

1. INTRODUCTION:

God in His Wisdom has placed humanity as custodians of Creation, and Jesus has appointed His Church as custodians in accomplishing His will in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. The church has been called into unity in love, though unfortunately through the years it has struggled with a number of theological issues that have been very divisive, often fomenting ideological conflicts and confusion within congregations and between denominations. These conflicts have often wrecked the “Unity in Love” called for by Christ to be the normative expression of faith within the Christian community. Pertaining to this paper, there are three specific articles that address areas of theological conflict through the ages that have been persistent in undermining unity in the Church: 1) Men and Women as leaders in the Church – the Egalitarian versus Complementarian debate, 2) Within the area of Spiritual Giftedness – the Cessationist versus Continualist debate, and 3) Within the area of Church Ministry Leadership Model – the Shepherding versus Chief Executive Officer debate. The purpose of this paper is to present a brief discussion of these three “Ecclesiastical Theological”¹ issues especially in the context of providing thought development in the church to promote understanding of the issues and hopefully promote dialogue and unity. For more on the basics of theology, please see this article on the AD website - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.6%20-%20Basic%20Doctrine%20&%20Theology.pdf> .

2. MEN AND WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP – EGLITARIAN OR COMPLEMENTARIAN AND THE QUESTION OF HEADSHIP:

In terms of a general perspective, Scripture is a great gift and provides God’s authoritative revelation of Truth. As such, “The best way to interpret Scripture is with the Scripture itself.”² God shows through Creation a love for order, symbiotic interdependence, and functional interrelatedness; so we should not be surprised to find such elements in social organization. The Bible tends to demonstrate patriarchal leadership, which was certainly the cultural norm in the ancient Near-East. In modern Western Culture, the norm is more egalitarian. The question is whether the Bible has anything to say of the appropriate role with regard to men and women’s leadership within the church. Too often the debate within the church enforces a parochial-patriarchal view of male dominance, rather than a view of men and women created equal but differently purposed and gifted. Personally, I believe there is a need for a more balanced male-female perspective in leadership. The purpose of this short article is to explore what Scripture reveals as to the role of the sexes, and how it may pertain in the context of church leadership.

There are many examples of women in leadership roles in Scripture including Miriam who was Moses and Aaron’s sister, Deborah in her role as Prophetess and Judge (Judges 4:4-10), and Priscilla along with her husband Aquila who together led a home church with Apollos (Acts 18:26) among many others. The Biblical question regarding female leadership is not about their capability, but rather its appropriateness within the cultural norms of the time, or is it a mandate for all time regardless of culture

¹ Theology of the Church

² “Are Israel and the Church the Same thing?”, article from [GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org)

change? Modern Christian leaders refer to this theological question as the “Headship debate” stemming from Ephesians 5:22-30 where husbands are “the head of their wife.” Noted author Sarah Sumner frames the problem well when she observes, “Broadly speaking, there is a contest going on between two definitions for this term translated as “head.” One definition says that head means authority, and the other says that head means source or fountainhead of sustenance. Complementarians usually argue for the former, egalitarians for the latter.”³ Robert Saucy has effectively argued that the Biblical position presented by Paul is one of women being “order under” or “subordinate” in the relationship to men. He quotes an assessment offered by Clark Pinnock, that the “plainest and simplest and therefore best interpretation of [Pauline texts especially 1 Tim 2:12] leads to some form... of hierarchicalism.”⁴ Saucy goes on to assert that, “Scripture reveals a significant ministry of women among God’s people, especially in the New Testament Church.” He explains that the prohibition of women teaching men in the Pastoral Epistles is predicated on the interpretation of the word “teach” (*hypotasso*) as not merely a matter of imparting knowledge, wisdom and skills, but pertains to the authoritative instruction of how to live one’s life before God. The former being an office that women can clearly perform, the latter being a broad discipling responsibility that Scripture reserves for the male elders. However, it is still unclear if this distinction means male leadership is culturally dictated by the times or Biblically mandated for all times.

Zondervan’s New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words offers the following insight based on the translation of the Greek word *Kephale* translated as “head.” The article explains that:

“The New Testament pictures the church as a living organism, a body of which Jesus is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10,19). A review of these passages suggests that Christ’s headship emphasizes His role as sustainer, protector, organizing principle, and source of the church’s life. The passages emphasize Jesus’ exalted position so that we may have complete confidence in Him. We respond to Him because He is Lord and the only one with wisdom and motive to direct us into God’s perfect will. It is very critical here not to read into this passage hierarchical notions. Instead, it would appear that ‘head’ is used in its well-established sense of source and nourisher of life. Rather than demand from the church, Christ “gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). His purpose is not to rob the church of her identity but to help her achieve her full potential. The husband imitates Christ by loving his wife, he ‘feeds and cares for’ her (again in the sense of head as source and nourisher), ‘just as Christ does the church’ (v. 29).”

It would seem apparent from the context that this passage supports the “fountainhead” view of “hypotasso” however, both leadership and authority may also be inferred. The Complementarian view is easily understood in this passage. However, the Egalitarian view that women and men are personally and functionally equal and thereby interchangeably able to perform any role they are trained and gifted for as authoritative leaders within the church, is not necessarily dismissed. It is certain that the Egalitarian view is a position that would be more in keeping with western culture. However, in the parochial and patriarchal eastern cultures, this perspective is not well supported, and this egalitarian interpretation would be met

³ Sumner, Sarah; Men and Women in the Church. Intersivarsity Press, 2003. Page 144.

⁴ Saucy, Robert; article on “Women’s Prohibition to Teach Men: an Investigation into its Meaning and Contemporary Application.”

with resistance. Hence, the eastern cultural convention better supports more of a Complementarian approach than an Egalitarian approach. The question is still unsettled as to whether this notion of head has a Biblical mandate [the standard for all people for all time] or merely a cultural preference [the standard is flexible dependent upon cultural sensitivities and preferences change].

Jesus and Paul both disciplined men, which made sense in that the Old Testament Discipleship relationship meant being with your master 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Only Jesus is shown discipling a woman in Luke 10-38-39 where Mary is sitting at Jesus feet as He taught. There is no evidence that women traveled with Jesus or Paul on the road, but there is evidence that Jesus and Paul stayed with their disciples at women's homes. Further, elder leadership in the Jewish community as well as the early church was male, and from this the tradition emerged that elders in the church were exclusively male, whereas deacons were male and female.

One thing seems to be clear in Creation as well as in Scripture, is that God prefers order and consistency over chaos and inconsistency. In understanding God's preference for order as it applies to ministry leadership, we can identify different roles:

- a. Two categories of spiritual leadership – apostles and prophets.
- b. Five categories of ministry – prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, and leadership.
- c. Two categories of operational officers within the church – elders (including pastors, bishops), and deacons.

Since Biblical times, women have exercised important visible roles as apostles, prophets and teachers [Word ministry], as well as the various aspects as ministers to the body [service ministry]. Relative to the Complementarian or Egalitarian debate, there is little evidence that women are unilaterally disqualified or excluded from the same orders of gifting as men. However, it does seem clear that how their gifting plays out in church office and practice is subject to a general theological preference for a male hierarchical convention. The “old school” approach of relegating women to teaching only other women and children may relieve the tension in some churches with theological conventions that are more conservative, but to press this notion as a Biblical mandate that women cannot or should not have a more visible leadership role in preference to a more subordinate leadership role is not necessarily accurate.

Authors Gregory Boyd and Paul Eddy state, “we know from Scripture that men and women are created equal in the image of God (Gen 1:27), meaning that men and women have equal dignity, worth, and responsibility before God.... This is not to say that men and women have identical functions according to Scripture. They were made as equals to complement the other.... Man was assigned the leadership role by God in Eden, and woman was created as an appropriate helper-partner for man.... The teaching that men are to be the spiritual leaders in their family is reiterated by Paul on a number of occasions.”⁵ In Galatians Paul affirms the equality of all in Christ, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.”⁶ The “neither male nor female” declaration is very

⁵ Boyd, Gregory; Eddy, Paul; *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology*; Baker Academic, 2002, page 227.

⁶ Galatians 3:28-29, NASB

clear and interesting, and would seem to support a more egalitarian view in society, but not necessarily leadership.

Another important factor to consider is the modern Christian disposition of subordinate hierarchy as a reflection of the Reality that within the Trinity the Father, Spirit, and Jesus are each equally God. Yet within the Trinity, there is relational subordination of Jesus and Spirit to the Father. Subordination plays out in the Church as well, where pastors and elders in particular are subordinate to Jesus, and the ministering body of the church are subordinate to the pastor and elders. Subordination further plays out within the family, where men are subordinate to God, women are subordinate to their husbands, and children are subordinate to their parents (Ephesians 5:21-24). The general rule within the Trinity is that the Three act in perfect harmony in complementary roles, which sets the stage for the family as well as the Church. Further, there is hierarchy within the socio-political order where people are instructed to submit to the rulers placed over them (Romans 13:1; Hebrews 13:17). In the Spiritual realm, God complains about His people's lack of subordination to Him and His order (Psalm 81:11; Hebrews 12:19). Subordinate certainly does not mean subservient inequality, and it does mean complementary.

The general rule of love in the church expects all members being equal yet mutually submissive to one another under the prescription of servant leadership promoting unity in love as the order modeled by Christ. Boyd and Eddy suggest, "There is a diversity of opinion about this matter [of the role of women in church], where many Complementarians interpret the New Testament prohibitions regarding women in leadership to mean only that women should not [normally] function as the top spiritual leader and teacher of a congregation."⁷ While the argument of Egalitarian versus Complementarian is not necessarily clearly defined as a Scriptural mandate, it is clear that in Biblical times it was their religious and social-cultural convention that elders were male. Hermeneutically, the matter is inconclusive and left open as to whether this convention is a fixed mandate for all time, or a social-cultural convention for that era subject to change over time.

In concluding thoughts of this short article, I think it's clear that humanity as men and women instead of being "equal *or* complementary", are both "equal *and* complementary." It is not an either/or question, but a both/and statement. We are equal *and* complementary. Marriage in such a relationship is a shared transformational experience of mutual dependence and submission in Christ to one another... it is an example of shared servant leadership. [See this AD article on the transformational relationship of marriage - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Maturity/SF%202.3%20-%20Marriage%20and%20Transformation.pdf>] Furthermore, the same should apply for relationships of brothers and sisters within the Church – it is a shared transformational experience of mutual dependence and submission to Jesus Christ and each other. Because it is a *both/and* rather than an *either/or* relationship, I think it important that men and women are involved in all aspects of leadership because they provide a necessary perspective that leads toward a more balanced leadership. Men who insist to lead without this balance miss a valuable God given component, and they may miss the transformational relationship or servant leadership components as well. Though the convention seems to support males at

⁷ Boyd, Eddy; page 230.

the highest leadership role of senior pastor and elder, it is my opinion that men and women have not consistently exercised their servant leadership roles on the order exhibited by Jesus who poured out His life on behalf of humanity and the Church. I believe as a result of our failure to live as servant-leaders, that much personal identity confusion has ensued within the Church, within the family, and within the society in which we live. My personal opinion on this matter is that women may hold any office or position that a man may hold according to their gifting, talent, and ability. While I see that God has a clear preference for order in Creation and Community, I see no clear mandate restricting women in leadership in Scripture.

Thus, the criteria for leadership should be based upon several character facets:

- a. All leaders should be submitted to Jesus who is the “Fountainhead” of the Church, the source of sustenance.
- b. Personal ego and pride should not occur in leadership, and humble servant leadership should be the norm.
- c. All decisions on leadership should promote unity within the church.
- d. To restore passion, power, and purpose within the institutions of Church, family and society... Godly men and women need to submit to God and to each other in a selfless, collaborative, mutually encouraging, and a sacrificially loving manner.

Finally, God does not have second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God, nor does He force a one-size-fits-all approach to Grace or Gifts for individuals or the communities in which they live. In His Grace, He allows ample room for choice of how we serve Him and each other based on the Spirit gifting each has received. The decision to follow either an egalitarian or complementarian approach to leadership probably should be more of a both/and approach... we are equal, and we are complementary. Also, God is always inviting us into deeper commitment with Him and with each other, and a one size leadership plan doesn't necessarily fit all individuals or their communities. What is appropriate in one place, may not be appropriate in another. Some communities may be better served with a leadership approach that is more complementarian or egalitarian, but whatever the approach submission in love is a necessary foundation.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE CHURCH:

The discussion of the coming, nature, and continuance of the Spirit and the Spiritual Gifts He brings is no less debated than the appropriate role of women in ministry, and unfortunately no less divisive within the Christian community. Rather than starting on what we disagree with, it makes sense to begin with what Evangelicals hold in common regarding the gifts of the Spirit. Theologians Boyd and Eddy suggest,

“All Evangelicals believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the world. All believe the Holy Spirit supremely works in human hearts to bring people to the point of faith in Christ. All believe the Holy Spirit gives certain gifts to people to carry out ministry, such as teaching, preaching, administration, and hospitality. And all agree that God can and does at times miraculously intervene in the affairs of people.”⁸

Theologian Millard Erickson points out that,

⁸ Boyd, Eddy; page 213.

“Because the Holy Spirit is not systematically described in Scripture, the doctrine of the third Person of the Trinity has been controversial.” He goes on to say that the, “Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal [and spiritually vital] to the individual Believer; that we who live in the period [the Church age] in which the Holy Spirit’s work is more prominent than that of the other members of the Trinity.”⁹

For a better understanding of the matter, we need to see what the Scripture has to say.

The gifts of the Spirit are a supernatural outward result of His Indwelling Presence in the life of a believer. In Galatians Paul gives us a list of the Spirit’s evidence, which he calls the fruit of the Spirit; “But the fruit of the Spirit is 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) goodness, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, 9) self-control; against such things there is no law.”¹⁰ The presence of this fruit forms a picture of what a mature Christian looks like. First and foremost, the evidence of the presence of the Spirit is a transformed life, with new priorities that manifest character change. In 1st Corinthians Paul discusses Spiritual gifts in context with the Christian life:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the 1) word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the 2) word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another 3) faith by the same Spirit, and to another 4) gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the 5) effecting of miracles, and to another 6) prophecy, and to another the 7) distinguishing of spirits, to another 8) various kinds of tongues, and 9) to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”¹¹

In this text Paul states that the evidence of the Spirit is manifest in transformational character change in the life of the believer in the form of Spiritual Gifts... that is, gifts Supernaturally Spiritually imparted to individuals for the benefit of the Church. It is clear in this passage that these gifts include two categories: 1) first and foremost inward character transformation, and 2) outward service oriented first to the Body, and second to the community at large. It is also clear in this text the call for a functional unity in members of the Church as “One Body” – or more appropriately as “one Organism.” This list also presents a hierarchical order of the gifts from greatest to least, with the clear impetus that edifying the Church is the primary purpose for the gifts. The question here is not that gifts are given to individuals by God, for that fact is incontrovertible in Scripture. The Bible demonstrates that the Spirit works through miraculous events, as like those which occurred through Jesus and His Disciples. Even the 72 who were sent out by

⁹ Erickson, Millard J.; Christian Theology. Baker Academic, 1998. Page 861-863.

¹⁰ Galatians 5:22-23

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, NASB

Jesus (Luke 10:1-10) performed miracles as documented in Scripture. In the succeeding years after the Resurrection of Jesus in the Church age, many additional miracles have been verified and many more claimed. The question for us is which if any of these Spiritual or “Charismatic” gifts are still viable in the Church today.

The “Cessationist”¹² view would argue that the miraculous gifts of “signs and wonders” ceased during the early church era; that these gifts were given to call attention to the dawning of the Gospel Kingdom of God on earth and ceased with the Church’s firm establishment. The “Continuationist” view would argue that since the Spirit is at work in each believer, that all supernatural gifts are still in play and the Spirit is working His life into and out of each believer. In reviewing Church history, “It is an indisputable historical fact that the exercise of charismatic gifts significantly decreased shortly after the first century and eventually ceased altogether in the early Church.”¹³ Most Christians would maintain that God’s Sovereignty enables Him to work as He pleases in His Kingdom and in the Church, and God certainly can, has in the past, and will continue to occasionally suspend the laws of nature to intervene in creation in a miraculous manner. Where there is occasionally evidence of such supernatural miracles in the developed Western World, it is far more prevalent in the developing world cultures where Christian evangelism remains vitally progressing. The connection of faith and the occurrence of miraculous events are directly connected in Scripture... Mark 6:5-6 states – “He [Jesus] could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And He was amazed at their lack of faith.” One of the claims of the Continuationist camp is that the institutional church has deadened faith and lowered expectations of God’s continued supernatural action. In essence, the lack of the Spirit’s supernatural activity is an outcome of either 1) their lack of faith (Mark 6:5-6) or 2) their weak faith (Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8, 17:20; Luke 12:28).

While the excitement and desire for supernatural miracles often causes some confusion among believers, it may even decrease the effective witness of the Church that seeks the miraculous over transformational life and character change in believers. However, I think it is wise to keep an open-minded approach before we state what God can or cannot do. Paul says unequivocally that some gifts will cease when the “perfect comes” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). The word translated as “perfect” is often thought to mean the Parousia when Christ instills the perfected new age... meaning the miraculous will continue until then. However, the word can also be translated to mean “brought to its end, finished; perfect; full grown,

¹² Wikipedia the Online Dictionary states – “In Christian theology, Cessationism is the view that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophetic utterances and faith healing, ceased being practiced early in Christian Church history. Cessationists generally believe that the miraculous gifts were provided only for the foundation of the Christian Church, during the time between the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, c. 33 AD, as described in the 2nd Chapter of Acts, and the fulfillment of God’s purposes in history, usually identified as either the completion of the last book of the New Testament (Book of Revelation), or the death of John the Apostle, the last of the Twelve Apostles. The counterpart to Cessationism is Continuationism, which teaches that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit have remained available for use by the church ever since Pentecost. Disputes over Cessationism versus Continuationism have since led to denominational schisms within the Church.

¹³ Boyd and Eddy, page 221.

and mature.” This context suggests a mature adult grown to full moral and mental character. Boyd and Eddy state, “Some argue that the complete [perfect] refers to the second coming of Jesus. But nowhere else does Paul use this term this way. The contrast is rather between the partial revelation the Corinthians had and the complete revelation that was coming in the New Testament.”¹⁴ Thus, some would argue that the “testimony of Scripture” may have supplanted the “testimony of miracles.” Again, I would say that as created beings we are unwise and maybe even foolish to insist what our Sovereign God can or cannot do. I maintain that God can do anything which is not in conflict with His Nature.

In my opinion, the more important matter is to focus on the gifting of the Spirit that we know endures. There is no question that the gifts of the Spirit includes the ministry gifting’s of “1) conviction, 2) penitence, 3) revelation, 4) illumination, and 5) discernment.” However, “Gifts of Grace” are another aspect of the ongoing Spiritual Gifts in the context of the Church to edify and equip God’s people for ministry. These “Gifts of Grace” include 1) prophecy, 2) serving, 3) teaching, 4) exhortation, 5) giving, and 6) leadership (Romans 12:6-8). Prophecy in the New Testament is seen as preaching and teaching God’s Word... this is “Word Ministry” where the Spirit renders God’s truth alive to individuals in each succeeding generation in the church age. Serving refers to people being supernaturally empowered to meet the needs of others in the Church body. Serving pertains first within the Church, and secondly as outreach into the community in strategic communication of the Gospel. Teaching is Word Ministry that doesn’t necessarily include preaching; this is the work of grounding and training disciples. Exhortation is the gift of encouragement in observing the Spirit’s action in people’s lives and speaking into their lives to move them along in their spiritual growth, which is a critical part of shepherding. Giving is the grateful love offering of the redeemed who gladly provide the material means to further the Gospel and the inward and outward expansion of the Kingdom of God. Leadership is the gifting of certain individuals to organize and lead God’s people. Each of these “gifting’s” are supernaturally distributed to individuals in addition to their natural giftedness. Evidence of the Spirit’s Presence in people’s lives and in the community of faith necessarily includes the demonstration of these gifting’s as a supernatural event.

Spiritual disciplines have been rediscovered recently with the rise of Post-modern thought, and I find this to be a very healthy component of Spiritual growth. Spiritual Formation is forming the heart of Christ within believers. Biblical Literacy is forming the mind of Christ within believers. Together, these are foundational components of Authentic Discipleship. Richard Foster explains the exercise of Spiritual disciplines in his book The Celebration of Disciplines. I especially appreciate his well-developed organizational structure of 1) the “inward disciplines” (meditation, prayer, fasting, study), 2) the “outward disciplines” (simplicity, solitude, submission, service), and 3) the “corporate disciplines” (confession, worship, guidance, celebration). What emerges is a holistic practice of Spirit encounter and focused Spiritual growth, where God’s Character and the believer’s submissive dependence are displayed. In addition to convicting the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness, Erickson observes ten activities of the Spirit in leading people to truth (John 14:26) including 1) teaching, 2) regenerating, 3) searching,

¹⁴ Boyd and Eddy, page 221.

4) speaking, 5) interceding, 6) commanding, 7) testifying, 8) guiding, 9) illuminating, and 10) revealing.¹⁵ In my opinion, all of these gifts, disciplines and activities of the Spirit are definitely in play for the Church age. As Christ commanded, we continue to pray in faith for healings and miracles and this testifies that we know God is able to meet these needs. If God no longer miraculously intervened in such manifestations of the Spirit as healings, wouldn't it make more sense just to pray for a quick and painless demise that the afflicted may enter eternity? The fact that we continue to pray for the miraculous in essence testifies that we know in the Spirit that God can and often does intervene.

The only Spiritual gifting I would argue that has ceased has to do with new authoritative revelation for the Church. No new Scripture may be written, as God has completed "Special Revelation" with the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The realm of "Prophetic Word Ministry" is in the supernatural gifting of understanding and application of the Scripture where Godly men and women may provide new insights through the Spirit's illumination. Thus, the area of "Apostolic Witness" meaning producing new Authoritative Revelation for the church has ceased. The only authority that holds true is the witness of the Bible applied through the revelation and illumination of the Spirit. While miracles I believe still occur, the witness of miracles is subordinate to the witness of Scripture. The balance of Spiritual gifting continues for the building up and edifying of the Body. I believe these disciplines and activities invite the faithful into deeper experiences of relational intimacy with God, which is at the heart of Christian discipleship.

The remaining controversy to consider has to do with when the Spirit comes upon the believer, and there are essentially four thoughts in this matter. The first holds that the Spirit indwells a believer at their profession of faith that Jesus is their savior. The second holds that there is a necessary "crisis" event where the professed believer surrenders to the Lordship of Jesus. The third holds that there is a separate "laying on of hands" by a spiritual elder when the Spirit indwells the faithful. The fourth holds that the presence of the indwelling Spirit necessarily manifests in supernatural spiritual giftedness including tongues in the believer. Much confusion has emanated as a result of this controversy, and Christian communities and denominations have separated and contested one another over them. This is a very great sin in light of the unity of faith that Jesus has called us into. From my perspective, God is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach to Grace or faith... people come to faith in differing manners and one, some or all of the four approaches may play out in an individual community. From my perspective, the true test of the Presence of the Spirit is the transformational life that emanates from Him in the character, values, and moral nature of the individual as they become increasingly a clearer reflection of our Lord Jesus. If transformational life is not evident, that is a concern for me as to the state of their spiritual health.

In concluding my thoughts in this short article, life in the Spirit is the promise of the Presence of the Spirit – **John 3:6** says "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." **John 6:63** says "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." **2Corinthians 3:6** says "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not merely of the letter of the Law, but of the Spirit; for the letter alone convicts and brings death, but the Spirit gives life." **Spiritual Life is Grace in motion, it is where the Spirit works the Nature of our Lord Jesus into us and out of us into others.**

¹⁵ Erickson, page 878.

Ultimately, how the Spirit works out transformational life in Christ followers is His responsibility not ours... though we have a role to play in cooperating with His work in us as we invest time and effort in both Biblical Literacy and Spiritual Formation.

4. CHURCH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP MODEL – SHEPHERD OR CEO:

How ministry leadership gets done in the church organization is the last of the three issues being addressed in this paper, and is one of the major complaints I have heard from pastors, lay leaders, and parishioners. Everyone has either had a problem or observed a problem about the churches they have been involved with in regard to their own internal leadership model. In this article, we will use the lower case ‘c’ to discuss the organization of the church – this involves the socio-political and financial structure of doing church services (AKA the ‘Business of doing church’); and we will use an upper case ‘C’ to discuss the organism of the Church – this involves the organic body of believers joined together through the indwelling Spirit (AKA the Church throughout redemptive history). The problem stems from the fact that the organization is a human institution, and as such is part of the fallen structure of human reality. By contrast the Organism is already perfected by the presence of the Spirit, and it is the Organic Bride Christ birthed at Pentecost. The institution allows the corporate congregation to assemble and be ministered to, but the Organism is of ultimate value to Christ because it is eternal. Personally, out of the six churches I have been involved in over the past thirty-five years, I can honestly say only two of them demonstrated effective shepherding-servant leadership. Two of the six were so dysfunctional that church splits resulted with 50% or more of the membership leaving. Further, almost every lay leader and most staff leaders whom I know have had difficult experiences at one time or another with the church organizations they were involved with in leadership mainly because the institution was run as a for-profit corporation rather than a non-profit shepherding ministry. Unfortunately, many church members have given up on the church out of their own personal confusion or despair with the inconsistency or hypocrisy of church leadership. Pastor Dan Kimball summed up this dilemma well with, “people like Jesus, they just don’t like the church.” This is obviously a serious problem that bears careful consideration. As Christian leaders we can and need to do better, and it starts with reframed priorities.

When I was in seminary I heard over and over again that the primary function of the Pastor is to shepherd the church body (the Organism), and the primary function of the corporate church (the organization) is to disciple and train leaders and send them into their own mission field. This however, is not the norm. George Barna in his insightful book Growing True Disciples, demonstrates that most churches in America share the same values as the culture around them. In polling communities Barna found the social culture of the surrounding society had completely infiltrated the Church. In another poll he found only 20% of the resources end up in developing the Organism – 1) In training and discipling, 2) coaching and counseling, and then 3) developing and sending lay leaders into their mission field. In contrast, some 80% of the resources go to the organization – 1) for mortgages or rent of buildings and facilities, 2) for salaries of staff and administration, 3) for media and audio-visual technologies to make the messages taught and preached more dynamic, 4) for training and managing the organization, 5) for insurance and payroll and

other administrative cost to support the organization. Concomitantly, most churches have adopted a “Corporate America” business plan model of ministry embodied by their elders (most of them coming from the business world), with most pastors acting as prescribed CEOs rather than shepherds...further proving how much influence the surrounding culture has on the church.

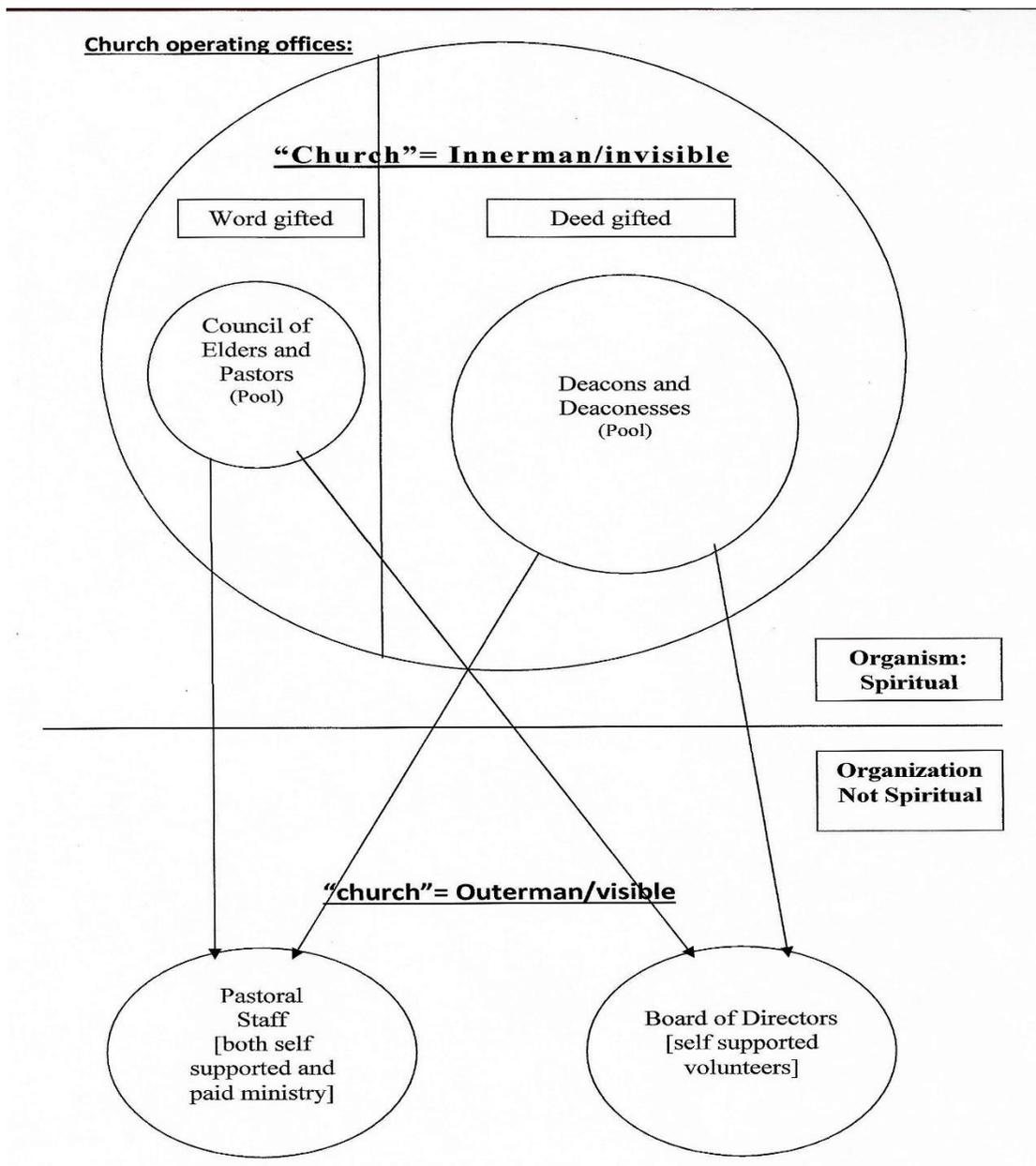
In one of my seminary courses a panel of pastors, missionaries and non-profit leaders was assembled for a question and answer session with graduating seminarians. I remember being shocked when a pastor on the panel related a conversation he had with his elder board. They told him, “Your job is to bring people into the church and see that they give and support our ministry. If you can’t do that we’ll find another who can.” Obviously, there needs to be income to pay the bills, but as we’ve seen in the income split above investing 20% into the Organism and 80% into the organization is a problem. The organization business model tends to be a “top-down” administrative hierarchy that focuses on marketing, staff meetings, corporate gatherings, and various ways to maximize income and ease of connectivity within the staff and community. The shepherding model is more of a “bottom up” servant leadership model, where leaders lead by example as shepherds who personally invest into the life of the individuals within the congregations. Certainly, the corporate aspects of the organization need to be attended to, but I would argue not to the extent most church budgets would demonstrate to the detriment of the Organism.

This matter of misguided priorities is unfortunately begun in pastoral training. Most seminary educations promote values in the *church* that are quantitative – meaning they focus on the quantitative analysis of how many people attend, how much do they give, how many decisions-baptisms are made, how many are involved in small groups, etc. Whereas the real value of the *Church* is qualitative – are people engaged in service and are they growing and maturing in their faith, is the moral-character fruit of the Spirit, are “value change” and “life transformation” evident? What we value determines what we invest in, but most communities don’t know the appropriate questions to ask themselves or their leadership about Christian maturity. Furthermore, while most elders can quote the Biblical moral/ethical requirements for eldership, most of them don’t really know what the Biblical ministry of eldership is all about. The primary skill set for eldership revolves around teaching, discipling, and prayer (Acts 6:1-7). Instead, of focusing on the Biblical mandate for eldership, most who are chosen tend to be successful business people and generous givers who are venerated by the congregation and set apart. Elders and Deacons should be relationally engaged “Spiritual Shepherds” of the congregation spending their time preaching, teaching, and praying; they are relationally separated and spend their time in meetings and pet projects and capital improvement campaigns. Elders should be focused on Word ministry, and Deacons on service ministry, but they should be adept at both. While this may sound like I have a low respect for the Church, the opposite is true. I have a high respect for the Church and her calling as the primary human vehicle for advancing the Kingdom of God on earth (Mat 16:18). Rather, I feel we are not adequately focused on the two-pronged mission of the Church given by Jesus, namely the Great Commandment [loving God and others], and the Great Commission [discipleship and evangelism].

There are two broad groups of Biblical leadership – elders are the servant leaders as bishops and apostles, whereas deacon and deaconess are the servant helpers. Biblical eldership as the Church

LD – 5.4 Church Leadership Issues - Roles of Women, the Spirit, and Church Leadership

leadership are the successors to the Apostles. In the first century, elders ministered along with the Apostles who had oversight of the Church. Acts 6:1-6 reveals the function of the elders to be in preaching, teaching, and prayer. The function of deacons was to assist the elders which included teaching, but focused on meeting the physical and material needs of the congregants. This was intentional so the elders could focus on the spiritual priorities of the Organism. Put another way, we may differentiate between the “Word Gifted” group of elders and the “Deed Gifted” group of deacons. Form follows function and we need a clear view of what the organization serves before we can determine what it looks like. I believe these are the appropriate distinctions that set the table for the rightful priorities of leadership. See diagram below:



The problem with having an imperfect goal of what the Church is and is called to do, is we develop misaligned leadership priorities, and as a result the church has become a reflection of the dominant culture around it rather than playing its rightful role as a Godly-countercultural challenge to the Fallen-worldly view. Noted theologian and pastor D.A. Carson has reflected on the church in America where leaders have not set proper priorities and their congregation is busy seeking wealth and comfort:

“Perhaps what we most urgently need is disciplined, Biblical thinking. We need more Bible colleges and seminaries, more theologians, more lay training, more expository preaching. How else are we going to train a whole generation of Christians to think God’s thoughts after Him, other than by teaching them to think through Scripture, to learn the Scriptures well? The one thing we need in Western Christendom is a deeper knowledge of God. [Without this] God simply becomes the Great Being who, potentially at least, meets our needs and fulfills our aspirations [instead of us filling God’s invitations to minister]. In the Biblical view of things, a deeper knowledge of God brings with it massive improvement in the other areas: purity, integrity, evangelistic effectiveness, better study of Scripture, improved private and corporate worship, and much more. But if we seek these things without passionately desiring a deeper knowledge of God, we are selfishly running after God’s blessings without running after Him.”¹⁶

It is important to understand that our leadership priorities define the leadership objectives, which in turn defines the organization and serves the Organism. Christian servant-leadership is less a “top-down” hierarchy, and more appropriately a “bottom-up” matrix organization. Top down is typical of corporate America with a CEO “org-chart” authoritative identity. Shepherding is leadership by example where disciples learn by watching and emulating the clarion call to serve the sheep. Bottom up organizations reflect the image of a vine or a tree where the roots support the trunk which in turn supports the branches and leaves, which is where the growth and fruit bearing occurs (John 15:5).

This discussion on leadership is not just for the senior pastor, but for the entire Church community. While the council of elders and board of directors tend to get the leadership attention, all members of the Church are ambassadors of the Gospel and ministers of Grace. What we really need is a new model of church organization. Instead of a corporate America view, a better “picture” of what church organization ought to look like is more like this:

The New Testament leadership standard knows nothing of a “board room approach” making all the “day to day” decisions. Instead, the modern church’s constitutional board is such by virtue of its corporate organizational authority rather than its Biblical mandate. While it is understandable that the board of directors should function as the corporate entity charged with the responsibilities of governing the corporate organization, the mantle of ministry leadership is upon the elders and deacons and should be spread upon all who are called [invited by God] and equipped [trained and empowered by the Spirit and the Church], and not merely those who are hired as professional vocational ministry. Pastors are first and foremost shepherds, not businessmen (see Ezekiel 34 for a powerful chastising of the “business of leaders living off the people they should be serving).

¹⁶ Carson, D.A.; *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*. Baker Academic, 2008.

Jesus inaugurated the model of servant leadership with the washing of the disciples' feet, and His life and ministry exemplified self-less and sacrificial servant-leadership... this is the essence of shepherding and the reality behind Isaiah's "Suffering Servant Songs" (Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12) which are a prophetic view of Jesus' Messianic ministry. Jesus passed this servant-leadership model along to His disciples who were the original elders of the early Church. Pastoral servant leadership is by definition shepherding, not CEO leadership (1 Peter 5:1-3). We need to recover what we've lost and redefine and realign our priorities and leadership organization accordingly.

5. CONCLUSION:

In this brief paper we have briefly examined three major theological issues within the church where leadership has been divided and often confused. While Scripture interpretation is often debated, I believe it is clear that God has set some organizational priorities for the Church:

- a. Men and women are both Complementarian and Egalitarian, and we desperately need a better balance of views and perspectives within the Church.
- b. Spiritual giftedness is a result of the presence of the indwelling Spirit, and we need vibrant Spiritual formation for the development of a heart that loves and seeks God, and a balance of Biblical Literacy that encourages a mind that knows God's truth and can communicate it effectively.
- c. Church leadership needs to recapture a shepherding, pastoral, servant leadership model and abandon the CEO approach that is destroying the holistic qualities of the Church.

To this end I suggest that pastors ought to engage in active discipleship training of their communities, including Biblical literacy and Spiritual formation for Elders, Deacons, and those who serve the Body as lay leaders. Realignment efforts need to begin within the church and also be supported from outside the church. To develop outside support, there are many resources including Church Resources Ministries, Authentic Discipleship.org is my own contribution to this need, and there are local Bible Colleges and Seminaries. I suggest seminaries develop specialized non-degree training specifically for elders and deacons. I have gone so far as to offer this training for free, through my website www.authenticdiscipleship.org and it is my belief that the experience of personal transformational discipleship in maturing lay-leaders will help correct and realign misguided notions and establish reasonable parameters for more effective ministry. I am hopeful that a more balanced perspective of head and heart in Biblical literacy and Spiritual formation will have a profound effect upon the Church in fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. It is to this end that my own ministry is being directed.

6. LESSON PLAN:

- a. Introduction – the need for unity in the church.
- b. Women in Leadership:
 - i. Creation and Scripture speak to order and purpose.
 - ii. Creation and Scripture speak to Complementarian roles of men and women.
 - iii. Egalitarian and Complementarian – authority vs. fountainhead.
 - iv. Interpretations of Teach- *hypotasso*.
 - v. God’s preference for order and hierarchy:
 - 1. Spiritual leadership
 - 2. Ministry
 - 3. Operational officers
 - vi. Imago Dei – created in God’s image means equality
 - vii. Trinity – pattern of subordinate hierarchy in unity
 - viii. Submission in love – Servant leadership
- b. Spiritual Giftedness:
 - i. What evangelicals hold in common
 - ii. Spiritual gifts are the result of the presence of the Spirit
 - iii. Spiritual gifts given for the benefit of the Church
 - iv. Cessationist vs. Continuationist
 - 1. Some gifts will cease
 - 2. Interpretation of *teleios*
 - 3. Some gifts remain
 - v. Spiritual disciplines and Spiritual formation
 - 1. What are the disciplines
 - 2. Their role in Spiritual growth
 - 3. Exercises in faith
 - vi. Authority in the Church
 - 1. End of apostolic authoritative revelation
 - 2. Bible is the authority of the Church age
 - 3. Witness of miracles subordinate to the witness of Scripture
- c. Ministry Leadership:
 - i. Problem of leadership
 - ii. Bifurcation of the church – Organism vs. organization
 - iii. Problem of CEO leadership vs. shepherding
 - iv. Biblical leadership:
 - 1. Word vs. deed gifting
 - 2. Innerman vs. outerman
 - v. Leadership priorities

vi. **Shepherding servant leadership**

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