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C0501 -- Jan. 05, 2005 – Ephesians 4:11-13 - Spiritually Gifted Persons Given

4:1-6 is the key NT passage on unity. The shift in verse 7 is from the corporate unity of the Church to the individuals that make up that unit. Paul says **to each one of us grace was given** in proportion **to the measure of Christ's gift**. Christ determines the measure of grace given to the individual. We have nothing to do with this bestowal of grace, it is solely determined by Christ. What we do have a role in is the value of the gift of grace. Ministering to one another in proportion to the grace given to each of us edifies the body, builds up the church, and promotes love and joy among believers. Grace ministries are not first of all for individual enjoyment but for the equipping of the saints and building up the body of believers. How we received this gift of grace is given by Paul in vv. 8-10. v. 8 is a summary of Psalm 68. It's not a direct quotation because it differs from Psalm 68:18 quite substantially. Paul's brilliant and extensive knowledge of the OT allowed him to quickly pick up similarities between OT passages and NT events. Here he picks up the idea of God descending from Mt. Sinai, defeating the Canaanites, ascending to Mt. Zion and giving gifts to Israel and draws a parallel with Christ descending from Heaven to earth, even into the grave, ascending to heaven and then giving gifts to the Church. The two key gifts in vv. 9-10 are the ascension and the gift giving. First, Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father giving Him authority. Second, Christ dispenses of the gifts themselves which is further explained in vv. 11-16.

One purpose of Christ giving gifts in v. 7 and which are listed in v. 11 is to preserve the unity already established by the Spirit (4:3). This section therefore is here to show the purpose of the gifts which is to re-enforce unity (4:13), build the church up into a mature man even to the stature of Christ.

Although there are a diversity of gifts given this diversity is not inconsistent with unity. Unity and diversity go hand in hand in both the Trinity (one and three) and the Church (one body and many gifts). The Church therefore reflects the Creator of the Church. Therefore, unity does not equal uniformity but harmony (e.g. a properly working football team, human

body, or automobile). The purpose of Christ's giving diverse gifts to the church is therefore to preserve the unity already established by the Spirit (v. 3). This is what Paul has taught so far. But in vv. 11-16 Paul wants to expound on the gifts Christ gave to the Church. Paul mentioned Christ giving gifts in v. 7 (read) and now he is expounding more on that topic in vv. 11-16. vv. 11-16 are the 7th of 8 long sentence in Ephesians. It is composed of 125 words.

Greek Text 4:11 kai autos edoken tous men apostolous, tous de prophetas, tous de euaggelistas, tous de poimenas kai didaskalous,

Translation 4:11 Namely, he gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

Whereas in v. 7 Paul mentioned Christ giving gifts to each one of us, here he speaks of Christ giving gifted people to the Church. This is not a contradiction because once Christ gives each of us a gift(s) we become gifted persons. Christ gave these people to the church to ultimately build up believers to do ministry.

Some important introductory points need to be made before we look at the list of gifted persons given here in v. 11. First, this list does not contain every gift. The three passages listing the gifts or gifted persons are Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Romans 12:3-8. All the lists seem to be representative. Second, Paul is listing *gifts*, not *offices*. The Bible never confuses gifts with offices. This is a very important distinction that has been given some but not much attention by scholars. Maintaining this distinction between gifts and offices immensely helps avoid confusion, particularly in the area of biblical manhood and womanhood. The design of men and women by God at creation, the headship of the male and the important role of women in the church.

What are some of the differences between gifts and offices? 1) The office is limited to apostles, elders, and deacons (some add Deaconesses depending on how one interprets 1 Tim. 3:11 and Rom. 16:1 but the best interpretation is that 1 Tim. 3:11 refers to the Deacons wives and Rom. 16:1 is not enough to establish a female office). 2) Those who hold offices are appointed or nominated and then appointed (Acts 6:1-6) whereas God gives the gifts sovereignly. 3) Everyone has a gift but not everyone has an office. 4) Qualifications are mentioned for those holding the office of elder and deacon but not for those who have gifts. 5) The offices are limited to men whereas gifts are given regardless of gender. 6) Those who hold offices cannot be novices whereas every believer regardless of maturity has a gift(s).

Offices	Gifts
Apostles, Elders, Deacons (Deaconesses?)	apostle, prophet, teacher evangelist, pastor, miracles, healings, helps, government, exhorter, giver, mercy, leader, server, tongues, interpretation
Appointed by men	Sovereignly given by God
Select believers	All believers
Must meet qualifications	No qualifications
Men only	All believers regardless of gender
Mature believers	All believers regardless of maturity

It should be noted that all who hold an office also have at least one gift. It's not that some get offices and some get gifts but that all get gifts and some are appointed to offices. If we keep this in mind it will avoid a lot of confusion. Now let's look at the list given here in Ephesians 4:11.

kai autos edoken tous men apostolous, tous de prophetas, tous de euaggelistas, tous de poimenas kai didaskalous, “and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,”.

He (that is Christ) **gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.** He lists four *or* five gifted persons here. Notice that each believer is not given the same gift or the same measure of a gift (v. 7).

Apostles. The first gifted person is the **apostle**. This is clearly the gift of apostle and not the office of apostle. We've looked at the word **apostle** in Eph. 1:1 where Paul was called an **apostle**. The word *apostolos* simply means “an official delegate who proclaims authoritatively the message of the sender”. In the Church an **apostle** was one who proclaimed the message of Christ and was involved in establishing and building up churches. There are three kinds of apostles in the NT. *First*, those who were with Christ from His baptism by John until His ascension, for example, the 12 (Acts 1:21-22). *Second*, those who saw Jesus in His resurrection body, for example, Paul (1 Cor. 9:1). *Third*, those who were given the spiritual gift of apostle. It seems that the main function of those who had the gift of apostle was to establish churches in areas that may not have been reached by others (Rom. 15:20). They function much like modern day missionaries.

Prophets. The second gifted person is listed as the **prophet**. Prophets have already been mentioned in 2:20 and 3:5. Both passages refer to NT prophets because it follows **apostle**. In this context it is also NT **prophets**. **Prophets** edified, comforted, encouraged, and communicated clearly the mysteries and revelation of God. Prophets also received revelation about the future. When a prophet received revelation he was not under some ecstatic influence. He was always one who had self-control when receiving revelation. This gift has received a lot of attention recently because some people claim to be prophets. However, the gift of prophecy passed away early in the 2nd century. We might speculate that the reason the gift of prophecy has ceased is because God is no longer speaking verbally into history. Certainly He guides and providentially directs us but He has finished revealing all that He wants to reveal until the coming of Elijah the prophet just before the Tribulation (Mal. 4:5). So, we might conclude that when God closed the canon of Scripture with the Book of Revelation there was no need for continuing to give **prophets**.

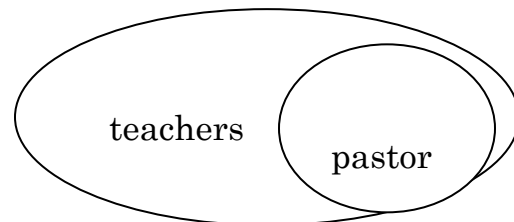
Evangelists. The third gifted person is listed as the **evangelist**. The **evangelist** is one who went everywhere preaching the gospel both inside and outside the church. Their function resembles modern day missionaries who carry the message of salvation to new territories. The word is used only two other times in the NT (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5). One of these is significant. In Acts 21:8 Philip is called an **evangelist**. The early church was located in Jerusalem, but Philip left Jerusalem and took the message to an Ethiopian eunuch as well as traveling to Azotus and Caesarea (Acts 8:26-40). He was taking the message of salvation to new territories that had not been exposed to it. That's the function of an evangelist. It's much like a modern day missionary.

In the early church it was thought that the evangelists were those who preached the gospel and were the successors to the apostles in that they laid the foundations of faith in new areas, appointed shepherds, and then moved to other lands and people.ⁱ

Or perhaps, the evangelists would win converts to the faith through gospel preaching, the apostles would establish churches, and the prophets would fill in the needed revelation. Some of the functions of these gifted people seem to overlap.

and some to be pastors and teachers. The Greek structure here has been debated. The issue is that there is one article for both **pastors and teachers** leading some scholars to think that this refers to one person with a combination of two gifts. We might ask the question this way. Are these two distinctly gifted persons or one person with two gifts? Those who think this is one person with two gifts translate this **pastor-teachers**. Some

church leaders have desired to be known under the title **pastor-teacher**. If **pastors and teachers** were singular rather than plural then that would certainly be the case (because it would follow the Granville-Sharp rule of Greek Grammar). However, they are both plural. It is a difficult question to answer this question. I think that there is a distinction between the two but the distinction is not total. In other words, I think that **pastors** is a subset of **teachers**. Therefore, all pastors are teachers but not all teachers are pastors.ⁱⁱ



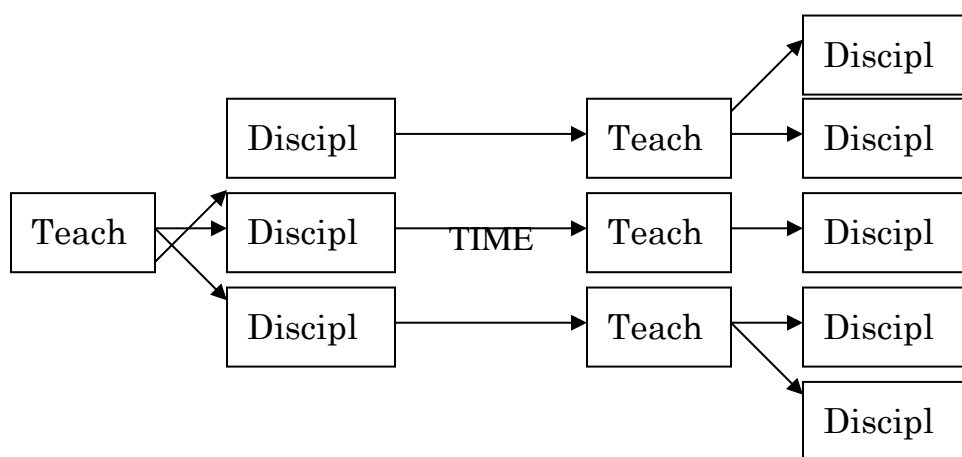
Pastors comes from the Greek word *poimen* which was used of a shepherd of animals. He cares for his flock as a shepherd cares for his sheep. This includes ministering to troubled believers, exhorting believers, comforting believers and administering the activities in the local church. Here again it is important to emphasize that this is a gift and not an office. Most people confuse the gift of pastor with an office. Pastor is not an office. The result has been that many think that only men can pastor. However, remember, offices are for men only but the gifts are for all believers. This would indicate that women can have the gift of pastor. To use their gift they need simply operate under the other NT guidelines given for women. Indeed, many women already function as pastors, even in this church. How many women in this church do you know who engage very effectively in the following areas? Ministering to troubled believers, exhorting believers, or comforting believers? Those are all pastoral functions. Nowhere does the NT say that women can't have the gift of pastor. The modern confusion regarding this is a confusion of the gift of pastor with an office. Pastor is not an office, it is a gift and the gifts are for all believers' not just men or women.

Teachers comes from the Greek word *didaskalos*. Basically it has always meant "one who instructs others". A related word used of **teachers** in the NT is *didaktikos* from which we get the word "didactic". Didactic instruction is systematic and organized. So, a **teacher** is one who systematically instructs others in factual matters, skills and moral living. Again, like the gift of **pastor** the gift of **teacher** is not limited to men. Women can and do have this gift and should exercise it under NT guidelines. In fact, older women are commanded to "teach good things" to the younger women in Titus 2:1, 3-4. For the NT guidelines for a woman teacher turn over to **1 Timothy 2:11-12**

¹¹ A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

Therefore, it follows that a woman may teach or have authority over other women but never over men. Who is a man? This is a debated question. Some hold that it refers to age 13-14 when a boy reaches puberty. Others hold that it is even younger than this. Some hold that a man is one who does not live under the authority of his parents. Until that point a woman can teach and have authority over boys. After that she is not to try to exercise authority or teach him.ⁱⁱⁱ The debate over this also rages and you can study it under the topics of Complementarianism (more conservative) vs. Egalitarianism (more liberal). I personally hold that by creation men and women have different roles. Therefore, as biblical Christians we cannot allow for all distinctions of role to be erased as modern feminism attempts to do. Men and women are created by God to have different roles. When these distinctions are maintained men and women can flourish and become beautiful models of God's intention for each. Wives are never treated as inferior in the Bible but are always pictured as subordinate to male authority. The same picture is drawn between the Father and the Son. The Son is not inferior but is subordinate to the Father.

As a teacher, Jesus followed the model of the Jewish rabbis which was to not only teach *content* but also to gather *disciples* around Him. This is the model that is developing here slowly and which I hope grows immensely. This model leads to a teacher making disciples who then become teachers who have their own disciples.



In this model the one thing the Jewish rabbis did that Jesus did not do was to teach with uncertainty. Instead, Jesus taught with authority (Matt. 7:29) and so should those who teach the Bible.

Teachers should not be like the scribes who propounded a variety of views but never came to any conclusion. Rather, they should teach the revelation of God authoritatively.^{iv}

This is a warning against teachers who just present all the different views but don't come to any conclusion of the matter. That is dangerous to teach or be taught that way because it leaves you open to the idea of uncertainty which leads to relativism and a denial of the ability to know truth (many Christians say, "because humans are fallible we can't know for sure what the text is saying so we just give all the views and discourage the learners from being dogmatic about any one view. Let people choose what they believe but don't be dogmatic about it."). Dangers of Diaprax as a teaching style coming out of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Diaprax claims that teaching should be an ongoing conversation where we produce an environment of tolerance for differing views. This kind of teaching emotionally attaches people to the group resulting in an unhealthy group dynamic because doctrine is watered down and it produces uncertainty and the idea that doctrinal points are really not important and we can all believe what we want about doctrinal points but no one can be certain so lets just all get along.

Now, what Jerry has been doing at FBG Bible Church is teaching authoritatively. What Fred and now I do is both shepherding and teaching authoritatively. The reason there is a difference between Fred's teaching and pastoring and my teaching and pastoring is because of verse 7 coupled with our God-given personalities. Remember, Christ gives to each a different measure of gift(s). So, some teachers are stronger than other teachers and some pastors are stronger than other pastors. This demonstrates the truth that there is one Spirit but there are a "variety of effects" of the Spirit through these gifted persons (1 Cor. 12:6). This is why pastors, teachers, evangelists, exhorters, etc... should never compete. It's not a competition.

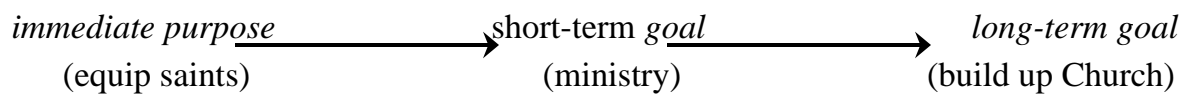
Now that Paul has described the gifted people he gives their purpose in v. 12 which is to equip other believers for the work of ministry which will finally edify the Church.

Greek Text 4:12 **pros** ton katartison ton agion **eis** ergon diakonias, **eis** oikodomen tou somatos tou Christou,

Translation 4:12 for the equipping/training of the saints to the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ,

Now, this is a very important verse. It shows that all believers are to engage in ministry, not just the leaders. The NASB translates this **work of service** but it would better be rendered **work of ministry**. The important structural thing about this verse is that there are three prepositional phrases here *pros...eis...eis* (NASB **for...for...to** or my translation **for...to...for**)

Why are spiritually gifted people given? The *immediate purpose* is **pros ton katartismon ton agion, “for the equipping of the saints”**. The *short-term goal* of gift giving is that believers might do **the work of ministry**. The *long-term goal* is that **the body of Christ** might be **built up**.



If everyone has received a gift then everyone is involved in equipping saints with the short-term goal that everyone does ministry and the long-term goal of building up the Church can be reached. That’s the way the Greek progresses through these phrases. That each individual believer is to be engaged in the work of ministry is supported strongly by the context. Notice in verse 16 that edification requires the work of each individual member and not a select group.

First of all we have the immediate purpose of spiritual gifts which is **for the equipping of the saints**. The word **equip** in the Greek means “training”, normally through instruction. It refers to the time when you as an individual believer are being prepared through the teaching of God’s word. You’re not being prepared to just sit there. You’re being prepared through instruction so that you can minister effectively in the church. **saints** throughout Ephesians refers to believers (cf. 1:1) not to a special class of believers. “Therefore, gifted persons were given to the church for the immediate purpose of training or preparing believers. It is important to be endowed with the gift(s) of the Spirit but it is also important to learn to use the gift(s) effectively in the church for its edification.”^v

eis ergon diakonias, “to the work of ministry”. Second, we have the short-term goal for these gifted people which is to do **the work of ministry**. NASB translates this “service” but I think you get the picture better when it’s translated **ministry**. It means to serve the Lord by ministering to one another. This means doing something, some activity, something. This is the short-term goal of equipping believers. The long-term goal is described next.

eis oikodomen tou somatos tou Christou, “for the building up of the body of Christ,”. Third, we have the long-term goal of these gifted people which is **for the building up of the body of Christ**. This refers back to 2:21 where the church is pictured as a **building** that is being built up. **The body of Christ** is the Church (cf. 1:22-23). This verse refers to the construction of the building. The Church is continually being built into a building that will be the dwelling of God the Spirit (2:22). The Church is not a static structure but a living and growing organism (like the human body).

A note here regarding the cessation or non-cessation of gifts. 1) Christ sovereignly bestows gifts/gifted individuals (4:7). This means that Christ decides whether He wants to give a gift during a certain time period or not. Christ has obviously chosen not to give the gift of prophet since the early part of the 2nd century. However, this does not mean that we are missing out on something that the early church had. The Church is a building that is being built up. Just as most homes are built on a concrete foundation so the Church was built on the apostles and prophets. Most homes do not use concrete for the superstructure and walls of the home but only for the foundation. Likewise with the Church Christ gave some foundational gifts (2:20) such as apostle and prophet which are necessary and beneficial for the entire Church regardless of whether they are present today. You can only see this truth if you understand that the Church is a building that is under construction. Some of the gifts were foundational some are for the superstructure and walls. The point is that every gifted person no matter when they lived in Church History is a benefit to those who follow. We all stand on the gifted people who went before us. This is why study of Church History is very beneficial for saints today. That’s why I often interweave Church History in my instruction, because it benefits you to see where the construction was at during certain stages, the problems they were dealing with, and their solutions to those problem as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Greek Text 4:13 mechri katantesomen oi pantes eis ten enoteta tes pisteos kai tes epignoseos tou uiou tou theou, eis andra teleion, eis metron elikias tou pleromatos tou Christou,

Translation 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of Christ’s full stature.

mechri katantesomen oi pantes, “until we all attain.” Here in v. 13 Paul explains the need that the process continue until we attain the final goal that believers mature to the measure of Christ’s stature. The word **until** is a conjunction used with an aorist subjunctive. Whenever this conjunction is used with an aorist subjunctive this means that the action is to go on until a future point action. In other words this equipping, ministry and building up

of the Church should go on until some future event. This event is probably the Rapture but Paul leaves open the possibility that it can be attained in the present time. This is an interesting but not strong argument for the imminence of the Rapture. We might say that the Church could attain the following at any moment. That's the force of *mechri* with the aorist subjunctive. This would demonstrate conclusively that the Rapture is for all saints and not just the good boys. Some teach that the pre-trib Rapture is only for a select group of saints that are extra holy, fruit-bearing Christians. All the other Christians have to stay on earth and go through the Tribulation until they shape up (kind of like a temporal purgatory). This verse X's out that idea because it says this process will go on **until we all attain to the unity...**

eis ten enoteta tes pisteos kai tes epignoseos tou uiou tou theou, “**to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God**,”. Verse 13 has three prepositional phrases that all begin with *eis*, “**to**”. These three prepositional phrases are like stair-steps that lead up to the final goal. The first stair-step is **the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God** on the way to the final goal. The only other time the word for **unity** ever occurs in the Bible is in 4:3. That's why this passage is the most important passage on **unity** in the entire Bible. In v. 3 Paul told us to **make every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit. unity of the faith** comes with the realization that all believers have one faith in the one indivisible person of Jesus Christ (cf. 4:5). Second aspect of the first stair-step is **knowledge of the Son of God**. The word here for **knowledge** is *epignosis* which we looked at in 1:17. *epignosis* means full, complete knowledge. It's not a surface **knowledge** but a deep **knowledge**. In 1:17 it was a deep **knowledge** of God. Here, because of the context it is a deep **knowledge of the Son of God**. This is the only time Paul uses the phrase **Son of God** in Ephesians. The way that we come to **unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God** is through gifted persons utilizing their gifts to equip one another so that we can realize this all together. The emphasis here is not solely on individual **knowledge** but collective **knowledge** of the body of believers. We grow together as a local body of believers in our **knowledge of the Son of God**. It's really not limited to the local body of believers because of the godly influences from other people outside of our congregation (normally biblical scholars and authors that teach on the seminary campus).

eis andra teleion, “**to a mature man**”. The second stair-step to the final goal is that the church will become **a mature man**. This is not talking about individual believers but the **body of believers** which is of course composed of individuals. However, the emphasis is on the body as a whole and not the individual because he doesn't say **to mature men** (plural) but **to a mature man** (singular). The word for **man** here is not the same word used in 2:15 of the “one new man” (*anthropos*). There Paul wanted to emphasize a new

humanity, the Church. Here Paul wants to emphasize growth from a boy to a man so he uses the word *aner*. The Church is not automatically a **mature man**. She must grow up from boyhood to manhood just like Israel had to do in the OT. They grew up under Law, we are growing up under grace. For the church to grow into a **mature man** requires that all believers do the work of ministry to help build it up! This is supposed to go on until we attain we all attain to the unity of the faith and of knowledge of the Son of God and until we all attain the final goal of the mature person. “As the body matures unity results. Often we tend to think of spiritual maturity as only individual growth in the Lord, but in this passage the emphasis is on body growth, resulting in unity. Inversely, immaturity is individual growth not shared with the body with the result that the body lacks maturity.” I think that needs to be hammered home.

eis metron elikias tou pleromatos tou Christou, “to the measure of Christ’s full stature.” This is the third stair-step to the final goal. In this context Christ is the **fullness** of God and is actively filling the Church. The emphasis here is on **we**. **We** are to **measure up** to this extent. Not the individual believer but the corporate body is the focus. Each member of course, is required to use the gift that has been given to him or her in proportion to the measure Christ gave him. When we do this then the body will measure to Christ’s stature. As the gifts Christ gave us are used then the Church will measure up to Christ’s stature or maturity. The Church’s maturity over time has gone through many stages in this regard and would look something like chart 1. When we reach the stature of Christ we will be Raptured.

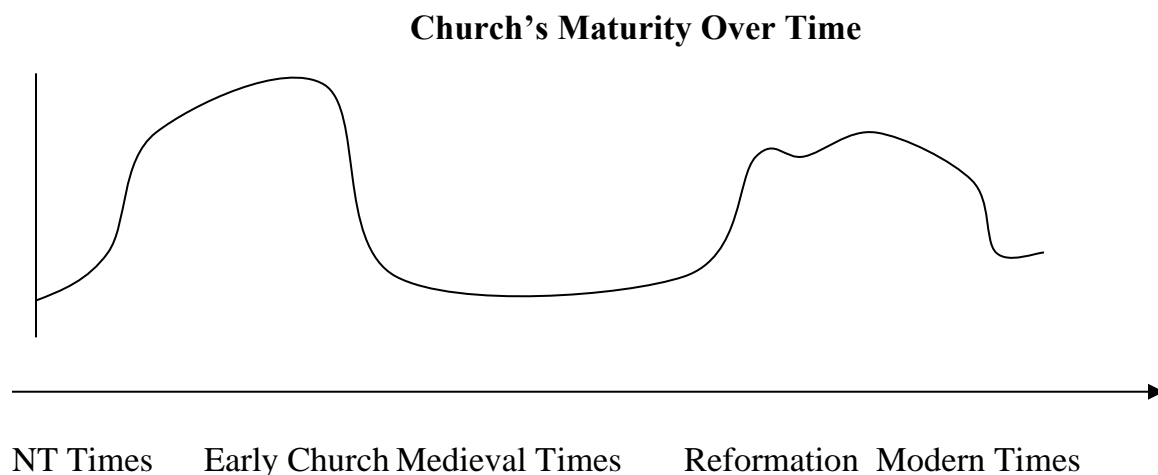


Chart 1: The Church’s maturity or lack thereof during Church History. When the Church matures to the full stature of Christ then she will be with her Lord.

ⁱ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 543.

ⁱⁱ I agree with Daniel Wallace's treatment in *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is known as a form of Complementarianism in Gender studies. See Daniel Wallace's two excellent articles at http://www.bible.org/series.asp?series_id=133. Also, Evangelical Egalitarianism and Galatians 3:28 at

http://www.conservativeonline.org/journals/05_16_journal/2001v5n16_id02.htm

^{iv} Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 545.

^v Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 550.

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