

First Baptist Church
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Ministry Development that can Stimulate Church Growth – Pastor Pierre Cannings

80/20

Ephesians 4:11-16

Outline

Body:

Background: The purpose for writing Ephesians was not to correct any error or heresy. The purpose was for the believers to understand the mystery of God (1:9), His goals for the church (1:11; 22-23), and to expand their knowledge (1:8, 18) of Him for a deeper spiritual walk (1:3; 3:14-21; 4:13). Paul also wanted the believers to understand that their walk was not only on an earthly plane, but also in heavenly realms where it receives its meaning and significance.

Paul also wrote to express his inner satisfaction with the Christ-centered faith of those addressed and their love for all the saints (1:15).

He also wrote in order to picture God's glorious redemptive grace toward the church, bestowed upon it in order that it might be a blessing to the world and might stand united over against all the forces of evil and thus glorify its Redeemer.

- I. Starts at the top v.11-13
 - a. Jesus the one who **Appointed** the gift of
 - i. Apostles- the 12 **Mentioned here because of their role in establishing the church (2:20)** From Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 it would seem that a necessary qualification of an apostle was to have seen the risen Lord, and to have been sent out by him, and thus to have come to be engaged as a foundation member (Eph. 2:20)
 - ii. Prophets- **People to whom God made known a message for his people that was appropriate to their particular need or situation (1 Co. 14:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:10).**
 - iii. Evangelist **While the other gifted people helped the church grow through edification, the evangelists helped the church grow by augmentation.**
 - iv. Pastors **Those who have pastoral care for God's people (the image is that of shepherding) will naturally provide "food" from the Scriptures (teaching)**
 - v. Teachers
 - b. For the Equipping

- i. For the work of Service
 - 1. *Equipping*- to make someone completely adequate or sufficient for something
 - 2. *Work is the manifestation of practical proof*
 - a. *This world is equivalent to God's work in creation but now with the church both through the Spirit*
 - 3. *Service*- all significant activity for the edification of the community
 - 4. To the building of the body- of spiritual strengthening (s. οἰκοδομέω 3) *edifying, edification, building*
 - a. and of restoring to spiritual health a person who has fallen (Gal. 6:1). It may be used, however, of 'perfecting' (A^{1V}) what is lacking in the faith of Christians
 - c. Until we attain Unity of the faith
 - i. from their different backgrounds of error and ignorance come into a growing understanding of the 'one hope'
 - ii. content of faith in God
 - d. Knowledge of the Son of God
 - i. Knowledge - Similarly, attaining to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God is likely to mean appropriating all that is involved in the salvation which centers in Christ
 - ii. Mature man
 - iii. To the Measure of Stature
 - 1. Which belongs to the fullness of Christ
- II. No Longer Children v. 14-15
 - a. Children – Immature in teaching needing milk Heb 5:13
 - b. Carried Away
 - i. False Doctrine
 - ii. Trickery of Men
 - iii. Craftiness
 - iv. Deceitful Scheming
 - c. Speaking Truth
 - d. The two are opposing from children to man and trickery to truth.
 - i. In Love
 - ii. We Grow Up
 - 1. In All Aspects in Him
 - a. Who is the Head
- III. Together We Grow v.16
 - a. Whole Body
 - i. Being Fitted
 - ii. Held Together
 - iii. Properly Working
 - b. Causes Growth
 - i. Building Up

¹AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

1. In Love - Love is the lifeblood of this body, and therefore, the ultimate criterion for the assessment of the Church's growth will be how far it is characterized by love.

Word Studies

Given- appoint to special responsibility, *appoint*²

Equipping- Along the same lines καταρτισμός is used at Eph. 4:12, in the context of the edifying of the body of Christ, to denote the equipment of the saints for the work of the ministry. The establishment of the community in work for the kingdom of God in the widest sense thus constitutes for Paul a material precondition of the upbuilding and consequently the actualisation of the community.³

⁴*m*: to make someone completely adequate or sufficient for something—‘to make adequate, to furnish completely, to cause to be fully qualified, adequacy.’⁵

Work - *manifestation, practical proof*⁶

This is no less clear in Paul. The ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ in R. 14:20 is the οἰκοδομή of the community. An agricultural image is used as well as an architectural (γεώργιον, 1 C. 3:9). This activity of God is through the Spirit. It is apparent in the missionary work of the apostle, 1 C. 9:1: τὸ ἔργον μου ἐμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ. The founding of the Christian Church corresponds to the creation of the world. In both cases we have a work of God through the Word or Spirit. The apostle is not alone in doing the work of God. His helpers also do this work, 1 C. 16:10; Phil. 2:30. Even the most secular action in the interest of the Christian work of mission may be regarded as ἔργον κυρίου, and it is thus understandable that in the active expression of faith Paul can see both work for the Lord and the work of the Lord. Thus his admonition in 1 C. 15:58 runs as follows: ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε (cf. Rev. 2:26:

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 242.

³ Gerhard Delling, “Ἄρτιος, Ἐξαρτίζω, Καταρτίζω, Καταρτισμός, Κατάρτις,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 476.

⁴*m* masculine

⁵ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*](#) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 679.

⁶ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 390.

τηρῶν ... τὰ ἔργα μου), and in Eph. 4:12 the diaconate is described as a work in this sense. That we are always to think of God's working is most evident in Phil. 1:6: ὁ⁷

Service- performance of a service

A decisive point for understanding the concept is that early Christianity learned to regard and describe as διακονία all significant activity for the edification of the community (Eph. 4:11 ff.)⁸

Building up - , of spiritual strengthening (s. οικοδομέω 3) *edifying, edification, building up*.⁹ the construction of something, with focus on the event of building up or on the result of such an event—'to build up, to construct, construction'¹⁰

Mature-pert¹¹. to being mature, *full-grown, mature, adult*¹²

Stature- the age which is sufficient or requisite for certain things, *maturity*¹³

1. V.13: "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It is marked of incompleteness, of spiritual immaturity, that we are still disunited; and the remedy is by no means to be found in reduced Christianity, but in advance to the highest levels which the "**fullness of the faith will overcome all our deficiencies**" "for our knowledge is imperfect...; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away" (1 Cor. 13:9-10).

Children- • sense is found **Hb 5:13** where the νήπιος, who is fed w¹⁴. the milk of elementary teaching, is contrasted w¹⁵. the τέλειος='mature person', who can take the solid food of the main teachings (s. also **1 Cor 3:1f**).¹⁶

⁷ Georg Bertram, "[Ἔργον, Ἐργάζομαι, Ἐργάτης, Ἐργασία, Ἐνεργής, Ἐνέργεια, Ἐνεργέω, Ἐνέργημα, Ἐνεργεσία, Ἐνεργετέω, Ἐνεργέτης](#)," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 643.

⁸ Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "[Διακονέω, Διακονία, Διάκονος](#)," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 87.

⁹ William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 696.

¹⁰ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains](#) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 513.

¹¹**pert. pert.** = pertaining (to)

¹² William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 995.

¹³ William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 436.

¹⁴w. **w.** = with

¹⁵w. **w.** = with

¹⁶ William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 671.

1. Babes – Nepios (#3516):

- a) **To speak; to child not yet able to speak plainly (Mt. 21:16, 1Cor. 13:11); a young person underage (Gal. 4:1, 3) a child, a babe in ignorance and simplicity (Mt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21; Rom. 2:20); a babe in Christ, a person weak in faith, a beginner, (1 Cor. 3:1; Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:13), to be an infant (1 Cor. 14:20).**
- b) **Metaphorically, of the unsophisticated in mind and trustful in disposition, Matt 11:25 and Luke 10:21, where it stands in contrast to the wise; of those who are possessed merely of natural knowledge, Rom 2:20; of those who are carnal, and have not grown, as they should have done, in spiritual understanding and power, the spiritually immature, 1 Cor 3:1, those who are so to speak partakers of milk, and "without experience of the word of righteousness," Heb 5:13; of the Jews, who, while the Law was in force, were in a state corresponding to that of childhood, or minority, just as the word "infant" is used of a minor, in English law, Gal 4:3, "children"; of believers in an immature condition, impressionable and liable to be imposed upon instead of being in a state of spiritual maturity, Eph 4:14, "children." "Immaturity" is always associated with this word. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)**
- c) **More likely is a link with the ¹⁷ἰόν νηπελέω, “to be without power” etc.,¹⁸⁴ which gives the meaning “impotent,” “weak.” In fact the term comprises the concept of a child as well as that of the person who in various ways is without understanding.¹⁹**

2. Toss - kludonizomai (#2831):

- a) **Driven by waves, to be agitated by waves.**
- b) Signifies "to be tossed by billows" (kludon, "a billow"); metaphorically, in Eph 4:14, of **an unsettled condition of mind influenced and agitated by one false teaching and another, and characterized by that immaturity which lacks the firm conviction begotten by the truth.** In the Sept., Isa 57:20. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
- c) The imagery in Eph 4:14 **is based upon a person in a boat being tossed about by the waves.** It may, therefore, be necessary to introduce a boat or ship in the context. (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)

3. Carry - periphero (#4064):

- a) With peri, "about," **signifies "to carry about, or bear about," and is used literally, of carrying the sick** Mark 6:55, or of physical sufferings endured in fellowship with

¹⁷ἰόν ἰόν

¹⁸⁴ F. Specht, *Zschr. f. vergl. Sprachforschung*, 56 (1928), 122 f.

¹⁹*Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) . Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI

Christ, 2 Cor 4:10; **metaphorically, of being "carried" about by different evil doctrines**, Eph 4:14; Heb 13:9; Jude 12. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

- b) They began to carry the sick about on mats to wherever they heard he was' Mark 6:55. May also be used in figurative contexts, as in 2 Cor 4:10, 'we always carry around in our body the death of Jesus.' (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)

4. Doctrine – Didaskalia (1319):

- a) That is is taught, teaching, instruction.
b) In the N.T. commonly used obj. and, therefore, in a pass. **Sense meaning that which is taught, doctrine** (Mt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Col. 2:22; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 4:1; Tit. 2:10).
c) **Refers not only to that which is taught but also to the authority of the teacher, thus not simply the subject taught but also the act of teaching or instructing.**
d) Used with the authority of the teacher behind the teaching (Rom. 15:4; 2 tim. 3:10,16).

5. Trickery -- kulia (or —eia) (#2940):

- a) **Denotes "dice playing"** (from kubos, "a cube, a die as used in gaming"); hence, metaphorically, "trickery, sleight," Eph 4:14. The Eng. word is connected with "sly" ("not with slight"). (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
b) Of the teaching given through the trickery of people' Eph 4:14. (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission).
c) Dice playing. **2 metaph. the deception of men, because dice players sometimes cheated and defrauded their fellow players.**²⁰

6. Craftiness -- panourgia (#3834):

- a) Allworking, " i. e., doing everything (pan, "all," ergon, "work"), hence, **"unscrupulous conduct, craftiness," is always used in a bad sense in the NT**, Luke 20:23; 1 Cor 3:19; 2 Cor 4:2; 11:3; Eph 4:14, KJV, "cunning craftiness." See SUBTLETY. In the Sept. it is used in a good sense, Prov 1:4; 8:5; indifferently in Num 24:22 and Josh 9:4. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
b) **As the snake deceived Eve by its treachery'** 2 Cor 11:3. (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)

7. Deceitful -- plane (#4106):

²⁰Strong, J. 1996. *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) . Woodside Bible Fellowship.: Ontario

- a) **A wandering," whereby those who are led astray roam hither and thither, is always used in the NT, of mental straying, wrong opinion, error in morals or religion.** In 2 Thess 2:11, KJV, it is translated delusion, RV, error. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
- b) **Behavior which deviates seriously from that which is morally correct - 'perversion.' They receive in themselves the punishment they deserve for their perversion'** Rom 1:27. In a number of languages in Rom 1:27 may be rendered as 'what people do which is completely wrong' or '... what is very wrong indeed.' (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)

8. Speaking the truth – Aletheuo (#226):

- a) **To be real, actual, not counterfeit, and to act as such.**
- b) **In Eph. 4:15 the expression “speaking the truth in love” is aletheuontes which mean to make it one’s business to express the reality of love and not to be feign it.**
- c) **In Gal. 4:16, not only speaking truth presenting an action as the truth and not counterfeit.**
- d) **To communicate what is true - 'to speak the truth, to tell the truth.'**
- e) **Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?' Gal 4:16.** In a number of languages it may be difficult to employ a highly abstract term such as 'truth.' Accordingly, one may find it necessary to relate 'truth' in Gal 4:16 to the immediate context, for example, '... by telling you what they really want to do' or '... what all this really means.'(from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission).
- f) **Signifies "to deal faithfully or truly with anyone"** (cf. Gen 42:16, Sept., "whether ye deal truly or no"), Eph 4:15, "speaking the truth"; Gal 3:16, "I tell (you) the truth," where probably the apostle is referring to the contents of his epistle. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

9. Love (agape #26):

- a) **Translated "charity" meaning benevolent love. Its benevolence, however, is not shown by doing what the person loved desires but what the one who loves deems as needed by the one loved.**
- b) **This love is agape, that divine love produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit, which love impels us to obey Him.**
- c) **Not what man wanted but what man needed as God perceived his need, His Son to bring forgiveness to man.**
- d) **It is God's willful direction toward man.** It is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
- e) **The attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly, John 14:21. To convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess. 3:12; 1Cor. 16:14; 2 Pet. 1:7. To express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.**

- f) **Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son,** 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom. 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Deut. 7:7,8.
- g) **Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love of God.**
- h) "Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal. 6:10.
- i) Love that values and esteems (Rev. 12:11). **It is an unselfish "love," ready to serve.**

10. Grow -- auxano (#837):

- a) "To grow or increase," of the growth of that which lives, naturally or spiritually, is used (a) transitively, **signifying to make to increase, said of giving the increase,** 1 Cor 3:6,7; 2 Cor 9:10, the effect of the work of God, according to the analogy of His operations in nature; **"to grow, become greater," e. g. of plants and fruit, Matt 6:28;** used in the passive voice in 13:32 and Mark 4:8, "increase"; in the active in Luke 12:27; 13:19; of the body, Luke 1:80; 2:40; of Christ, John 3:30, "increase"; of the work of the gospel of God, Acts 6:7, "increased"; 12:24; 19:20; of people, Acts 7:17; of faith, 2 Cor 10:15 (passive voice), RV, "groweth" (KJV, "is increased"); of believers individually, Eph 4:15; Col 1:6, RV, 10 (passive voice), "increasing"; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; of the church, Col 2:19; of churches, Eph 2:21. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
- b) **To grow, to increase in size, whether of animate beings or of plants - 'to grow, growth.' Look how the wild flowers grow' Luke 12:27;**
- c) The whole body ... grows as God wants it to grow' Col 2:19. In Col 2:19
- d) Is used figuratively in the sense that the reference of 'body' is the church rather than a physical body. **Normally a term for 'growth' would imply not only size but also number, that is to say, the growth of the church would be in terms of the increase of members of the church, though it might refer to spiritual maturity.** In some instances, however, it may be necessary to specify 'growth in numbers' so as to avoid the implication which might be derived from the context, namely, that the church is simply a building which gets bigger and bigger.
- e) In a number of languages one must make a clear distinction in the choice of terms referring to the growth of an animate being (animal or human) and the growth of plants. (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)

11. All things; whoever – Pas (#3956):

- a)** It can mean the individual within the totality and the totality of the individuals.
- b)** **It can stand alone as the case of pas, anyone and everyone – “Therefore, anyone and everyone who hears” – all things in there individually and in their totality.**
- c)** **It means not only all things in their totality by also each thing with that totality came into existence through Him (Jn. 1:3).**
- d)** It can also stand with around without an art., e.g., pan, every individual and all of them together – meaning every good tree and all the good trees (Matt. 7:17).
- e)** Radically means "all." **Used without the article it means "every," every kind or variety.** So the RV marg. in Eph 2:21, "every building," and the text in 3:15, "every family," and the RV marg. of Acts 2:36, "every house"; or it may signify "the highest degree," the maximum of what is referred to, as, "with all boldness" Acts 4:29. Before proper names of countries, cities and nations, and before collective terms, like "Israel," it signifies either "all" or "the whole," e. g., Matt 2:3; Acts 2:36. Used with the article, it means the whole of one object. In the plural it signifies **"the totality of the persons or things referred to."** **Used without a noun it virtually becomes a pronoun, meaning "everyone" or "anyone."** In the plural with a noun it means "all." The neuter singular denotes "everything" or "anything whatsoever." One form of the neuter plural (panta) signifies **"wholly, together, in all ways, in all things,"** Acts 20:35; 1 Cor 9:25. The neuter plural without the article signifies "all things severally," e. g., John 1:3; 1 Cor 2:10; preceded by the article it denotes "all things," as constituting a whole, e. g., Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
- f)** **A degree of totality or completeness - 'complete, completely, totally, totality.' 'to speak your message with complete boldness' Acts 4:29; 'worthy to be completely accepted' 1 Tim 4:9; 'using your full authority' Titus 2:15. 'Whoever has bathed ... is completely clean' John 13:10. '(Shows that) you have completely failed' 1 Cor 6:7; 'but I say to you, Do not swear at all' Matt 5:34. In Matt 5:34 should not be interpreted as a qualifier of 'to swear,' for this is not a matter of 'not swearing completely,' but is a degree attributive of the proposition 'do not swear.' In a number of languages the closest equivalent is 'do not ever swear' or 'under no circumstances whatsoever make an oath.' (occurring only in Acts 4:18 in a negative expression): 'do not speak at all' Acts 4:18. 'the total number of the years' (literally 'the totality of the years') Mark 16:14-15 (apparatus). (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)**

12. Head – Kephale (#2776):

- a)** **The head as the top (Mt. 21:42; Luk. 20:17); the head, as the superior (Eph. 5:23), as the husband of the wife (1 Cor. 11:3), Christ of the Church (Eph. 4:15,16; Col. 2:19), and of all principality and power (Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:22).**
- b)** **Was not generally used in Greek literature in the sense of "chief" or "highest in rank." They did use head when the physical head was not intended. Paul's first century readers would have understood his metaphor to indicate "source of life" rather than "ruler" or "superior vs. inferior". Christ is the source of man's life (John 1:4).**

- c) God the father is designated as the head of Christ in His manifestation as man, or as **the divinity is superior to the humanity (1 Cor. 11:3).**
- d) (an idiom, literally 'upon someone's head') **to accept responsibility for some action, often with the implication of blame - 'upon someone's head, responsibility.'**
- e) Literally, 'your blood will be upon your own heads,' meaning 'your destruction will be your own responsibility' Acts 18:6. **This statement in Acts 18:6 is no doubt an adage meaning that anything bad which may happen to a person, including one's death, will be one's own responsibility, and therefore no one else is to blame.** It is also possible to classify this idiom in Domain 90 D. Note that in 37.102 the focus is on the assignment of responsibility. (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)
- f) Besides its natural significance, is used (a) figuratively in Rom 12:20, of heaping coals of fire on a "head" (see COALS); in Acts 18:6, "Your blood be upon your own heads," i. e., "your blood-guiltiness rest upon your own persons," **a mode of expression frequent in the OT, and perhaps here directly connected with Ezek 3:18,20; 33:6,8; see also Lev 20:16; 2 Sam 1:16; 1 Kings 2:37; (b) metaphorically, of the authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to believing men, of the husband in relation to the wife, 1 Cor 11:3; of Christ in relation to the Church, Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19; of Christ in relation to principalities and powers, Col 2:10.** As to 1 Cor 11:10, taken in connection with the context, **the word "authority" probably stands, by metonymy, for a sign of authority (RV), the angels being witnesses of the preeminent relationship as established by God in the creation of man as just mentioned, with the spiritual significance regarding the position of Christ in relation to the Church; cf. Eph 3:10; it is used of Christ as the foundation of the spiritual building set forth by the Temple, with its "corner stone," Matt 21:42; symbolically also of the imperial rulers of the Roman power, as seen in the apocalyptic visions, Rev 13:1,3; 17:3,7,9.** (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)
- g) Adam (hoaner; the man") is the source from which woman was formed God Himself is the source form which the incarnate Christ came. What we do, then, reflects on the source form which we spring, to its honor or dishonor.
- h) And Paul's use of "head" here must not be taken to support a hierarchical view of male/female relations in home or church.
- i) Of the authority or direction in the following manner:

Background

Purpose:

The purpose for writing Ephesians was not to correct any error or heresy. The purpose was for the believers to understand the mystery of God (1:9), His goals for the church (1:11; 22-23), and to expand their knowledge (1:8, 18) of Him for a deeper spiritual walk (1:3; 3:14-21; 4:13). Paul also wanted the believers to understand that their walk was not only on an earthly plane, but also in heavenly realms where it receives its meaning and significance.

Paul also wrote to express his inner satisfaction with the Christ-centered faith of those addressed and their love for all the saints (1:15).

He also wrote in order to picture God's glorious redemptive grace toward the church, bestowed upon it in order that it might be a blessing to the world and might stand united over against all the forces of evil and thus glorify its Redeemer.

Theme:

If it be true that in Colossians Paul dwells on "Christ, the Pre-eminent One, the Only and All-Sufficient Savior," then in Ephesians he discusses its corollary, namely, "The Unity of All Believers in Christ." For "All Believers" one can substitute "The Church Glorious." The ideas of "unity" and of the "in Christ" relationship can be given their proper place in the Outline.

****Careful study of Ephesians has led an ever-increasing number of exegetes to arrive at the conclusion that the concept of the church receives such emphasis in this epistle that the entire contents can be grouped around it without superimposing one's own subjective opinions upon the apostle's thinking.

****The term church, as here used, indicates the body (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4,16; 5:23,30), building (2:19-22), and bride (5:25-27,32) of Christ; the totality of those, whether Jew or Gentile, who were saved through the blood of Christ and through him have their access in one Spirit to the Father (2:13,18).

A. Specific Information:

4:11 Apostles, meaning "envoys," or "ambassadors," in its strict sense refers to those who saw Christ in resurrected form, performed miracles, and were specially chosen by Christ to

tell others about Him from their eyewitness accounts. As such, there are no apostles today. **Prophets delivered direct revelations from God before the NT was written (1 Cor. 14). They foretold God’s actions in the future, and they proclaimed what God had already said in the Scriptures. Evangelists are gospel preachers who help bring people into the body of Christ. They do so by presenting Christ’s offer of free salvation by grace through faith (2:8, 9).**

Since each of these categories is responsible for equipping believers, evangelists may also train other believers to share their faith effectively. **Pastors do all for the church that a literal shepherd does for sheep: feeds, nurtures, cares for, and protects them from enemies. A shepherd’s task is not to acquire sheep. However, if a shepherd does what he is supposed to do, he will have healthy sheep and his flock will grow.** **teachers:** While the Greek ties the two titles *teachers* and *pastors* closely together here, elsewhere they are listed separately (Rom. 12:7; 1 Pet. 5:2).²¹

4:9–10. Paul interprets and applies the text just cited, the way a good Jewish teacher would. “Lower parts of the earth” probably means the realm of the dead, hence that Jesus had died (Ezek 32:24), although it could mean his descent from heaven to become a servant at his incarnation (Phil 2:7; cf. Ps 139:15).

4:11. “²²Apostles” were literally commissioned messengers carrying out their sender’s mission; as such, they were backed by the sender’s authority to the extent that they accurately represented that commission; in the ²³New Testament, the term applies to commissioned agents of Christ authorized in a special way (more authoritatively than others) to declare and propagate his will. “Prophets” were spokespersons for God, whose role was known from the ²⁴Old Testament and continued in the ²⁵church; apostles were to prophets

²¹ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible commentary* (Eph 4:11). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

²²Apostles ***Apostle.** The term applies literally to a sent or commissioned messenger; in Judaism such messengers acted on the full authority of their sender, to the extent that they accurately represented the sender’s message. The closest Old Testament equivalent to God’s “apostles” in this sense was the prophets, although the apostles seem to have added an overseeing and evangelistic function that prophets (both Old Testament and New Testament) did not always incorporate. Those prophets commissioned with special authority to oversee prophetic awakening (e.g., perhaps Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah) or to judge Israel (e.g., Deborah, Samuel) may provide the best Old Testament models.

²³New Testament ***New Testament.** The common modern term for the early Christian literature finally declared canonical by the church and accepted by nearly all Christians today.

²⁴Old Testament ***Old Testament.** The common modern term for the Hebrew Bible (including Aramaic portions) as defined by the Jewish and Protestant Christian canons; Jewish readers generally call this the Tenach.

²⁵church ***Church.** The Greek term used in the New Testament reflects the terms often used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word for the “congregation” (*qahal*) of Israel: “church” (assembly) and “synagogue” (gathering). Although some scholars have suggested that Jesus could not have spoken about the church during his earthly ministry, the Dead Sea Scrolls used the Hebrew term for God’s community; hence Jesus could use this word in talking about his future community (Mt 16:18; 18:17). The term was in common use in Greek culture for “assemblies,” especially citizen assemblies in cities. (The popular modern surmise that the Greek

perhaps as prophetic judges (e.g., Samuel and Deborah) or leaders (e.g., Elijah and Elisha) were to other Old Testament prophets—with special rank and authority.

“Evangelists,” as proclaimers of good news (the message of Christ), were seen as “heralds,” again a type of messenger. “Pastors” were literally “shepherds” (used for overseers in the Old Testament, e.g., Jer 23:2–4), elsewhere in the New Testament identified as overseers of local congregations (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1–2); they were called to shepherd God’s people by declaring his message accurately (Jer 23:18–22). “Teachers” were expounders of the Scriptures and of the Jesus tradition; if they functioned like Jewish teachers, they probably offered biblical instruction to the congregation and trained others to expound the Scriptures as well.

As in many ancient lists, some of these terms may overlap considerably (the Greek indicates an especially strong overlap between “pastors” and “teachers”). **They share a common focus and basis of authority as bearers of Christ’s message.** The authority is resident in their message and spiritual gifting; as in the case of Jewish teachers of God’s message (as opposed to the chief priests), none represents institutional authority in the sense of a supralocal church hierarchy, which does not seem to appear until the early second century. Together these ministers of God’s Word were to equip all God’s people for their ministry (4:12–16).

4:12. The term for “training” or “equipping” was used in the Greek world to describe the work of philosophers and teachers.

4:13–16. The images of a person growing into maturity and a ship being tossed about by waves were common in Paul’s day. The image of growing to maturity was rarely applied to a whole community of people as here, but the point would have been no less easy to grasp. Paul’s image is a generic one, lacking standard Jewish images for the end time; he probably therefore refers to the church’s need for maturity in general, rather than specifically predicting its completion in the end time.²⁶

4:11–16 GIFTS THAT BRING MATURITY FOR STABLE GROWTH

These are the gifts of Christ (4:7, 8, 11, “has given” and “gave”). The purpose of mentioning the gifts was to enlighten the readers to the value of the people mentioned in 4:11. They were literally Christ’s gift to the church. Some hold that the terms “pastors” and “teachers” represent one gifted person, not two. Elsewhere, however, the ministries are separated (Rom. 12:7; 1 Pet. 5:2). Certainly a pastor should be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17), but there may be teachers in the church who do not function in the office or role of pastor. The purpose of these gifts is to equip the saints for ministry. **The phrase “helps the other parts grow” (4:16), or “build itself up” (NIV), is used in ancient medical literature of setting a bone. It has the**

word for “church,” *ekklēsia*, means “called-out ones” is thus mistaken; that sense is actually more appropriate for “saints,” i.e., “those separated [for God].”)

²⁶Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Eph 4:9-13). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

idea of “making fit.” The Ephesians were being told that the way out of cunning, craftiness, and deceitful scheming (4:14) is to benefit from Christ’s gifts to the church.²⁷

Commentary Studies

b. Diversity in unity (4:7–16)

7. The great heritage of the faith all Christians share, and **having this in common they are responsible to guard the unity of the Spirit.** But they may not expect their personalities, their gifts and their tasks to be all alike. In his wisdom, and to make each dependent on others, God has ordained not uniformity, but an endless variety of gifts for members of the body. As Calvin puts it, ‘no member of the body of Christ is endowed with such perfection as to be able, without the assistance of others, to supply his own necessities.’ *To each of us is given* different gifts for the benefit of all. Paul uses the word *grace* here in the sense in which we have found it used in 3:2, 7–8: the privilege of a special calling in the service of God. The word implies that there is no place for boasting; none has anything other than what he has received unmerited (cf. 1 Cor. 4:7). No-one has all the gifts; and also it is true that no member of the body is without some spiritual task and spiritual gift for it. *To each*—not ministers or leaders alone—such *grace* is given *according to the measure of Christ’s gift*. These words suggest the Lord’s portioning out, in his wisdom, different kinds of gifts to different members. Both the words *measure* and *grace* are used with the meaning they have here in Romans 12:3–8, while 1 Corinthians 12:4 has the same thought as this when it says that ‘there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit’.

8. At this point Paul leads on to a new thought. ‘The measure of Christ’s gift’ is that of the ascended Lord who in the days of his flesh promised such abundant bestowal when he returned to the Father’s presence (John 14:12–14). To express this the apostle quotes Scripture, Psalm 68:18, a passage which perhaps as early as this was associated with Pentecost in Jewish liturgy, and which could be applied to the triumph and ascension of the Lord followed by the bestowal of spiritual gifts to his church.²⁸³ In their original setting the words of the Psalm picture the Lord returning in triumph (either to the Jerusalem sanctuary or to heaven itself), after the overthrow of Israel’s enemies. He has made his enemies captive, and they follow, as it were, in his triumphal procession. As conqueror he has received gifts that he can bestow. Like many of the Psalms, this found ready application to the Christ. He has conquered his enemies, and returned to his Father’s throne in triumph, now to bestow blessings on his people. In fact his former foes, whom he leads

²⁷Hughes, R. B., Laney, J. C., & Hughes, R. B. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary*. Rev. ed. of: *New Bible companion*. 1990.; Includes index. The Tyndale reference library (594). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

²⁸³ See further A. T. Lincoln, ‘The use of the O.T. in Ephesians’, *JSNT* 14 (1982), pp. 18ff., and also Kirby, pp. 97–99.

in ‘triumph in Christ’ (2 Cor. 2:14; A^{29v}, R^{30v}), like Paul himself, are his gifts to his church.

We must note, however, an important change in the words used. The Hebrew Psalm has words which speak of God ‘receiving gifts among men’. Paul says *he gave gifts to men*. Various explanations have been offered for the difference. Some see it as an intentional, others as an unintentional, misquotation. It is significant that the Targum (the Jewish Aramaic paraphrase) on the Psalms, which may involve an interpretation going back into pre-Christian times, speaks of the giving rather than the receiving of gifts, as it has ‘Thou ascendedst up to the firmament, O prophet Moses, thou tookest captives captive, thou didst teach the words of the law, thou gavest them as gifts to the children of men.’ It is also possible that the words in this form were used in an early Christian hymn. In any case the Psalm could be understood to speak of the truth expressed in Acts 2:33: ‘Being ... exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this ...’. The ascension of Christ made possible the outpouring of the Spirit (John 7:39), and so these varied gifts of which he is about to speak in detail.

9–10. We have a further difficulty to deal with in these verses. When we read that *He ascended*, the meaning is clear. After his resurrection he was exalted in glory, a fact that has been emphasized already in 1:20–21 and 2:6. And when Paul says *far above all the heavens*, he uses language that agrees with the Jewish concept of a plurality of heavens, though he is not necessarily limiting himself to a spatial concept (see on 1:20). He means that Christ has been exalted to the highest honour and glory possible (Phil. 2:9–11); he has returned to the Father from whom he came into the world. But what is the meaning of his descent? The word ‘first’ in the A^{31v} in verse 9 is not found in the majority of the oldest MS^{32s} and it would seem that, with the more recent English versions, we should omit the word as a later interpretative addition to the text. It must be said also that the tense of RS^{33v} *had also descended* is not required by the Greek. *Ascended* and *descended* are in the same tense and same verbal forms in both verses 9 and 10. The descent may be that which Christ made by his Spirit after Pentecost. Against this is the association of the giving of the gifts with his ascension rather than his descent (in v. 8).

If the descent refers to the coming of the Spirit then *the lower parts of the earth* must mean just ‘the earth below’. If it speaks of the incarnation there are further possibilities of meaning. Some have been led by these words to set this passage alongside 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6, understood as referring to a descent of Christ after his crucifixion to preach the gospel to those who had died before his coming. The exact meaning of the 1 Peter passages is not certain, but whatever their meaning there seems no reason to suppose that there is this kind of reference here to his preaching to the dead. Above the highest heaven he ascended, and he had been to the deepest depths of the earth. This may thus mean simply this earth, so low in comparison with his heavenly home (cf. Isa. 44:23); or it may denote the fact that he suffered the greatest humiliation when he endured death itself (cf. Phil. 2:8), and thus descended to what Scripture sometimes calls ‘the depths of the earth’ (cf. Ps. 69:15; Rom. 10:7).

There seem to be two points that the apostle is wanting to stress here. Firstly, it is Christ’s will and purpose for everything to be pervaded with his presence (cf. 1:10). He has descended and ascended *that he might fill all things*. He is supreme over all the powers of heaven and earth

²⁹AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

³⁰RV Revised Version, 1881.

³¹AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

³²MSS Manuscript(s)

³³RSV Revised Standard Version, NT 1946, ²1971; OT 1952.

(cf. Col. 1:16–18); there is nothing that is not subject to him, no place or order of existence where his presence may not be known and felt. Both the descent and the ascent have this purpose. In particular, as Barclay puts it, ‘the ascension of Jesus meant not a Christ-deserted, but a Christ-filled world’ because of the giving of his Spirit (cf. John 16:7). Secondly, we are to realize that the ascended Lord whom the church now worships is the same as he who came down and lived among us, sharing our sorrows, trials and temptations, and therefore he feels those of his people today.

11. Now Paul goes on to speak of the specific gifts that he has given. The *gifts* are the people. All, in their particular ministries, are God’s gift to the church. ‘To Christ’, says Calvin, ‘we owe it that we have ministers of the gospel.’ The church may appoint people to different work and functions, but unless they have the gifts of the Spirit, and therefore are themselves the gifts of Christ to his church, their appointment is valueless. The expression also ‘serves well to remind ministers that the gifts of the Spirit are not for the enrichment of oneself but for the enrichment of the Church’ (Allan).

At the later date which some would give to this letter it would seem almost impossible not to have reference to the local ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons which had come to be of greatest importance to the church. As it is, the apostle is not thinking of the ministers of Christ in their offices but rather according to their specific spiritual gifts and their work, and not least of those who in the exercise of their functions were not limited to a particular locality. This may account for the differences between the list that we have here and the similar list in 1 Corinthians 12:28. It also seems true that, as F. F. Bruce³⁴ puts it, ‘those that are named’ here ‘exercise their ministries in such a way as to help other members of the church to exercise their own respective ministries’.

First stood the *apostles*. First in time and first in importance, Masson puts it. The word *apostolos* is used in three different ways in the New Testament. It could mean simply a messenger, as is the case apparently in Philippians 2:25—we can neglect that meaning here. It was used above all for the twelve, who in many parts of the New Testament are given a special and distinctive position (cf. 1 Cor. 15:5; Rev. 21:14). But we read of others as apostles, not only Paul himself and Barnabas (Acts 14:14), but James the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19), Silas (1 Thess. 2:6), and Junias and Andronicus who are mentioned only in Romans 16:7. In fact there would appear to be those who can truly be called apostles (1 Cor. 15:7), who are not even known to us by name. From Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 9:1–2 it would seem that a necessary qualification of an apostle was to have seen the risen Lord, and to have been sent out by him, and thus to have come to be engaged as a foundation member (Eph. 2:20) and worker for the building up of the church.³⁵⁴ If the qualification for an apostle was thus to have seen and been sent by the risen Lord, the proof of an apostle was his labours in the power of Christ, even ‘with signs and wonders and mighty works’ (2 Cor. 12:12). It should be noted also that, according to Acts 1:21–22 (cf. Acts 2:42), the apostles gave definitive witness to the facts of the ministry of Jesus and to his resurrection.

Closely associated with them in the work of building the church from its foundations, and therefore basic as gifts of Christ to the church, were the *prophets* (see on 2:20 and 3:5). It is harder for us to see their particular ministry, but they stand out clearly from the New Testament as people of inspired utterance, whose ministry of the word was of the utmost importance for the

³⁴F. F. Bruce F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London, 1961).

³⁵⁴ The phrase ‘apostles of the churches’ (2 Cor. 8:23; Gk. and RV and RSV mgs.) may be taken in the non-technical sense as ‘messengers’—the rendering given by AV, RV, RSV.

young church. On occasion they might foretell the future, as in Acts 11:28 and 21:9, 11, but like the Old Testament prophets their great work was to ‘forth-tell’ the word of God. This might be in bringing to light with convicting power people’s sins (1 Cor. 14:24–25), or in bringing new strength to the church by the word of exhortation. The latter is illustrated most strikingly by Acts 15:32 where it is said that in Antioch ‘Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words and strengthened them.’

The ministry of *apostles*, as we have understood the word above, ceased with the passing of the first generation of Christians. The foundational ministry of *prophets* ceased also. Their work, receiving and declaring the word of God under direct inspiration of the Spirit, was most vital before there was a canon of New Testament Scripture. There continued to be prophets, but not with quite the same ministry as those of the church in the first generation. The apostolic writings were coming to be read widely and accepted as authoritative; the written word took the place of the authoritative spoken word of apostles and prophets making the essential nature of the gospel plain. At the same time the local ministry came to assume much greater importance than that of itinerant ministers, and there was the added problem that there were many false teachers and self-styled ‘prophets’ who went from place to place to peddle their wares.

Next come the *evangelists*. Only two other references to these in the New Testament can guide us as to their function and work. In Acts 21:8 Philip, whose four daughters were prophets, is called an evangelist, and in 2 Timothy 4:5 Timothy is told to ‘do the work of an evangelist’. We may assume that theirs was an itinerant work of preaching under the apostles, and it may be fair to call them ‘the rank and file missionaries of the church’ (Barclay).

Then, linked together (by the same article in the Gk.) are the *pastors and teachers*. It is possible that this phrase describes the ministers of the local church, whereas the first three categories are regarded as belonging to the universal church. More likely, the dominant thought is still of spiritual functions and gifts. Apostles and evangelists had a special task in planting the church in every place, prophets for bringing a particular word from God to a situation. *Pastors and teachers* were gifted to be responsible for the day-to-day building up of the church. There is no hard and fast line to be drawn between the two. The duties of the pastor (literally ‘shepherd’) are to feed the flock with spiritual food and to see that they are protected from spiritual danger. Our Lord used the word in John 10:11, 14 to describe his own work, and he continues to be the chief pastor (Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4) under whom others are called to ‘Tend the flock of God’ (1 Pet. 5:2; cf. John 21:15–17; Acts 20:28). Every pastor must be ‘an apt teacher’ (1 Tim. 3:2; cf. Titus 1:9), though it is evident that some have pre-eminently the gift of teaching, and may be said to form a particular division of ministry within the church, and to be a special gift of Christ to his people (Acts 13:1; Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28).

12. Three phrases are now used in this verse to describe the purpose of the spiritual gifts just named. As different translations indicate, the three have been connected in various ways. The A³⁶v took each of them separately. The difference of the prepositions in the Greek is against this, and at least implies that the later two are dependent on the first. It is probably correct to understand the second to depend closely on the first, and the third on the two that precede: *to* [Gk. *pros*] *equip the saints for* [Gk. *eis*] *the work of ministry, for* [Gk. *eis*] *building up the body of Christ*.

In the first place, then, the ministry of the church is given to it *to equip the saints* (RS³⁷v first edition, 1946, has *for the equipment of the saints*). The word used (*katartismos*) is not found

³⁶AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

³⁷RSV Revised Standard Version, NT 1946, ²1971; OT 1952.

elsewhere in the New Testament, although the corresponding verb is used of repairing something (Matt. 4:21); of God's bringing the universe in the beginning into its intended shape and order (Heb. 11:3); and of restoring to spiritual health a person who has fallen (Gal. 6:1). It may be used, however, of 'perfecting' (A^{38v}) what is lacking in the faith of Christians (cf. 1 Thess. 3:10; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10) and we may say with Robinson that the word denotes 'the bringing of the saints to a condition of fitness for the discharge of their functions in the Body, without implying restoration from a disordered state'. Their being brought to this condition is not an end in itself, but for a purpose, that they may be fitted *for the work of ministry*. As clearly as in verse 7 it is thus implied that every Christian has a *work of ministry*, a spiritual task and function in the body. The word used here (*diakonia*), or the corresponding verb, is used of menial service (Luke 10:40; 17:8; 22:26–27; Acts 6:2), and so of the particular work of those who came to be known as 'deacons', but it is also used in the more general sense of our word 'service' (see on 3:7).

What is done for the saints, and by the saints, is *for building up the body of Christ*. The word *oikodomē* has been used in 2:21, but here it has a broader meaning. The church is increased and built up, and its members edified, as each member uses his or her particular gifts as the Lord of the church ordains, and thus gives spiritual service to fellow-members and to the head. Because of its applied meaning the use of *oikodomē* with *the body* does not necessarily involve confusion of metaphors, but because of what he wishes to say now about the growth and unity of the church, the apostle finds the metaphor of the body more adequate than any other.

13. All three phrases in verse 12 have described the process going on in the life of the church. But the apostle could never think of a process without fixing his eyes on the goal. The verb used at the beginning of the verse (*katantaō*) is used nine times in Acts for travellers arriving at their destination; NE^{39B} translates 'So shall we all at last attain ...'. (Cf. Acts 26:7 and Phil. 3:11 for use similar to that here.) The end of the church's journey is described in three ways. Firstly, it is *the unity of the faith*. Where *the faith* (see on v. 5) is duly communicated, people from their different backgrounds of error and ignorance come into a growing understanding of the 'one hope' (v. 4), an increasing dependence on the 'one Lord' (v. 5), and so to a developing appreciation of the 'one body' (v. 4). The goal must be *unity in the faith*.

Secondly, it is emphasized, though enough has already been said to make this evident, that faith is not just the acceptance of a collection of dogmas, in the embracing of which unity will be found. It is something deeper and more personal. It is unity in *the knowledge of the Son of God* (see on 1:17). That *knowledge* which Paul sought supremely for himself (Phil. 3:10) he set also as the goal for others. We can never know any person simply with our mind; and knowledge of such a person as is envisaged here must involve the deepest possible fellowship. For this person is *the Son of God*, and here we have one of the rare places in all the Pauline letters where this title is used (cf. Rom. 1:4; Gal. 2:20; 1 Thess. 1:10). When Paul speaks of the relation of the Lord to his church and to the Father's purpose, he regularly uses the title 'Christ', but 'when he would describe Him as the object of that faith and knowledge in which our unity will ultimately be realised' (Robinson), he speaks of him in his unique position as 'the Son of God'.

But such knowledge which is fellowship with the Son of God involves the full experience of life 'in Christ', and therefore development *to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*. All the different expressions here speak of maturity. The Greek word *teleios* used here (RS^{40v} *mature*) has the connotation of full development in 1 Corinthians 2:6,

³⁸AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

³⁹NEB New English Bible, NT 1961, ²1970; OT 1970.

⁴⁰RSV Revised Standard Version, NT 1946, ²1971; OT 1952.

14:20 and Hebrews 5:14. *Manhood* here means adulthood, as in 1 Corinthians 13:11 where it is also contrasted with *nēpios*, the word used in the next verse here for ‘children’. The singular, moreover, expresses again the thought that maturity involves unity; the ‘many’ are to become ‘one new man’ (2:15). Then the word that is used for *stature*, which may connote age (John 9:21, 23) or physical stature (Luke 19:3) speaks figuratively of maturity, the measure of which is nothing less than *the fullness of Christ*. As in 1:23 some interpret it here as ‘the measure of the perfect Christ’, made complete by his fulfilment in his church. Others take it as that which is filled by Christ. It seems better to understand it in the way that we have taken the phrase in 1:23, as the complete possession of the gifts and grace of Christ that he seeks to impart to humanity. He has himself the very fullness of God (Col. 1:19; 2:9); he seeks that the Christian should be filled with all of his endowment that can be communicated. Whether the goal can be realized in this life or not is irrelevant. The point is that the Christian is to press forward with no lesser ambition than this. This is human life as it is intended to be, measured only by all that we can understand of the human life of Christ himself.

14. There must be *no longer* the immaturity of *children (nēpioi)*, characterized by instability in the face of the pressures of different doctrines and standards of life. ‘Maturity brings with it the capacity to emulate various forms of teaching, to accept what is true and reject what is false’ (Bruce,⁴¹ *NICNT*). The word translated *tossed to and fro* is the verb from the noun *klydōn*, used in Luke 8:24 of the raging of the waters of Galilee, and in James 1:6 for the ‘surge of the sea’ (R^{43v}); in the latter case it is the waves themselves that are driven by the wind, but here the picture is probably that of a boat *tossed* in the storm *and carried about*. This second verb is translated more vividly by NE^{44B} ‘whirled about’; the Greek verb *peripherō* often has the idea of such violent swinging about as makes a person dizzy. Christians were realizing already that they had to keep an even keel against *every wind of doctrine*, as the companion Letter to the Colossians well shows. The unsteady and rudderless could easily be turned from their course. For there were not only those who had been deceived and gone astray without realizing it, but there were some who were lying in wait to deceive (cf. 2 Tim. 3:13). Their activities are described firstly by the word *kybia*, which means literally playing with dice, and hence trickery or fraud; and secondly as *craftiness (panourgia)*, the word used with reference to our Lord’s questioners in Luke 20:23, and in 2 Corinthians 11:3 of the guile of the serpent. When people wander out of the way of the truth (the Gk. *planē*, ‘error’ [R^{45v}], is lit. ‘wandering’), they do not hesitate to use *deceitful wiles*, cunning devices, to lead others to follow them.

15. The preachers of the truth for their part cannot and must not resort to such methods (2 Cor. 4:2); they must act in all simplicity and straightforwardness, but at the *same time beware of the means that their enemies may use. They are ambassadors of the truth, and are to be found speaking the truth and dealing truly*’ (R^{46v} mg.—the Gk. word *alētheuō* included both). Moreover, both are to be done *in love*. What is upheld, and the manner in which it is supported, are to be in complete contrast to those spoken of in verse 14. Such deceive others to make their

⁴¹Bruce, F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*; Grand Rapids, 1984).

⁴²*NICNT* F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*; Grand Rapids, 1984).

⁴³RV Revised Version, 1881.

⁴⁴NEB New English Bible, NT 1961, ²1970; OT 1970.

⁴⁵RV Revised Version, 1881.

⁴⁶RV Revised Version, 1881.

own gain; Christians are to hold forth the truth in order to bring spiritual benefit to others, and they are to do so with a winsomeness that only love can make possible. Then, with a metaphor which is as far as possible removed from that which describes the immature as tossed about like a little boat in a storm, it is said that they will *grow* in stability and spiritual maturity. That growth is *into Christ*, the development of the life so that it is found more and more ‘in’ him, ‘all things’ (A^{47v}) and every part of life finding their centre and object and goal in relation to him and in union with him. The preposition might also be translated ‘towards’ or ‘unto’, and thus have the thought of growth towards his perfect humanity as standard, in the way that verse 13 has expressed it.

We should not imagine that the apostle thought of growth into the head. We are wise to take the imagery of growth first, and then the thought of *Christ as the head*. He may be spoken of as the whole body, but also in a particular way as *the head*. This has been expressed already in 1:22 and will be again in 5:23. Growth, and indeed every activity of the members, is from him as source and under his direction. The members can be healthy and strong only as each is dependent on him. The next verse develops this point.

16. From Christ alone, as head, the body derives its whole capacity for growth and activity and its direction as one co-ordinated, directed entity. Colossians 2:19 is closely parallel to this verse, and should be studied with it, but there the word translated *joined ... together* is not used. Its only other use in the New Testament is in 2:21. It derives from a word (*harmos*) used for a joint or fastening in the construction of a building, or for the shoulder-joint of the body. The second participle (*sybibazomenon*) is used in a general way of bringing things or people together, and of reconciling those who have quarrelled, and of putting together facts in an argument or a course of teaching. Both participles thus give the sense of a functional unity, that is made possible among the members by the direction of the head. But after the participles the Greek is difficult. The word translated *joint* (*haphē*) has many meanings. Basically it means a ‘touch’, and so can mean ‘contact’, ‘point of contact’, or ‘grip’, and these meanings have led commentators to a variety of interpretations. Both the context and medical usage of the word for a ‘joint’ of the body justify the RS^{48v} rendering, and most English translations follow this. The Greek says literally ‘through every joint of the supply’, which probably means that it is through every joint with which the body is equipped—‘every constituent joint’ (NE^{49B})—that growth and true functioning are possible. In other words the body depends for its growth and its work on the Lord’s direction, on his provision for the whole (cf. vv. 11–12), and on his arrangement for the interrelation of the members as well.

Then we are brought back to a word (Gk. *energeia*) that has become familiar in this letter (cf. 1:19 and 3:7), as the apostle turns from the consideration of the members and the connection between them, to the whole *working properly*. *Each part*, in its place and according to its need, must have this functioning that is made possible by the ‘energizing’ of God in the whole. Then, yet again, the purpose of *growth* is mentioned, and it is made clear that each member does not seek its own growth but that of ‘the body’ (A^{50v}) as a whole (RS^{51v} has *bodily growth*), not its own upbuilding but the upbuilding of the whole. Moreover, the context makes clear that it is not increase in size of the church that is primarily in view, by members being added to it, but

⁴⁷AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

⁴⁸RSV Revised Standard Version, NT 1946, ²1971; OT 1952.

⁴⁹NEB New English Bible, NT 1961, ²1970; OT 1970.

⁵⁰AV Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

⁵¹RSV Revised Standard Version, NT 1946, ²1971; OT 1952.

spiritual increase. And this increase is above all *in love*. The little phrase comes yet again (cf. 1:4; 3:17; 4:2; 5:2), as love determines that each member will seek the upbuilding of all. Then without doubt, if there is a caring community living *in love* and showing the truth *in love*, the numerical increase will follow.⁵²

2. THE PRESERVATION OF UNITY (4:7–16)

After discussing the basis of unity (vv. 1–6), Paul now analyzed the means of preserving that unity (cf. “keep the unity,” v. 3) of the body by means of the various gifts.

a. The distribution of the gifts (4:7–11).

4:7–8. Previously Paul discussed the unity of the entire church (vv. 1–6). Now he discussed the diversity within the church (cf. unity in 1 Cor. 12:12–13, and diversity in 1 Cor. 12:4–11, 14–20). From God **each** believer receives **grace** or enablement (cf. Eph. 3:2, 7–8) **as Christ apportioned it** (lit., “according to the measure [*metron*, also used in 4:13, 16]; of the gift of Christ,” i.e., the gift He is pleased to give). Each believer is to function in Christ’s body by God’s enablement, proportionate to the gift (spiritual ability) bestowed on him, no more and no less. This means that a variety of gifts will be exercised, as seen in verse 11; Romans 12:4–6; and 1 Corinthians 12:4–6. Furthermore, since each believer receives “grace,” clergy and laity—to use a common present-day distinction—are on the same level in exercising their gifts.

Ephesians 4:8 includes a quotation from the Old Testament, which confirms God’s giving of gifts. Most think it quotes Psalm 68:18 with five minor and two major changes. The two major variations are the change from the second to the third person, and the change of direction from having received gifts from men to the giving of **gifts to men**. However, it is better to think that Paul was not quoting one particular verse of the psalm but rather that he was summarizing all of Psalm 68, which has many words similar to those in Psalm 68:18. The essence of the psalm is that a military victor has the right to give gifts to those who are identified with him. Christ, having captivated sinful people by redeeming them, is Victor and gives them as gifts to the church. Whereas Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 speak of gifts given to believers, Ephesians 4:7 speaks more of gifted believers given to the church (cf. v. 11).

4:9–10. Verses 9–11 serve as a commentary on two words of the quotation in verse 8, namely, **ascended** (vv. 9–10) and “gave” (v. 11). In verses 9–10 Paul commented on the words **He ascended**. These two verses are parenthetical in thought because the issue of the passage is the giving of gifts. Before Christ could ascend He had to descend. What is meant by **to the lower, earthly regions**, literally, “into the lower parts of earth”? The genitive “of” can be taken

⁵² Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 120–131.

in three ways: (1) “Into the lower parts, namely, the earth” (a genitive of apposition). This would refer to Christ’s incarnation, His “descent” to the earth. (2) “Into the parts lower than the earth” (a genitive of comparison). This would mean that Christ descended into hades between His death and resurrection. (3) “Into the lower parts which belong to the earth” (a genitive of possession). This would refer to Christ’s death and His burial in the grave. The third view best fits the context because in His death Christ had victory over sin and redeemed those who would be given as “gifts” to the church.

Christ’s ascent above **the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe** probably refers to His regal relationship with the whole world, from which position He bestows gifts as He wills because of His work on the Cross. This fits well with 1:23, which speaks of Christ imparting all the fullness of His blessings to the church and to the universe. Christ, who embodies the fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9), fills the universe and is Head over it (cf. Col. 1:18).

4:11. This verse is a commentary on the second part of the quotation in verse 8, namely, Christ’s giving gifts to Christians. The gifts to the church are gifted people. The subject **He** is emphatic in the Greek to denote that Christ Himself gives the gifted people. Five kinds of gifted people are listed in the predicate accusative, so the NI⁵³V correctly translates, **gave some to be**. The first two, **apostles** and **prophets**, were already mentioned in 2:20 and 3:5 as the foundational gifts to the church. The apostles include the Twelve, who had the office of apostleship by virtue of being with Christ (Acts 1:21–22) and having been appointed by Him (which would also include Paul; 1 Cor. 15:8–9; Gal. 1:1; 2:6–9). But “apostles” also included others who were recognized as apostles, such as James (1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19), Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14; 1 Cor. 9:6), Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7), possibly Silas and Timothy (1 Thes. 1:1; 2:7), and Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6, 9). This latter group had the gift of apostleship but not the apostolic “office” as did the Twelve and Paul. Apostles, then, were those who carried the gospel message with God’s authority. “Apostle” means “one sent as an authoritative delegate.”

New Testament prophets were gifts to the church to provide edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). They probably revealed God’s will to the church when the biblical canon was incomplete. Since the apostles and prophets were foundational, they did not exist after the first generation of believers.

Evangelists were those engaged in spreading the gospel, similar to present-day missionaries. **Pastors and teachers** are listed together because they are governed by one article (“the” occurs before “pastors” but not before “teachers”) and because the word “and” (*kai*) differs from the other “and’s” (*de*) in the verse. This may imply that these are two kinds of gifted people whose ministries are among settled congregations (rather than itinerant ministries like those of the apostles and evangelists). More likely, they refer to two characteristics of the same person who is pastoring believers (by comforting and guiding) while at the same time instructing them in God’s ways (overseers or elders are to be able to teach; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9).

b. The intention of the gifts (4:12–16)

The purpose of the gifted believers (vv. 7–11) is to equip other believers for the ministry so as to give them stability doctrinally and practically and thus lead them to mutual edification. Like several other passages in Ephesians (1:3–14, 15–23; 2:1–7; 3:1–13, 14–19; 4:1–7; 6:14–20), 4:11–16 is one long sentence in Greek.

4:12. The purpose of the gifted men is **to prepare God’s people for works of service.** **More**

⁵³NIV New International Version

literally, this purpose is “for the perfecting or equipping (*katartismōn*; cf. the verb *katartizō* in Matt. 4:21, ‘mending’ or ‘preparing’ nets; in Gal. 6:1, ‘restore’ for proper use; cf. 2 Cor. 13:11; Heb. 13:21) of the saints unto the work of the ministry” (*diakonias*). Gifted people (Eph. 4:11) are to minister the Word to others so that they in turn are readied to get involved in ministering to others (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2). The goal of all this is the building up or edifying of **the body of Christ** (cf. Eph. 4:16). This shows that all saints and not just a few leaders should be involved in the “ministry.” All saints are gifted (v. 7) to serve others spiritually.

4:13. Gifted people are to minister till **all** the church attains (**reach** translates *katantēsōmen*, used in Acts of travelers arriving at their destinations) the three goals, each introduced by the Greek preposition (*eis*, “unto”): literally, (1) “unto the **unity of the faith** (cf. Eph. 4:5) **and full knowledge** (*epignōseōs*; cf. 1:17) **of the Son of God,**” (2) “unto a **mature man,**” and (3) “unto the **measure** (*metron*; cf. 4:7, 13) of the stature **of the fullness of Christ.**” As each believer functions in accord with the gift(s) Christ has given him (v. 7) the body as a whole enjoys unity (cf. vv. 3–6) and becomes more spiritually mature (cf. v. 15), more like Jesus Christ in all His fullness (cf. 1:23; 3:19).

4:14–16. Here Paul expressed the ultimate purpose, or perhaps better, the result (*hina*) of gifted people equipping saints to serve the Lord and others. Negatively, believers should not **be** like immature **infants** who are easily swayed and confused, like **waves being tossed back and forth** (cf. Luke 8:24; James 1:6) **and blown here and there** (lit., “whirled around,” a violent swinging that makes one dizzy) **by every gust of wind of teaching ... by the cunning,** better, “trickery” (*kybeia*, lit., “dice-playing”) **of men in their deceitful scheming** (*panourgia*, also used in Luke 20:23; 1 Cor. 3:19; 2 Cor. 4:2; 11:3), moving toward (*pros* indicates goal) a system of error. False teachers cause this kind of confusion regarding the truth in order to try to bring believers into their erroneous schemes. In contrast (*de*, Eph. 4:15) Paul stated positively that by **speaking the truth in love** (lit., “truthing in love,” which has the idea of maintaining truth in love in both speech and life) believers may **grow up into Him** with reference to **all things**. Christ, then, is the Source of a believer’s growth and also the Aim and Goal of his growth (cf. v. 13). From the Head (cf. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18) the body derives its **whole** capacity for growth and activity (Eph. 4:16). Each member of the body is **joined** (2:21) by being carefully fitted **together**, and each member is held or brought together **by** means of **every supporting ligament** (cf. Col. 2:19) according to the standard (*kata*, with the accusative) of the measured working (*metrō*, from *metron*) of each individual. This causes the body of Christ to grow (cf. Eph. 4:15) and build **itself up** (cf. v. 12) **in love**. The phrase “in love” occurs three times (vv. 2, 15–16), **thus pointing to the way unity is maintained. Significantly the word “measure”** (*metron*) is also used three times in this context (vv. 7, 13, 16). Each believer is to function in Christ’s body by God’s enabling grace in accord with the measure of the gift Christ bestowed on him (v. 7). When each believer accomplishes that measure, then the church **grows** properly (v. 16), coming ultimately to the measure of Christlikeness (v. 13). Stunted growth comes when one does not allow his or others’ gifts to function.

The preservation of unity is the responsibility of God’s gifted people in the church (vv. 7–16). In this unity of structure is variety of function. Paul emphasized body growth, not self-growth. **Each** individual contributes to this unified growth as he allows his particular gift(s) to function.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, “[Ephesians](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 634–636.

11, 12 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν, “and it was he who gave.” The αὐτὸς picks up the αὐτὸς of v 10, making plain that he of whom the psalm said “he gave gifts to men” is the exalted Christ who fills the universe. The psalm citation with its reinterpretation continues to dominate the passage, for the gifts are now explained as the ministers whom the writer lists. They are seen as the royal largesse which Christ distributes from his position of cosmic lordship after his triumphant ascent. In fact Christ has given these ministers as part of the overall purpose for which he ascended—that his work of filling all things might be brought to completion. The link with the previous verse indicates that in the writer’s vision Christ’s giving of ministers of the word to build up the whole body into his fullness is interwoven with the goal of his pervading the cosmos with his presence and rule. This underlines the point the writer has already made in 1:22, 23. God gives Christ as head over all to the Church, and it becomes his instrument in carrying out his purposes for the cosmos. The readers are to see themselves as part of this Church which has a universal role and which is to be a pledge of the universe’s ultimate unity in Christ. Now, the one who has been given to the Church as cosmic Lord, himself gives to the Church to equip it fully for its cosmic task. And to assert that the ministers are gifts of the exalted Christ, rather than merely officers created by the Church, is clearly meant to enhance their significance in the eyes of the readers. As in 1:22, the verb διδόναι retains its general sense of “to give” rather than “to appoint” (see Comment on 1:22).

τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, “the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.” As our translation indicates, in the expression τοὺς μὲν ... τοὺς δὲ ..., since it comes with a list of differing nouns, the article is most probably to be interpreted as simply an article which belongs directly with the following nouns and not as a substantive used absolutely with the nouns serving as predicates. In other words, the better translation is “it was he who gave, on the one hand, the apostles. on the other, the prophets” or simply, as above, “it was he who gave the apostles, the prophets,” rather than, as in most versions, “it was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets.” The preferred translation is in line with the most frequent force of the article with μὲν ... δὲ ... in the NT and means that the writer’s main concern is with listing the nouns themselves (cf. the full discussion of this grammatical point in Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*. 73–75; also Schnackenburg, 183). What does the exalted Christ give to the Church? He gives people, these particular people who proclaim the word and lead. In relation to vv 7, 8b, he gives not just grace to people, but he gives specific people to people. In Rom 12 gifts were ministries or functions and this is the way the term had been employed in 1 Cor 12, though in the latter passage in vv 28, 29 Paul could also speak of God appointing ministers as well as giving ministries. In contrast to both passages, here in Eph 4 the focus is narrowed to particular ministers of the word (as we shall see, even “pastors” cannot be completely separated from such proclamation of the word).

The first two groups of ministers listed, the apostles and the prophets, also appear first in Paul’s list in 1 Cor 12:28 and have already been singled out as the object of the writer’s reflection in Eph 2:20 and 3:5 (see Comment on 2:20 and 3:5 for a discussion of their identity and their foundational role as recipients and proclaimers of revelation). In these earlier references the apostles, as divinely commissioned missionaries and planters of churches, and the prophets, as

specialists in mediating divine revelation, were viewed as norms from the past. It is likely that the same perspective is at work here. Drawing conclusions about the historical conditions of the churches in Asia Minor from the writer's theological reflections is a hazardous enterprise. So whether there were still prophets operating in the churches to which he writes cannot be ascertained with any certainty (pace Klauck, *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 [1973] 96, 97 and Schnackenburg, 185, who state rather categorically that both apostles and prophets would have been no longer active). But even if the writer is aware of prophets still exercising their gifts (cf. Did. 11–13; 15:1, 2; Herm. Man. 11), it appears that for him the period of their significance was in the past, and the development whereby prophets became increasingly marginalized in the Christian movement as their leadership role was taken over by the more stable teaching and ruling ministries is one that fits in with the theological emphasis of this passage. (On the relation of prophets to other leaders cf. also Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*. 350–61; D. E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] esp. 203–11).

It has been suggested that the triad of apostles, prophets, and teachers, enumerated by Paul in 1 Cor 12:28 by means of “first ... second ... third ...,” represents a tradition about church leadership which can be traced back beyond Paul to the Antioch church through the sources behind Acts 13:1–3; 14:4, 14 (cf. Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*. 249–87), but it is unlikely that the meager evidence will support such a hypothesis (cf. the reservations of F. Hahn in his review of Merklein's work in *TRev* 72 [1976] 281–86 and the objections of H. Schürmann, “‘... und Lehrer,’ ” *Orientierungen am Neuen Testament* [Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1978] 135 n. 90). In any case, to this group the writer of Ephesians has added two further categories of ministers, the evangelists and the pastors. In the post-apostolic period it is the evangelists who continue to carry out many of the activities of the apostles and it is the pastors who now exercise the leadership role, alongside the teachers, previously held by the prophets (cf. also Klauck, *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 [1973] 97). As the name suggests, evangelists were involved in the proclamation of the gospel. The term is used of Philip in Acts 21:8 in the context of mission (cf. also Acts 8:14–17 where Luke depicts Philip's missionary activities as dependent on the apostles). It is used also in 2 Tim 4:5, where it may well be intended to be seen as part of the work of a church leader. Since the term “pastors” covers church leadership in Eph 4, it is likely that here “evangelists” are to be seen as those engaged in mission and the founding of churches and, therefore, as having responsibilities beyond the local congregation. A further reason for their mention here could be that the churches in Asia Minor which are being addressed, were not founded directly by Paul but by just such people, co-workers and followers of Paul who continued his type of missionary activity (cf. also Schlier, 196; Ernst, 354). It is in this sense that the term is used much later by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.37.2 3; 5.10.2. the view, first proposed by Oecumenius, that the reference in Eph 4:11 is to “the office of gospel writer” (cf. Hadidian, *CBQ* 28, [1966] 317–21) is quite improbable.

The definite article, which has been employed for each of the three categories mentioned so far, is repeated before “pastors” but omitted before “teachers.” What significance should be attached to this? Some have claimed that it indicates that the two groups are in fact identical (e.g., Barth, 438–39, who holds that one ministry only is being described, that of “teaching shepherds”). In Acts 13:1 those designated “teachers” in Antioch are shown exercising leadership while in the Pastorals teaching is a major role of the church leader (cf. 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9). But it is doubtful whether this is enough to demonstrate that the two ministries were always exercised by

the same people. It is more likely that they were overlapping functions, but that while almost all pastors were also teachers, not all teachers were also pastors. Whether the two functions were performed by a single individual within a particular local situation may well have depended on what gifted persons were present in that situation. The one definite article is therefore best taken as suggesting this close association of functions between two types of ministers who both operate within the local congregation (cf. also J. Jeremias, “ποιμήν,” TDNT 6 [1968] 497; Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*. 362–65).

Though the noun ποιμήν, “shepherd, pastor,” is used of Christ himself in John 10:11, 14; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25, it is employed for church leaders only here in the NT the cognate verb does, however, describe their function in Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet 5:1–4 and Peter’s activity in regard to the Church in John 21:16. It suggests the exercise of leadership through nurture, care, and guidance. Significantly, the concept of the shepherd and tending the flock is often found in association with that of the bishop or overseer and overseeing (cf. Jer 23:2; Ezek 34:11; Zech 11:16; CD 13.7–11, where the mēbaqqēr, “guardian, overseer,” in the Qumran community is likened to a shepherd with his flock; Acts 20:28, where those appointed bishops of the church at Ephesus are to shepherd the church of God; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:2; Ign. Rom. 9.1; Phil. 2.1, where the bishop is also called a pastor). It is probable, then, that the pastor of Eph 4:11 fulfills the functions denoted in Paul’s writings by such terms as προϊστημι, “to rule, manage” (1 Thess 5:12; Rom 12:8), κυβέρνησις, “administration” (1 Cor 12:28), and ἐπίσκοπος, “bishop, overseer” (Phil 1:1). ἐπίσκοπος was a term taken from the Hellenistic world, but because the general notion of overseeing had close associations with the shepherd in Jewish thought, it is understandable that the term “pastor” could become interchangeable with “bishop” in the Christian movement. It is the equivalent to πρεσβύτερος, “elder,” of Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet 5:1, 5; Jas 5:14 (see Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 362–78, for an extended discussion). That bishops and deacons are not mentioned here, though they are in Phil 1:1; Did. 15.1; Herm. Vis. 3.5.1; Mart. Pol. 16.2, illustrates the variety of structures in the early church and the difficulty of obtaining any clear overall picture. But it justifies neither the assertion that “the churches here addressed had not yet reached that stage of development rejected in Phil 1:1” (pace Caird, 76) nor the speculation that the writer is opposed to these particular structures (pace Fischer, *Tendenz*, 21–39, 201–2, and see the discussion under Form/Structure/Setting).

The teachers, with whom the pastors are so closely associated, already had a special role in Paul’s time (cf. 1 Cor 12:28, 29; 14:26; Rom 12:7) and are mentioned specifically elsewhere in early Christian writings (cf. Heb 5:12; Jas 3:1; Acts 13:1; 1 Tim 3:2; 4:11, 13, 16; 5:17; 2 Tim 2:2, 24; 3:16; 4:2, 3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7; Did. 13.2; 15.1, 2). Their function appears to have been preserving, transmitting, expounding, interpreting, and applying the apostolic gospel and tradition along with the Jewish Scripture. They were specialists in the inculcation of Christian norms and values and the conduct appropriate to them, and in this way became particularly associated with the qualities of wisdom and knowledge. (For a discussion of the teaching ministry in the early church, see F. V. Filson, “The Christian Teacher in the First Century,” *JBL* 60 [1941] 317–28; H. Schürmann, “... und Lehrer,” 116–56.) Wisdom and knowledge are qualities which this writer has desired for his readers in the intercessory prayer-reports (cf. 1:17, 18; 3:18, 19), and knowledge of the Son of God forms part of the goal of the Church’s existence here in 4:13. Teachers, then, are instrumental in the Church’s growth in these qualities. That teachers instructed in practical Christian living is also clear from the immediate context in Eph

4:20, 21. In Colossians, over against the syncretistic philosophy, the importance of the apostolic tradition of teaching (1:5–7, 23; 2:6, 7) and its mediation through such people as Epaphras (1:7; 4:12), Tychicus (4:7), and Archippus (4:17) had been emphasized. Now in Ephesians also, the writer stresses the vital significance of such ministers in building up the body of Christ, a significance that is underlined in relation to the false teaching which he mentions in v 14. In this passage the writer's major concern is with the unity and maturity of the Church. So, of the ministers listed whom Christ has given to the Church, it is particularly the pastors and teachers active in his own day whose worth he wishes to assert. This could be seen as self-serving, for the writer himself is surely to be regarded as a gifted teacher who transmits and interprets the Pauline tradition on the basis of his own special insights (cf. also Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 351; Schürmann, "... und Lehrer," 151). But the context makes clear that he is not out to promote his own position or that of any particular individuals. His burden is for the well-being of the Church as a whole. He genuinely believes that the preservation of the apostolic tradition is essential for such well-being and that pastors and teachers are the Christ-given means for accomplishing it. Because of the special foundational place given by this writer to the apostles and prophets, in effect a new triad of ministers, in comparison with the triad of 1 Cor 12:28, emerges as active in the churches of his time—evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Interestingly, it is the teachers who retain their place. While the evangelists carry on the missionary activity of the apostles and the pastors take over the earlier leadership functions of the prophets, evidently the role of the teachers has been consolidated as they provide the major element of continuity in ministry, the bridge between the apostolic and post-apostolic periods.

It is often asked whether functions or offices are involved in the list of 4:11. The superficial answer is neither. The writer talks about groups of persons, not about either their activities or their positions. But obviously the question can then be pursued. Do these persons receive the name they have been given simply because they perform certain functions from time to time or also because they occupy some clearly defined position within their communities? The discussion of this question has often been plagued by imposing on the evidence false dichotomies between "dynamic" and "static" categories, between charisma and institution, between ministry as event and ministry as office. The answers given are highly disputed, and it may simply be the case that a question is being asked of the text for which there is neither enough data in the text nor sufficient knowledge of church organization at this time and in this area to provide a convincing answer. But perhaps a number of general points can be established. On the one hand, there is no hint in Ephesians of ordination to office or of the sort of legitimation of office by the church which is reflected in the Pastorals. On the other hand, evangelists, pastors, and teachers were so called because they regularly exercised their ministries, and such ministries would have required acceptance and recognition by their churches, for even in Paul's time the exercise of charismata required evaluation and recognition on the part of the congregation, and certain congregations recognized clearly defined leaders (cf. the bishops and deacons of Phil 1:1). So, if the ordered regular nature of a ministry and its recognition by a local church makes it an office, then the ministers in 4:11 who are active in the writer's own day are officers. If, in addition, an office has to be constitutive for the life of the Church, then in this writer's theological perspective the ministers he lists fall into this category, since they are seen as the representatives and guarantors of the apostolic revelation and tradition which provide the norms for the Church's existence (pace Schweizer, who in his comment as a Protestant within Schnackenburg's EKK commentary [195] and in his own commentary on Colossians [164 n. 41]

plays down the extent to which these ministers are singled out in v 11 and in a minimalist interpretation claims they only provide examples of gifts given to every member of the community). Whether in the churches to which he wrote there were explicit ecclesiastical structures which corresponded to his theological vision and what sort of institutions had been developed for the acceptance and recognition of regular ministries are questions to which we do not know the answer. (For an extensive discussion of these and related issues, see Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 79–80, 348–92.)

πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ, “for bringing the saints to completion, for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ.” Why does the exalted Christ give the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers? Three reasons follow, each of which has a slightly different focus. Before we pursue the different nuances of each, we should note that this exegesis has not been universally accepted by scholars and that there is an issue surrounding the intended relationship of the three prepositional phrases and, therefore, the punctuation of any translation. The view has become popular that the second prepositional phrase is not to be seen as distinct from the first and that the two taken together contain one idea, namely that the ministers have been given to equip the saints to carry out their service. In carrying out their service, the saints play their part in building up the body—the force of the third prepositional phrase. In support of this view, appeal is made to the change in preposition from πρὸς to εἰς between the first and second phrases, as a sign that the phrases are not coordinate, to v 7 with its notion that all have received grace for service, and to v 16 with its emphasis that building up the body is the work of all believers (cf. Westcott, 62–63; J. A. Robinson, 98–99; Roels, *God’s Mission*, 192; Bruce, 86; Käsemann, “Epheser 4, 11–16,” 290; Gnllka, 213; Klauck, *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 [1973] 100; Barth, 439, 479–81; Caird, 76; Mitton, 151; Mussner, 127; Bratcher and Nida, *Handbook*, 102). However, the change of preposition cannot bear the weight of such an argument, and there are, in fact, no grammatical or linguistic grounds for making a specific link between the first and second phrases. An active role for all believers is safeguarded by vv 7, 16, but the primary context here in v 12 is the function and role of Christ’s specific gifts, the ministers, not that of all the saints. In line with this, as we shall see, καταρτισμός, “completion,” has a meaning which does not require supplementing by a further phrase, and διακονία, “service,” is more likely to refer to the ministry of the ministers just named. What is more, to string together a number of prepositional phrases, all dependent on the main verb and coordinate with each other, is a characteristic feature of this writer’s style. Three such phrases are found in 1:3; 1:20, 21; 2:7 and, significantly, in the following verses here, 4:13 and 4:14, as well as four in 6:12 and five in 1:5, 6. It is certainly preferable, therefore, to see the three prepositional phrases here as each dependent on the notion of the giving of ministers, and hard to avoid the suspicion that opting for the other view is too often motivated by a zeal to avoid clericalism and to support a “democratic” model of the Church (cf. also, Abbott, 119; Dibelius, 82; S. Hanson, *Unity*, 157; Masson, 192–93; Schlier, 198–99; Ernst, 356; Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 76; Schnackenburg, 186; “Christus,” 295; Hamann, *Concordia Journal* 14 [1988] 42–49). There is no reason, however, for making a distinction between the pastors and teachers and the other three groups of ministers and deciding either that the first two prepositional phrases relate only to the pastors and teachers, while the third applies to the task of all five types of ministers (Dibelius, 82), or that the last two phrases describe the role of all the ministers, while the first relates only to the pastors and teachers (Masson, 192–93). The writer is taking a general view of all the ministers given by Christ and describes the activity

such ministers were intended to perform in three different ways, with the change from πρὸς to εἰς in the introductory preposition most likely being simply a variation in style.

They are to bring the saints to completion. On the term ἅγιοι, “saints,” see the earlier discussion of 1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8. The noun καταρτισμός occurs only here in the NT. The verb καταρτίζεω is found in Paul, however, in 1 Thess 3:10; Gal 6:1; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11; Rom 9:22 (cf. also Heb 13:21; 1 Pet 5:10) where its range of meaning includes “to complete,” “to restore,” and “to prepare.” It is the notion of making complete, which can include making complete by restoring or training, that best fits the context, where, in the next verse, different images for the Church’s completion will be used. The use of the noun in this sense is evidenced later in Clement, Strom. 4.26; Basil, Hex. 9.1; Ammonius, Ac. 18.25; and Chrysostom, Hom. 2.1 in Tit. Interestingly, the verb is used of the task of the philosopher or educator in the Hellenistic world (cf. Plutarch, Cato Minor 65.5; Alex. 7.1; Them 2.5–6; Epictetus, Diss. 3.20.10; 4.9.16). **All believers are to be brought to a state of completion**, and it is the ministers Christ has given who are the means to this end as they exercise their ministries of proclamation, teaching, and leadership. These officers are Christ’s gifts to the Church, but again it becomes clear that such a perspective on their role should never lead to self-glorification. They have been given to carry out the work of service, and it is service which provides the framework for understanding any ministerial function or office (cf. also Mark 9:35; 10:42–45, where service is a basic requirement of discipleship). In Rom 12:7 service is a particular charisma, while in 1 Cor 12:5 the term has a more general reference, as “varieties of service” stand parallel to “varieties of charismata.” Here in Ephesians, the ministers named are seen as engaged in διακονία in this more general sense. There is precedent in Paul’s writings for an association between specific leaders, not simply all believers, and διακονία. The term is used of the ministry of Paul himself in 2 Cor 3:8, 9; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; Rom 11:13 and of that of his co-workers in 1 Cor 16:15, where Stephanas and his household are said to have devoted themselves to the service of the saints, and in Col 4:17 with reference to Archippus. The primary focus of this service for the ministers of Eph 4:11 has already been expressed in the preceding phrase—bringing the saints to completion. Like that of Stephanas and his household, their leadership in the various communities will be characterized by devotion to the service of the saints. The reason for the giving of ministers can also be summed up as “for the building up of the body of Christ,” a phrase that combines body and building imagery. The writer had employed the biological imagery of growth when talking of the Church as a building in 2:21; now he employs building imagery when talking of the Church as a body. On the Church as the body of Christ, see v 4 earlier in this pericope and the extended Comment on 1:23. The notion of building up or edifying the body had been a major criterion in Paul’s evaluation of various ministries (cf. 1 Cor 14:3–5, 12, 26). Now this is seen as the goal for which the ministers of the word were given to the Church. Although this building up is also the task of all the members of the body (v 16), the ministers have a distinctive and particularly significant role to play in it. Their transmission and interpretation of the apostolic gospel and tradition are what will prove especially constructive for the rest of the body.

13 μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” To the setting out of three purposes for which the ministers were given is now added a statement which incorporates a threefold description of the goal of the Church’s existence. The first part of this description features the unity of the Church’s faith and knowledge. μέχρι, “until,” has both a

prospective and a final force (cf. BDF §383[2]). The ministers are to carry out their task both until the whole Church reaches this goal and in order that it might reach this goal. They are seen in the context of the entire Church (“we all”; cf. also 3:18, where it was stressed that growth in comprehension takes place in the company of all God’s people), and this Church is depicted as on the way to its goal (cf. also the use of *καταντᾶν*, “to come to, attain to,” in Phil 3:11). Barth (484–96, “Die Parusie,” 248–49) has an unusual interpretation of this verse in which he claims to find a reference to believers going out to meet Christ at his parousia as king and bridegroom. But although the related substantives *ὑπάντησις* and *ἀπάντησις* can mean a procession to meet someone (cf. Matt 25:1, 6; 1 Thess 4:17), such a meaning is not in view with the use of the verb here and has to be read into it. Besides, although this meaning would fit with his interpretation of the second prepositional phrase as a reference to Christ as the “perfect man,” it makes no sense at all to speak of processing to meet the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. As in v 12, the three prepositional phrases in this verse are all dependent on the verb rather than on each other. The first one takes up again the theme of unity from the earlier part of the pericope. There we have already seen that the unity given still has to be maintained, and here we discover that the unity given is also still to be attained. This is particularly clear in the case of the first element of this unity—faith. In v 5 “one faith” was spoken of as a given, but now the writer’s thought appears to be that the full appropriation of that oneness of the faith lies in the future. As in v 5, *πίστις*, “faith,” used here in the context of an emphasis on the teaching ministry and the mention of false teaching, is likely to have an objective connotation. In other words, it is not primarily believers’ exercise of faith that is in view but rather the content of that faith (cf. also Col 1:23; 2:7). The idea is of the whole Church moving toward the appropriation of all that is contained in its one faith. Similarly, attaining to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God is likely to mean appropriating all that is involved in the salvation which centers in Christ (cf. Col 2:2, 3, which speaks of the knowledge of Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge), and since there is one Lord (v 5), full knowledge of what is given in him will also have the quality of oneness. Earlier in his two intercessory prayers, the writer has spelled out a number of aspects of this one knowledge that he desires his readers to possess (cf. 1:17–19; 3:16–19). In the earlier passages such knowledge was regarded primarily as a gift to be received, but now it is also viewed as a goal to be reached.

Syntactically, the Son of God is likely to be the object of knowledge only and not also of faith, because the definite article is repeated before *ἐπίγνωσις*, “knowledge.” This particular Christological title, Son of God, occurs nowhere else in Ephesians, but too much should not be read into this. It is more likely that the writer has simply taken up a traditional Pauline Christological title (cf. 1 Thess 1:10; Gal 1:16; 2:20; 4:4, 6; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 1:19; Rom 1:3, 4, 9; 5:10; 8:3, 29; Col 1:13) than that there were divergent views about Christ’s divine sonship troubling his readers (pace Mussner, 128). Nevertheless, the unity of Christian faith and knowledge does provide a contrast to the mention of diverse winds of teaching in the next verse, and it is the task of the pastors and teachers, who are Christ’s gifts to his Church, to ensure that there is a progressive movement toward the goal of full appropriation of the one faith and of the one knowledge of Christ (cf. also Meyer, 222; S. Hanson, *Unity*, 161; Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 103). It is worth noting that what emerges from the writer’s treatment of the unity of faith and knowledge here is a version of the Pauline eschatological tension between the “already” and the “not yet” applied to the life of the Church. The unity of faith and knowledge is already

possessed in Christ, but at the same time it still remains to be attained, and to be attained through the effective utilization of the gifts that are an element of that which is already possessed.

εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, “to the mature person, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” These last two goals to which all believers are to attain are expressed in terms which describe the Church in its completed state. The Church in this state is seen as a corporate entity, not as disparate individuals. A comparison with Col 1:28 is instructive at this point. There the apostle’s aim is “that we may present every person mature in Christ,” and the focus is clearly on each individual. Here in Ephesians the focus has shifted onto the whole Church seen as a unified entity. “We all” are to move toward “the mature person” (pace Mitton, 154, and Mussner, 129, who hold that the individual believer is in view with this latter term; Bratcher and Nida, *Handbook*, 103–4, who recognize the corporate element but misleadingly still wish to translate as “we shall become mature people”). Some scholars have thought to find affinities between this term understood as “the perfect man” and the Gnostic Anthropos figure (cf. P. Vielhauer, *Oikodome*, 135–36; Pokorný, *Epheserbrief*, 78; Schlier, 200–201), but the expression is quite explicable without recourse to this speculation and in any case employs ἀνήρ rather than ἄνθρωπος. τέλειος has the nuance of mature rather than perfect (cf. also 1 Cor 2:6; 14:20; Heb 5:14), while ἀνήρ denotes here an adult male, a full-grown man. The emphasis is on the mature adulthood of this person in contrast with the children to be mentioned in the next verse. The Church, which has already been depicted as one new person (ἄνθρωπος) in Christ (2:15), is to attain to what in principle it already has in him—maturity and completeness.

This pattern of thought also helps to explain the language in which the third goal is depicted. The goal is not so much Christ himself in his perfect qualities (pace Mitton, 154–55; Mussner, 129) as the Church as his fullness. Both the mature person and the fullness of Christ are primarily terms for the Church, yet neither can be totally separated from Christ, since for this writer the Church is always seen as incorporated in him. The writer has already described the Church as the fullness of Christ (see Comment on 1:23), and now the same expression can also serve in this portrayal of the Church’s goal. As Best puts it, “what in 1:23 was a statement of fact is now a standard of attainment” and “the Church is the dwelling place of Christ’s attributes and powers and yet must seek more and more to give room for those very attributes and powers to dwell in it” (*One Body*, 141 and n. 2). This goal can also be compared with that which the writer had expressed in his prayer for his readers in 3:19, “that you might be filled up to all the fullness of God.” The full description is introduced by the phrase “to the measure of the stature.” There is some debate about whether to take ἡλικία as a reference to age or to bodily size, as it can denote either aspect of matured growth. Since the context contains the contrast between children and adults, some interpret it in terms of age as a further part of this contrast and as an explanation of what was meant by the “mature person” (cf. Abbott, 120; BAGD, 345; Percy, *Probleme*, 321; Mussner, 129). It seems preferable, however, to treat this third depiction as introducing a new image of completion and to recognize that πλήρωμα, “fullness,” more naturally has spatial connotations, so that “stature” is probably the more appropriate interpretation (cf. S. Hanson, *Unity*, 160; Schlier, 201; Gnllka, 215; Ernst, 357; Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 106; Klauck, *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 [1973] 101). The standard for believers’ attainment is the mature proportions that befit the Church as the fullness of Christ. Again, we should recall that this is a continuation of the discussion of Christ’s gifts and that it is through his gifts of ministers that Christ enables the Church to attain to the complete realization of what it already is. Ministers are

important for the period of the “not yet,” in which the Church has to be helped to progress toward the eschatological goals of unity and maturity.

14 ἵνα μηκέτι ὤμεν νήπιοι, κλυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς διδασκαλίας, “so that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth by waves, and gusted here and there by every wind of teaching.” With a mixture of metaphors the writer now illuminates by negative contrast the significance of Christ’s giving of gifts to the Church and the progress toward its goals that these gifts enable it to make. Through the building up and bringing to completion that the gifts effect, immaturity and instability can increasingly be left behind. νήπιοι, “children,” contains a double contrast to “the mature person.” Not only do silly infants contrast with the mature adult (cf. 1 Cor 2:6; 3:1; Heb 5:13, 14), but the plural of “children” also contrasts with the singular of “the mature person,” individualism being a sign of childishness, unity a sign of maturity (cf. also Best, *One Body*, 148). For this writer immaturity is evidenced in instability, rootlessness, lack of direction, and susceptibility to manipulation and error. κλυδων denotes rough water or waves, and the passive participle of the cognate verb means “tossed by waves.” So the picture conjured up by the two participles is of a little storm-tossed boat or of swirling flotsam and jetsam entirely at the mercy of the waves and the wind. In either case, the confusion and lack of direction evoked contrasts strongly with the goal-oriented language of the previous verse. The use of the imagery of wind and waves for instability was common and is found elsewhere in the NT in Jas 1:6, where it depicts the instability of doubt. But the sort of vocabulary contained in this passage is also employed in warnings against false teachers in Jude 12, 13 and Heb 13:9. Here in Ephesians, it is every wind of teaching that is pictured as gusting immature believers about. The use of the singular of διδασκαλία, “teaching,” and of the definite article with it, has been seen as an indication that it is the Christian teaching that is in view, though this teaching is being used for perverted ends (cf. Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt*, 107, followed by Schnackenburg, 189). It is true that the singular is employed when Christian teaching is under discussion in Rom 12:7; 15:4 and becomes almost a technical term in the Pastorals, though frequently accompanied by the adjective “sound” (cf. 1 Tim 1:10; 4:6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1; 2 Tim 3:16; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7), whereas the plural is used of false teaching in Matt 15:9; Mark 7:7; Col 2:22; and 1 Tim 4:1. But this does not sufficiently take into consideration the influence of Col 2:22 on the wording of Eph 4:14 (see above under Form/Structure/Setting) and ignores the force of the adjective “every” in the phrase “every wind of teaching,” which suggests any and all kinds of teaching in contrast to the unity of faith and knowledge of which the writer has spoken. It is better, therefore, with the majority of commentators to take this as a reference to false teaching in the guise of the various religious philosophies which threatened to assimilate, and thereby dilute or undermine, the Pauline gospel. The only other clue in the letter about the nature of this teaching, the warning of 5:6–13, suggests that the writer was perhaps more worried about its ethical consequences than anything else. The lack of specificity about such teaching does not mean that it was thought of as only a remote possibility. It is more likely that the writer deemed it a constant general threat. After all, he knew what had happened in the case of the Colossian church. Indeed, the warnings of Acts 20:29, 30; 1 Tim 1:3, 4; 6:3–5, 20 attest to problems with false teaching in the churches of this area in the post-apostolic period.

ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν πανουργίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, “by human cunning, by craftiness, in the scheming of error.” This further sequence of three prepositional phrases asserts that behind the threatening teachings, making them so dangerous, are deceitful people,

ready to manipulate and take advantage of immature and unstable believers. *κυβεία*, translated here as cunning, literally meant the throw of the dice. In the ancient world dice-playing frequently had negative connotations of trickery, and the player was thought of as a wily and cunning customer (e.g., Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.19.28). “Human” here also has negative connotations as that which is purely human and opposed to that which is in Christ. The writer had found such a contrast already in Col 2:8 (“according to human tradition ... and not according to Christ”) and 2:20–22 (“with (Christ ... =according to human commandments and teachings”). Here human cunning can be seen as opposed to the fullness of Christ (4:13) or the truth in Jesus (4:21). *πανουργία* the craftiness or unscrupulousness by which false teachers pursue their ends of leading the immature astray. Interestingly, this vice heads a massive list in Philo, *Sacrif.* 32, and in 2 Corinthians Paul had contrasted his apostolic ministry with the practice of cunning (4:2) and attributed the latter to the serpent in his deception of Eve (11:3). The noun *μεθοδεία*, “scheming,” occurs elsewhere in the NT only in this letter—in 6:11 in connection with the devil. Its force can be ascertained from the cognate verb *μεθοδεύειν*, “to devise or scheme (evil)” (cf., e.g., LXX 2 Sam 19:27; Ign., *Phil.* 7.1). For this writer, such scheming produces error. Again, Paul had placed the vice of *πλάνη*, “error or deceit,” in contrast to his apostolic practice in 1 Thess 2:3 and more generally in contrast to the truth in 2 Thess 2:11, 12. Here also in Eph 4:14 there is a contrast to the reference to truth in the following verse. “Error” is frequently used of false teaching (cf. Jude 11; 1 John 4:6; 2 Pet 2:18; 3:17). These parallel references prompt the reflection that the attitude to false teaching reflected here in Ephesians is similar to that found in the so-called Catholic epistles and in the Pastorals. A clear-cut difference between the apostolic tradition and all other teachings is assumed. There is no attempt to interact with or even to refute the content of any of these teachings, as had taken place in Colossians. Instead, attack is deemed the best form of defense, and the proponents of other teachings are accused of evil intentions and of being ready to manipulate the weaknesses of believers to their own erroneous ends (cf. also esp. 2 Tim 3:1–9; Titus 1:10–16; 2 Pet 2:10–22).

In the context of 4:7–16 this negative picture of v 14 is meant to underline the importance of Christ’s giving of ministers to the Church. Immaturity on the part of believers cannot be treated as a neutral state which will be outgrown in due course. It is a highly dangerous condition because it lays them open to manipulation by cunning people and the forces of error. But it is for precisely such a situation that pastors and teachers have been provided—to prevent believers in their immaturity from falling prey to false teaching and to lead them from the instability which ends in error to the stability of the truth.

15a, b *ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, “but rather, speaking the truth in love.” The writer returns to the positive side of his portrayal of the Church’s movement toward its goals. He describes growth instead of immaturity, a growth which takes place as believers speak the truth in love instead of being taken in by those who propagate error through their unscrupulous craftiness. This contrast between the first part of v 15 and the last part of v 14 can be seen to have a chiasmic structure with *ἀληθεύοντες*, “speaking the truth,” in opposition to *τῆς πλάνης*, “of error,” and *ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, “in love,” in opposition to *ἐν πανουργίᾳ*, “by craftiness” (cf. also Schnackenburg, 190). Some argue that *ἀληθεύειν* refers not simply to speaking the truth but to doing the truth or living according to the truth (cf. Abbott, 123; Westcott, 64; J. A. Robinson, 185; Mitton, 156; Bratcher and Nida, *Handbook*, 105). There is in fact a textual variant *ἀλήθειαν δὲ ποιοῦντες* “rather doing the truth” (championed by Dubois, *NovT* 16 [1974] 30–34), although the manuscript evidence for it is very weak (FG). But *ἀληθεύειν* is used consistently in the LXX (cf. Gen 20:16; 42:16;

Prov 21:3; Isa 44:26; Sir 31:4) and in Philo (cf. Mos. 2.177; Ios. 95; Abr. 107; Decal. 84) with a verbal connotation, meaning “to speak the truth,” and that is its most likely force here in Ephesians (cf. also Schlier, 205; Gnilka, 217; Barth, 444; Schnackenburg, 190). Just as in Galatians Paul’s claim to be telling the truth to his readers (4:16) is inextricably bound up with his proclamation of the truth of the gospel (2:5, 14), so in Eph 4:15 the Church’s speaking the truth is determined by that word of truth which is the gospel of salvation (1:13; cf. also 6:14). In line with this, believers cannot make use of the same means of manipulation and deceit as those who are ready to lead believers astray. Instead, they proclaim the truth by means of love.

The phrase ἐν ἀγάπῃ, “in love,” which occurs six times in this letter, has been connected syntactically by a few scholars (e.g., Meyer, 230) with the following verb ἀυξήσωμεν, “we may grow up in love,” and thereby paralleled with the notion of growth in love in v 16. But the majority of commentators connect the phrase with the preceding verse. The chiasmic structure of the contrast to the end of v 15, which, as has been noted above, this clause then provides, adds to the likelihood that this is the right construal. A conceptual link with the notion of growth is to be found here in any case, since the whole clause, “speaking the truth in love,” should be understood as the means of the Church’s growth. The association of truth and love in this clause is a significant one. Any claim to loyalty to truth which results in lack of love to those perceived to be disloyal stands as much condemned as any claim to all-embracing love which is indifferent to truth. But it is not as if two competing claims or two quite different qualities have to be held in balance. Ultimately, at the heart of the proclamation of the truth is love, and a life of love is the embodiment of the truth. The Church reflects this relationship when its witness to the truth has love as its style and as its power (cf. also Schnackenburg, 191).

ἀυξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, “may grow up in every way to him.” Some scholars understand the syntax of this clause differently, taking the verb in a transitive sense, which it has for example in 1 Cor 3:9 or 2 Cor 9:10, and seeing τὰ πάντα, interpreted as the cosmos, as the verb’s object (cf. Schlier, 205–7; Steinmetz, Protologische Heilszuversicht, 120; Ernst, 358–59; Howard, NTS 20 [1974] 355–56; Meyer, Kirche und Mission, 72–76). The verse would then be translated “but rather, speaking the truth in love, we may let the cosmos grow up or cause the cosmos to grow up to him who is its head” and would speak of the Church’s role in bringing the cosmos to God’s purposes for it in Christ. As Schlier (“κεφαλή,” TDNT 3 [1965] 681) puts it, “When as the risen Lord He takes control of the world in His body, He is simply actualizing His real power over creation.... Hence, the Church as His body, when it relates the world to itself, is simply in process of taking over what truly belongs to it.” In favor of such an interpretation are the predominant use of τὰ πάντα as the cosmos elsewhere in the letter, the fact that the letter’s earlier reference to Christ as head is most immediately in relation to the cosmos (1:22), and the writer’s concern with the Church’s cosmic role. But whether the rest of the letter’s teaching about the Church’s cosmic role is rightly described in these terms and whether this role is in view at all here is highly questionable. Nowhere else in Ephesians is there talk of the Church’s active influence on the cosmos, and nowhere else is the cosmos said to grow up to Christ (cf. also Merklein, Das kirchliche Amt, 111; Schnackenburg, 191). In fact, growth is posited only of the Church, not of the cosmos. In this context the preceding verses have been about the Church growing to maturity, and the following verse will discuss the growth of the body, so everything points to the growth in this verse being that of the Church. As in 2:21 the verb should therefore be taken intransitively rather than transitively (cf. BDF § 101, 309 [2]; BAGD 121), and τὰ

πάντα should be understood as an adverbial accusative, meaning “in every way” and having the same force as the dative expression ἐν πᾶσιν in 1:23 (cf. BDF §160; BAGD 633).

So Christ’s giving of gifts to the Church is to enable the Church to move toward its goals, and that movement is seen in terms of believers’ growth toward Christ. In Paul’s letters, believers’ faith can be said to grow (cf. 2 Cor 10:15; 2 Thess 1:3), and growth is used of the development of the local Corinthian church and credited to God in 1 Cor 3:6, 7. The concept occurs more often in Colossians, where it is employed of the work of the gospel itself in 1:6, of believers’ knowledge of God in 1:10, and of the whole body of the Church, which is said in 2:19, the verse on which Eph 4:15, 16 is modeled, to “grow with a growth that is from God.” Here in Ephesians, then, the notion of the Church’s growth is elaborated, and 4:15 has affinities with 2:20, 21 where, as we have seen, Christ is presented as the keystone of a building in the process of growth. The earlier statements of the Church’s goals in 4:13 were primarily descriptions of the Church itself in its state of completion, but now it is specifically Christ who is the standard of maturity, indicating again that for this writer ecclesiology remains determined and measured by Christology. The Church is in Christ and has to grow up toward him. This underlines that the Church’s growth is not being thought of in terms of quantity, a numerical expansion of its membership, but in terms of quality, an increasing approximation of believers to Christ. In the face of the scheming of error, believers are not only to stand firm, as will be emphasized in 6:13, 14, but also to make progress. That proper growth and progress is to take place in every way, that is, in every aspect of the Church’s life and particularly in those aspects singled out earlier, in unity, in knowledge, and in speaking the truth in love. While Ephesians makes reference to an end of history (e.g., 4:30; 5:5; 6:13), the imminence of that end is not in view in the same way as it is in some of Paul’s letters. These notions of movement toward a goal, of progress, of maturing, and of growth may well function as Ephesians’ equivalent to some of the future elements in Paul’s eschatology (cf. also Steinmetz, *Protologische Heilszuversicht*, 114–21). They certainly suggest that the Church’s future in history is being taken seriously.

15c, 16 ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα ... τὴν αὐξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται, “who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body ... makes bodily growth.” In 1:22, 23 the writer had already spoken of Christ as head over all things for the Church, described as his body. Implicit was the idea that he was also head over the Church. Now this relationship is made explicit, as the one toward whom believers grow is identified as Christ, the head. The terminology of Col 2:19 is taken up so that Christ, the head, can be seen as both the goal and the source of the Church’s growth. The focus is more exclusively on Christ as the source of growth than in Colossians, since Colossians had also included a reference to the growth coming from God but this writer omits τοῦ θεοῦ, “of God,” after the noun “growth.” In fact, he reworks Col 2:19 in such a way as to convey and summarize some of his own emphases from earlier in the pericope. This has resulted in an overloading of the relative clause in v 16 and explains the awkward syntax with its five prepositional phrases. The reason for the redundant genitive τοῦ σώματος, “of the body” or “bodily,” as part of the verbal expression “makes bodily growth,” is its distance from the first mention of “body” as the subject of the clause (cf. also J. A. Robinson, 188). For further discussion of the dependence on modification of Col 2:19 in Eph 4:15c, 16 see *Form/Structure/Setting*.

The metaphor of Christ as head was originally independent of the metaphor of the Church as

body, but the two are brought together in Colossians and Ephesians, where the Church as body is seen as receiving its life from Christ and Christ's headship is understood in the sense of both rule and origin. For more extensive discussion of the likelihood of the writer having taken up Colossians' fusion of two separate metaphors, for which Hellenistic thought about the cosmos provided the catalyst (e.g., Philo, Praem. 125, "the virtuous one ... will be the head of the human race and all the others like the members of a body which are animated by the powers in the head and above"), and for treatment of the development of thought, whereby growth can be said to come from the head because of the connotations of κεφαλή as determinative source, see Comment on 1:22b, 23. "Body" imagery for the Church has been employed already in this passage in vv 4, 12. Here in v 16, in comparison with its use by Paul in 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12, which also talk about the mutual contributions of the body's members, the writer's emphasis is on the necessity for corporate growth rather than on interdependence itself. Through the proper functioning of the parts, the whole body is to be active in promoting its own growth, although ultimately it is Christ who is seen as providing the means for the body to carry out such activity. From this perspective, relating Christ as head to the Church as his body becomes an appropriate way to sum up the main thrust of vv 7–16. As the one who has been exalted to sovereign rule over all things, Christ is in the position and has the power to supply his Church with the leadership, the life, and the love that are the requisites for its growth.

συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας, "joined and brought together by every ligament which gives supply." The first participle, συναρμολογούμενον, "joined together," has been used by this writer earlier in 2:21 as part of his architectural imagery for the Church's life, while the second, συμβιβαζόμενον, "brought together," has been taken over from Col 2:19 (cf. also Col 2:2) and is a term that was frequently employed in a context of reconciliation (cf. Herodotus 1.74.3; Thucydides 2.29.6; Plato, Prot 337E). The two present participles are virtually synonymous (pace Whitaker, JTS 31 [1930] 48–49, who claimed, "the first participle speaks of position, the second of movement; the first of relation to Christ, the second of that relation in action"), and, taken together, underline forcefully that for the unified growth of the body its members have to be involved in a process of continue mutual adjustment. This interaction of the members is assisted "by every ligament which gives supply." ἀφή has been interpreted as sense or sensation (cf. Meyer, 234), contact (cf. Abbott, 126; Barth, 449), and joint or ligament (cf. most commentators). The last interpretation is almost certainly the right one, since in Col 2:19 ἀφή is linked through the use of a common article with σύνδεσμος, which had a recognized physiological connotation as a joint, and since it is also employed in this way in Aristotle for the connection between parts of the body (cf. Metaph. 4.4; 10.3; Phys. Ausc. 4.6; De Gen. et Corr. 1.6, 8; De Caelo 1.11; cf. also esp. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, 196–97, who concludes that the term refers to "the joinings, the junctures. When applied to the human body they would be 'joints,' provided that we use the word accurately of the relations between contiguous links, and not loosely [as it is often used] of the parts of the limbs themselves in the neighbourhood of the contact"). Each ligament is seen as a means of support or supply for the other parts of the body. ἐπιχορηγία occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Phil 1:19, where it means "help," "supply," or "support." But the cognate verb, in addition to its participial form in Col 2:19, is found in Paul's writings in Gal 3:5 and 2 Cor 9:10, where it is best translated as "to supply." Here the genitive phrase τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας, literally "of supply," should be understood in an active sense, referring to the ligaments giving supply rather than their being supplied to the body (cf. also Schlier, 208; Gnilka, 219; Klauck, Wissenschaft

und Weisheit 36 [1973] 103; Schnackenburg, 192). In this way, the writer pictures the ligaments functioning to provide the connections between the various parts and thereby mediating life and energizing power throughout the body. In the light of the earlier part of the pericope, this is to be seen as an image of the ministers who have been given to help maintain unity and enable growth to maturity (cf. also Schlier, 207–8; Masson, 199; Gnilka, 220; Klauck, Wissenschaft und Weisheit 36 [1973] 103; Merklein, Das kirchliche Amt, 114–15; Schnackenburg, 193; Mussner, 131). It is true that ministers are unlikely to be the reference of the joints and ligaments of Col 2:19 (cf. Schweizer, Colossians, 164; O’Brien, Colossians, 147). But the writer of Ephesians has placed much greater emphasis on this aspect of the body metaphor by adding *πᾶς*, “every” or “each,” by moving this prepositional phrase to a position after the two participles and immediately before the verbal expression, “makes bodily growth,” by omitting the accompanying reference to joints, and by underlining the mediating function of the ligaments through the addition of the substantive expression “of supply” in comparison with the cognate participial formulation of Col 2:19. These modifications and the context in Eph 4 make it highly probable that what is being highlighted is the role of the ministers in the whole body ruled and nourished by Christ and that, just as in v 11 the giving of Christ was embodied in particular persons, so here in v 16 the growth from Christ is mediated by particular persons. *κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους*, “according to the activity commensurate with each individual part.” These two prepositional phrases are part of the writer’s additions to Col 2:19 and recall both the phrase *κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν* in 1:19 and 3:7, where God’s power which raised Christ was said to be operative in believers and in the apostle Paul, and the terminology of the earlier part of the pericope in v 7 (cf. *κατὰ τὸ μέτρον* and *ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ*). So in this summarizing picture of v 16 both particular ministers and every member find a place. Each part of the body receives the energizing power it needs, and the proper growth of the whole body is in proportion to and adapted to each part. Each member has his or her distinct role in the well-being of the whole, and the unity in diversity depicted earlier in the passage to be essential for the proper growth of the Church.

εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, “for the purpose of building itself up in love.” On the notion of the building up of the body, see Comment on its earlier occurrence in this passage in v 12, where the ministers were understood as having been given for the edification of the Church. **It now becomes clear that, however significant the writer deems their role to be in this regard, ministers do not have exclusive claims to this function. In the building up of itself the whole body is involved.** The *ἑαυτοῦ*, “of itself,” adds to the previous reference the note of the Church’s active participation and is in line with the earlier emphasis of the verb on the Church’s promotion of its own growth, though ultimately the source of that growth is Christ, the head. The final prepositional phrase of the pericope—“in love”—recalls its opening exhortation, particularly the clause in v 2—“bearing with one another in love” (cf. also v 15a). If any corporate growth or building up is to take place, love is the indispensable means. The climactic stress on this performs a function here similar to that of Paul’s hymn to love in the midst of his discussion of the proper working of the body of Christ in 1 Cor 12–14. **Love is the lifeblood of this body, and therefore, the ultimate criterion for the assessment of the Church’s growth will be how far it is characterized by love.**

Lincoln, A. T. (1990). Ephesians (Vol. 42, pp. 263–264). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, pp. 248–263). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

11 Christ now sets out to accomplish the goal of filling all things by supplying⁹⁵ his people with everything necessary to foster the growth and perfection of the body (v. 13). Having achieved dominion over all the powers through his victorious ascent, he sovereignly distributes gifts to the members of his body.⁹⁷ The building of the body is inextricably linked with his intention of filling the universe with his rule, since the church is his instrument in carrying out his purposes for the cosmos.

While in 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 the ‘varieties of gifts’ are the diverse ministries allocated by the Spirit and the ability to exercise them, here the gifts are the persons themselves, ‘given’ by the ascended Christ to his people to enable them to function and develop as they should. Christ supplies the church with gifted ministers.¹⁰⁰ Four (or five) categories are mentioned: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The words ‘he gave gifts to men’ are not restricted to these, but they exemplify all the gifts of Christ’s victory by which he endows the church. The words which commence the Psalm citation, ‘This is why’ (v. 8), indicate that all the varying graces of v. 7 are gifts from Christ’s bounty. These in v. 11 are deliberately emphasized since they provide the church with the teaching of Christ for the edification of the body (v. 12) and for the avoidance of false teaching (v. 14). They enable others to exercise their own respective ministries so that the body is built to maturity, wholeness, and unity. Those listed are ministers of the Word through whom the gospel is revealed, declared, and taught. The return to ‘each one’ occurs in v. 12 with its reference to ‘the saints’ who have been equipped by the ministries which the apostle lists here.

The New Testament contains five such lists (Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:8–10, 28–30; Eph. 4:11–12; cf. 1 Pet. 4:10–11) which between them number more than twenty different gifts, some of which are not particularly spectacular (cf. Rom. 12:8). Each list diverges significantly from the others. None is complete, but each is selective and illustrative, with no effort to force the various gifts into a neat scheme. Even together all five do not present a full catalogue of gifts.

The specific mention, first of all, that Christ gave apostles and prophets corresponds to the earlier references in 2:20 and 3:5 (see the exegesis above) to their foundational role as the authoritative recipients and proclaimers of the mystery of Christ (note also their appearance first in Paul’s list of 1 Corinthians 12:28). Because of the mention of evangelists, pastors, and teachers, many modern commentators have concluded that the apostles and prophets had passed from the scene by the time Ephesians was written and had been replaced by a second generation of ministers. But this conclusion is unnecessary. Evangelists, pastors, and teachers exercised their ministry during the apostles’ time and subsequently, and were no doubt the church workers whom most of the readers had encountered. Many did not know the apostle Paul. It was his fellow-evangelists through whom the gospel was proclaimed outside Ephesus, while towards the end of his ministry the term ‘pastor’ or ‘shepherd’ was used alongside ‘overseer’ and ‘elder’ to describe church leaders (cf. Acts 20:17, 28, where ‘elders’ are ‘overseers’ who ‘pastor’ the flock). (Note particularly the example of Epaphras, through whom the congregations at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were founded: Col. 1:7–8; 4:12–13.)

Evangelists were engaged in the preaching of the gospel. They are not mentioned elsewhere in the Pauline corpus except at 2 Timothy 4:5, where Timothy is urged to ‘do the work of an

evangelist'. The only other New Testament occurrence of the noun is in Acts 21:8, where Philip (one of the 'seven' of Acts 6:3–6) is called 'the evangelist'. As proclaimers of the gospel evangelists carried on the work of the apostles. While the term probably included itinerant individuals who engaged in primary evangelism, it was not limited to them. The admonition to Timothy to 'do the work of an evangelist' is set within the context of a settled congregation, which presumably meant a ministry to believers and unbelievers alike, while the cognate verb, rendered 'preach the gospel',¹⁰⁷ covers a range of activities from primary evangelism and the planting of churches to the ongoing building of Christians and the establishment of settled congregations (cf. Rom. 1:11–15). Here in Ephesians 4 evangelists are given by the ascended Christ for the purpose of building his body, and this included both intensive and extensive growth.

The term 'pastor' is used only here in the New Testament to refer to a ministry in the church, although the related verb 'to shepherd' appears several times in this sense (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; cf. John 21:16), and the noun 'flock' is used of the church (Acts 20:28–29; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3). Pastors, whose functions are similar to those of overseers (cf. Phil. 1:1) and elders (cf. Acts 20:17, with 28; also 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:17, 19, etc.), exercise leadership through nurture and care of the congregation. They manage the church (1 Thess. 5:12; Rom. 12:8), and are to be regarded in love 'because of their work'. The imagery of the shepherd, which was applied to God (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23:1; 80:1; 40:11) to denote the way he cared for and protected his people, as well as to leaders (both good and bad) in Israel (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:71; Jer. 23:2; Ezek. 34:11), comes to be applied to church leaders as those who carry on Jesus' pastoral ministry. He is the Good Shepherd, who cares for God's flock (John 10:11–18; Matt. 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4). Leaders in the church are exhorted to be 'shepherds of God's flock' (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28) who pattern their pastoral ministry after Christ's example.

The pastors and teachers are linked here by a single definite article in the Greek, which suggests a close association of functions between two kinds of ministers who operate within the one congregation (cf. 2:20). Although it has often been held that the two groups are identical (i.e., 'pastors who teach'), it is more likely that the terms describe overlapping functions (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28–29 and Gal. 6:6, where 'teachers' are a distinct group). All pastors teach (since teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry), but not all teachers are also pastors.¹¹³ The latter exercise their leadership role by feeding God's flock with his word.

Teaching is often an exposition or application of Scripture (Acts 15:35; 18:11, 25; Rom. 2:20, 21; Col. 3:16; Heb. 5:12), or an explanation and reiteration of apostolic injunctions (1 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:10). In the Pastoral Epistles, teaching appears to be an authoritative function concerned with the faithful transmission of apostolic doctrine or tradition and committed to men specially chosen (e.g., 2 Tim. 1:13–14; 2:1–2; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1:9). Timothy is urged not only to pursue a teaching ministry himself but also to entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (1 Tim. 4:13, 16; 2 Tim. 2:2). Teachers did not simply impart information or open up new ways of thought. They also urged their hearers to live by what they taught (Eph. 4:20–21). So important is this ministry for building the body of Christ that provision is made for its continuity for succeeding generations.

Ephesians 4 focusses on the exalted Christ's action of giving these 'ministers' to the church. We

may assume that they regularly functioned as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and the like, and that their ministries were accepted and recognized in the churches. It is appropriate, then, to speak of them as ‘officers’. To suggest, as Fee does, that the listing in v. 11 ‘has to do with function, not with office’ is to introduce a false antithesis. Arnold’s comment is more balanced: ‘Christ supplies the church with gifted men; he provides both charisma and office in an inseparable unity’.¹¹⁶

12 The purpose of Christ’s bestowing these gifts on the church is expressed in three successive prepositional phrases, the precise meaning and construction of which are not entirely clear: ‘for the equipment of the saints’, ‘for the work of ministry’, and ‘for building the body of Christ’. These phrases have been understood along the following main lines:

(1) Until recently the dominant view has been to take the first phrase, ‘for the equipment of the saints’, as directly related to the main verb he gave (v. 11), and to express the reason for Christ’s giving these ministers. Then, in line with the change of preposition, the phrase ‘for the work of ministry’ has been understood as subordinate to the first, ‘for the equipment of the saints’, while the next phrase, ‘for building the body of Christ’, is dependent on the previous phrases together (cf. NIV: to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up). On this view, ministers have been given by Christ to equip believers for the exercise of their gifts (v. 7; cf. v. 16) in Christian service, so that by means of both the ministers and the common service of believers the body of Christ may be built. This interpretation, it is claimed, does justice to the change of prepositions in the Greek, to the emphasis in v. 11 on Christ’s giving of ministers, and to the corresponding part which each believer plays in the growth of Christ’s body (v. 16).

(2) This dominant approach, however, has been challenged, and an earlier interpretation, as represented by the AV and the RSV, has been preferred. The three phrases of v. 12 are taken as coordinate and dependent on Christ’s giving. The various ministers of v. 11 have been given ‘for the equipment of the saints’, ‘for the work of ministry’, and ‘for building the body of Christ’. The change of preposition, it is claimed, cannot bear the weight placed on it by the earlier view (and may be simply a stylistic variation), while there are no grammatical or linguistic grounds for making specific links between the first and second phrases. In response to the charge that this represents a ‘clerically dominated’ interpretation, it is asserted that the active role for all believers is preserved in vv. 7 and 16, while the focus in the context of v. 12 is on the task and function of Christ’s specific gifts, that is, the apostles, prophets, and the like, not all the saints. On this view, the term translated as ‘preparing,’ or ‘equipping’, is instead taken to signify ‘completion’, and does not need to be supplemented with an additional phrase such as ‘for the work of ministry’. This latter expression is believed to refer to the special ministry of those mentioned in v. 11, not Christian service in general. Those who take this line suspect that the alternative view is motivated by a desire to avoid clericalism and to support a ‘democratic’ model of the church!

The difficulties with the second view are syntactical and contextual. The prepositional change is not finally decisive: syntactically the three phrases could be dependent on the verb ‘he gave’. But if there is a movement from the discussion of the work of the ministers (v. 11) to that of all God’s people between v. 12a and v. 12bc, as we contend, then the change in preposition confirms that movement, and the mention of ‘saints’ in v. 12a underscores it. If the three phrases described activities in which ministers alone were engaged, then one might have expected the term ‘saints’

to appear at the point of change, namely, in v. 12c; instead, it occurs at the conclusion of the first phrase, v. 12a, ‘for equipping the saints’.

Further, the letter as a whole has emphasized Christ’s riches being received by all the saints (1:3–19; 3:20), while the immediate context of vv. 7–16 is framed by an insistence at the beginning of the paragraph that each believer was given ‘grace’ (v. 7), and at its conclusion that the whole body is growing from the head as each part (v. 16) does its work. If it is only the leaders of v. 11 who perfect the saints, do the work of ministry, and edify the body of Christ, then this is a departure from Paul’s usual insistence that every member is equipped for ministry. It is better, therefore, to regard those enumerated in v. 11 as helping and directing other members of the church so that all may carry out their several ministries for the good of the whole. An emphasis on ‘word’ ministries corresponds with Romans 12:6–8 and the ranking of 1 Corinthians 12:28, while the connection between the ‘special’ ministers and others enhances our understanding of the relationship between gifted members and gifted leaders.

The meaning of the first phrase, rendered ‘to equip God’s people’ by the NEB, turns on a noun¹²⁵ which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, although the cognate verb is found frequently. The latter has several related meanings, including ‘repairing’ (Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:19), ‘equipping, preparing’, ‘completing’, and ‘training, disciplining’. The notion of equipping or preparing, in the sense of making someone adequate or sufficient for something, best suits the context. However, it does require an object: people are prepared for some purpose. That purpose is ‘for the work of ministry’, an activity of the saints for which the leaders are to prepare and equip them. Christ has given ‘special’ ministers so that they will ‘make God’s people fully qualified’, thus enabling them to serve their Lord by serving one another. ‘Work’ describes an ongoing activity (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 2:30; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:5) seen in ‘service’. In Paul’s letters the latter term occasionally refers to the specific ministry of the word (2 Cor. 3:6–8; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; Rom. 11:13; Col. 4:17); but here it is used more comprehensively for the service of believers generally—as, indeed, it is in the parallel list of 1 Corinthians 12:5 (cf. Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 16:15). ‘The ministry of the officials does not find its fulfilment in their own existence but only in the activity of preparing others to minister’. The ministry mentioned in v. 11 fulfils an important role in the Lord’s purposes: it is pioneering in nature, since it leads the way in serving the Lord’s people (i.e., the ‘saints’; see on 1:1, 15) and in equipping them for their own ministry. On this interpretation ‘for the work of ministry’ is subordinate to the first phrase, ‘for the equipment of the saints’, and refers to the common service of all believers. The ‘work of ministry’ thus corresponds to ‘the grace given to each one of us’ (v. 7), which is the subject of the section.

What has been done for the saints, by the apostles, prophets, and others preparing them, and by the saints through the exercise of their gifts in Christian service, is ‘for building the body of Christ’. All that has been spoken of in v. 11 and in the first two phrases of v. 12 is directed towards the goal of building the body of Christ, so that together the ministers of v. 11 and ‘the saints’ serve this divinely appointed goal. To the metaphor of building Paul has joined the idea of growth. Previously he used biological imagery of growth when referring to the building of the temple (cf. 2:21; 4:16); now he employs building imagery in speaking of the church as a body. The key term used in the phrase, ‘for building the body of Christ’, here denotes the activity of building. The cognate verb appears outside the New Testament for the literal building of houses,

temples, and other structures, and figuratively for the establishment of individuals or nations.¹³¹ In the LXX this verb is employed in both a literal and a figurative sense of building (cf. 2 Sam. 7:11–13, where both senses are found). According to the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, the restoration of Israel after the judgment of the exile is promised in terms of God building a people for himself (Jer. 24:6; 31:4; 33:7), and this he does by putting his words in the mouths of his prophets (Jer. 1:9–10). Matthew 16:18 ('I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it') expresses the idea that as the Messiah Jesus is the one who builds or establishes the renewed community of the people of God.

In line with this salvation-historical dimension, Ephesians 4 indicates that the exalted Messiah gives ministries of the word to equip God's people for work in his service so as to build his body. This constructing has both an extensive and an intensive dimension to it. Growth in size is implied in the mention of the gifts of apostles and evangelists (v. 11), while the introduction of the body metaphor implies the notion of development of the church as an organism from within, by means of its own God-given life. Although the expression may be built up has sometimes been interpreted individualistically, this is inappropriate, since it regularly has a corporate dimension in the apostle's teaching, and this is clearly its significance in the present context.

13 The final goal to which the process of building the body of Christ is to lead is described in terms of attaining 'to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'. Those given by Christ as 'ministers' (v. 11), along with the 'saints' (v. 12), render their service so that God's people might reach this objective, and they are to continue serving until it is attained. The verb employed here is used figuratively and means to 'attain or arrive at a particular state', with the focus on the end point.¹³⁵ Significantly, Christian growth or progress does not occur in isolation, for Paul's language here envisages God's people collectively (we all) as en route to this vital destination.

Three similar expressions, each introduced by the same preposition, depict the final goal. The first is '[until we attain] to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God'. The unity which has been inaugurated in Christ through the events described in 2:11–22, and which the readers are strongly urged to maintain (i.e., 'the unity of the Spirit', v. 3), is here spoken of as a unity to which they are to attain. This oneness thus partakes of the tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet': it has been proclaimed as a given fact, but is now presented as the goal of Christian endeavour, a goal which can only be reached by all collectively, and will finally occur at Christ's coming, when he brings his people to complete maturity. The eschatological tension is evident in the first element—the unity of the faith. This faith has already been given (v. 5), yet its oneness is still to be fully appropriated. In the light of the syntactical connection between faith and knowledge, the immediate context with its emphasis on instruction (v. 11), the reference to steadfastness in the face of false teaching (v. 14), and the likelihood that faith in v. 5 refers to that which is believed, it is best understood here in terms of its objective content rather than the readers' activity of believing. The point being made, then, is that God's people are moving towards the goal of appropriating all that is included in the one faith.

Likewise, the eschatological tension between the already and the not yet is present in the second half of this expression, namely, the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God. God has already made known to the readers the mystery of his saving purposes in Christ (1:9–10). The apostle

has prayed that they might grow in their spiritual understanding and know more of their hope, of God's inheritance, and of his mighty power on their behalf (1:17–19; 3:16–19). Now 'the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God' is the goal to be attained. This knowledge, like the preceding faith, is probably objective, thus referring to what is known of the Son of God. Although it is marvellously variegated, since it concerns the one in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. 2:2–3), it ultimately has a unity to it (cf. v. 5). The apostle, then, has in view an ongoing appropriation by believers, in fellowship together, of 'all that is involved in the salvation which centers in Christ', and this goal is to be sought through the proper exercise of gifts.

The second statement which indicates the destination of God's people on the final day is that '[we all attain] to the mature man'. This destination to which all believers are headed is understood as a corporate entity: it is not described in individual terms,¹⁴² but refers to the totality of believers as the body of Christ (cf. v. 12), in an expression that is akin to 'the one new man' of 2:15. The phrase 'mature man' is somewhat unusual since the term for an adult male or full-grown man is used, rather than the generic word for man or human. The adjective has the sense of 'mature' (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20; Heb. 5:14) rather than 'perfect', and focusses on the mature adult person in contrast with the infants of v. 14 who are immature and unstable, like a storm-tossed boat blown in all directions by the winds of false teaching.

The full maturity to be attained is more specifically defined by the third expression: it is 'measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ' (NEB). Although the word rendered 'stature' can signify 'age', and in the light of the contrast between children and adults some have taken the term in this latter sense,¹⁴⁵ the imagery of 'fulness' is more naturally suited to spatial categories so that 'stature' is more appropriate here. The church is already the fulness of Christ (1:23; cf. 4:10). There is thus a realized dimension to its existence. But the future element is still present: the apostle has prayed that the readers might be 'filled up to all the fulness of God' (3:19); now in the immediate context the goal to be reached is mature manhood, and this is defined by the fulness of Christ. The maturity of this growth is measured by nothing less than Christ's full stature. 'The glorified Christ provides the standard at which his people are to aim: the corporate Christ cannot be content to fall short of the perfection of the personal Christ'.

¹⁴ The threefold description in v. 13 points to the ultimate destination of God's people on the last day. Now, through a negative contrast, Paul sets forth the more immediate objective that is in line with this final goal and which should take place in the lives of the readers in their current situation. The introductory clause, 'so that we may no longer be children ...', which is subordinate to v. 13, provides general comments about their present circumstances (cf. 'no longer'), at the same time indicating what should occur if genuine progress is to be made. The exalted Christ has given his gifts to the church so that by building his body immaturity and instability will increasingly be left behind. 'The ministry was given not only to enable the church to grow but also so that it would be able to resist any forces that might corrupt or destroy it'. Paul writes tactfully as he pens these words, since he associates himself with his readers by using the first person plural we (cf. Phil. 3:15). He too desires, along with them, to stand firm, not to be tossed to and fro but to speak the truth in love and grow up into Christ, the head (v. 15).

The contrast between 'the mature person' of v. 13 and the 'children' here is pointed. Not only do

the latter's ignorance and instability stand over against the knowledge of the mature adult (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1; Heb. 5:13, 14), but also the use of the plural 'children' (with its implications of individualism) stands in contrast to the one 'mature person' who is a corporate unity. The nature of the children's immaturity is graphically pictured in the following clauses and phrases: they are unstable, lacking in direction, vacillating, and open to manipulation. Like small, rudderless boats, they are tossed back and forth by the waves and driven this way and that by the prevailing wind. The immediate, though not ultimate, cause of their instability is 'every fresh gust of teaching' (NEB). This teaching, though regarded by some as Christian doctrine that has been 'endangered and perverted by various currents of wind', is really false instruction. The full expression 'every wind of doctrine' suggests different kinds of teaching (note Col. 2:22) which stand over against the unity of faith and knowledge to which the readers are to attain (v. 13). Accordingly, Paul's reference is best understood, along with most commentators, of the various religious philosophies which threatened to undermine or dilute the apostolic gospel. No specifics are spelled out (though note 5:6–13), suggesting that the apostle has in view ongoing general dangers which were a hindrance to those not firmly grounded in the faith. Unable to come to settled convictions or to evaluate various forms of teaching, they fall an easy prey to every new theological fad.

Behind this dangerous and misleading teaching by which immature believers are tossed to and fro are deceitful people who seek to manipulate them by evil trickery. Paul's language is graphic, if not forthright. The false teaching which causes so much strife is promoted by the cunning of men. Cunning literally refers to dice-playing and comes to be used metaphorically of a trickery that results from craftiness, while the qualifier of men (as in Col. 2:8, 22) depicts it as human—that, and nothing more—and therefore opposed to Christ and his teaching. The second phrase, 'with cunning', intensifies the first. It literally means a 'readiness to do anything'. Although used in the LXX in a good or indifferent sense, its five occurrences in the New Testament have a negative connotation,¹⁵³ and here it signifies the malicious deception by which the false teachers seek to lead the unstable astray.

But, in addition to this, the apostle may have had in mind another source of that seductive 'cunning' which preys on human weakness, namely, the evil one himself. Paul employs the same word with reference to the serpent deceiving Eve 'by his cunning' (2 Cor. 11:3), while the synonym, which appears in the next phrase, denotes a 'crafty scheming with the intent to deceive' that describes the intrigues of the devil (Eph. 6:11). Satan's machinations have 'method'; his aim is to mislead the immature who are not grounded on apostolic doctrine. If this connection is in view, then behind the false teaching are not simply evil men and women who pursue their unscrupulous goals with a scheming that produces error. There is also a supernatural, evil power who seeks to deceive them with devilish cunning; his 'intrigues' are to be resisted energetically with the aid of God's armour (6:11).

Within the context of vv. 7–16, the dangers presented here only serve to highlight the importance of the ascended Christ giving ministers of his word to his people. They are to be firmly grounded in the apostolic teaching so that they may leave behind all immaturity and instability.

15 As Paul now focusses positively on the ultimate goal towards which he and his readers are moving, he desires that together they may grow up into Christ, who is the head. This growth will occur as they speak the truth in love rather than being misled by the malicious scheming of the

false teachers. A sharp contrast, heightened by a chiasmus, is drawn between the final words of v. 14 and this opening clause of v. 15. Over against the ‘crafty scheming’ stands the expression in love (a key phrase in the letter, see below), while speaking the truth is set in opposition to the words ‘of error’. Thus, speaking the truth in love lays out a twofold contrast with the false teachers: the latter were presenting false doctrine in a deceptive manner, but over against this God’s people are to grow through proclaiming the truth in love.

There is a considerable body of scholarly opinion which contends on both semantic and contextual grounds that the verb rendered to ‘speak the truth’ really signifies here to ‘live out the truth’. However, in our judgment, there are stronger reasons for thinking that the word here refers to verbal testimony. Occasionally, it meant to ‘speak the truth’ in secular Greek, and it consistently signified this in the LXX. At Galatians 4:16, the only other instance of the word in the New Testament, Paul refers to ‘speaking the truth’ of the gospel (cf. Gal. 2:5, 14). The same meaning makes better sense within the immediate context of Ephesians 4, where the ascended Christ gives ministers of the word, and where speaking the truth provides a pointed contrast with the scheming of the false teachers and the dangerous winds of doctrine that were swirling around throughout proconsular Asia. Accordingly, the apostle is not exhorting his readers to truthfulness in general or speaking honestly with one another, however appropriate or important this may be. Rather, he wants all of them to be members of a ‘confessing’ church, with the content of their testimony to be ‘the word of truth’, the gospel of their salvation (1:13). This truth, which is guaranteed by God and is depicted as part of his own armour, is the belt which believers are to buckle around their waist as they resist the onslaughts of the evil one (6:14).

As Christians witness to the truth of the gospel they cannot use the same methods as the false teachers or the tempter whose evil activity lies behind them. Instead, they are to set forth this truth in love, an expression that rules out all cunning and deception. Love has a prominent place in Ephesians: the first half of the letter (chaps. 1–3) climaxes with a prayer for the readers’ establishment in the love of Christ and for a greater awareness on their part of the magnitude of this divine love (3:17, 19). The second half (chaps. 4–6) contains a series of instructions to love, the fulfilment of which is the outworking of the apostle’s prayer. These are summarized by the exhortation to ‘walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us’ (5:2). Here the key phrase in love, which occurs six times in the epistle, begins and ends this paragraph on unity, diversity, and maturity in the body of Christ (4:2, 15, 16). It thus forms an *inclusio* or envelope to the passage (4:1–16). All those who have been urged to live a life worthy of their calling (v. 1) are to bear with one another in love (v. 2) and to testify to the truth of the gospel in love (v. 15; see also on v. 16). In love describes the sphere of the Christian life and spells out the manner in which the ministry of all is to occur. Its juxtaposition with truth is no accident. The claims of the two should not be held in tension. The truth as proclaimed should not be dissociated from love or promoted at the expense of love, while a life of love should embody the truth of the gospel.

By speaking the truth in love, then, we will all grow up in every way into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. Although it is grammatically possible to understand the verb ‘grow’ in a transitive sense (‘we may cause the cosmos to grow’), referring to God’s people bringing the world to growth and maturity in Christ, both usage and context favour its being taken intransitively to denote the church’s growth to maturity. Elsewhere in Ephesians and Colossians this word is used intransitively.¹⁶⁵ But nowhere else in Paul is the cosmos said to grow up into Christ, although

growth is certainly envisaged of God's people. Believers are expected to grow in faith (2 Cor. 10:5; 2 Thess. 1:3) and in the knowledge of God (hence the apostle's prayer to this end, Col. 1:10). According to Colossians 2:19, which is akin to Ephesians 4:15, the whole body of Christ, which is totally dependent on the head to nourish and unify it, is said to 'grow with the growth of God'. Here the growth is to be comprehensive: God's people are to grow into Christ 'in every way', that is, in faith, knowledge, unity, and, especially in this context, in love.¹⁶⁷

This growth of the body has Christ as its goal: he is the one into whom we are to grow. The earlier reference to increase underscored his indispensable position as the foundation stone of the building which grows into a holy temple in him (2:21). In the following verse of this paragraph he is the source of the body's expansion (from him, 4:16). At v. 15 the stress is on the readers' progress and maturity towards him as the goal. Together believers become more and more like their Lord, so that they are fully and completely incorporated into him. And once more, by using the first person plural (lit. 'in order that we might grow') the apostle includes himself among those who are progressing and maturing into him. Already in the letter Christ has been called the Head over all things for the church, which is his body (1:22, 23). Implicit in this was his headship over the church. Now this notion is made explicit, for the one who is the goal of believers' growth is identified as Christ, the head of the body, and this means that he rules or governs it.

16 In this concluding verse of the paragraph (vv. 7–16) several prominent ideas of the earlier exposition, such as unity and diversity within the body, together with the body's growth in love, are repeated in summary form. In addition, the metaphor of the body is further developed in relation to 'the supporting ligaments' and 'each part'. Christ is not only the goal of the body's growth (v. 15); as the head who rules over the body he is the ultimate source (from him) of its growth, for he supplies all that is necessary for its well-being, including its unity, nourishment, and progress.

Paul's focus is on the growth of the body as a whole, not on the need for individuals to become mature in Christ, however necessary this may be. Both the subject of the sentence, 'the whole body', and the final expression, 'for its own upbuilding in love', clearly affirm this corporate emphasis. Although the distinct contribution of each member to the life and development of the whole is highlighted through the clause as each part does its work, the stress still falls on the corporate growth of the body. The notion of believers' unity and their growing together as a collective whole is further accented by the following two verbs. The first, 'joined together', has already been used of the harmonious construction of the church as 'a holy temple in the Lord' (2:21), while the second, 'held together', appears in Colossians, where it refers to the body knit together as a unity by the head alone (Col. 2:19). The two verbs are virtually synonymous and indicate that there is an ongoing,¹⁷² unified growth to the body. It is 'not shapeless', but is 'ordered and united, ... fitly framed and knit together'.

While the empowering for growth comes from above, members of the body themselves are fully involved in the process. Paul continues the physiological language, using it metaphorically¹⁷⁵ to speak of the divine energy being channelled by every supporting ligament.¹⁷⁷ The ligaments make contact with other parts of the body and are the channels which extend nourishment from the head.

But to whom do the ‘ligaments’ refer? To those who are ‘special ministers’ (cf. v. 11) or all the members of the body? The answer, in part, turns on whether the phrase ‘according to the due measure of each individual part’ clarifies the preceding expression, by every supporting ligament, or makes an additional point with a broader reference to each member of the body. Is ‘each ligament’ to be identified with ‘each individual part’? Or is the latter a broader reference to every member, while the ligaments point to a narrower group? Two main approaches are as follows:

(1) The usual interpretation is to understand ‘according to the due measure of each individual part’ as a clarification of by every supporting ligament, and to identify ‘every ligament’ with ‘each individual part’. Accordingly, these ligaments are taken as representing all the members of the body, not ‘special ministers’ or officebearers. It is argued that the singular ‘ligament’ together with the addition of ‘every’ stresses the contribution that each part makes to the whole, while the phrase ‘according to the due measure of each individual part’, which is unique to Ephesians, also ‘highlights the importance of the active contribution of each individual member’. Every member of the body is in view in both expressions, it is claimed, and this is consistent with the mention of joints and ligaments in Colossians 2:19. Accordingly, the spiritual gifts of each believer become the channel for focussing divine power in the life of the church.

(2) The alternative view is that every supporting ligament refers to ‘particular ministers of the word’ rather than ordinary church members. Lincoln, for example, claims that ‘what is being highlighted is the role of the ministers in the whole body ruled and nourished by Christ and that, just as in v 11 the giving of Christ was embodied in particular persons, so ... [in this phrase of] v 16 the growth from Christ is mediated by particular persons’. The broader reference to every member then appears in the following line, ‘according to the due measure of each individual part’. In this summarizing picture of v. 16, both gifted ministers and gifted members have a part to play in the body’s growth. The former are represented by the ligaments which provide connections between the other parts of the body, while the latter have their distinct role to play in the well-being of the whole.

The second explanation is consistent with the movement of thought within the paragraph (vv. 7–16): first, grace is given to each believer in accordance with Christ’s apportioning (v. 7). The focus then narrows to the ‘special ministers’, whom the ascended Christ gives, together with their functions of ministry (vv. 8–12b), before widening out to the saints who build Christ’s body (v. 12c) and ‘us all’ (v. 13) who reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. In this summarizing sentence of v. 16, the decisive role of Christ is once again asserted (v. 16a), while both special ministers (v. 16b) and all members (v. 16c) have a part to play. The ministers are presented as the means of support or supply for the other parts of the body, and this is consistent with the earlier emphasis in the paragraph on the ministry of God’s word and the role of teaching leaders (cf. vv. 8–12b).

The importance of each member’s active contribution to the growth of the whole body is asserted in the words as each part does its work, which recall the language of v. 7, especially ‘each one’ (and ‘according to measure’). Every member of the body, to whom grace has been given by the ascended Christ (v. 7), receives the necessary enabling power to perform his or her proper

function so that the growth of the whole body is in proportion to and adapted to each. God's supernatural empowering has already been mentioned in Ephesians to describe his raising Christ from the dead, and now it is operative in believers (1:19), as well as in the life of Paul as an example (3:7; cf. Col. 1:29). In the light of God's dynamic enabling through Christ believers should eagerly exercise their ministry for the good of the whole. The presence of gifted persons within the body makes us dependent on one another, and as every Christian fully utilizes his or her gifts for the growth of the body, divine fullness will be experienced.

By means of architectural imagery (cf. 2:21–22), the ultimate goal of Christian growth is now reiterated in the final phrase, 'for the purpose of building itself in love'. Clearly the whole body is involved in this process of building, not simply those who are leaders or who have special ministries. '[Of] itself' adds to the previous reference of the church's active participation (though ultimately Christ is the source of growth), while the words in love, which begin and end the paragraph (note the discussion at v. 15; cf. v. 2), further underscore Paul's emphasis on *agapē* as the indispensable means of building the body. If it is only in love that the body increases, then it is only in love that true Christian ministry will contribute to the building of the body. The 'spiritually gifted community is not only distinguished by its full possession of gifts through which divine energy flows, but it is also marked by its divine nature'. Love thus becomes the criterion for an assessment of the church's true growth. Even the fullest demonstration of gifts has no spiritual value if love is lacking (cf. 1 Cor. 13).

Ephesians 4:1–16 stands at the beginning of the explicitly exhortatory half of the letter (chaps. 4–6). It consists of two main sections (vv. 1–6, 7–16), the first of which reminds the readers of their calling into membership of the body of Christ (4:1). The rest of this lengthy paragraph underscores Paul's distinctive concerns for the unity of the church, as he admonishes his readers with the utmost urgency to preserve the oneness given by the Spirit (v. 3; cf. 2:14–18; 3:6), a unity that is organically related to the divine intention of bringing all things together in unity in Christ (1:9, 10). The second section (vv. 7–16) introduces the note of diversity and shows how it contributes to the unity of the body, since Christ's giving different gifts of grace to each is for the purpose of enriching the whole, so that all may be prepared for full maturity when they meet their Lord (v. 13). The whole paragraph, then, is concerned about unity, diversity, and maturity.

This important paragraph focusses very specifically on the church. It is the sphere into which believers have entered by being called by God into a relationship with his Son. A major image for this community is the body (vv. 4, 12, 16), and it is combined with the language of building (vv. 12, 16) and the fulness of Christ (v. 13). Ministries have been given by Christ, particularly ministries of the word, to enable the body of Christ to attain to its ultimate goal, that is, 'the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (v. 13). In one sense the body of Christ is already complete: it is a true body, not simply part of one. In another sense that body is said to grow to perfection, a process that will be completed only on the final day. The body metaphor reflects the 'already—not yet' tension of the two ages. It is both complete and yet it grows. It is a heavenly entity and yet it is an earthly reality; and it is both present and future, with a consummation occurring at the parousia.

Although the church is at the forefront of Paul's thinking in this passage, Christology has not

collapsed into ecclesiology, as some seem to suggest. The lordship of Christ is clearly evident throughout. He remains the ‘one Lord ‘(v. 5) who as the exalted one gives grace both to individuals (v. 7) and to ministers of the word (v. 11) for the church. The church is his fulness (v. 13) and his body (v. 12). As its head who rules over it Christ is the source and goal of its growth (vv. 15–16).

O’Brien, P. T. (1999). *The letter to the Ephesians* (pp. 297–317). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Exegetical Work Acts 2:41-47

Perverse- **to being morally bent or twisted, crooked, unscrupulous, dishonest**⁵⁵

A transferred sense naturally suggests itself for the quotation from Is. 40:3–5 in Lk. 3:5. Deliverance from corruption, from σκολιά, is the decisive act of God (Ac. 2:40) or the act of Christ.¹⁵⁶⁹ The moral hindrances to Christ’s coming are to be set aside. This is the task of the fore-runner and his preaching, though in the sense of the conviction of the primitive Church that the Logos Himself is at work in John the Baptist.²⁵⁷⁰ A precise distinction between σκολιά “humpy,” “crooked,” and τραχεῖα “rough,” “uneven,” is neither necessary nor possible.²⁵⁸¹ The word σκολιός still has an ethical nuance.²⁵⁹² It expresses the ethical and social misconduct which is rooted in ungodliness and unbelief and which will vanish with the coming of the Messiah. The reference is universal. As all will see the salvation, i.e., the Saviour, so the setting aside of σκολιά (πᾶσα φάραγξ, πᾶν ὄρος) will take place in all mankind.

⁵⁵ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 930.

⁵⁶¹⁹ Cf. Cramer Cat. on Lk. 3:5: “All that hinders the development of virtue will be corrected by Christ.” Previously one reads: “Make straight the paths of God, who goes His way in righteousness: iniquity is crooked (σκολιά).” This is an ethical understanding. Human passions and demonic attacks are to be destroyed: “He describes as abysses, mountains and hills the passions and the opposition of demonic powers ... But this has all become smooth, for Christ has vanquished Satan ... By the rough he understands all human corruption, i.e., the life of publicans, harlots, robbers and wizards, who were perverse but then entered the straight way.” Mt. 21:31 is adduced in illustration.

⁵⁷²⁰ Cramer Cat. on Lk. 3:4.

⁵⁸²¹ Bengel, *ad loc.* Acc. to Kl. Lk. on 3:4 one should compare the contrast between high and low in Lk. 18:14. But this does not speak of levelling; it refers to the transvaluation in the estimation of man.

⁵⁹²² τραχύς occurs again in the NT only for cliffs in Ac. 27:29, Haench. Ag., *ad loc.* The word is seldom used in the lit. sense in the LXX.

2. Ac. 2:40; Phil. 2:15 adopt the O⁶⁰T expression γενεὰ σκολιά → 406, 18 ff. Under this judgment of crookedness stands either the Judaism around Jesus, the human race of the time, or that of all times and places. The word is based on Jesus' own⁶¹

The Lord brings people to a healthy church. A healthy church attracts unbelievers.

Commentary Notes:

They were still worshipping in the temple for no breach had yet come between Christians and Jews.⁶²

The **selling** of property and the common possession of the proceeds may imply that the early church expected the Lord to return soon and establish His kingdom. This may explain why the practice was not continued. **Holding everything in common was not socialism or communism because it was voluntary (cf. 4:32, 34–35; 5:4). Also their goods were not evenly distributed but were given to meet needs as they arose.**⁶³

With the first of seven summary progress reports (cf. Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30–31) **Luke brought this section of Acts to a close: each day others were being saved. The church grew rapidly right from the start!**⁶⁴

One of the subthemes of Acts is joy, because a victorious church is a joyful one. This is seen in verses 46–47 and numerous other times (5:41; 8:8, 39; 11:23; 12:14; 13:48, 52; 14:17; 15:3, 31; 16:34; 21:17). In their fellowship **they broke bread in their homes and ate together** (cf. 2:42) with joy. (The word **praising** [*ainountes*] is used only nine times in the NT, seven of them by Luke: Luke 2:13, 20; 19:37; 24:53; Acts 2:47; 3:8–9; Rom. 15:11; Rev. 19:5).⁶⁵

They kept close to holy ordinances, and abounded in all instances of piety and devotion, for Christianity, admitted in the power of it, will dispose the soul to communion with God in all those ways wherein he has appointed us to meet him and promised to meet us.

1. **They were diligent and constant in their attendance upon the preaching of the word. They continued in the apostles' doctrine, and never disowned nor deserted it; or, as it may be read, they continued constant to the apostles' teaching or instruction; by baptism they were disciplined to be taught, and they were willing to be taught.** Note, Those who have given up their names to Christ must make conscience of hearing his word; for thereby we give honour to him, and build up ourselves in our most holy faith.⁶⁶

⁶⁰OT Old Testament.

⁶¹ Georg Bertram, "[Σκολιός](#)," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 406–407.

⁶² A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ac 2:46.

⁶³ Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" In , in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), Ac 2:44–45.

⁶⁴ Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" In , in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), Ac 2:46–47.

⁶⁵ Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts" In , in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), Ac 2:46–47.

⁶⁶ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), Ac 2:42–47.

They kept up the *communion of saints*. They continued *in fellowship* (v. 42), and *continued daily with one accord in the temple*, v. 46. They not only had a mutual affection to each other, but a great deal of mutual conversation with each other; they were much together. When they withdrew from *the untoward* generation, they did not turn hermits, but were very intimate with one another, and took all occasions to meet; wherever you saw one disciple, you would see more, like *birds of a feather*. See how these Christians love one another. They were concerned for one another, sympathized with one another, and heartily espoused one another's interests.⁶⁷

Those that were being saved (τοὺς σωζομένους [*tous sōzomenous*]). Present passive participle. Probably for repetition like the imperfect προσετιθει [*prosetitheî*]. Better translate it “those saved from time to time.” It was a continuous revival, day by day. Σωζω [*Sōzō*] like σωτηρια [*sōtēria*] is used for “save” in three senses (beginning, process, conclusion), but here repetition is clearly the point of the present tense.⁶⁸

Word Studies

Favor with “all” people- that which one grants to another, the action of one who volunteers to do someth⁶⁹. not otherwise obligatory⁷⁰

Devoted- *hold fast to, continue in, persevere in someth*⁷¹, w. dat⁷². of thing (Poly⁷³b. 1, 59, 12 τῆ ἐπιμελείᾳ) τῆ διδασχῆ κτλ. (Posido⁷⁴n.: 87 Fgm⁷⁵. 36, 48 Jac⁷⁶. τοῖς λόγοις=the teaching) **Ac 2:42**⁷⁷

Fellowship- an association involving close mutual relations and involvement—‘close association, fellowship.’ ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ’ ἡμῶν ‘in order that you may have fellowship with us’⁷⁸

is portrayed in the early chapters of Acts. The believers met together in house groups for teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42, 46). So profound was their sense of togetherness that the Christians pooled their possessions and distributed them to brothers and sisters in need (2:44–45; 4:32–35). Perhaps the dominant

⁶⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), Ac 2:42–47.

⁶⁸ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ac 2:47.

⁶⁹ someth. **someth.** = something

⁷⁰ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1079.

⁷¹ someth. **someth.** = something

⁷² dat. **dat.** = dative

⁷³ Polyb **Polyb**, III–II B.C.—List 5

⁷⁴ Posidon **Posidon**, II–I B.C.—List 5

⁷⁵ Fgm. **Fgm.** = fragment, fragmentary

⁷⁶ Jac. **Jac.** = Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, ed. FJacoby—Lists 5, 6

⁷⁷ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 881.

⁷⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 445.

characteristic of this early Christian fellowship was the love among the believers (1 Thes 4:9; 1 Pt 1:22).⁷⁹

close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship⁸⁰

This partnership involves participation in, as the blood of Christ (Phil. 2:1) or co-operation in the work of the gospel (Phil. 1:5) or contribution for those in need (II Cor. 8:4; 9:13). Hence there is wide diversity of opinion concerning the precise meaning of ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ [*koinōnia*] in this verse. It may refer to the distribution of funds in verse 44 or to the oneness of spirit in the community of believers or to the Lord's Supper (as in I Cor. 10:16) in the sense of communion or to the fellowship in the common meals or ἀγάπαι [*agapae*] (love-feasts).⁸¹

Cross References

Adding to their number - Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31, 35, 42; 11:21, 24; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12⁸²

Exegetical Outline Model Church

Pure v.40

Saved from perverse generation

Growth v.42

Devoted to the Teachings

Devoted- ***hold fast to, continue in, persevere in***

Relationship v.43

Fellowship v.42 Genuine Relationships

Fellowship- an association involving close mutual relations and involvement—‘close The depth of camaraderie among the first Christians

Sacraments v.

Same Mind v.44

Meeting the needs of Others v.45

Sincere in Heart v.46

Praising God

Favor w/all People

The Lord was adding to their gathering through salvation

⁷⁹ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 484.

⁸⁰ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 552.

⁸¹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ac 2:42.

⁸² *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

