

STUDY 19

The Life of the Kingdom Community

Rod James

THE VICTORY–RULE OF THE SERVANT LORD

Hierarchy As Holy Rule

The word hierarchy is derived from two Greek words: *hieros*, ‘holy’ or ‘sacred’; and, *archē*, ‘origin’ or ‘rule’. Literally, then, ‘hierarchy’ is ‘holy order’ or ‘holy rule’. However, the recent journey undertaken by this word in Western culture has almost reversed its current meaning to ‘unholy order’, that is, ‘domineering and oppressive rule’. Whether or not the usage of the word can be restored to its literal meaning is unsure, but the fact remains that there is such a thing as holy order and rule, that is, divinely appointed order and rule. In this study we will undertake to look into the character of divine holy rule as servant rule under the leadership of the servant Lord. By this entry we will look into life in the community of God’s kingdom.

The Rule, Ministry and Gifts of the Lord Jesus Christ

As always, the place to start is with the rule, ministry and gifts of the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and ascended. Paul reveals Christ’s victorious and ascended rule in Ephesians 4:7–10:

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says,
‘When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.’

(In saying, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)¹

We need to make a couple of enquiries concerning this passage. Firstly, we must ask why Paul’s quotation of the passage from Psalm 68:18 (‘he gave gifts to men’) differs from the original (‘receiving gifts among men’). Suggestions that Paul misquoted from memory, or that he just changed the quote to suit his purpose do not seem

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations in this study are from the English Standard Version.

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consistent with Paul's obvious knowledge of Scripture, and his view that 'all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16). The psalm is a joyous celebration of God's triumph over his enemies, the liberation of his people, the giving of his law at Sinai, and the victorious procession to Mt Zion, the city of God. John Stott comments on Paul's use of the Psalm:

Paul applies this picture to Christ's ascension, not arbitrarily because he detected a vague analogy between the two, but justifiably because he saw in the exaltation of Jesus a further fulfilment of this description of the triumph of God. Christ ascended as conqueror to the Father's right hand, his train of captives being the principalities and powers he had defeated, dethroned and disarmed.

Concerning our query about receiving or giving gifts, Stott gives further explanation:

... we need to remember that after every conquest in the ancient world there was invariably both a receiving of tribute and a distributing of largesse. What conquerors took from their captives, they gave away to their own people. The spoils were divided, the booty was shared. It seems possible that the Hebrew text itself may imply this, since the verb could be translated 'brought' rather than 'received', and it is not without significance that two ancient versions or translations, one Aramaic and the other Syriac, render it 'gave'. So evidently this was already a traditional interpretation.

One other interesting point needs to be made. Liturgical custom in the synagogues associated Psalm 68 with Pentecost, the Jewish feast commemorating the giving of the law. Paul's use of it in reference to the Christian Pentecost then makes a remarkable analogy. As Moses received the law and gave it to Israel, so Christ received the Spirit and gave him to his people in order to write God's law in their hearts and through the pastors he appointed (verse 11) to teach them the truth, This whole argument that 'receiving' and 'giving' belong indissolubly to each other is aptly illustrated in Acts 2:33 where Peter on the day of Pentecost said: 'Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit; he (*sc.* Jesus) has poured out this which you see and hear'. Christ could only give the gift he had received.²

As Stott has made clear, Acts 2:33 and Ephesians 4:7–10 are speaking of the same reality—the Lord Jesus Christ, victoriously ascending, receiving all things in the kingdom of his Father, and pouring out enabling gifts upon his people. This glorious and vital revelation needs to be kept in mind by Christians who are prone to seeing themselves as poverty stricken underdogs.

Secondly, we need to ask what is meant by 'the lower parts of the earth' in verse 9. Some have suggested that it refers to Christ's descent into hell. This would seem to imply that hell is somewhere in 'the lower parts of the earth'. Others have suggested it refers to Christ's incarnation, corresponding to his ascension into heaven. It is noteworthy, however, that the ascent that corresponds to his descent is not into heaven but, 'far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things'. Geoffrey Bingham comments, 'it is pointless to try to detail "the lower parts of the earth"'. Surely Paul is saying that there is no depth that Christ has not depthed, and no height to which he has not succeeded'.³ John Stott agrees with this approach, and links this quotation with Philippians 2:5–11:

Such an interpretation would fit well with Philippians 2:5–11, where 'even death on a cross' describes his deepest humiliation, which was followed by his supreme exaltation. This was 'far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named'

² John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1979, pp. 157–8.

³ Geoffrey Bingham, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, Redeemer Baptist Pr., Castle Hill, 1997, pp. 53–4.

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according to 1:21, and here ‘far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things’ (verse 10), or ‘so that he might fill the universe’ (NEB). What is in Paul’s mind, therefore, is not so much descent and ascent in spatial terms, but rather humiliation and exaltation, the latter bringing Christ universal authority and power, as a result of which he bestowed on the church he rules both the Spirit himself to indwell it and the gifts of the Spirit to edify it or bring it to maturity.⁴

The Eternal Lamb

In enhancing our understanding of what Paul is revealing we must further realise that Christ’s descent and ascent are not separate and contrasting eras in the sense that the servant-descent ‘into the lower parts of the earth’ is left far behind in the contrasting reward and glory of the ascent ‘far above the heavens’. Rather, the Ascended One is the Descended One; the eternal Lord is the eternal Servant. This principle is amply portrayed in the book of Revelation where John is invited to ‘behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah’ (Rev. 5:5f.). But when he looked to see this Lion–King he ‘saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain’. The Lion–King is forever the Lamb, and his glory as exalted King is the glory of the Lamb who was slain. Indeed, this King is not referred to as the Lion again in the Revelation, but is called the Lamb a further 27 times. Geoffrey Bingham accompanies his pertinent study *The Sons of God Are the Servants of All* with two poems on the theme. In the first of these we read:

The true participation is in the death,
The Cross-experience of the gentle Son,
The transition of flesh-in-death
To flesh enlivened, the essential rising
And the defeat of death. Death is the possession
Of the new humanity, its true crucible
For depthful cleansing, wholesome regeneration
Where the self-endeavour dies
And the new life rises
Eager for the serving of love.⁵

There comes to us, then, as leaders in the household of God, a revelation of the exalted servant Christ, of his passion, victory and glory, and of his giving to his people that which he himself has plundered from his enemies and that which he has received from his Father. We can summarise in the following way:

- Through the Cross and the Resurrection, Christ the conquering King has triumphed over and captured his enemies which are also the enemies of humanity.⁶
- Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God, far above all other dominions (Eph. 1:20, 21) and now fills all things (Ps. 8:6; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22).

⁴ John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, pp. 158f.

⁵ Geoffrey Bingham, *The Sons of God Are the Servants of All*, NCPI, Blackwood, 1982, p. xiv.

⁶ The nine enemies of humanity are sin (John 8:24, 34), the devil and his powers (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8), the wrath of God (John 3:36; Eph. 2:1–3; Rom. 1:18, 24, 26, 28; Gal. 3:13), death (Rom. 5:12–14; Heb. 2:14–15; 1 Cor. 15:56), an evil conscience (Titus 1:15), the law of God, which by exposing and provoking sin in us condemns us (Rom. 7:7–13), our flesh operating apart from and over against God (Rom. 8:7), the idols (Rom. 1:25; Hosea 4:17; Gal. 4:8), and the world that is set against God (1 John 2:15–17; Gal. 1:4). The NCTM Summer School 2007, *For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free*, detailed these nine enemies and Christ’s victory over them.

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- Receiving from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he is pouring out the Spirit of his grace on ‘all flesh’ (Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28) and the power of his lordship by giving ‘gifts to men’ (Eph. 4:7; Ps. 68:18).
- His reign is from first to last the reign of the Servant Lord who has done all for the sake of his people, and who gives all that he has received to his people that they might share ‘all things’ with him.

‘All Things’

It is very important for us to understand the magnitude of Christ’s beneficent reign as ‘head over *all things*’ for the church. ‘In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of *all things*, through whom also he created the world’ (Heb. 1:2). Jesus said, ‘*All things* have been handed over to me by my Father’ (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 13:3). The apostolic testimony is that God’s ‘plan for the fullness of time [is] to unite *all things* in him, things in heaven and things on earth’ (Eph. 1:10), and to ‘put *all things* in subjection under his feet’ (1 Cor. 15:27–28; Eph. 1:22), so ‘that he might fill *all things*’ (Eph. 4:10). For through him God has ‘reconciled *all things*, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross’ (Col. 1:20). ‘He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill *all things*’ (Eph. 4:10). Therefore ‘he is before *all things*, and in him *all things* hold together’ (Col. 1:16–17).

Having ‘put *all things* under his feet’, God ‘gave him as head over *all things* to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all’ (Eph. 1:22–23). ‘He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us *all things*?’ (Rom. 8:32). ‘So let no one boast in men. For *all things* are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s’ (1 Cor. 3:21–23). ‘His divine power has granted to us *all things* that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence’ (2 Pet. 1:3). At the goal of all things, ‘he will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject *all things* to himself’ (Phil. 3:21).

THE ABUSE OF HUMAN LEADERSHIP

Before we look further into the outworking of this wonderful provision it is necessary to face honestly the contrary abusive leadership so prevalent in the human community. Leadership is surely a vexed question in human communities. Not without reason the saying stands, that ‘power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’. Examples of this principle abound in governments, church leadership, and in all situations where power is exercised. Many movements, religious and secular, have arisen making messianic promises of a kingdom that will usher in the golden age. One by one, however, these false messiahs have been exposed for their greed and corruption and the exploitation of their subjects. Losing the trust and allegiance of the people, they fail one essential criteria of the true messianic kingdom. Of the Messiah it was foretold, ‘Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power in

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holy garments' (Ps. 110:3). Another translation has it, 'Your people will be volunteers in the day of your power' (NKJV). When leaders do not embody the reign of Christ in their leadership, and fall into greed, corruption and oppression, the people become disenchanted, unwilling and unholy. When the people cease to offer themselves freely, such leaders have to sustain their rule by fear and force. That is the beginning of the end for that kingdom as it spirals into greater coercion by its leaders and increased resistance on the part of its subjects:

*The mystery is that man ignores
The throbbing centre, the cordial beat
Of Love's being and intent—to serve.
Man misses the delight
Of agapitic ministry, the joy
Of serving others. Hell's centre—
Its cruel core—is self-serving,
The unserving intention of self-preserving,
The grim eagerness of ego-extension,
The stolid ignoring of the helpless,
The insistence on countless autonomies,
And no merging with the human corpus,
Only the disintegration of the social unity
Into the series of separated selves.

In the conflict, in the hideous struggle
The loving and the giving is neutralised.
The autonomous self demands the service
Of the other separated selves.
The tyranny of slavery is born
Where love's labour is conscripted
By the pitiful reward, the meting out
Of pathetic giving, the tantalising no-giving
Which is empty promise
To the emotional depths.⁷*

The Bad Shepherds of Ezekiel 34

It is sobering to realise that even in the community of faith, the people of God, leadership can become quite evil:

The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them' (Ezek. 34:1–4).

The consequence of self-interested and neglectful ruling is that the sheep are scattered and ravaged. They wander about in dangerous places, and no one goes looking for them:

⁷ G. Bingham, *The Sons of God Are the Servants of All*, pp. xii–xiii.

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So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them (Ezek. 34:5–6).

God's response to this reprehensible leadership and its disastrous consequences was threefold. He determined to hold the bad shepherds accountable (Ezek. 34:7–10), to shepherd his sheep himself (Ezek. 34:11–16), to send the Good Shepherd (Ezek. 34:23–24).

THE ACTION OF THE LOVE COMMUNITY

Leaders Are to 'Rule Well'

In contrast to the shepherds of Ezekiel 34, Paul speaks of elders who 'rule well':

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17).

The Greek word translated 'rule', *proistēmi*, literally means to 'to stand before', that is, to preside, rule or govern. Those who rule in the congregation are to 'rule well'. It was said of David as king of Israel, 'With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand' (Ps. 78:72). The last words of David, a man after God's own heart, include the following expression of what it means to rule well:

When one rules justly over men,
ruling in the fear of God,
he dawns on them like the morning light,
like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning,
like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth (2 Sam. 23:3b–4).

To rule well, beautifully described, is to serve as the morning sun and the falling rain serve the earth and give it life. Psalm 72 provides us with a description of God's chosen king ruling well:

For he delivers the needy when he calls,
the poor and him who has no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
From oppression and violence he redeems their life,
and precious is their blood in his sight (Ps. 72:12–14).

This theme of a ruler who serves the people well by enhancing the poor and opposing the wicked is similarly described in the prophecies of the Servant Messiah who will 'come forth [as] a shoot from the stump of Jesse' and 'shall bear fruit' (Isa. 11:1):

... but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked (Isa. 11:4).

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In direct contrast to the abuse of self-interested rulers, Jesus taught his disciples to be a community of servants. True greatness in the kingdom community is measured in terms of loving servanthood:

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:42–45).

True rulers rule well by washing ‘one another’s feet’:

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you’ (John 13:12–15).

To rule well is thus to exercise leadership for the sake of the people and their best interests in the will of God. Such rulership includes ‘keeping watch over [their] souls, as those who will have to give account’ (Heb. 13:17), admonishing (1 Thess. 5:12), and ‘especially’ labouring in preaching and teaching the word of God (1 Tim. 5:17).

Tending the Flock and Exercising Oversight

Ultimately we can only have a true revelation of what it means to rule well by attending to the rulership of Christ the head of the church and the Shepherd of his people. When Jesus came and announced, ‘I am the Good Shepherd’, he was in effect saying, ‘I am the One foretold in Ezekiel 34’. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep (John 10:14), calls his own sheep by name (v. 3), lays down his life for the sheep (v. 11) and does not abandon the sheep when he sees the wolf coming (vv. 12, 13). Peter understood well that ‘the chief Shepherd’ had given to the leaders in the church the task of shepherding the flock of God:

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:1–4).

In 1 Peter 2:25, Peter calls Jesus ‘the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls’. Later in his letter he encourages the elders in the church to ‘shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight’ (1 Pet. 5:2). The word *episcopos*, or ‘overseer’, has come in current usage to mean bishop or boss, that is, a person in a position of authority who rules over others. The word literally means ‘one who watches over’, from *epi* meaning ‘over’, and *skopos* ‘a watcher’, as in telescope, periscope or stethoscope. Human concentration is such that when we focus on one thing we are oblivious to other things. Our attention is governed by what is dear to our hearts and we ‘look after’ that thing. Thus one person will have ‘episcopal vision’ for his motor car, another for the décor of her house, another for the balance in his bank account. The

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Good Shepherd, however, has ‘episcopal vision’ for the sheep of his flock, and Peter instructs us to do the same. No doubt Peter would remember very clearly Jesus’ test of his love:

He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend [shepherd] my sheep’ (John 21:16).

Those who truly love the Lord, then, express that love by having ‘episcopal vision’ for the sheep of his flock. They remember the words of Jesus, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me’ (Matt. 25:40). Those who love the Lord love his sheep. They know what is happening for the sheep and have a heart for their wellbeing. In this way, Peter says, the elders are to be examples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:3), that is, so that all God’s people learn the way of good shepherding. We are called to follow the Good Shepherd, to be his treasured flock, to learn from him, and to shepherd as he does. Such ‘careful attention’ is important given the presence of ‘fierce wolves’ in the vicinity of the God’s flock:

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears (Acts 20:28–31).

Submission to Leaders

Hebrews 13:15–17 gives us a cameo of life in the kingdom community. Through the Lord Jesus Christ the believers are to ‘continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name’. They are not to neglect any opportunity ‘to do good and to share what [they] have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God’. This atmosphere of gratitude to God, resulting in continual praise, doing good, and sharing, is also to result in willing and helpful obedience and submission to their leaders on the part of the people:

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you (Heb. 13:17).⁸

The leaders are to have a willing servant love for the souls in their care, and the people, recognising the blessing of being so loved and served, are to have a corresponding willing submission to such godly authority. This mutuality of those leading and those who are led is to be a matter of joy rather than groaning. Guthrie comments, ‘The idea of leadership with groaning is clearly not one to be encouraged’.⁹ The exhortation, ‘Let [the leaders] do this with joy and not with groaning, for that

⁸ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC, vol. 47b, Word, Waco, 1991, p. 554:

The writer carries his injunction a step further with the second verb *ὑπεικείν*, ‘to submit to someone’s authority.’ Although the verb occurs only here in the NT, it is used frequently in secular Greek in the sense of submission to a person of authority (cf. 4 Macc 6:35; Philo, *On the Special Laws* 2.232; *Moses* 1.156; *On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain* 105). A cognate term *ἐκτικῶς*, which denotes a ‘habitual readiness’ to comply, is used in describing military subordination in *1 Clem*; 37:2 (cited by Thurén, *Lobopfer*, 205). The community is summoned to respect the authority with which the leadership has been invested by God.

⁹ Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, IVP, Leicester, 1983, p. 277.

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would be of no advantage to you', is probably directed as much to the people as to the leaders—'make your leaders' work a joy not a burden'. The expressions of joy or groaning may refer to the occasion when the leaders give account to God as well as the actual occasion of their leading:

Accountability to God attaches not only to the pastors but also to the members of those flocks which are blessed with earnest and faithful leaders. Let your leaders give an account to God *joyfully*, our author counsels his readers, *and not sadly*; in other words, enable them, when the day of reckoning comes, to present a joyful report of blessing, thanks to your willing obedience and cooperation. A sad report of disharmony and spiritual decline, occasioned by an ungracious and recalcitrant spirit on your part, will be *of no advantage to you*, he warns.¹⁰

1 Corinthians 12–14 in the Light of the Church as the Kingdom Community

It would appear that prior to writing 1 Corinthians, Paul had been asked by the Corinthian believers about several matters concerning life in the church community (1 Cor. 7:1). In 1 Corinthians 12:1, he addresses one of these—'Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed . . . ' Because of our interest in the matters addressed by Paul in chapters 12–14, we are inclined to focus on them specifically—spiritual gifts, the church as the body of Christ, love, and corporate worship. While these chapters are a valuable resource for each of these subjects, it is possible to miss what Paul is saying in the section as a whole. When read in its entirety the section has an overall theme—in the community of the kingdom everything is done for the common good and for the building up of God's people:

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (12:7).

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ (12:12).

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies *speaks to people for their upbuilding* and encouragement and consolation (14:1–3).

The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies *builds up the church*. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, *so that the church may be built up* (14:4–5).

. . . since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in *building up the church* (14:12).

For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not *being built up*. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue (14:17–19).

What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. *Let all things be done for building up* (14:26).

¹⁰ Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 587.

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The Built Up Body

After he had described Jesus' victory, ascension, receiving and giving, Paul continued in Ephesians 4:11–16 with a beautiful description of the all-sufficient provision of Christ's servant leadership of his people. The goal of that leadership is that the body of Christ be built up, 'to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ':

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (Eph. 4:11–16).

'Then Finally See This'

It could be said that the content of this study is straightforward and hardly new. Nevertheless it seems there is a need to reiterate these characteristics of life in the Kingdom Community in our congregations today, where pastors often choose the most attractive appointments, adopt a professional approach to ministry, keep office hours, and take an 'I'm here if you need me' stance in pastoral care, and where leaders and members alike often seem far more preoccupied with acquiring the advantages of a prosperous society than laying down their lives for the sheep of God's flock:

*Then finally see this—
That giving love through sacrifice,
And placing others in the prior place
Is how love is at root. Its radicals
Are rooted in the giving. Giving is Godness
Come to fruit. We do not give that joy
May come to us. Should we so do
Then joy itself has fled, impeded.
Yet when we give—not to receive—
True joy comes coasting in
At love's floodtide. This Christly thing
Is how God is, and how the image too
Fulfils itself. Love's taste is God's
And man's, at one. This God is love
And in his image man loves man
Unto the death, and in the life:
This is the true man!¹¹*

¹¹ G. Bingham, *The Sons of God Are the Servants of All*, p. 130.