

Many, many years ago---back in my seminary days—I remember channel surfing with my remote and I—took a moment to pause on Trinity Broadcasting Network—as I sometimes do—just to remind myself of how bad things really are in this broader segment of evangelical Christendom and I will never forget what the preacher said to his audience: *if we are to reach the world for Christ, we must have a whole new concept of ministry.* Then he said let me repeat that ---and he did, “*if we are to reach the world for Christ, we must have a whole new concept of ministry.*” And what he meant by that—was made clear in the rest of the message—and basically what he was proposing was a change away from CLERICAL MINISTRY to—EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY. And if you don't what this means, EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY —is the philosophy of ministry that ---the real work of ministry is to be performed by ---all believers—while---pastors ----have this small job of making the rest of God's people ready for THE MINISTRY—by teaching and equipping them for it. You see, his whole point is—that if you multiply MINISTERS—instead of doing it as pastors one by one---then much more MINISTRY WORK—gets done.

Now—what this pastor was proposing was not all that UNIQUE. At that time—I was taking a course in pastoral ministry in seminary---and we often did what seminary students do—WE FOUGHT ENDLESSLY ABOUT WHO OR WHAT WAS RIGHT AND WHO AND WHAT WAS WRONG. And I will never forget---a moment of clarity I had when I was in a quite heated argument with a fellow classmate. In my Eureka moment--I proclaimed that the reason why we were not able to agree ---WAS NOT—because we were looking at the SAME TRUTH—in 2 different ways—as my classmate thought, instead it was because we had 2 COMPLETELY OPPOSITE VIEWS of what the truth was. And how I confirmed that to my classmate—was by asking him a simple question: does Ephesians 4:12 teach that ALL GOD'S PEOPLE do the ministry –or does it teach--that MINISTERS—given by Christ ---DO THE WORK OF THEM MINISTRY?

See that???? The way that question is phrased—puts the issue in SHARP RELIEF. The question *puts the spotlight on the problem*---which was not that we were seeing the matter in dispute from 2 different angles----rather the question ---was—WHAT IS THE MINISTRY—and -----WHO DOES IT? AND THE REASON why that was the issue at stake is because *we had a professor* who was teaching us in our PASTORAL MINISTRY class the same EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY philosophy of ministry—that I saw and heard that TBN preacher----PROPOSE. That is right, at a self-advertised Reformed & Presbyterian seminary ---from a ordained Presbyterian minister----I was being taught a view of ministry---I could have gotten much cheaper by staying home and watching TBN. But sadly—you don't have to go to a REFORMED & PRESBYTERIAN seminary—and be taught this view by a seminary professor====YOU CAN GET IT BY READING YOUR REFORMED STUDY BIBLE!!!! THE

REFORMATION STUDY BIBLE'S COMMENTS on Ephesians 4:12-13 are as follows: *It is not primarily those mentioned in v. 11 who do the work of the ministry; it is the people they equip. Effective teachers help each believer to find their own way of benefiting the rest of the church.* The Reformed Study Bible's comment here is clearly supporting the EQUIPPING MINISTRY---EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY view WHICH IS so widespread in the church today, but it is certainly NOT THE CLASSIC REFORMED VIEW. All we have to do to confirm that is CONSIDER—the comment made on this very same verse in the GENEVA STUDY BIBLE of the 16th century---which says: *He shows the aim of ecclesiastical functions, that is, that by the ministry of men all the saints may so grow up together, that they may make one mystical body of Christ.* Clearly—here—the Geneva Bible ---comment is saying that the MINISTRY is done by MINISTERS and BY MEANS OF THEIR MINISTRY of the word and sacrament---THE SAINTS GROW UP.

So what we have --are 2 SHARPLY CONTRASTING INTERPRETATIONS—and 2 ---very DISTINC T VIEW OF THE MINISTRY. One view says---SAINTS --to the work of ministry----- and MINISTRY—is just about anything saints do in faith and according to the law of love. The other view says—MINISTERS—the gifts—of v11---DO THE WORK OF MINISTRY—and the ministry—is the ministry of the word and sacraments. THOSE ARE ---2 DISTINCT----SHARPLY CONTRASTING---points of view.

In today's sermon—we are going to DEFEND THE CLASSIC Reformed view-and show that these verses teach that *THE GIFTS*—of v11—are the ones --who-ARE DOING THE WORK in v12. In other words, we are going to argue that MINISTERS—do—the work of ministry and that---THE MINISTRY---is the ministry of the WORD & SACRAMENTS.

Now---as we dig into this topic—let's—look to v12-and see the PURPOSE,---for which Christ's gave the word gifts

I. The PURPOSE of Christ's giving the WORD GIFTS

By noticing the connection of ideas here between vv11-12---we can see that we need to review context.

A. Review of v11

1-If you just pick up v12—and start reading it by itself—you will quickly see that ---you need to back up a moment. The NASV reads: for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. Now—reading v12—by itself—without the connection of thought to v11----it is hard to make any sense of the verse at all---it does not present a complete thought. But---if you read it in connection with v11—it makes much more sense: *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of*

*the [d]saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.* See—we have the main verb in v11—HE GAVE—and the objects of the verb—SOME —apostles-prophets—evangelists—and pastor-teachers and THEN—he gives-their PURPOSE & ROLE —in v12.

Since there is the this obvious connection —let’s stop and review a moment

2-The WIDER CONTEXT --starts in v7—where Paul says Christ SOVEREIGNLY DISTRIBUTES GIFTS—to his church. We have already said—those GIFTS---are for the purpose of SECURING THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH. Moving forward---in vv8-10—we see that Paul defends his assertion that Christ SOVEREIGNLY DISTRIBUTES gifts to the church. By first showing that Psalm 68:18---prophetically anticipated Christ’s ascension into heaven—and that at the ascension —he gave gifts to his church.

Then in vv9-11—Paul takes up 2 words from Psalm 68:18---cited in v8—and uses them to structure his unfolding thought. In v9-10—Paul takes up the word ASCENDED----and goes out of his way to make that case—that it was == the incarnate Christ who—first ==DESCENDED---who is-also the one who ASCENDED----FAR ABOVE ALL THINGS and he states the PURPOSE of Christ’s ascending —FAR ABOVE ALL THINGS—it was SO THAT ---HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. When we looked at this passage we interpreted that as *an OT way of expressing* the SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST OVER ALL THINGS. Now—in v11-the word GAVE—is taken up from v8---and applied to Christ—who GIVES WORD GIFTS TO HIS CHURCH.

Now with that in view, let’s take just a moment—to break down those WORD GIFTS. First we have APOSTLES. Apostles are the actual representatives of Christ and they are historically delimited by Acts 1:21-22. Apostles were given a specific task of REPRESENTING CHRIST—speaking in his name—the things received by him through SPECIAL REVELATION. Second we have PROPHETS. These prophets were people who were given to specific churches during the apostolic era—who were occasional recipients of SPECIAL REVELATION—and communicated that to the church in WORSHIP ASSEMBLY. Once—the apostles passed off the scene ---so did the prophets----since—their function of communicating special revelation was NO LONGER NEEDED—because the NT canon was COMPLETED. Third we have EVANGELISTS. The evangelists---were men who possessed a delegated authority from the apostles to FOUND CHURCHES—where the gospel had not yet been preached. Since these evangelists are tied HISTORICALLY to the apostles---and since the NT knows of no other continuing ecclesiastical offices besides---elder and deacon. We can CONCLUDE then THAT —THE EVANGELISTS---passed off the church scene at the end of the apostolic age as well. Fourth we have the LAST CATEGORY---of word gifts---

PASTORS & TEACHERS. This office refers to THOSE TEACHERS—who are elders, but whose primary calling is to GIVE THEMSELVES wholly to the PREACHING OF THE WORD. We said before that they are ELDERS WHO TEACH. We can demonstrate that in three ways. First, the words PASTOR & ELDER— fall under one article---not 2—indicating—just one office is in view here. Second, the word PASTOR--- is a synonym for ELDER. All we have to do to confirm that is turn 1 Peter 5:1-2 where Peter exhorts elders to PASTOR, to shepherd the flock of God. Clearly—the FUNCTION---shepherding—indicates—office, an elder-pastor—that is shepherd. Third, the second title—CLARIFIES THE first, TEACHER, clarifies---WHAT---kind of elder/ shepherd is in view. We know that is the case because of 1Timothy 5:17—which tell us that there are 2 kinds of elders---elders who rule—and elders—WHO LABOR AT TEACHING. It is that KIND OF AN ELDER—who is in view—here—AN ELDER— PASTOR—SHEPHERD---WHO TEACHES. AND BY THE WAY---this office of PASTOR-TEACHER—continues in the church—RIGHT UP UNTIL TODAY.

AT ANY RATE—these are the GIFTS—Christ gave the church.

And it is obvious—that—as you move on from v11---Paul has not left the topic—of these GIFTS. In v12 Paul moves on to SPELL OUT---the PURPOSE of Christ in giving these gifts and we can see that in the PREPOSITIONS----translated FOR—in v12.

Now—the *question* before us---is ---whether---the prepositional phrases spell out 3 purposes of Christ in giving the gifts to the church-or---do these 3 prepositional phrases--refer to the GIFTS of v11—and the SAINTS together. The latter construction fits with the EQUIPPING MINISTRY interpretation ---and I want to take just a moment to unfold it here.

B. The FALSE---EQUIPPING MINISTRY---interpretation

1-A survey of the leading 21st century BIBLE TRANSLATIONS---shows that the EQUIPPING MINISTRY view is DOMINANT:

the NIV has- 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

the Amplified Bible ==reads-- 12 His intention was the perfecting *and* the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church),

the ESV says--- 2 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

the NKJV follows suit---saying- 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

the NASV is almost IDENTICAL---at this point---for the equipping of the [d]saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Last but not least----the hip—cool new translation ----

The Message reads-- He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church,

So there you have it—the PREDOMINANT VIEW in the modern translations is: Christ gave the pastor-teachers---to EQUIP Christians ---so they could do the work of ministry which in turn builds up the body of Christ.

Now—just so that we can understand why this choice in translation is made---let's cover some issues here in the text. Some argue that there are legitimate textual reasons for the ---EQUIPPING MINISTRY translation. First there is a CHANGE—in PREPOSITIONS in v12. The 1st preposition is---pros—which in this case means—FOR—signaling purpose and the 2nd and 3rd prepositions are---eis—which in this case could indicate purpose or intended result. So-one reputable commentator ----draws the following conclusion –from this change in prepositions: *the progression indicates that he gave gifted people for the immediate purpose of preparing them for the work of ministry, which in turn has the final goal of building up the body of Christ.* His point is that the ministers do the preparing for works of ministry by teaching—and the result is that the people of God—do the work of ministry—and in turn—that builds up the church. Second, we have the word translated –EQUIP. This word translated---EQUIP—is *KATARTISMON* and it used only here in its noun form in the New Testament. But—its verbal form is found in many different places—and it has MULTIPLE different interpretations. For various reasons---modern translators—decided---it must mean EQUIP—here, but there isn't any DECISIVE REASON FOR THAT—based upon the LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS of the word. Third that brings us the last important factor in v12, the phrase—*WORK OF MINISTRY*. Both words---WORK—and MINISTRY—are sort of GENERIC---words—which are stretchy and can apply to different things. Taken together—*WORK OF MINISTRY*—only yields the very specific kind of WORK in view—the work of MINISTRY. To establish the meaning of the words you have to consider the context of their use—and other uses of the word MINISTRY—to determine what is in view. MINISTRY in general—which would be –*ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS*—or ---*MINISTRY*—with a capital M—referring to the *MINISTRY OF THE WORD*. What is so PUZZLING –about the EQUIPPING MINISTRY translation is—that NEITHER

CONTEXT—or PARALLEL SCRIPTURE passages—TIP this in favor of MINISTRY—with a small “m.” The context here obviously—has TEACHING THROUGH PUBLIC OFFICERS in view. ALL you have to do is remember what v11 is about—and by the time you get to v14—it is clear that PUBLIC TEACHING IS IN VIEW. If you survey—Scripture—where—MINISTRY is used—YOU FIND—its use is varied—but—the meaning of the term is colored in by the context.

So those are the KEY ISSUES here—in translation ---and you can see for yourself that—nothing here that REQUIRES—or EVEN remotely offers reasonable SUPPORT—for-the idea of EQUIPPING MINISTRY. AND THAT IS WHAT MAKES THE ---PREVALENCE of this INTERPERTATION SO PUZZLING. The Equipping ministry view ---is UBIQUITOUS. For instance, Anglican commentator John Stott---states what is the common view of those who hold the equipping ministry view—when he says, *“Thank God that in our generation this biblical vision of an every-member ministry is taking a firm hold in the church.”*

The rhetoric here is that of RE-DISCOVERY. The clear implication is that the apostolic church knew of every member ministry---but somehow—that Biblical view of ministry was LOST TO THE CHURCH—until ---finally in the 20th century---OLD LIGHT broke forth from the word of God—and the old—APOSTOLIC CHURCH practice of ministry has been recovered & reinstated. Now, if this were true, this of course would something to be celebrated.

And at least one thing Stott says here is true—the EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY VISION—is TAKING FIRM HOLD IN THE CHURCH. Last week I was taking a peek at the BIO’S and PROFILES—of some LEADING LIGHT pastors who were taking part in some ---BIG CONFERENCE-for Reformed Christians---and what I found in one of the pastor bio’s was this all—too commonly held philosophy of MINISTRY. This pastor’s profile reads reads, *“Pastor Mike’s view of mission in family and ministry is taken from Ephesians 4:12-13, ‘the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.’”*

Though this view PREVAILS THROUGHOUT the church of our age—it certainly was a view which was UNKNOWN at the time of the Reformation. We have already ---read the comments taken from the Geneva Bible of the 16th century. Now listen to a summary of Calvin’s interpretation of this passage ---as a sort of pivot and segue towards our defense of the correct interpretation:

*-If the edification of the church proceeds from Christ alone, he has surely a right to prescribe in what manner it shall be edified. But Paul expressly states, that, according*

*to the command of Christ, no real union or perfection is attained, but by the outward preaching. The church is the common mother of all the godly, which bears, nourishes, and brings up children to God, kings and peasants alike; and this is done by the ministry. Those who neglect or despise this order choose to be wiser than Christ. Woe to the pride of such men!*

In a nutshell that is the classic Reformed and Presbyterian view. The MINISTRY is the ministry of the word & that is done by the GIFTS—of v11—ministers

Now, let's ground that view now in the ACCURATE INTERPRETATION of this passage.

C. The CORRECT---classical---CLERICAL MINISTRY ===interpretation

And in defending the classical view---the first thing we have to take up is the PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES and to do that LETS START with the relationship of the phrase to EACH OTHER. We have already seen that the equipping ministry view---sees the 1st phrase as stating the immediate goal of the GIFTS—and then the 2nd phrase---expresses the purpose of teaching in the church; it is so that the saints can do the work of the ministry—and that in turn---leads to the BUILDING UP OF THE BODY.

This interpretation does not see these phrases as COORDINATE. But the fact is the prepositional phrases ARE COORDINATED, they are 3 parallel clauses, and should have a comma after each. We saw that the reason modern commentators—reject that is because of the CHANGE IN PREPOSITION. But the fact is---- the MERE CHANGE of the preposition is INADEQUATE ground to suggest that the implied subjects have changed. In Romans 15:2---Paul changes prepositions---but that does not signal a lack of coordination: Each of us must please our neighbor for good, for edification. The first preposition is *eis* and the second preposition is *pros*. Clearly the prepositions are COORDINATE and they are governed by the main verb—MUST PLEASE. Paul says—we MUST PLEASE---for good, for edification. The prepositions are---COORDINATE---expressing two separated but related purposes. *A similar change in prepositions occurs in Philemon 5* where Paul says, "I hear of your love toward all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus." In this case the first preposition "toward" is *pros* and the second preposition "toward" is *eis*. In both cases—the PREPOSITIONS—have CHANGED-- --but they are INTERCHANGEABLE in meaning and are coordinate. The change is—nothing more than STYLISTIC VARIATION. So---that means—there is NO SOUND-grammatical REASON ----TO REJECT—that these are 3 *parallel clauses*—here in Ephesians 4:12.

NOW—that brings us to the next thing we need to say about these phrase and that pertains to -the relationship of the prepositional clauses to the *MAIN VERB* of v11 which is GAVE. First of all we should note—the point AT Lincoln makes which is that Paul regularly STRINGS TOGETHER a number of prepositional phrases, all dependent on the main verb and coordinate with each other, AND THIS---is a characteristic feature of his writing style. Here are some quick examples from the book of Ephesians which confirm that:

-1:3-- Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ

-1:5-6-- He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the [f]kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

-4:14- s a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness [h]in deceitful scheming;

-6:12-- 2 For our struggle is not against [e] flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Now—I listed those off to show you something that is a stylistic feature of Paul’s writing here in Ephesians which is that he regularly multiplies prepositional phrases---tucks them under a main verb—and coordinates them ---placing them --one after another—but not in sequence—its more like LAYING THEM SIDE BY SIDE. So --if he does that all throughout this book—there is absolutely NO REASON—why that is not the case here. AND WHAT WE CAN CONCLUDE NOW IS--Paul uses these 3 prepositional phrases-- -TO UNFOLD CHRIST’S PURPOSE in giving these TEACHERS: it is for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. And the SUBJECT of all 3 prepositional purpose clauses---is the same—THE PASTOR-TEACHER: the pastor-teachers---PERFECT THE SAINTS, the pastor-teachers-DO THE WORK OF MINISTRY, and the pastor-teachers—BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST. That is how we are to understand the whole flow of thought here.

Now—with that OVERVIEW of the clauses—in view--let’s break them down one by one and INTERPRET the CLAUSES. First we have, “*for the perfecting of the saints.*” The NASV—here has “EQUIPPING THE SAINTS” but a better translation is “CONSTITUTING” —or---“JOINING.” WE HAVE ALREADY SAID—that this word



for EQUIP/perfect—IS USED only here in its noun form; that means we should take a moment to see how it is used outside of the NT—and how it is used in the verbal form in the New Testament. OUTSIDE of the NT—in secular Greek—it is –rarely used--- but when it is used—it is used with great CONSISTENCY. For example---it used in a MEDICAL MANUAL----written by Apollonius---47 times =====and each time it is used there---it refers to the MEDICAL PRACTICE setting a broken limb or bone IN ORDER. So “JOINING”—is the idea that best captures the meaning here. It is also used in the LXX--17 times where it translates 9 different Hebrew words----it has various meanings such as “to establish” (Ps 74:16), “to restore” (Ps 68:8), and “to complete, to finish.” So from this survey of uses outside the NT---it should be clear to us that EQUIP—is not an OBVIOUS TRANSLATION of this word. Now—let see how the VERBAL FORM IS USED. The VERBAL FORM===katartizo is employed in 5 ways as Dr. Gordon summarizes:

-1- *Of "mending" FISHING NETS-----*Matt 4:21 & Mark 1:19.

-2- *it is used of "fashioning" or "preparing"---a range of different things---*

(a) Matt 21:16: "Have you never read, Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared (*katertisö*) praise for yourself?"

(b) Luke 6:40: "A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified (*katêrtismenos*) 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 (*katêrtismena*) 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 (*katertisö*) for me."

(e) Heb 11:3: "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared (*katêrtisthai*) by the word of God."4

-3- Paul uses it ---*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 (*katêrtismenoi*) in the same mind and the same purpose."

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(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 spiritual 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 (*ten hymön katartisin*).n

(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."

What should be clear—with respect to seeing how *katartizo* is used in the verbal form—is that that translation “EQUIP”—is not an ---INEVITABLE OR obvious NATURAL TRANSLATION. ALL THIS ----SHOULD LEAD US TO ASK---what is the CORRECT TRANSLATION? THE REFORMED HAVE ----LONG HELD—THAT –it should be translated something like “order”---“constitute”—or –“join.” For instance, Calvin says, "I prefer the word -- *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." John Owen comments on this word as follows, “that which is effected towards the saints is *katartismos*, their coagmentation, jointing, or compacting into order." Finally, we can appeal to Charles Hodge who dives into the etymology of the word and tells us that “the root ἄρω, means to unite or bind together. Hence ἄρτιος signifies united, complete, perfect.” So Hodge----seems to agree that something like “order”—or “join”---is correct.

The reason ---this is the preferred translation of the word--is because of the CONTEXT. Even though the word is translated in various ways----what can be drawn from some of the more common uses of the word is that of “UNITING”—or “JOINING” and THAT IDEA---FITS THE CONTEXT. The *UNITY OF THE BODY*—is the DOMINANT METAPHOR & THEME of the context—from vv2-16. Christ’s BODY is to be UNITED—and that UNITY of the various parts of the body—is secured through the EFFICIENT USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS. The body—which consists of many parts and members—is to be UNITED---GROWING—MATURING—KNIT TOGETHER and this is ACCOMPLISHED-through-TEACHING AND PREACHING THE WORD OF GOD. So the PURPOSE—of GIVING THE PASTOR-TEACHERS—is ----CONSTITUTING—OR –

JOINING—the saints together.

Now, how that JOINING—or constituting occurs—is indicated in the next prepositional phrase, “for the WORK OF MINISTRY.” We have already said—that both of these words—WORK & MINISTRY—are generic terms—and they are stretchy—and may be applied to various situations. But—the only place where they are BOTH USED TOGETHER—does shed some light—on how they may be used HERE. In 2 Tim 4:5 Paul says to Timothy— “Do the work (*ergon*) of an evangelist, complete your ministry (*diakonian*).” Plainly here the terms are virtually synonymous and evidently refer to Timothy's ministry of the Word. What seems obvious from this verse—is that MINISTRY—is the WORK—Timothy is supposed to be engaged in and that WORK is specified as EVANGELISM—which is the PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. So MINISTRY—here is—MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD. From this—and other uses in the NT—Dr. Gordon gives us a RULE OF THUMB—for how to TRANSLATE—this phrase. He says— *“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.”* And then Gordon goes on to say—that—if such a rule is followed here—it will be CONSISTENT with BROADER NT—TEACHING. He says, *“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 support of Gordon's case listen ---to how PERVASIVE---THIS THEME---OF ---- MINISTRY OF THE WORD—through SPECIAL OFFICE TEACHERS---is in the NEW TESTAMENT. GORDON---lists----In six different ways the NT writings speak of this --- specific ---task of ministering the Word of God:

=1=there are-- *Passages that refer-- directly to NT teachers---who are to--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 4:14-15: "Do not neglect the gift that is in you. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them. "

=2= *Passages that indicate the NT church recognized TEACHING was a distinct task and office---THROUGH THE RITE & CEREMONY OF ORDINATION*

(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.

(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

(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 4:1FF---WHERE PAUL CHARGES TIMOTHY-----saying---: "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.

=5= *Passages where special HONOR is assigned to those who fulfill TEACHING*

*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."

AND FINALLY...

=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."

THESE PASSAGES MAKE IT CLEAR---that TEACHING—is a specific task—a specific ministry---given to specific people who hold the SPECIFIC office of teacher. By official title, by a distinguishing rite, by particular honor, by particular qualifications, by being judged more strictly, ==it is established—that TEACHING IN THE CHURCH—IS NOT A GENERAL OFFICE FUNCTION OR CALLING. TEACHING IN THE CHURCH—is not a gift given to all ---or a CALL---which all believers have AN OPEN INVITATION TO. Paul says—Christ GAVE---PASTOR-TEACHERS---for the SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF -- -MINISTERING THE WORD and if a person is not given that gift, is not given that call, and is not set apart and ordained for that office and function and purpose, HE IS NOT TO TEACH IN THE CHURCH!

In view of this broad stream of evidence, I WONDER—how many---so-called TEACHERS—that would ELIMINATE in the church. YOU SEE, along with the rise to dominance of the EQUIPPING MINISTRY translation and philosophy, has been the RISE—of a FLOOD OF TEACHERS---and BIBLE STUDIES—which have NO AUTHORIZATION IN SCRIPTURE AT ALL. We have A HOST OF STUDIES—and TEACHERS---who have NO CALL—no ORDINATION—and NO AUTHORITY to teach. We have SUNDAY SCHOOLS—staffed with TEACHERS—who have NO CALL, no ordination, and no authority. Churches have all kinds of DESIGNER BIBLE STUDY GROUPS: women’s studies—men’s studies—teen studies—30-something studies—baby boomer studies--senior studies. There all kinds of BIBLE STUDIES AND STUDY GROUPS---taking place –ALL OVER THE CHURCH—which have absolutely NO WARRANT—and NO AUTHORITY---and NO CALLING from GOD AT ALL

And as I say that ---I MEAN---this is going on IN –THE---REFORMED & PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH! I expect---evangelicals---to have all this stuff--but-NOT THE REFORMED. BUT YOU SEE----In the Reformed & Presbyterian churches--- We have lost our understanding of the TEACHING office—and the WARRANT & AUTHORITY of teaching---that is STAMPED PLAINLY—across the NT—and confessed in our CATECHISMS AND DOCTRINAL STANDARDS. We have gone the WAY OF---- BROAD EVANGELICALISM---and no one seems to CARE—or --- PROTEST and yet-- none of it is BIBLICAL –or justified.

People of God –what it means to TRULY CONFESS –*SOLA SCRIPTURA*—is that in the church of Jesus Christ--everything we do---and everything we teach—must be GROUNDED IN GOD’S WORD-or-----WE DON’T DO IT OR BELIEVE IT. That is what SOLA SCRIPTURA MEANS---and in this area—and so many other areas in worship and church life—the REFORMED---seem to JUST USE—sola Scriptura—as a SLOGAN-and ---then do WHATEVER---they find pleasing to the most amount of

people. But here—at ALL SAINTS---we better not go that direction –we MUST---UNITE--our PROFESSION & OUR PRACTICE. And by the way—AS WE DO THAT—we will be challenged, we will be criticized,—and we will be---VILLAINIZED-and portrayed--as – CRAZY—uptight—and legalistic. All that will happen—*simply because*---WE INSIST—on doing –NOTHING MORE—or LESS—than what SCRIPTURE COMMANDS AND TEACHES.

Now—that brings us to the 3rd and final prepositional phrase, “for the BUILDING UP of the body of Christ.” THE word here is OIKODOME---which is a construction term---and means “BUILD UP.” Here it is natural for us to reach back in our thinking to 2:20—where we are told that the saints are being BUILT UP---ON THE FOUNDATION—of the apostles and prophets—into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. So –that is what is in view—this TEMPLE—comprised of the saints.

What Paul says here—is that the Pastor-teachers—are the INSTRUMENTS---God uses to BUILD THE SAINTS UP INTO THIS DWELLING PLACE. Commenting on this last prepositional phrase Calvin says: *He could not exalt more highly the ministry of the Word, than by attributing to it this effect. For what higher work can there be than to build up the church that it may reach its perfection?*

Well—LET’S ---move now to make some applications of this verse to the church

## II. APPLICATIONS

A. The equipping ministry interpretation and philosophy of ministry is unbiblical and not-Reformed

We have gone to the Scriptures and we have examined grammar, meaning of words, context,—and parallel passages of Scripture. The result of this examination has enabled us to conclude that—EPHESIANS 4:12—DOES NOT TEACH—the popular-every member ministry—equipping ministry—CLERGY-HOOD OF BELIEVERS—interpretation –so widely held and believed in the church today. It is SIMPLY ---NOT---IN THE TEXT—it is not FOUNDED upon God’s word.

In view of that---IT OUGHT to be a source of great CONCERN---for us as Reformed people, that the classic Reformed view of this passage and the classic Reformed view of the MINISTRY is being----REJECTED---today in broader REFORMED EVANGELICALISM---and is being REPLACED with what is new—and trendy. It should not happen—that students are sent to LEADING Reformed SEMINARIES and are taught EVANGELICAL philosophies of ministry. It should not happen that REFORMED STUDY Bibles---teach evangelical views of ministry. It should not happen –that LEADING REFORMED COMMENTATORS—like William Hendriksen----teach this novel and UNBIBLICAL VIEW. It SHOULD NOT HAPPEN—that the *vast majority* of Bible-

believing—conservative—confessionally --REFORMED & PRESBYTERIAN churches--TEACH & IMPLIMENT—a PHILOSOPHY of MINISTRY WHICH is—CONTRARY TO THEIR HISTORY & THEOLOGY & AND CONFESSIONS and that their philosophy of ministry—is IDENTICAL –to one THAT is TAUGHT-- ON TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK. Something is FOUL IN DENMARK—when ---we as Reformed people are TRADING—our Biblical and theological and confessional BIRTHRIGHT—for a MESS of UNBIBLICAL –superficial---evangelical POTTAGE.

People of God—we must-beware of theological fads---and---group think and the way we protect ourselves from that—is by CAREFUL ANALYSIS of Scripture—and by analyzing our positions for THEOLOGICAL COHERENCE—and test it by its application in the history of the church.

That brings us next to...

B. Christ has *ordained that TEACHING* is to be performed through the ORDAINED OFFICERS

We live in a day and age in the CHURCH—where it is full of self-appointed teachers. It is reminiscent of Jeremiah 23:21—which says—“THEY RUN—but I have not sent them.” It was true then –and it is true now.

The way we AVOID that happening---is by examining Scripture teaching about WHO—is sent to TEACH—IN THE CHURCH. ELDERS--are called to TEACH—in the church—and NO ONE ELSE. Ruling elders are to teach—and TEACHING ELDERS—are to teach—AND—NO ONE ELSE. We find no BIBLICAL BASIS---FOR ANYONE ELSE---teaching in the church.

So a simple way to DETERMINE—whether someone is called to teach in the church is to ask, “have they been called?”— “have they been examined?” “have they been elected?” “have they been ordained and installed to teach in the church?” If a person does not meet that THRESHOLD—they are not called to TEACH in the church.

THAT DOES NOT MEAN—a person cannot teach in a PRIVATE SETTING. We have Biblical examples of this:

-HUSBANDS—are explicitly commanded to TEACH THEIR WIVES AT HOME

-fathers and mothers are to TEACH THEIR CHILDREN at home

-BELIEVERS---are to exhort –admonish and teach one another---in private—settings  
But—when it comes the CHURCH—and its OFFICIAL MINISTRY—the BIBLE DRAWS A CLEAR LINE

Someone hearing this may say, "WHY DOES THIS MATTER?" THE ANSWER IS: the Mediatorial kingship of Jesus Christ. Christ and Christ alone---has AUTHORITY—to ESTABLISH—the order and constitution of the church and he does that THROUGH HIS WORD. To GO AGAINST that order is a violation of the word of Christ, it is DISOBEDIENCE to the RULE of Christ, and is itself the spirit of antichrist (anti --- meaning-in the stead of Christ). The spirit of antichrist---is *substituting man's ideas* and opinions for Christs. THE ESSENCE OF THE HERESY OF ROME—is that they forsake the word of Christ—and PUT MEN---in the place of Christ---BY DOING—what is NOT AUTHORIZED BY THE WORD OF GOD. What we should understand is that---this whole EQUIPPING MINISTRY—every member ministry—clergy-hood of BELIEVERS—philosophy of ministry REPRESENTS—nothing else---but A REJECTION ---of---Christ's sovereign—kingly supremacy—over the church—and MEDIATED THROGUH HIS WORD.

Symingtons---comments here on the RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL AUTHORITY to his church are very relevant:

*though independent of man, the church is under subjection to Christ. He is the Head of the body, the church. The doctrines which it is the duty of the church to believe and profess are such as he taught. The ordinances to be observed are his institutions. The laws to be obeyed are his laws. The matter of faith; the form of worship; the line of conduct, are alike sanctioned by his authority.*

And we know Symingtons remarks apply here—because when we speak about philosophy and practice of ministry---we are dealing with a matter which-SCRIPTURE—so plainly teaches about. Christ INSTITUTED the offices of ministry—and Christ gives men to fill the offices of ministry—and the church –is OBLIGATED to show submission to Christ—by embracing and employing that philosophy of ministry. And that is why the Reformed and Presbyterian—have held so FIRMLY to the CLASSIC and exegetically correct view of ministry taught by Paul here in Ephesians 4:12. Let me just read to you---one example of this---from the history of the Reformed and Presbyterian church—to support my claim. The following example is taken from-the 19th century TESTIMONY of the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Church---and it very succinctly states the CLASSIC REFORMED & PRESBYTERIAN VIEW:

*Presbyterians find a distinction between rulers and the ruled 1Th 5:13; Heb 13:7,17; they find the work of ruling connected with the elders; they find in the regular organization of the church a plurality of elders Acts 14:23; Tit 1:5; they find a distinction between elders who only rule, and those who labor in word and doctrine*



THERE YOU HAVE IT—the Reformed & Presbyterians saw—Christ’s exercise of KINGSHIP applied specifically and directly to the church’s constitution and establishment and role of ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICES.

NOW--In view of such OBVIOUS BIBLICAL WARRANT—for the classic –biblical philosophy of ministry—we ought to ask---WHY ---has this EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY view become so PREVALENT? AT Lincoln-in his very learned commentary on the book of Ephesians---offers an educated guess---which I concur with when he says, *“it is 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.”* And in saying that---Lincoln’s views are not far from statements made by leading commentators who advocate the equipping ministry view. One such commentator, Harold Hoehner, in defending his exegesis of the equipping ministry view----adds, *“this interpretation eliminates the distinction between clergy and laity, a distinction with little, if any, support in the NT.”*

If you listen carefully to people --- you will find that they will tell you why they hold certain positions and it is very clear---why Hoehner holds this position –and how his bias drives his interpretation, he WANTS NO DISTINCTIONS in the church, he wants no clergy-laity distinction, he wants no official leaders, instead, he just wants a body full of SERVANTS, as he would put it, people just DOING, who have official titles or official office. But of course—as we have seen---SUCH A VIEW---CANNOT HOLD UP TO SCRIPTURE

Next, take note that....

C. Christ has ordained the preaching/teaching ministry—for the SANCTIFICATION and perfection of his church

We will examine this connection more thoroughly next week---but here we can state what we know the CATECHISM TEACHES. THE ---Westminster Shorter Catechism teaches us how Christ COMMUNICATES sanctifying grace to his people. Question 88 asks, “What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?” and the answer is “The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.” The answer of the Westminster—could not be clearer: Christ communicates his grace through the PREACHED word and sacraments, and that is the regular ordinary way to grow in grace.

It is PRECISELY---this idea of HOW WE RECEIVE—grace—that---the equipping ministry philosophy rejects . It collapses all the distinctions between the various uses of the word for ministry in the Bible—and makes them all MEANS OF GRACE; so that whatever word of encouragement, whatever work produced by love, whatever act or gesture performed out of kindness, is a communication of Christ's grace and that means then—almost ANYTHING---can be turned into a MEANS OF GRACE.

WE ought to be able to see—that this view is false—and exceeds the superstition of Rome by leaps and bounds—since Rome at least numbers and limits the means of grace to 7---while evangelical protestants today—cannot conceive of ANY LIMITATION on the number of these---so-called means grace.

But—we must be CLEAR—about---why ---SPECIAL OFFICE MINISTRY—is de-emphasized and that is because —the preaching of the word and the sacraments are thought to be not OVERLY IMPORTANT rather they are just a couple of ways among a limitless multitude of means----TO EXPERIENCE THE GRACE OF CHRIST. And the TRULY SAD-thing-is to see what HAPPENS-SPIRITUALLY—when this model is CONSISTENTLY FOLLOWED: it leads to the DEFORMATION OF THE CHURCH. A SURVEY---was conducted—a few years back---BY ---WILLOW CREEK CHURCH—one church –which has thoroughly committed itself over the past 30 years to the EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY MODEL---and what it found was:

...increasing levels of participation in these sets of activities [church programs] does NOT predict whether someone's becoming more of a disciple of Christ.

It does NOT predict whether they love God more or they love people more.

And digging deeper into the study—we find this:

-a quarter of those who described themselves as "close to Christ" and "Christ-centered" reported that they were spiritually "stalled" or "dissatisfied" with the role of the church in their spiritual growth.

&

Even more alarming: About a quarter of the "stalled" segment and 63 percent of the "dissatisfied" segment contemplated leaving the church

See that??---every member ministry---philosophy of ministry—LEADS TO SPIRITUAL DEFORMATION—and endangers the souls of Christians. And the reason why that is true—is because---IT IS UNBIBLICAL.

NO STUDY—however was needed—to find out the results which Willow Creek found—all ---one has to do –is listen to Calvin's comments on this passage:

They therefore are insane, who neglecting this means hope to be perfect in Christ, as is the case with fanatics, who pretend to secret revelations of the Spirit; and the proud, who content themselves with the private reading of the Scripture, and imagine they do not need the ministry of the church." If Christ has appointed the ministry for the edification of his body, it is in vain to expect that end to be accomplished in any other way

People of God—if we truly want to be BUILT UP as individuals in the grace of Christ— if we want our church to be built up and made firm and strong in Christ—and if we want to be used to reach the world for Christ, we don't need a WHOLE NEW CONCEPT OF MINISTRY, what we need---is Paul's concept of MINISTRY, which in turn is Christ's ORDAINED CONCEPT OF MINISTRY: Christ gives pastor-teachers—for the joining/ constituting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. IF WE EMPLOY THAT PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY—we have every reason to be CONFIDENT—our King Jesus Christ—will HONOR what he has ordained- AMEN