

## “EQUIPPING” MINISTRY IN EPHESIANS 4?

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As a minister and an academician, I examine religious slogans the way cultural analysts examine bumper stickers. They tell us what is on people's minds and what they tend to think about what is on their minds. Two of the religious slogans I have heard frequently in the last decade or so are “equipping the saints” and “lay ministry,” each of which ordinarily occurs in tandem with a reference to Eph 4:11–12. As I have examined these slogans, I have discovered that what is behind them is a belief that the major “ministry” of the Church is to be performed by the saints themselves and that only a smaller, “equipping” ministry is to be performed by those who are ordained as distinct from other saints.

As is ordinarily the case with any error, there is an element of truth in this one. Believers are indeed called to be saints and to live distinctly holy lives in the world, thus functioning as salt and light. Further, they are called to serve one another in love, even as Christ loved them. They are to exhibit his mercy in their conduct toward others. Such acts of charity and mercy may properly be called “service” or “ministry,” and in Greek the one word *diakonia* could be employed to describe any service of any sort. The error does not reside in reminding Christians of their perpetual responsibility to live Christlike lives. Rather, the error consists in reducing the function of the ordained ministry to “equipping” saints for service.

Since Eph 4:11–12 is so often cited as alleged justification of the above viewpoint, what follows is an attempt to demonstrate that this passage, correctly understood, teaches no such thing at all. I realize this may not persuade all of those who promote the “equipping” viewpoint, since their view may never have been exegetically motivated. Ephesians 4:11–12 (in several recent translations) was simply a convenient prooftext for what they wished to believe anyway. But I am not so cynical as to believe that there are no practicing Bible-believers in the evangelical world. I still believe they are out there, and I continue to meet them with some regularity. Such individuals do not wish to grasp and twist the Scriptures to suit their own purposes. They sincerely wish to discover what the mind of the Holy Spirit is as revealed in Holy Scripture. For such individuals I believe that what follows is sufficient to convince them of his mind on this matter.

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## I. THE QUESTION STATED AND THE BURDEN ASSIGNED

The question stated is whether Eph 4:12 teaches that the “ministry” of the Church is done by the “saints” and whether the only distinctive role of the officers is to equip the saints for such service. The very fact that some ancient translations (Vg, KJV) do not translate the text in such a way as to permit such a conclusion should produce caution and should motivate those who are otherwise convinced to frame an exegetical argument.

My belief is that the “equipping lay ministry” translation is indefensible. There is not a single, nor even a twofold, but a triple difficulty with translating Eph 4:12 in such a way. To sustain such a translation, three things must be proven: (1) that the three purpose clauses, so obviously parallel in their grammatical structure, have different implied subjects (thereby disrupting the parallel); (2) that *katartismos* is properly translated “equip” here; and (3) that *ergon diakonias* refers not to acts of service, in the general sense, but to the overall “Christian ministry.”

If any one of these three is not proven, the entire argument unravels, for the “lay ministry” translation of this passage requires all three conclusions. It requires that the implied subject of the three clauses is not the “gifted ones” in each clause but only in the first clause. It requires translating *katartismos* as “equipping,” or it makes no sense to take the second and/or third purpose clauses as complementary to the first. It requires understanding *ergon diakonias* to mean the distinctive ministry of the Word, or it requires reducing that ministry to an equipping role for other service.

The proponents of the “lay ministry” interpretation of this text must assume the burden of proving their view, and that for two reasons. (1) As a matter of Christian conscience their view places a responsibility on the shoulders of others (namely “to do the ministry”), which responsibility they must justify so placing. (2) The entire remainder of the NT distinguishes the mutual “service” of love and mercy in the Church from the particular “service/ministry of the Word” and distinguishes those responsible for the latter through official titles and/or through laying on of hands (sometimes with prayer or fasting). That is, people armed simply with an English Bible ought to be suspicious of the “equipping” translation on the ground that, if correct, it would be contradictory to everything else taught in the NT about the ministry of the Word.

The older translations are correct, and I will produce below the reasons for agreeing with the older translations. I do not, however, assume the burden of proving my view, since my view obliges no one to any particular service other than those who have accepted a call to such service. My view places no special ministerial burden on anyone’s shoulders, nor does it cause any tension or conflict with the teaching of the remainder of the NT regarding the ministry of the Word of God.

Having assumed no responsibility to prove the view of the older translations, however, I submit it for the reader’s inspection, and I am satisfied that the candid and unprejudiced reader will agree that the more likely translation of Eph 4:12 is that adopted by older translations (such as Vg

and KJV) and defended by commentators on the Greek text of Ephesians from Calvin, Owen and Hodge all the way to the present.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE SYNTACTICAL RELATION OF THE PURPOSE CLAUSES IN V. 12

The KJV (with the Vg) translates the clauses as follows: “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Note that the KJV takes the three clauses as parallel, and anyone reading it would assume that the implied subject is the several categories of “gifted ones” just mentioned. Several recent translations, however, obstruct the parallel, taking the first clause as the responsibility of the gifted ones and the last two clauses as describing the responsibilities of the saints.

Briefly, the sentence is constructed in this way. There is a main verb (*edōken*) followed by several direct objects (each introduced by the article *tous*). The purpose of Christ’s giving these officers to the Church is described in the three purpose clauses (introduced by the telic prepositions *pros* and *eis*), and the extent or degree of the purpose clauses is explicated by the following *mechri*. “He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers; for the purpose of (their) perfecting the saints, doing the ministry, and edifying the body of Christ, to the extent that all would attain the unity of the faith and knowledge of God’s Son, mature humanity, and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Who is the implied subject of the three accusatives *katartismon*, *ergon* and *oikodomēn*? Who “knits/completes” the saints, who “works” the ministry, who “edifies” the body of Christ? Is the subject of each of these the same, or are different subjects supplied to different ones? The most natural reading (preferred by KJV and ARV) is to understand that the ones “given” to the Church are the ones who do these three things, since it is for these three purposes that they are given. This is natural because the main verb would suggest that the purposes of the gifted ones is being supplied by these clauses, since the clauses are subordinated to the main verb. Apart from some fairly clear indication there would be no reason to expect that one of the telic clauses is subordinated to one of the others. Also, if the latter two telic clauses are in fact subordinated to the first, the most common way of accomplishing this would be to omit the second and third prepositions and have two complementary infinitives joined by the copula. The natural way of producing that thought would have been as follows: *pros ton katartismon ton hagion ergein tēn diakonian kai oikodomein tēn sōmata tou Christou*.<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, the telic clauses are distinguished by one matter: The first is introduced by *pros*, the latter two by *eis*. Whether the difference in preposition is intended to suggest that there are remote and proximate purposes, or whether the purposes might be logically related in some other

<sup>1</sup> A T Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42, Dallas Word, 1990)

<sup>2</sup> Cf the discussion in *ibid*

way, is a matter that may rightfully be discussed and debated. I have no zeal for any particular resolution of these matters (though the reader may wish to consult Alford, DeWette, Hodge, Owen *et al.*). I am more zealous, however, to argue that the mere change of the preposition is inadequate ground to suggest that the implied subjects have changed. Indeed it is more likely that the prepositions are essentially interchangeable, as they are in Rom 15:2, “Each of us must please our neighbor for good, for edification” (*eis to agathon pros oikodomēn*), and in Phlm 5, “I hear of your love toward all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus” (*pros ton kyrion Iesoun kai eis pantas tous hagios*).

In construing the meaning of these clauses, much depends on how one understands them to fit into the overall chapter. The broader context addresses the privileges and responsibilities of the entire “body” under Christ’s lordship (esp. 4:7). That is, the chapter as a whole presents the great, tripartite picture of Christ the Head, the “gifted ones” as his special ascension gift to the Church, and the “parts.” Each of the three has responsibilities. The ascended Head has responsibilities that he performs, the “parts” each perform their particular roles, and the “gifted ones” perform theirs. What is at stake, however, is whose responsibilities are being discussed in v. 12 and/or whether the “gifted ones” have merely the responsibility of “equipping.” Verses 11–13 themselves indicate that Paul distinguishes the Head who “gave” (v. 11) the gifted ones who perform these three tasks (v. 12) and the “all” (v. 13) who will ultimately come to completion. That is, in vv. 11–13 the broader pattern is Christ giving the “gifted ones” (v. 11) to the body (v. 13). Verse 12 explains the threefold purpose of his giving these “gifted ones” by explaining the ends they will accomplish. Thus the most natural reading of v. 12 is that of the KJV, which construes the three telic clauses as indicating what the “gifted ones” do for and in the body.

### III. THE TRANSLATION OF KATARTISMON IN V. 12

In this context, should this word be translated “equip” or “perfect/constitute”? Elsewhere in the NT the term is employed (in both its verbal and nominal form) in five ways.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Of fishing nets, “mending”* (though some think “folding”): Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19.

2. *Of a variety of different matters, “fashioning” or “preparing”*: (a) Matt 21:16: “Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing

<sup>3</sup> Standard lexical works indicate that this word has a broad range of usage in Greek. BAGD notes that the verb has the following uses “Put in order, restore, put into proper condition, complete, make complete, prepare, make, create.” The noun is recognized as having the following senses “equipment, equipping something, training, discipline.” Similarly, LSJ recognizes the following uses for the verb (the noun is not cited) “to adjust, put in order again, restore, repair, to settle by mediation, reform, to furnish completely.”

babies you have prepared (*katertisō*) praise for yourself?” (b) Luke 6:40: “A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified (*katērtismenos*) will be like the teacher.” (c) Rom 9:22: “What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made (*katērtismena*) for destruction?” (d) Heb 10:5: “Consequently, when Christ came into the world he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared (*katertisō*) for me.’” (e) Heb 11:3: “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared (*katērtisthai*) by the word of God.”<sup>4</sup>

3. *Of Church unity, either confessional or governmental:* (a) 1 Cor 1:10: “Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united (*katērtismenoī*) in the same mind and the same purpose.” (b) 2 Cor 13:11: “Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order (*katartizesthe*), listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

4. *Of Christian sanctification or health:* (a) 2 Cor 13:9: “For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect (*tēn hymōn katartisin*).” (b) Heb 13:20–21: “Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete (*katartisai*) in everything good so that you may do his will.”

5. *Of restoration of something/someone damaged, incomplete or injured:* (a) Gal 6:1: “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore (*katartizete*) such a one in a spirit of gentleness.” (b) 1 Thess 3:10: “Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore (*katartisai*) whatever is lacking in your faith.” (c) 1 Pet 5:10: “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore (*katartisei*), support, strengthen and establish you.”

Commentators have recognized the breadth of usage within the first century and have attempted to permit contextual considerations to dictate what the most likely usage is in Eph 4:12. Following Calvin, Owen and Hodge, it is preferable to understand the expression to mean either “perfecting” or “constituting/joining” because the language and thought of the body, unified and growing to perfection, will continue throughout the chapter. That is, Christ, the heavenly Head, is uniting<sup>5</sup> and growing the body

<sup>4</sup> Note that the word “prepare” here is very close to meaning “create” or “constitute.”

<sup>5</sup> “The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (v. 3); “there is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope of your calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (vv. 4–6); “until all of us come to the unity of the faith” (v. 13); “the whole body, joined and knit together” (v. 16).

into perfection<sup>6</sup> by means of these "gifts," the officers. What Calvin, Owen and Hodge all seem to promote is an understanding that is quite consistent with the context.<sup>7</sup> Contextually there is the great Pauline picture of a body consisting of many parts with Christ as the (organizing and governing) Head. Somehow he manages to "join" and "knit together" the "whole body" in such a way that "each part is working properly" (4:16). In the only two other places in the NT where the term is used with application to the corporate Church it has this meaning (cf. 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11). It would be quite natural to the usage of *katartismos*, and to the context, to translate it in this fashion here. The most natural understanding of the term in this context is that of gathering, uniting, or ordering the saints into visible communion and mutual cooperation one with another.

#### IV. THE TRANSLATION OF *ERGON DIAKONIAS* IN V. 12

Does this expression refer to the general work of Christian service (love and mercy) or to the more specific work of ministering the Word of God? The only other place where these two nouns are employed together by Paul is in 2 Tim 4:5: "Do the work (*ergon*) of an evangelist, complete your ministry (*diakonian*)."<sup>8</sup> Plainly here the terms are virtually synonymous and evidently refer to Timothy's ministry of the Word.

Christian mutual love is also occasionally referred to by this language, as in Heb 6:10: "For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and your love that you have performed in his name by serving the saints, and indeed you do serve them (*diakonēsantes tous hagiois kai diakonountes*)."

<sup>6</sup> "To maturity" (v. 13), "we must grow up in every way into him who is the head" (v. 15), "promotes the body's growth" (v. 16)

<sup>7</sup> Calvin "The Greek word employed by Paul is *katartismos*, which signifies literally the adaptation of things possessing symmetry and proportion I prefer the word (*constitutio*) *settlement* or *constitution*, taking it in that sense in which a commonwealth, or kingdom, or province, is said to be *settled*, when confusion gives place to the regular administration of law" J. Owen (*Works* 4:496) "It is *pros ton katartismon tōn hagiōn*,—that is, for the gathering of the saints into complete church-order. The subject-matter of this part of their duty is the saints, that is, by calling and profession, such as are all the disciples of Christ. And that which is effected towards them is *katartismos*, their coagmentation, jointing, or compacting into order" C. Hodge "The word *katartismos*, rendered *perfecting*, admits of different interpretations. The root *aro* means to unite or bind together. Hence *artios* signifies united, complete, perfect, and the verb *katartizo* is literally 'to mend,' Matt. iv:21, to reduce to order, to render complete, or perfect, Luke vi:40, 2 Cor. xiii:11, to prepare or render fit for use, Heb. x:5, xii:21. The substantive may express the action of the verb in the various modifications of its meaning. Hence it has been rendered here,— 1 To the completion of the saints, i.e., of their number, 2 To their renewing and restoration, 3 To their reduction to order and union as one body, 4 To their preparation (for service), 5 To their perfecting. This last is to be preferred, because agreeable to the frequent use of the verb by this apostle, and because it gives the sense best suited to the context." In point of fact, Paul employs the verb only five times (Rom. 9:22, 1 Cor. 1:10, 2 Cor. 13:11, Gal. 6:1, 1 Thess. 3:10) and the noun in one other place (2 Cor. 13:9). Apparently Hodge's comment about the context is a reference to v. 16 and the "growth" referred to there. It is perhaps equally possible to understand v. 16 as referring to the symmetrical ordering and arranging of the various parts of the body. If so, Calvin's rendering is preferable.

For our purposes it must be remembered that *diakonia* is a wide-ranging term, often referring to general service of this mutual kind, unless contextual considerations (2 Tim 4:5) warrant otherwise. Thus in contemporary English what the saints would be “equipped” for, if “equip” were a proper translation of *katartismos*, would be mutual acts of Christian charity—namely, “service” and not necessarily “ministry.” That is, the subject of the “service” determines the service: The “service” of a carpenter is carpentry, the “service” of an electrician is electricity, the “service” of a physician is medicine. When Christians in general are spoken of, the service is that mutual service expected of all Christians (such expectation itself is established by other passages of Scripture). When those who are servants of the Word are spoken of, the service is obviously that which is expected of them. Thus without further argument “service” here would be an empty and meaningless term until its subject is expressed and until we know what is expected of that subject from other texts.<sup>8</sup> It would be pure question-begging to assume that the service performed by the “saints” is the same as the service performed by the “gifted ones,” for instance, unless some passage somewhere teaches us that their service was the same. Nevertheless the “work of ministry” spoken of here is not that which is the saints’ responsibility but that which is the responsibility of the gifted ones mentioned in v. 11. It is the ministry/service of the Word.

#### V. THE REMAINDER OF THE NT

An additional advantage of my view is that it corresponds not only with the immediate context but also with the more distant context of the remainder of the NT. The distinction between those who labor in preaching and teaching God’s Word and those who profit from that labor is a distinction well established by the NT writings themselves. It is not a distinction imposed by later centuries of the Church. In six different ways the NT writings distinguish the task of ministering the Word of God from other, more general duties that all Christians share.

1. *Passages that narrate that some “devote themselves” to this particular task:* (a) Acts 6:4: “We, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.” (b) Acts 13:2: “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” (c) Rom 1:1: “Paul, . . . called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.” (d) 1 Tim 4:13: “Give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhorting, to teaching.” (e) 1 Tim 4:14:

<sup>8</sup> So Hodge “Hence the phrase *eis ergon diakonias*, may mean ‘to the work of mutual service or kind offices,’ or to the work of the ministry—in the official sense. The latter is the common interpretation, and is to be preferred not only on account of the more frequent use of the word in that sense, but also on account of the connection, as here the apostle is speaking of the different classes of ministers of the Word.”

"Do not neglect the gift that is in you." (f) 1 Tim 4:15: "Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them."

2. *Passages that narrate the Church's recognition of such a distinct task by particular rites:* (a) Acts 13:2–5: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them." (b) 1 Tim 4:13–15: "Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress." (c) 2 Tim 1:6: "For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands."

3. *Passages that describe the distinct qualifications necessary for this task:* (a) 1 Tim 3:2: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher." (b) Titus 1:7–9: "For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it."

4. *Passages where individuals, as individuals, are exhorted to fulfill this particular task:* 2 Tim 4:1–5: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully."

5. *Passages where special honor is assigned to those who fulfill this distinct task:* 1 Tim 5:17: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching."

6. *Passages where warnings are given not to enter this distinct task lightly:* Jas 3:1: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness."

In these various passages we find that the NT distinguishes the general service (of mercy and charity) expected of believers from the particular service (of ministering the Word of God) expected of those set apart. Some individuals are distinguished from other believers by official title, by a distinguishing rite, by particular honor, by particular qualifications, by being judged more strictly, and/or by assuming responsibilities not assumed by others. The NT even establishes one office (diaconate) in order to permit those who fill another office (ministry of the Word and prayers) to devote themselves thereto. Thus the NT data outside of Ephesians 4 is similar to our understanding of the data within Ephesians 4—namely, that the NT picture of the Church is actually a tripartite picture. The heavenly Head blesses his earthly body by showering upon them “gifted ones,” who serve ministerially. Further, the picture inside and outside of Ephesians does not restrict this ministerial activity to “equipping.” The ministers of the Word are not mere motivators or enablers. They do not teach others to preach, but they themselves preach. They do not hesitate to function in an ambassadorial role between God and humans: “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). To be sure, one aspect of their ministry of the Word includes instructing the saints in their mutual duties to one another and in their duty to shine as a light in a dark place in the world. But the overall task is far more comprehensive than to instruct the saints in their service.

#### VI. ACCOUNTING FOR THE POPULARITY OF THE “EQUIPPING” VIEW

We cannot account for the popularity of the “equipping” view of Ephesians 4 on Scriptural grounds. The “equipping” view is so contrary to the natural grammar of the passage, and so strikingly contrary to the teaching of the remainder of the NT, that we cannot account for its popularity on the basis of careful Biblical study. Rather, we must attribute it to the egalitarian, anti-authoritarian, populist *Zeitgeist* so well documented by Nathan Hatch.<sup>9</sup>

This spirit is so pervasive and so impervious to self-criticism that it even projects itself onto others. One remarkable example of that projection is the suggestion that the egalitarian view of ministry was a trademark of the Reformation. Some have taken the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of believers to mean that the Reformation did not believe in an ordained ministry. The Reformers taught no such thing. For them, the “priesthood of believers” recognized that the priestly duties of consecrating our lives to God were incumbent upon all believers, as was the priestly duty of interceding for others. The Reformers thus taught that the particular office of priest within the Sinai covenant became both general and nonsacrificial in the new covenant. But the Reformation recognized that

<sup>9</sup> N. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989).

other, nonpriestly offices rightly existed in the NT Church. They taught the priesthood of believers but not the clergyhood of believers. Calvin recognized four nonpriestly offices: deacon, elder, pastor, teacher. Others (e.g. the Scottish *Second Book of Discipline*) recognized three: minister of the Word, elder, deacon. Thus there will be no “new reformation” that will be characterized by an egalitarian ministry. Any “new reformation” will be characterized, as was the first, by a revival of appreciation for the ministry of Word and sacrament and a consequent revival of appreciation for the ministers of the same, despite their individual imperfections. Any true reformation that will ever appear will be characterized, as was the first Reformation, by a zeal for conforming our practice to the Scriptures, not to the (populist, egalitarian, anti-authoritarian) *Zeitgeist*.

Finally, not all errors are of equal magnitude. Not all errors are worthy of rebuttal. But this error is indeed of sufficient magnitude to warrant rebuttal. To reduce our appreciation for the ordained ministry of the Word of God is not merely a sin against those called to that office. It is not merely a sin toward humans. It is not merely a matter of dishonoring those whom we are commanded to treat with double honor. Nor is it merely a matter of refusing to “set apart” those whom we ought to set apart (though that would be sin enough in itself). It is also a matter of dishonoring the ascended Christ, who has “given” such individuals to his Church for its edification. Further, insofar as these “gifted ones” are appointed for the edification of the body, it is detrimental to the health of the body to diminish or otherwise alter the role of the gifted ones. That is, it is a sin against all three components of Paul’s metaphor, not merely against one, to diminish the role of the gift. It diminishes the thanks that are properly due the Giver for his gracious provision. It diminishes the range and degree of edification that the body might otherwise experience. And it diminishes the honor that ought to be given to those we are commanded to honor doubly.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Already we perceive some of the negative effects of this viewpoint. Those preparing for ministry (and the institutions that prepare them) are turning their energies away from those skills associated with the distinctive ministry of the Word (original-language exegesis) and toward organizational, managerial and motivational (coercive?) skills. Indeed, it is not surprising that the proponents of this view have not offered and will not offer an exegetical defense of their view. They are, occasionally, neither capable of nor interested in the (to them arcane) question of what the original text of Holy Scripture actually says. Ironically, then, they prove my point for me, at least practically speaking. Here are so-called leaders in the Church who do not even have the capacity to determine which English translation is correct, or why. And they will produce similar leaders—leaders who can promote all sorts of activity without the capacity to determine whether God is pleased by the activity.



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