



Dear Precious Friend,

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New Covenant Reality

As I study the New Covenant, I see again and again that the pastor-centered approach is not the New Covenant model; and it clearly doesn't get us to the ultimate purposes of God. It doesn't promote the unity of the Spirit or bring the believer to maturity. It can cause things to either get stuck and stunted or it promotes the one-man-centered spectacle with the majority of the members of Christ's body looking on as spectators, never fully maturing, even in many cases, sacrificing their own destiny and giftings to elevate one charismatic personality to follow his vision alone. This can never please our Father who loves us all and has a plan for each one of us.

For a number of years now, the apostolic-prophetic restoration movement has been trying to "fix" this problem and in the best cases, it's producing some good biblical results. At the same time, in many cases, it's caused strong retaliation from pastors who see it as a kind of elitism, superiority, control, and an attempt to usurp pastoral authority. Often they are right, if the "apostle-prophet" personality lacks the Christlike character to carry the office. Yet some of these Restorationists have truly uncovered and tapped into the *Ephesians 4* biblical pattern that works, in spite of it being intimidating to those who desire to preserve and guard their pastor-centered leadership style in spite of its flaws. This is where truth needs to be spoken in love and where we all need to be patient with each other until we all grow into the knowledge of His will and His ways.

We know from *Acts 3:21* that there is a restoration of all things before Yeshua's return. It seems that there might be a crucial link between the *Acts 3:21* restoration of all things to the *Ephesians 4:11-12* fivefold model in these last days. Here are a few of my thoughts about it.

God lays out in *Ephesians 4* the pattern for New Covenant reality that brings us to the unity of the faith to a mature man in the stature of Messiah, not a one-man-centered model, but a more inclusive three-step fluid process that promotes healthy congregational growth, unity and transformation:

1. Fivefold Ministry: *Eph 4:11-12*
2. Unity of the faith: *Eph 4:13a*
3. Stature of Christ: *Eph 4:13b*

The *Ephesians 4*, three-step New Covenant model clearly and organically moves toward one unified corporate body and integrated man in Messiah's image. The pastoral gift on its own cannot bring the body into this fullness because it wasn't designed to. In fact, no one gift can do it.

The fivefold ministry is the conveyor belt. It's what gets us to the purpose that is the unity of the faith unto a mature man. It's not the goal. The goal is always the stature of Christ. If we emphasize the fivefold ministry, we may lose sight of the goal. If we focus only on the goal but neglect the fivefold ministry, we may never get to our final destination. As we get closer to the goal of unity and the stature of Christ, the fivefold ministry ought to be flexible, humble and decrease as the corporate mature man increases and assumes a slightly different approach and more full-bodied corporate expression.

The life of John the Baptist is a great model for this transition. For even as John was the forerunner of Christ, so also the fivefold ministry functions as a forerunner to the unity of the faith and of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The fivefold ministry team is to model that oneness and the stature of Christ until the rest come into the same. In being so filled with the Spirit of Christ, John had become so Christlike that many asked if he were the Christ/Messiah!

"You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

John 3:28-30

John knew his purpose as forerunner was to point to the goal, which is Christ and not to himself. Even so, the fivefold team, like John, are sent "before" to point to Christ and not to themselves. The purpose of the fivefold team is to bring the body to unity and to a perfect man. Like John, the fivefold ministry team must decrease as He increases in His corporate body.

Let's all pray for the Body of Messiah, that in whatever team we are set in by the Lord, we will function as one man in the unity of the Spirit, towards the goal of the stature of Christ.

Thank you for your love and faithfulness to me as I set my heart and my face towards actively pursuing this end time goal in the Bible lands. May we all become one as Yeshua and the Father are one and may He be fully formed in us before His return.

Shalom and Agape,

Greta