

Priesthood and Ministry: the Early Brethren

In the Old Testament God declared His intention that the nation of Israel would be a kingdom of priests, but the priesthood was eventually limited to one tribe because of the Israelites' idolatrous failure (Exo. 19:6; 32:7-29; Deut. 33:8-10). The New Testament clearly indicates a priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6). Although it names a few offices corresponding to particular services in a local church (overseers, deacons) and spiritual gifts and ministries, it also unequivocally advocates the functioning of every member of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28-29; 14:26, 31; Eph. 4:11-12). Nevertheless, a distinct hieratic class, who claimed special access to God and unique authority to perform intermediary rites on behalf of others, quickly emerged in post-apostolic Christianity and has remained pervasive until the present along with institutional sources and sanction of ministry.

Martin Luther and other early reformers took a bold step in declaring the equal spiritual status of all believers and their equal access to God and salvation, but they stopped short of eliminating formal offices and removing requirements of formal training and ordination for speaking functions in a Christian congregation or evangelistic setting (Froehlich 127-130). Although George H. Williams asserts that the Radical Reformation moved toward a "universal lay apostolate" (845), "radical" reformers, such as the Anabaptist leaders who wrote the Schleitheim Confession in 1527, did not earn their revolutionary appellation by changing the requirements and role of the clergy (Janz 176, 178). John Calvin famously extended clerical powers into civic affairs in Geneva, which became a model for countless Reformed communities abroad. Thus, the anticlericalism that preceded and permeated the Reformation was aimed primarily at the abuse and significance attached to clerical positions rather than challenging their inherent legitimacy. Three hundred years later, the British Brethren asserted the freedom of all Christians to exercise their priesthood by audibly participating in Lord's table and prayer meetings and using what the Spirit had given them for ministering by speaking for God among His people and those outside.

As "The Church Life of the Early British Brethren" in the Fall 2013 issue of *Affirmation & Critique* delineates, the primary reason that the early British Brethren quit exist-

ing ecclesiastical structures was their desire to practice the scripturally revealed oneness of all believers (99-103). Nevertheless, an outstanding characteristic of their discontent with contemporary Christian institutions was the requirement to be officially ordained in order to function in Christian assemblies or missionary fields. Most of the first Brethren conscientiously rejected these requirements while they were still meeting in state and private denominations. Once they left those institutions and began to gather simply as believers, they made a point of forestalling the reemergence of any vestiges of distinct classes, such as clergy and laity. It was for this reason that they earned the name Brethren. In place of designated clergy performing a prescribed sequence of rituals, the Brethren took up the New Testament pattern of meetings that permitted any to whom the Spirit gave something to contribute it audibly for the worship of God, the announcing of the gospel, and the edification of fellow believers.

Renunciations of Formal Requirements for Ministry

When Edward Cronin moved to Dublin as a medical student in 1826, the independent denominations that he visited did not allow him to participate in the Lord's table with them unless he chose "special membership" with one (*Interesting Reminiscences* 15). It was his conviction concerning the oneness of the church as the Body of Christ and all believers as its members that led him to firmly refuse such membership (16). Nonetheless, Cronin recalled that it was his "growing feeling of opposition to one man ministry" that prevented him from attending denominational meetings other than the Lord's table (16).

With Cronin as a notable exception, many of the first Brethren were ordained clergymen or students seeking ordination in order to begin serving God according to what they perceived was His inward calling of them. Most of these ecclesiastics, such as Anthony Norris Groves, George Müller, John Nelson Darby, and Benjamin Newton, followed a similar path, beginning with their discovery that the Scriptures contain no formal, institutional requirements for ministry. They realized that such requirements, rather than being expedient innovations, were harmful impediments to the present will of God made known through His Spirit in any believer of His choosing. Subsequently, they renounced their official ordination or pursuit of it.

For Groves, the renunciation of institutional requirements for ministry was incremental but rapid. In 1827 he ceased his efforts to be ordained by the Church of England, because he would not implicitly adhere to at least one of its unconscionable articles (Coad 22). According to J. G. Bellett, a law-school acquaintance of Darby's and an early member of the Brethren, Groves saw that "college education for the work of the ministry was not the thing" (*Interesting Reminiscences* 4). This caused Groves to reconsider "as he never before had done, the whole matter of the Established Church [state] and the claims of the Dissenting bodies" (4). Soon thereafter, when the missionary society that Groves hoped would send him to Baghdad forbade him from administering communion to his future converts since he lacked ordination, he faced a further dilemma of conscience: "I saw not yet my liberty of ministry to be from Christ alone, and felt some ordination to be necessary, but hated the thought of being made a sectarian" (qtd. in Coad 22). Thus, the issue of formal requirements for ministry led directly to Groves's questioning the validity of the institutions making those requirements.

On a visit to Dublin in 1828 Groves told Bellett,

This, I doubt not, is the mind of God concerning us, that we should come together in all simplicity as disciples, not waiting on any pulpit or ministry, but trusting that the Lord would edify us together, by ministering as He pleased and saw good from the midst of ourselves. (*Interesting Reminiscences* 5)

Bellett, a spiritually seeking layman, who had been dissatisfied with the state and private churches and who was considering simple Christian unity in fellowship with Darby and others, pinpoints this declaration of Groves as the moment when he became convinced of the rightness of his convictions. On his deathbed in 1864 Bellett wrote to Darby, "I still [hold] to the truth as most precious which I learnt some thirty years ago: and, dearest John, only think, in contrast with it, of offices and ordinances... and clergy!" (22-23). From beginning to end, Bellett's experience with the Brethren was aimed toward the spiritual function of the priesthood of all believers.

Groves also is credited with having an early and formative influence on Henry Craik and George Müller, who married Groves's sister (Coad 37). Müller recounts a new realization he had not long after his arrival in England in 1829 to be trained as a missionary to the Jews: "It struck me that

I was wrong and acting unscripturally, in waiting for the appointment to missionary work from my fellow-men; but that, considering myself called by the Lord to preach the gospel, I ought to begin at once to labour" (42). According to historian Harold H. Rowdon, both Müller and Craik agreed that "no fixed pastoral relationship should be contracted" when they began to serve a congregation in Bristol in 1834 (122). Rowdon devotes several pages of his authoritative Brethren history to demonstrating "the unwillingness or Müller and Craik to be regarded as the sole ministers of the church, and their anxiety to see others exercising pastoral gifts" (124). Robert C. Chapman, who became a close friend of Müller and led a congregation in Barnstaple, also followed Groves's pattern in repudiating ordination and not holding institutional training as a requirement for ministry (146; Callahan 56).

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Other early Brethren followed a similar pattern of renouncing requirements of training and ordination or other artificial barriers to the exercise of ministry given by the Spirit. In a letter Darby recounts his thoughts as a young Anglican priest in Ireland:

I said to myself: "If the Apostle Paul were to come here now, he would not, according to the established system, be even allowed to preach, not being legally ordained...and my christian [sic] friend...would be unable to recognise the most powerful instrument of the Spirit of God, however much blessed in his work of leading multitudes of souls to the Lord, if he had not been ordained according to the system." All this, said I to myself, is false...It is the *principle* of the system that is at fault. Ministry is of the Spirit...Consequently it seemed impossible to remain in it any longer. (Letters 3: 300)

Thus, Darby was positively motivated not only by the scripturally revealed oneness of all believers to meet separately from state and private denominations, but he also felt compelled to disassociate himself from those organizations since he saw them as part of a system inextricably linked with unscriptural barriers to ministering according the Spirit's inward activity.

In 1834 Darby wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Notion of a Clergyman Dispensationally the Sin against the Holy Ghost." Presumably based on Matthew 12:22-32 and the parallel Gospel portions, Darby defines the sin against the Spirit as "ascribing to the power of evil that which came from the Holy Ghost" and then contends that the charge of "disorder and schism" made against laymen through

whom the Spirit speaks is precisely such a false ascription (*Writings* 1: 39). By claiming exclusive authority in “preaching, teaching, and ministering communion,” clergymen implicitly identified as evil any activity that the Spirit leads those who are not officially consecrated to do (40). Darby, thus, indicts the restrictive concept of a clerical system as being the means by which “this dispensation...has sealed its destruction in the rejection and resistance of the Spirit of God” (39). Darby points to the contradiction between human appointment in the state church and divine appointment (40-41). Finally, he defines the clergy as “the substitution of a privileged order whom man owned for the Church which God owned, and the consequent depression of the Church and the despisal of the Holy Ghost in it” (46). Darby’s scripturally derived view of the normal church life does not involve uniformity of function among the believers, for he acknowledges divine gifts such as apostles as well as “instructors” and overseers (39, 46).

In addition to many of the first Brethren’s personal renunciation of ordination, the quantity of their early writings on the subject also indicates its importance. Historian James Patrick Callahan identifies “the nature of ministry” as one of four key issues upon which the early Brethren periodical *The Christian Witness* was focused (9). James L. Harris, who resigned his Anglican curacy to join the Brethren in Plymouth and eventually became the second editor of *The Christian Witness*, wrote, “The ministry of the Church is in the hands of the Spirit in it; and departure from the simplicity of Christ in this instance, has led the church to look for its edification to a hired teacher without it” (qtd. in Callahan 53-54). In a work devoted to the subject of ministry, Harris echoes Darby’s transliteration of the Greek word translated “allotments” in 1 Peter 5:3: “The Church itself is God’s clergy” (qtd. in Callahan 56; *Writings* 1: 46-47). Harris also reiterates other Brethren themes by repudiating the notion that authority in the church is derived from human appointment and by insisting that it can be granted only by the Spirit (Callahan 56-57).

Universal Priesthood

Like the early reformers, or perhaps more clearly, the Brethren saw the biblical revelation of the priesthood of all believers. However, the Brethren advanced still further when they saw that this priesthood is not only a spiritual status or condition but also should be exercised in the meetings of the church. Just as the early Brethren’s ecclesial identity with regard to church practice was more about positively seeking to open fellowship to all Christ’s members than it was about negatively seceding from an inherently apostate system, their stand with regard to ministry was more about positively opening a way for Christ to freely direct His members to function than it was about negatively rejecting the unscriptural system of requirements of formal training and ordination for ministry.

In an 1834 pamphlet Darby flatly declares, “The assumption of priesthood by any, save as all believers are priests, is wrong” (*Writings* 1: 76). His basis in Scripture for assessing the issue of priesthood is evident in a later piece: “A distinct class of priests on earth among Christians is totally unknown to the New Testament” (10: 210). In the same short work he cites 1 Peter 2:5 and 9; Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9; and 20:6 as plain evidence that “all Christians are priests to God” (209). He also quotes Hebrews 13:15 to show that offering sacrifices of praise, “the fruit of our lips,” is how believers are to “exercise their priesthood” (209-210). Darby proceeds to debunk the undergirding concepts of an earthly priesthood among a special group of Christians. In another early piece, “On Ministry: Its Nature, Source, Power, and Responsibility,” he distinguishes between the Old Testament notion of a priestly order, which has been done away with by Christ’s accomplished work, and New Testament ministry (1: 208), which expresses God’s love in “calling souls [and] nourishing those who are called” (1: 209). Similarly, in an 1867 letter Darby differentiates corporate worship and prayer, in which all believers are equal (priesthood), and the use of spiritual gifts for “edification” (ministry), which differ according to the Spirit’s measure (*Letters* 1: 507).

The work of preaching the gospel to the unconverted in Ireland, called the Home Mission, was, according to Darby’s 1833 description, initiated by laymen there and subsequently coopted by the Anglican clergy, who then excluded laymen from it (*Writings* 1: 54). Darby explains that the demand not only for preaching but also for Scriptural instruction and communion could not be met by the clergy but had been monopolized by them (58). He then refers to Acts 8:4 and 11:21 to illustrate the divinely inspired and blessed labor of ordinary Christians in announcing the gospel. It is not official employment, Darby says, but the working of the Spirit that qualifies a Christian for service (59).

In 1834 Darby produced a pamphlet entitled “Christian Liberty of Preaching and Teaching the Lord Jesus Christ” in which he argues for removing “arbitrary limits of place and person, prescribed by man, but sanctioned in no way by Scripture” (68). His dual rationale is, first, the unsatisfied need among unbelievers and the church to hear God’s word and, second, obedience to the biblical commission for all “who themselves have drunk of the living waters” to proclaim the gospel (68). Darby quotes 1 Corinthians 14:26 and 31 to support the necessity for all to speak in the church “as God led them...for the edifying of the church” (70). He also cites Ephesians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:18 and 25 to demonstrate the need for each believer’s participation as a member of the Body of Christ (71-72). He repeats most of these Scriptures and conclusions in another short work entitled “On Lay Preaching” (131f).

With regard to their basis of gathering, the Brethren conscientiously avoided establishing yet another sectarian

denomination but instead sought to depart entirely from the degraded, divisive, and unscriptural system of institutional Christianity. Similarly, with regard to the spoken ministry among them, they did not want to merely substitute one artificial system of ordination for another but desired to permanently remove all unscriptural obstructions to divinely inspired speaking. Thus, Darby concludes concerning speaking in the church: "I advocate no system...Grace and scriptural qualities alone should be our standard of valuation; and that, in the arrangements of the Holy Ghost, it is only the gift of God which gives any title to service in the church" (72-73). In 1828 Groves wrote to a concerned friend in the Church of England, "Am I exercising the ministry on my own nomination? I trust not, for if I am, the work will come to nought; I trust I exercise it on the nomination of my Lord by His Spirit" (qtd. in Coad 24). Groves concluded his letter by referring to the authority of Scripture, the error of sectarianism, and the divisiveness of unscriptural regulations.

Who then, we might ask, did the Brethren think might be expected to receive divine gifts for service? Based on the New Testament promises that the Spirit is always in the church or at least among two or three gathered into Lord's name, Darby writes that the requirement to speak God's word is upon all believers (*Writings* 1: 72). He recounts the records in Acts to support all Christians announcing the gospel to unbelievers (73). He also quotes Moses' aspiration in Numbers 11:29 that all God's people would be prophets and recipients of the Spirit. Darby then asserts the fulfillment of this aspiration in the New Testament dispensation (75). According to Darby, it was in fact the prophesying of all believers at Pentecost that marked the beginning and continuing characteristic of the new dispensation (76):

Although there be no new revelations of truth, there may be, as proceeding from God Himself, a power of applying to the circumstances of the church, or of the world, truths hidden in the word; such as, in practice, might render the ministry prophetic. Moreover, [in the New Testament] all those who expressed the mind of God 'to edification' were called prophets, or, at least, prophesied. (224-225)

In expounding Ephesians 4 Darby references verse 7 as proof that "we all fill some little service" (27: 71). He even suggests that the activity of Christ's love in a believer's heart is demonstrated by that believer's commensurate service, particularly in ministering to fellow believers (14: 5). Darby goes so far as to equate inactivity in the church with the slothful slave burying his talent in Matthew 25 (5). He tempers this call to action by stating that it is not given to all to speak publicly, though all should be able to do so privately (7-8).

As is evident in the aforementioned Brethren writings, the Brethren's renunciation of formal requirements for

ministry and their affirmation of the universal priesthood were unmistakably based on the pattern found in the New Testament. Darby conscientiously avoids discussion of historical development or tradition even for the purpose of refutation, insisting on the sufficiency of the scriptural pattern (1: 75). Callahan rightly observes that the Brethren were unique in applying the principles of "scriptural sufficiency and authority to ecclesial order" (42). They rejected any notion that Christianity could be restored to its original form and aimed only to stand as a testimony through their obedience to the scriptural standard at the behest of and in the strength of the Spirit (*Interesting Reminiscences* 12-13).

Müller states in his autobiography that his decision to begin preaching without official sanction from a missionary society followed his realization that "the word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things" (39). Groves's final renunciation of ordination clearly issued directly from his firm adherence to the absolute authority of Scripture and the normative nature of the first Christian practices recorded therein: "The thought was brought to my mind, that ordination of any kind to preach the gospel is no requirement of Scripture. To me it was the removal of a mountain" (qtd. in Coad 22). Darby recalls his early discovery of the nature of ministry: "I saw in scripture that there were certain *gifts* which formed true ministry, in contrast to...clergy...Salvation, the church, and ministry, all were bound together [by]...the Spirit...acting in [the members] according to His will" (*Letters* 3: 300-301).

In response to a letter sent by one who was wavering in his decision to begin or resume full-time "ministry of the word," Darby uses the examples of Moses and Paul to illustrate the certainty of divine calling notwithstanding the possibility of being "set aside for a time" (2: 243). However, he draws at least one distinction between present ministry and those two scriptural cases: "Our word is not confirmed by accompanying signs. This does not trouble me" (243). He reminds the recipient of his letter that all believers should labor for the Lord and concludes, "If you feel that the Lord has entrusted you with His word, has put it into your heart, not only for yourself, but for others (Gal. i.15, 16), then fear nothing" (243).

Müller's emphasis on the benefit of mutuality in Christian meetings similarly arose from his diligent searching of and obedience to the Scriptures. He wrote that, while still serving as a Baptist pastor in 1830, "It appeared to me scriptural, according to Eph. iv., Rom. xii., &., that there should be given room for the Holy Ghost to work through any...with the gift which the Lord has bestowed upon him. Accordingly at certain meetings any of the brethren had an opportunity to exhort or teach the rest, if they considered that they had any thing [sic] to say which might be beneficial to the hearers" (54). Müller summarizes his

view of the scriptural pattern for meeting thus: “Those, whether one or several, who are truly gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, be it for exhortation, or teaching, or rule, &c., are responsible to the Lord for the exercise of their gifts” (54).

Early Practices in Meeting

According to Bellett, Francis Hutchinson, who hosted the first Brethren meetings in the late 1820s in his Dublin home, “prescribed a certain line of things as to the services of prayer, singing and teaching” (*Interesting Reminiscences* 6). Soon, however, an incremental but definite process of change began, resulting in removal of predetermined order of activities or restriction of audible participation to designated members. Bellet recalls,

The settled order of worship...gave place gradually, teaching and exhorting were first made common duties and services, while prayer was restricted under the care of two or three...but gradually all this yielded. In a little time...all service was of a free character, the presence of God through the Spirit being more simply believed and used. (7-8)

Before long, assemblies in other locales in England, such as Plymouth, Bristol, and Barnstaple, became connected with the Brethren in Dublin. Notwithstanding their shared impetus to practice the oneness of all believers, these groups varied significantly in their background and development. Nevertheless, historian Peter L. Embley writes, “two elements...remained constant in all sections of the Brethren, even after 1848: the complete rejection of a formally-appointed ministry, and the practice of charismatic worship especially in connection with the Lord’s Supper service” (108). Embley uses *charismatic* to describe the Brethren’s practice of opening a meeting to the participation of any and all who were led by the Spirit to contribute a prayer, hymn, Scripture reading, or exhortation.

Darby describes the early Brethren meetings in Plymouth thus: “Each was free to read, to speak, to pray, or to give out a hymn” (*Letters* 3: 301-302). Describing his later work in France, Darby writes, “We had the custom of gathering together...to study scriptural subjects together, or books of the Bible, and to communicate to one another what God had given to each” (303-304). In 1843 Darby said, “He who has the gift of teaching is responsible to Christ for the exercise of his gift; it may be exercised in private;...if so led, on the Lord’s day; or he may assemble them to teach them if he has the capacity for it” (1: 57).

Müller recalls that the last day of 1834 was marked by a prayer meeting explicitly welcoming all believers in Bristol: “It was open to any of the brethren to pray, as they felt disposed, and eighteen did so...We continued in prayer and praise, mixed with singing, reading the Word,

and exhortation, from seven in the evening till one in the morning” (88). Although this special meeting ushered in the new year, the openness and mutuality that characterized it were by no means unprecedented in Bristol. In March of the same year Müller recorded informal meetings with “brethren and sisters” that followed corporate meals: “We prayed repeatedly, sang hymns, read a little of the Word, and several brethren spoke of the Lord’s dealings with them” (85). When Müller referred to “the great leading principles on which we professedly meet,” he specified only “the removal of any restraint upon the exercise of whatever gift the Spirit may bestow, in connexion with the practice of weekly communion” (222). Chapman introduced the same way of having the Lord’s table in Barnstaple (Callahan 11).

The openness of Brethren meetings did not give way to chaos. Darby forestalled fears and accusations of rebelliousness by pointing out that the liberty he spoke of was not “the spirit of insubordination” but, quite the contrary, “entire subjection to the Spirit and the church of God” (*Writings* 1: 79). Similarly, Harris pointed out that contrary to the accusation of some that Spirit-led ministry would lead to anarchy, it was in fact human appointment that did so by usurping God’s rightful position of authority in the church (Callahan 56). Darby was faithful to Paul’s emphasis in 1 Corinthians 14 by stressing the necessity of intelligibility and orderliness in the exercise of spiritual gifts in meetings (*Writings* 27: 72; 14: 9; *Synopsis* 4: 254-256). The memoirs of those who attended Brethren assemblies indicate that there was sometimes silence between members’ contributions but never a cacophony of simultaneous outbursts (Embley 109, 206).

The corporate, mutual aspect of Brethren meetings was not misconstrued to impose an artificial leveling of ministry. Darby denounced those who would make themselves the center of a meeting for worship, particularly, the Lord’s table meeting, but readily acknowledged the ongoing existence of and need for the specially gifted members and emphasized that they are constituted not by human appointment but by the inward activity of the Spirit (*Letters* 1: 508; *Writings* 1: 71, 88; 14: 4). Accordingly, in gatherings especially for ministry, such as “teaching meetings,” spiritual gifts of differing measures were recognized and given proportional time according to the discernment of the assembly (*Letters* 1: 57). Various Brethren groups invited those whom they considered to be gifted to come and speak, such as when the groups in Bristol invited Darby in 1832 (8). Darby’s view that the exercise of one’s gift ought to be carried out in responsibility to Christ alone was tempered by his recommendation that it is best done in “with the concurrence and in the unity of the brethren” (57). He further cautions, “Grace is required in these days to realize at the same time the two principles of brotherhood and the exercise of gifts; because the

latter necessarily gives externally an appearance of superiority" (*Writings* 1: 231). Differences of opinion concerning how to uphold these principles and implement the New Testament pattern of eldership played a seminal role in the Brethren's first major division.

Dogmatism and Loss of Vision

The first schism among the Brethren can be traced to a jealous guarding against the reemergence of an elevated class of clergy. Darby's initial displeasure with Newton in 1845 was what he perceived as Newton's and others' domination of the Plymouth meetings at the expense of all having opportunity to participate according to the Spirit's leading (20: 13, 19, 21-22). Embley frames this as a controversy about "the degree of 'liberty of ministry'... allowed" (157). Three years later this concern led to the rupture that became evident in published disputations concerning seemingly unrelated matters.

This incident positively demonstrates the commitment of the Brethren to the scriptural way of meeting, but it also negatively illustrates the increasing tendency among some of them to elevate rectitude and uniformity in non-essential doctrine and practice above the vision of Christian unity that had motivated their first meetings. Thus, Embley detects a distinct shift from the early prominence of the principle of "catholic communion fellowship" to an emphasis on "the principle of 'liberty of ministry'...during the 1830s" (83-84). As a result, the liberality that the apostle Paul advocates in Romans 14 began to disappear in the Brethren's practice, particularly among the exclusive assemblies under Darby's influence. Groves warned Darby in an 1863 letter that this trend represented a loss of the original vision of the Brethren (qtd. in Coad 289). Darby's response to Groves, if any, is unknown. In an 1870 letter to another brother, Darby recommends acquiescence with an assembly that had only an "open" meeting, in which all had equal opportunity to speak, but labeled as "false and pernicious" an assembly that met only to hear a single gifted member preach or teach (*Letters* 2: 91). However, he carefully reiterated that the exercise of a gift outside of an assembly meeting, perhaps for evangelistic purposes, was entirely an individual matter carried out in responsibility to the Lord (91-93; 3: 445).

These regrettable aspects of the Brethren's history serve as a stark warning of the dangers of legal adherence to doctrines, demonstrating the killing effect of "the letter," which Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 3:6, and of prioritizing anything, even scriptural conformity, above oneness in the practice of the church life. The church's oneness being the oneness of the faith implies that although the basic truths of the Christian faith must be carefully guarded, other teachings, even scriptural ones, can become destructive (Eph. 4:13-14).

Conclusion

The Brethren's dispensationalism and exposition of other scriptural truths have had a marked influence on fundamental Western Christianity, but the monumental light and experience among the Brethren concerning church practice are generally neglected. They repudiated not only the false elevation of clergy over laity but also the very existence of a distinct class of clergymen. Moreover, they allowed believers in their meetings to audibly participate in various ways according to the Spirit's inward leading and supply as well as to spread the good news to the unbelieving world. Removing barriers necessarily precedes forward movement, but not all who were formerly bound will spontaneously rise up to claim what has been wrongly withheld from them. According to Ephesians 4:12, the saints require perfecting by the gifted ones in order to carry out the work of the ministry, which is to build up the Body of Christ.

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