TOWARD A MODEL OF DIVINE EMPOWERMENT: 
A SOCIORHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF EPHESIANS 4:1-16 

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This study found that leaders are divinely empowered and authorized to participate with God mediating the relationships between God and man and among men. This study addresses the divine aspect of leadership by examining the relationship between God and leadership roles in the first-century church. Ephesians 4:1-16 was analyzed to discover the relationship between the ascension of Christ and leadership empowerment. Ephesians 4:1-16 was chosen to be examined because of the importance of Paul's epistles to the development of the church and because it specifically associates deity—the ascended Christ—with leadership functions. Addressing the research question—What is the empowering relationship between the ascended Christ and the leadership ministries in Ephesians 4:1-16?—this research found that Christ represented the Trinity in exalted form, giving gifts and authority to the church for the purpose of building maturity and unity. Sociorhetorical analysis of the text found five components that comprise divine empowerment: calling, participation, membership, authority, and mediating roles. A model of divine empowerment was suggested.

The term empowerment is extensively used in Christian leadership literature but often ill-defined and conceptualized. Many books on Christian leadership use the term empower or empowerment but often do not offer a definition or explanation of the term, assuming that the reader understands how the concept is used. Some Christian writers have used the term empowerment in the same vein as writers in organizational development. Herrington, Bonen, and Furr applied Kotter's change process in church development.

contexts. Although they write in a Christian context, their definition was based more upon organizational theory, such as force field analysis, than upon Christian ideology or biblical principles. In his book about leadership in a Christian context, Ford\(^3\) used Bennis and Nanus\(^4\) four strategies for taking charge: vision, communication, trust, and empowerment. Ford adhered to Bennis and Nanus' concepts closely which uses components of psychological empowerment. In both cases, a more specific definition of empowerment would better serve their purposes.

Some writers have attempted to address the divine aspect of leadership and leadership empowerment. Elliston conceptualized empowerment in terms of authority.\(^5\) He stated that the Holy Spirit "empowers, that is, delegates the right to use His power to influence in a variety of ways which are described in Scripture as spiritual gifts". When leaders develop new leaders, Elliston wrote that existing leaders mirror the work of the Holy Spirit empowering the new leaders by delegating authority to them to lead—to influence toward God's purposes. He defined empowerment as the process of enabling, equipping, and allowing [emerging leaders] to make a significant contribution in a situation and then recognizing that contribution. Thus, the established leader acts as moderating influence between God and the emerging leader until the emerging leader reaches maturity.

In a doctoral dissertation, Campbell attempted to develop a model of leadership development based on a theological and organizational process of empowerment viewed from a theological perspective emphasizing the Holy Spirit's role in the empowerment process\(^6\). Building from the Greek words for power (dunamis) and authority (exousia) and understanding that power is the strength, ability, or authority to exercise control over a situation, environment, or person, Campbell posited that to empower someone is to give that person the authority, ability, or strength to control or influence surrounding circumstances. He offered examples of empowerment from the Old Testament (i.e., Moses, Elijah, Elisha, prophets, and priests) and New Testament examples (i.e., Jesus, the disciples, and Paul) but offered little insight on how God empowers other than stating, "The Holy Spirit delegates His power to emerging leaders in the form of spiritual gifts".\(^7\)

Christian leaders have acknowledged there is a divine aspect to leadership empowerment and have attempted to address this mystery. Many writers have insisted that empowerment (or receiving power) comes from closeness to God\(^8\). Other writers


\(^7\) Ibid., 14.

have attributed empowerment to the work of the Holy Spirit, although they did not explain how this empowerment happens other than to use phrases such as connected to God; aligned with God; dependence on the Spirit’s gifting and empowerment; being Spirit-led; and being renewed in the person, presence, and power of the Holy Spirit. Other Christian writers have made general statements about being empowered by God or Christ such as “Jesus appeared to them with a word of empowerment and a directive of mission.” The point is not to argue with these valid statements but to show the lack of conceptualizing the divine aspect of empowerment.

I. PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

This study examines the Christological connection to leadership empowerment. Specifically, this study analyzes the relationship between the ascension/exaltation of Christ and leadership functions listed in Ephesians 4:11 (i.e., apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher). The findings of this study aid in the understanding of the divine aspect of leadership empowerment and assist in developing a comprehensive and integrated theory of leadership empowerment. This study addresses the critical need for leadership development and succession in the church today.

The exact form of church government and leadership in the New Testament remains obscure, yet we see the New Testament church as a powerful and organized body that was successful in planting churches and making converts throughout the Roman Empire. The key to the success of the church was the result of Pentecost. Pentecost initiated the equipping for ministry through gifts often referred to as spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephes 4:11). Every Christian is given at least one ministry gift. The ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11 are often listed alongside the other lists of spiritual gifts. However, the gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 are distinct from

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the other lists in two main ways. First, these are persons who are given to the church\textsuperscript{13}; and these gifts of persons are given, distributed, or allotted by Jesus Christ\textsuperscript{14}.

Paul stated that these ministries or functions\textsuperscript{15} were given by Christ who had ascended and is sitting at the right hand of God, thus indicating the direct relationship of Christ’s ascension to the leadership gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher:

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives and He gave gifts to men.” (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does that mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephes 4:7-12, New American Standard)

According to scripture, Christ ascended and is now seated at the right hand of God (Ephes 1:20; Hebrews 12:2). Session, from the Latin word sessio, refers to Christ sitting on the right hand of the Father. “Session of Christ at the right hand of God means . . . the investment of power and authority, dominion, and rule”\textsuperscript{16}. Session is for the sake of exercising power and authority. The basic definition of empowerment is to give power and/or authority to another; therefore, Christ's ascension (and ultimate session) is directly tied to the giving of power (empowerment) to the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher in Ephesians 4:11. The relationship of Christ’s ascension and session to the ministry gifts are diagramed in Figure 1.


Christ’s Session
(Authority and Power)

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Pastors
- Teachers

Christ’s Ascension

He gave . . .

Figure 1: Ascension and empowerment—the relationship between the ascension of Christ and empowerment.

Whereas the divine or spiritual aspect of empowerment has not been studied in organizational literature and the nature of divine empowerment in scripture has not adequately addressed the Christological link, the purpose of this study is to examine the empowering aspect of the Christological event of Jesus’ ascent and exaltation to the leadership ministries in Ephesians 4:11.

II. Organization of Study

To extract data from Ephesians 4:1-16, this study utilizes sociorhetorical analysis developed by Vernon K. Robbins17. Sociorhetorical criticism is an approach to literature that focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live. Robbins stated that socio as a prefix refers to the rich resources of modern anthropology and sociology that sociorhetorical criticism brings to the interpretation of a text. The aim of good interpretation is to get at the plain meaning of the text. Sociorhetorical analysis helps the interpreter consider all aspects of the communication process, including the social aspect to arrive at the meaning of the text. Theologians do not agree upon the nature of the church or assembly. Whether scripture reveals the church as the assembly of God’s people or merely an assembly of people or if the church is revealed as a formally organized structured society or an informal interpersonal community, the social aspect of scripture cannot be denied. Therefore, we need to explore how a passage orients its audience to the world of everyday life and how it seeks to shape their relationships and interactions with one another.

The rhetorical aspect of sociorhetorical criticism refers to the way language in a text is a means of communication among people. Whether you believe that Paul’s epistles were private letters, public epistles, or treatises, they are without doubt a

communication tool. People use language in many ways. They use it to establish relationships, to set some people off as enemies, to negotiate with kinsmen, to pursue interests, and so forth. Sociorhetorical criticism integrates the ways people use language with the ways they live in the world. Robbins used the metaphor of tapestry to describe how sociorhetorical criticism works. He identified five levels (i.e., textures) of social and rhetorical analysis: inner texture (getting inside the text), intertexture (entering the world of a text), social and cultural texture (living with a text in the world), ideological texture (sharing interests in texts), and sacred texture (seeing the divine in the text). Specifically, this research examines the inner texture, the social and cultural textures, and sacred texture of sociorhetorical analysis as conceived by Robbins.

III. Theology and Leadership

Whereas empowerment is the distribution of resources, authority, power and building self-efficacy in others; and that Christian scripture says that God is the source of everything, this section reviews the topic of theology as it relates to empowerment. Ayers asserted that leadership literature and research does not generally embrace theology. In spite of the recent interest of spiritual matters in leadership, the relationship between theology and organizational leadership in scholarly writing and research is tenuous. There has always been a strained relationship between the philosophy of the day and theology as reflected in Tertullian’s famous line: What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? While there has not been a convergence of theology and leadership in organizational literature and research, Christian leadership literature regularly has used theology to inform leadership thought and practice.

Horsthuis suggested that conceptions of leadership should begin with the doctrine of the Trinity. The ancient concept of *perichoresis* (can be equated to the Greek “dance around”) refers to the mutual interaction of the threefold nature of God and offers a participative understanding of leadership. *Perichoresis* is not actually derived from the root of the verb “to dance around,” *perichoreuo* (related to *choreia* from which the English “choreography” is derived), but the play on words illustrates the dynamic sense of *perichoresis* (Fiddes, 2000). *Perichoresis* was first used in patristic times to explain how the two natures of Christ—human and divine—function together in unity. The term was later applied to the Trinity to temper the suggestion of tri-theism. Horsthuys defined *perichoresis* as the mutual indwelling, without confusion, of the three

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persons of the one God. Horsthuis pointed out that the use of *perichoresis* is not limited to early Christian usage but that Karl Barth, among many theologians, made use of the term, suggesting that the divine modes of existence condition and permeate one another mutually with such perfection and that one is as invariably in the other two as the other two are in the one. The patristic and the modern use of *perichoresis* contain two features: (a) the three persons of the Trinity mutually dwell in one another, and (b) there is no confusion of the persons of the Godhead in the mutual indwelling of divine persons. Thus, despite this mutual indwelling, the Son is never the Father, the Spirit is never the Son, and so forth.

Horsthuis wrote that the use of the well-established doctrine of *perichoresis* welcomes Christ’s disciples as participants in the mutuality of Father, Son, and Spirit (as suggest by Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17). For Horsthuis, a theology of leadership including the notion of being drawn into participation with God has profound implications.

A cluster of scholars share a favorite image of the perichoretic union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This image aids us in understanding how disciples might be included in such a profound relational space. This favorite image of a dance is compelling because it incorporates both movement and participation as it provides a measure of definition to dynamics of the Triune God.21

*Perichoresis* traditionally expresses participation in the triune life and participation has been suggested to be a Trinitarian virtue.22 The image of a dance is used to illustrate the *perichoretic* unity of the Godhead and how individuals might participate in that unity. “It roots all leading not in the leader’s capabilities or techniques, but in movement of grace that begins with and in the Triune God”23. As a result, leaders will view their ministry as a means of participation in the mutual ministry of the Trinity.

The dynamic of entities working in harmony can also be expressed in the term *polyphony*. Polyphony is a musical term that denotes the simultaneous singing or playing of two or more melodic lines that fit together as equally important parts in the overall structure of a piece. In relation to the triune God, polyphony refers to the way in which simultaneous difference exists as a homogeneous unity.24 The standard definition of participation is “to take part in” and usually refers to an activity in which we are joined by others but becomes a significant Trinitarian concept as we begin to think about what it might mean to dwell in, and be indwelt by, the lives of others.25 The Trinitarian virtue of participation can come to mark our own lives as we contemplate participating with

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21 Ibid., 93.
23 Horsthuis, “Participants with God,” 94.
God in pastoral ministry\textsuperscript{26} and Christian leadership.\textsuperscript{27} Perichoresis and polyphony offer a limited but significant understanding of human participation in divine activity.

\section*{Christology and Leadership}

Christology is the study of the person, nature and works of Jesus Christ. Early Christianity was filled with controversy surrounding the ontology of the second member of the Trinity. Orthodox Christianity has affirmed that Christ in his incarnation was at once fully God and fully human, or as Fee wrote, “The common faith of the one historic church is that, in the Jewish Messiah Jesus, God was living out a genuinely human life on planet earth”.\textsuperscript{28} Jesus, the God–man and third person of the divine Godhead, shares equally all of the attributes of God. After the nature and attributes of Christ, Christology focuses upon the acts of Christ. Most conservative theologians have agreed on the basic acts or events of Christology: preexistence, virgin birth, sinless life and ministry on earth, atoning death and burial, resurrection from death, postresurrection ministry on earth, ascension, and session. Figure 2 diagrams the basic events of Christology.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{christology_diagram.png}
\caption{Basic events of Christology.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{26} At least two works emphasizes with the Trinity in a ministry context: Paul S. Fiddes, \textit{Participating in God}. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000, and Pembroke, \textit{Renewing Pastoral Practice}.

\textsuperscript{27} Horsthuis, “Participants with God”, 81-107.


The incarnation is the doctrine that maintains that the eternal, preexistent Son of God became human in the person of Jesus. Incarnation has given Kenotic theory a special place in the field of systematic theology. The word *kenosis* is taken from the Greek verb *ken/o/w*, which generally means “to empty” and is translated “emptied himself” in Philippians 2:7. Kenosis or the humiliation of Jesus includes his birth through his death, whereas the exaltation of Jesus includes his resurrection, ascension, and session in heaven. Theologically, kenosis and session are bookends to the earthly ministry of Christ. Kenosis or the kenotic theory has been associated with the onological controversy regarding the nature of Christ. According to Grudem, the kenosis theory derived from Philippians 2:5-11 holds that Christ gave up some of his divine attributes while on earth as man. Erickson wrote that this theory sees Jesus not as God and man simultaneously, but successively. Grudem contends that the real meaning of kenosis is revealed in the context of the verse: “being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death” (Phil 2:8). This emptying is equivalent to humbling himself and taking on a lowly status and position—kenosis equals humility, not relinquishing divine attributes.

Bekker eruditely explained that recent studies have attempted to escape the controversy around Philippians 2:5-11 (The Philippian Hymn) and explore the hymn as an alternative and exemplary model of ethical leadership rooted in a first-century, mimetic Christological spirituality. Bekker, therefore, submitted a model of mimetic Christological leadership that is marked by (a) Christological mimesis, (b) kenosis (self-emptying), (c) servant posturing, (d) humane in its orientation, (e) active humility, and (f) missional obedience. Mimesis and kenosis (humility) are two issues addressed by this model. Mimesis is the ability to imitate someone or something in action, speech, and behavior, while the cognitive function of mimesis allows one to recognize the reality of that which is being mimicked. The Philippians Hymn is a call to imitate Jesus, who is shown as divine (Phil 2:6), and is thus a call in a sense to “imitate God”. Mimesis is human participation in the *perichoretic* union.

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31 Williams, Renewal Theology, vol. 1, 381.
33 Erickson, Christian Theology, 749.
34 Grudem, Systematic Theology, 550.
37 Velli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Toward a Pneumatological Theology. New York: University Press of America, 2002, 156 points out that the Eastern church extends the doctrine of participation to deification. However, participation should be viewed in terms of mimesis, not becoming god.
While the humiliation of Jesus is finding its place in leadership research and literature, the exaltation aspect of Christology has been largely neglected. The exaltation of Christ includes the resurrection, ascension, and session. Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and session are each integral to the gospel, but the ascension has not aroused as much reflection and devotion as the other aspects of Christ’s mission. The ascension of Christ is the event by which Jesus decisively ended his time on earth in terms of his physical presence on earth by ascending—by going up to the place from where he had come. Ascent is the reversal of descent. The actual event of the ascension is recorded in Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11, and Mark 16:19-20 (although the Mark passage is generally thought to be a later addition to the text). Toon listed six results of Jesus’ ascension: (a) the ascension follows and completes the resurrection; (b) Jesus becomes the first fruits of his people that guaranteed the final redemption and sanctification of those in union with him; (c) the ascension implies exaltation; (d) Jesus ascended to begin his heavenly ministry as high priest, making intercession for his people; (e) Jesus ascended to bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit; and (f) the ascension inaugurates a new era. The ascension of Christ is important to Christian leadership studies because Paul tied the leadership gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher directly to the ascension of Christ in Ephesians 4:1-16.

Session is the climactic stage in the exaltation of Christ and concerns the present locus and sphere of the exalted Lord. Daniel foresaw the disrupting and transforming power of the ascended Jesus and what Paul encountered on the road to Damascus:

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Dan 7:13-14)

The earliest New Testament reference to the phase of Christ’s existence following his burial cast it in terms of exaltation is found in Philippians:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11)

The present locus of Christ’s being is enthroned in heaven (Haroutunian, 1956) at the right hand of the father. The present position of Christ at the right hand of the Father is mentioned in many scriptures (Ps 110:1; Matt 22:44; Mrk 12:36, 16:19; Luk

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42 Williams, *Renewal Theology,* 396.
20:42-43, 22:69; Rom 8:34; Ephes 1:20; Col 3:1; Hebrews 1:3-13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22). The implication is that all glory, authority, and power are shared by the Father with the Son.\textsuperscript{45} Jesus returned to his rightful place beside the Father in a place of authority and rulership so that he could send the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

\textit{Pneumatology and Leadership}

Pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, equal to the Father and the Son in every way, and the third parichoretic partner. Christ’s ascension and Pentecost are inseparable. It was in connection with the sending of the Holy Spirit that Christ stressed the necessity of his going away from the disciples, “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor (\textit{para/kh\theta oj}) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7). "This indicates that Pentecost is a primary, and not a secondary, benefit of the departure of the Lord".\textsuperscript{46} Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost affirms that it was the ascended Jesus who was given the promise of the Spirit and sent him on the day of Pentecost.\textsuperscript{47} “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear” (Acts 2:32-33).

The Holy Spirit’s role as comforter (\textit{para/kh\theta oj}) reveals much of the work he was sent to do. This Greek word can also be translated as helper, counselor, intercessor, advocate, or guide. In light of Jesus’ promise to send another \textit{para/kh\theta oj} in John 14-16, Toon (1984) made seven statements concerning the prophetic ministry of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit:\textit{para/kh\theta oj}: (a) the coming of the Holy Spirit is dependent upon the going away of Jesus; (b) the Holy Spirit comes in the name of the Son to abide with the disciples forever; (c) the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples to testify of the exalted Christ; (d) the Holy Spirit comes as the Spirit of truth to guide the disciples into all truth; (e) the Holy Spirit discloses to the disciples what Christ has received of the Father and thus what Christ offers to them now as Savior and mediator; and (f) the Holy Spirit, whom the world cannot naturally receive, nevertheless comes to the world to convince people of their need of Christ.

The importance of the Holy Spirit’s role as \textit{para/kh\theta oj} to leadership should not be underestimated; however, the Holy Spirit as giver of gifts and power more directly relates to leadership and leadership empowerment. Spiritual gifts can be defined as any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church\textsuperscript{48} or a divine endowment of a special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ.\textsuperscript{49} Table 1 shows the lists of gifts in the New Testament.


\textsuperscript{48} Grudem, \textit{Systematic Theology}, 1016.

\textsuperscript{49} Enns, \textit{Moody Handbook of Theology}, 270.
These lists should not be viewed as comprehensive or exhaustive but as representative. Other gifts are mentioned in scripture; for example, 1 Peter 4:10-11 lists speaking and service as gifts and 1 Corinthians 7:7 lists marriage and celibacy as gifts. Attempts to categorize these gifts are tentative at best. One reason is that a variety of terminology is used to describe these gifts. Three primary words are used to explain the giving of spiritual gifts: first is pneumatiko/s and means spirituals or spiritual things and is often translated "spiritual gifts," second is xa/risma that means grace gift, and third is the general word for give is di/dwmi. Each list shown in Table 5 uses different words to describe the gifts. For example, the spiritual things (pneumatiko/s) being given (di/dotai) in 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 are called grace gifts (xa/risma/twn), services (diakoniw~n), or operations (e0nerghma/twn). The word for spiritual things, pneumatiko/s, is used only in 1 Corinthians 12. Neither pneumatiko/s nor xa/risma is used to describe the ministries Christ gave (e0/dwken) in Ephesians 4:11.

Table 1: Lists of Spiritual Gifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Cor 12:1-11</th>
<th>1 Cor 12:27-31</th>
<th>Rom 12:6-8</th>
<th>Ephes 4:11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Apostles</td>
<td>Prophesy</td>
<td>Apostle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Evangelist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Shepherd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracles</td>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophecy</td>
<td>Helps</td>
<td>Leading</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discernment</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongues</td>
<td>Tongues</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another distinction between the three main gift lists is that each list has a different primary divine agent. In Romans 12:3b, Paul stated that “God has given” each of these gifts to the members of the body of Christ, these gifts could be properly called the gifts of the Father. Ephesians 4:7 states that these gifts are given “as Christ apportioned” and are sometimes referred to as the ministry gifts of Christ. Paul referred to the manifestation of the Spirit and used the phrase “by the Spirit” throughout the list in 1 Corinthians 12—they alone can accurately be called “gifts of the Spirit”. Each person of the Trinity plays a vital part in the manifestation of gifts. The persons of the Godhead have different roles, yet vitally work together, blending into a perfect unity of expression. This is an example of the divine perichoretic partnership at work.

There has been a great controversy regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit (often of, with, or in the Holy Spirit are used interchangeably). Most Pentecostals and

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50 Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 891.
52 Fee, *Paul*, 356.
53 Miller, *In Step with the Spirit*, 184.
charismatics have believed that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience subsequent to salvation, whereby the third person of the Godhead comes upon the believer to anoint and empower him for special service. Others have believed that the baptism with the Holy Spirit happens upon conversion and is a baptism into the body of Christ\textsuperscript{55}. A difficulty in finding consensus of meaning is the diverse language used to explain the relationship of the Holy Spirit to man. For example, the Holy Spirit has been said to be “poured out” (Isa 44:2-3; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:16-18; Acts 2:33, 10:45), “fallen on” (Acts 10:44, 11:15), “coming upon” (Acts 1:8, 19:6), “baptizing with” (Acts 1:5, 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13), and believers are “filled with” or “full of” the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4, 6:5, 7:55; Ephes 5:18). Grudem wrote that the phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit” is divisive and suggests that Pentecostals and Charismatics use terms such as “fullness of the Holy Spirit” or “new empowering for ministry.” Different phraseology will not settle the “subsequence” issue or having two categories of Christians—“Spirit-filled Christian” and “ordinary Christian.” There is, however, a commonly held belief among evangelicals of subsequent and additional “fillings” of the spirit separate from what they view as baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ\textsuperscript{56}. This may provide some common ground.

Gordon Anderson, in a major Pentecostal journal, stated that believers who have not experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit can still minister with supernatural signs following. Yet, Anderson stated that the Spirit-baptized believer will have more power for ministry\textsuperscript{57}. A more thorough examination of the controversy over the baptism of the Holy Spirit is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, even with disagreements regarding an experience with the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation and an enduement of additional power, there are several areas regarding the Holy Spirit where evangelical Christians and Pentecostals can agree: (a) the Holy Spirit indwells all Christians; (b) the Holy Spirit is the paraclete that comes alongside the Christian to counsel, help, teach, and guide; (c) the Holy Spirit gives gifts to Christians; (d) the Holy Spirit empowers Christians by his presence and empowering gifts.

\textbf{Sociorhetorical Analysis.} Ephesians 4:1-16 is examined using sociorhetorical analysis to gain insight into the relationship between the historical event of Jesus’ ascension and the leadership ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. The research question that guides this study follows: What is the relationship between the ascension of Christ and leadership empowerment in Ephesians 4:1-16? The purpose of this study is to conduct a multifaceted hermeneutical analysis of a portion of Paul’s epistle to the Ephesian church to discover the relationship and affects that Christ’s ascension had upon leadership. This study explains the intent of Paul, the author, in connecting the ascension event to giving the leadership gifts of apostle,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item See Gruden, \textit{Systematic Theology}, and Thiessen, \textit{Lectures in Systematic Theology} for example.
\item Enns, \textit{The Moody Handbook of Theology}, Ryrie, \textit{Basic Theology}, and Thiessen, \textit{Lectures in Systematic Theology} expound this view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
\item Gordon L. Anderson, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Initial Evidence, and a New Model,” \textit{Enrichment} 10 No. 1 (2005), 77. Anderson is addressing the fact that non-Pentecostals have accomplished great things without the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the traditional Pentecostal prescription.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. This study intends to be introductory into the examination of divine empowerment for leaders.

Sociorhetorical analysis draws a number of temporary boundaries around a text for the purpose of close examination from one point in time. This approach presupposes that what is discovered within one bounded area will be put in dialogue with discoveries in other bounded areas. It can be compared to piecing together patterned squares that have been sewn separately; only when the squares are placed in right relation to each other does the overall design emerge. Robbins referred to these bounded areas as textures. By changing the interpreter’s angle a number of times, the interpreter is able to bring multiple textures of the text into view. Sociorhetorical analysis, as developed by Robbins, exhibits five different angles to explore multiple textures within texts: (a) inner texture, (b) intertexture, (c) social and cultural texture, (d) ideological texture, and (e) sacred texture. Robbins’ systematic approach asks the interpreter to develop a conscious strategy of reading and rereading a text from different angles. This study analyzes the inner texture, the social and cultural texture, and the sacred texture of Ephesians 4:1-16.

III. Sociorhetorical Analysis of Ephesians 4:1-16

The goal of sociorhetorical analysis is to bring skills we use on a daily basis into an environment of interpretation that is both intricately sensitive to details and perceptively attentive to large fields of meanings in the world in which we live. It describes a set of integrated strategies that moves coherently through inner literary and rhetorical features of a text into a social and cultural interpretation of its discourse in the context of the Mediterranean world. Sociorhetorical analysis is first concerned with rhetoric. Rhetoric is the faculty (power) of discovering, in the particular case, the available means of persuasion according to Aristotle and in Paul’s day, it is referred to as the art of persuasion. Rhetorical analysis concerns the interrelationship between language and human actions and how language attempts to create effects on an audience. All language is a social possession that is an instrument of communication and influence. Therefore, rhetorical discourse is always situational, is generated to change reality, and is functionally a socially motivated mode of action. Thus, sociorhetorical analysis is interested in how language is used to communicate within the social and cultural context of the text. Many methods can be utilized for sociorhetorical analysis. However, this study uses the method of sociorhetorical analysis developed by Robbins. His method of sociorhetorical analysis is highly structured, dividing the analysis into divisions and subdivisions (he called textures). Robbins examined the rhetorical style by dividing the textual analysis into inner texture and intertexture and examines the social–cultural aspect of the text by dividing the textual analysis into cultural/social texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture. This study analyzes the inner, cultural/social, and sacred textures of Ephesians 4:1-16.

Inner Texture Analysis

Inner texture focuses on words as tools for communication and concerns relationships among word–phrase and narrational patterns that produce argumentative and aesthetic patterns in texts. At this stage, the interpreter assigns only basic lexical meanings to the words in the text and withholds fuller meanings to allow sign and sound patterns to emerge. The emphasis is on the relations of the signs and sounds rather than the content and meanings. According to Robbins, sociorhetorical inner texture includes (a) repetitive–progressive, (b) opening–middle–closing, and (c) argumentative textures.

Repetitive–Progressive Analysis. Repetitive texture resides in the occurrence of words, phrases, or concepts occurring more than once in a unit. Progressive texture resides in sequences or progressions of words, phrases, or concepts throughout the unit. Ephesians 4:1-16 contains repetitive words, phrases, or concepts as shown in Table 2. A cursory look at the table reveals themes developing in the elementary structure of the text through the repetitive words, phrases, and concepts the author use to communicate his message.

Table 2: Repetitive Words, Phrases, and Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>calling you have been called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>hope of your calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>forbearance to one another in love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>speaking truth in love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>building up of [the body] in love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>unity of spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>unity of the faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>fitted and held together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>one body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>body of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>whole body/causes the growth of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>one body, one Spirit, one hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>one Lord, one faith, one baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>one God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>who is over all and through all and in all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Power)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>ascended far above all heavens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>him, who is the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>he gave gifts to men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>and he gave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>building up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>mature man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most obvious use of repetitive texture is the repeated use of “one” in verses 4-6. The word translated as one comes from the Greek word ἕν (hen); is the neuter primary numeral one; and precedes the words body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God, which asserts God’s oneness and unity with the body. This crescendo of nouns is used to preserve the unity of those belonging to Christ and unity in God. Some have seen a logical sequence to this series of seven acclamations of oneness. However, Lincoln wrote that the precise sequence is dictated more by compositional and rhetorical factors than by any deliberate preference for experiential rather than logical order in creedoal formation. The repetitive words, however, are grouped around the three members of the Trinity: verse 4—one body, one Spirit, one hope; verse 5—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; and verse 6—one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all, which indicates not only the unity of the Godhead but also the unity with God and the body. This string of nouns, unconnected by conjunctions, has rhetorical force, adding to the weight of the exhortation to unity, which is a theme throughout the pericope. The effect of the repeated use of one is to drive home the central theme of unity. Significantly, the creedoal tone of verses 4-6 establishes Trinitarian structure for a monotheistic Jewish audience living in a polytheistic Roman world. For Diaspora Jews accustomed to reading and hearing the Septuagint, the confession of “one Lord” would echo their daily confession of the Shema (Deut 6:4-9) where Yahweh is worshipped as the one Lord in the very same language.

A second theme emerging from this textual analysis is calling. The references to calling are echoes from the introductory prayer in Ephesians 1:18 (“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>grow up in all aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>growth of the body / building up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascend</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>he ascended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>he ascended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>he who ascended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descend</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>he who also descended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>he who descended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 Ibid., location 6247.
calling”) and helps connect the first division (theological) to the second paraenetic (exhortive) division of Ephesians. The redundancy in Ephesians 4:1 (“I . . . implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called”) emphasizes the importance of this call. The concept of calling is important in biblical thought. Writers have identified three biblical calls. The first is the universal call for an individual to come into relationship with God. The second is a general call to Christian service. The third is to a specific call to a ministry or vocation. This calling is primarily the first calling—the universal call to relationship with God—but may also include the others. The author addressed those who “were dead in [their] trespasses and sin in which [they] formerly walked according to this world” (Ephes 2:1) but now are a part of the community of God. This exhortation is directed toward all “the saints” in Asia, especially the converted Gentiles. The Jewish believer would be accustomed to the concept of “called” and “chosen,” but this concept would be of great significance for the Gentile believers who are being told that they have full access to God and the Christian community. The expression “hope of your calling (1:18 & 4:4) does not just refer to a future life; it is a reference to the present life of the believer that foreshadows a future life.

As with calling, a macro view of Ephesians reveals that power and authority are themes for the entire book as well. Ultimate power and authority are implicit in the phrases “who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephes 4:6) and “ascended far above all heavens” (v. 10). The headship (lordship) of Christ over the church is specified in Ephesians 4:15: “we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ.” Each of these phrases harken back to the prayer Paul offered in Ephesians 1 where the authority and headship of Christ is firmly established:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephes 1:18-23)

Ultimate authority and power is also implied in the repetition (and progression) of “descended” and “ascended” in verses 9-10; especially verse 10: “He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.” Ascension also hearkens back to the prayer in Ephesians 1. The repetition of these phrases points directly to the authority and power of the ascended Christ that Paul had previously explicated.

Opening-Middle-Closing Analysis

Opening—middle—closing texture resides in the nature of the beginning, the body, and the conclusion of a section of discourse. Other textures regularly work together to create the opening, middle, and closing of a unit of text. The opening, middle, and closing of our pericope becomes evident by examining the repetitive and progressive words in the text shown in Table 3, which reveals a distinct beginning, middle, and closing for this pericope and begins to reveal the theme for the paraenetic portion of Ephesians and reinforces the theme of the entire book of Ephesians.
### Table 3: Opening–Middle–Closing Inner Texture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Calling</th>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Unity</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Maturity</th>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Gifting</th>
<th>Ascend</th>
<th>Descend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Calling/called</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>love</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unity of spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Called/calling</td>
<td>One…one…one</td>
<td>One…one…one</td>
<td>One…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who is over all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unity of spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Who is over all</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grace was given / Christ’s gift</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gave gifts to men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>He ascended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>He ascended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>He who was descended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Above all heavens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>And he gave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Building up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Building up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Building up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- **Verse 1:** Calling/called
- **Verse 2:** Love
- **Verse 3:** Unity of spirit
- **Verse 4:** Called/calling
- **Verse 5:** One…one…one
- **Verse 6:** One body
- **Verse 7:** Who is over all
- **Verse 8:** Grace was given / Christ’s gift
- **Verse 9:** Gave gifts to men
- **Verse 10:** He ascended
- **Verse 11:** He who was descended
- **Verse 12:** Above all heavens
- **Verse 13:** And he gave
- **Verse 14:** Building up
- **Verse 15:** Building up
- **Verse 16:** Building up
The repetition of the phrases or words “calling,” “love,” “unity,” and “body” and the seven-fold use of “one” combine to reveal the beginning of this text is the author’s call or appeal for unity within the body of Christ (Ephes 4:1-6). “Unity,” “love,” and “body” are found in the opening and closing. The middle portion of the text is clear through the repetition of “give” and “gift” (vv. 7-11). These gifts are directly linked to the exaltation of Christ through the repetition and progression of the “descent” and “ascent” of Christ (vv. 12-16). This equipping and appeal for unity culminates with an indication that unity and maturity in the body of Christ is the natural byproduct of empowered Christian living or service. The repetition of “love” in the beginning verses and the closing verses indicates that love is an important ingredient for accomplishing the unity desired. It is also noteworthy that the concept of authority appears in the opening, the middle, and the closing section signified by the use of the phrases “who is over all,” “above all heavens,” and “him who is the head.” The author’s inclusion of phrases that indicate divine power and authority throughout this portion of text is most likely a sign that authority and power is foundational and integral to the additional points the author made.

Repetitive–progressive and beginning–middle–closing inner textural analysis is preliminary to our overall sociorhetorical analysis; however, a major theme is emerging: Believers are called to grow in maturity and maintain unity in the body of believers as the ascended Christ with all power and authority empowers them.

Argumentative Analysis

Argumentative texture is interested in the rhetorical style as much as the words themselves. Study of argumentative texture investigates various kinds of inner reasoning in a discourse. Argumentative texture analysis integrates the tools of both ancient and modern rhetorical criticism into sociorhetorical analysis of the text. Argumentative texture looks for the logical reasoning in the text. Ephesians is a mixture of exhortation and argumentation. Ephesians 4:1-16 begins the section that is largely argumentation.

Rhetoric played a powerful role in the everyday life in the Roman Empire from the official courts to the marketplace. Traditional rhetoric is generally divided into three kinds or branches: (a) forensic, (b) deliberative, and (c) epideictic. Forensic and deliberative rhetoric looks for judgments or verdicts, forensic rhetoric looks for judgments on past happenings as in judicial courts, and deliberative rhetoric looks for judgments in the future such as the legislature making laws. Epideictic rhetoric is ceremonial speech of praise (or blame) and does not look for a judgment. Its purpose is to inspire and motivate. Every Greco–Roman speech falls into one of these three branches, and identifying the branch of rhetoric scriptural text falls under gives the interpreter an important clue to understanding the intent of the author.

A biblical interpreter should be careful not to force rhetorical conventions upon a text that the author did not intend. However, whereas the art of rhetoric was well known in Paul’s day, it is no surprise that typical rhetorical devices can be identified in New Testament writings. Ephesians 4:1-16 can be easily divided into three sections: (a) introduction and presentation of his argument (vv. 1-6), (b) the main part of the argument or body (vv. 7-13), and (c) the conclusion of his argument (vv. 14-16). Ephesians 4:1-3 includes a brief exordium or introduction (I, the prisoner of the Lord),
Paul then moved directly into his argument, “Therefore, I . . . implore you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called” The directive could end there, but in Pauline fashion, he offered an extended description of how to walk out this calling—with humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance in love, and unity. Verses 4-6 (an almost parenthetical description of unity) lists seven proofs for unity—one body, one Spirit, one hope of calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God—supporting his admonition to strive for Christian unity.

Verses 7-13 include the main part of his argument—the confirmatio or the logical argument. The basic argument is that Christ gave the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher to help in the walk that believers are called to and become believers. These gifts are people with special abilities: leading, prophesying, proclaiming the good news, shepherding, and teaching. The author tied the giving of these gifted individuals directly to the ascension (and by implication the session) of Christ. Again, this harkens back to Ephesians 1 where Christ is revealed as being resurrected and ascended to heavenly places: “[God] raised [Christ] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places” (Ephes 1:20b). These gifts of gifted individual are given for the specific purpose for maturing and unifying the body (vv. 12-13). To strengthen his argument, the author used the intertexture recitation of Psalm 68:18. This verse is quoted (if taken from Coptic translations, Targumic readings, or most Syriac Peshitta texts) or used in a similar context (if taken from the Masoretic text or the Greek Septuagint) to support the notion of Christ giving gifts. Psalm 68 is notoriously hard to interpret, but the key to understanding this verse is to recognize its original use as a liturgical text accompanying a ritual. This psalm, governed primarily by ritual factors and not simply by literary and thematic considerations, is basically a psalm of military triumph (Boice, 1996). Boice explained Paul’s logic in reciting Psalm 68:18:

It is not so strange that Paul would take a verse that in the Old Testament refers to the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant at Mount Zion and refer it to Jesus who, in a similar way, ascended to the heavenly tabernacle after his resurrection to reign over the church.

The use of Psalm 68:18 to strengthen the concept of God giving gifts and also for the potential of every Christian to receive a gift from God would have been significant to the Jewish and Gentile believer alike.

Verses 14-16 are the peroratio or the conclusion. This conclusion is identified by the words “as a result.” This indicates that the previous argument, when fulfilled, will accomplish or result in a desired state. This state includes maturity (no longer being children), confidence in the faith (not being carried about by every wind of doctrine, trickery of men, or deceitful scheming), and unity in the body of Christ (caused growth of the body for the building up of itself in love).

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Summary of Inner Texture Analysis

However preliminary in our investigation, themes can be seen developing that aid our understanding of the relationship between Christ’s ascension to leadership empowerment. The first theme, calling, is evident in the repetitive texture in the opening portion of our pericope. Calling is also seen in the opening of the theological portion of Ephesians (i.e., Ephes 1-3) as well as in the opening of the exhortive section of Ephesians (i.e., Ephes 4-6). The second theme beginning to emerge is equipping through the gifts given by the authority and power of the ascended and seated Christ. The mediatorial role of the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are also beginning to form.

Cultural and Social Textural Analysis. After rhetorical and textual considerations, the social and cultural aspects of the text are analyzed. What is significant here is the social and cultural nature or location of the text. The use of anthropological and social theory helps the interpreter understand the social and cultural voices in the text. Robbins’ taxonomy of social and cultural texture considered specific topics, common topics, and final topics.

Specific Categories Analysis

Specific social topics in the text reveal the religious responses to the world in its discourse. How the writer and audience of the text react to the world is of primary interest in specific topics. Robbins wrote that people set themselves apart from others in the world. There are different ways in which people set themselves apart from others, and sociologists and anthropologists have given us language to describe different ways in which people do this. Robbins referred to the typology of sects developed by Bryan Wilson who conceptualized seven types of religious responses to the world: (a) conversionist, (b) revolutionist, (c) introversionist, (d) gnostic–manipulation, (e) thaumaturgical, (f) reformist, and (g) utopian. Each describes a possible reaction or response to the world from changing society by changing individuals to total destruction and reconstruction of society. Social and religious differences in the text are examined and then applied to social identity theory.

Ephesians 4:1-16 is the opening of the paraenetic portion of the book. Paul is exhorting the Saints of Asia to live their lives worthy of their calling. The next verses read:

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (Ephes 4:17-19)

This suggests a conversionist reaction to the world. The conversionist response to society is characterized by a view that the world is corrupt because the people are corrupt; and if the people can be changed, the world will be changed. Paul's main
concern is for individual change whether or not society changes. The Greek word for Gentile is ethnā from which we get the English word ethnic. In scripture, it can also be translated as nations, non-Jew, pagan, heathen, or unbeliever. Paul addressed this discourse to “the Saints who are at Ephesus.” The reference to Saints did not distinguish between ethnic identities but is an address to any believer in Christ regardless of his or her political or racial identity. The use of ágios and ethnikoí suggest a division between believer and nonbeliever, not a social distinction. The indication is that a Gentile believer is no longer part of the ethnikoí but is now a ágios.

Ephesians, as with all of Paul’s writings, represents the intersection of three worldviews: Roman, Jewish, and the emerging Christian worldview. Roman society\(^6^9\) in the first century was very structured with distinct class stratification. At the very top of the society were the emperors. Becoming an emperor was by heredity. Emperors were not selected based on ability or honesty but because they were born in the right family—a divine right to rule. The Patricians comprised the privileged class with most of the wealth and power. Most Patricians came from families of wealth and land, but this class was open to a few who had been promoted by the emperor. Below them was the Equestrian class. They were the business class. Wealth could be achieved in this class as well. This class was made up of tax collectors, bankers, miners, traders, and so forth. Below the business class were the Plebeians. The Plebeians were the working class with jobs such as farming, baking, construction, or craftsmanship. Some Plebeians could eventually work themselves into the Equestrian class, but most lived the difficult life supporting their families and paying their taxes. At the bottom of the social structure were the slaves and freedmen. Slavery was common in the ancient world, and the Roman world was no exception. All slaves and their families were considered the property of their owners. Roman society practiced manumission or the practice of allowing slaves to be freed. Many freedmen became plebeians and worked the same job for their owners. Freedmen, although free, did not enjoy rights that other citizens enjoyed. For example, they were not considered citizens, could not own land, and any possessions went to their previous owner when they died.

Religion in the Roman Empire in the first century was polytheistic and very syncretistic. A typical household would have private gods like Janus and the goddess Vesta that watched out for their home and fields. Romans also had national gods like Zeus and Jupiter (Diana or Artemis was the dominant god in the region of Ephesus). Durant wrote that some of the divinities (di novensiles) were not conquered but conquering; they seeped into Roman worship through commercial, military, and cultural contracts with Greek civilization. Thus, Roman gods became associated with Greek gods—Cronus with Saturn, Poseidon with Neptune, Artemis with Diana, Hades with Pluto, and so on. Religion permeated life in the Roman Empire. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public life or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them without renouncing the commerce of mankind and all the offices and amusements of society (Gibbon, 1845). Roman gods rewarded ritual and formulas, not goodness. Roman religion (heathenism) is a deification of the rational and irrational

creative and a corresponding corruption of the moral sense, giving the sanction of religion to natural and unnatural vices—heathenism was a religion groping after the unknown god.\(^70\)

Jewish life in the time of Paul was similar to that of the surrounding culture. They were involved in local commerce as shepherds, fishermen, carpenters, and so on. Yet, the theocentric nature of the Jews made them particularly stand out from society. Wherever a Roman or a Greek might travel, he could take his gods with him or find rites kindred to his own. It was far otherwise with the Jew. He had only one temple and only one God. The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities once caused the Jew to live away from their capital and temple, but by Paul’s day living away from Jerusalem and the temple were entirely voluntary. Edersheim described the Jew as being dispersed over the whole inhabited earth and become a world—nation, yet its heart still beat in Jerusalem. \(^71\) Edward Gibbon described the diaspora Jews as being multiplied to a surprising degree in the East, and afterwards in the West, and soon exciting the curiosity and wonder of other nations and explained Jewish disposition toward Gentile cultures:

The sullen obstinacy with which they maintained their peculiar rites and unsocial manners, seemed to mark them out as a distinct species of men, who boldly professed, or who faintly disguised, their implacable habits to the rest of human kind. Neither the violence of Antiochus, nor the arts of Herod, nor the example of the circumjacent nations, could ever persuade the Jews to associate the institutions of Moses [with] the elegant mythology of the Greeks.\(^72\)

Gibbon described the attitude of diaspora Jews as a narrow and unsocial spirit, which instead of inviting had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the Law of Moses. Jews, even in their disadvantaged state, still asserted their lofty and exclusive privileges, shunned, instead of courting the Gentiles. They still insisted with inflexible vigor to practice the parts of the law still in their power to practice with their distinction of days, of meats, and observances that probably seemed trivial and burdensome to Gentile neighbors. Gibbon suggested that even the rite of circumcision was alone capable of repelling a willing proselyte from the door of the synagogue. Jews adhered most tenaciously to the letter of the law and to their traditions and ceremonies, cherished a bigoted horror of the heathen, and were therefore despised and hated by them as misanthropic. Thus, a strong line of demarcation between the Jews and Gentiles ran through the whole of the Roman Empire. The “middle wall” of partition was built up by diligent hands on both sides. \(^73\)

Under these circumstances, Christianity spread through Asia. At the time of Paul, the Christian worldview was emerging but was seen as a branch of Judaism. Soon Christians grew in number. Gibbon wrote that Christians had a similar inflexible and

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intolerant zeal as the Jew, but their zeal was “purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit” of Jewish zeal.\textsuperscript{74} It was this purified zeal, however, that helped Christianity to become influential. Doctrine of a future life, miraculous powers, Christian morality, and the unity and discipline of the Christian community were also influential, according to Gibbon. The enfranchisement of the Christian church from the synagogue was a work of some time and difficulty. Jewish believers tended to adhere to the customs of the law they were accustomed to and even desired to impose them upon Gentile converts. It was into this setting that Paul wrote his epistles, including Ephesians.

Application of social identity theory aids in the understanding of the conversionist disposition of our text. According to social identity theory, people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories such as organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, and age cohort.\textsuperscript{75} Group or group affiliation gives a sense of identity and belonging to the social world. People can belong to several groups depending on various factors such as ethnicity, location, belief, age, and gender. People have a tendency to divide themselves into us and them groups (labeled in-groups and out-groups). Tajfel and Turner identified three processes in distinguishing in-groups and out-groups.\textsuperscript{76} The first, social categorization is the simple process of deciding which group you and others belong to based on a variety of distinguishing factors. The second is social identification whereby individuals adopt the identity of the group they have categorized themselves with. The third process is social comparison. After identifying with a particular group (in-group), we have a tendency to compare our group with other groups (out-groups). Social comparison between groups is a decisive element in the process by which social categorization can turn into the creation of positive in-group distinctiveness. Social classification serves two functions: (a) it cognitively segments and orders the social environment, providing a systematic means of defining others, and (b) social classification enables the individual to locate or define himself or herself in the social environment.

Social identity is the perception of oneness with or belonging to some human aggregate.\textsuperscript{77} Ashforth and Mael identified three factors besides the typical factors for group formation (similarity, proximity, shared goals, etc.) that are most likely to increase the tendency to identify with a group: (a) group distinctiveness—values and practices in relation to the values and practices of other groups, (b) group prestige—individuals often cognitively identify themselves with winners, and (c) group salience (standing out relative to neighboring groups)—awareness of other groups tend to increase group homogeneity, reinforce boundaries, and underscore values.\textsuperscript{78} They also stated that group cohesion, cooperation, altruism, and positive evaluation of the group are results of an individual identifying with a group. Another result of group identification is that individuals tend to choose activities congruent with the salient aspects of the group identity, and they support the institutions embodying those identities.

\textsuperscript{74} Gibbon, \textit{History of the Decline and Fall}, 318.


\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 24-25.
Although there are three distinct worldviews, Paul drew the boundaries between two groups, the ágioi and the ethnikoí—the Saints (believers) and Gentiles (unbelievers). The implication is that Jew and Gentile believers should identify with the Christian community. The first three chapters of Ephesians draw the boundaries for the Christian in-group and also help define the distinctiveness, prestige, and the salience of this in-group. The results of social identity as a saint will be group cohesion (unity), altruism (love), cooperation, and other activities congruent with the Christian identity—all of which are the ultimate goals of Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:1-16. So that Paul's message is clear, he listed behaviors or attitudes of their past that they should no longer associate with such as falsehood, anger, wrath, stealing, unwholesome speech, bitterness, clamor, slander, malice, immorality, greed, filthiness, silly talk, course jesting, and immorality. On the other hand, Paul listed in-group attitudes and behavior such as speaking words of edification, kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, thankfulness, and being imitators of God. These behaviors clearly differentiate the groups. Drawing a comparison between the in-group ágioi and the out-group ethnikoí, as Paul did in Ephesians, helps increase their unity and strengthen their Christian values and behavior.

Common Categories Analysis

Culture is a common or shared system of patterned values, meanings, and beliefs that give cognitive structure to the world, provide a basis for coordinating and controlling human interactions, and constitute a link as the system is transmitted from one generation to the next. Common social and cultural topics are instinctively learned. They are the overall environment for the specific social topics in a text. Knowing the common social and cultural topics in a text can help an interpreter to avoid ethnocentric and anachronistic interpretation. The emerging theme of Ephesians 4:1-16 is that Paul is exhorting Christians to walk worthy of their calling in maturity with altruistic behavior pursuing unity with other Christians. After this exhortation, Paul described the results as maturity and unity in the body of Christ. In verses 11-13, Paul introduced five gifts (or individuals with ministry gifts) that mediate the process of maturity and unity. These gifted individuals (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher) are given by the ascended Christ specifically to help in the walk of maturity and unity. These gifts are culturally significant to the text.

For understanding the significance of giving in the first century, an examination of giving and the exchange of goods is examined. The world of the authors and the readers of the New Testament was one in which personal patronage was an essential means of acquiring access to goods, protection, or opportunities for employment and advancement.79 Patronage is the giving and receiving of favors to relations and friends. In modern culture, patronage is seen as unfair advantage and despairingly called nepotism, but in the first century it was essential, expected, and even advertised. One particular kind of patronage was called benefaction. This relationship is where the wealthy person is the benefactor and there was a clearly articulated code that guided the noble exchange of graces. God is presented in the New Testament as the source of

many gifts. God’s patronage of the church is evidenced in the growth and building up of the churches and members. Benefaction within the church is a specific gift of God (Rom 12:6-8; Ephes 4:7, 11-12). It is a manifestation of God’s patronage of the community, mediated through its members. DeSilva wrote,

Alongside and among spiritual endowments and edifying services like prophesying, tongues, teaching and words of knowledge, God also bestows the gift of giving to achieve God’s purposes in the family of God. God supplies all things, so that Christians are called to share on the basis of their kinship responsibly toward one another in the church rather than use gifts of money and hospitality to build up their client base (the source of local prestige and power).80

Thus, God’s purpose in patronage (giving graces) is to mature and build the body of Christ through the mediation of gifts given to individual members. These gifts for the building up of the body would include the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

The disparity between the texts of Ephesians 4:8 and Paul’s use of Psalm 68:18 to enforce the notion of the ascended Christ giving gifts may be understood in the context of patronage. Psalm 68:18 reads, “You have ascended on high, you have led captive your captives; you have received gifts among men,” while Ephesians 4:8 reads, “When he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” This use of the Old Testament text seems to change or reverse the meaning of the text. However, patronage is seen as a reciprocal relationship where the more wealthy or powerful person or entity bestows gifts in return for services or even worship. At a time when patronage is the cultural norm, it would likely be understood that a conquering king would receive gifts from and also give gifts to their loyal subjects. One implies the other in Paul’s world where patronage is the custom.

The gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are common cultural topics. They each would have had a role in the life of a believer and a particular reason for Paul to list them as being important to the maturity of the church and establishing unity in the body of Christ. There has been, however, some disagreement whether Paul intended to list pastor and teacher as two separate gifts or as the combined gift of pastor/teacher. This disagreement comes from the anarthrous listing of teacher. Each of the gifts in the list is preceded by a definite article except for teacher, leading some to believe that Paul intended that pastor and teacher fulfill one function—that of a pastor/teacher. Ephesians 4:11 in the Greek reads kai\ au0to\ j e0/dwken tou\ j me\ n a0posto/ louj, tou\ j de\ profh/taj, tou\ j de\ eu0aggelistaj, tou\ j de\ poime/naj, kai\ didaska/louj. Note the use of a particle (me\ n) and the use of two different conjunctions (de\ and kai\ j). The author used de\ j before listing apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor, but he used kai\ j before teacher. The use of two different conjunctions could be a mere stylistic choice but may be an indication that the two functions of pastor and teacher were intended to be combined. The particle (me\ n) is hard to translate and many English versions leave the particle untranslated. The UBS Greek New Testament (4th revised edition) indicates that when me\ n and de\ j are used together, it is an indication of contrast or emphasis. With these factors in mind, Ephesians 4:11 could be translated “and he gave on the one hand apostles, and on the other hand prophets, and

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80 Ibid., 153.
on the other hand evangelists, and on the other hand pastors and teachers.” This has caused many (perhaps most) commentators to combine pastor and teacher into one role. However, it should be noted that the gifts listed in our text are individuals who operate in a particular function or functions, and most of the other gifts that are listed are functions (teaching, prophesy, serving, miracles, discernment, etc.), not people or offices. Also, the list in 1 Corinthians 12:27 includes teacher separately with no mention of pastor, indicating that pastor and teacher are two distinct gifts. Regardless of whether Paul intended for teacher and pastor to be two gifts or one, they are two distinct functions—teaching and shepherding.

The ministry functions in Ephesians 4:11 provide a mediatorial role. God’s expressed state for believers and his church is unity and maturity, according to his messenger Paul. The past state of his audience is implied in Ephesians 4 but made explicit in Ephesians 2:1, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 4:1-16 conveys that the past state of believers and the desired state of the church is mediated by the gifts (functions or ministries) of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Mediatorial roles (leadership).](image)

These mediatorial roles are indications of leadership. Each gift of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher fulfills a leadership role in the church. Northouse defined leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.81 The apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher each assert different influences upon saints and unbelievers to achieve a common goal. Each gift functions differently, but they have the shared goal of unity and maturity in the body of believers.

The first cultural item and leadership gift listed in Ephesians 4:11 is the apostle. Many scholars and commentary writers have believed that the office of the apostle has ended with the death of the last apostle. Numerous authors have followed the lead of Calvin who wrote in his commentaries of 1 Corinthians and Ephesians that only the “offices” of pastor and teacher were still functioning in the church in his day.82 Yet, Harnack, pointing out that the term apostle is confined to the 12 only twice in Paul (1 Cor 9:5 and Gal 1:7), wrote,

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The term [apostle] cannot be sharply restricted at all; for God appoints prophets and teachers in the church, so also does he appoint apostles to be the front rank therein, and since such charismatic callings depend upon the church’s needs, which are known to God alone, their numbers are not fixed.83 Apostle is the transliteration of the Greek word apostolos, meaning “a messenger” or “one sent on a mission.” Apostles were literally commissioned messengers fulfilling their sender’s mission and were backed by the sender’s authority to the extent that they accurately represented that commission.84 “Being sent” was known to the Jewish and ancient world, but Paul’s use of a0posto/louj had a distinct meaning for the first-century believer. The New Testament used a0posto/louj in the general sense as an apostle or sent one (Rom 16:7; 1 Thess 2:6), but in the majority of the approximately 80 times the word a0posto/louj is used, it is in reference to the original 12 apostles. However, Paul used this term to describe himself and his calling and used a0posto/louj to describe a gifting for ministry (1 Cor 12:27; Ephes 4:11).

Much has been written about the criteria and function of apostleship. The concrete duties of an apostle are not clear, though they surely follow the example of the 12 and Paul. Although the apostolic functions are unclear, apostles have commonly been associated with authority to some extent. For centuries, apostleship has been held in high esteem and ascribed only to the original 12, Paul, and Matthias. J. B. Lightfoot and other scholars have concluded that direct commissioning from Jesus did not apply to Paul and Matthias; this raised theological problems about the significance of the derivation of apostle from the Jewish practice of legal representation and about the authority of apostles in general.85 If those in the New Testament called apostles (namely Paul and Matthias) were not directly commissioned by Jesus, then where does their authority lie, and can others be named apostle as well? This raises questions about the continuation of the ministry or gift of apostle that Paul listed in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12.

It is difficult to know what apostolic authority is and how it functioned in the New Testament. The modern perception of authority, as with patronage, is not the perception of authority in the first-century Roman Empire. Authority in modern writing is placed upon an implicit source alone; modern authority rests within the social organization and is constantly being underwritten by those who command and those who obey, presumably because the goals of the social organization benefit, and are shared by both. Authority in ancient times was more explicit. Authority should derive from an auctor. Schütz cited B. de Jouvenel:

The auctor is, in ordinary speech, creator of a work, father or ancestor, founder of a family or a city, the Creator of the universe. This is the crudest meaning; more subtle meanings have become incorporated with it. The auctor is the man whose advice is followed, he instigates, he promotes. He inspires others with . . . his own purpose, which now becomes that of those others as well—the very

principle of the actions which they freely do. In this way the notion of father and creator is illuminated and amplified: he is the father of actions and creator is illuminated and amplified: he is the father of actions freely undertaken whose source is in him through their seat in others.  

For Schütz, the auctor of apostolic authority is the power of the gospel (i.e., the news of the person and work of Jesus Christ). Nothing is more closely associated with the apostle Paul than the gospel (“Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God” [Rom 1:1]). The one who knows himself to be sent, knows himself to be sent for the purpose of the gospel. (The distinction between the gift of apostle and Paul’s own apostleship is not one that he made.) For the Jew, the ultimate source of authority is God through the law (i.e., Torah); for the first-century Roman, the ultimate source of authority is the Roman emperor through Roman law; for the Christian, the ultimate source of authority is God through the work of Christ. In the language of Schütz, the auctor or source of apostolic authority is the ascended and exalted Christ.

Whereas the specific role and function of an apostle is difficult to determine, the mediatorial leadership function of prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are easier to recognize. The reason these roles are easier to determine is that they are known in the cultural and social context of the first century. It should be understood, first, that because each of the other ministry gifts share the mediatorial function with the apostle, they logically share in the authority given to them by the ascended Christ.

The English word prophet comes from the Greek profh/taj, which signifies, in classical Greek, one who speaks for another, especially one who speaks for a god, and so interprets his will to man. Prophesy and soothsaying were known in antiquity throughout the ancient Near East. During the intertestamental times, the Jews recognized that prophecy had ceased, but they looked forward to a revival of prophecy during the messianic age. Certainly, prophets were known in Jesus’ time: John the Baptist (Matt 11:9-14; Mrk 11:32), Jesus (Matt 21:11; John 4:19), Anna (Luk 2:36); Josephus reported that the first-century Essenes possessed the gift of prophesy, and the warning against false prophets presupposes the existence of authentic prophets (Matt 7:15; Acts 13:7; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1). Whereas apostles, evangelists (those who deliver good news), shepherds, and teachers had a secular equivalent, prophets were distinctly religious whether Jewish, Christian, or heathen such as the well-known Oracle of Delphi said to be inspired by Apollo. Prophets were divinely inspired to communicate God’s will to the people and to disclose the future to them (Unger, 1998). The mediatorial role for the prophet is to communicate God’s message to his people.

Paul listed evangelists as the third mediatorial leader. In the literal sense, an evangelist is “one announcing the good news.” This could be any person announcing

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86 Ibid., 12.
any good news, but usually it refers to a Christian telling others about the person and work of Jesus Christ. The role of evangelist is not well defined in scripture, and there are only three references to evangelists in the New Testament (Acts 2:18; Ephes 5:11; 2 Tim 4:5). Harnack wrote that any distinction between apostles and evangelists was rarely drawn in the early ages of the church and many church fathers referred to the 12 apostles and the gospel writers as evangelists (e.g., Irenaeus). Although apostles preached the good news, there seems to be a distinction of roles. As with the sparse mention of evangelists in scripture, pastors, the fourth mediatorial leader, has only one mentioned in the New Testament (Ephes 4:11). The role of pastor is not well defined as well. The Greek word for pastor is poime/naj and literally means shepherd. Shepherd evokes a mental image from the Old Testament (e.g., Ps1m 23) and would be culturally familiar to the first-century Greco–Roman world. Pastor/shepherd seems to indicate the basic functioning of ministry: love, compassion, care, protection, and provision. Eusebius (circa A.D. 260-339) gave us insight into the operation of the evangelist and the pastor:

For indeed most of the disciples of that time, animated by the divine word with more ardent love for philosophy, had already fulfilled the command of the Savior, and had distributed their goods to the needy. Then started out upon long journeys they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver them the divine gospels.

And when they had only laid the foundations with of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace and the co-operation of God. (Church History, 3.37.2-3)

This insight into the roles of first-century evangelists and pastors reveals that the mediatorial role of the evangelist is delivering the gospel message to unbelievers and the role of the pastor is to care for the needs of the new converts.

The final mediatorial leader is the teacher. Harnack wrote that teachers were respected with very high esteem in Judaism and is indicated by Jesus’ rebuke of them, “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do for they do not practice what they preach” (Matt 23:1b-3). Rabbis held a high position with those of the Pharisees. Teachers in the first-century church no doubt enjoyed a similar respect, especially of following the example of Christ or of Paul. If the mediatorial role of the evangelist is to preach and persuade non-Christians to become Christians and the role of the pastor is caring for new converts, then the mediatorial roles of teachers would be to teach new converts the gospel in fuller detail.

Role theory concerns one of the most important characteristics of social behavior—the fact that human beings behave in ways that are different and predictable

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92 Bayes, “Five-fold Ministry,” 120.
depending on their respective social identities and the situation. Our analysis of specific social categories revealed how Paul drew the boundaries between the in-group (the body of believers) and the out-group (Jewish and Gentile unbelievers). Common cultural topics revealed the leadership roles that mediate the state of the immature Christian or unbeliever and the desired state of maturity and unity in the body. Role theory helps us see how the leadership roles can help to get individuals from the out-group to the in-group.

There is some confusion and incongruity in role theories, but Biddle’s terminology is used. Role theory began as a theatrical metaphor that concerns itself with concepts such as patterned and characteristic social behavior, identities that are assumed by social participants, and scripts for behavior that are understood and adhered to by all participants. Role theories are organized around the notion that individuals occupy a variety of social roles or positions, each of which specifies certain normative behaviors and attitudes. Role theory fell out of use after the mid-20th century, but the concept of role remains a basic tool for sociological understanding. Because there is so much diversity and confusion as to terms and definitions posited by role theorists, only two role theory concepts are employed; role and expectation. In functional role theory, roles are conceived as the shared, normative expectations that prescribe and explain these behaviors. Actors in the social system have presumably been taught these norms and may be counted upon to conform to norms for their own conduct and to sanction others for conformity to norms applying to the latter.

A loose application of role theory to Ephesians 4:1-16 reveals that Paul listed five roles that aid in bringing the body to unity and maturity. Theoretically, each role of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher would be specific to the individual, and his or her behavior would be normative. Although roles may overlap one another, an individual may exchange one role for another, or at times an individual may occupy a role on a temporary base, an individual will better meet his or her expectations when the role is clearly defined. To meet expectations (or “stay on script” to continue the theatrical metaphor), each actor should know what the other actors are doing and trust them to do it. The apostle depends on the prophet to hear from God and deliver the message, the evangelist must depend upon the pastor to care for new converts, and the pastor depends upon the teacher to educate them. Each actor must know his or her role and the script (expectations).

Final Categories Analysis

Cultural location concerns the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people through the rhetoric they use. Discovering the cultural location (in contrast to the social location) of readers or writers reveals their dispositions, prepositions, and values, which influence the writing and reading of a text. To aid in finding the cultural location of a text, V. K. Robbins

96 Biddle, “Recent Developments,” 70.
developed a typology of culture through study of the sociology of culture. His typology separates people into a dominant culture, subculture, counterculture (alternate), contraculture (oppositional), or liminal (outlier) culture. Paul’s exhortation to the saints in Asia is clearly separatist rhetoric, indicating a separate culture—a subculture. A subculture rhetoric imitates the dominate culture and claims to enact them better than the members of the dominant society. The most prominent feature of a conceptual subculture is their basic assumptions of life, the world, and nature. Subcultures differ from one another according to the prominence of one of three characteristics: (a) a network of communication and loyalty, (b) a conceptual system, and (c) ethnic heritage and identity. Each of these was evident in the first-century church.

One characteristic of a subculture, according to Robbins, is a network of communication and loyalty. Christianity exists not merely as a power or principle in this world but also as an institutional and organized form, which is intended to preserve and protect it. Though the church is a spiritual entity, it is also visible with apostles, teachers, leaders, structure, sacred rites, and (for better or worse) traditions. The church had everything it needed for an organization to operate and flourish. The church had zealous leaders, members, a message, and a divine commission. Although a subculture to the Roman Empire, Christianity was established and expanded by taking advantage of the structure and relative peace that Rome provided. From Rome, a network of highways extended to bring the most distant provinces into intimate connection with the great city. Europe at the beginning of this century enjoyed no better means of communication by land than were provided in the major part of the Roman Empire. Rome’s land routes were second only to their sea routes. Every great city in the Roman Empire was connected by either a land or sea route. It is no accident that a significant body of believers was established in every major city in Asia.

Paul is the first missionary of record and was the vanguard for the spread of Christianity setting the pace and missionary example. Paul’s primary mission was to the Jew. Considering that the Jew had a prior claim to the gospel and that synagogues throughout the empire were pioneer stations for Christian missions, Paul naturally addressed himself to the Jews and proselytes. However, Paul almost always found that the proselytes were more open to the gospel than his own brethren. This missionary method produced the nucleus of new congregations and provided a natural bridge for preaching to the gentiles. Paul’s new churches were generally composed of a mix of Jew and Gentile believers. Paul’s influence over the church remained high, even over the churches that he did not personally establish. Church leaders also took advantage of the ease of communication the Roman Empire provided. Documents (sermons or letters) from the disciples (Peter, Paul, James, and John) were circulated to the churches in Asia for exhortation, teaching, and correction.

A second characteristic of a subculture is a conceptual system. Christianity is not merely a system of beliefs and doctrines but life. Christianity does not begin with religious views and notions, though it includes these, but it comes as new life as

regeneration, conversion, and sanctification.\textsuperscript{100} Persecution of Christians in the first century hindered the establishment of written dogma, however the apostolic letters, the gospels, and book of Acts were (and are still) the foundation of Christian belief. Although not dating to the first century and having been adapted through the years to adjust for theological clarity, the Apostle’s creed is the best summary of early Christian belief:

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead; I believe in the Holy Ghost; I believe in the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body; And the life everlasting. Amen.\textsuperscript{101}

This so-called Apostle’s creed is the earliest Christian creed and covers the basic beliefs of the first-century church. It has remarkably held up for almost two millennia and offers every Christian group, from Paul until today, a starting point for dialogue. This creed provides the nucleus of the Christian conceptual system.

A third characteristic of a subculture is ethnic heritage and identity. Christians are not centered on an ethnic identity, geographic center, or political system—Christians are centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ is the center of their lives and their message. The ancient epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus (A.D. 130) sums up the spiritual heritage and identity of Christians:

Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers.\textsuperscript{102}

This epistle gives a good description of the Christian of the first century (before the establishment of the Roman Church). Identity for first-century Christians is not geographical or racial; their identity comes from the shared belief of and devotion to Jesus Christ. If the geographical center for the Jew is Jerusalem, and the geographical

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 434.
center for the Roman is Rome, then the geographical center for the first-century Christian is heaven where Christ is seated on his throne.

Summary of Cultural and Social Texture Analysis

The specific, common, and final categories of cultural and social texture analysis reveal a conversionist reaction or rhetoric toward the world. Paul drew a distinction between two groups—unbelievers and believers. These two groups are referred to as in-groups and out-groups in social identity theory. Social identity theory states that a sense of identity and belonging is revealed within a social group. Categorizing or deciding which group to associate with, identifying with that particular group, and comparing that group to other groups brings a defined identity, cohesion, and clarity to the group. Also revealed were the five mediatorial roles with a leadership capacity—the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. These leaders are given to the church for the maturing of the members with unity within the body as a primary goal. These roles mediate Paul's desired states of believers to their current state, working toward the unity of the body. Authority was also revealed to be explicit in the ascended Lord (and ultimately in the Trinity). The Christian subculture was also revealed with a unique network of communication taking advantage of Roman infrastructure. Christians also share in a common conceptual system and in a common identity—the Christian subculture.

Sacred Texture Analysis. As themes emerge through the analysis of inner texture and cultural and social texture, the sacred texture is examined. Sacred texture reveals human and divine relations in the text. Those who study the New Testament are interested in finding insights into how human life relates to the divine. The purpose of sacred texture analysis is to locate the ways a text speaks about God or realms of religious life. Robbins suggested a method of analysis that will guide the interpreter in a programmatic search for sacred aspects of a text (whether or not the text is scripture). His guide includes aspects of texture that includes references to deity, holy persons, and religious community. Sacred textural analysis gives insight into what the text is saying about how believers are intended to relate to the divine, to each other, to opponents, and how to live holy lives and emerges through a study of the other textures. The current study's purpose for examining sacred texture is to discover aspects concerning the relationship of Christ’s ascension to Christian leadership.

Deity Analysis

Identifying God’s presence and describing the nature of God provides a starting point for analyzing and interpreting the sacred texture of a text. Inner texture analysis reveals deity in the text through repetitive word and phrases. The reference to “one God and Father,” the repeated reference to the Spirit, and the repetitive references to Christ indicate the presence of all three members of the Trinity (perichoretic partners). Verses 4-5 particularly reveal the Trinity (one Spirit, one Lord, one God).
Table 4: Deity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Repetitive word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>unity of the Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>one Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>one Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>one God and Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Christ’s gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>He [Christ] ascended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He [Christ] led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He [Christ] gave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>He [Christ] ascended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He [Christ] also had descended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>He [Christ] who descended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is Himself [Christ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>also He [Christ] who ascended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>and He [Christ] gave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Him who is the head, even Christ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If this portion of scripture was a narrative, the main character would be Jesus Christ. The text is centered on him; however, Paul stressed unity not only within the Godhead, but also within God’s church. Verses 8-10 are a reference to Christ’s incarnation and exaltation. The defining doctrine of Christology is the incarnation—God coming to earth in the form of man. The incarnation is Paul’s point in the Philippians hymn:

> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those on earth and under the earth and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father. (Phil 2:5-11)

Martin wrote that this passage allows us to see it as setting Christ before us as the example that guides the Christian in his or her conduct toward others. However, Martin stated that the exaltation and authority of the Lord is the basis of Paul’s paraenetic appeal in Philippians and that the lordship of Christ is the hymn’s central thought. The same is true in Ephesians 4. While the incarnation can be seen in the “descend” references, Paul’s greater purpose is in showing the lordship and authority of Christ. It is also the reason for Paul’s use of Psalm 68:18, which references a victorious

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king receiving gifts and his argument for Christ's authority and ability to give the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher to the church.

The first-century writings (not including the New Testament canon) are characterized by a certain meagerness and a want of definiteness, and there was no clear concept of the Trinity, but the belief in the Trinity is affirmed in their writings. In the first two centuries A.D., there was little conscious attempt to formulate theological and philosophical issues like the Trinity. We do find the use of the triadic formula (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) but little attempt to explain it. The doctrine of the Trinity was finally given a definite form at the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) in a statement in which the church made explicit the beliefs previously held implicit. It took almost 300 years to formulate Paul's teaching about the Trinity into doctrinal form.

Ephesians 4:1-16 reveals the Trinity, not just Christ, at work in the church. The ancient concept of the *perichoresis* describing the Trinity refers to the mutual indwelling (oneness) without confusion (or with distinction). According to David Cunningham, both concepts are necessary to describe the Trinity. It has been a difficult task for theologians to give equal space to “oneness” and “difference.” Cunningham suggested that most theologians have chosen to travel down one road and offer a “tip of the hat” to the other to avoid the criticism that they have overemphasized singularity and neglected difference or overemphasized difference and neglected singularity. Our pericope reveals both the oneness (vv. 4-6) of the godhead and the distinction of Christ (vv. 7-11).

Two attributes of Christ are revealed in Ephesian 4:1-16. The first is Christ's exalted status to the right hand of God (implicit in Ephes 4 but stated explicitly in Ephes 1). Being ascended far above all the heavens (v. 10) clearly establishes Christ as equal to the Father in all authority and power. The second is, because of the authority and power that Christ yields, he has the power to give gifts to the church. Also implicit in the giving is the empowering or the enabling of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher to fulfill their calling and function to bring unity and maturity to the body of believers. Thus, the deity our pericope reveals is Christ—second *perichoretic* partner—and the relationship of deity to man is Lord and benefactor.

**Holy Persons Analysis**

Regularly, texts feature one or more people who have a special relation to God or to divine powers—holy persons. Robbins stated that Jesus is the holy person par excellence, but I argue Jesus should be viewed as deity more than a holy person in this text. Christian doctrine views Jesus as 100% human and 100% God. References to Jesus as Son of Man in the gospels are to stress the human aspect of Christ's nature and identification with humanity. Paul, in Ephesians 4:1-16, stressed the divine aspect of Christ's nature to show his ability and authority to bestow gifts upon people.

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104 See previous discussions regarding Psalms 68.
107 Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 361.
108 Cunningham, *These Three Are One*, 321.
portion of scripture does, however, include holy persons in the person of Paul the apostle and in the five gifted leaders listed in verse 11.

Paul introduced himself in Ephesians 1:1 as an “apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” Having already introduced himself in Chapter 1, Paul again referred to himself using the first-person pronoun “I” and described himself this time as “the prisoner of the Lord.” Paul’s reference to himself as an apostle by the will of God connects himself to God and establishes his authority as God’s messenger or “sent one” to deliver God’s message to the churches. Witherington suggested that Paul’s reference to his imprisonment and chains suggests that the audience needs to realize the seriousness and possible consequences of behaving in a Christian manner in a non-Christian world and to also stir the deeper emotions of the audience so they will be more ready to receive the wisdom imparted.\textsuperscript{110}

Paul was an example for the first-century Christian. Castelli posited that \textit{mimesis} (example) was an aspect of Paul’s apostolic authority.\textsuperscript{111} Paul referred to \textit{mimesis} five times in his letters in the context of urging the audience to follow his example for Christian behavior. This example is usually in conjunction with the example of Christ (see Table 5).

Table 5: Paul’s Example (Mimesis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Reference to Pauline Mimesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Thess 1:6</td>
<td>You also became imitators of us and the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with joy of the Holy Spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Thess 2:14</td>
<td>For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil 3:17</td>
<td>Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 4:16</td>
<td>Therefore, I exhort you, be imitators of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 11:1</td>
<td>Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The notion of mimesis is common in antiquity. A survey of ancient discourses reveals some generalizations about the idea of imitation that Paul inherited from the Greco–Roman culture: (a) mimesis is always articulated as a hierarchical relationship, whereby the “copy” is but a derivation of the “model” and cannot aspire to the privileged status of the model, (b) mimesis presupposes a valorization of sameness over against difference—unity and harmony are associated with sameness while differences are attributed characteristics of diffusion, disorder, and discord—and (c) the notion of the authority of the model plays a fundamental role in the mimetic relationship.\textsuperscript{112} A holy person (once separated unto God for a particular purpose) is naturally set up to be an example for early Christians.

\textsuperscript{110}Witherington, \textit{The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians}, 284.
\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., 16.
In addition to Paul, the gifted people referred to in verse 11—the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher—are also holy persons. These persons are called and gifted to perform specific functions in and for the body of Christ. The word *holy* comes from the Greek adjective hagios that means set apart to or by God, consecrated, or holy. Used as a noun, ágios is translated Saint and refers to Christians. A *holy person* is a saint or a Christian who has been separated by God from the world. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are first saints, but they have been equipped by God with a special set of skills and given the authority to accomplish God’s purposes. In the context of Ephesians, this purpose is to bring the church to maturity and unity.

**Religious Community Analysis**

The gospel is not a purely personal matter, it has a social dimension—it is a communal affair. A relationship with God assumes a relationship with other Christians that, in Paul’s language, are the “church” or the “body of Christ.” The community of God is revealed in the inner texture repetitive use of “body” images. This is a theme for the entire book of Ephesians and the “body” or “body of Christ” is the focus of our text (4:1-16). The body imagery is unique to Paul. Table 6 lists all of the references to body in Ephesians.

**Table 6: References to Body in Ephesians**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:23</td>
<td>which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:16</td>
<td>and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enemy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:6</td>
<td>to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:4</td>
<td>There is one body and one Spirit, just also you were called in one hope of your calling:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:12</td>
<td>for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15</td>
<td>but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:16</td>
<td>from whom the whole body, being fit and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Footnotes**

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114 Modern interpreters should keep in mind that 21st-century understanding of the human body is far advanced than Paul’s and should avoid anachronistic interpretations.

5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, He Himself being Savior of the body.

5:29-30 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church because we are members of His body.

Paul’s conception of the church as a body expresses fundamental ideas important to the identity and function of the church. The body and members illustrate the unity and diversity of the church (especially seen in Paul’s description of the church as a body in 1 Cor. 12). Many scholars have acknowledged that the primary theme of Ephesians 4 is unity. In the whole section of Ephesians 4:1-16, the Christian community is seen as a living organism. The body grows as the individual parts each contribute to the developing maturity and growth of the whole, the ultimate goal being the fullness of Christ himself. The distinction of the five leadership gifts in verse 11 shows that diversity among the members does not hinder unity; on the contrary, diversity of the members aids the unity of the body. The body metaphor reveals a second important concept that is essential for the understanding of the church—headship. Christ has been revealed as the head of the church. Ultimate power and authority is attributed to God the Father in verse 6, but Christ is specifically named the head over the whole body in verse 15.

Body may be Paul’s most descriptive label for the church, but his most common term for the church is ἐκκλησία. Although the English word church is not used in Ephesians 4:1-16, it is used throughout the rest of the book and requires mentioning. Ἐκκλησία is a difficult word to translate because it is a common Greek word for assembly that is used in more than one way by the apostolic writers. The exact meaning must be interpreted by the context in which it is found and the overall thinking of the writer. The Greek root suggests a “calling out” or “setting apart” of a particular group, indicating a kind of distinction between members of the particular assembly and the wider culture. Assembly is the general translation for ἐκκλησία, but in Paul, the background of the word is the Old Testament (LXX) use of the ἐκκλησία as the people of God. Implicit in the word is the claim that the church stands in direct continuity with the Old Testament people of God. Paul used the two terms, body and ἐκκλησία, in Ephesians 5:22-28 (especially v. 23) to urge husbands to love their wives with the same love that God has toward his church, picturing the relationship between God and his church.

Ephesians 4:1-16 says more specifically about the church than any other part of Ephesians. It also reveals how some of the members of the community function and help the body to grow. Verse 12 reveals the purpose of the five leadership functions with three prepositional phrases: (a) for the equipping (completing or perfecting) of the saints, (b) for the work of service, and (c) to the building up of (edifying) the body of Christ. There has been much discussion around the interpretation of verse 12. The Revised Standard Version translates the three prepositional phrases as if the designated leaders were given by Christ for the equipping of the saints, work of service,

117 Cunningham, *These Three Are One,* 321.
and building up of the body of Christ. This translation makes these three matters the sole responsibility of the leaders listed in verse 11 (see Figure 4).

Apostle
Prophet
Evangelist
Pastor
Teacher

for the equipping of the saints
for the work of service
to the building up of the body of Christ

Figure 4: Ephesians 4:12 (functions of the leaders).

In this option, the leaders listed in verse 11 bear all of the responsibility for the ultimate goal of building up the body of Christ. The New Revised Standard Version, on the other hand, considers the second and third prepositional phrases dependent upon the first (see Figure 5).

Apostle
Prophet
Evangelist
Pastor
Teacher

for the work of service
for the equipping of the saints
to the building up of the body of Christ

Figure 5: Ephesians 4:12 (functions of the saints).

In the second option, the leaders of the church listed in verse 11 have only the task of equipping the saints so that they in turn can fulfill the work of service and the building up of the body of Christ. Both translations are possible. In recent times, the latter has been preferred because it highlights the ministry of the whole church. The issue has also been raised whether the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher should be interpreted as offices or as individuals with a specific function. Bayes concluded that there may be some evidence for the existence of an office of prophet and teacher in the first-century church, but there is little evidence for the offices of apostle, evangelist, and pastor. While this can be argued, the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher definitely represent functions that edify and build the church. The logical interpretation is that these gifted leaders equip other believers so they might use their gifts to bring the body of Christ to maturity and unity. Each member

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119 Giles, What on Earth is the Church? 140. Giles gives a good explanation of the textual issues regarding the function of the ministry gifts.
120 Bayes, “Five-fold Ministry.” 113. Bayes’ assumption is that if apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are offices, there would be Old Testament precedent and first century evidence. There is some evidence for the offices of prophet and teacher, but little or no evidence for the offices of apostle, evangelist, and pastor.
of the Christian community has a vital role in the development and health of the community.

A sense of community has been defined as a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.¹²¹ This definition has four elements that seem to be present in a mature Christian community: membership (or a sense of belonging or connection to the group), influence and participation (the feeling that you matter to the group and make the group better), integration and fulfillment of needs (reciprocal relationships where individual needs are shared and met), and shared emotional connection (identifying with the community and the feeling that experiences and situations in life are commonly understood by the group). Paul’s body metaphor for the functioning of the church allows believers to achieve a sense of community and have an active role in the development of the community.

Ethics Analysis

Ethics concerns the responsibility of humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. Ethical refers to behavior considered right or wrong according to our own beliefs—no matter the culture or society. Ethical failure usually falls into one of three areas: deceiving, stealing, or harming.¹²² Each is forbidden in the Decalogue and Paul associates this aberrant behavior with Gentile or un-Christian behavior. The general purpose of Ephesians is to remind Christians of their identity and to encourage them to pursue the values and behaviors that characterize them. Ephesians has several interrelated themes: the power of God over all other principalities, powers, and authorities; the unity of Jew and Gentile into one body in Christ; and the appeal for maturity and holy living. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul implored the saints to walk worthy of their calling. Paul later described the Gentile life as a life of “sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (4:19) and urged the saints to “put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness in truth” (4:24) and listed some behaviors to avoid (stealing, unwholesome speech, bitterness, anger, and malice) and replaced them with good behaviors (hard work, speak edifying words, kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness). Paul described the Christian’s past state and God’s desired states for the church in ethical terms.

Summary of Sacred Texture

Sacred texture analysis leads the interpreter to examine relationships between the human and divine in a text. The relationship of human and divine in Ephesians 4:1-16 is described in terms of power and authority. God (in Trinitarian form), having all power

and authority gives gifts (i.e., people separated by calling and gifted for a special function) by the ascended and seated Christ (the second *perichoretic* partner) to mediate the process of ministry to bring Christians to maturity and of building up of the body of Christ (the Christian church).

**Summary of Findings.** Robbins’ method of sociorhetorical analysis was applied to Ephesians 4:1-16 to address the research question: What is the empowering relationship between the ascended Christ and the leadership ministries? Specifically, the inner texture, cultural and social texture, and sacred texture of the text were analyzed. The findings reveal multiple aspects to the relationship between the exalted Christ and leaders. Inner texture analyzes the words of the text for emerging themes, arguments, and relevant information. The repetitive words and phrases and the opening–middle–ending of the inner texture reveals several themes in the text: calling, unity, authority, and maturity. Each theme was present in Paul’s argument for the Saints to live right. Inner texture analysis can be summed up: Christ gave the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelists, pastor, and teacher to help the saints walk worthy of their calling and become mature as believers and live in unity.

Cultural and social texture analysis in particular reveals information relevant to the research question. Specific topics show that the text points toward a conversionist attitude toward the world. Paul drew a distinction between believers and Gentiles as two distinct groups and exhorted the saints to be mature and live in unity with the body. Common cultural topics analysis reveals that the exalted Christ gave gifted individuals (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher), with authority directly from God, as a mediator between the past sinful state of the saint and the desired state of maturity and unity in the body. Final cultural topics revealed a subculture with a unique network of communication. Paul’s pioneering missionary method and communication through circular epistles took advantage of the Roman infrastructure. The Christian community had a common conceptual system that united the churches. They also shared in a common identity with the person of Christ whom they exemplified.

Sacred texture analysis is particularly important for the examination of human and divine relationships. This analysis reveals the presence of each member of the Trinity, yet the text focuses upon Jesus Christ as deity and ultimate authority. Holy persons were present in Paul and the five gifted leaders listed in Ephesians 4:11. These holy persons were revealed to have been given for the specific purpose of equipping the saints, ministering to the body, and building up the community of believers that are identified, not by race or place, but in Christ.

A summary of the information reveals several points leading toward a model of divine empowerment:

1. Divine empowerment is participation with the Trinity in the context of calling and membership in a common community.
2. Divine empowerment focuses on desired behavior and relationships.
3. Divinely empowered agents mediate the old or present state of being and the desired state of maturity and unity of the saints. Mediators have at least five possible functions:
   a. Mediators are authorized by God as envoys.
   b. Mediators speak for God.
c. Mediators speak about God.
d. Mediators show the care and love of God.
e. Mediators inspire and instruct the saints.

III. DISCUSSION

Divine empowerment for leaders comes through calling, membership, and participation. The call in Ephesians comes from an explicit source—the God of the Bible. A call has been defined as a profound impression from God that establishes parameters for your life and can be altered only by a subsequent, superseding impression from God. In the nonreligious context of workplace spirituality, calling has been defined as the experience of transcendence or how one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life. This experience of transcendence, according to this concept, is by choice where individuals acknowledge a creator, supreme-being, higher power, a god of love, or Allah, Jehovah, Buddha, or any other transcendent being. Central to the many Christian interpretations of calling is the idea that there is something that God has called me to do with my life, and my life has meaning and purpose at least in part because I am fulfilling my calling. This meaning and purpose is what proponents of workplace spirituality refer to as transcendence. Paul often reminded the churches of their calling: called to be saints (Rom 1:7), being sanctified by their calling (1 Cor 1:2), and to be faithful to God who called them (1 Cor 1:9). For Paul, calling is an act of God that initiates membership into the body of Christ by those who hear and act upon the calling. Calling then initiates participation with God.

Paul was clear in Ephesians 4:4 that there is only one body, one community of believers whose membership is attained by embracing the gospel, specifically membership by the “blood of Christ” (Ephes 2:13). Paul distinguished between the Gentiles (whom he equated with sin and lostness) and saints. Individuals tend to categorize themselves and identify with groups based upon common variables. To be a part of the body of Christ, they are categorized by their belief in the good news of Jesus Christ. This is what they identify with and by which comparisons are drawn with other groups. Members of the body of Christ are also identified by common behaviors. In the first three chapters of Paul’s Ephesian sermon, he identified the boundaries of the body to which the saints belong. The last three chapters of Ephesians identify behaviors and attitudes that are common to the body. There are two basic concepts that make up “membership.” First is the means by which individuals are categorized and identified for inclusion to a certain group. Second are the feeling and the advantages of belonging to a group. Fry wrote that membership encompasses the cultural and social structures we

123 Iorg, *Is God Calling?* Kindle location 63.
are immersed in and through which we seek to be understood and appreciated. Membership has been defined as the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness—a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and has a right to be a member. Membership is the first step to the process of developing a sense of community and conveys upon people a set of rights and responsibilities that are always characterized by belonging to the community. There may be a conceptual link between sense of community and empowerment. A sense of community may give community members the sense of control and social support necessary for development. Membership or identifying with a particular group (in-groups) provides a sense of being understood and accepted. Membership promotes unity and cohesion within the group and strengthens relationships.

Ephesians 4:1-16 suggests participation between God and man in the process of unifying the community of believers and the development of individual members into mature saints. A major theme, if not the main theme, of the book of Ephesians is unity, and unity is the dominant theme of 4:1-16. Paul was clear that unity is a vital aspect of God’s desired behavior for the body, explicitly instructing the saints to “keep the unity of the Spirit” (v. 3) until we all “come to the unity of the faith” (v. 13). The believer’s example for unity is the divine Trinity that is revealed in verses 4-6. The terms _perichoresis_ and polyphony allow for participation between God and man by “joining in the dance” and “joining in harmonically” with God’s actions for the accomplishing of his will. Paul expressed God’s instructions to the churches in Asia to live in unity as mature saints. Paul strengthened this argument by revealing that God has facilitated this process by giving equipped and empowered leaders to aid in the process of building maturity and unity. This is the very example of _perichoresis_ and polyphony—participation with the divine.

Analysis of our text reveals the distinction of authority in the relationship between deity and leaders. Divine authority is implicit in Christ’s giving leaders to the church (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher). The divine authority that accompanies the function of apostle and prophet as legates of God was known in first-century Judea, and we can safely assume that the same divine authority was extended to the evangelist, pastor, and teacher as well. Authority is a central feature of the structure of formal organizations and is derived from implicit or explicit contracts concerning the individual’s position or knowledge. The modern concept of authority (especially in organizations) is almost entirely based upon implicit sources. This

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133 Schütz, _Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority_, 12.
contemporary view of authority exists within social organizations and is constantly being endorsed and supported by the leaders and their followers. This implicit source of authority exists because of shared goals and for the benefit of the organization. In the past, sources of authority were more explicit. Historically, authority had a divine origin. In ancient times, dynastic rulers and Roman emperors felt they had a divine right to rule. Authority was a family inheritance, but it was divinely given. The source of authority must be more than merely implicit. Paul clearly stated that Christ is seated in “heavenly places above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name” (Ephes 1:21) and reiterated this fact in Ephesians 4:8-10, directly connecting this ultimate authority and power to the gift of leaders in verse 11 showing a direct and explicit source of authority for these leaders.

In Ephesians 4:1-16, Paul revealed God’s concern for the churches in Asia for individual maturity and unity in the body. Therefore, God gave the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher for equipping the members, serving, and strengthening the body. These leaders or leadership functions were given to the body for the ultimate purpose of building up believers until they are united and developed. They mediate the unifying and maturing process in at least five ways. Generalizing the functions of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher may reveal how they would function in organizations and churches today. The day-to-day function of the apostle is difficult to discern. What is known about apostles in the New Testament and the cultural equivalent of ambassadors or envoys is that they were authorized to take a message to another group of people. While working in the capacity of apostle, they acted with the full authority of their sender to the extent that they accurately represented the sender’s message. Apostles in the first century were sent out to take a specific message to another sovereign body. Apostleship assumes a relationship with and knowledge of the sending sovereign. Apostles then were given by Christ, according to Ephesians 4:11, to represent God as the author of the directive of unifying the body and becoming mature.

The role of the apostle and prophet are similar—both speak for God—but apostle seems to have an overseeing function that prophets do not have. Prophets speak forth God’s message by divine inspiration. Some Old Testament prophets were commissioned with special authority to oversee prophetic awakenings (e.g., Elisha or Jeremiah) or to judge Israel (e.g., Deborah or Samuel). The function of an evangelist (which is unique to the New Testament and early church) is also a speaking function. Whereas the apostle and prophet speak for God, the evangelist speaks about God. Specifically, the evangelist tells about the person and work of Christ Jesus primarily to those who do not already have knowledge or a relationship with him.

While the pastor and teacher may be one role, there are two separate functions—shepherding and teaching. Pastor is only found once in the New Testament, yet the function of a shepherd is well known. Shepherding is a metaphor, and metaphors assume some cultural competence. There are three critical functions of

135 Ibid., 822.
shepherds: providing, protecting, and guiding. Teaching presumes the transfer of knowledge from one individual to another. In the biblical sense, teaching is the process of educating the people of God about God and the things of God. The roles of shepherd and teacher are much more personal than the roles of apostle, prophet, and evangelist. The function of the shepherd then is to show the love and care of God in tangible ways, and the function of the teacher is to instruct about God and to inspire people to live godly lives. Each leader enters the divine dance with God by fulfilling the roles that God has designated for them.

Leaders are empowered by participating with God through calling and membership (identification with God and other saints). Being authorized directly by God, they in turn empower others in their mediatorial roles that connect them to God and to the body of saints. Simply stated, leaders are empowered when they participate with God for the purpose of facilitating individual maturity and unifying relationships. Leadership empowerment comes by participating with God through a divine call and identification with the group for the purpose of building up of the body. Empowered leaders then are authorized by God to mediate these relationships. The focus of divine empowerment is on relationships and individual development. Figure 6 shows the relationships of the components of divine empowerment and does not depict a process of empowerment.

![Figure 6: Components of divine empowerment.](image)

**Implications for Ecclesial Leadership**

Empowerment is an important topic for the church. However, it is a concept that has numerous connotations, depending upon the theological context of the person or group using the term. Spiritual empowerment for the Pentecostal or Charismatic has very different implications from those of a Reformed tradition. Empowerment in organizational leadership means something quite different from empowerment in a Christian context. However, Christian leaders have begun using constructs from organizational empowerment as components in church transformational and leadership development models, and some have combined the organizational construct of empowerment with Holy Spirit empowerment with some success. There has been a need for a model of divine empowerment that can be integrated with theories of organizational empowerment. This divine empowerment model was developed from the examination of Ephesians 4:1-16 where leadership roles are directly connected to God. This empowerment model has five interrelated components: (a) calling is a profound impression from God that establishes parameters for your life; (b) participation is joining the divine dance with the Trinity to participate in God’s plan; (c) membership is the feeling of belonging to a group and a sense of relatedness and purpose; (d) authority is power conferred by a superior being—in this case it is power from the seated Christ;
and (e) mediatorial roles of leading, speaking for God, speaking about God, showing God’s love and care, or instructing and inspiring the saints.

Limitations of This Study

Pentecostal and Charismatic readers may feel that the role of the Holy Spirit in this model of divine empowerment has been minimized. However, the purpose of this study was to focus on the role of Christ and the Trinity in leadership empowerment. While the role of the Spirit is integral to divine empowerment, a fuller exploration into the Spirit’s role in empowering leaders is beyond the scope of this study.

The analysis of Ephesians 4:1-16 was extensive but not exhaustive. There are several limitations to this study. The most obvious limitation of this study was that it only analyzed 16 verses in the book of Ephesians. This study sought to discover the relationship between the ascension of Christ and leader empowerment in Ephesians 4:1-16. Whereas this pericope was chosen because of the direct link between the ascension and leadership roles, there are other texts that show links between the exalted Christ or God and leadership that may shed further light upon this question. Additionally, this study required some examination of other texts in Ephesians as they directly weighed upon the findings, but it was done briefly and only to the extent that it was necessary to gain understanding. A full analysis of Ephesians would have added greatly but was beyond the scope of this study.

Another limitation of this study was in the method of analysis itself. This study utilized sociorhetorical analysis as developed by Vernon. K. Robbins. This research only analyzed the inner texture, social and cultural texture, and sacred textures. It would be nearly impossible to exhaust sociorhetorical analysis. While many social and cultural aspects relevant to the research question were examined, there may be more social or cultural features still in need of investigation that may impact directly upon the relationships this study examined. Additionally, the ideological texture was not considered.

Future Research

The limitations of this study also revealed areas of further investigation. The first suggestion for additional study is the analysis of the other ascension texts in scripture. The analysis of these ascension scriptures may bring greater understanding to our research question. There are several other texts that explicitly or implicitly connect Christ’s ascension, exaltation, or authority to leadership or divine mandate. This study considered only one of the lists of gifts in relationship to leadership. Additional analysis of the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and Romans 12 promises to inform our understanding of the relationship between the members of the Trinity and leadership empowerment.

This study considered intertexture only to the extent it was necessary to understand the rhetorical aspects of Ephesians 4:1-16. A more in-depth analysis of intertexture may reveal more insights to this study. This study also did not analyze the ideological texture. Future research into the ideological texture may be the most important next step in the final analysis of the text. Leadership empowerment has to do
with the use of divine power. A full analysis of the ideology of power (as outlined by Robbins\textsuperscript{137}) will bring fuller understanding of divine empowerment.

Further examination of the proposed divine leadership models is warranted. Sociorhetorical analysis of Ephesians 4:1-16 revealed five aspects to divine empowerment (i.e., calling, participation, membership, authority, and mediating roles). These aspects along with the suggested empowerment models should be examined closer for generalizability. Additionally, a fuller application of the proposed divine empowerment model should be expounded upon and tested.

Perichoresis in relation to leadership should studied. The use of perichoresis (divine dance) was used to describe the possibility of men participating with God. Whereas there has been renewed interest in the doctrine of the Trinity\textsuperscript{138} and the Trinity has been examined in relationship to pastoral practice,\textsuperscript{139} additional study into the Trinity and leadership is needed with special attention to the role of the Holy Spirit and leadership.

\textsuperscript{137} Robbins, Exploring the Texture of Texts, 113-115.
\textsuperscript{138} Cunningham, These Three Are One, ix.
\textsuperscript{139} See Fiddes, Participating in God, and Pembroke, Renewing Pastoral Practice.