecclesial model. Then I will consider the impact of equipping leadership upon the Christian as he or she become functional in the fivefold ministries of Christ:

becoming more missional (apostle), prophetic (prophet), reconciling (evangelist), pastoral (pastor) and rabbinical (teacher).

CHAPTER 5

THE FIVEFOLD CHRISTIAN

Introduction

There is divine wisdom in the Old and New Testament leadership models. To facilitate the growth and development of the saints, God raised up uniquely gifted and anointed leaders. Each was distinct in his/her abilities from which God's people could receive equipping in the multiple facets that make up godly ministry. For the saints of the Old Covenant, the priests, prophets and sages provided three levels of spiritual leadership that were to make Israel priestly, prophetic and sagacious. For the saints of the New Covenant, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were to equip every saint for multidimensional Christ like ministry. It is this fivefold ministry of the parishioner that will be the onus of this final chapter.

It is important that one conceive of all the fivefold ministries as multiple facets of total ministry. Every believer needs to be equipped in all five "ministries" to be prepared for ministry. Each one is distinct from the others, but as well, interdependent with the others for holistic ministry to occur. This multidimensional method of equipping has been replicated throughout time and continues today. For example, the traditional approach to secular education encompasses multiple subjects that prepare the student in various disciplines necessary for life. Thus, a student engaged in elementary education is required to learn language, mathematics, science, history, geography, the arts and even

physical training, all to prepare them for life. Each of these subjects, though distinct from the others, is equally necessary and all eventually work together to equip the student to properly function in society. Lack of even one of these disciplines impacts the student's quality of life and ability to function fully. As well, for the student to master each subject, it is required that he or she become competent in multiple disciplines within each subject. For example, mathematics requires that you learn your sums and take-a-ways as well as your multiplications, divisions, fractions, etc. So to be competent in arithmetic the student must master multiple related tasks within that discipline.

So it is with the fivefold ministries. Each in a way is distinct from the others, yet all are necessary in order for the parishioner to be fully fitted for ministry. As well, each "ministry" has multiple disciplines that require mastering that ultimately enable the parishioner to fully function in that facet of ministry. In God's great wisdom, he gave to the church five distinct equipping functions that serve to fully equip parishioners for Christ like ministry in the home, faith community and world. It is left to church leadership to return to their God-given commission to equip the saints for these ministries and for these same saints to realize their role as ministering agents of Christ. The purpose of this chapter is to consider the impact of this New Testament leadership and ecclesial paradigm upon the contemporary church as well as to further consider the ultimate product, the ministry of the believer as realized through the fivefold ministries.

The Call for Radical Reformation

Despite its institutional proclivity, the church is a highly systems-oriented organism. Even minor changes in any aspect of a local church can potentially impact the entire congregation. What is proposed in this dissertation, when implemented, may be

enough to turn over the proverbial ecclesial apple cart. Accommodating this change is not as simple as having leaders become more equipping and less ministerial, or parishioners engaging in more ministry as they become equipped. The organization and function of “church” must be redesigned to serve this New Testament ministry paradigm.

In his book, *The Church Faces Death*, Michael Jenkins suggests that a more grave solution to facilitate change is needed, that is, death. He contends that the church is dying from the current ecclesial paradigm. He specifically identifies the Protestant church in Scotland as symptomatic of this death. Currently, the church is losing twenty thousand parishioners per year.¹ Given this rate of decline, he predicts that the Protestant church in Scotland will be extinct by the year 2047. In similar fashion, the church in Ireland is well ahead of Scotland and boasts the second most un-churched populace in the industrial world (84%). However, Jenkins sees this death as a necessary process that ultimately will usher in new ecclesial life. “One form of ecclesial life diminishes and disappears from history while another surprises us by being raised to new life.”² This death and rebirth appears to be a recurring event in the history of Christianity, and G.K. Chesterton gives reason to find solace in this: “Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it has a god who knew the way out of the grave.”³

Whether or not the church must suffer death in order for a new ecclesial model to arise may in part be dependant upon its response to change. Without question, the impact of the “church” itself becoming effective and primary ministers will demand significant

¹ Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 75-76.

² Michael Jenkins, *The Church Faces Death: Ecclesiology in a Post-Modern Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28.

³ G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1925), 288.

ecclesial transformation. Reggie McNeal, in *The Present Future*, addresses the profound reformation needed to facilitate the ministry of the Body of Christ:

The first Reformation was about freeing the church. The new Reformation is about freeing God's people from the church (the institution). The original Reformation decentralized the church. The new Reformation decentralizes ministry. The former Reformation occurred when clergy were no longer willing to take marching orders for their ministry from the Pope. The current Reformation finds church members no longer willing for clergy to script their personal spiritual journey.⁴

Though somewhat brutal in his approach, McNeal is correct in his evaluation of the failure of the first reformation and in calling for a dramatic change to accommodate parishioner ministry. As discussed previously, the present ecclesial paradigm is predominantly clerical-based in its ministerial practice, and by its very function, resists if not constrains both the equipping and empowering of the saints for ministry. As such, leaders must embrace radical change that begins from ceasing to be those who “collect” believers to their own ministries, to become those who equip, empower and release the ministry of others.

However, the change needed extends well beyond the leadership of the church. There must be a change in the basic organization of church. The current organizational structure is the product of centuries of refinement in support of the present clerical-based ministerial model. In order to accommodate a new parishioner ministerial base, organizational structures must change. Ed Hayes, in his work *The Church*, looks back to the apostolic church to provide a simpler, more primal organizational structure that facilitated the ministry of others: “Organization in the apostolic period was ministry-

⁴ Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 43.

driven. That is, only such organization emerged as was necessary to help fulfill Christ's commission and to provide compassionate care and instruction of the flock."⁵

The organization of the early church served to engender and release the ministry of parishioners. Leaders appear for the most part to equip for ministry, provide spiritual and practical care, and then back away to allow the Body of Christ to minister. Consider again the words of Paul to the Ephesians that call the populace of the church to maturity for ministry:

As a result, we are no longer to be children... but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Eph 4:14-16)

Presently, the church, for the most part has a clear understanding of the present organizational structure that serves to accommodate the ministry of the clergy. How services are conducted (liturgy) and facilitated (buildings, furnishings, etc.) all serve this ministerial paradigm, which fundamentally amounts to ministry that arises from the few. A key question, then, is what would be the organizational structure that would serve the New Testament ministerial paradigm of the ministry of the many? Clearly it would have to be radically different.

When one is properly trained or educated in a particular discipline or skill, what generally follows is the natural desire to engage in it. For example, an athlete trains in a particular sport to participate, not to become a spectator. If one is to open the ecclesial equivalent of Pandora's Box of equipping parishioners for ministry, then one must provide the venue through which they can practice their ministries. To do this, leaders

⁵ Edward L. Hayes, Charles R. Swindoll, and Roy B. Zuck, *The Church: The Body of Christ in the World of Today* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1999).

must become more like “player-coaches” and less like sole participants.⁶ Because of *imitatio Christi*, the church longs to participate in ministry. In his study of the church, Rodney Clapp notes the observations of Henri Nouwen in which he concludes, “Christians long to ‘touch the center’ of men’s and women’s lives but instead find themselves on the ‘periphery, often pleading in vain for admission.’”⁷ Again, the desire for ministry arises from *imitatio Christi*, but the ability to minister comes from equipping and the opportunity to engage in ministry from leaders that release ministry. All three are necessary and the current ecclesial paradigm is for the most part failing to equip and release the ministries of parishioners. Sadly, many parishioners find themselves on the outside of ministry in the church and ill-equipped for ministerial service where they are free to minister, which is in the home and the world.

There is a need for ecclesial leaders to return to a more Christ like leadership model. A majority of Christ’s time was spent equipping, empowering and releasing the ministry of others (disciples). He took every opportunity to develop and give place for the participation of his disciples in ministry. For example, when five thousand folk gathered to hear Christ speak, the disciples encouraged him to send the crowd into the local villages to eat, as they were growing hungry. Knowing that a miracle was going to take place, he responded to his disciples, “You give them something to eat!” In Luke’s account of this event, the disciples had just returned from their ministries and were ready to give account for “all they had done” (Lk 9:10). It was their chance to share their victories (Lk 10:17-19). Here was an opportunity for Christ to do another miracle that

⁶ Ogden, *The New Reformation*, 73.

⁷ Rodney Clapp, *A Peculiar People; the Church as Culture in a Post-Modern Society* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 17.

would further glorify his own ministry and yet his greater desire was for the disciples to work a miracle.

From the perspective of some leaders, Christ like leadership is understood as a single leader before the masses, preaching awe inspiring messages. Instead, contemporary leaders must see Christ like leadership as equipping, empowering and releasing the ministry of others. It is time for pastors to say to equipped parishioners, “You give them something to eat!” What must typify their success as leaders is the successfulness of the ministry of those they equip. To develop effective parishioner ministry, leaders must engage in this aspect of Christ like leadership.

As a result, the primary role of leadership must change. It must have at its core the development of the ministry of others. McNeal addresses the need for leaders to be more preparation-oriented and less visionary- or planning-oriented.⁸ He uses the example of a surfer who spends most of his or her efforts on preparing to surf by servicing equipment and honing and developing skills. In fact, he poses the question “How do you plan waves?” In reality, leaders have no clear vision of the future, just a mandate to prepare (equip) others for whatever the future might bring. Thus, being effective in a modern or postmodern world requires the same, being fully equipped in Christ like ministry.

Ecclesial leaders must prepare parishioners for ministry in and out of the church. Equipping for ministry must be for all of life, within and without the ecclesial walls.

McNeal addresses the failure of the reformation to accomplish this:

Luther preached that all the people of God are called and gifted for service. The church got this part right. But this powerful biblical theme has been truncated in its impact, because the church has interpreted it almost solely for its own use. This myopic vision has resulted in ministry being defined

⁸ McNeal, *The Present Future*, 92-93.

largely in church terms and lay people often being viewed as functionary resources to get church work done.⁹

To remedy this, he calls for a more apostolic style of leadership that conceives of ministry within and without the church. He concludes that true apostolic leaders “measure their effectiveness by their impact beyond the church walls.”¹⁰ This effectiveness becomes ultimately realized through the lives of equipped parishioners.

This being the case, ecclesial leaders must conceive of ministry occurring outside the walls of the church and outside the “direct” oversight and control of leadership. They must be willing to fully entrust ministry to others.¹¹ By doing so, ministry, and in some measure the “church,” becomes redefined in how, where and when it is expressed. It can no longer be contained solely in a basilica, cathedral or sanctuary. It will be expressed in myriads of ways and countless settings of which the only common denominator is Christ, ministering through his body. These expressions of the church may very well be like the foot and hand or eyes and ears that Paul metaphorically used to describe the great functional diversity of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:15-17).

In the end, church structure will have to dramatically change in order to make a place for the ministry of parishioners. Liturgy, organizational systems and even facilities must change to accommodate the New Testament ministry paradigm.¹² What this may

⁹ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰ Ibid., 127.

¹¹ I am thinking more in terms of micro-managing. I am not implying that there are to be ministries without leadership oversight. What is important is that ministry is allowed to happen through parishioners because leaders have effectively equipped them and can readily entrust ministry to them, with minimal oversight. This is evidenced in the ministries of the apostles as they repeatedly entrust ministry to others.

¹² The current 2nd-Century system requires specific liturgy and the facilities to accommodate its ministry. For example, services are conducted by leaders, pews all face forward, directing the attention of

look like will be very different from the current model of church. Michael Horst attempts to capture the essence of this radical change in his work, *The Shaping of Things to Come*: “Rather than investing time in the creation and development of sacred religious spaces for people to meet God, this mode recognizes that the church is a more organic, dynamic, and noninstitutionalized set of relationships than the old Christendom mode allows for.”¹³ To attempt to create a common functional structure for all churches might be an exercise in futility, as little evidence of a single functional prescription is evident in the New Testament record. The church is not so much an institution that demands formal structure, but as Horst observes, a living organism that must be freed from its institutional fetters to fully express itself. Equipping leaders ultimately serves that purpose.

The Fivefold Christian

This brings us to the ultimate product of the fivefold equipping leadership gifts, the fivefold Christian. In Chapters Three and Four, the ministries of the fivefold leaders were discussed. General definitions were given to reveal the distinctiveness of each gift. If each gift is in any measure imparted to the believer, then the perspectives and abilities related to those gifts become evident in the believer. It is the overall concepts and applications of these gifts to the life and ministry of the believer that will be considered here.

parishioners to the cleric that is ministering, etc. Parishioner ministry would require restructuring liturgy and facilities for the ministry of many.

¹³ Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 43, 44.

Missional: an Apostolic People

The ministry of the apostle was multi-faceted. Fundamentally, the apostle was uniquely called out for the purpose of being sent on a divine assignment. To engage in apostolic ministry is to understand that just like Christ, who was sent to earth for the divine assignment of establishing the kingdom of God, and then called out and sent forth apostles with like assignment, so he sends parishioners as well. In Darrell Guder's work, *Missional Church*, he dedicates an entire chapter to the apostolic role of parishioners. He concludes: "The church exists as community, servant, and messenger of the reign of God in the midst of other kingdoms, communities, and powers that attempt to shape our understanding of reality... To that world, the missional church is apostle—sent out on behalf of the reign of God."¹⁴ The apostolic office served to engender this calling and commission to take the kingdom of God to the world. As such, every believer was to be missional, actively participating in extending the kingdom in every context of life.

Apostolic believers understand that they are a sent people. In other words, God commissions them every day to go forth for the purpose of taking his kingdom to the world. This may require a reorientation of the church's perspective on its purpose in life. The apostolic believer lives in the kingdom of God and as such, lives for the kingdom of God. To get practical, they do not simply "go" to work, or school, or to the store, etc. Due to the apostolic aspect of their ministry, parishioners understand they are called out and sent by God to those places for purposes far more related to his kingdom than theirs. Thus, every believer lives a continual "called out" and "sent forth" life.

As well, apostolic believers are sent not just to labor (work), or learn (school) or purchase (store), etc, which all may be very good things in and of themselves. Each

¹⁴ Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 110.

encounter, task, and endeavor has a greater kingdom purpose. Apostolic believers are first and foremost sent to bring the reign and presence of God in the context of those endeavors. The earthly task or responsibility is always second to serving the kingdom of God. This awareness of the overall kingdom purpose of believers' lives is why Paul exhorted New Testament saints to "render service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph 6:7), and "to do your work heartily, as for the Lord, rather than for men" (Col 3:23). Paul called believers to an ever present sense of the kingdom of God of which they were ultimately to serve throughout the day. It was this apostolic-like ministry that gave opportunity for the kingdom of God to effectively penetrate that first-century pagan culture.

In the end, God sends equipped believers out every day to strategic locations, directed under his sovereignty (Jas 4:13-16) to take with them the reign and message of God. This commission is a core element of Christ like ministry. Gruder notes: "Jesus believed it to be his mission to announce the presence of the reign of God and its implications and call. It was his mission to put into words what was true about his presence and his deeds."¹⁵ This message passed on to the original apostles when they were sent, is to ring forth from every believer as they are sent to their daily tasks: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand (i.e. "God has come near")."¹⁶ The task of the church is to bring the kingdom, its message and benefits to the part of the world they are sent to that day. Sadly, this foundational apostolic call to go out to the world may have first been compromised by the very apostles given the commission. As Neal Cole observes, "One

¹⁵ Ibid., 106.

¹⁶ Matt 3:2, 4:17

irony of the New Testament record is that under persecution everyone from the Jerusalem church went out, except the “sent ones” who were given the command in the first place. ‘Apostles’ literally means sent ones, and they were the only ones who didn’t go when persecution struck the church—a sad irony indeed.”¹⁷

Of course this apostolic call involves being “sent” to the faith community as well. As a result, congregants do not simply go to church, but are sent, with divine assignments that serve to build the kingdom of God in the ecclesial context. As parishioners embrace their roles as functioning, ministering agents, they understand church, very much like a contemporary pastor today, as a place where they are commissioned to minister. As a result, they come equally prepared to bring the kingdom of God near.

Finally, parishioners are to be apostolic in their marriages and families. They understand that as a married couple or family, they are called for kingdom purposes. This apostolic function brings a missional perspective to the home. As well, much like the apostles that oversaw the growth and development of the church, apostolic believers do the same for their homes. In the end, apostolically equipped parishioners become sent people that take the kingdom of God, its message and paternal oversight, everywhere they live and every where they go. Thus, the apostolic mission incorporates every aspect of life.

Incarnational: a Prophetic People

The Apostle John begins his gospel by introducing Jesus as the Word of God that became flesh, incarnated (Jn 1:1, 14). This divine act became the catalyst through which the Word could dwell within every believer (1 Cor 3:16). A good portion of the

¹⁷ Cole, *Organic Church*, 42.

collateral damage from the present clerical system is the loss of the prophetic ministry of parishioners. When the handling of the word is restricted to select, specially trained individuals, the populace of the church tends to remain silent. The Apostle Paul understood the significance of the word of God dwelling in every parishioner and the need for that word to be spoken by the church. To the Colossians he wrote:

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Col 3:16, 17)

To the Corinthians he wrote:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. (1 Cor 2:12-13)

In both of these references, Paul apparently refers to experiences in the “word” for all believers that may be distinct of the spiritual gift of prophecy addressed predominantly in 1 Corinthians 14. He is referring to the words and thoughts of God incarnate in the believer. The presence of God’s “words” or thoughts in the believer is fundamental to the Christian experience. In Paul’s epistle to the Romans, he placed the presence of the word as foundational to saving faith: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”¹⁸

In his introduction of spiritual gifts to the Corinthians, Paul addressed the presence of the Holy Spirit that strongly influences even the confessions of believers:

¹⁸ Romans 10:17

“no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹ What Paul suggests is that this very simple declaration of faith and/or praise, “Jesus is Lord,” is accomplishable only because of the presence and subsequent influence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Thus, God is a great influencer of our thoughts and speech (1 Cor 2:12-13). This is reflected in Peter’s insightful declaration of Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). Immediately after this confession, Jesus instructed him that his revelation (words, thoughts) did not come from flesh and blood but from God the Father. Peter may have thought he came up with this great revelation on his own (flesh and blood), but in fact he was unaware of its origin. This may be the condition of much of modern Christendom. Scripture teaches that God is still actively speaking through His Spirit to believers. The concern at the end of the first-century may have been whether or not anyone could hear or discern the Spirit’s voice. As a result, Jesus ends each of his messages to the seven churches of Revelation by directly addressing, “he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

New Testament prophets were individuals that entered into a unique relationship with God, were gifted with *charismata*, and given the ability to hear, discern, and communicate God’s word. They were emissaries on behalf of God to the world and faith community. As a result, there may be no better equipping leader than the prophet to instruct the church on how to hear and discern the word of Christ and then boldly declare the same. As a result, there needs to be a renewed and concerted effort from prophets in equipping the church to discern the voice of the Spirit with an empowering that enables those words to be spoken. God desires that his word be spoken throughout the world and

¹⁹ 1 Cor 12:3

he places in the heart of every believer the person of the Holy Spirit as the source of that word (Jn 16:13-14). Equipping parishioners to hear and speak will unleash a new realm of the ministry of God's word in the home (Eph 5:26), workplace (Col 3:23), church (1 Cor 12:8) and community (Acts 20:20). Thus, when parishioners are prophetically equipped they will be a people that have within them the words of God, the ability to hear and discern these words and the boldness to speak them as directed by the Spirit. In a sense, God's word becomes incarnate again, through the life of the believer.

However, being incarnational is more than just the word of God within the believer. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch propose that the prophetic word within the believer must become incarnated into the culture. In the *Shaping of Things to Come*, they challenge the church to find the means to more fully incarnate itself into its culture. In the past, the church required the culture to incarnate itself into the church. They contend that the burden should be upon the church. Just like Christ, that took on human form (Phil 2:7) without compromise to the human person, so the church must find a way to incarnate into its culture without compromise to the culture.

As such, a prophetically equipped people will be able to discern the word of God and communicate that word in a way that is relevant to the culture.²⁰ This is reflected continually in the ministry of Christ as he prophetically ministers in the context of the Jewish culture. In a sense, he not only took on human flesh, but as well incarnated into the human culture he addressed. Prophetically equipping parishioners must incorporate both aspects of incarnation. They need to be equipped to discern and speak the word of God and to contextualize that message into the culture they are called to address.

²⁰ Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 35-41.

Reconciling: an Evangelistic People

In earlier chapters of this study, the evangelist was defined as a divine herald of good news. The greatest of all news is the work of reconciliation accomplished by Christ between God and humanity. This is the message and ministry Paul identified with in his second epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:18-21) and clearly defined his missional ministry. The act and message of reconciliation is the heart and soul of evangelism and the foundation of our faith.²¹ It is as well the catalyst for an ongoing healthy faith community, for at the heart of reconciliation is forgiveness. It is important to conceive of the faith community as a forgiving community. In fact, Jesus suggested that we must be a forgiving community before we can become a forgiven community:

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matt 6:12)

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men for their transgressions, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matt 6:14-15)

If the church is a forgiving community, why do they suffer the same divorce rate as unbelievers and why do divisions and schisms still exist? These issues continue to plague the church. The answer may lie in a people that have yet to realize their role as reconcilers (evangelists). As Lesslie Newbigin observes, "The church is sent into the world to continue that which He came to do, in the power of the same Spirit, reconciling people to God."²² Evangelists are uniquely gifted in the ministry of reconciliation. They must serve to equip the congregation to become agents of forgiveness and reconciliation.

²¹ "The central Christian belief is that Christ's death has somehow put us right with God and given us a fresh start." C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 57.

²² Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 230.

The twenty-first century church tends to think of evangelism in a programmatic way. Even the message of the gospel has been formularized (Four Spiritual Laws, etc.) and for the most part seen as only applicable to those outside the church. Arguably, first-century evangelism was far more than a prepackaged message for the lost. It was in fact, a primal economy of the Christian life. For example, husbands are required by Paul to be forgiving and redemptive (evangelistic) to their errant wives:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water of the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Eph 5:25-27)

Paul also admonished the Corinthians to fully reconcile with a repentant brother who tearfully sought forgiveness. In his appeal he revealed the predominant place that reconciliation had in the ancient church:

Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. For to this end also I wrote that I might put to the test whether you are obedient in all things. But whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes. (2 Cor 2:5-11)

In Paul's epistle to the Galatians he echoes this same kingdom economy: "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourselves, lest you too be tempted" (Gal 6:1).

The work of evangelism is the ongoing work of reconciling folk into a right relationship with God and others. The church must become the heralds of the gospel that remedies the enmity due to sin. The evangelist was given to the church to this end. Since

modern evangelists are predominantly engaged in parachurch ministries to the lost, they must be called back to the church to equip congregants in the ministry of reconciliation. In the end, when parishioners are evangelistically equipped, they will become agents of reconciliation. They will be a forgiving people bringing estranged folk back into right relationship with God and one another.

Pastoral: a Shepherding People

Given the current ministerial paradigm, the pastor should be the most understood role of the fivefold ministries. However, the modern pastoral role may be but a shadow of what its first-century counterpart was. Due in some part to America's predominantly urban culture, much of the church today may no longer have a grasp of the role of the common shepherd.²³ The sole concern of the Israelite shepherd was the wellbeing of the sheep in his or her charge. This included food and water, shelter, safety and overall health. The ultimate fruit from all of the shepherd's efforts was a flock of sheep that produced abundant wool, meat and more sheep. Sheep required continual care, night and day. As such, the shepherd watched over the sheep, ensuring that they were well fed, protected from the elements and predators, free from disease and healthy enough to reproduce. The whole focus of the shepherd was on the health and growth of the sheep. For the shepherd, all sheep that were under his charge were his or her concern, whether currently in the flock (found) or away from the flock (lost).

The pastoral role of the equipped parishioner incorporates the spiritual care and oversight of other believers. Very much like the ancient shepherd, the parishioner is

²³ A distinguishing mark of the shepherd was his daily life in and among the sheep, daily while in the fields. "When shepherds and flocks take up their more permanent abode in any city, this is a mark of depopulation and disaster through divine judgment." See *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1436.

actively involved in the spiritual welfare of others. He or she watches over their lives, ensuring they have the proper spiritual food to eat, and that they are not alone against the elements or the enemy of the sheep. They serve their continual growth and maturity in Christ. No single pastor can accomplish this in any ecclesial context. This is why God gave to the church servant-leaders with pastoral gifts to equip the church to care for itself. When parishioners are pastorally equipped, they become pastoral, taking on the responsibility for the growth and wellbeing of other folk, in and outside the faith community. Jesus conceived of all people as sheep in need of a shepherd (Mk 6:34) and the world is at a loss without the pastoral care of the church.

Rabbinical: a Teaching People

In light of the first-century office of Rabbi, it is difficult to use the term “rabbinical” in terms of parishioners. In fact Christ emphatically stated that we should call no one “Rabbi” (Matt 23:8). However, Rabbi is interpreted as “teacher” (Jn 1:38) and I suggest this office was redefined by Jesus Christ, who allowed himself to be called a rabbi (Matt 26:25, 49; Mk 9:5; 11:21). It is in deference to Christ that the term rabbinical is employed here, not the proper noun, but the adjective to define this aspect of the ministry of parishioners. As previously addressed in this study, the greatest teacher, Christ, taught in the context of life and it is in this context that parishioners are called to teach as well.

If the context of teaching was everyday life, then the content of teaching was living like Christ in that life. Even though Paul waxed quite theological at times, he was equally capable of presenting great theological truths in the context of daily living. In fact, a vast majority of his epistles deal with “life” as a Christian. For example, he

provided vital life lessons in such areas as being single for the kingdom of God, marital and parental counsel, dealing with such areas as greed, pride, divisions, offences, how to treat unbelievers, and a plethora of other life issues. The epistle of James is so life-oriented that it is considered by many theologians as New Testament wisdom literature.²⁴ The apostles taught about the fundamentals of being a Christian in every aspect of life. Ecclesial teachers of that day were not so much theologians or biblicists, but instructors in the way of life for the believer. However, primary to their call was equipping the saints to be able to teach these same truths in the home, church, and the world. The teacher needs to return to the church in force as an equipper of parishioners so they can teach others. In other words, gifted teachers need to equip parishioners to be life-teachers. As a result, when parishioners are equipped to teach, they are rabbinical in that they teach others how to live as Christians.

Conclusion

Those who have gone through elementary education in America have, at minimum, rudimentary skills in all of the disciplines of that program. As a result, they can read and write, do their numbers, follow a map, and have at least a general knowledge of history, science, etc. In other words, they can function in the world in which they live. The fivefold ministries allow the believer to fully function in Christ like ministry for the kingdom of God. Fundamentally when equipped, they become missional, incarnational, reconcilers, pastoral, and rabbinical. Each of these is necessary for a mature Christian life in the church, home and community. Believers can no more afford to be without, let us say, pastoral skills, or teaching skills, as the everyday

²⁴ See Ralph P. Martin, *World Biblical Commentary; James*, ed. David A. Hubbard, vol. 48 (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1988), lxxxvii-xciii.

American can be without reading or mathematic skills. All five are vital for effective Christian ministry and life.

The American church can ill afford to continue on its present course. The culture continues to depart from the Judeo-Christian morals established by the church. As well, there is evidence of a mass migration of Christians from the institutional church. Church as purely an institution must end and must transition into a living organism in which every part of the organism is equipped to function. God gave five distinct yet profoundly related equipping gifts to leaders to equip the church for ministry. Each of these provides abilities that together allow every believer to effectively minister to the church and the world. It is time for these leaders to embrace their primary role as equippers. It is time for believers to be equipped, empowered and released for ministry. New Testament leaders understood the vital role of every member of the church as ministering agents of Christ. Their ministries comprised the spiritual care and ministerial development of theses believers. Contemporary church leaders need to become these kinds of servant-leaders, embracing equipping as a primary role of their ministry.

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