

**TITLE OF DISSERTATION**

**'Jobs for the girls?' An exploration of New Testament Women  
demonstrating the 'Fivefold Ministry' functions of Ephesians 4:11,  
and implications for the Church today.**

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**'Jobs for the Girls?' An exploration of New Testament women demonstrating the 'Fivefold Ministry' functions of Ephesians 4:11, and implications for the Church today.**

In the New Testament a story unfolds, through eye-witness accounts, historical narrative, and a variety of letters, of an emerging community of people, both men and women, who follow Jesus, believing him to be the Messiah/Christ. They came to be known collectively as 'Christians',<sup>1</sup> followers of 'the Way',<sup>2</sup> and 'the church'.<sup>3</sup> Observations of the church throughout history, and in the west today, reveal a similarly unfolding narrative of an, arguably, much more institutionalised organisation than the church found amongst the pages of scripture. One cause of contention seems to be the place of women in the church, provoking an 'ongoing and often volatile contemporary debate about the role of women in ministry.'<sup>4</sup> The debate continues without resolution, inviting many questions regarding what the New Testament actually teaches about women, especially in a 'ministerial' context. For example, how did women function within churches in a patriarchal context? What difference, if any, did Jesus', and later Paul's, teaching about and attitude towards women make? Did the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy on the day of Pentecost<sup>5</sup> make any difference to the gifts or roles women were free to exercise in their faith communities?

Whilst many denominations in the west today acknowledge and ordain female ministers, (for example, the Baptist Union in GB),<sup>6</sup> controversy remains about women in church leadership. This has led to a personal interest in the experiences of women in ministry and church leadership. It would be fascinating to employ quantitative research in an applied theological study of contemporary women's experience but the constraints of this thesis prevent such extensive investigation. My primary aim instead, is to examine and extrapolate what scripture teaches, implicitly and explicitly, about the roles of female church leaders, providing a biblical survey of notable women in the New Testament, particularly Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Phoebe, Lydia, and Priscilla. Such women arguably functioned as leaders and 'ministers' in the Early Church. Uniquely using Ephesians 4:11-13 as the lens through which to view them, I will note instances where such women appear to have demonstrated the ministry gifts, or roles/functions, mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, frequently referred to as the 'Fivefold Ministry', viz a viz Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd/Pastor and Teacher (APEST).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Acts 11:26 followers of Jesus are first called 'Christians' in Antioch. Unless stated otherwise, all Biblical references and quotations are from *Holy Bible: NIV Popular Bible*, New International Version, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> In Acts 9:2 Saul seeks permission to search the Damascus synagogues for 'any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women' to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> 'The church', *Ekklesia*, means either the entire body of Christians or a local gathering of believers. See Matthew 16:18 & 18:17, Acts 5:11, 8:1 & 3, 9:31, 11:22 & 26 for examples.

<sup>4</sup> Moo, D.J., *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002) p.205.

<sup>5</sup> Joel 2:28-32, interpreted in Acts 2:14-21, refers to men and women exercising various spiritual gifts.

<sup>6</sup> In 1919 Violet Hedger was the first UK Baptist Woman trained for ordination at Regent's Park College. In 1975 the 'Deaconess Order' closed and many women were transferred to the accredited ministers list.

<sup>7</sup> For convenience, 'Fivefold', rather than 'Five-fold', will be used throughout, as used by Green, M.D., *Understanding the Fivefold Ministry* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2005) and Hirsch, A., *5Q* (Milton Keynes: 100Movements, 2017). Hirsch provides the acronym 'APEST' to refer to the roles/functions of Ephesians 4:11.

As the emphasis is on women in the church, I will focus primarily on Lukan, Pauline and Johannine writings. Luke highlights women more frequently than the other gospel writers, John includes women's stories not mentioned in the synoptic gospels (e.g. The Samaritan women at the well, John 4), and Luke and Paul took early missionary journeys together, writing much about the church as it developed. Considering whether texts are descriptive or prescriptive, I will examine how they impact our understanding of female participation in church ministry, both then and now. Where relevant, I will also refer to selected Old Testament women (e.g. Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Esther) who demonstrate female leadership or APEST 'gifts' but the main emphasis will remain on women of the early church.

I will seek to extrapolate how the fivefold gifts and leadership were understood in the early church, and how women exercised their 'gifts' and 'leadership', contributing to the discussion in academic scholarship about the role of women in church ministry today. The thesis presented here, then, is that through an examination of biblical women, particularly in the New Testament, not only can we reasonably elucidate a biblical theology which demonstrates that women were, and still are, 'allowed' to preach, teach, and fulfil the 'traditional model' of pastor/teacher,<sup>8</sup> but that, further, biblical texts demonstrate how women within the earliest Christian congregations functioned in *all* aspects of ministry and leadership, including APEST roles.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Whilst much has been written to challenge the view that women should not 'speak' in the church, teach, or hold any authority,<sup>9</sup> surveying theological writing reveals that comparatively little seems to have been written about women in the non-pastoral/teaching roles of the fivefold ministry, namely those of apostles, prophets and evangelists. As a field of research, 'women in ministry and leadership' invites many questions which could be explored in relation to the 'Ascension gifts'.<sup>10</sup> For example, one might ask, if Paul were writing an epistle to the western church today, which contemporary women might he include in his greetings as those recognised as servants, fellow-workers or 'notable among the apostles'? Would he emphasize those demonstrating APEST gifts or would other leadership roles, such as deacons, also be mentioned? Would other contemporary church ministries such as 'worship leaders' or 'pioneers' also be included? As such questions act as 'directional signposts for research',<sup>11</sup> the questions driving this study include: How did Paul understand church leadership and the fivefold (APEST) ministry when he wrote Ephesians? How did women use those leadership gifts in the emerging New Testament church? How did Jesus and Paul relate to, and work with, women? Whilst acknowledging the validity of these questions, the primary focus of this analytical thesis will remain how New Testament women exercised the fivefold ministry gifts of Ephesians 4:11, and, secondarily, what the implications are for the church today.

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<sup>8</sup> By 'traditional' model of leadership, I mean that of a pastor/teacher, ordained as a minister, who typically leads a local church. A definition of terms will be included shortly.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. Commentary writers differ on their interpretations of these texts which shall be discussed later.

<sup>10</sup> 'Ascension gifts' is another term for the Fivefold Ministry/APEST functions, which will be explored further in the exegesis of Ephesians 4:7-11 shortly.

<sup>11</sup> Jimmy D. Bayes, 'Five-fold Ministry: A Social and Cultural Texture Analysis of Ephesians 4:11-16', *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, 3:1, (Winter 2010), 113-122, p.115.

A firm belief in the 'Priesthood of all Believers'<sup>12</sup> should be recognised as an underlying principle here, not only in the sense that every individual believer can access God, through, Christ, without other human mediators (1 Timothy 2:5), but in equal responsibility to participate in the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:18-20), using any God-given gifts in the work of ministry as part of a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9). Referring to this verse, Luther asserted,

'It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests and monks are called to the spiritual estate, while princes, lords, artisans and farmers are called to the temporal estate... All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference between them except that of office.'<sup>13</sup>

This, perhaps, also highlights an understanding of 'church leadership' as 'offices' held, rather than simply as 'functions'. Luther did not wish to abolish ministerial 'offices' but emphasized that all believers have the *status* of being priests through faith and baptism, though they may function differently, according to their gifts. The concept of the priesthood of *all* believers also seems to stand in stark contradiction to the view that women should not participate in church leadership (although corruption amongst the 'clergy', not gender, was Luther's emphasis and the *raison d'être* for this doctrine).

### **Patriarchy, Complementarianism and Egalitarianism**

The unresolved tension that exists between the theologies of Patriarchy, Complementarianism and Egalitarianism<sup>14</sup> in today's church must also be acknowledged. Patriarchy can be described as 'A society that promotes male authority and female submission,'<sup>15</sup> generally, but within the evangelical tradition patriarchal theology and practice propose specifically that women should submit to men, church leadership must be male, and male headship within the home is the only viable model for households to operate in a 'biblical' manner. Lu notes that 'interpretations of NT household codes favoring male authority have often been cited to support such practices...'<sup>16</sup> Pawson, a key proponent of patriarchy, argues from the creation accounts in Genesis 1-2, that since woman was made '*from man... for man... after man...*'<sup>17</sup> women are therefore subordinate to men. He acknowledges that individually these statements do not make a conclusive case for patriarchy but suggests that 'the cumulative effect of all three points in this direction.'<sup>18</sup>

Complementarianism asserts that men and women are equal in value but different in roles. Some might argue that complementarianism is a softer, 'Christianised', version of general patriarchy but in practice, many complementarians remain opposed to women in leadership,

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<sup>12</sup> The doctrine was presented in Martin Luther's reformation treatise, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, 1520.

<sup>13</sup> Alistair E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edn (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p.210.

<sup>14</sup> Defined next.

<sup>15</sup> Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2021) p.13.

<sup>16</sup> Shi-Min Lu, 'Women's Role in New Testament Household Codes: Transforming First-century Roman Culture', *Priscilla Papers*, 30:1, (Winter 2016) 9-15, p.9.

<sup>17</sup> David Pawson, *Leadership is Male: What Does the Bible Say?* (Ashford: Anchor Recordings Ltd, 2014) pp.16-17.

<sup>18</sup> Pawson, p.17.

promoting female submission to male authority. Some compromise by suggesting that 'women are not to submit to men in general (pagan patriarchy) but that wives should submit to their husbands (Christian Patriarchy),'<sup>19</sup> which doesn't explain the position for women who may be single, divorced or widowed, and still expected to submit to male authority in the church. Grudem, Piper and MacArthur are key advocates of this, supporting the '*fait accompli* presented to evangelical women... that God's design for male headship and female submission was an eternal and divine condition.'<sup>20</sup>

Egalitarians, on the other hand, are those who argue for 'biblical equality between men and women.'<sup>21</sup> Strongly opposed to patriarchy, egalitarian writer Barr suggests that, as it is presented by the evangelical western church, particularly by 'the Gospel Coalition',<sup>22</sup> so-called 'Biblical womanhood *is* Christian Patriarchy,'<sup>23</sup> further asserting, 'Complementarianism is patriarchy, and patriarchy is about power. Neither have ever been about Jesus.'<sup>24</sup>

Each viewpoint stems from interpretations of scripture regarding whether 'female submission' existed before 'The Fall', or is a consequence of sin, and therefore something to be challenged and reversed in the church today. Complementarians insist that 'male headship existed before the fall'<sup>25</sup> whilst egalitarians 'proclaim that it only came after,'<sup>26</sup> with Watson adding, 'there is no suggestion in the Genesis text that this relationship is understood hierarchically.'<sup>27</sup> The complementarian Gospel Coalition state 'the distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.'<sup>28</sup> However, we might suggest this is not a matter of a cultural or feminist agenda, but rather one of biblical interpretation and application. Cray comments as an egalitarian, for instance, that if male dominance over women was a consequence of the fall, then it logically follows that 'this was never God's design and is something Jesus came to undo... it must be something his Church should seek to overcome... and to change as much as we can.'<sup>29</sup> Urquhart, meanwhile, observes that some 'can accept the *ministry* of women, but not the *leadership* of women... they must operate under the covering of a man,'<sup>30</sup> but suggests, more pragmatically, that people should 'consider the anointing rather than the sex'.<sup>31</sup>

There remains an ongoing 'stale-mate' as each side believe their view is 'biblically' correct. We are unlikely to resolve this tension but using scriptural analysis, and biblical scholarship, some conclusions may be drawn that a patriarchal/complementarian stance, restricting women's

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<sup>19</sup> Barr, p.17.

<sup>20</sup> Barr, p.32.

<sup>21</sup> Barr, p.32.

<sup>22</sup> The Gospel Coalition <[www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents/#confessional-statement](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents/#confessional-statement)> [Accessed 16 May 2021]

<sup>23</sup> Barr, p.216.

<sup>24</sup> Barr, p.218.

<sup>25</sup> Barr, p.32.

<sup>26</sup> Barr, p.32.

<sup>27</sup> Francis Watson, 'The Authority of the Voice: A Theological Reading of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *New Testament Studies*, 46, Cambridge University Press, (2000), 520-536, p.521.

<sup>28</sup> The Gospel Coalition [Accessed 16 May 2021]

<sup>29</sup> Graham Cray, *Women in Leadership: Soul Survivor's position on Women in Leadership*, Booklet, (Watford: Soul Survivor, date unknown) p.4.

<sup>30</sup> Colin Urquhart, *True Leadership* (Horsham: Kingdom Faith Resources, 2004) p.56.

<sup>31</sup> Urquhart, p.53.

ministries, is not in line with the freedom and equality the New Testament presents. Considering myself an egalitarian, I acknowledge that I bring to this study my own bias as a female minister who has faced much criticism from those who hold a patriarchal/complementarian viewpoint. Conscious of this prejudice, however, I intend to apply rigorous exegesis to my research, along with a methodology 'deeply embedded within the hermeneutical/interpretative paradigm.'<sup>32</sup> I also acknowledge, however, that a desired outcome is to make a small contribution to Pastoral Theology's task of 'recognizing distorted practice... (and calling) ...the Church back to the theological significance of its practices... to enable it to engage faithfully with the mission of God'.<sup>33</sup>

### **Scope of research and Methodology**

Although the scope of biblical research here is primarily within the New Testament, mention of some Old Testament women is necessary, to respect the whole counsel of scripture. It is difficult to ignore, for example, the significant leadership demonstrated by Esther/Hadassah (c.475 BC). Considering Esther, retrospectively through the lens of Ephesians 4:11, we might ask if she was an Old Testament example of a female 'apostle', since she was a 'sent one' (*apostolos*), from Mordecai to King Xerxes (Esther 2:8-18) and by God, in order to 'save' the Israelites in a similar way to Moses, (Esther 4:14, 5:1-3, 7:3-4, 8:1-17). She might be regarded as a 'shepherd/pastor', exercising her influence as a pastoral leader, caring for 'her' people and appointing Mordecai to his position, (Esther 8:2), and quite possibly as a 'prophet', because she called the entire Jewish nation to fast and pray (Esther 4:15-17).<sup>34</sup>

As biblical analysis and a literary based methodology are employed, it should be acknowledged that most biblical literature is written by men. Storkey notes that some feminist theologians have 'developed a "hermeneutic of suspicion", identifying the patriarchal context of the biblical text',<sup>35</sup> and questions whether biblical women's lives and experiences can ever be presented authentically. However, she asserts, 'though the scribes might be male, and the context reflect a patriarchal culture where male voices predominate ...many stories are authentically those of women... the original sources... will have been women themselves.'<sup>36</sup> Other hermeneutical principles include considering the original meaning of the language used by the writers, contextualisation, and appreciating the overall ethos of liberty and equality within Christianity.<sup>37</sup> Bailey notes there is 'a strong tendency to see Scripture through the eyes of traditional interpretation of it, or through the eyes of current ideologies...'<sup>38</sup> so a 'rigorous attempt will be made to allow Scripture itself to control and correct our understanding of it.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006) p.75.

<sup>33</sup> Swinton and Mowatt, p.25.

<sup>34</sup> 'Apostle', 'shepherd/pastor', 'prophet', and other terms, will be defined shortly.

<sup>35</sup> Elaine Storkey, *Women in a Patriarchal World: Twenty-five empowering stories from the Bible* (London: SPCK, 2020) p.xiv.

<sup>36</sup> Storkey, p.xiv.

<sup>37</sup> For the theme of liberty see: Luke 4:18, Romans 8:21, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:1 & 13, Ephesians 3:12 and 1 Peter 2:16. For equality (in Christ) see Acts 2:17-18, 10:34-35, Galatians 3:26-28, Ephesians 2:11-22.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth E. Bailey, 'Women in the New Testament: A Middle Eastern Cultural View', *Theology Matters*, 6:1, (Jan/Feb 2000) 1-10, p.1.

<sup>39</sup> Bailey, p.1.

Brief textual analysis of Ephesians 4:7-16, Romans 16:1-16, and other passages where women utilise the APEST gifts will be investigated. I will also briefly address the 'difficult' scriptures concerning women 'speaking' and 'teaching',<sup>40</sup> exploring why they are controversial, and whether they apply universally or not. Along with brief exegesis of such texts, consideration will be given to the cultural context of the developing church because, as Bayes observes, 'Socio-rhetorical interpretation is not a new method of Biblical interpretation, but rather a model for analysis that encourages full use of exegetical skills.'<sup>41</sup>

### Definition of terms

A definition of certain terms is necessary, firstly, 'leaders' and 'leadership': In the early church, the 'leaders' were primarily the apostles and prophets,<sup>42</sup> who spread the gospel into new areas, pioneered new congregations, and appointed pastors, elders and deacons to those new 'churches',<sup>43</sup> delegating the practical work of the church to others.<sup>44</sup> Paul acknowledged that loyalty to different 'leaders' was evident amongst early Christians<sup>45</sup> but hoped that the focus remain on the gospel. In the context of today's church, the designation 'leader' or 'the leadership', most frequently refers to the pastor/minister and the elders and/or deacons of a particular congregation. Throughout this paper, references to church leadership will mostly mean those with a designated *office* within a local church, *i.e.* the 'Minister', or Pastor-teacher, ordained for that task (whilst it is recognised that many non-ordained, 'lay' people also function in these capacities/roles). Bayes questions whether Ephesians 4:11 refers to '*offices*' or '*functions*', defining an 'office' as 'the public recognition by the Body of Christ that an individual has a certain gift and is authorized to minister that gift in what might be termed an official capacity...',<sup>46</sup> but he acknowledges that while some writers view the APEST gifts as *offices* 'others view these five gifts as *functions* of the individual.'<sup>47</sup> I deliberately refer to APEST as 'functions' or 'roles', rather than 'offices', however, because 'textual evidence does suggest that the five gifts... are functions of individuals in the New Testament and through the first century.'<sup>48</sup> The term 'leadership gifts' will allude to the fivefold functions, rather than a church's 'office-holding' arrangements, and with Hirsch, I will use the expressions 'APEST', 'fivefold ministry' and 'ascension gifts' somewhat interchangeably.<sup>49</sup>

The terms 'Pastor' and 'Shepherd' will be used interchangeably, referring to either an office-holding 'Minister' or those exercising a shepherding (leadership) role. 'Pastor' has often been the traditionally designated title of someone entrusted with the main office in a church, which Frost and Hirsch describe as the 'standardized mode of pastoral leadership so dominant in the Western church'.<sup>50</sup> Larger churches with leaders who should, perhaps, be recognised as more

<sup>40</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

<sup>41</sup> Bayes, p.115.

<sup>42</sup> Ephesians 2:20 states God's 'household' (the church) is 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.'

<sup>43</sup> Mark 3:13-19, Acts 14:23, 15:22, Galatians 2:22, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Hebrews 13:7, 17 & 24.

<sup>44</sup> Acts 6:1-6.

<sup>45</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:10-15.

<sup>46</sup> Bayes, pp.114-115.

<sup>47</sup> Bayes, p.114-115, italics mine.

<sup>48</sup> Bayes, p.113.

<sup>49</sup> Alan Hirsch, *5Q: Reactivating the Original Intelligence and Capacity of the Body of Christ* (Milton Keynes: 100Movements, 2017) p.xxxv.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2003) p.226.

of a teacher, visionary or apostle, also often call them ‘Pastor’, regardless of their actual leadership style or ‘gifting’. Whilst prolific, this church leadership model has its drawbacks, as Hirsch points out, claiming that the problem resulting from this ‘reduction of ministry is one of the major and most daunting challenges that the Western Christian movement faces as it moves out of the protections of established Christendom.’<sup>51</sup> References to a ‘traditional’ view of leadership, should be understood as Patriarchal/Complementarian, rather than Egalitarian, as historically this has been the predominant model. ‘Pastors’ are most frequently male (and often the only financed or ‘employed’ church leader within a local church setting) and women may only hold complementary roles. Having established what is meant by these essential terms, the primary text will now be examined.

### **EPHESIANS 4:7-13, AN EXAMINATION OF THE FIVEFOLD MINISTRY/APEST GIFTS**

The key premise of this discussion is Ephesians 4:11-13, which informs the reader,

**‘So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,** to (a) equip his people for works of service, so that (b) the body of Christ may be built up until (c) we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and (d) become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.’<sup>52</sup>

These verses must first be considered within the context of the whole chapter and epistle, which address matters of unity, maturity, building up ‘the body’, and the gifts and graces given by God to the church. Noting that this letter was circulated amongst house churches, it provides ‘insights into Paul’s general teaching and practice in all the churches, not just one’<sup>53</sup> and arguably applies for all time. Alluding to Markus Barth, Hirsch, a key proponent of APEST, states, ‘Commentators have long held that Ephesians as a whole is something of the constitutional document of the church... it is meant to guide all subsequent thinking and action in the organization so constituted.’<sup>54</sup> In Ephesians 4:7, Paul states ‘...to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it’. Hirsch’s understanding is that God has given every individual ‘leanings’ towards one of the five types of gifting in v.11, and that the ‘5Q’ are ‘intelligences’ which people, and churches, hold with varying degrees of strength. He emphasises that Paul ‘clearly states in verses 7 and 11 that Jesus “gave” APEST to the church, distributing it among all the people as he sees fit.’<sup>55</sup>

To correctly exegete this text, we must consider how Paul understood Psalm 68:18, quoted in in Ephesians 4:8-10, which is that having descended (to earth, through the incarnation) and having later ascended (to the ‘heavenly realms’) in his resurrection body, Christ has received gifts *from men* as Psalm 68:18 suggests, and given gifts *to men* (meaning mankind), hence the reference to ‘Ascension gifts’. Giesler notes that Paul probably quotes Psalm 68 from the

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*N.B.* Hirsch develops his acronym from APEPT (Pastor) to APEST (Shepherd) between books to distinguish pastors from prophets, and to differentiate between the *function* of a Shepherd/pastor from the *office* of ‘Pastor’/Minister.

<sup>51</sup> Darrell Guder in Hirsch, *5Q*, p.3 (brackets mine).

<sup>52</sup> Emphatic bold type and brackets/alphabetizing mine.

<sup>53</sup> Frost & Hirsch, p.207.

<sup>54</sup> Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Vol. 2, The Anchor Bible (New York, Doubleday, 1974) cited in Hirsch, p.4.

<sup>55</sup> Hirsch, P.5.



Aramaic Targum which translates the Hebrew text as ‘you have given’,<sup>56</sup> rather than ‘you have taken’, or ‘received’, as translated in the Septuagint, but comments that in either case, the implication remains that God ‘received or took gifts so that they could then be distributed to men... both renderings are correct.’<sup>57</sup>

Hirsch emphasises the chronological significance of the aorist indicative verb form used for ‘given’ (Gk. *edothē*), suggesting that this is ‘a very resolute verb form perfectly suited for use in constitutions... aorists reflect actions that took place in the past and as such they are once-and-for-all-time events.’<sup>58</sup> He proposes that the aorist indicatives used in Ephesians 4:1, 7 and 11 illustrate how APEST ‘has, once and for all, been bequeathed to the Body of Christ... it cannot and will not be revoked’,<sup>59</sup> elucidating his opinion that this is *prescriptive* for the church, for all time, and in all cultures. Ephesians 4:11 then makes explicit that the ascension/fivefold ministry gifts are those of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds (Pastors) and Teachers; the APEST gifts to be explored imminently.

In Ephesians 4:12-13 Paul makes explicit the *raison d’être* for the fivefold ministry; to equip people for works of service; to encourage and build up the body (the church); to reach unity in the faith and knowledge of Christ; and to attain maturity in the church and growth into the fullness of Christ. Hirsch posits that in Ephesians 4:12 we ‘discern a shift in Paul’s argument from the *prescription* of APEST to the *description* of the expected impact in the church.’<sup>60</sup> Significantly, one commentary notes, these gifts are given by Christ ‘for the nurture and equipping of His church, not for hierarchical control or ecclesiastical competition.’<sup>61</sup> Hirsch also considers a broader definition of the term ‘*katartizo*’ than simply ‘to equip/build up’. Pointing out that *katartizo* can refer to mending ‘what has been broken or rent’,<sup>62</sup> like fishing nets or broken bones, he argues that the word translated ‘equipping’ also implies ‘perfecting, mending, perfectly joining together, putting in order, ethically strengthening, completing, fulfilling (and) healing ...of the saints, for the work of the ministry’,<sup>63</sup> which adds nuances that a singular interpretation cannot convey.

Comparing the functions of APEST to the systems of the body, Hirsch believes that each element of the fivefold ministry must be in balance with, and interdependent on, each other for the church to function fully and attain the fullness of Christ (v.13). In the human body, systems such as the immune system, cardiovascular, nervous system, and musculoskeletal system *etc*, rely on each other, working in harmony to attain the correct balance of the whole body. Similarly, Hirsch insists that churches with an emphasis on one or two of the fivefold functions, most commonly Shepherd and Teacher, make for unbalanced churches with serious deficiencies. Ephesians 4:14-16 concludes the pericope, reiterating the need for maturity and for the whole body to function together.

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<sup>56</sup> Norman L. Giesler, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008) p.476.

<sup>57</sup> Giesler, p.477.

<sup>58</sup> Hirsch, p.5.

<sup>59</sup> Hirsch, p.5.

<sup>60</sup> Hirsch, p.8.

<sup>61</sup> Jack W. Hayford (Ed.) *Spirit Filled Life Bible*, New King James Version (NKJ), (London: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1991) p.1792.

<sup>62</sup> Hirsch, p.12.

<sup>63</sup> Hirsch, p.14.

Paul does not restrict these roles/functions to any particular subgroup of people. Rather, he suggests that the various expressions of God's grace have been given to 'each one'. Paul's epistles were most likely read to, and heard by, congregations regardless of who constituted them, and there is nothing in the text to suggest that these roles are only to be held by men. Since Jesus brought a radical and counter-cultural equality to women in his interactions with them, it seems unlikely that he would then exclude them from the distributions of gifts amongst the 'all' and 'each one' of v.7. Paul also wrote, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,' (Galatians 3:28) and whilst differences obviously exist in the physical realm, in matters of spirituality and gifting those differences are arguably irrelevant.

Hirsch and Frost also maintain 'there is no New Testament Hermeneutic principle... that would limit the scope of this text to just the early church period.'<sup>64</sup> Hirsch further states,

'We have always treated it (Ephesians) as the book par excellence on the nature and purposes of the church. It represents best thinking about the church – at least how Paul understood it. Ephesians is the spiritual template for the church in all ages.'<sup>65</sup>

Hirsch's explicit objective is to rediscover the emphasis of fivefold ('5Q') leadership within the church. He suggests that, typically, western churches have overemphasized the traditional leadership model and neglected the apostles, prophets and evangelists. Frost and Hirsch suggest, the 'leadership styles of the Western church, moulded as it is by the Christendom paradigm, have tended to be predominantly pastor-teacher (or priestly) types'<sup>66</sup> and that one drawback of that is that 'taken out of a multidimensional style of leadership, these *types* of leaders have tended to be the maintainers of the status quo rather than initiators or pioneers of new mission and... innovative forms of the church.'<sup>67</sup>

Having briefly considered the *purpose* of the fivefold ministry, it is important to understand what each gift is. Bayes suggests that textual analysis of Ephesians 4 determines that 'there is some support for the designation of the offices of prophet and teacher, but there is little support for the designation of office of apostle, evangelist, or pastor,'<sup>68</sup> which is controversial given that apostles seem predominant in Pauline writing. Paul states that the church is 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone,' (Ephesians 2:20) and the couplet occurs again in Ephesians 3:5, where the mystery of the gospel was 'revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.'. Paul also implies that the 'apostles and prophets' are of high significance in 1 Corinthians 12:28; 'God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing...' though admittedly, the order in which they're mentioned does not necessarily imply a greater level of importance, and Paul may be writing the order ironically, given the Corinthians' apparent overuse of speaking tongues.<sup>69</sup> Bayes' perspective does not affect our understanding of what each gift involves, however, except that they are viewed here as *functions/roles* rather than *offices*.

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<sup>64</sup> Frost and Hirsch, p.207.

<sup>65</sup> Hirsch, p.4.

<sup>66</sup> Frost and Hirsch, p.226.

<sup>67</sup> Frost and Hirsch, p.226.

<sup>68</sup> Bayes, p.113.

<sup>69</sup> Paul addresses 'speaking in tongues' in 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:1 and 14:1-40.

## Apostles

Opinions vary regarding whether apostles still exist, or need to, in the church today, given that the foundational role of the original apostles has been fulfilled. However, it may be argued that scripture mentions 'enough additional apostles to indicate that this office, with that of prophets, is as continuing a ministry in the church as the more commonly acknowledged offices of evangelists, pastors and teachers.'<sup>70</sup> Based on the Greek term *apostolos*, meaning 'sent one', Bayes suggests 'apostles' were, and are, 'literally commissioned messengers carrying out their sender's mission,'<sup>71</sup> providing a broader definition of how apostles may function. Hirsch call the role of an apostle the 'quintessentially missional ministry,'<sup>72</sup> which applies to many more biblical figures than only 'The Twelve', Peter, James and Paul.

Morledge differentiates between 'Apostles' with a capital 'A',<sup>73</sup> like Peter and Paul, who had post-resurrection encounters with Jesus and were specifically called to spread the gospel,<sup>74</sup> and 'apostles', with a small 'a', as those who are 'sent' to fulfil the ministries of church planting and gospel-spreading missions. It is plausible that the 'big-A' Apostles were limited to the early church, but the role and function of 'apostles' is still in evidence in the church today. Perhaps those who function as apostles today, though, are now known by less controversial sounding titles, like 'pioneer', 'church planter' or 'missionary'. Morledge writes,

'...most Christians I know surely acknowledge the presence of many, many gifted church planters today, who have been sent out... just as you read about them in the New Testament... Church planters exercise the gift of being "*apostles*," in that they are sent out by Christian communities as messengers of the Gospel.'<sup>75</sup>

Considering the female emphasis of this paper, it is important to note Paul's reference to a female apostle in Romans 16:7, where he declares his relatives Andronicus and Junia as 'outstanding among the apostles.'. Controversy about this couple will be considered later but their profile seems to fit Hirsch's understanding of an apostle's role as '...very much a pioneering function of the church, the capacity to extend Christianity as a... reproducing movement, ever-expanding into new cultures.'<sup>76</sup>

## Prophets

Prophets in the early church were considered to be divinely inspired to communicate God's word to people, prompted by God's Spirit, sometimes including an element of revelation about the future, as exemplified by Agabus in Acts 11:28 and 21:10. Regarded as 'spokespersons for God, whose role was known from the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament church,'<sup>77</sup> 'prophets' perhaps came the closest to holding an 'office' in the church, as their role

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<sup>70</sup> Hayford (Ed.), NKJ, p.1792.

<sup>71</sup> Bayes, p.116.

<sup>72</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiii.

<sup>73</sup> Clarke Morledge, *Do We Still Have Apostles Today, in the Church?*

[www.sharedveracity.net/2019/11/19/do-we-still-have-apostles-today-in-the-church](http://www.sharedveracity.net/2019/11/19/do-we-still-have-apostles-today-in-the-church) [Accessed 20 March 2021]

<sup>74</sup> Peter: John 21:15-19, Saul/Paul: Acts 9:1-31

<sup>75</sup> Morledge.

<sup>76</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiii.

<sup>77</sup> Bayes, p.116.

in Jewish society, common before the church era, extended into the first century. Along with apostles, New Testament prophets were foundational in building the church. Hirsch suggests that modern prophets, male or female, are 'guardians of the covenant relationship that God has with his people,'<sup>78</sup> who speak significantly about matters of justice, holiness, and righteousness. When Luke mentions Agabus, he adds that Philip the evangelist '...had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.' (Acts 21:8-9). He need not have mentioned these women at all, since the prophesy subsequently reported came from Agabus but Luke's narratives often portray women in a positive, ministering, light.

The prophets of the Old Testament, deeply embedded in Israel's history, were undoubtedly familiar to the first Jewish believers in Christ, and female prophets were significant among them. Miriam and Deborah feature as such prominent Hebrew prophetesses. Miriam (c.1500 BC) is regarded as the protector and 'deliverer' of her brother Moses (Exodus 2:1-10) but as 'an adult prophetess, she led the delivered slaves in praising God,'<sup>79</sup> (Ex 15:20-21). Richards suggests, 'It would be a mistake here to relegate Miriam to the role of some "women's group." The text portrays women leading the community in worship, and Miriam was the worship leader.'<sup>80</sup> He further acknowledges her equality with her brother Aaron, stating that they are 'recognized together, for both held significant leadership positions.'<sup>81</sup>

Deborah (c.1300 BC) led Israel as a judge and prophetess, (Judges 4-5). Identified as the wife of Lappidoth (Judges 4:4), in an era when women were regarded as 'belonging' to their husbands and their households, Deborah is specifically described as *leading* Israel. There was 'no conflict between being a wife in a patriarchal age and being a spiritual leader,'<sup>82</sup> it seems. Richards notes that Israel's judges were 'spiritual, political, judicial, and in most cases, military leaders... (who) functioned as the government of the tribes they led,'<sup>83</sup> yet Deborah was not a military leader. No other judge is described as a prophet, however, and Barak respected her authority and leadership, and wanted her presence in battle, (Judges 4:8-9), which suggests the 'extent of Deborah's credibility as God's spokesperson and as Israel's leader.'<sup>84</sup> Jael, who completed Barak's campaign by famously killing Sisera with a tent peg through the head (Judges 4:18-22), along with Deborah, clearly challenge the assumption that Hebrew women were 'essentially powerless and subservient.'<sup>85</sup>

Other female prophets are mentioned frequently enough in the Old Testament to note that women who had this gift were respected, even within their patriarchal society. Regardless of gender, prophets were 'God's spokespersons. He gave them words... that had the authority of the divine Word.'<sup>86</sup> Huldah the prophet (625 BC) is mentioned in 2 Kings 22:13-14 and 2 Chronicles 34:22, when Israel's king, Josiah, wanted to turn the people back to God, after discovering a lost book of God's law and realising the consequences of idolatry. Although this was the era of Habakkuk the prophet, Josiah chose to send his representatives to a woman to

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<sup>78</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiii.

<sup>79</sup> Sue Poorman Richards and Larry Richards, *Every Woman in the Bible*, (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999) pp.142-143.

<sup>80</sup> Richards and Richards, p.144.

<sup>81</sup> Richards and Richards, p.143.

<sup>82</sup> Richards and Richards, p.45.

<sup>83</sup> Richards and Richards, p.45.

<sup>84</sup> Richards and Richards, p.45.

<sup>85</sup> Richards and Richards, p.93.

<sup>86</sup> Richards and Richards, p.143.

inquire about what to do. As Richards observes, 'What is fascinating is that these representatives were sent to Huldah, a prophetess. Clearly Huldah had established a reputation as God's spokesperson ...(she) was clearly the king's first choice when seeking to know God's will.'<sup>87</sup>

Nehemiah and Isaiah also both refer to female prophets. Nehemiah specifically mentions a prophetess who attempted to make him afraid to fulfil his vision, (Nehemiah 6:14); 'Remember... the prophetess No-adi'ah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.' The accuracy and source of her words are questionable but what is not is that women who functioned as prophets were taken seriously. Isaiah had a son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz by a young woman he referred to as 'the prophetess'. This title may have been conferred upon her by virtue of her marrying Isaiah, but as she seems to be the first 'young virgin pledged to be married who conceives a son', she fulfils the prophesy of Isaiah 7:14 as a prophetic type of Mary, the mother of Jesus, playing a prophetic role regarding the circumstances of Christ's birth, arguably the most important prophecy of Isaiah and the nameless prophetess.

Moving into the New Testament era, the gospel of Luke (2:36) records Anna, a prophetess who lived in the temple during the intertestamental period, prophesying to Mary and Joseph about Jesus' destiny. Luke also records Elizabeth and Mary prophesying, prior to the birth narratives, which illustrates women functioning as prophets yet again. Perhaps most significantly, however, Luke records details of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which is notable for the equality it establishes between those of differing gender, age and status. Peter declares that this was a fulfilment of Joel 2:28-29;

'...this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:<sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. *Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.* <sup>18</sup>*Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.*' (Italics mine, Acts 2:16-18.)

Because of this fulfilment in the Christian era, Cray's view that 'Every barrier has been wiped away'<sup>88</sup> is poignant. He regards Pentecost as a vital turning point, because 'gifts are the equipment for leadership, and gifts are poured out equally on men and women.' Peter states that God *himself* says 'your sons and daughters will prophesy', bringing spiritual gifts both male and female believers, yet the issue of women 'speaking' still creates controversy today. It is important, then, to reflect on the context of the first century AD, examining the 'difficult' passages about women speaking, prophesying, preaching and teaching, or acting as 'leaders' in the church. Bailey suggests,

'On the negative side are two critical texts. The first of these is 1 Cor. 14:33-36 which tells the women to be silent in church. The second is 1 Tim. 2:11-15 which adds that they must not teach or 'have authority' over men. These two texts seem to affirm the exact opposite of all that we have thus far observed.'<sup>89</sup>

Timothy 2:11-15 will be examined when 'teachers' are considered but Bailey astutely observes that there are several alternatives available to the reader regarding these texts. These include

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<sup>87</sup> Richards and Richards, pp.90-91.

<sup>88</sup> Cray, p.10.

<sup>89</sup> Bailey, p.6

the possibility of dismissing the biblical witness as ‘contradictory and thus irrelevant’;<sup>90</sup> accepting the texts that are supportive of women as normative, ignoring the rest; concentrating on the apparent negatives of the passages whilst overlooking ‘the women disciples, teachers, deacons/ministers, prophets, and woman apostle’;<sup>91</sup> concluding that ‘the NT is at loggerheads with itself and that the Church can only choose one biblical view against the other’<sup>92</sup> or, finally, taking a more detailed examination of the so-called ‘negative’ texts ‘to see if their historical settings allow for more unity in the outlook of the NT than we have suspected’,<sup>93</sup> which is the preferred option here.

1 Corinthians 14:34 problematically reads, ‘women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission,’ yet in the ‘post-Pentecost’ church, Paul addresses occasions *when* a woman ‘prays or prophesies...’, writing that she should be dressed appropriately for her cultural context when doing so, (1 Corinthians 11:5). He expects spiritual gifts to be exercised by both men and women, contradicting any interpretation that women are ‘not allowed to speak’, because both prayer and prophesying in worship gatherings necessitate ‘speaking’. This is reinforced by 1 Corinthians 14:26, where Paul advises that *everyone* participating may bring a hymn, a word of *instruction*, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation’, and 14:31 where he states, ‘you can *all* prophesy in turn so that everyone may be *instructed* and encouraged.’. Inferring from this and chapter 11, Paul fully expects women ‘to speak’, with the purpose that *everyone* ‘may be instructed and encouraged,’ (1 Corinthians 14:31), implying that women may exercise gifts that instruct or teach others, including men. Morris notes, ‘As Paul has countenanced their praying or prophesying (11:5), the rule against their speaking is not absolute (*cf.* Acts 2:18f.; 21:9),’<sup>94</sup> and Belleville adds, ‘There are no gender distinctions here. Both men and women brought a teaching to the congregation.’.<sup>95</sup>

There are two Greek words for ‘speaking’, *laleo* (chatter, meaningless talk) and *lego* (speaking to build up). Paul forbids *laleo*, **not** *lego*, ‘speaking’ in a useful, spiritual manner. These verses are about maintaining an attitude of ‘quiet’ learning. Since Jesus’ ministry, women had been invited to participate in worship and receive instruction as equals of men, where previously they had been excluded and uneducated. Paul is saying that women who had found a new freedom within Christian gatherings, should refrain from ‘chattering’ or speaking at inappropriate times, hence the instruction for wives to ‘ask their own husbands at home’ if they did not understand a concept new to them, or perhaps had a different interpretation of a prophetic utterance. Paul may simply have been trying to prevent husbands and wives from arguing in public! Either way, this cannot possibly include *all* women, for *all* time. Paul’s epistle promotes worship, where ‘everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way’ (1 Corinthians 14:40), whether exercising gifts, taking communion, or how people dress, because ‘God is not a God of disorder but of peace,’ (1 Corinthians 14:32). Paul addresses the Corinthians’ attitudes to ensure that expressions of the Spirit are orderly, and that consideration for one another is paramount. Therefore, we can anticipate a continuation of women speaking, as prophets, or in any other role throughout Christendom.

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<sup>90</sup> Bailey, p.6.

<sup>91</sup> Bailey, p.6.

<sup>92</sup> Bailey, p.6.

<sup>93</sup> Bailey, p.6.

<sup>94</sup> Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, (Rev. Edn.) Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: IVP, 1995) p.197.

<sup>95</sup> Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) p.57.

## Evangelists

The role of the 'Evangelist' is 'the proclamation of the good news that is at the core of the church's message'.<sup>96</sup> 'Euangelista' literally means 'herald/proclaimer/bringer of good news', and while the New Testament frequently refers to Jesus and his disciples proclaiming the good news,<sup>97</sup> it only specifically mentions the gift a few times. Phillip shares 'the good news of Jesus' in Acts 8:35 but is only explicitly called an evangelist in Acts 21:8, suggesting that it was how he functioned that earned him that recognition. Paul encourages Timothy to 'do the work of an evangelist' (2Timothy 4:5), suggesting again that this is a role, not an office, amongst the APEST gifts.

Jesus describes himself as 'sent' from God the Father, particularly in John's gospel,<sup>98</sup> and is called 'our apostle and high priest' (Hebrews 3:1). Functioning as an evangelist, however, he clearly expresses the purpose of the *Missio Dei* in verses like Luke 4:43; 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God... because that is why I was sent.'. His proclamation that he fulfils the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2, in Luke 4:17-21, reveals him as the ultimate evangelist of the Kingdom of God. He also sent others to 'evangelise', including both male and female disciples, (Luke 8:1-3, 9:1, 10:1). New Testament women who functioned in the capacity of 'missioners to the unconverted'<sup>99</sup> will be considered later.

## Shepherds (Pastors)

Hirsch describes those gifted as 'shepherds' (pastors) as demonstrating a commitment to 'nurture spiritual maturity, maintain communal health, defend the community against breakdown, and engender loving community among the redeemed family of God'.<sup>100</sup> The Greek term '*poimen*', translated 'shepherd', appears approximately eighteen times throughout the New Testament but is only once translated as 'pastor' - 'only in Ephesians 4:11 is shepherd found in reference to a function or office in the Church,'<sup>101</sup> reinforcing the idea that 'pastors' were never meant to be titled ministers holding a hierarchical position, but rather to function as spiritual shepherds of God's people, as intimated by Jesus' instructions to Peter to 'Feed my lambs... take care of my sheep... feed my sheep,' in John 21:15-17.

Womack observes that 'in the course of Church history, the terms "pastor", "elder" and "bishop/overseer" have evolved into separate and distinct ministerial offices,'<sup>102</sup> but that scripture uses the terms interchangeably. It is the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28 who are charged with the role of being shepherds. Paul exhorts, 'Keep watch over... all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God...' (Acts 20:28). Peter, also addressing elders, encourages 'Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care...' (1 Peter 5:1-2). The role involves feeding, nurturing, teaching, guarding and protecting the spiritual life of members of the body and the body itself.

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<sup>96</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiii.

<sup>97</sup> E.g. Matthew 4:23, 9:24; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43, 8:1, 9:6, 20:1.

<sup>98</sup> E.g. Mark 9:37, Matthew 10:40, Luke 4:18, 10:16, John 4:34, 5:23-24; 36-38, 6:29, 6:38-39, 7:33, 8:16-18 etc.

<sup>99</sup> A.M. Hunter, *Layman's Bible Commentaries: Galatians to Colossians* (London: SCM, 1960) p.66.

<sup>100</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiv.

<sup>101</sup> Bayes, p.116.

<sup>102</sup> I.R. Womack, *Fivefold Ministry: Basic Training Course #1* (Edgewood, MD: Amazon Books, 2015) p.84.

It should be noted that there is scholarly controversy over whether the ascension gifts should be considered as 'fourfold' or 'fivefold', because in the Greek text, an article precedes each gift except that of teacher, where it is omitted. This has led some to claim that 'Pastors and Teachers' refer to one person with two distinct gifts. In the church today there is usually an expectation that a minister should function with both but Bayes argues that this distinction is only really significant when deciding if the Ephesians 4 gifts/ministries are offices or functions because it is 'more likely that a person has multiple functions than a person having multiple offices.'. <sup>103</sup> Concurring with Hirsch and Frost, that the APEST gifts are in fact *functions* rather than *offices*, 'shepherds' and 'teachers' in this study are treated as separate ministry gifts.

### **Teachers**

Bayes describes Christian teachers as 'expounders of the Scriptures and the Jesus tradition,' <sup>104</sup> adding that 'if they functioned like Jewish teachers, they probably offered Biblical instruction to the congregation and trained others to expound the Scriptures as well.'. <sup>105</sup> The emphases of gifted teachers within the church are storytelling, sharing scripture and interpretation and the Christian tradition, and engaging learners in the life application of Christocentric wisdom. Hirsch believes that teaching involves 'integrating the intellectual and spiritual treasure of the community and encoding it, in order to pass it on to others and to the next generations.'. <sup>106</sup> The New Testament certainly presents Jesus as an exemplary teacher who used parables, allegory and reinterpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures to teach his disciples, <sup>107</sup> but nowhere in scripture is teaching a gender specific gift, despite patriarchal interpretations of texts like 1 Timothy 2:12, (addressed next). Paul honoured Priscilla who, with her husband Aquila, took the apostle Apollos into their home, and explained to, or taught him, 'the way of God more adequately,' (Acts 18: 26). Priscilla fits Hirsch's understanding of a teacher as someone 'concerned with helping people gain insight into how God wants them to see and experience their world... (who) will seek to bring theological truth and shape the consciousness of God's people to be consistent with that truth.'. <sup>108</sup>

Some, in the church today, accept women 'praying and prophesying', but struggle with the concept of women teaching, which is paradoxical when the interpretation of 1 Corinthians presented here implies that prophecy itself contains an element of teaching/instruction, (1 Corinthians 14:19, 26 & 31). However, based on 1 Timothy 2:12 where Paul states, 'I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man...' some churches today still forbid women to teach, especially where men are present. Another 'difficult' text, it initially appears to prohibit women from teaching explicitly, but Belleville comments of one particular translation, 'The NLT's "I do not let women teach" can be easily misunderstood as Paul's universal practice and overlooks the context of false teachers specific to the Ephesian situation.'. <sup>109</sup> As within the Corinthian church, correct contextualisation is vital.

Paul wrote to Timothy about sound doctrine and being aware of false teaching that could infiltrate the Ephesian church, (1 Timothy 1:3-11, 6:3-4). There was much witchcraft/sorcery

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<sup>103</sup> Bayes, p.116.

<sup>104</sup> Bayes, p.116.

<sup>105</sup> Bayes, p.116.

<sup>106</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiv.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. Matthew 7:29, Mark 10:17, Luke 3:12, John 3:2.

<sup>108</sup> Hirsch, p.112, brackets mine.

<sup>109</sup> Belleville, p.57.



(Acts 19:17-20) in the city and the cult of Artemis/Diana was prevalent. This cult promoted the supremacy of women, treating some men as temple sex slaves who 'worshipped' domineering women as goddesses. They practised sordid sexual rites and taught that women did not even need men to reproduce. Some such women were coming to Christ, finding a new way of life and freedom in the church but, unfortunately, brought with them their misguided cultish doctrine. The influence of this Artemis cult was 'likely a key factor: The female was considered superior to the male,'<sup>110</sup> a concept as inconsistent with a biblical understanding of gender equality as the notion that the male is superior because he was created first. The legend of Artemis taught that when she was born to the gods Zeus and Leto, and helped her mother birth her male twin Apollo, 'Not only did she have the priority over her brother but over the other male gods,'<sup>111</sup> which is perhaps why Paul re-emphasises the order of creation from the Judaic-Christian tradition (1 Tim 2:13-14), that Adam preceded Eve in Genesis 2, where there is no sense of Eve's inferiority to Adam, either. Women were not first chronologically, or in terms of superiority, and Paul does not permit *these* women to promote *that* teaching.

Belleville suggests, 'A reasonable conjecture is that the women of Ephesus... were trying to gain the advantage over the men by teaching in a dictatorial fashion',<sup>112</sup> hence Paul's desire that they learn with a quiet demeanour, like the Corinthian women, where 'quiet' refers to a peaceful attitude, not silence (v.11). Women should also not 'lord it over' men if they did teach them. Lu observes that when women, or indeed men, assume power over others, 'presumptions of superiority and inferiority contradict the gospel message of love and grace, the good news of setting the oppressed free,'<sup>113</sup> but the text is not an absolute for women never to teach.

The issue of female 'authority' and, therefore, women in leadership positions should be explored further. Giesler asks, 'Does the Bible limit the ministry of women?' and his short answer is, 'not at all.'<sup>114</sup> Initially he seems supportive of women in all ministry roles/APEST functions, but as his discussion progresses he seems to contradict himself. Appealing to significant hermeneutical principles, his first six assertions support women exercising ministerial roles.<sup>115</sup> He alludes to the equality of men and women in both creation (Gen 1:27) and redemption; the fact that gifts are not organised by gender; the history of women leaders throughout both testaments; Jesus' endorsement of female disciples; and women's 'silence' *not* equating to non-participation in ministry. His final two points, however, reveal the underlying complementarianism familiar amongst Southern evangelicals in the west (USA). Despite implying that the Bible does not limit the ministry of women, Giesler then states that women should be limited in 'leadership' and 'authority', writing, 'male headship and leadership is not simply a cultural matter... evident by the fact that it is based on the very order of creation',<sup>116</sup> a view which seems distinctly opposed to his own earlier affirmation of Deborah (Judges 4:4) as the leader/judge of Israel being an argument for *not* limiting the roles

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<sup>110</sup> Belleville, p.61.

<sup>111</sup> Belleville, p.61, and Kip Smith, *A Fresh Look at Women in Ministry: The Hermeneutical Oddity of 1 Timothy 2:12* (Catonsville, MD: Last Mile Books, 2020) pp.66-70.

<sup>112</sup> Belleville, p.61.

<sup>113</sup> Lu, p.9.

<sup>114</sup> Giesler, p.497.

<sup>115</sup> Giesler, p.497-499. Giesler makes eight points supporting his argument that the Bible does not limit women's ministries, yet point seven (p.498) clearly portrays his theology as complementarian regarding male authority/female submission, and point eight implies that the main function of women is to produce offspring.

<sup>116</sup> Giesler, p.498.

of women, even in positions of leadership and authority. He discusses childbirth, implying that this is women's true role and suggests 'The fact that men cannot have babies is not demeaning to their humanity or their role in the family. It is simply that God has not granted them this function but a different one.'<sup>117</sup> This initially reads as self-deprecating of males to accept the situation, but also implies that a woman's primary function is to reproduce, which takes no account of childless women, and re-opens the discussion of 'general' female submission to men. Whilst recognising Mary for her role as Jesus' mother, Giesler seems to patronisingly limit women further when he states that God, 'through the birth and nurturing process, endowed woman with the most marvelous role in forming all human beings, including every man.'<sup>118</sup> Confusingly, he summarises of women that 'God has... bestowed upon them the gifts of the spirit (1 Cor. 12; 14; Rom. 12) whereby they can edify the body of Christ, including prophecy (cf. Acts 2:17-18, 21:9) and teaching (Acts 18:26, Titus 2:4)',<sup>119</sup> whilst maintaining that they should not hold positions of authority or leadership.

When interpreting Paul's words that women should not 'have authority over a man', biblical language must be considered again. There are various Greek words for 'authority', e.g. *exousia* (meaning the 'exercise of power') but this is not the word used by Paul here. He uses the word *authentein* which carries the connotation of seizing authority or exercising illegitimate, usurped authority, a principle which arguably should apply to all. Guthrie elucidates that 'in public meetings Christian women must refrain from laying down the law to men and hence are enjoined to silence.'<sup>120</sup> In practice, Paul is probably saying that these 'new' women had no right to attempt to usurp apostolic authority and doctrine because the apostles had already originated the church's doctrine. The cultists should not be allowed to reinterpret the foundational teaching in the church. Paul's statement 'I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man' is perhaps better understood as 'I do not permit a woman (from the cult of Artemis) to teach false beliefs (that woman is superior to man), to originate apostolic doctrine, or to usurp apostolic authority, 'lording it over' men when they do teach.'

Paul certainly would not want uneducated, aggressive women (or men) to perpetuate poor doctrine, ungodly gender views, or challenge the order of creation within the church. He is evidently opposed to false doctrine and usurped authority, not to godly women teaching Christian truth. Belleville asks, 'What then is the restriction? ...It can't be women teaching *per se*, since Paul commands Cretan women... to "teach others what is good" (Titus 2:3-5; cf. Acts 18:26).'

<sup>121</sup> Mounce concurs that 1 Timothy 2:12 'cannot be a blanket prohibition of women teaching anyone... The context thus limits the universal application.'<sup>122</sup> Believing that there is nothing in the text to suggest that Paul's statements refer either to a commandment from God, or to the *permanent* prohibition of females teaching, Morledge suggests it should be held in balance with 'yet another directive of Paul, whereby men *and women are to teach* and

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<sup>117</sup> Giesler, p.498.

<sup>118</sup> Giesler, p.499.

<sup>119</sup> Giesler, p.499.

<sup>120</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tynedale NT Commentaries (Leicester: IVP, 1957)

<sup>121</sup> Linda Belleville in Comfort, P.W., (Ed.), *Cornerstone Biblical Commentaries, vol 17;: 1 Timothy*, Carol Stream, IL: Tynedale House, 2009) p.57.

<sup>122</sup> W.D. Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 46, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000) p.123.

admonish one another, in the local church... Colossians 3:16.’<sup>123</sup> He adds, ‘That all believers, including men and women, are encouraged to teach one another, is an idea that has universal scope and application,’<sup>124</sup> and is, again, prescriptive *for* the church. In Romans 12:5-6 Paul insists that ‘we have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us...’, agreeing with Ephesians 4:7. Romans 12:7 similarly encourages believers that if their gift is teaching, ‘then teach’, without reference to gender. Peter also reinforces the use of gifts by *all* believers in 1 Peter 4:8-10, ‘Each one should use whatever gift he (*or she*) has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms’, after declaring that *all* believers are part of the ‘holy priesthood,’<sup>125</sup> (1 Peter 2:5).

Paul highly respects Timothy’s female relatives who have passed on (taught) their faith to him. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 encourages Timothy to continue in what he has learned ‘because you know those from whom you learned it...’, which, presumably, refers to the women who taught him his faith, not Paul or the other apostles, because Paul continues, ‘...from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures,’ and ‘I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also,’ (2 Timothy 1:5). The women who had taught Timothy scripture in his childhood are admired. In Titus 2:3, too, women are encouraged to ‘teach what is good’, and while it may be perceived that women are only to teach other women ‘female’ matters, the instruction is about behaving morally so that the word of God won’t be maligned. The controversy regarding teaching, then, seems less about gender and more about teaching accurately, with a correct doctrinal understanding. Paul does support women teachers, providing they teach accurately and with humility, a rule which should arguably apply to men as well. He does not suggest that godly women should not teach others the ways of God. If he had done so he would have contradicted his own friendships, beliefs and ethos. In view of Paul’s attitude towards women generally, then, we should expect to find some women demonstrating the APEST ‘teacher’ role within the New Testament church and beyond. It makes sense to reconsider whether today’s church correctly interprets the spirit of the Pauline epistles, which appear *not* to have made perpetual rules about the use of women’s gifts after all because, as Tidball comments, a ‘dogmatic superstructure that forbids women from being pastors and teachers today is built on a very flimsy foundation’<sup>126</sup> indeed.

### **APEST thinking**

Having described the Ephesians 4:11 gifts, Hirsch firmly asserts that APEST gifts are the way in which Jesus is now present in the body, stating that APEST ‘*is* Jesus’ ministry in and through the local ecclesia... the fivefold ministry is the way, or mode, by which Jesus is actually present in the church, and by which he extends his own ministry through us.’<sup>127</sup> He believes that the distinctive gifts of every individual in the church are ‘actually derived from the purposes and functions first given to the whole Body of Christ as an entirety...’<sup>128</sup> and are expressions of the purposes ‘coded into the whole church by Jesus when he bequeathed APEST to the church in his ascension.’<sup>129</sup> If this is the case, then logically it follows that each member of the body,

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<sup>123</sup> Morledge.

<sup>124</sup> Morledge.

<sup>125</sup> Italics/brackets mine.

<sup>126</sup> Tidball, p.264.

<sup>127</sup> Hirsch, p.8.

<sup>128</sup> Hirsch, p.16.

<sup>129</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiv.

regardless of gender, has a responsibility to function according to the gifts they have been given. Ephesians 4:1-16, is regarded as the key to fivefold thinking, which Hirsch posits 'unlocks the powerful 5Q system coded into the core of the church's being.'<sup>130</sup> Using the language of 'DNA', 'code', 'default settings' some and 'genetics', he emphasises the importance of 'Ephesians' to the whole church, suggesting it 'presents us with something of the default settings coded in by God on a primordial level.'<sup>131</sup> This is worded somewhat strongly, perhaps, but APEST thinking may indeed provide us with

'a much more legitimate understanding of ministry than the disastrously reduced one we currently have among Western churches, which have almost universally narrowed ministry to suit (APE)ST understandings of the church.'<sup>132</sup>

Believing that this kind of 'asymmetry' in the church has caused such a negative impact upon it, we might ask if this is also the case where there seems to be gender imbalance in ministry.

### **AN EXAMINATION OF NOTABLE NEW TESTAMENT WOMEN**

Throughout the gospels and other accounts in the New Testament, myriad women are presented as involved with the ministry of Jesus and the Early Church in a wide variety of ways. On occasions, statements appear in the text which may seem insignificant, but it is important to examine these seemingly 'throw away' comments in scripture to correctly understand the cultural context in which they appear. For example, in Mark 15:40-41 and Luke 8:1-3, 'the women' are noted for their involvement with, and as, disciples of Jesus. Mark notes the commitment of the women to Jesus, even at his crucifixion:

*'Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. <sup>41</sup>In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.'* (Italics mine).

Luke's descriptions also highlight the inclusion of women travelling with the disciples:

'Jesus travelled about... proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup>Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. *These women were helping to support them out of their own means.'* (Italics mine).

Storkey stresses that when Luke draws attention to these women, 'we know he is breaking the mould... The women who accompanied Jesus on his travels were no less significant than the male disciples,'<sup>133</sup> presenting a radical challenge to patriarchal attitudes in Jesus' era, since women following an itinerant rabbi was previously unheard of. Storkey further comments, 'we need to understand the significance of this mixed group of itinerant followers. It was unusual and counter-cultural, to say the least.'<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Hirsch, pp.3-4.

<sup>131</sup> Hirsch, p.4.

<sup>132</sup> Hirsch, p.16.

<sup>133</sup> Storkey, p.103.

<sup>134</sup> Storkey, p.104.

### Lukan writings

Whilst all four gospel writers make mention of *'the women'*, *'some women'* or *'many women'*, the most prolific in naming them is Luke, whose accounts of the disciples of both gender extend into 'Acts'. The beginning of Luke's gospel is striking for the positive accounts of three women in particular; Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, Mary, mother of Jesus (Luke 1), and the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36-38), especially for their faith and prophetic utterances. When Elizabeth greeted Mary she was 'filled with the Holy Spirit (and) in a loud voice exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear,' (Luke 1:39-45). Mary responds with a song, prophetically claiming that she will be called 'blessed' for generations to come, (Luke 1:46-49). Anna, on seeing the infant Jesus presented in the temple, 'gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Israel,' (Luke 2:36-38). These three women provide significant examples of those exercising the role of prophets.

Luke's treatment of women is significant as, in several pairings of men and women, he seems to portray women more favourably. For example, when Zechariah is foretold of the birth of his son, his response is doubtful, 'How can I be sure of this?' (Luke 1:18) but Mary, when told she would conceive the Son of God, responds, 'May it be to me as you have said,' (Luke 1:38). During a meal at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50), Jesus shows respect for a 'sinful woman', commending her for her faith, act of love, and gratitude, when she anoints him. When Jesus challenges Simon's negative assumptions about the woman, and himself as a prophet (v.39), Simon seems only to grudgingly admit that those with the biggest debt cancelled are the most grateful, (v.43). Along with other contrasting pairings in Luke's gospel, such as the synagogue ruler and the woman with a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:10-17), and wealthy men *versus* a poor but generous widow (Luke 21:1-4), a pattern emerges of 'the place of the transformation of women within the dawning kingdom of God,'<sup>135</sup> contributing to a revolutionary perspective on female disciples.

Luke also reveals the evangelistic role of women. In Luke 23:55-56, 'The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee' witness Jesus' burial in Joseph's tomb and prepare 'spices and perfumes' to anoint his body. Luke 24:1-12 records their discovery of the empty tomb and an angelic encounter which informs them 'He is not here, he is risen!' (v.6). Luke writes that the angel reminded these women of what Jesus had said about himself regarding his death and resurrection, again confirming that they had indeed been treated as equal disciples whom Jesus had taught. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and 'others with them' become the first people to proclaim the resurrection to the other disciples, (Luke 24:9-11), even though their testimony is not readily accepted, (v.11). This only reinforces the way in which the patriarchal men of the era dismissed female testimony, yet Peter arguably leads the way in giving them equal status by investigating the empty tomb for himself, (Luke 24:12), signifying the start of the turning tide towards the inclusion of women in ministry. Peter would be the man to interpret the events of Pentecost as God's affirmation of women in ministry, and later the inclusion of gentiles in salvation (Acts 10). Through Peter, Luke seems to be at pains to stress the inclusive nature of the Kingdom of God and the continuing ministry of Jesus throughout the whole church.

Joanna is a significant woman, who had experienced healing from Jesus, being 'cured of evil spirits and diseases,' (Luke 8:1-3 & 24:10). Luke 8:3 provides more information about her; she

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<sup>135</sup> Richards and Richards, p.301.

was the 'wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household' and she helped to support Jesus and the disciples financially. This is significant because 'if it was unusual for single women to be in Jesus' group of followers, it was unheard of for married women to be following a roving rabbi. Joanna stands out as someone who broke with tradition on a number of counts...'.<sup>136</sup> As Bauckham observes, Joanna's association with Jesus should 'probably be understood as socially scandalous to the elite circles from which she comes.'<sup>137</sup>

In Graeco-Roman households, under Roman law, the eldest male was the head of the household, the '*paterfamilias*', and 'all other members of the household were under his authority, including children, grandchildren, slaves and even employees.'<sup>138</sup> Joanna was married but she may have spent less time than 'normally' prescribed for wives on her domestic duties. It was abnormal for any woman, let alone the wife of an important official, to follow a rabbi and one wonders if her absence from Herod's household was noticed. Addressing this, Storkey writes,

'we can assume Chuza knew where she was... if this had been any kind of defiant act towards her husband, she would not have been his wife for very long! A patriarchal society did not encourage men to tolerate independence in their wives and made it relatively easy to divorce them.'<sup>139</sup>

It is possible that Chuza was unusually supportive of his wife's choices and recognised Jesus as someone worthy of Joanna's time. Perhaps there was an element of gratitude which motivated his approval of her ministry amongst the other disciples. That Joanna contributed financially towards Jesus and his followers, implies that she either had her own income, which was unlikely, or that Chuza allowed her to share his. If the latter is true, then 'we have an extraordinary reversal of patriarchal values and a strikingly liberated marriage,'<sup>140</sup> which perhaps indicates the beginning of the paradigm shift Jesus instigated regarding women. Noting Joanna's inclusion in a group with Susanna and Mary Magdalene, as well as with the male disciples, Witherington shrewdly observes that Luke provides evidence of 'how the Gospel breaks down class and economic divisions, as well as social barriers, and reconciles men and women from all walks of life into one community,'<sup>141</sup> which one hopes remains the case in the church today. Regarding the intriguing Joanna, however, a further question remains, (to be addressed later); is she the 'Junia' whom Paul mentions as a woman 'outstanding among the apostles' in Romans 16:7?

'The women' feature again in Acts 1:14, where the disciples 'all joined together constantly in prayer, along with *the women* and Mary the mother of Jesus.' Richards highlights the significance of Luke's inclusion again stating, 'While modern readers would likely pass over these two words, they reflect a radical change in first-century attitude. Believers had gathered

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<sup>136</sup> Storkey, p.104.

<sup>137</sup> Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) p.120.

<sup>138</sup> Richard S. Ascough, *What Are They Saying About (WATSA)... The Formation of Pauline Churches?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998) p.6.

<sup>139</sup> Storkey, p.105.

<sup>140</sup> Storkey, p.106.

<sup>141</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and their Roles as Reflected in His Earthly Life* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) p.118.

for prayer and worship, and the text specifically says that “the women” were among them.’<sup>142</sup> Until this point, when Jewish men gathered for prayer or study, a minyan (ten men) was required for Judaic worship to take place, and women did not count, but they certainly counted amongst the disciples waiting for Pentecost. The fact that Peter’s message was preached where it could be heard by both men and women indicates that ‘the new freedom Christ offered to women had begun to be experienced,’<sup>143</sup> and in Acts 9:36-43, Tabitha (or Dorcas) is specifically called ‘a disciple’, demonstrating how female discipleship continued into the era of the emerging New Testament church.

Two further female disciples prominent in Luke’s writing demand consideration, Lydia and Priscilla. Lydia is introduced in Acts 16:14 as ‘a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshipper of God,’ which, explains Wright, suggests that she was an entrepreneur, ‘a business woman, and independent figure... in other words she was working at the top end of the market... the Karen Millen of northern Greece.’<sup>144</sup> The account is unusual as Luke and Paul ‘expected to find a place of prayer’ outside of the city gate by a river (Acts 16:13). It is unknown whether they intentionally sought out a location where women were likely to gather but they certainly impacted the women gathered there.

After hearing Paul’s message on the riverbank in Philippi, Lydia and her household were baptised (Acts 16:15). Ascough notes that if no male *paterfamilias* were present a woman could ‘assume the headship of a household,’<sup>145</sup> and adds that ‘If the head of the household converted to a different way of life... he or she did so with the whole household,’<sup>146</sup> which in Lydia’s case then became a centre of hospitality for fellow believers, (Acts 16:15 & 40). It could be argued that as the head of her household, Lydia was a natural leader, as other members of her household followed her example in baptism, but it may have been the case that this was simply expected of them. Paul and Silas found fellowship in Lydia’s home where Christian believers began to gather. Ascough suggests that without Lydia ‘there may well have been no Philippian Jesus community. She was a key player in Paul’s social network – one of the pivotal sisters of the faith,’<sup>147</sup> but this neither confirms nor denies whether she functioned with a specific APEST role. She may have been considered a ‘shepherd/pastor’, by virtue of gathering people together in her home, but this does not necessarily mean she was responsible for their ongoing discipleship. Alternatively, though, as the first recorded ‘convert’ of Paul’s mission within Europe, Lydia may be regarded as an ‘apostle’, since she established a base for the church in her city. Modern day pioneers who establish such bases may be considered in a similar light, although not necessarily given the title ‘apostle’, again reinforcing the view that Ephesians 4 gifts are perhaps best understood as functions.

Fitting the model of an APEST teacher, and possibly an apostle too, Priscilla is notable. Priscilla and husband Aquila were tentmakers with whom Paul stayed in Corinth. They had relocated there from Italy because Claudius ‘had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome,’ (Acts 18:1-3). Taking them with him when he later sailed for Syria, Paul left the couple in Ephesus, (Acts 18:19), where they heard fellow Jewish believer Apollos teach ‘accurately’ about Jesus but

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<sup>142</sup> Richards and Richards, p.253.

<sup>143</sup> Richards and Richards, p.253.

<sup>144</sup> N.T. Wright, *Acts for Everyone: Part 2 Chapters 13-28* (London: SPCK, 2008) p.63.

<sup>145</sup> Ascough, *WATSA*, p.6.

<sup>146</sup> Ascough, *WATSA*, p.6.

<sup>147</sup> Richard S. Ascough, *Lydia: Paul’s Cosmopolitan Hostess*, Paul’s Social Network Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009) p.1.

found he 'knew only the baptism of John,' (Acts 18:25). Consequently, the couple 'explained to him the way of God more adequately,' (Acts 18:26). Some scholars suggest that Priscilla's name repeatedly appearing first (Acts 18:18, 19 & 26, Romans 16:3 and 2 Timothy 4:19) 'may indicate the prominent role of Priscilla or her higher social position,'<sup>148</sup> but, regardless, Paul describes the couple as 'fellow-workers in Christ Jesus', (Romans 16:3), giving them the same status as Epaphroditus, whom he describes as a 'fellow soldier', (Philippians 2:25).

Paul regarded Priscilla as an equal, respecting her as a teacher, fellow-minister and a leader, or at least facilitator of, household churches in both Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:19) and Ephesus. As with Lydia, if an expression of the gifts of an apostle is the ability to establish 'local churches', then Priscilla may be considered an influential APEST figure. Her teaching role was perhaps only one aspect of a wider apostolic gift.

Completing this consideration of the women in Lukan writings, Luke mentions that in Thessalonica 'not a few prominent women' were persuaded by Paul's teaching, becoming followers of Jesus (Acts 17:4). Acts 17:12 also records that many Jews in Berea 'believed', along with 'a number of prominent Greek women.'. Little is known about these women but in Acts 21:8-9, the women finally mentioned by Luke, are prophets. He simply writes, 'we... stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist... He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.'. That Luke describes their prophetic ministry again reveals his sense of equality between the genders.

Differing from the synoptic gospel writers, John pays the most attention to the household of Lazarus, Martha and Mary,<sup>149</sup> although, significantly, it is Luke, again, who seems to imply that Martha is unusually the head of this household, rather than her brother Lazarus, (Luke 10:38).<sup>150</sup> Luke also points out that Jesus encouraged Mary for 'sitting at the Lord's feet listening to what he said,' (Luke 10:39-42), in the way that a male Jewish disciple would have with their rabbi, reinforcing how Jesus challenged the *status quo* regarding female disciples. However, if Luke most clearly portrays women in the roles of disciples, heads of households, and facilitators of 'house churches', or exercising the gifts of prophets, pastors and teachers, then John is, arguably, the writer who most notably presents women as 'apostles' and 'evangelists'.

### **John's Gospel**

Two women in John's gospel particularly stand out as evangelists. Firstly, John gives an exclusive account of an exchange between Jesus and a Samaritan woman around Jacob's well near Sychar, (John 4:1-30, 39-42). This interaction highlights the racial and religious tensions between Jews and Samaritans, surprising both the woman and Jesus' disciples that he chooses to engage with her, (4:9 & 27). Evans reports that Bultmann finds the disciples' amazement interesting, 'not so much because Jesus talked with a Samaritan, but because he talked with a woman,'<sup>151</sup> which was a 'radical reversal of normal standards.'<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *The Compact NIV Study Bible*, New International Version, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), footnote p.1649.

<sup>149</sup> John 11:1-44, 12:1-11.

<sup>150</sup> Luke writes, 'Martha opened her home to him.'

<sup>151</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) p.193, in Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998) p.52

<sup>152</sup> Bultmann, p.180, in Evans, p.150.



By virtue of her being alone at the well at 'the sixth hour' (v.6), we can assume that this woman was something of a social pariah and that her circumstances had made her an outcast. Jesus is seen to challenge, by his actions, the prejudice and the social 'barriers' which had existed due to race, religion, status and, perhaps most significantly here, gender.

The woman recognises Jesus as a prophet (v.19), and, significantly, it is to a woman that he chooses to reveal his messianic identity (v.29). John later writes of Martha also having a messianic revelation, (John 11:27). Evans relates this to Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16, which, she observes was 'significantly related to his position of leadership in the church,'<sup>153</sup> implying that these women were also perhaps future 'leaders'. Richards comments, 'To think of women as disciples in training for leadership violated Jewish custom, but Jesus broke the mold [sic] in his relationships with women.'<sup>154</sup> The Samaritan woman is so impacted by her encounter with Jesus that she rushes to tell her experience to the very villagers who had scorned her, urging, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?', (John 4:28-30). Hirsch comments that 'the evangelist is the storyteller, the all-important recruiter to the cause, the naturally infectious person who is able to enlist people into what God is doing in and through the church,'<sup>155</sup> and John 4:39 records that many Samaritans 'believed in him (Jesus) because of the woman's testimony.'. According to APEST thinking this woman typifies the evangelist, exemplifying that role. Storkey affirms,

'Her own encounter with Jesus has transformed her into an evangelist. Her words are so persuasive that her neighbours don't hesitate to follow her back to the well... (and) they confirm for themselves that Jesus is indeed the Anointed One (John 4:39-42)'.<sup>156</sup>

Witherington concurs, noting, 'this woman's witness was fruitful... as one of Jesus' witnesses, through whom others are led to him.'<sup>157</sup> We might also see exemplified in this unnamed woman the role of an apostle, as she shared the 'good news' with a group of previously 'unreached' people. Initially Jesus had asked her to call her husband (John 4:16) but instead she ends up calling the entire town to see Jesus for themselves, (John 4:29-30). Although in a sense she 'sends' herself to these townspeople, she breaks 'new ground' in doing so, which is part of Paul's apostolic ambition expressed in Romans 15:20, '...to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.'

The second evangelistic woman of note in John's gospel is Mary Magdalene, who is sometimes referred to as 'an apostle to the apostles'.<sup>158</sup> In Matthew 28:1-10, an angel, and the resurrected Jesus himself, commission the women at the tomb to tell the other disciples that he had risen from the dead but John deliberately portrays Mary Magdalene as the *first* person to proclaim the 'good news' of Jesus' resurrection, (John 20:10-18). Exemplifying the role of an evangelist, a herald of 'good news', Mary was also a leader amongst the disciples. Her name is used more frequently 'than most of the twelve apostles',<sup>159</sup> and she appears in nine New Testament lists of women, where 'in all but one her name heads the list, indicating her

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<sup>153</sup> Evans, p.52.

<sup>154</sup> Richards and Richards, p.122.

<sup>155</sup> Hirsch, p.xxxiv.

<sup>156</sup> Storkey, p.94.

<sup>157</sup> Witherington, p.61.

<sup>158</sup> E.g. Carolyn Custis James, *Lost Women of the Bible: Finding Strength and Significance Through Their Stories* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005) p.199.

<sup>159</sup> Custis James, p.186.

prominence.’.<sup>160</sup> That Mary calls Jesus ‘Rabboni’ (John 20:16) provides evidence for Jesus’ radical attitude towards, and inclusion of, women amongst those he taught. Of choosing her as the first witness of Jesus’ resurrection, Richards comments, ‘It is forever stamped on the pages of sacred history that it was not a man, but Mary who was granted this privilege.’.<sup>161</sup>

Interestingly, despite Jesus appearing ‘first to Mary Magdalene’ (Mark 16:9), Mark records that the disciples did not believe her (Mark 16:10-11) until he appeared to the ‘Eleven’ himself, when he rebuked them ‘for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen,’ (Mark 16:14). Luke also comments that Mary Magdalene was among the first to inform the disciples but they ‘did not believe the women because their words seemed like nonsense to them,’ (Luke 24:9-11). Witherington notes that ‘Jesus’ estimation of the worth and validity of a woman’s word of testimony was higher than that of most, if not all of His contemporaries.’.<sup>162</sup> In the church today, we may wonder why women’s ministries are so often disregarded, yet scripture itself implies that this may not be an uncommon response amongst male Christ-followers!

Mary Magdalene seems to fit the criteria for ‘apostleship’ and church leadership, according to Acts 1:21-22 - someone who had been with Jesus throughout his ministry and was ‘a witness of his resurrection.’. It is interesting that despite Mary’s obvious pre-eminence as a resurrection witness, the men of the early church replaced Judas Iscariot with another man, perhaps indicating that Jesus’ attitude towards women as leaders had not yet been fully embraced by the developing church. Richards reflects, ‘It’s curious that if Mary Magdalene were with us today, many church pulpits would be closed to her.’.<sup>163</sup>

### **Paul and women**

Luke’s accounts clarify that Paul appreciated his female ‘co-workers in Christ’, accepted their hospitality, encouraged churches to meet in their households, and used their spheres of influence as a means to pioneer churches throughout the gentile Roman Empire. Cohick notes that ‘Lydia’s status as Paul’s benefactor would make a leadership role in the church likely,’<sup>164</sup> (Acts 16:12-40). Examining Romans 16:1-16 as a key Pauline text relevant to this discussion, we find ample evidence for Paul’s encouragement of women in ministry and leadership, despite the previously mentioned ‘difficult’ Pauline statements. In his closing greetings to the church in Rome Paul mentions many significant women.<sup>165</sup> Priscilla, Paul’s ‘co-worker in Christ’ (Romans 16:3) has already been acknowledged but new to the list of notable women are Junia, Phoebe, Mary of Rome, Tryphena and Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus’ mother, Julia and Nereus’ sister and some further unnamed women meeting with Asyncritus *et al.* In contrast to the presentation of women in the gospels, where they are largely, though not exclusively, portrayed in the ‘rural peasant culture of Roman Palestine,’<sup>166</sup> Osiek observes that ‘the women of Paul’s frame of reference belong to the larger urban world of the predominantly

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<sup>160</sup> Custis James, p.185.

<sup>161</sup> Richards and Richards, p.125.

<sup>162</sup> Witherington, p.125.

<sup>163</sup> Richards and Richards, p.126.

<sup>164</sup> Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009) p.307.

<sup>165</sup> For a full citation see Romans 16:1-16, Appendix A.

<sup>166</sup> Carolyn Osiek, ‘The Women in Paul’s Life’, *Biblical Theological Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture*, 42:90, Sage Publications, (2012), 90-95, p.90.

eastern Roman Empire.’.<sup>167</sup> Ascough agrees, writing, ‘Paul considered women equal to men in undertaking the propagation of the Jesus cult in urban centres in the Roman world.’.<sup>168</sup>

Paul refers to several women as his ‘co-workers’, particularly ‘Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchreae,’ who is referred to in the same terms as male deacons elsewhere in his letters, (Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8- 10). This was clearly a leadership position, though not an APEST gift, recognised by the New Testament church, and it seems highly likely that ‘there was no distinction seen between the office of male and female deacons.’.<sup>169</sup> In Philippians 4:2-3, mention is also made of Euodia & Syntyche, women who have ‘contended’ at Paul’s side ‘in the cause the gospel’, and are therefore ‘evangelists’, whom he includes among his ‘fellow-workers’. Tryphena and Tryphosa, along with Persis, are also lauded as women who ‘work hard in the Lord’ and for the advancement of the gospel and the church.

Regarding both Junia and Andronicus, Bruce comments,

‘they were “of note among the apostles”, which probably means that they were not merely well known to the apostles but were apostles themselves... and eminent ones at that; they had been Christians from a very early date, since before Paul’s own conversion,’<sup>170</sup>

which is significant in the light of APEST being distributed amongst the whole body of Christ. Bauckham, who argues that Junia definitely *is* ‘Luke’s Joanna’,<sup>171</sup> (partly on the basis that ‘Junia is the Latin name of the Hebrew Joanna,’<sup>172</sup>), and Bailey, concur, claiming we have ‘near certitude in perceiving Junia to be a female apostle.’.<sup>173</sup> Cohick adds that Joanna/ Junia’s wealthy background and status may have contributed to her being recognised as a leader in the church, because she would ‘likely be fluent in both Aramaic and Greek, and perhaps Latin,’<sup>174</sup> useful skills for an evangelist or apostle spreading the gospel throughout the Graeco-Roman world. It seems conclusive, to Bailey, and others, that women ‘appear on nearly all, if not all, levels of leadership in the NT Church.’.<sup>175</sup> Ascough comments that the Romans 16 women ‘represent only a few examples of what must have been a greater number of women among Paul’s wide network of colleagues and co-workers,’<sup>176</sup> while Cray observes, ‘...we have the church planting apostolic co-workers ...(and) women were active in Christian leadership... Jesus, and Paul, travelled with women as well as men in their ministry teams.’.<sup>177</sup>

Given that Paul highly regards his female fellow workers it seems unlikely that he would contradict himself by distinguishing between the gifts of men and women in the churches he planted. His claim in Galatians 3:26-28, ‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor

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<sup>167</sup> Osiek, p.91.

<sup>168</sup> Ascough, *Lydia*, p.95.

<sup>169</sup> Evans, p.125.

<sup>170</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tynedale NT Commentaries (Leicester: IVP, 1963) p.272.

<sup>171</sup> Richard J. Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) pp.167-179 & 184.

<sup>172</sup> Cohick, p.315.

<sup>173</sup> Bailey, p.5.

<sup>174</sup> Cohick, p.315.

<sup>175</sup> Bailey, p.5.

<sup>176</sup> Ascough, *Lydia*, p.95.

<sup>177</sup> Cray, p.12.

free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus...’, seems to further support his view that men and women are equal in Christ, although Watson contends that these verses are not about gender hierarchy, nor an argument with which Egalitarians can combat patriarchy.

Summarising the New Testament women who notably demonstrate the APEST roles/functions then, we may regard Junia, Priscilla, Lydia and Mary Magdalene as Apostles (possibly with the addition of the female Samaritan evangelist); Elizabeth, Mary, Anna and Philip’s daughters as prophets; the Samaritan woman, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Euodia and Syntyche as Evangelists; Lydia, and perhaps Phoebe, as potentially apostolic Shepherd/Pastors; and Priscilla, Lois and Eunice as teachers. With others in various roles mentioned by Paul (like deacon Phoebe) there is no shortage of evidence suggesting that there were many women in the New Testament church who demonstrated each of the Ephesians 4:11 gifts. To Bailey, it seems abundantly clear that many biblical women occupied ‘a remarkable range of clearly identifiable positions,’<sup>178</sup> including those of teachers, elders and deacons, prophets and apostles.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH TODAY.**

Having considered how scripture presents women involved in all aspects of church life and leadership, it is important to consider the implications of this examination for the church today. Recognising the relative limitations of this study, I agree with Witherington that ‘Only after a comprehensive exegesis of the all the New Testament material can the hermeneutical question of its applicability to the modern church situation be approached,’<sup>179</sup> but some conclusions may be drawn from this brief analysis.

Firstly, having concluded that Ephesians is generally prescriptive, and a somewhat ‘constitutional’ document for the church, it must be applied to today’s context as much as to the one in which it was written. DeSilva writes, ‘Ephesians 4:11-16 articulates a healthy model for ministry, one that needs to be universally grasped and enacted if the church hopes to keep up with the needs of the world.’<sup>180</sup> The roles and functions of Ephesians 4:11 should, therefore, be recognised and incorporated into today’s leadership structures if the church is to function in the ‘fullness’ of 4:13. The implication is, as Hirsch states, that ‘if APEST is part of our foundational theological DNA... then we as faithful leaders are *obliged* to factor it into our thinking, our practices, and the very leadership of the churches we are blessed to lead.’<sup>181</sup> He asserts ‘there has never been a Jesus movement with long-term societal impact that did not also have the fivefold fully operative in its organization and among its members,’<sup>182</sup> which is a bold claim, but the inference is that APEST is still vital for the church to sustain balanced leadership.

Secondly, if Christ has apportioned APEST, as he determines, amongst *all* people in the church, women should naturally be incorporated into APEST thinking. Storkey sadly observes ‘...although we can find Christ’s radicalism about gender mirrored in churches throughout

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<sup>178</sup> Bailey, p.2.

<sup>179</sup> Witherington, p.131.

<sup>180</sup> David A. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: Sage, 2004) p.731, in Bayes p.114.

<sup>181</sup> Hirsch, p.5.

<sup>182</sup> Hirsch, p.15.

Christian history, these have often been groups that have broken with the mainstream in order to liberate their women,<sup>183</sup> which invites ‘the mainstream’ to reconsider the place of women in church leadership. It may be that many Christian women today do exercise APEST ministries but have been labelled differently to avoid controversy. For example, it may be the case that ‘apostles’ are more colloquially known as ‘Church planters’ or ‘Pioneers’, though this may be equally true about contemporary male ‘apostles’. Interestingly, women are frequently not allowed to speak/preach/teach amongst their own congregations but may be encouraged to travel as missionaries, teaching indigenous peoples the gospel and scripture. As Blomberg writes, ‘countless women from Western cultures have been permitted to preach, teach... and in general lead evangelical ministries... ‘on the mission field’ – when their sending churches would never permit such practices ‘back home’,<sup>184</sup> which is clearly a double standard. Within western church culture, it also seems that some complementarians, who strenuously object to women teaching, will allow them to teach in a ‘Sunday School’ context. If they insist that ‘biblical womanhood’ includes not having authority over males, and children are the church’s future leaders, there seems to be something inherently hypocritical about allowing women to influence the most vulnerable sector of the church family.

Having referred to ‘unbalanced’ churches as ‘diseased’, it might be argued that where approximately only 20.5 per cent of ministers in the UK are female,<sup>185</sup> for example, the lack of gender equality in ministry creates similar dis-ease within that body. (This, of course, only accounts for ‘professional ministers’ or clergy within mainstream denominations, not counting the prolific ministry of ‘lay’ women.) It is perhaps difficult to accept that many contemporary churches still regard women’s roles as secondary to those of men. If the ‘disease’ analogy rings true when there is an over-emphasis on the shepherd/pastor-teacher model which neglect the other three functions, it is also valid to assume that ‘imbalance/asymmetry’ may also occur in the church where one gender is not ‘permitted’ to function within their call or gifting. This imbalance in the church comes from what Hirsch calls ‘over-development of one or two functions (“precocious development”) or by overt lack of capacity due to... “disabled” functions,’<sup>186</sup> which needs re-examining and challenging. So too does a church without female leadership.

Thirdly, given the scriptural background of female prophets and other female biblical leadership roles elucidated here, it is, perhaps, difficult to appreciate a Patriarchal/ Complementarian view of women in leadership, or to comprehend a ‘backwards steps’ in today’s church regarding women with APEST gifts. As Morledge comments, ‘The practice of those, like Tim Challies, who only allows men to read Scripture publicly in church, seems really over the top... and without sufficient grounding in the Bible.’<sup>187</sup> In 2020 John MacArthur also sparked heated controversy about women in ministry and leadership by suggesting that Beth

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<sup>183</sup> Storkey, p.108.

<sup>184</sup> C.L. Blomberg in J.R. Beck and S.N. Gundry, (Eds) *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, Revised Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) p.127.

<sup>185</sup> Statistic represents a 2012 survey across UK mainstream denominations and independent churches and may have changed since then. <<https://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/women-in-ministry.cfm>> [Accessed 3 May 2021]

<sup>186</sup> Hirsch, p.11.

<sup>187</sup> Morledge.

Moore,<sup>188</sup> a prolific Bible teacher, and women like her should 'Go home.'. <sup>189</sup> Whilst this remains a prevailing attitude amongst many, this writer believes that there is a need to challenge the theology and praxis of church leadership in the light of the biblical precedence for equality in ministry and the use of APEST gifts. What if, as Barr asks, 'we heeded Beth Moore's plea to grapple with the entire texts of how women are portrayed throughout the Bible – not just in a few Pauline texts?'.<sup>190</sup> Arguably, as Storkey comments, 'We need to ask... why Jesus' challenge to patriarchal attitudes and control has still not filtered down in some areas of the Church two thousand years later.'. <sup>191</sup>

Finally, the biblical texts examined here elucidate how women bring significant contributions to the church and demonstrate that there are important 'jobs for the girls' undertaken throughout the whole of scripture. Perhaps another implication then, is that today's church needs to be more intentional about hearing the voice of its female members, in the same manner that Israel was exhorted to 'hear' Miriam. In Numbers 12:3, Miriam challenges, 'Has not the Lord spoken through us also?'. As Richards observes,

'Miriam's role as a prophetess and worship leader suggests that, while some denominations may have trouble with women holding important leadership positions, perhaps God does not... God speaks to the whole community of faith through women as well as through men.'<sup>192</sup>

Further, I believe it is not enough to accept women only in the traditional ministries of pastor/teachers. Even where churches and denominations have embraced ordained women, they are often limited to those roles, and very infrequently are regarded as apostles, prophets or evangelists, at least not in any official capacity. Tidball observes that leadership in the New Testament church was 'much more fluid and radical than it is in contemporary denominations,'<sup>193</sup> and scripture seems to clearly portray women fulfilling any and all of the leadership roles mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12, and in other scriptural lists of 'gifts/roles', such as Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:27-31. As Barr suggests, 'Jesus set women free a long time ago. Isn't it time for evangelical Christians to do the same?'.<sup>194</sup> Perhaps the implicit challenge is that the church needs to embrace a wider definition of 'ministers' and 'ministry gifts' to encompass the fivefold gifts Christ has graced to the church for its building up and maturity.

In conclusion, it may seem obvious to suggest that we need to recognise women who function with APEST gifts, in the church today, as much as the early church did, in equality with their male counterparts also expressing Ephesians 4:11 gifts. It is my belief that gender is, or at least should be, irrelevant in the exercising of gifts and ministries. The concluding thoughts here are straightforward: the implications of this study for the church are that we need the fivefold ministry to maintain healthy and balanced churches, ministries and leadership models, and we

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<sup>188</sup> 'Author and Speaker Beth Moore is a dynamic teacher whose conferences take her across the globe. She has written numerous bestselling books and Bible studies. She is also the founder and visionary of Living Proof Ministries based in Houston, TX.' <<https://www.lproof.org>> [Accessed 19 April 2021]

<sup>189</sup> 'John MacArthur Beth Moore Go Home', 18 October 2019, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeNKHqpBcgc>>, [Accessed 19 April 2021].

<sup>190</sup> Barr, p.217.

<sup>191</sup> Storkey, p.107.

<sup>192</sup> Richards and Richards, p.145.

<sup>193</sup> Tidball, p.264.

<sup>194</sup> Barr, p.218.

should allow women to fully participate in *all* aspects of ministry, including leadership, in response to the egalitarian nature of the distribution of gifts presented in Ephesians and other texts. Hirsch argues that an 'asymmetrical' church 'cannot do what Jesus did or what Jesus intends to do in and through it...' <sup>195</sup> and that it is 'only by activating the others (gifts and genders) missing from the equation that fullness and maturity of purpose can be attained.' <sup>196</sup>

The implications for the church today seem clear; we must neglect neither the fivefold ministry, nor the female contingent of the body of Christ, if the church is to be balanced and mature. The church should utilise APEST gifts and release women fully into these gifts and roles in the mainstream. Hirsch optimistically expresses, '...any embrace of the fivefold typology holds out huge promise for the systemic renewal of the Christian movement and its ministry,' <sup>197</sup> but the church, arguably, requires radical paradigm shifts in thinking about both gender equality and the APEST gifts, for the growth and renewal of the Church. When the contributions of New Testament women to leadership, patronage and demonstrable usage of APEST gifts are considered, we can conclude with Cohick that 'Women in the world of the earliest Christians offer us a portrait of possibilities,' <sup>198</sup> a portrait which the contemporary church would do well to recognise and replicate.

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<sup>195</sup> Hirsch, p.11.

<sup>196</sup> Hirsch, p.11, brackets mine.

<sup>197</sup> Hirsch, p.16

<sup>198</sup> Cohick, p.327.

### **APPENDIX A: New Testament references to 'gifts' (Bold type mine)**

These biblical references are provided in full for ease of reference, where full texts are not included in the body of this dissertation. Key names, words and themes are emboldened to demonstrate where the emphasis of each passage is most relevant to the topic covered.

#### **Key texts:**

- Ephesians 4:7-16
- Romans 16:1-16

#### **Other 'lists of gifts':**

- Romans 12:3-8
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 27-31
- 1 Peter 4:8-11

#### **Further references to 'gifts':**

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 14:1-6

#### **Key texts:**

##### **Ephesians 4:7-16**

<sup>7</sup>But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

<sup>8</sup>This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." <sup>9</sup> (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

<sup>11</sup>**So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,** <sup>12</sup>**to equip his people for works of service,** so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

<sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup>From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, **as each part does its work.**

##### **Romans 16:1-16**

I commend to you **our sister Phoebe, a deacon** of the church in Cenchreae. <sup>2</sup>I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for **she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.** <sup>3</sup>Greet **Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus.** <sup>4</sup>They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. <sup>5</sup>**Greet also the church that meets at their house.** Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. <sup>6</sup>Greet **Mary, who worked very hard for you.**

<sup>7</sup>Greet **Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are**



**outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.**

<sup>8</sup>Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. <sup>10</sup>Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. <sup>11</sup>Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>**Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.**

**Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.**

<sup>13</sup>Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and **his mother**, who has been a mother to me, too.

<sup>14</sup>Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers **and sisters** with them. <sup>15</sup>Greet Philologus, **Julia**, Nereus and **his sister**, and Olympas and all the Lord's people who are with them. <sup>16</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss.

### Other 'lists of gifts':

#### Romans 12:3-8

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. <sup>4</sup>For just as each of us has one body with many members, and **these members do not all have the same function**, <sup>5</sup>so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup>**We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup>if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup>if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.**

#### 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 27-31

<sup>4</sup>There are **different kinds of gifts**, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. <sup>7</sup>Now **to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good**. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>**All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.**

<sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ, and **each one of you is a part of it**. <sup>28</sup>**And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues**. <sup>29</sup>**Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues<sup>[d]</sup>? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.**

#### 1 Peter 4:8-11

<sup>8</sup>Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Offer **hospitality** to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>**Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms**. <sup>11</sup>If

**anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides**, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

**Further references to gifts:**

**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

If I speak in the **tongues** of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>**If I have the gift of prophecy** and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and **if I have a faith that can move mountains**, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

**1 Corinthians 14:1-6**

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. <sup>2</sup>For anyone who **speaks in a tongue** does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. <sup>3</sup>But **the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort**. <sup>4</sup>Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but **the one who prophesies edifies the church**. <sup>5</sup>I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. **The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified**. <sup>6</sup>Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, **unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?**

All references cited are taken from <[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)>

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