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The Journal of the Pentecostal Theological Association (JEPTA) is a peer-reviewed international journal which has a pedigree stretching back to 1981 when it began as the EPTA Bulletin. Despite its European origins JEPTA has interests in Pentecostalism world-wide. It aims to promote and report research and scholarship in Pentecostal and Charismatic studies especially in relation to five fields of study:
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Journal of the European Theological Association
Leadership versus the congregation in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement

David J. Garrard

Thanks to a sovereign move of the Holy Spirit and the willingness of a minority of keen and anxious believers who were not satisfied with the status quo, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are now able to look back with considerable satisfaction at what has been achieved and give great praise to God. The way in which the wind of the Spirit has blown across our globe appears to be unprecedented and causes one to suggest that even the move of God at the time of the Reformation has been surpassed in terms of numbers of those who have been influenced by this movement.

The difficulty is that many Pentecostals have become so engrossed with their place in what has happened that they have failed to realise that they have only just begun the journey toward perfection. Their positions, both theological and practical, continue to present a haphazard picture to their critics within and without the Christian fold.

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1 David Garrard is Senior Lecturer in Mission & Ecclesiology at Mattersey Hall, UK. Email dave.garrard@virgin.net
2 The increase in numbers of those who have accepted this form of Christianity is considerable even if the numbers themselves are debatable. cf. Allan Anderson, An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity, (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), p.11; D. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson and Peter Crossing ‘Missiometrics 2006: Goals, Resources, Doctrines of the 350 Christian World Communions’, in IBMR, Vol. 30 No.1 Jan. 2006 pp. 27-30 estimates Pentecostals and Charismatics to represent 596,096,000 people worldwide.
3 The multitude of different groups, names and doctrinal emphases are indications of these factors and the lack of unity even if some of them are members of the Pentecostal World Fellowship many are not.

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Post-modernism is guilty of the practice of absolutizing relativism. Truth is One in the person of Christ and it is necessary for the believer to tease out what that means for the Body as a whole as well as for the individual in particular. Pentecostals and Charismatics are normally very dogmatic that truth is ‘their perception of truth’ even though they are unable to recognise that their own understanding of the same is only partial at best. One of the issues with which Pentecostals and Charismatics have difficulty is in the building of trust between the leaders and congregations.

**Biblical leadership**

One of the reasons for the apparent success of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement in the two-thirds world is that it has never accepted the dichotomy of Western thinking and for that reason the holism of the spirit and physical world make more sense when understood in the light of an active spirit world where God has the final say and where the Holy Spirit has the answers to all of the believer’s difficulties not just in terms of soteriology and sanctification but his need for direction, healing and power to overcome the work of Satan.

Pentecostals have during their history, looked to a number of outstanding leaders who have greatly impacted their thinking and their practice. Because these leaders have been charismatic, in both the ability to express themselves with great facility, as well as in the sense that they were people who majored on the use of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, their word was sometimes viewed on a par with that of Scripture itself.

The problem has been that such thinking has led Pentecostals to have more faith in their leaders than it has in their personal understanding of the Word of God or perhaps even the personal leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In real terms it is always easier to listen to a recognised leader and do what he tells you than it is to wait upon God for His personal and secret guidance. It takes less time for a start! It also means that if your leader gets it wrong you can always blame him for the failure

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4 In the early days of the Pentecostal movement in Britain men like Donald Gee as an author on Pentecostal issues, an organiser and an international figure interested in uniting Pentecostals and others like Smith Wigglesworth the practitioner as well as George Jeffreys.

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whereas if the individual waits upon God and then gets it wrong there is no one to blame but oneself.

Generally, there is very little difference in the concept of that held by the Old Testament Jew of his priest or prophet when it comes to the Pentecostal’s view of a God given leader or of an anointed individual. Priests and Prophets were the anointed of God. They were in a class of their own, appointed by God and representatives of man. They had specific tasks for which only they were suited. No one who was outside of the family of Aaron and the Levites could serve as a priest. Again, the prophets were especially anointed of God and only those who were chosen by Him could even speak on His behalf. To attempt to speak on His behalf without this particular anointing would not only be foolish but could have dire consequences and result in the death penalty for false prophets.

By the time we come to the New Testament all priests are replaced by the one and only High Priest – Jesus Christ. Not only is He the only mediator between man and God, He is also the Prophet, the Priest and the King. Again, he offers himself as the “once for all” sacrifice for our sin. Consequently, to attempt to place oneself in the place of a priest after the order of Aaron is to ignore the purpose and plan of God in sending Christ to die for mankind’s sin. It is to fail to recognise the difference between Old and New Testaments, Old and New Covenants, the covenant at Sinai which was partial and has been now done away with, and the perfect covenant in Christ’s blood which opens the door to salvation for all mankind who believes. The phenomenal action of God has meant that no longer does the individual in Christ rely upon another mediator to enter into the full presence of God because all believers are privileged to have full access, into the presence of God, through the blood of Christ.

Pentecostals often have created their own spiritual hierarchies, which in many ways have bypassed the necessity for the individual to know the voice of God. The leaders have done more than lead. They have in many instances become spiritual dictators, even if one gives them the benefit of the doubt and classes them among the benevolent class. They have usurped the place of the Holy Spirit in the exercise of their role. Perhaps they have done this without recognising what they have done. Many of
these people are well intentioned and would admit that they only want to do the will of God but due to the emphasis that has been placed upon leadership and ministry together with the particular emphasis that has been made regarding the ministries in Ephesians 4:11 they have not recognised the danger of their teaching nor have they stopped to think about the significance of the purpose of God’s anointing upon all of his people in the New Testament. The Reformation teaching of Martin Luther regarding the Priesthood of all believers has never been more than a theological phrase for many to the extent that even the Lutheran Church has failed to implement the teaching of its founder.

British Pentecostals may hesitate to use the term ‘Reverend’ when speaking of their pastors, but they still think much in terms of the parallels between the Old Testament priest being in charge of religious activities and having particular spiritual rights and privileges in the order of the Catholic Priest even though they would hate to have it spelled out in such terms. It is not the purpose of this paper to deny the significant role played by leadership. To do so would be to fly in the face of Scripture and history. However, it could be suggested that one area of Theology

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5 Especially in his writings found in three different works by Martin Luther, *An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520); *A Prelude on the Babylonia Captivity of the Church* (1520) and *A Treatise on Christian Liberty* (1520) all in *Works of Martin Luther with Introduction and Notes*, (Grand Rapids, MI.; Baker Book House, The Philadelphia Edition Vol II, 1982), respectively: pp.61-164; pp. 170-293 and 312-348. These are by no means the only works of Luther which develop the subject but they are the most substantial. Another significant and interesting but later work is found in *The Right and Power of a Christian Congregation or Community to Judge all Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proved from Scripture* (1523), found in the same series of *The Works...*, Vol IV. pp.75-85.

6 cf. Peter Kuzmic. ‘Pentecostals Respond to Marxism’ in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* (Eds. M.A.Dempster, B.D. Klaus and D. Petersen), Peabody, Hendrikson 1991 p.172 but I doubt that what he says here about ‘professional pastors’ is correct today in the British and for that matter in many other traditional Pentecostal contexts even if it may have been at one time.

7 John G. Stackhouse’s chapter: “A Double Copernican Revolution: Leadership and Membership in the Church” in his book *Evangelical Landscapes*, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2002), pp37-45 points out the abuses in both the overemphasis of the place of the leadership as well as the minimisation of the role of the individual church member.
which still needs to be corrected and which has been at fault during most of the last two thousand years of the Christian era is that the Church has spent so much time and energy looking at its leaders, their role, their significance, their privileges, that it has not somehow remembered that the Church is not equivalent to the hierarchy. There are still large denominations, both Pentecostal and others, which spend so much time looking at leadership that they almost ignore the Body of Christ as a whole. What has happened to the congregation?8

Whatever is said about the leadership the Church must not and cannot afford to forget the reason for which leaders have been set in place. Perhaps it is significant that the word *leadership* as such, is hardly used in Scripture (cf. 1 Chron.12:27;13:1; 2 Chron. 32:21; Mt. 15:14; Lk. 18:18). It is applied to Christ but in other contexts it is only used in terms of those who are worldly leaders and blind leaders of the blind where the term is condemnatory and deficient in its understanding of divine purpose. It is very likely that the absence of the word is due to the fact that leadership and the connotations it bears in a worldly context is always deficient because it is self reliant and mostly self serving.

The gifts God gives to those in the Church who have responsibilities to steer his Church in the right direction are totally dependent upon the right relationship with Himself and the right motivation with regard to those who are to be given direction. They are gifts resulting from the correct relationship with the Spirit; the legitimate channel of the gifts depends upon continued humility and dependency upon the Lord where there is no room for superior attitudes on the part of the leaders (1 Pt. 5:3). The moment humility, servanthood and total reliance upon the Lord cease to exist the divine/human relationship degenerates into that of

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human self-reliance, self-importance and the exercise of abuse and models based upon earthly power. The compulsion of the Spirit which is in evidence when the gifts are properly exercised become the compulsion of the base nature of mankind and the individual who has the gifts views himself in terms of having a divine right which exceeds that of all the others in the Christian community. At that point the concepts of worldly hierarchy predominate and force becomes worldly rather than spiritual persuasion or compulsion.

**Ephesians 4:11 and the Ministry Gifts**

One problem with any systematic approach to the teaching of Christian doctrine is that it often ignores the context from which any passage is drawn. This is unfortunately true of the way in which those in leadership within the Pentecostal denominations and the Charismatic movements often present the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:11. The moment verse 11 becomes the immediate focus of any exhortation it underlines the centrality of Christ as the giver of the particular gifts, and the people who are given, or the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. However, to do justice to the passage it is absolutely necessary to understand all that Paul has said up to this point. The least that can be expected is that a review of what Paul has stated regarding the Church in chapter 4 be undertaken. One of the most important things he underlines is the unity both within the Godhead and the purpose of the creation which we call the Church. The Apostle makes it clear in verse 7 that everyone has been given a gift of God according to the measure which Christ has willed. That means that there is no Christian who lacks the ability to be involved in the fulfilment of God’s overall plan. Verse 11 demonstrates that Christ has given the Church a variety of people with different functions and activities.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to examine the full nature of these individuals. There is much which has been written and said on that behalf, some of which has been helpful and some of which has been of questionable value. What is necessary to note here is that the emphasis in Paul’s thinking is not the fact that these people have been given to the Church but the reason for which they have been given. This reason is presented in verses twelve following. Most of the literature coming from Pentecostal leaders concerning this area has focused on the importance of
the so-called fivefold ministry\(^9\). The authors of this literature have spent their energy debating whether or not these ministries are present in our churches today. The emphasis is often taken up with a description of the meaning of these names. This is probably a perfectly legitimate activity but it is not the most important because Paul was more concerned with what these individuals were to do than he was with their importance as individuals in their own right.

As has already been stated, Pentecostals have always been preoccupied with the individuals who have been perceived as the giants of their denominations. This means the giants of their brief past and those of the present. Any who have been regarded as charismatic preachers, healers, prophets, men and women of faith and those who have started large congregations, have been, and still are, held in high esteem. They are viewed as possessing an anointing which surpasses all others.\(^{10}\) Again, the whole perception of what is understood by anointing in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles would be worth an in-depth study. This emphasis upon Spirit-filled, anointed leaders means that the mindset of most Pentecostals is so attuned that it automatically looks for and to the leaders before it looks at the purpose of God in the whole Church. It somehow assumes that provided that the leaders are recognised and given pre-eminence the Church will fall into the right place as it follows these anointed leaders. The reason for this is, as one scholar has

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\(^9\) The language may vary but is centred around the Ephesians 4:11 ministries. cf. the website of International Coalition of Apostles led by C. Peter Wagner and others: http://www.apotlesnet.net/; C. Peter Wagner (ed) *The New Apostolic Churches*, (Ventura CA., Regal, 1998); Paul C. Weaver the former General Superintendent of the AOG-GB made this subject the matter of numerous messages at churches, conferences and in articles but see his book: *Breaking the Leadership Bottleneck*, (Tonbridge, Sovereign World, 2005), pp. 84f, pp. 89f.; Bryn Jones, *The Radical Church*, (Shippenburg PA., Destiny Pub., 1999), pp. 117ff.

\(^{10}\) Anointing is used here metaphorically to indicate divine choice and any resultant ministry ability which is mostly attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit.
suggested, that: ‘the leaders have become the chief mediators of God’s power, via the agency of, say, healing, prophecy, or renewal.’\textsuperscript{11} This mindset fails to recognise that many of these so called anointed leaders, including some of the best known like George Jeffreys,\textsuperscript{12} were responsible for such things as major denominational splits; some like William Branham\textsuperscript{13} have been responsible for the denial of Trinitarian doctrine and more recently others have been guilty of moral turpitude.\textsuperscript{14} All this means is that these people, like any others, are capable of failure. These same followers could not comprehend the fact that their leaders were just as human as themselves and just as likely to go adrift if they did not have the checks and balances that are required of all whether they be in leadership or not. This means that those in leadership are in need of greater help, sympathy, prayer and fellowship, than those who are not because they are more likely to become targets of satanic attack. This knowledge should prevent them from having views of their importance which go beyond what is their God given function or as Paul says to the Corinthian Christians, that they should not think of their leaders, “above that which is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). Again Paul underlines the need for all to make sure that they do not to have over exalted views of themselves but that they should be realistic regarding their abilities and place in the church (Romans 12:3). Exaggerated expectations of people, even of those in leadership, will always result in disappointment because they demand too much of them and in so doing cater to their carnal nature. Another matter which needs redressing in Pentecostal circles is the fact that authority in leadership needs to be recognised as being dependent upon function and not upon position or delegated status. The names given to the \textit{people gifts} in Ephesians 4:11 signify their function and not

\textsuperscript{11} Martyn Percy, \textit{Words, Wonders and Power: Understanding Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism and Revivalism}, (London, SPCK, 1996), p. 26; it should be noted that Percy does not appear to be sympathetic toward much that takes place in Spirit-filled circles but this does not mean that we should reject all of his observations.

\textsuperscript{12} D.W. Cartwright, ‘Jeffreys, George’ in \textit{NIDPCM}, pp. 807f.

\textsuperscript{13} D.J. Wilson, ‘Branham, William Marrion’ in \textit{NIDPCM}, pp.440f.

\textsuperscript{14} D. Hedges, ‘Swaggart, Jimmy Lee’, in \textit{NIDPC}, p.1111

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their position or station. This means that they were apostles because of the apostolic gifts which they possessed and not because they had been chosen to be apostles and to fill an apostolic office. The same can be said of all the functions which are given in this text.

It is amazing how many so-called pastors view the flock for which they are responsible with a condescending spirit.\(^{15}\) They preach to them on Sundays but would hardly go out of their way to minister to them on a personal level. They do not function as pastors. The people named by Paul in Ephesians 4:11 are Christ’s gift to the Church. They are divinely appointed and gifted. They may have had their gifts sharpened at a Bible College but they certainly did not receive them there. They may have been recognised and prayed for by the members of a General Conference, but they did not have the gifts conveyed by men but by God.

**Pentecost, anointing or unction.**

The whole area of anointing or unction has to be examined primarily in the Old Testament before it can be understood in the New. It has already been mentioned that one thing of which all need to be careful is that we do not read the New Testament purely in the light of what transpired in the Old. One of the basic rules of hermeneutics is getting the chronology of any passage right. Anointing is used in the Old Testament in a number of ways: to pour oil upon an individual who is to be chosen especially for divine service such as: a king, a prophet, or a priest. However, it is also used of someone chosen to be a captain of the army. In a natural sense it is used of rubbing oil on oneself to make oneself beautiful and of a good appearance. When Pentecostals use the term to describe someone’s preaching or work it is usually in the sense that the individual is clearly blessed of God and that their speaking, their prayer or their work is clearly powerful and efficacious. Yet, often it is used in somewhat of a mystical manner to describe the entire character, life and ministry of an individual who is perceived as being especially used of God in a general

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\(^{15}\) In eastern and southern Congo the expression ‘*membre bule*’ (French-Swahili for ‘valuless member’ or ‘just an ordinary member’) is the descriptor used by pastors of church members. Due to the litigious day in which we live I am not able to be more specific about these attitudes in the UK.
as well as in a specific manner. An anointed person is viewed as someone who has received special authority and power from the Holy Spirit to a degree which surpasses that observed among the majority of believers.

Most Pentecostals and Charismatics believe that those who are gifted in the area of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are anointed to a level which singles them out as God’s anointed in a tangible way. If an attempt were to be made as to the exact meaning of this anointing and its practical effects, most would believe that this gave them authority that surpassed that of the ordinary believer. However, when this happens, categorisation automatically results which is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament regarding the place of members within the Body. This concept is very important because in real terms it means that although most Pentecostals are taught that they do not believe in the Theology of a clergy/laity split, in real terms they do. The gifted individuals are viewed as automatically having superior authority, superior power, and superior insight into the will of God. Consequently, whatever they say is immediately held as being more important and as conveying more of the purpose and will of God than the word of other members. This whole area needs to be closely re-evaluated in the light of the teaching of Paul on the Body in 1 Corinthians 12:14-31 and Romans 12:3-8.

The first passage is particularly significant in that it flows from the text which is the focus of the same individuals who perceive themselves as especially gifted; they hold to the teaching of an anointed and supernatural ministry (I Cor. 12:1-11). Paul introduces the various gifts but immediately says that the Body is one even though it has many members (1 Cor.12: 12). What is he saying? If one continues to examine the text it is observed that Paul is against greater importance being accorded to the more obvious members – the anointed spokesmen and leaders. To the Corinthians, he emphasises the fact that the less visible members are just as important because they make up the entire Body,

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16 Alexandre Vinet, the Swiss theologian, complained about the implications of this kind of thinking when he said that if there was any single act which only those who call themselves pastors could perform and that no other member of the flock of God could carry out then in practical terms we would be able to say that sacerdotal service had been reinstated at the heart of Protestantism. In Histoire Général du Protestantisme (E.G. Léonard) Vol. III, (Paris, PUF), p. 203
which is known as the Church. There is no room for a ‘Church within the Church’ because each and every member plays a vital role. The well-being of the whole Church is the focus and not the prominence of the individual, no matter how gifted he or she may be. This means that when a hierarchy usurps the place of all members within the Body, it minimises the status of the less visible believers and consciously or otherwise limits the function that they are to fulfil in the whole divine plan because in the NT all the believers make up the new priesthood under Christ the Unique High Priest.¹⁷

The importance of the New Covenant itself, if one is to grasp the significance of the difference between Old and New in terms that incorporate more than the Person and work of Christ, is the role of the Spirit in the entire body of believers or the new community of God – the Church. It is the Spirit Himself who has come to make the Church his residing place. Not only does he reside in the leadership and the exceptionally gifted individuals but within each and every individual who has surrendered to God by their placing faith in the Person of Christ as Lord. This is the central truth of what makes the Church to be the Church of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). Much more time and effort needs to be taken to fully grasp the significance of this fact because for the most part, Christianity has spent little time looking at the role of the whole Body; scholars have been so taken up with the leaders that they are guilty of ignoring the major place of the congregation. What M. Douglas Meeks complains of as representative of most Protestant congregations in the Western World is no less true of what faces most Pentecostal and Charismatic groups today:

What we in Europe and North America glibly call "congregation" often have no resemblance to what the Reformation originally envisioned as the congregated people of God. During the last 450 years the Protestant church has nearly destroyed one of the principal realities at which the Reformation was aiming, namely, the congregation. There is nothing in principle wrong with structures, organisation, authority, and offices in the church. They

¹⁷ Hans Küng, *The Church* (ET), (Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates, 1968), pp383-387 has a good section on how the doctrine of separation between clergy and laity has developed and how it is opposed to NT teaching on the subject of the Church.
are all necessary. What is wrong is the way in which all of these have come to be understood and practiced in an overly clericalised, authoritarian, and statically structured church. The problem with such a church is that the life of the congregation gets squeezed out.

For the majority of Pentecostals and Charismatics the importance of the teaching on the Body has never been fully grasped. Most view the relevant passages as teaching the significance of the various parts of the body in the whole but then immediately go on to describe the pastoral ministry as superior. Perhaps it is because those who have most interest in expounding these passages in a practical or ecclesiastical context are those who are pastors themselves. Since it has often been assumed that pastors have a superior ministry to all others it is likely that there is a sense here in which pastors are not really the best ones to be called upon to explain the significance of the texts.

This means that rather than merely look at the passages in a detached way which assumes that there is going to be no real relationship between what we already do in Church and the government of the Church, we should be open to asking ourselves the hard questions which require that we not only be willing to review what the passages really mean but that we be ready to change our views where necessary.

There is no doubt but that pastoral responsibility has its own authority as a God given gift which facilitates the exercise of the task at hand. However, this is not the only task which is present within the equipping ministries and functions and this responsibility, rather than limit the responsibility of the individual Christian upon his Lord and the Spirit of Christ, should rather bring greater awareness of that responsibility in both deed and word. Any practice or pretence which detracts from the individual believer’s relationship with the Lord Himself and from his

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19 Even Philip Jacob Spener, the German Pietist who recognise the specific place and gifting of leadership, complained as early as 1675, in *Pia Desideria* (Translated and Edited by Theodore G.Tappert) (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1964) pp. 93-5f of the neglect of the congregation since the time of Luther.
dependency upon the Holy Spirit is short sighted and spiritually debilitating.

If the congregation can see itself functioning as a unit or as a Body then the priesthood of the whole, or the prophethood of the whole, should automatically issue from the community. However, as long as the Pentecostal/Charismatic promotion and reverence of superstars is the norm, the Body will remain dysfunctional. The result is not just undesirable it is debilitating.

To return to the theme of Ephesians 4:11ff. it is necessary to understand that Paul desired that the Ephesians grasp the importance and function of the unity of the Body of Christ. The purpose of the gifts which each received (4:7 henî de hekastô hèmôn edothè hè charis ...) and the five-fold ministry, is not so that the individuals might focus on their own importance. This is how the Pentecostal Churches have mostly interpreted the force of the text until the present. They have failed to recognise the purpose for the gifts. They have failed to keep reading the context and the thrust which is given. Paul tells the Ephesians that the reason for the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, is focussed on the entire congregation and its function.

The equippers are meant to provide the tools, the ability and the motivation for the congregation to carry out its God intended purpose – ministry (work and diaconate). (Eph. 4:12 eis ergon diakonias eis oikdomèn tou sômatos tou Christou). This ministry is in turn aimed at building up the whole Body of Christ. This means that the functions given in verse 11 are secondary but the task which they are to perform is primary. In real terms the names we call these people does not really matter. We need to realise that it is the function and the task, which is vital not the title. All of these people mentioned in verse 11 are equippers or perfectioners. The word Paul uses is a technical one which means the person who is to restore something or someone to the place for which it was originally intended or to discipline and prepare them for the same. In other words, God had

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20 This is the term preferred by Roger Stronstad in The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke’s Charismatic Theology (Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series, 16), (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

21 cf. katartismos in Eph. 4: 12 where according to W.Baur A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (ET), (Cambridge, OUP, 4th Ed.)
intended his people be part of his divine team. The plan did not work properly because of Adam’s sin, but now that Christ has come and the Holy Spirit has been given so that all believers have received the anointing of God, there is work to do which excludes none of the redeemed.

The five-fold ministry must make sure that the entire body of believers, which we can call the saints, or the congregation of God, get involved in doing God’s work or ministry. Failure to do so is actually a failure in part to carry out the intended function which is intricately linked to their very *raison d'être*. Much of the Church has believed that only those who are in leadership are in ministry. It can be stated without fear of contradicting what the New Testament teaches, even if it contradicts our ecclesiastical traditions, that ministry is what Christ has given to the Church – the Whole Church - not just what has been given to those who have Ephesian 4:11 gifts. Ministry is a fancy word for work. Work is what all called to do and to engage in. If the people who name themselves part of the gift ministry do not indeed equip the congregation as a whole for the “work of ministry for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ” (*my translation*; Eph. 4:12) then it is legitimate to ask the question: Are they really equippers or are they pretenders? If the gift they have is concerned with training, preparing, equipping and discipling for the purpose of the overall plan of the work of the Church as Christ perceives it, (this is the sense of the verse when it comes to understanding “work of ministry” or to put it crudely “work of work”) and all their followers do is become passive participants in the plans of the named gifted individuals, then it could be suggested that something has gone horribly wrong or that their gift is not what it is made out to be.

It could be suggested that the gift ministries have been misunderstood because they have focused so much attention upon themselves and their importance that they have failed to underline the importance of their function. In other words: Why are they there? This is the part that has been neglected. In any case, apart from a few exceptions Pentecostals and Charismatics have been so busy building up the ego of the “gift men/women” and giving them rights beyond the intention of Scripture

1952), pp. 418f. the main thought in the root is that of equipping for a specific purpose, or creating with a fixed task in mind.
that they have done the Body of Christ a disservice. Rather than integrate the congregation in the plan of God they have extended the rights and authority of the hierarchy and in some cases they have installed a hierarchy with rights which surpass those of the Papal system which was present prior to the Reformation. All this has happened in the name of spiritual anointing and has resulted in a failure on the part of believers to understand their intended role as the congregation.

There is no New Testament Church other than the congregation but it would appear that apart from a limited number of congregations during the course of the post-Reformation period, the majority of Protestants, including the majority of Pentecostals and Charismatics have not understood this and have not practiced the priority of the People of God.\textsuperscript{22} The majority of believers have not functioned in terms of the congregation of the redeemed or as a whole people involved in the entire purpose of God engaging a lost world with word and works. Because of the emphasis upon the ‘gift men and women’ - a very small and highly visible, vocal and gifted minority of the Church - has by its teaching and its emphasis been happy to carry all the load, have all the heart attacks and nervous breakdowns on behalf of the silent and supposedly ‘incapable’ majority. How long will it be before we wake up and realise that this was never the intention of Christ or of the Spirit for the Church of Jesus Christ? We have made a rod for our own backs. It is time to refocus and to realise that rather than the present emphasis on the Leadership and their role versus that of congregation it is time to see how it is rather their role together with and as part of the congregation to accomplish the plan of Christ for his whole Church in today’s impoverished world.

\textsuperscript{22} This is indeed the trust of the book written by R. Paul Stevens, \textit{The Abolition of the Laity}, (Carlisle, Paternoster, 1999).