

MetnorNet #39

THE FIVE-FOLD GIFTS GOD PROMISED TO ALL FLOCKS

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He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. *Ephesians 4:11-14 (ESV)*.

Supernatural Resources

God has given to the Body of Christ all that it needs to reproduce continually, in all societies, cultures and economies. His supernatural resources that are available to every obedient congregation include the Scriptures, the Presence of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit, access to the Father through prayers, and highly-motivated members.

God gives gifted, motivated, workers to every congregation. (The English 'gave' in Ephesians 4:11 translates the Greek aorist which only means the past tense in an historical context. In this verse, it means 'gives' as a general truth.) If your congregation does not yet have all five kinds of gifted persons, then it soon will. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to do so (Luke 10:2).

In the New Testament those five terms (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher) are each used with several meanings.

- (1) Jesus himself is called Apostle (Hebrews 3:1), Prophet (Matthew 21:11), Evangelist (Mark 1:15), Pastor (1 Peter 5:4) and Teacher (John 11:28).
- (2) The same titles applied to the twelve original apostles of Jesus, to the Apostle Paul, and to Philip are well known and codified in systematic theology.
- (3) A danger lies in taking theologians' definitions of those same words and importing them back into the New Testament, for they sometimes apply to rather ordinary Christians who do most of the on-going work of God. Consider these examples:
Apostles: Barnabas (Acts 14:14) and Apollos, (1 Corinthians 4:6, 9).
Prophets: Agabus (Acts 11:27), Antioch congregation leaders (Acts 13:1), Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32), all of the Corinthian believers (1 Corinthians 14:3, 24, 29, 32).
Evangelists: Believers scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1, 14; 11:19-21).
Pastors: Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28) and other unpaid volunteers (1 Peter 5:1-3).
Teachers: Antioch congregation leaders (Acts 13:1), any mature believers (He 5:12).
- (4) We shall not elaborate on false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13), false prophets (Mark 13:22), false evangelists (Galatians 1:8), false pastors (John 10:12) and false teachers (2 Peter 2:1).

'Five-fold Gifts' Skit

Introduce 'Mr. Mature' and 'Mr. Amateur' who are talking about the need of the five-fold gifts to help congregations reproduce.

(Apostles)

Mr. Mature: Amateur, what do you know about the role of **apostles** in helping congregations reproduce?

Mr. Amateur: I know what an apostle is. Apostles come from other countries, have lots of money, hire local folks to do congregation work, and take long vacations. I would like to be an apostle.

Mr. Mature: For every apostle of that kind, we need hundreds of apostles of another kind who will go as volunteers to the next village or town and help start new congregations.

(Prophets)

Mr. Mature: Amateur, what do you know about the role of **prophets** in helping congregations reproduce?

Mr. Amateur: I know what a prophet is. Prophets go into trances and receive words from God that they speak in a shaking voice, predicting the future, often scolding and warning of punishment. I would like to be a prophet.

Mr. Mature: For every prophet of that kind, we need hundreds of prophets of another kind who, according to 1 Corinthians 14:3, will speak comfort, strengthening and encouragement to others.

(Evangelists)

Mr. Mature: Amateur, what do you know about the role of **evangelists** in helping congregations reproduce?

Mr. Amateur: I know what an evangelist is. Evangelists stand on platforms shouting into microphones while 100s repent get saved. I would like to be an evangelist.

Mr. Mature: For every evangelist of that kind, we need hundreds of evangelists of another kind who will tell the Good News to their families and friends.

(Pastors)

Mr. Mature: Amateur, what do you know about the role of **pastors** in helping congregations reproduce?

Mr. Amateur: I know what a pastor is. Pastors wear neck ties, get to do all the important work in a church, and receive a regular salary. I would like to be a pastor.

Mr. Mature: For every pastor of that kind, we need hundreds of volunteer pastors of another kind who will lovingly shepherd little, new congregations of new believers.

(Teachers)

Mr. Mature: Amateur, what do you know about the role of **teachers** in helping congregations reproduce?

Mr. Amateur: I know what a teacher is. Teachers stand in classrooms telling students what they will need to know three years later. I would like to be a teacher.

Mr. Mature: For every teacher of that kind, we need hundreds of teachers of another kind who will equip ordinary Christians to obey Jesus and do all of these ministries.