



**Poema**

***“The Gifts of Christ to the Church” Part 2***

**Ephesians 4:11**

An attitude has taken shape in the Western church that puts the wrong emphasis on the wrong person or persons as it pertains to church growth. There is an expectation from the body of Christ about the growth of the body of Christ that does not reflect the Head of the body of Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, “...***I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it...***” (***Matthew 16:18***). That emphatic statement by Jesus is one that must not be ignored or dismissed. Jesus said it, therefore He performs it consistently and presently through the Holy Spirit.

***John MacArthur states:***

***“The past decade or so has witnessed the development of what is called the church growth movement. Seminars, conferences, books, programs, and even special organizations are devoted exclusively to teaching and discussing principles and methods for church growth. Many of the efforts are helpful, but only to the extent they are consistent with the principles Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:12-16. Here in its most succinct form is God’s plan by which Christ produces church growth.”***

As creative as the Body may be in its attempt to add to its numbers, it cannot over step nor ignore the formula God has made clear in the Scripture.

After Paul teaches the depth of the gift of God’s grace with the emphasis on the greatest gift of all – Himself, he goes on to teach the gift of Christ to the church in its leadership.

- ***Christ has called certain men to a SPECIFIC task for the continued GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT of His PEOPLE (Ephesians 4:11)***

***“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.***

***Apostles and Prophets***

The first two listed are the apostles and prophets. These men were gifted and called to three basic responsibilities:

- 1) – to lay the foundation of the church (*Ephesians 2:20*)
- 2) – to receive and declare the revelation of God’s Word (*Acts 11:28; 21:10-11; Ephesians 3:5*)
- 3) – to give confirmation of that Word through “signs and wonders and miracles” (*Acts 8:6-7; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4*)

Apostles were men who must meet certain qualifications: having been directly called by Jesus and having been an eyewitness of the risen Christ.

Prophets were also appointed by God as specially gifted men, and differ from those believers who have the gift of prophecy. The prophets sometimes spoke revelation from God and sometimes simply expounded revelation already given.

### ***Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers***

These two offices are now in place in God's plan for the advancement of the kingdom.

Evangelists are men who proclaim good news. The work of an evangelist is to preach and explain the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not yet heard the gospel. In the New Testament, evangelists were missionaries and church planters who went where Christ was not named and led people to faith. These gifted men are uniquely designed and given to the church to reach people with the gospel. Even today, they are a very important part of all local congregations.

Pastor in the Greek is ***poimen***, whose normal meaning is shepherd. The term emphasizes the care, protection, and leadership of the church.

Teacher ***didaskaloi*** has to do with the primary function of the pastor – the English separates the two with ***and***. This leads to a misunderstanding that there are two separate offices. However, the Greek does not make the separation. It should be translated as one office of the church, ***pastor-teacher and or shepherd-teacher***.

Pastors are not distinct from bishops and elders; the terms are simply different ways of identifying the same people. The Greek word for ***pastor*** is ***poimen***, which means ***shepherd***. The Greek word for ***bishop*** is ***episkopos***, which means ***overseer***. The Greek word for ***elder*** is ***presbuteros***, which denotes ***an older person***. All three terms refer to the same office. In the qualifications for a bishop, listed in 1 Timothy 3:7, and those for an elder, in Titus, Paul uses both terms to refer to the same man.

*Elder* emphasizes who the man is, *bishop* speaks of what he does, and *pastor* deals with his attitude and character. All three are used of the same church leader, and all three identify those who feed and lead the church. Yet, each term has a unique emphasis.

An unfortunate expectation is present among western churches of this position. The pastor-teacher is not the CEO of the church tasked to bring a "profit" of souls to the "share holders and officers of the corporation," known as the Board of Trustees, in order to grow the "company."

The pastor-teacher/elder/bishop/overseer/shepherd is responsible for the care and feeding, as well as the spiritual guidance, of the entire church. This leader's task remains for the church today and will continue until the church is raptured to meet the Lord in the air. The pastor-teacher is solely responsible for the spiritual development of the congregation. He is not responsible to grow the church numerically or build the church – that is the role of Christ alone. (***cf. Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47***)

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