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**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF  
THE EMERGING APOSTOLIC CHURCHES WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NOTION OF THE  
FIVEFOLD MINISTRY.**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
PHILOSOPHIAE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY –  
DOGMATICS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

**BY**

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**July, 2008**



## DECLARATION

I declare that *a critical analysis of the ecclesiology of the emerging apostolic churches with special reference to the notion of the fivefold ministry* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

**KELEBOGILE THOMAS RESANE**

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

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## DEDICATION

*It was He Who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13)*

This work is dedicated to all members of my family, especially my dearest wife Tabby, who gave me moral support. My son, Koketso was exceedingly understanding and tolerant of my technology limitation and edited most, if not all of the documentation put into place. My two daughters, Mamosa and Duduetsang also provided their moral support and love. They accommodated my excuses for not being with them due to this research, when they needed me.



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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to explore and analyze the ecclesiology of the emerging charismatic or apostolic churches with a special reference to their church polity based on the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4:11. The survey of the traditional church government is done as a basis and directional guide for church government and polity.

Since the Classical Pentecostals and Charismatics form a sizeable part of evangelical Christianity, their ecclesiology is explored and it is discovered that this is generally not formulated into certain cohesion. This mainstream evangelical Christianity does not formulate dogma, but adds pneumatological dynamism to their faith. However, the ecclesiastical understanding of the emerging apostolic movement is endeavored as a way of trying to understand the premise of ecclesiological understanding.

There is a historical survey of the fivefold ministry since the dawn of the twentieth century, especially starting with the Latter Rain Movement. As in all researches of this kind, the marks of this phenomenon are identified and the different terms used to refer to it explored. These marks are highlighted in view of their theological and hermeneutical approaches to doctrinal conclusions.

The rationale behind the movement's fivefold ministry hangs on the doctrine of restoration, whereby the church is believed to be prepared in the last days for a great eschatological realization, and that to accomplish this, the restoration of church government structure based on the fivefold ministers is to be applied. It is believed that the church can only fulfill its mission here on earth when it operates under the guidance of apostolic structure as laid out in Ephesians 4:11.

The research argues the theological bases and the roots of the fivefold ministry and compares this with the current scenarios found among the apostolic churches. This is examined in regard to the leadership in the early church, the principles of ecclesiality and contextuality, phenomenology, *Realpolitik* and *vox populi*. The argument is enhanced by



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the fact that the Charismatic theology lacks cohesion and synergy because of the lack of *catechesis* and apostolic *paradosis*.

The Ephesians 4:1-16 exegeses acts as a precursor to understanding the fivefold ministry and the *charismata* in the church as supported by history and the application of *domata* that the fivefold ministry was intended for *ecclesia's* growth, life and nourishment. The *domata* of Eph 4:11 were intended for maturity, not for the government of the church.

The climax of the research endeavours to answer the hypothesis if the fivefold ministry can be a theologically legitimate application for church government. The apostolic churches are reviewed and their distinctive characteristics surveyed. The fivefold ministry is critically discussed and the arguments against it for church government brought forth. These arguments are evaluated by comparing them with the contemporary participative ecclesiologies.

Some further valuable deductions can be made from research:

1. There is disparity and lack of synergy regarding the fivefold ministry among the Charismatics.
2. Ephesians 4 passage cannot be used to justify the church government structure based on the fivefold ministry.
3. The *ecclesia* is a charismatic fellowship.
4. The church needs structure for the sake of order and effectiveness in the world.
5. Most of the fivefold ministry promoters are not scholarly or theologically elite.

A few constraints have been encountered which have a limiting effect on the research. The research highlights a number of important areas which can be further researched.



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