



1-1-1964

The Doctrine of the Ministry Among the Disciples of Christ

Arthur H. Bishop

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Name of candidate:

Arthur Howard Bishop

Oral examination:

Date July 28, 1964

Committee:

Professor Ronald E. Osborn, Chairman

James G. Clague

Calvin L. Porter

Thesis title:

The Doctrine of the Ministry
among Disciples of Christ

Thesis approved in final form:

Date July 28, 1964

Major Professor

Ronald E. Osborn

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY
AMONG THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

BY

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Arthur H. Bishop

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

Division of Graduate Instruction
Butler University
Indianapolis
1964

PREFACE

A theory of the ministry has emerged among Disciples of Christ which for the most part is of a functional nature in that this theory never has been formulated in a formal manner like the doctrines on the ministry of other Christian communions. Because of this lack of a systematized statement on the ministry, it is probably more accurate to refer to the Disciples' view of the ministry as a functional theory instead of a formal doctrine. It is my hope that this paper will serve as a stimulus to Disciples toward the articulation of a more formal statement on the ministry.

The Disciples' idea of the Christian ministry while being based upon Biblical data has developed pragmatically over the past one hundred and fifty years as the Brotherhood itself has grown. During that span of time, several uncertainties and ambiguities have arisen about the ministry that call for examination and clarification.

I will be concerned primarily in this paper with the formal or special ministry. Although there will be some reference to the ministry of the laity, principally I will be speaking to the role of the cleric or formal minister among Disciples of Christ.

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to remove some of the vagueness associated with the ministry of the Disciples and to add some depth to their theory of the ministry through some proposals for renewal and reformation. First, I propose to accomplish this purpose through an historical survey of the development of the ministry among Disciples. Then, some recommendations will be offered in the light of the Biblical ministry, the historical ministry of the Church, and the contemporary situation. It is my opinion that the Church and its ministry must be renewed constantly through continuing reformations. In order to be valid, these reformations must not neglect Biblical, historical, and existential factors. Upon these criteria, I have based my propositions for the doctrine of the ministry among Disciples of Christ.

In the preparation and composition of this paper, I acknowledge the counsel and encouragement of the faculty of Christian Theological Seminary with special reference to Professor Ronald E. Osborn for his helpful suggestions and recommendations. I am indebted for the typing of this paper to my wife, Joan, without whose assistance and perseverance this work would not have been possible.

To the glory of God the Father, to the honor of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the praise of the Holy Spirit, this thesis is dedicated.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE MINISTRY AMONG DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

The Beginnings

The Disciples of Christ are often thought of as being a laymen's movement since many of their outstanding leaders in the past one hundred and fifty years have been laymen. Yet, the Disciples of Christ as a Christian communion were founded by four ministers. Three of them were ordained and the fourth could have been if he had so desired. Thomas Campbell and Barton Stone were ordained by duly recognized presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church, Campbell in Ireland and Stone in Kentucky. Alexander Campbell was ordained by the Brush Run Church in western Pennsylvania. Walter Scott, the great evangelist of the early Disciples, although he possessed all the credentials, was never ordained. These four leaders blazed the trails for the movement that became known as the Disciples of Christ.

Thomas Campbell came to the United States in May, 1807 and after presenting his credentials to the Associate Synod of North America, then in session in Philadelphia, was assigned to the Presbytery of Chartiers in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Subsequently, Campbell was appointed to a circuit of preaching points between Pittsburgh and Washington, Pennsylvania. However, in October of the same year, after Campbell had been on the field four months, charges of heretical teaching and irregular ministerial procedures were lodged against him. These charges were debated in both the presbytery and the synod in a complicated set of proceedings extending over two years. But before the issue was decided, Campbell withdrew from the presbytery and the Presbyterian ministry.

It is significant for our study of the ministry that the third of the seven charges leveled against Campbell was that he believed it to be the duty of ruling elders to pray and preach publicly when no ordained minister was present or available.¹ Defending himself before the presbytery, Campbell "confessed without argument that he thought lay elders should pray and exhort in public worship when no minister was at hand."² Thus, in these words and actions of Thomas Campbell we glimpse some of the ideas concerning the ministry which were later embodied in the beliefs and practices of the Disciples of Christ. However, from this point forward with the exception of his famous Declaration and Address which makes little mention of the ministry, Thomas Campbell handed

¹Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p. 132.

²Ibid., p. 134.

the torch of reform and role of iconoclast over to his son, Alexander.

Alexander Campbell arrived in this country in 1809 and immediately joined his father in western Pennsylvania. Rejoicing in the fact that his father's reform beliefs were much akin to his own, Alexander joined forces with his father in establishing the small Brush Run Church near Washington, Pennsylvania in 1811 and uniting with the Redstone Baptist Association in 1813. In the years that followed Alexander Campbell became the outspoken and outstanding orator of the Reformers, as they were called. Certainly the trial of his father provided Alexander Campbell with an early stimulant for his later radical teachings, especially his anticlericalism. D. Ray Lindley has remarked that the trial of Thomas Campbell served as the key to Alexander's career. "Coming as it did at the very time when the decision as to his life-work was being made, and being of such a nature as to outrage his sensitive spirit, it launched him on his career."³

Alexander Campbell's Concept of the Ministry

During the next fifty years, Alexander Campbell said a great many things about the ministry, the majority of which formed the basis for the philosophy of the Disciples of Christ

³D. Ray Lindley, Apostle of Freedom (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1957), p. 16.

upon this subject. In his early years as editor of the Christian-Baptist, Campbell became an adamant and fierce opponent of the established clergy of his day. Perhaps Alexander Campbell is best remembered by many for his almost unceasing anticlericalism in those early days. His famous "Third Epistle of Peter to the Preachers and Rulers of Congregations" is an eloquent satire on the pompous and pretentious clergy. Campbell minced no words on this subject. He was quite critical of clerical names, beautiful and expensive manses, ostentatious pulpit robes, large salaries, costly wines and elaborate church buildings.⁴ Likewise, it was during the Christian-Baptist days that Campbell coined his famous phrase "the hireling clergy." The hireling in the same manner as a mechanic learns his trade prepares himself for the office of preacher or minister. Then after receiving a license to preach from a congregation, convention or the like "agrees by the day or sermon, month or year, for a stipulated reward."⁵ Campbell often characterized the hireling as a wolf who "goes about looking for a flock and when he finds one that suits his expectations he takes the charge of it for a year or two until he can suit himself better."⁶

⁴A. Campbell, "The Third Epistle of Peter to the Preachers and Rulers of Congregations--A Looking Glass for the Clergy," Christian-Baptist, Vol. II (July 4, 1825), pp. 281-285.

⁵A. Campbell, "The Bishop's Office," Christian-Baptist Vol. III (April 3, 1826), pp. 360-361.

⁶Christian Baptist, III, 1826, p. 233.

From these and similar statements it appears that Alexander Campbell was vehemently opposed to ministerial remuneration. Such an idea, however, seems to me to belong to the Campbell myth or Campbell mythology--that great body of material which is frequently attributed to Campbell but which for the most part is composed of half-truths. Opposition to ministerial salaries is one such half-truth. Campbell was dogmatically opposed to preachers proclaiming the Gospel only for the sake of money and portrayed those who did so as the hireling clergy. However, it is a misunderstanding to say that Campbell opposed all ministerial remuneration. Even in his early days with the Christian-Baptist Campbell believed that the overseer or president of a congregation called by the congregation to that responsibility should receive "such remuneration as his circumstances require; . . ." The wages paid to the overseer were not for preaching because the congregation had no need for preaching since they had already believed and professed. Further, as we shall see in a moment, preaching per se was not the responsibility of the overseer. Rather, the overseer was to be paid for his labors of teaching, admonishing, visiting, presiding and "in guarding them against seduction, apostasy, and everything that militates against their growth in knowledge, faith, hope and love, and retaining their begun confidence unshaken to the end."⁷

⁷Ibid.

The anticlericalism of Alexander Campbell was a sign of the times which was bound to come and as Clarence Lemmon has pointed out "if the Campbells had not sparked it, [it] would have come anyway."⁸ The clergy of post-revolutionary America had so complicated Christianity with elaborate ecclesiastical machinery and theological propositions that only experts, the clergy, could on the one hand administer the church and on the other interpret the faith. "So there had come into existence," as Garrison and DeGroot asserted, "a Protestant priesthood which stood between the people and the Bible."⁹ Not only did the Campbells rebel against such clerical domination but also the whole Western frontier revolted. The idea of domination either from Church or State was counter to egalitarianism and individualism of the frontier. Clerical superiority just did not fit into the pioneer scheme of things. Thus, the communions like the Disciples, Baptists and Methodists who were able to adjust and adopt their ministry to the frontier framework grew and prospered while the more ecclesiastical groups like the Episcopalians and the Lutherans with their formal ministries were much slower in their western movement and advancement.

⁸ Clarence E. Lemmon, "An Evaluation of Our Ministry," The Reformation of Tradition, ed. Ronald E. Osborn, Vol. I: The Renewal of Church: The Panel Reports, gen. ed., W. B. Blake-more (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1963), p. 202.

⁹ Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p. 176.

Campbell's opposition to the formalized ministry of his day can also be traced to the fact that he believed, and rightly so, that many of the divisions of Christendom had been inspired by clerics "puffed up with their own importance." It is difficult for those of us who live in this ecumenical century of relative peace and cooperation among the different and separate groups of Christianity to realize the intense sectarianism which prevailed in early nineteenth century America. "The minister of each of these sectarian groups had a vested interest in perpetuating the doctrines, church forms, and rituals of his own particular segment of Christianity."¹⁰ However, Alexander Campbell with his father abhorring division within the Body of Christ, being of a mind and spirit of Christian unity, could but reject the principal proponents of sectarianism. In later years one of the chief propositions of the Disciples was and still is the union of all Christians.

Another reason for Campbell's somewhat radical anti-clericalism may be seen in his emphasis upon the Bible and "where the Scriptures speak, we speak and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."¹¹ There is a vein of anticlericalism to be found in many parts of the Scriptures especially

¹⁰Lemmon, loc. cit.

¹¹This slogan was adopted by the Christian Association of Pennsylvania in 1809. Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., p. 140.

the prophetic portions such as the encounters of Amos and Micah with the pretentious Hebrew priesthood of their time and the continual controversies of Jesus with the priests, scribes, and Pharisees.

Another factor, which Lemmon mentions, to be taken into consideration in the anticlericalism of Alexander Campbell in particular and the Disciples in general is the often neglected sociological aspect. While the Disciples began as a protest movement against the prevalent sectarianism of the early nineteenth century, it was not long before they attained the status of a sect group and became as provincial as the groups which they had originally opposed. Beginning as a sect was quite normal for the Disciples since all religious bodies begin in that manner and then through development of culture, education, and economic status move from a sect to a conventional denomination. There is some question as to where Disciples are today in this sociological ladder. Lemmon poses a soul-searching comment at this point. "One wonders if most of our present problems are not merely the refusal of certain groups within the brotherhood to pass from the sectarian to the denominational status."¹²

The basic approach of the sect group is negative as it opposes the formal practices and beliefs of the denominations

¹²Lemmon, op. cit., p. 205.

around it, endeavoring to recapture the simplicity of primitive Christianity and to restore the church to pristine purity.¹³ Opposition to the formal clergy of the denominations is one of the chief characteristics of the sect group. The Disciples like all sects called for a simple ministry composed of laymen as they attempted to eliminate the special clerical class. One of the central ideas in such a program of anticlericalism is a suspicion of and resistance to formal education. Most sects are usually opposed to any college or graduate ministerial training since it seemingly fosters the ecclesiasticism of the denominations. The majority of early Disciples followed this line of thinking for many years as they stubbornly withstood any move toward the formal training of the leaders of their congregations. However, Alexander Campbell while originally hostile to educational institutions for ministers relented somewhat when he founded his own Bethany College in the hills of [West] Virginia. Bethany was principally established for the education of all Christians, Disciples in particular, with no special emphasis given for the training of men for the ministry. Obviously many of the early graduates of Bethany, if not most, became ministers of local congregations. But Bethany was founded for the

¹³ Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 18.

purpose of granting all believers a basic knowledge and understanding of the Christian system as Campbell called it. The Bible was the first and main textbook of the College and theology was never included in the curriculum during Campbell's lifetime. Nevertheless, the Sage of Bethany maintained avid antagonism toward graduate theological schools. Campbell believed that such centers of higher education had contributed considerably to corrupting and degrading the Christian religion, to constructing walls of alienation and division among the divergent groups of Christendom and "as powerful obstacles in the way of acquiring a rational, scriptural and sanctifying knowledge of Christianity."¹⁴ Such a dislike for theological seminaries, especially from the paramount founder of the Disciples, is one reason for the slow establishment of such institutions among the Disciples of Christ.¹⁵

While Campbell's early writings on the formal ministry were, for the most part, anticlerical in nature, yet it is a mistake to assume that these negative declarations represent the whole of his thinking on this subject. It is unfortunate that some Disciples, both then and now, believed that Campbell's main thoughts on the ministry centered in his anticlerical condemnations. Nothing could be further from the

¹⁴ A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. VII (August, 1836), pp. 375-376.

¹⁵ Riley Benjamin Montgomery, The Education of Ministers of Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1931), p. 46.

truth. Campbell never opposed the idea of the clergy being a special group called out of the Church to lead the Church. He condemned the power and the pretentiousness that resided in the clergy of his day. At this point, Campbell was in substantial agreement with another early Disciple advocate, Barton W. Stone. Like Campbell, Stone vigorously resisted the power of the priesthood and called for reform "to put the ministry in their proper place."¹⁶

In order to restore the ministry to its proper setting within the Christian Faith, Campbell believed that the authority and power of the clergy must be returned to the people, the laity of the local congregation. There seems to have been some conflict here between Campbell and Stone. Although Stone agreed with Campbell that basic authority resided in the local congregation, yet he felt that the ministry should be regulated by a conference of "bishops and elders" [ministers] instead of by the local congregations as Campbell believed. Stone's reasoning at this point may be seen in relation to his former orderly and authoritative Presbyterian background. While Stone and his followers, known as the Christians, repudiated the power of presbyteries and synods, nevertheless they maintained their insistence upon an orderly ministry governed and administered by a conference of ministers.¹⁷ Although

¹⁶Barton W. Stone, Christian Messenger, Vol. IV (September, 1830), p. 230.

¹⁷Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., p. 210.

such a plan was never exercised by the Disciples, yet the idea of a regulated ministry has had its effect upon the Restoration Movement in the insistence of many Disciples upon a responsible ministry especially in relation to ordination. But this controversy had the immediate result of raising some contention between the Christians and the Reformers, the followers of Campbell. These two groups united in 1832 in a loose connectionalism composed of several independent congregations. However, before the union some Reformers complained that the clerical system of the Christians was keeping the two groups apart. As one Reformer asserted, "It is the clergy--the hireling clergy--the called, and sent--the rulers--that keep us apart."¹⁸ However, Garrison and DeGroot insisted that such a charge was somewhat inaccurate and that it was a mistake to refer to any of the Christian ministers as "hirelings."¹⁹ But the charge did have some substance in the fact that a few Christian congregations, particularly in Lexington, did believe that the ordinances could be administered only by an ordained minister. Shortly thereafter these more formal congregations dropped the idea and became a part of the union. The Lexington churches finally resolved the problem in 1835 and joined the Christians and the Reformers.

¹⁸The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. III (April 2, 1832), p. 192.

¹⁹Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., p. 215.

As has already been established, Campbell believed that the basic authority and power of the Christian system properly belonged to the local congregation. This local group had the responsibility of providing for itself a proper ministry. Such a ministry was to be chosen and elected by the congregation. Contrary to the popular myth Campbell did not claim that all Christians were to be preachers and teachers in the sense of being leaders in the congregation. That idea would have fostered anarchy which was counter to Campbell's thinking. He did assert that "all Christians are preachers, in some department of society,"²⁰ meaning that every Christian should daily present a Christian witness. Likewise, Campbell, taking his clue from Luther, declared that all Christians regardless of their station in the Church are priests in their veneration and worship of God. All Christians are equal and of identical worth before God. Thus, in response to the Episcopal bishop of Tennessee, Dr. James H. Otey, Campbell wrote that the prayers and sacrifices of sister Phebe, "are as acceptable to God as those of 'His Grace' the Archbishop of Canterbury. . . ." ²¹ Also, in the same article Campbell maintained "that all church officers are no more priests in relation to God, than the brethren over whom they preside, . . ."²²

²⁰A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. III (June 7, 1832), p. 249.

²¹A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. VI (May, 1835), p. 228.

²²Ibid.

While all Christians are equal in the sight of God, yet they are not equal in regard to their responsibility and vocation in the Church. Counter to the somewhat popular anarchical interpretation of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers among evangelical Protestants, Campbell denied the right of all members to positions of leadership in the Church. All members are not chiefs although they are of equal worth before God. Campbell felt that "to employ all the members of the community, either at one time, or in rotation, to preach, teach, or exhort" was adverse to divine wisdom and even human prudence.²³ Perhaps the following analogy will render Campbell's interpretation of the priesthood of all believers more intelligible and understandable. Every citizen of the United States is entitled to equal rights and privileges but all citizens are not judges, legislators, governors and presidents. The same idea applies to the Christian community.

After a congregation has been duly organized and set in order by an evangelist, it is the obligation of the newly established congregation to choose and elect bishops and deacons to be the leaders or ministry of that congregation. By their election, these leaders are a distinct group, set apart to perform the duties of their respective offices.

²³Ibid., Vol. III (October 1, 1832), p. 501.

Once the congregation has chosen their leaders, they have transferred to them certain rights and privileges which belong particularly to that special group. The congregation is still the seat of authority but it delegates some of its power to its officers. The non-officer can perform the duties of an officer only in case of emergency. Hence, Campbell counseled that any Christian "may of right preach, baptize, and dispense the supper as well as pray for all men, when circumstances demand it."²⁴ However, the members of the congregation are not the ministry. The congregation represents the source of authority through which the ministry is elected and set aside to perform designated functions in the church. Therefore, we conclude that although Campbell opposed clerical domination and privilege, abhorred ministerial pride, objected vehemently to such titles as reverend or doctor, denied apostolic succession, and repudiated any doctrine of a special call of the Holy Spirit to the ministry, still he articulated a rather elevated view of the ministry. Substantiating this point, W. B. Blakemore said of Campbell that he "certainly held a high doctrine of the ministry--a distinct group, requiring special qualifications, set apart--as an inescapable and necessary element of the Christian systems."²⁵

²⁴A. Campbell, The Christian System (St. Louis: John Burns, 1835), p. 82

²⁵W. B. Blakemore, The Scroll, Vol. XLIV (Feb. March, 1952), p. 153.

Likewise, C. E. Lemmon agreed that Campbell "held the ministry in high regard."²⁶

Alexander Campbell believed that the genius and wisdom of the Christian system in regard to church officers consisted of four essential points. First, the System had established the necessary offices for its continuance and growth. In the second place, the Christian Faith through the Scriptures provides for the selection of the best qualified persons for these offices. Third, it consecrates and sets apart these individuals for the offices. Finally, those persons duly ordained are commanded by the Faith to give of themselves to the Lord's work that they may grow and mature with the overall body.²⁷

Campbell classified the offices of the church under two general headings--the extraordinary and the ordinary. Under the extraordinary were placed those ministries which had to do with the founding of the New Testament Church on Pentecost but whose functions had ceased with the apostolic age. This category included the prophets and apostles. Included under the ordinary grouping were those offices upon which fell the regular and continuing work of the church. From this latter classification came the necessary offices for the local congregation. Hence, according to Campbell the

²⁶Lemmon, op. cit., p. 200.

²⁷Campbell, The Christian System, loc. cit.

regular and standing ministry of the church was composed of bishops, deacons, and evangelists. Bishops were to be elders, pastors, teachers, overseers, and presidents. As these several names indicate the bishop was to preside over the congregation, comfort and lead the flock, instruct and edify the faithful, and watch over the spiritual life of the Christian community. The bishop's jurisdiction was over only the one congregation which had ordained him to that office. Campbell argued that there might be a plurality of bishops in one congregation but that there never should be a plurality of congregations under the authority of one bishop since the largest diocese to be found in the New Testament was a single church.²⁸

Granville T. Walker draws our attention to the fact that Campbell did not consider preaching to be a function of the bishop or of any local church office. "Indeed it is clear," wrote Walker, "throughout the writings of Campbell that the function of preaching was never held to be a part of the program within the local church."²⁹ As a part of his teaching function the bishop, in lieu of actual preaching, was to deliver a lecture on or preside over a discussion of the Scriptures. In this vein Campbell remarked that "a lecture of half an hour, more or less, should be prepared by the

²⁸A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. VI (October, 1835), p. 503.

²⁹Granville T. Walker, Preaching in the Thought of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954), p. 158.

President of the day."³⁰ After researching this matter, Walker concluded that Campbell probably refrained from the use of the words "sermon" and "preaching" in describing the public oration of bishops and evangelists because of the negative connotations connected with these terms from certain abuses of preaching and teaching wrought by the contemporary churches.³¹ Although Walker does not specifically identify these abuses, we can infer that they consisted of those alleged evils of the hireling clergy such as sermons for pay and the general formal and ritualistic manner of denominational preaching. Further, Campbell argued that while teaching, praying and singing were a necessary part of the worship of the Church, "preaching in the church or to the church, is not once named in the Christian Scriptures."³²

The second office of the local church, which was subordinate to the bishop, was that of deacon. Deacons were to be servants, treasurers, almoners, door-keepers, messengers, and stewards. This office also had a wide variety of functions as the above terms indicate. Campbell also mentioned deaconesses in connection with this office manifesting a responsibility for the female members of the congregation in

³⁰ A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. III (October, 1853), p. 551.

³¹ Walker, op. cit., p. 159.

³² A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. V (April, 1862), p. 154.

the official ministry of the church. However, his reference to the office of deaconess was rare and infrequent in comparison to the several occasions on which he commented upon the duties and qualifications of the deacon.

The third functionary of the Church was the evangelist who was also referred to as a missionary and preacher. Although this office was created by the local congregation, it did not serve the local church directly. After a person was chosen and elected to this position and duly ordained by the congregation, he was sent out into the world to proclaim the Gospel. Thus, the duties of the evangelist were to preach the word, immerse all believers, establish and organize churches, and instruct them in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord until they were able to form their own local ministry of bishops and deacons. Sometimes these evangelists were supported and appointed to their duties by a group of churches as was the case of Walter Scott. Scott was appointed by the Mahoning Baptist Association of eastern Ohio in 1827 to evangelize the failing and dying Baptist churches of that area. However, most of the churches in that district became Disciple congregations in a few months through the efforts of Scott who with Campbell persuaded the Mahoning Association to dissolve its Baptist affiliations and adopt the New Testament pattern of government and salvation. This procedure of several congregations supporting one evangelist

seems to have been the practice followed by early Disciples. However, with the establishment of churches being completed, the evangelist's function often became that of reviving inactive churches and members and converting the non-believers of these Christian communities. This thought brings us to another important point in the philosophy of Campbell and that is the idea of expediency. Campbell obviously was a pragmatic thinker. Wherever a need existed in the Church that need should be filled if at all possible. Campbell held that the offices of the New Testament have arisen out of needs of the congregation. Hence, he believed that should the need arise for an extension of the present offices or an increase of the duties of these offices or conversely should circumstances require a limiting of offices or duties as in the case of the evangelist, the congregations were in accordance with the New Testament pattern to make the desired changes. Thus, offices and duties might change from community to community. The number, character and attainment of these functionaries "must depend on its [congregation's] position, the number and attainment of its members, and the surrounding circumstances."³³ Of course, Campbell's theory of expediency has probably caused more controversy among Disciples than any other one proposition that he ever articulated. It definitely

³³A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. III (May, 1853), p. 247.

relates to the contemporary ministry of the church as we think of the shrinking duties of current elders and deacons. We shall speak to this matter later.

The Bethany Sage referred to the New Testament for the moral and ethical qualifications for these offices. But he held that the physical and mental qualifications for any office were to be found in the nature of the office itself. Campbell felt that the work to be done was the best guide in "ascertaining the qualifications of the doer of it."³⁴ Thus, the congregation in the selecting or calling of persons to the offices of the Church were to be guided by the nature of the functions to be performed and by the qualifications of those selected to perform them. As D. Ray Lindley pointed out, "the call to the ministry as a social compact Campbell held to be functional in nature."³⁵ Thus, Campbell discounted any special or supernatural call to the ministry by the Holy Spirit. He claimed that the authority and dominion of the clergy was maintained in part by the alleged special call. Campbell challenged those who claimed to possess such a special call to prove their calling by being able to speak infallibly and by working miracles. All New Testament references to divine callings, Campbell affirmed, were accompanied

³⁴A. Campbell, The Christian System, op. cit., p. 82.

³⁵D. Ray Lindley, Encounter, XXIII (Winter, 1962), p. 17.

by the gift of working miracles. Hence, he wrote, "Nothing short of divine attestations or miracles can evince that any man is especially called by the Spirit of God to instruct us in the Christian religion."³⁶ Repudiating the surrounding denominations, Campbell contended that the call to the ministry consisted neither of a direct summons from the Holy Spirit, nor of a transmission of authority from a sacerdotal system, nor of the personal ambition of the one believed called but of a social contract, functional in nature, between the qualified and the church.³⁷ Campbell referred to the Scriptures where he could find no instance in which the call and appointment of an officer was not represented as the act of the congregation.³⁸ When attacked with the charge of humanism in regard to the call to the ministry, Campbell responded with "vox populi, vox dei"--God through his grace attached to the ministry had appointed the Church to call its own ministry.³⁹

Likewise, Campbell held that the call to the ministry was not only composed of such a call to the qualified by the church but also of the ordination of the elected by the congregation in conformity with the New Testament. He maintained

³⁶A. Campbell, The Christian-Baptist, Vol. I (Oct. 6, 1823), p. 65.

³⁷Lindley, Encounter, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁸A. Campbell, The Christian-Baptist, Vol. IV (August 7, 1826), p. 261.

³⁹Lindley, Encounter, op. cit., p. 18.

that the authority delegated to the elected by the electors demands that they who render such power "should give it with their own hands, and not by proxy."⁴⁰ Such ordination was an outward expression of the priesthood residing in the congregation as they delegated their authority to those whom they had elected. But the congregation in ordination never abdicated its rights as in the sacerdotal system of succession. Being a violent foe of apostolic succession, Campbell contended that Christ had given no law of succession. But if the Lord had prescribed such a system, that system would now have destroyed itself "by a long continuance of the greatest monsters of crime that ever lived; and by Cabals, intrigues, violence, envy, lust and schisms, so that no man can believe that one drop of apostolic grace is either in the person or office of Gregory XVI."⁴¹ The New Testament's only example of ordination was that by the congregation upon the one whom they had elected. The imposition of hands upon the candidate carried with it no concept of succession but rather simply the devoting of the person to the work of the Lord in the capacity to which he had been selected. Unfortunately, in the early years of the Disciple movement some congregations ordained some unqualified persons of unscrupulous character

⁴⁰ A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Extra (Oct. 1835), p. 498.

⁴¹ A. Campbell, Campbell-Purcell Debate (Cincinnati: J. A. James & Co., 1837), p. 139.

who betrayed the principles of the office to which they had been elected. Hence, in later years, Campbell called for a fuller and more thorough examination of all candidates for ordination. We might say, parenthetically, that this particular problem of ordaining unqualified and unfit persons to the ministry persists among Disciples although it has been somewhat overcome in recent years through state commissions and councils on ordination.

Alexander Campbell had a high view of the ministry while he denounced clerical pride and authority; yet, he advocated an orderly ministry, called, elected, and ordained by the local congregation. He denied the concept of a special, divine call as well as apostolic succession. Nevertheless, he held that each church should set aside some of its members to be its leaders and servants. His basic argument with the denominations around him was over the seat of authority. They insisted that authority rested in the clergy or in a synod or conference composed mostly of clergy. Campbell contended that all authority and power resided in the local congregation.

The Settled Ministry

During the period 1832 to 1865, the Disciples grew and prospered as a religious group. For the most part they moved

westward with the advancing western frontier of the United States. For this reason even to this day, the Disciples are rather few in number along the eastern seaboard. Their beliefs and practices fitted right into the frontier spirit. They adhered to a simple, literal Biblical understanding. They rigidly insisted on democratic, autonomous church government. And they developed a ministry that was close to the people. As Ronald Osborn has indicated, ". . . their preachers were farmers or miners or storekeepers, with little pretension to formal learning. . . ." ⁴²

During these middle years of the nineteenth century, the Disciples grew rapidly in number from a few hundred in the 1830's to several thousand in the 1860's and 1870's. It is probably true, as some Disciple historians have postulated, that the Disciples of Christ experienced more numerical growth in the last three decades of the nineteenth century than any other American religious communion in the same period. This rapid rise in membership had a very definite effect upon the ministry of the Disciples. It called for leadership. No longer could the untrained and secularly employed lay elders properly minister to their congregations. More and more the churches began calling for a full-time ministry to lead, direct and pastor their congregations.

⁴² Ronald E. Osborn, The Spirit of American Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 8.

As Earl West pointed out, "By the time of the Civil War, it was becoming an increased practice in the Church of placing a preacher in 'charge' of a congregation."⁴³ There are several reasons for the development of the settled ministry among Disciples in which a preacher would accept the call or offer of a congregation to be their leader for usually a lengthy period of time under a salary agreement with the church. However, the reasons for the establishment of the located pastor with the Disciples are the same as those of any sect group in the transformation from a lay ministry to a full-time, trained ministry. It is a social determinism that every Christian sect of any permanence must eventually turn to and depend upon a special group for its direction and leadership. This special group is set apart to devote its full-time energies to the ministering of the larger groups--the congregations. The evolution of the ministry from "lay officers and traveling pastors and evangelists to a 'trained, settled, and salaried' ministry has occurred by reason of social necessity, . . .," declared the 1955 World Convention Study Committee on the Ministry.⁴⁴

⁴³ Earl Irvin West, The Search for the Ancient Order (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950), II, 453.

⁴⁴ World Convention of Churches of Christ 1955, Doctrines of the Christian Faith, "The Christian Ministry," No. 5, prepared by Study Committee (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1956), p. 2.

The most obvious reason for the development of the settled pastorate was leadership. Any and every organization, religious or secular, must have strong leadership in order to advance and succeed. This proposition has been proven over and over again. For the most part, the lay officers did not have the time or the training to meet the needs of their congregations. A full-time person who could be called upon at any time to marry, bury, direct, coordinate and pastor was what the churches wanted and needed. And this is exactly the reason why many Disciples fostered and supported the settled ministry. It was a social and practical necessity. Responding to an article written by L. B. Wilkes on the eldership, the editors of The Christian-Evangelist, J. H. Garrison and B. W. Johnston, repudiated the idea that elders could sufficiently supply the needs of the congregations. "The theory that a plurality of business men absorbed in secular pursuits, elected 'elders,' can 'feed the flock of God,' and lead forward the cause of Christ has never worked and never will."⁴⁵ Not only were many elders poorly equipped in terms of training to properly minister, the editorial continued, but also some of nominal dedication were then being elected [] and still are [] and ordained to

⁴⁵"The Eldership," The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. XXXI (January 18, 1894), p. 34.

the eldership who would not minister. Thus, the Church, faced with the could nots and would nots of the eldership, was forced to employ a person who would lead and advance the congregation.

Also, J. J. Haley pointed to the practical necessity of the pastoral office which he declared was illustrated "in the failure of the little denominations of Christendom which have ventured to repudiate the pastoral office in the interest of a lamp-lighting system of evangelization and an incompetent plural eldership invested with supreme spiritual authority in the local church."⁴⁶

Not only was the need for centralized leadership seen in the area of pastoral functions but also in regard to evangelism. After an evangelist had established a congregation, he gave their care and advancement over to the elected elders who frequently presented little in the way of evangelism except for the semi-annual or annual return of an evangelist to revive the nominal and baptize the pagan. Hence, a more balanced and continuing program of enlistment and evangelism called for a regular ministry. In a survey conducted by The Christian Standard in 1931 among the Christian Churches of Oregon, it was found that there were practically no additions to the churches which

⁴⁶ J. J. Haley, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. XXXII (February 21, 1895), p. 114.

were without ministers.⁴⁷

A second reason for the establishment of the settled ministry among the Disciples may be seen in the general rise of culture and wealth of the American people. Speaking of the evolutionary process from sect to denomination, Elmer T. Clark commented, "It is the growth in wealth and culture that brings about the departures from the early status and standards against which the schismatics protest."⁴⁸ By 1870, more and more Americans were attending secondary and higher schools. A congregation which had developed a higher level of cultural religious understanding demanded a leader with like training and maturity. Schools of higher education, like Bethany College, were established by the Disciples in many regions of the nation, chiefly for ministerial training. Though the duration of several of these schools was short because of a lack of financial support, yet they all raised the general level of ministerial education among Disciples. It is interesting to compare W. T. Moore's two volumes of sermons, compiled fifty years apart, written by Disciples to notice the increase in formal education especially in graduate training. In the first volume, Living

⁴⁷"No Converts Without Preachers," Christian Standard, Vol. LXVI (September 26, 1931), p. 946.

⁴⁸Clark, op. cit., p. 18.

Pulpit of the Christian Church, edited in 1868, Moore drew upon the sermons of twenty-eight prominent Disciple preachers. Of that number eight had no college training, one had some college work but no degree, twelve had graduated from Bethany College, two held A.B. degrees from other colleges, one had a Master's degree in addition to his A.B., two had M.D. degrees, and two held degrees in Law. Fifty years later when Moore edited his second volume in 1918, out of the twenty-eight preachers used, only one had no formal higher education, eight had some college work but no degrees, six had obtained A.B. degrees, eight had M.A. degrees, two had Bachelor of Divinity degrees, and the remaining three had Ph.D. degrees. Likewise, it is significant to note that whereas in 1868 only ten of the twenty-eight contributors were settled pastors, in the second volume twenty of the twenty-eight sermons were from pastors.

Although the general cultural development and maturity of Disciples led to the settled ministry, the rise in wealth and support of the minister with Christian Churches was rather slow and became a hindrance instead of a stimulant for the pastoral office. Further reference to this problem will be made in a few moments.

There can be little doubt that the surrounding denominations with their own settled ministers had a definite effect upon Disciples. Thus, Tolbert Fanning not only denounced the system on Scriptural grounds but also declared

that "the brethren have adopted their views and practices from the sectarian influences that surround them."⁴⁹

Likewise, Russell Errett in a Christian Standard editorial criticized the "pastor idea" from the same perspective. He wrote, "Unconsciously, the church and the preachers have been affected by certain conditions in modern denominations, where the ministry is regarded as a distinct order, with some special call to a holy life."⁵⁰ The ecumenical outlook of many Disciples even in the late nineteenth century could not isolate them from cooperating with other Christian communions and adopting those practices which they deemed beneficial for their own posterity and for the cause of Christian unity.

Clarence Lemmon has mentioned one further reason for the formation and maintenance of the settled ministry. He believed that the outstanding example and dedication of many distinguished pastors gave real permanence to the pastoral office. There were consecrated ministerial leaders like Alexander Procter of Independence, Missouri; T. P. Haley, Burris Jenkins, and George H. Combs of Kansas City; George A. Campbell of St. Louis; Peter Ainslie of Baltimore; the Philputt brothers of Indianapolis and St. Louis;

⁴⁹Tolbert Fanning, The Gospel Advocate, Volume II, (May, 1856), p. 156.

⁵⁰Russell Errett, Christian Standard, Vol. XXXVI (March 17, 1900), p. 326.

Powell of Louisville; Goldner of Cleveland; Medbury of Des Moines; Power of Washington; Bricker of Atlanta; Chilton of St. Joseph. "These men," Lemmon continued, "gave themselves to the pastoral ministry and the stability of their character, the singlemindedness of their lives, and their eminence in their own communities and in the communion raised the status of the ministry among Disciples."⁵¹

The Establishment of the Parish Ministry

Though some churches began the policy of a settled ministry during the 1860's, the idea was slow in taking hold and probably did not become a generally accepted procedure until after the turn of the century. There are some obvious reasons for this slow process. First of all, there was much adverse criticism to the plan from the conservative element of the Brotherhood on purely Scriptural grounds. Denouncing the located ministry, Fanning maintained, "The brethren who advocate the salary system lose sight of the fact that we professed in years past to adopt the Scripture as our only rule of faith and practice."⁵² Another critic, C. Kendrick in response to an address by Isaac Errett, wrote in the Christian Standard that "the modern idea of

⁵¹ Lemmon, op. cit., p. 209

⁵² Fanning, op. cit. p. 156.

the pastorate, calling the evangelists in and putting them over the Churches, was contrary both to the Scriptures and to the providence of God."⁵³ The settled ministry proponents had difficulty defending the system from Scripture since the early Christian community had not at the writing of the New Testament documents evolved from lay leadership to a full-time priesthood. This development did occur but after the period covered by the Canon. Thus, the advocates of the settled ministry resorted to the Old Campbellian principle of "in faith unity, in opinions liberty, in all things charity" in contending that the settled pastorate question was not a matter of faith but rather one of opinion. Hence, James Atkins, a layman in the Church of Christ, Savannah, Georgia insisted, "It is, however, my opinion as now informed that one not an officer may be called in by the church. . . ."⁵⁴ The opponents of the system argued that the matter of the located minister was an article of faith and should be approached in that manner. Isaac Errett, an advocate of the pastoral office, while approaching the question from the viewpoint of opinion and expediency, criticized the existing eldership of most churches as being counter to the overseers of the early Christian community. Errett claimed, "Elders who are

⁵³C. Kendrick, Christian Standard, Vol. XIX (October 25, 1884), p. 338.

⁵⁴James Atkins, Christian Standard, Vol. XXII (April 2, 1887), p. 105.

immersed in earthly cares and who can give but odd moments to the oversight of the churches are not the elders described in the New Testament."⁵⁵

While adherents of the resident ministry resorted to the axiom of opinion over faith in justifying the system, yet often they endeavored to fit the minister into a Biblical framework making him either an elder or an evangelist in the local congregation. But this raised some controversy. Was the settled minister an elder or an evangelist or both?

Though Alexander Campbell never had to face this problem during his lifetime, still he felt that the bishop or elder was the head of the congregation and should be reimbursed for his pastoral services if such compensation was warranted. Of course, the elders of Campbell's time were at best part-time servants of the Church usually being farmers or tradesmen or merchants of some kind. However, I am of the opinion that Campbell probably would have designated the settled minister primarily as an elder in the organizational structure of the Church. The Bethany Sage gave more emphasis to the pastoral duties of the head of the congregation than to his speaking responsibilities. Both J. J. Haley and W. L. Hayden agreed that the minister should be chiefly considered as an elder in the congregation. Writing in The Christian-

⁵⁵Isaac Errett, Christian Standard, Vol. XX (April 11, 1885), p. 116.

Evangelist, Haley held, "The pastor of today who feeds the flock of God approximates more nearly to the New Testament elder than any other modern ecclesiastical official."⁵⁶ Likewise, Hayden concluded that "when a church calls a minister to be its pastor, it calls him to the eldership of that Church, and to all the duties of that office."⁵⁷ Yet, both these men asserted that evangelism and preaching were a necessary part of the minister's responsibility but secondary in nature. Thirty years later, R. C. Harding contended that while the minister might perform the functions of an elder or even a deacon when necessary, his first obligation was that of preaching.⁵⁸ Thus, the settled minister accepted the duties both of elder and evangelist with priority being given to those functions which seemed to be most significant and most necessary at that particular time. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century and at the present time almost a hundred years later the pastoral duties of the minister seem to be the most important. Preaching and the evangelistic functions of the minister were emphasized in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. The pendulum swings back and forth between these

⁵⁶J. J. Haley, The Christian-Evangelist Vol. XXXIII (February 21, 1895), p. 114.

⁵⁷W. L. Hayden, Church Polity (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1894), p. 55.

⁵⁸R. C. Harding, Handbook for Elders and Deacons (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1932), p. 28.

two poles. Since the formation of the pastoral office, the minister has always been considered to be a part of the eldership of the Church which he served. But whether his prime function was to be pastoral or evangelistic has depended upon the needs of the time and the place.

Unfortunately when a minister located with a congregation, he often assumed the duties formerly held by the elders. Eventually, the minister became the overseer of the church. Russell Errett was correct to some degree when he wrote in 1900 that "the pastor idea of most modern churches is responsible for much helplessness on the part of the membership."⁵⁹ Prior to the advent of the minister, the elders visited the sick and shut-in, comforted the bereaved, counseled the non-believers, taught the youth, presided at the Lord's Table, preached, and directed the general management of the Church. Obviously they could not give these functions adequate time and care in the midst of ever-growing pastoral demands. Also, an enlightened and more informed society demanded greater excellence particularly in preaching and church administration. But these elders, part-time servants though they were, rendered a valuable service and dedicated witness to the Christian community. Of course, under the minister plan they could have continued to serve

⁵⁹ Russell Errett, Christian Standard, Vol. XXXVI (March 17, 1900), p. 236.

in the pastoral field. However, all too frequently they have retreated from their former pastoral functions either because the minister did not solicit their assistance or because the elders themselves felt that the minister should accept the pastoral duties because of his employment status or his ability and training.

Beyond Scriptural criticism, the pastoral plan was slow in being established among Disciples for lack of ministerial education. Isaac Errett in 1856 was among the first to call for the formal education of the minister. "Our pulpits," said Errett, "do not furnish evidence of much intellectual or spiritual growth, nor of adaptedness to the times."⁶⁰ Further, Errett observed, "The spirits that hunger and thirst for righteousness, will seek elsewhere for sympathy and encouragement--broad views of humanity--elevated views of the spiritual are rare."⁶¹ While several colleges were founded in the second half of the nineteenth century by Disciples such as Transylvania, Butler, Culver-Stockton, Drake, Eureka, Hiram and Texas Christian to meet the demands for trained leadership, yet some of the more conservative brethren hesitated and objected to purely ministerial education. Following the old Campbellian

⁶⁰ Isaac Errett, Millennial Harbinger, Vol. VI (September, 1856), p. 491.

⁶¹ Ibid.

principle of higher education for all Christians, the conservatives rebelled against the idea of higher education for ministers only. David Lipscomb, defending his own Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee, declared, "We criticized schools to make preachers specially excluding all others, and certain methods of conducting them, but we have always insisted on Bible schools to teach the Bible to all who will attend. . . ." ⁶² The great fear in the minds of this element of the Brotherhood was that exclusive ministerial education would create a special class of priestly functionaries. Along this line of reflection, Ben Franklin observed, "The question, then, is really not about education; but about raising up a special class and bestowing great labor on them, while the great body is neglected." ⁶³

Of course, Lipscomb, Franklin, Fanning, and others were correct in predicting the erection of a special ministerial class within the Church. However, formal education was only one of the rungs in this clerical ladder. In addition, leadership needs, cultural growth, outside denominational influences, and the expediency factor were contributing forces to the elevation of a special class. Nevertheless, the idea of a special class as we have seen

⁶² David Lipscomb, The Gospel Advocate, Vol. XXXIV (June 30, 1892), p. 404.

⁶³ Ben Franklin, American Christian Review, Vol. XXI (October 29, 1878), p. 348.

was not opposed by either the Campbells or Stone.

As might have been expected, the establishment of seminaries for graduate ministerial training followed the founding of colleges by several years. As we have noticed, even in W. T. Moore's second volume of 1918 of collected sermons, only two of the twenty-eight contributors held B. D. degrees. Again, Isaac Errett was the leader in the movement for theological schools. Writing in the Millennial Harbinger, he asserted, "There should be a school of prophets--a theological school--where men of learning, and wisdom, and large experience could impart the sum of their experience, from books, from life and from their own souls, to the young and prepare them for wise and faithful labors."⁶⁴ Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that while Isaac Errett was as strong an advocate of formal education as the Disciples of Christ have ever had, yet he himself had no formal training. Perhaps this fact in his own life led him to crusade for ministerial schooling. But a man of lesser stature and maturity than Errett might have been prejudiced against education like some of his contemporaries.

The slow movement toward seminary training can be attributed to the fear of the erection of a special class and to a commonly accepted view among Disciples until about

⁶⁴ Isaac Errett, op. cit., p. 550.

forty years ago that education beyond the college level was unnecessary. But in a society which on the one hand has become highly informed and sophisticated and on the other hand highly specialized and to some extent degree conscious, graduate ministerial training has become necessary.

A third hindrance to the development of the pastoral ministry among Disciples of Christ was the inadequate financial support of the minister. In the beginning of the Restoration Movement the elders of a congregation or a visiting evangelist or dignitary preached for little or no remuneration. Of course, in the early period most Disciples were not wealthy and could contribute but little to the local church's finances. But "as economic conditions bettered themselves in the country," Earl West pointed out, "church members had more money but they still wanted their preaching for nothing."⁶⁵ The most apparent reason for lack of ministerial support stems from the American principle of separation of Church and State. Prior to the adoption of that principle by the American Founding Fathers, the church and its ministry had been wholly supported by the State. But with the separation of Church from State, the ministry in America had to depend upon the free will offerings of the congregation for their support. Hence, all American

⁶⁵West, op. cit., p. 454.

communions suffered for some time during the transitory period of adjustment from a state-supported practice to the free church system. When American wealth generally began to rise in the latter part of the nineteenth century, ministerial support increased.

However, Disciples had some other specific obstacles to overcome before they began to adequately compensate their ministers. First of all, there was the example of Alexander Campbell. Though Campbell believed that the head of a congregation should be remunerated for his services if necessary, he held that such support should be modest. As we have observed, the Bethany Sage abhorred the outrageously high salaries paid to the hireling clergy of the surrounding denominations. But the modest compensation which he originally recommended in his Christian-Baptist days would not adequately support the full-time ministry. It is true that later in life Campbell strongly advocated financial support for evangelists and the few settled pastors of that period. In 1835 he somewhat clarified his position on the hireling clergy. Wrote Campbell, "A hireling is one who works for the sake of wages; therefore, every one who receives wages is not a hireling. The laborer is worthy of his hire, or wages."⁶⁶ But as was true in many other areas of Campbell's

⁶⁶A. Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, Vol. IV (April, 1835), p. 170.

writings, his early Christian-Baptist negativisms held precedence over his later more positive affirmations.

Likewise, Campbell's own practice of not accepting any remuneration for any of his services as editor, author, president of Bethany, or public speaker certainly hindered the support of the Disciple ministry. Of course, Campbell did not need to be paid for his many services. He received from his father-in-law a rather large farm from which he was able to realize considerable wealth so that he died a relatively wealthy man. Earl West had suggested a second reason for the refusal of Campbell and David Lipscomb to accept any compensation for their ministering. "Leaders in any movement," explained West, "are subjects of considerable criticism, and by his refusal to take money for his religious work, Alexander Campbell was never criticized for leading a religious reformation as a means of making money."⁶⁷ Yet, in 1850 when he was urging the support of the ministry, he regretted to some degree his practice of not accepting pay for his church work. "But with me it has been," Campbell reflected, "and still is, a question, whether we do more evil than good, in many cases, by such a course?"⁶⁸

While most Disciple leaders maintained that the

⁶⁷West, op. cit., p. 453.

⁶⁸A. Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, Vol. VII (September, 1850), p. 487.

ministry should be supported, there was some controversy as to the method to be used to furnish that support. Fearing the erection of a "hireling" clergy and being prejudiced against the salary methods employed by the denominations, the more conservative brethren denounced a prescribed annual salary for ministers as being contrary to the Scriptures. Campbell had advocated a system by which the minister was to be paid quarterly in advance. Every Christian, Campbell affirmed, "should lay by in store, against the day of payment, his stipulated sum, with the faith and liberality of a Christian man."⁶⁹ But Tolbert Fanning who wrote several articles on the salary question in 1855 and 1856 in The Gospel Advocate repudiated the "stipulated sum" theory and insisted upon the "Scriptural" practice of free will offerings, non-subscribed and non-budgeted.⁷⁰ One reason for the many articles written in these years by Fanning was the large volume of correspondence he received from ministers criticizing his position. The plan prescribed by Fanning and Lipscomb proved uncertain and unsatisfactory. The more expedient annual salary system was adopted by many Disciple churches but not until the turn of the century. Unfortunately, financial insecurity led many able ministers

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 491.

⁷⁰Fanning, op. cit., p. 90.

to seek other vocations. However, it is significant to note the increasing interest in ministerial support among Disciples as documented by the unpublished notes of W. R. Warren who had been the Secretary of Ministerial Relief. Warren outlined that development in the following chronological classification:

Indifference	(1809 - 1823)
Hostility	(1823 - 1830)
Neglect	(1830 - 1840)
Kindly Interest	(1840 - 1870)
Increasing Concern	(1870 - 1895) ⁷¹

In the twentieth century, the concern for ministerial support continued to increase. This fact has been documented by William Martin Smith in his volume For the Support of the Ministry. Through a survey of the salaries paid Disciple ministers in 1925, Smith arrived at the figure of \$2,217 plus parsonage as the average annual salary. Thirty years later, in 1955, the average ministerial wage had almost doubled to \$4,030.86 plus parsonage. The 1925 study included ministers, evangelists, educators, state and national workers but the 1955 survey included only located pastors.⁷² With the salary question on a much better basis, the settled ministry became firmly established among the Disciples of

⁷¹W. R. Warren, unpublished notes, Pension Fund of Disciples of Christ, Indianapolis, Indiana, quoted in William Martin Smith, For the Support of the Ministry (Indianapolis: Pension Fund of Disciples of Christ, 1956), p. 32.

⁷²William Martin Smith, op. cit., p. 32.

Christ. Though the ministry gained status and prominence, yet Disciples believed and continue to affirm to some degree that there is no function in the church which the ordained minister performs that the unordained layman cannot likewise discharge. As Garrison and DeGroot observed, "The line between the ministry and laity remained somewhat vague. The distinction was largely that between full-time and part-time religious service, . . ."⁷³ Whereas there has never been a clear distinction between the ministry and the laity, which is commendable, among Disciples, there has continued to be in the last sixty years strong support for the settled, ordained ministry. Most Disciples would agree with Clarence Lemmon that "the church has never gone far beyond its ministry. . . . As goes the ministry so will go the church."⁷⁴

The Call, Ordination, and Authority

Three other areas, the call of the minister, ordination and ministerial authority, all of which from time to time have been matters of controversy require further examination. The various communions of Christendom have generally defined the call to the ministry as either (1) by the direct,

⁷³Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., p. 342.

⁷⁴Clarence E. Lemmon, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. 94 (October 10, 1956), p. 1040.

mysterious, divine call of the Holy Spirit, (2) by the ecclesiastical machinery of the sacerdotal system, or (3) by the people of the Church, both clergy and laity, in which the ability to perform, the compulsion to serve human need, and the readiness of dedication are the principal criteria.⁷⁵ Disciples have always vigorously rejected the second classification. But they have never clearly chosen either of the remaining two alternatives. Instead they have formulated affirmations concerning the call to the ministry which are frequently combinations of the first and third categories. And more often than not these affirmations have lacked clarity and distinctness.

It will be remembered that Alexander Campbell denied any idea of divine call. He held that the call to the ministry was merely a social compact which was of a functionary nature. But not long after Campbell's death, some Disciples began advocating the concept of a special, holy call to the ministry. Isaac Errett remarked in 1886 that "all God's people are 'the elect;' but those whom he called to His special work were the elect of the elect."⁷⁶ Also, the Christian Standard in 1918 carried an article entitled, "A Good Minister of Christ Jesus" which asserted, "The Biblical

⁷⁵D. Ray Lindley, Encounter, Vol. 23 (Winter, 1962), p.9.

⁷⁶Isaac Errett, Christian Standard, Vol. XXI (March 13, 1886), p. 84.

term of description--'a holy calling'-- relates to the nature of the call as well as to the character of the work, and implies that the call, the man and the service are holy."⁷⁷ F. E. Smith, former Executive Secretary of the Pension Fund, maintained that before men were ordained to the ministry "God has put His finger on His man and called him into His service."⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that while many Disciples in the last fifty years have contended for the divine call concept, they have often been quick to point out that they do not mean by such a call the direct intervention of God or the Holy Spirit. Hence, in his address before the Christian Missionary Convention of Kansas in 1884, T. P. Haley argued that the sacred call to the ministry was not to be construed as "an audible voice calling, nor an endowment of the Holy Spirit as Paul received; but a man should have such sense that it is his duty to preach the Gospel, . . ."⁷⁹ Likewise, George A. Campbell, characterized the special call as being "one's own decision through pondering and meditation, . . ."⁸⁰ With the growing support for the divine call precept in recent decades, it is not at all

⁷⁷"A Good Minister of Christ Jesus," Christian Standard, Vol. LIII (March 16, 1918),

⁷⁸F. E. Smith, Christian Standard, Vol. LXXV (September 7, 1940), p. 2.

⁷⁹T. P. Haley, Christian Standard, Vol. XIX (December 13, 1884), p. 393.

⁸⁰George A. Campbell, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. 75 (May 20, 1937), p. 650.

surprising that the Nashville Study Group on the Ministry submitted to the 1955 World Convention the following declaration: "The call to the ministry comes first to the individual as an inner conviction that he has been apprehended by God."⁸¹

Of course, there were many Disciples who denied the validity of the divine call and approached the issue much like Campbell from the functional perspective. One is called to the ministry as he becomes conscious of the fact that he possesses the skills necessary to do the job. Employing this pragmatic outlook, Carroll Cotten wrote in The Scroll, Fall, 1957, that the call simply consisted of the "importance of the considered vocation and talents and abilities the individual possesses."⁸² Still others like W. E. Garrison approaching the question from the humanitarian viewpoint insisted the call was composed of "an opportunity for simple helpfulness to people every day in their deepest needs. . . ."⁸³ Thus, another study group, Eugene, Oregon, incorporated both the functional and benevolent principles into their presentation to the World Convention (1955). "The call to the ministry is . . . the recognition on the part of an individual of the

⁸¹"The Christian Ministry," 1955 World Convention, op. cit., p. 7.

⁸²Carroll Cotten, The Scroll, Vol. XLIX (Fall, 1957), p. 11.

⁸³W. E. Garrison, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. LIX (July 6, 1922), p. 844.

needs of men for the Gospel, a conviction by the individual that he has the ability to serve in a particular way to meet the need in part, . . ."⁸⁴

However, as is easy to see, the above conceptions of the call to the ministry are highly subjective where the decision to enter the ministry was left almost wholly to the individual. The net result of such idealism was a tragic shortage of ministers. Hence, in recent years some Disciples, mostly educators, have set out to articulate a more objective approach to the subject in which the church has become the initiating and recruiting agency. Ronald Osborn with his article "Motivation for Ministerial Enlistment" in Encounter, Winter, 1962, has made a strong case for the call to the ministry being issued by and through the Church. He points to the numerous Biblical incidents where a religious leader claimed the life of a young person for God's service. There was Moses who commissioned Joshua, Samuel who anointed Saul and David, Jesus of Nazareth who chose the Twelve, the Antioch Church that commissioned Barnabas and Paul as missionaries, and Paul who ordained Timothy and Titus.⁸⁵ Osborn further insisted that such men as Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine of the

⁸⁴"The Christian Ministry," 1955 World Convention, op. cit., p. 7.

⁸⁵Ronald E. Osborn, Encounter, Vol. 23 (Winter, 1962), pp. 76-77.

Church's fourth century ministry did not "offer themselves for the ministry" but were chosen and drafted by the Church. Dr. Osborn concluded that "when the Church was convinced that its ministry required the ablest men in society and when it went after these young men with conviction and refusal to take NO for an answer, the problem of motivation was solved."⁸⁶

Obviously such a doctrine as espoused by Osborn squarely places the responsibility of ministerial calling not upon the individual but on the Church. Also, the personal encounter with God for direction and guidance is not ruled out. Rather, as Professor Joseph M. Smith has indicated, " . . . the personal experience of God in Christ is mediated through the Church and ministers are called through relationship with a community that knows itself to be called of God."⁸⁷ There is little argument but that the call to the ministry ought to come in the midst of the Christian community as the consecrated individual himself or herself comes to a personal decision for Christian service through an encounter with God. The personal experience with God, the response to the need of the Church for leadership, the compulsion to serve human need, the recognition of one's

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 77.

⁸⁷ Joseph M. Smith, The Christian, Vol. 99 (October 1, 1961), p. 1259.

own abilities and talents, and the constant pressing of the Church for dedicated men and women are all a part of the call to the ministry. One or all of these factors may be involved in one's decision to enter the Christian ministry. I would agree with Dr. Osborn, however, that the Church must play a leading role in this process. To be effective this program of recruitment must be supported not only by the clergy but also by the laity. In the past as Osborn's Biblical illustrations and fourth century instances affirm, far too often the calling to the ministry has been carried out almost solely by the religious leaders of a given era. The whole Church must take up the responsibility of calling worthy persons to service in its vineyard.

In the early years of the Disciple movement, ordination was a rather loosely defined ceremony in which the local congregation laid hands on those whom they had elected to the church offices of elder, deacon, and evangelist. There was little examination of the candidates. The ordained officers were accountable only to the congregation which had ordained them. Such a system worked fairly well in regard to local officers who remained in the service of the ordaining congregation. Should the local officers become unfaithful and disloyal to these Christian responsibilities, they could be appropriately disciplined by the congregation. Further, as Alexander Campbell directed, when these local officers

moved from the ordaining congregations, they were no longer to consider themselves to be ordained elders or ordained deacons. However, the system was inadequate in regard to traveling evangelists. The congregation ordained evangelists and sent them out to preach the Gospel and to establish churches in much the same manner as the New Testament church at Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas. It was inevitable that some of these "roving" evangelists would become guilty of irregular and unscrupulous practices. The only accountability that these evangelists had was to the ordaining congregation to which they reported rather infrequently. In some instances an evangelist was commissioned by several churches jointly. In that case he was responsible to the entire group. Granville T. Walker has pointed out that the evangelist was "technically responsible to the ordaining group, but morally responsible to the whole church."⁸⁸ But it is doubtful especially in the early period that the churches charged their evangelists to this moral responsibility or that many evangelists were themselves aware of it. The most common abuses of the evangelists of contemptible and shabby character were material mindedness in that they preached just for monetary gain and preached and practiced doctrines contrary to commonly accepted Disciple beliefs. It must be said that the unscrupulous represented only a small segment of all

⁸⁸Walker, op. cit., p. 165.

Disciple preachers and evangelists. Yet, the group was large enough and their abuses were obvious enough to warrant Campbell and other leaders to demand a more rigid and systematic examination by the churches of all candidates for ordination. Campbell carried his fight to the 1849 General Convention meeting in Cincinnati which passed the following resolution:

Resolved, That we recommend to the Churches the importance of great care and rigid examination, before they ordain men to the office of evangelist, . . .⁸⁹

Further the Convention also recommended to the Churches "to countenance no evangelist who is not well reported of for piety and proper evangelical qualifications, . . ."⁹⁰

In the next fifty years the Churches became more and more aware of the fact that an evangelist or minister ordained by a single congregation would no doubt affect the growth and spiritual welfare of several churches during the course of his ministry. Hence, following the recommendations of the 1849 and subsequent conventions, the Churches began reforming their formerly loose system of ordination.

Initially, they adopted as recommended more thorough and rigid examinations for ordination candidates with respect to qualifications, education, beliefs, and ability.

⁸⁹Resolutions of the 1849 General Convention, cited in F. M. Green, Christian Missions (St. Louis: John Burnes Publishing Co., 1884), p. 111.

⁹⁰Ibid.

Second, recognizing the responsibility of the minister to serve the whole church, increasingly the Churches began to invite fellow Disciple congregations to participate in the ordination service. Frequently though not always, these other congregations were represented by ministers at the service. That action led to the criticism by Fanning and others that the "modern idea of preachers ordaining preachers is wholly unauthorized."⁹¹ But the condemnation by Fanning was only half true in that laymen always had a part in the ordination ceremony, especially those from the ordaining congregation. An editorial in The Christian-Evangelist, written in 1903, maintained that an isolated congregation far removed from sister churches may act independently in ordaining men to the ministry but in a community where there were several Disciple congregations, "they might well unite in so important a matter as that of giving sanction and approval to the character and qualifications of one who is to be their public representative."⁹²

Another aspect in the direction of a more regularized ordination system and a more formal ministry has been the creation of commissions and councils on the ministry by

⁹¹Fanning, Gospel Advocate, Vol. II (August, 1856), p. 231.

⁹²"The Church and Its Ministry," The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. XL (August 20, 1903), p. 229.

state and national agencies. The International Convention of Disciples of Christ of 1935 meeting in San Antonio, Texas established a Commission on Ordination which while seeking to preserve the autonomy of the congregation in ordination recommended to the Churches some standard procedures and qualifications for ordination candidates. Also, upon the encouragement of the Commission, most state and area missionary societies founded commissions on the ministry which have formulated certain minimum qualifications and general regulations relative to ordination.

In the main, the state commissions on the ministry and ordination adopted the standards set forth by the Commission on Ordination at the International Convention, 1939, at Richmond, Virginia.⁹³ The recommendations approved by the Convention were that the ordination candidate should be of "good moral character and personal fitness for the ministry." Further, the candidate prior to ordination should have some experience in church work in which he has shown "real leadership, vision, pastoral qualities and preaching ability." Also, it was recommended that all candidates possess a college education and if possible graduate training in religion. In lieu of college training, it was suggested that the candidate enroll in a three year reading course

⁹³Commission on Ordination, International Convention of Disciples of Christ, 1939, Richmond, Virginia.

under the direction of a church college or state committee on the ministry along with a similar period of pastoral activity. During that three year period the candidate would not be ordained but would be a licensed minister. The ministerial license and ordination carry the same legal rights. The difference between the license and ordination is that while the latter is for life, the former is granted only for a limited period usually from year to year. The license is usually granted by the official board of a local church in conjunction with the approval of the state commission on the ministry. When a candidate had successfully completed the three year internship, he would be qualified to be ordained.

The current procedure in the ordination of a candidate to the ministry is first to have the man or woman examined by the local church. Then, he or she is recommended to the state council on the ministry who also investigates the fitness of the candidate. Then, if approved, the candidate is ordained. While this system may, as Loren E. Lair, state secretary of Iowa contends, "serve as a safeguard to the churches,"⁹⁴ yet surely it has meant the dissolution of complete congregational autonomy in the selection and ordination of ministers. Obviously the existing screening system has

⁹⁴Loren E. Lair, The Christian Churches and Their Work (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1963), p. 66.

eliminated several irresponsible and unqualified men from the ministry. But there is the ever present danger that in their movement toward a responsible ministry Disciples may eventually exclude the local congregation and ordain men on a state or regional level where the ordaining body is principally if not completely composed of clergymen. If such a development ever occurs, then Disciples will be guilty of enacting a system which their founders vehemently repudiated--domination by clergy.

In addition to the participation of local congregational officials and representatives of other Disciple churches, a member of the state commission on the ministry and/or the state secretary are also now invited to have a part in the ordination service. Likewise, on occasion, college and seminary professors are asked to participate as representatives of the church at large.

Although ordination is a sacred ceremony setting a person aside for ministerial service for life, it is not to be considered "an irrevocable consecration."⁹⁵ When an ordained person leaves the ministry or ceases to serve the churches professionally, his ordination is considered to be in abeyance. Should an ordained minister be found to be immoral, dishonest, or dishonorable in his ministering or in

⁹⁵"The Christian Ministry," 1955 World Convention, op. cit., p. 5.

his personal life, he is disciplined by the local church.

Also, in regard to ordination some mention should be made of the setting apart of women. Like most other American Protestant communions, Disciples ordain relatively few women to the pastoral ministry. The reason for the small number is that only a few women are interested and enter the pastoral ministry. However, in recent years there have been several women who have become directors or ministers of Christian education in churches that employ a multiple ministry. Some of these women Christian educators are now ordained by the churches like pastoral ministers as a symbol of their being set apart for significant and full-time Christian service. The obvious difference between the ordained and the unordained is a matter of formal training and full-time or professional employment.

The matter of authority within the ministry is an interesting and somewhat fascinating story. Disciples have traditionally abhorred and refused to accept the theory of the historic and ecclesiastic churches that authority is inherent in the ministerial office itself. On the contrary, Disciples have insisted that the ministerial office in and of itself possesses no power whatsoever. The seat of authority in the church lies not with the clergy but with the laity. Thus, according to Disciples, the ministry or the clergy

"has no powers other than those given to it by the laity."⁹⁶

The laity or the people of the church may grant authority to the minister and later, if they choose, may recall the powers which they previously bestowed. Basil Holt, writing for the South African Convention of Disciples of Christ, declared: "If a minister is a sort of monarch in the local church, it is a thoroughly CONSTITUTIONAL monarchy. He governs only with the just consent of the governed, and only for so long as that consent is continued."⁹⁷ Further, Holt reminded Disciples that while the minister is responsible to the laity for his actions, both the laity and the clergy are together subject to Christ for the actions and work of the church.

Some Disciples though repudiating the authority of the ministerial office have suggested that there is authority in the message of the minister. Ministers "are men sent," contended the Christian Standard, "and the authority is the authority of the message sent by them."⁹⁸ The same article discounted any such idea as modern prophets being similar to the Biblical prophets. Authority was to be found in the message but not in its bearer. In complete

⁹⁶W. B. Blakemore, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. 92 (March 24, 1954), p. 273.

⁹⁷"The Christian Ministry," 1955 World Convention, op. cit., p. 6.

⁹⁸"Ministers as Men of Authority," Christian Standard, Vol. LXXVIII (October 2, 1943), p. 835.

agreement the Des Moines Study Group on the ministry for the 1955 World Convention in Toronto asserted: "The authority of the minister of any church of Disciples of Christ is not the authority of an office or of a religious order or of a profession, but the authority of the Word of God which he proclaims. . . ." ⁹⁹

Disciples would agree that there is authority in the message of the preacher. Likewise, they would consent to the idea that the minister himself only possesses that power granted him by the congregation. However, in my estimation, ever since the advent of the settled ministry, the local Disciple pastor has been receiving more and more authority to the point that today the powers of a Disciple minister are similar to those of another denomination's pastor whose authority is inherent in his office. Primarily, the seat of authority resides with the local church which decides what powers if any it will delegate. In the beginning, the local churches elected a board of elders to administer and perpetuate the church. Gradually this elected board became known as the church board or the official board composed not only of elders but also deacons, deaconesses, trustees so that all elected officials were included. The official board became the legislative, policy making body of the church.

⁹⁹"Christian Ministry," 1955 World Convention, op. cit., p. 7.

And the minister became the executive, policy administrative branch of the church. Prior to the advent of the settled pastor, the elders of the church formed both the policy making and administering organs of the church. In the early years of the resident pastor, the elders still exerted much authority in the church. Often, the minister's only part in the worship service was preaching much like the practice of contemporary British Disciple Churches. Likewise, for some time the elders continued to be active overseers and callers in the community. But with the passage of time, the tendency was to grant the minister more and more of the elders' former responsibilities such as presiding over worship including the Lord's Supper, visiting the sick and shut-in, comforting the bereaved, evangelizing the unsaved, and a general overseeing of the church. With increased functions and many more responsibilities, obviously, the authority of the minister has also increased.

The rise in ministerial authority can be attributed to increased functions, to a greater appreciation and respect for the ministerial office, and the magnetism of the personality who holds the office. It is quite evident that contemporary Disciples have a much greater respect for the office of the ministry than did their forefathers. Yet, the ministerial office does not have in and of itself any authority. Along with more responsibilities the person of the minister

has enhanced the authority of the ministry. While denying any powers to the ministerial office as such, the local church has frequently granted the minister as person authority based upon his service, genuine humility, care and counsel, leadership ability, longevity with congregation, and personal magnetism.

The personality factor in relation to authority¹⁰⁰ is much more noticeable with respect to Disciple leaders beyond the local church. These leaders while representing the Church at large and being a part of the Church's total ministry received their authority not only through the greatness of their personalities but also through the influence of the positions which they held. In the early years of the Disciple movement, this kind of authority was possessed by editorial giants like Alexander Campbell, D. S. Burnett, Isaac Errett, Tolbert Fanning, Ben Franklin, David Lipscomb, Moses Lard, W. K. Pendleton, and J. W. McGarvey. Through the periodicals which these men edited and published, they exerted much influence among the brethren. No doubt many plans and programs died through lack of support from the pens of these editors. In like manner, some causes and systems were defeated because they were repudiated by Disciple periodicals. Certainly Alexander Campbell had

¹⁰⁰I do not mean an authoritarian personality.

awesome influence with the brethren which he occasionally used. The Thomas and Ferguson cases are obviously instances of Campbell's exertion of his authority.

About 1834, Dr. John Thomas of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a Disciple, began preaching and teaching reimmersion and soul sleeping. In 1835, Thomas moved to Richmond, Virginia where he recruited quite a following through his magazine, Apostolic Advocate, and his abounding enthusiasm for his cause. Through the Millennial Harbinger, Campbell called for the discipline of Thomas by the local church. But Thomas's own congregation upheld him and his views. Thus, in 1838, Campbell called on Dr. Thomas in the latter's church in Paineville, Virginia. Upon the insistence of Campbell and in agreement with Thomas, the Paineville Church censored certain of Thomas's teachings. Shortly thereafter Dr. Thomas moved to Illinois where he became the founder of the Christadelphian sect.¹⁰¹

Another illustration of Campbell's influence and authority can be seen in the Jesse Babock Ferguson fiasco. During the late 1840's and early 1850's Ferguson was the highly successful pastor of the Nashville, Tennessee church and editor of the Christian Magazine. The point of contention developed in April, 1852 when Ferguson in the Christian Magazine published his views on I Peter 3:18-20. Ferguson

¹⁰¹Garrison and DeGroot, op. cit., p. 272.

declared that the passage suggested that Christ preached to the spirits in prison in the interim of the crucifixion and the resurrection. Almost immediately Ferguson was attacked and repudiated by many Disciple leaders, especially Alexander Campbell who referred to Ferguson's teachings at this point as a "posthumous gospel."¹⁰² Again, through the pages of the Millennial Harbinger, Campbell called for the Nashville church to dismiss Ferguson but the church refused. Finally, in December, 1854, Bishop Campbell went to Nashville where he held a series of meetings for the distinct purpose of denouncing Ferguson and his teachings. Eventually, a year later through Campbell's continued insistence, the Nashville church removed Ferguson from its pulpit.

In the February, 1963, winter lectures at Christian Theological Seminary, Dr. Walter Sikes referred to the power asserted by Campbell in the above instances as "authority attained without benefit of constitution, courts, or canon law."

Likewise, in the early years of the Disciple movement similar authority was frequently granted the itinerant evangelists who went from place to place establishing churches and setting them in order. The editors and the evangelists certainly exerted much influence over several churches and

¹⁰² A. Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, Vol. II (June, 1852), pp. 313-329.

hence, for all intents and purposes, were unofficial bishops with the authority of the bishops of the post-New Testament era. Of course, this authority was of a voluntary nature as is all authority among Disciples, beyond the local level. The churches, obviously, did not have to listen to or obey the dictates of editors or evangelists. Yet, needing advice and assistance in many matters, the churches asked and received help from several outside sources.

Beside the early editors and evangelists there have been and continue to be other authoritarian figures among Disciples who fit the bishop complex. Disciple college, university, and seminary officials and professors have always possessed some influence with the churches. But unlike editors, evangelists and other authority forces, college people have not usually been directly involved in the internal affairs of the churches. Perhaps if they had been, they would have received better support for their schools. The college influence has often been of a different variety in that it has been in the placement of ministerial students in the several churches. Further, there is the influence of colleges and seminaries through their graduates and through the addresses and writings of their own personnel. However, the power and authority of the colleges with the churches has not been nearly as great as other forces.

Then, there has been the authority and power of the typically large Disciple church in the county seat town.

This was the church in the early twentieth century that had eminence and prestige. Usually the minister of such a church possessed considerable influence not only in his own church but also in the churches of the county and surrounding area. There were Peter Ainslie in Baltimore, Edgar DeWitt Jones in Detroit, P. H. Welshimer in Canton, Medbury in Des Moines and many others. These men were highly admired, respected and revered. In my opinion, it was quite natural that when a church in the vicinity had some problem, needed a minister, wanted some advice, it frequently went to the county seat or city minister for assistance. Often ministers themselves requested the counsel of the county "bishop." Thus, these outstanding ministers in strategic locations had much authority over a wide area. The power of these men waned with the advent of the state and area secretary system. When state secretaries came into existence, the power of the county seat and city ministers was usually transferred over to them. Of course, there are still several prominent Disciple ministers who exert considerable influence in their respective areas and are occasionally involved in a power struggle with the state secretary. Likewise, some of the larger and more eminent Disciple churches seldom consult or counsel with the state secretary. However, for the most part, current Disciple authority has become centralized in the state secretary who more than any other present Disciple

figure conforms to the bishop complex. More often than not the churches consult with the state secretary when in need of a minister. Obviously, through ministerial placement the state secretary can have much influence on the "theological coloring of the ministry of his state."¹⁰³ But usually the assistance and cooperation of the state secretary is beneficial to the churches. Nevertheless, as C. E. Lemmon has pointed out, there is an implicit danger in a consultation system in the tendency on the part of the state secretaries to "place a premium on conformity. They are happier recommending the man who will go along with the organization."¹⁰⁴ Hence, the minister or ministers who do not conform to the state program are not readily recommended. Of course, the degree of conformity demanded depends upon the personality of the state secretary. In more recent years the sphere of influence of the state secretary has been broadened with the enlargement of the office of state secretary to include departments of Christian education, youth, women, and men's work with appropriate staff personnel. Hence, when the local church needs assistance in any of these areas, it calls upon the state office.

There is sometimes some question of authority and "jurisdiction" over ministerial placement in areas where

¹⁰³ Lemmon, op. cit., p. 211.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

church colleges are located. Frequently, colleges and seminaries have placement officers who assign ministerial students to available churches. Of course, if the placement is to be permanent and not temporary, the churches proceed to issue a formal call to whatever student they choose in the same way as they would call a full-time minister. Occasionally, a conflict of authority arises over student placement between the state secretary and the placement officer. The problem can be and has been remedied in many situations by cooperation between these two authority figures.

However, the whole area of ministerial placement among Disciples of Christ with regard to permanent ministers, interim ministers, and student ministers has been improved by the adoption of a set of principles and procedures on "Ministerial Placement." This document which is included in the appendix of this paper was adopted by BOIAR (Committee on Brotherhood Organization and Inter-Agency Relationships of the Council of Agencies), the Interim Committee of the Council of Agencies, and the Council of Agencies in May, 1963 and circulated to all Brotherhood agencies including the United Christian Missionary Society, state societies, colleges, seminaries, city, district, area, interdenominational and ecumenical organizations for their individual approval. In essence this document sets forth some basic

procedures to be followed by Brotherhood agencies in ministerial placement. The principal responsibility is given over to state secretaries who with the assistance of the National Office of Ministerial Services are to counsel with ministers and local pulpit committees in placement. All agencies and institutions are asked to accept the document as a guide in ministerial placement. Also, a Mediation Committee, a subcommittee of BOIAR, is set up for "handling conflicts and differences in methods of procedure, or violations of agreement."¹⁰⁵

In a recent interview I had with Dr. Harlie L. Smith, president of the Board of Higher Education and member of the Interim Committee of the Council of Agencies, Dr. Smith related that the document had been approved almost unanimously by Brotherhood agencies and institutions. According to Dr. Smith those organizations which disapproved did not disapprove the entire document but only one or two sections of it.¹⁰⁶

The churches that do not cooperate with the state secretary or state society system usually grant authority to a prominent independent minister in their immediate area

¹⁰⁵ Committee on Brotherhood Organization and Inter-Agency Relationships of the Council of Agencies, "Ministerial Placement," see Appendix, p. 202.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Dr. Harlie L. Smith, President of the Board of Higher Education, June 12, 1964.

and to Bible college officials with whom they consult for their ministers. However, these congregations often possess a greater spirit of independency and local church autonomy and have a tendency to grant much less authority to outside groups and persons.

Some mention must be made of national and international agency executives such as the president of the United Christian Missionary Society, the president and executive secretary of the International Convention, the executive secretary of Unified Promotion. These executives while being highly respected and admired do not exert much influence over the local churches simply because they are not readily accessible to the local scene and situation. The persons who have exercised the most authority in the Disciples of Christ have been those who have been locally accessible and locally interested. And it must be said that correspondence and mailings of whatever magnitude do not fulfill this requirement.

Editors, evangelists, prominent county seat and city ministers, and state secretaries have been those authoritarian figures most akin to the ecclesiastical office of bishop. The authority exerted by these persons has been for the most part beneficial and benevolent. There have been a few instances in Disciple history of a tyrannical and totalitarian use of authority. However, it

is my opinion that we cannot condemn authority itself as such. It was a natural tendency for the authority to develop. No sociological entity that wished to be more than local in its outreach ever existed without some form of extra-local human authority. While we do not condemn the authority itself, we do condemn the lack of structural and organizational form which through its non-existence allowed non-accountable and non-sanctioned powers to exist.

The churches and the ministry of the Disciples need a structure of authority and power for their own protection and advancement. Disciples have developed a rather efficient and beneficial system--the office of the state secretary. All the churches need to do at this point, I believe, is to structure the office of the state secretary and of the state convention with regularized practices and procedures and delegate some real authority and powers to the office and the convention. The non-existence of such a systematic structure is readily seen in the fact that while many churches consult the state secretary in the matter of securing a minister, they seldom notify the secretary when they have decided to dismiss their minister. Either Disciples will sanction systematic authority beyond the local level, or they will continue to be plagued by the quasi, unofficial authority which they now have. A remark posed by W. T. Moore at the turn of the century is appropriate at this juncture.

Speaking of ministerial authority, Moore mused, ". . . unless I am greatly mistaken in the signs of the times, I see the shadow of a domineering clergy arising in certain quarters in the beginning of this twentieth century."¹⁰⁷

Summary

To sum up, the concept of the Christian ministry commonly held by Disciples of Christ "represents an acknowledgment of historic forms and of the principle of expediency."¹⁰⁸ Disciples have traditionally taken the ministerial forms of the New Testament and some of the interpretations and practices of the Protestant Reformation to be their norms for the ministry. Employing the New Testament offices, adopting Luther's priesthood of all believers, and making liberal use of the principle of expediency, a ministerial system has developed which is functional rather than ecclesiastical. The truth of the above statement is seen in the fact that the Disciples' ministry did not emerge out of a background of theological dogma and doctrine setting forth all propositions and postulates concerning the ministry of the Church down to the finest points. Rather the ministry of the Disciples has

¹⁰⁷W. T. Moore, The Plea of the Disciples of Christ (Chicago: The Christian Century Company, 1906), p. 48.

¹⁰⁸"The Christian Ministry," 1955 World Convention, op. cit., p. 4.

developed and continues to develop with little theological foundation resting basically on the premise of continually fulfilling the job requirements of the ministry regardless of the place, situation or point in time. Hence, in response to the Faith and Order Conference, Lund, Sweden, 1952, Disciples asserted that the minister "exercises under appointment a representative priestly function rather than holding a priestly office or standing in a priestly order."¹⁰⁹

In the creation of this functional system, as might be expected, very few Disciples until recently have given any consideration to the formulation of a formal doctrine of the ministry. Of course, the historic Disciple dislike for theology and dogma as a whole is one reason for the absence of such a doctrine. But the consequences of the absent document on the ministry have been far reaching.

First, Disciples have never fully comprehended a clear picture of the ministry. Forty years ago, Robert C. Lemon wrote in the Christian-Evangelist: "One of the reasons why we, as ministers, do not accomplish any more than we do is because we do not have a definite, clear-cut conception of our field of labor."¹¹⁰ Many Disciples in more

¹⁰⁹"A Response to Lund," The Shane Quarterly, Vol. XIV (July, 1953), p. 104.

¹¹⁰Robert C. Lemon, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. LIX (July 27, 1922), p. 932.

recent times have echoed Lemon's perspective. Disciples in their lack of understanding have given little attention and appreciation to the office of the minister and to the ministry as a whole. In this context, Don Von Hata argued: "The Disciples make too much of the minister and too little of the ministry. . . . Disciple Churches have never had a very high regard for the ministry." ¹¹¹

The absence of a definite theology in the ministry has posed a serious dilemma for Disciples in their ministerial recruitment. Hence, in 1933, The Christian-Evangelist editorialized: "But we have never generally possessed any clear conception of the function of the ministry as an office, an institution and our pastors have been haphazardly recruited and but poorly supported." ¹¹² Likewise, Dean Osborn has maintained that even when a formal statement on the ministry has been issued, it has usually been "a grudging admission of need for a sort of low grade order of Levites to do the housekeeping chores of the church; essential to be sure, but not very challenging to anyone with large abilities, certainly not to an idealistic young Christian. . . ." ¹¹³ Usually ministerial recruiters have

¹¹¹ Don Von Hata, The Scroll, Vol. XXXVII (February, 1940), p. 189.

¹¹² "The Office of the Ministry," The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. LXX (September 14, 1933), p. 1171.

¹¹³ Ronald E. Osborn, Encounter, Vol. 23 (Winter, 1962), p. 63.

endeavored to overcome the absence of a clearly, articulated doctrine on the ministry by presenting the high calling in rather general and sometimes ambiguous terms.

Another problem arising from a lack of a formulated statement on the ministry is that of authority. As has already been noted, the absence of a structured system of authority among Disciples beyond the local level has given sway to an unauthorized but authoritarian power structure particularly in the person of the state secretary. I have no quarrel with this system which is for the most part beneficial and helpful. But I wish it was properly ordained and structured by the local churches. Even in the local church, the responsibilities, functions, and authority of the minister have never been clearly defined.

However, let us hasten to say that we must not be too derogatory of Disciples at this point. For one wonders whether the early church had formulated much of a doctrine on the ministry or in fact any doctrine one hundred and fifty years after Pentecost. But at the same time a warning must be sounded. A responsible and creditable ministry requires some formal guide lines, direction, purpose, and foundation. Fortunately, in recent years a few Disciples have become quite concerned over this matter and are now attempting to persuade their brethren to give serious and thorough consideration to the whole idea of theology and church doctrine.

The recent Panel of Scholars Reports are probably the best papers ever prepared by Disciples on the doctrines of the Church. It is hoped that these papers will inspire greater appreciation and more research in all the Christian disciplines especially theology.

Besides the dislike for theology, another reason for the absence of a formal doctrine of the ministry is the traditional lack of distinction with Disciples between clergy and laity. Disciples have long held that "there is fundamentally no special distinguishing group within the congregation which is 'The Ministry.'" ¹¹⁴ In fact some Disciples still refrain from using the terms "clergy" and "laity" believing that to make such a labeling is to acknowledge a distinction. However, a distinction does exist and to pretend that it does not is pure fantasy and an illusion. But the tendency among some to ignore the obvious distinction has resulted in a narrow conception of both the clergy and the laity. As Charles E. Dietze contended, "We overemphasized the right of the layman to perform the priestly functions of the clergy and under-emphasized the responsibility of both for witnessing for Christ in their everyday tasks." ¹¹⁵ Further, Granville T. Walker has reminded

¹¹⁴W. B. Blakemore, The Scroll, Vol. XLIV (February, March, 1952), p. 149.

¹¹⁵Charles E. Dietze, The College of the Bible Quarterly, Vol. XXXIII (April, 1956), p. 2.

us that the Disciple historic role of minimizing the clergy-laity distinctions, of proclaiming far and wide the priesthood of all believers, and of failing to exalt the ministry has been one of the major causes of a generally poor program of recruitment of young men and young women for the ministry. Hence, Walker concluded that "our very conception of the ministry may defeat us!"¹¹⁶

The ministry must be exalted though not elevated to the pinnacle of superiority. It must be revered though not worshipped. It must be established though not imprisoned. Twenty years ago, F. E. Smith gave voice to a theme of which we must always be aware. He wrote, "The ministry belongs to the Church and is its most prized possession."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶Granville T. Walker, The Christian-Evangelist, Vol. 94 (June 27, 1956), p. 642.

¹¹⁷F. E. Smith, Christian Standard, Vol. LXXV (September 7, 1940), p. 883.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLICAL MINISTRY

Before beginning our study of the Biblical materials which relate to the ministry, some general statement must be made. As many commentators have pointed out, the first consideration for those who would expound a Christian doctrine of the ministry should be the articulation of a Christian doctrine of the Church. We shall assert throughout the remainder of this paper the relation of the ministry to the Church but since it is not our purpose, we shall not formulate a specific doctrine of the Church per se. At this juncture we will declare our conviction that the following Biblical and historical data proclaim that the ministry is not the Church but rather it is a part of the Church; under the Church, and not apart from the Church.

Anthony Tyrrell Hanson is justified in criticizing theologians who "have tended to read into the New Testament their own theories of the ministry, theories already formed on a priori grounds."¹ Further, Hanson has contended that

¹Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, The Pioneer Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 11.

"the New Testament does not contain the sort of doctrine of the ministry which it has been required to give--that is, a doctrine which will enable us to pass judgment on the various forms of the ministry possessed by the Church today, . . ."² However, this is not to say that the New Testament and the Old Testament as well do not have a doctrine of the ministry. They do. But we must beware lest we consciously or unconsciously use the Scriptures to fit our own preconceived ministerial forms.

Likewise, we must remember that the Bible is a proclamation of God's dealings and relationships with his people and not a manual on church order. In particular, the New Testament was written to declare the redemption and salvation of Jesus Christ and to propagate the Christian Faith and not to establish any rigid organizational structure. Finally any reconstruction of the Hebrew ministry and the early Christian ministry must rest upon, as John Knox maintained, "the implications of a very few scattered passages in a very meager literature."³

The Ministry of Israel

With these preceding thoughts in mind we now go

²Ibid., p. 12.

³John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, ed. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 3.

to the Scriptures to trace the ministry from the Old Testament, through that of Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament and so across the centuries to our time.

The most significant element of the Hebrew ministry is the calling of the whole nation to service and ministry. All Israel is called and the individual ministries are a part of and on behalf of the whole nation. Yet this aspect of the Old Testament ministry is a later development that takes form in the post-exilic writings of Deutero-Isaiah. Prior to the exile, the Hebrews believed that they were a chosen people--chosen by God to proclaim and to worship the one and only true God--but the servant element expressed by Deutero-Isaiah is absent. Although the covenant relationship with God seems to have been established with Abraham, "No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him,"⁴ it was not until after the Exodus that the conviction of the Hebrews that they were the chosen people in a covenant relationship with Yahweh was given pre-eminence in their law and religious institutions. Thus we read in Deuteronomy, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God

⁴Gen. 18:19.

has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth."⁵

The conditions of the covenant were that the Hebrews were to receive prosperity, preservation, and security in return for which they were to worship Yahweh and conform to the Law. Obviously, there are some elements of service contained in the Torah but these are secondary. First, the Hebrews must worship Yahweh. They are to "worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God, . . ."⁶

With Deutero-Isaiah the clarion call of a new age is sounded. Not only are the Jews chosen as servants but also they are servants with an apostolic purpose--the light to the Gentiles.

It is too light a thing that you should be
my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the preserved of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the
end of the earth.⁷

The Servant poems (Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53) written by Deutero-Isaiah have been interpreted in a variety of way. The Servant may be interpreted as

⁵Deut. 7:6; also, 14:2.

⁶Exodus 34:14.

⁷Isa. 49:6.

referring to (1) the coming Messiah; (2) the writer himself; (3) another prophet of the era; (4) the whole Hebrew nation; (5) the Remnant of Israel. I am inclined to believe that these Servant Songs represent the mission of the faithful Remnant--that group of believing and witnessing Jews who after the Exile took upon themselves the proclamation of God's nature to Israel and to the Gentiles. Furthermore, the Servant passages have their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. T. W. Manson remarked that "in Jesus we have the actualization of the Remnant ideal in the Old Testament, the picture of the Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah; . . ."⁸

Some of the New Testament writers probably identified with the Remnant of Deutero-Isaiah the Christian Church and in particular the Apostolic mission of the Remnant was thought of as being transferred over to the Church.⁹ However, it is Paul who was most concerned with the transition from Israel to Christianity. In the Galatian letter, Paul traces the lineage of the Remnant from Abraham through the Remnant to the Jewish-Gentile church of Paul's day. Endeavoring to assert the primacy of faith over law, Paul reports that from Moses to Christ the line is suspended. Yet, the

⁸T. W. Manson, The Church's Ministry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948), p. 19.

⁹John 8 and I Peter 1.

apostle was not too rigid at this point. Because of their relevance, the suspension was lifted temporarily during the age of the prophets. Thus, we have continuity from the Old Testament to the New Testament in the Servant attitude and mission of the Jewish Remnant transformed and re-established in the early Church with its apostolic perspective.

Essentially the ministry of the Hebrew community was characterized by the two functions of priest and prophet. There were other ministerial positions among the Hebrews but they were secondary roles. In the earliest examples of the ministry in the Old Testament the functions of priest and prophet are combined. Abraham, Moses and Samuel are both prophets and priests. Certainly Abraham is not a prophet in the manner of Moses or Elijah but yet he performs the role of the prophet in that he is "the man to whom God reveals his purpose."¹⁰ In the earliest social patterns of ancient Israel the priestly class did not exist. Any Israelite man could present offerings to God although the responsibility usually fell to the eldest son or a tribal leader. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as Genesis tells us were their own priests.¹¹ But by the time of Samuel the priestly class had become for the most part

¹⁰James D. Smart, The Rebirth of Ministry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 51.

¹¹Gen. 22:13; 26:25; 31:54.

the ministers of Yahweh in Israel. Thus we read of the calling of the ancient Levites to the priesthood: "For the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand and minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for ever."¹²

Yet even as late as the monarchial period, all of the priestly functions of Yahweh worship were not enacted by the Hebrew priesthood. The kings of Israel, David and Solomon in particular, exercised priestly functions even at such high moments as bearing the Ark up to Jerusalem and dedicating the Temple.¹³

The chief responsibilities of the Hebrew priesthood were the general ordering of Hebrew worship, the offering of sacrifices, the teaching and enforcement whenever necessary of the Torah. It is certainly an oversimplification to suppose the majority of the Hebrew priests to be corrupt and immoral. On the contrary, when Hebrew history is considered in its totality, probably only a small percentage of the entire priestly class was infamous and unfaithful to Yahweh.

With the advent of the eighth century B.C. prophets, we note the prophetic division of the ministerial functions of Israel. Many of the prophets were laymen as contrasted with the Hebrew priesthood which was the official clergy

¹²Deut. 18:5. ¹³II Sam. 6:12-19; I Kings 3:15; I Kings 8.

of ancient Israel. Elisha was a Jordan Valley farmer while Amos was a herdsman of Tekoa. Likewise, Micah was the prophet from the countryside. While many of the observations of Hosea like that of Amos were of a rustic and agrarian nature, yet in his book Hosea reveals some intimate relations with the priesthood.¹⁴ In fact, Ezekiel was a priest and probably both Isaiah and Jeremiah were reared in priestly families. But their close relationship with the priesthood did not hinder them from almost constantly calling for the reform of that ministerial order. The prophets were called by Yahweh to a special ministry of renewal and reconciliation. They were called to reveal God's purpose and will to the Hebrews and to warn them of the impending judgment and doom for those who refused to obey Yahweh and his commandments.

We now turn the page from Malachi to Matthew.

The New Testament Ministry

The ministry of Jesus is rather significant since his ministry--what he said, what he was, and what he did--became the model for all subsequent ministries within the Church. Jesus bridged the gulf between the Old and New Testaments. Jesus through the example of his life reformed

¹⁴Hosea 4:6-14.

and renewed the whole idea of ministry in that while the Jewish priesthood was not significantly changed by Jesus yet the ministry of the Apostles and the Church re-established ideals long since forgotten and neglected by the Jewish ministry.

Jesus proclaimed that a new age was at hand, that the kingdom of God was coming to earth. The Lord called men to repentance with the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Above and beyond all, the ministry of Jesus was one of reconciliation. The Nazarene called men to an encounter with themselves through self-examination and to an encounter with the Father in reconciliation.

In order to preach the forgiveness of God and the blessings of the coming kingdom, Jesus took upon himself the form of a servant. Thus, it is in Jesus that the whole idea of Deutero-Isaiah's Suffering Servant is fulfilled. He was despised and rejected. He did bear our griefs and take upon himself our sorrows. Finally, he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our sins.¹⁵ In the beginning of his Gospel, Luke pictured Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth proclaiming that his mission was to fulfill the servant's mission as described by Deutero-Isaiah in Isaiah 61:1-3. Likewise, there is John's witness of Jesus girding himself with a towel to perform the task

¹⁵Isa. 53.

of the lowest servant of the household as he proceeded to wash the feet of his disciples on the last night of his life. The servant of man is the very center of the essence of the ministry of Jesus. He was "servant of all; servile to none--and a liberty of the Spirit that does not degenerate into license."¹⁶ Furthermore, Jesus endeavored to pass along to his disciples that their ministry like his must have the form of a servant as its nature and norm. Finally, Jesus gave the ultimate expression of servant and sacrifice as he surrendered his life on the Cross. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."¹⁷

As Jesus became the embodiment of the Suffering Servant, the basic nature and theme of the New Testament and early church ministry is characterized by one central ideal, servant. "Thus it is clear from Scripture," wrote Daniel Jenkins, "that the ministry of the Church is, like that of its Lord, in the form of a servant and that it loses its meaning whenever that is forgotten."¹⁸ It is really Paul who lifted up the whole idea of servant as being descriptive of the Christian life. No doubt the Apostle's thoughts and writings on the ministry and

¹⁶Manson, op. cit., p. 32. ¹⁷John 15:13.

¹⁸Daniel Jenkins, The Gift of Ministry (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 23.

the service of the whole church are reflective of his dominant image of Christ as one who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. and being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."¹⁹ Further, Paul reported to the Corinthians that all ministry is the acceptance of the same lowly service which Christ came to perform and that Christians as servants minister for Christ's sake. "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."²⁰

The New Testament writers basically employed two words to express the idea of servant, doulos and diakonos. Essentially doulos means "servant" or "slave" although it is more often translated "servant." While our English word "deacon" is derived from diakonos, its basic meaning is "servant" or "minister." John Knox has pointed out that doulos primarily denoted a status or relationship in that a slave is the property of someone whereas diakonos although status may be implied emphasizes a function--the function of service.²¹ Also, it should be noted as David Noel Freedman disclosed in his article "The Slave of Yahweh,"

¹⁹Phil. 2:7-8.

²⁰II Cor. 4:5.

²¹Knox, op. cit., p. 2.

that the basic Hebraic concept of "servant" or "work" denotes function and not status.²²

The contemporary connotations associated with the idea of servant and service were much the same in the time of Jesus. Servant was commonly held to be a rather passive, menial, and second-class role in life. But Jesus gave the servant image a new dimension and a wider horizon when he declared, ". . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."²³ With these words and with the example of his life, Jesus radically transformed the commonly accepted concept of service into a "joyful, active, voluntary submission to a reality so ultimate for man in meaning and in concern that it calls forth the total dedication of all that a man is and has in its service."²⁴ Also, Jesus added another element to the concept of servant, equality. Master and slave are equal. There is no such thing as first-class or second-class citizens in the Kingdom. All men are equal; all men are servants on the same level.

Jesus called all men to follow him and become servants. All men were called in equality to usher in the coming Kingdom and to be a light to all nations. Like

²²David Noel Freedman, "The Slave of Yahweh," quoted in Arnold B. Come, Agents of Reconciliation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 80.

²³Mark 10:43-44. ²⁴Come, op. cit., p. 46.

the faithful Remnant before it, the Church was and is "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, . . ."²⁵ There is no distinction either between the leaders and the led in the teachings of Jesus or in the writings of the early church. As William Robinson affirmed, "All Christians were called to the ministry, whether they were tent-makers or slaves."²⁶ Time and again Paul appealed to the analogy of the physical body in expressing the need for every member of the body of Christ to manifest his individual ministry that unity might be realized and that the Church might fulfill its mission to the world. "For the body does not consist of one member but of many."²⁷ Using the same comparison, the author of the Ephesian letter contended that "when each part [of the body] is working properly, [it] makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love."²⁸ Every Christian was called to a common ministry of love and reconciliation. Every Christian through his baptism received his ordination to the

²⁵I Peter 2:9.

²⁶William Robinson, The College of the Bible Quarterly, Vol. XXXII, (July, 1955), p. 18.

²⁷I Cor. 12:14; also, Rom. 12:4.

²⁸Eph. 4:16. Concerning the authorship of Ephesians, we cannot assume that the Epistle came directly from Paul's pen. In the light of recent scholarship which from both external and internal evidence excludes Pauline authorship, one cannot ascribe the Epistle to the Apostle. However, since Ephesians contains many basic Pauline concepts and ideas we can and will assume that it was written by a disciple who thoroughly understood the mind of Paul. Hanson, op. cit., p.38.

ministry of Jesus Christ.²⁹

Although the clergy-laity distinction cannot be found in the New Testament, the words "clergy" and "laity" are derived from two Greek words used in the New Testament in reference to the church. However, the words never refer to a division of the body of Christ into two groups or classes. Kleros from which the word "clergy" is derived is always used, with one exception, in the sense of "allotment" or "inheritance." Never does kleros have the meaning of "magistrate" or "priest" which it later received in the development of the clergy-laity separation in the post-New Testament period. For the most part, kleros in the New Testament stands for the "inheritance" received from God by the whole Christian community.³⁰ The one notable exception to the above meanings of kleros is found in I Peter 5:3 where elders are exhorted in the exercise of their office to act, "not as domineering over those in your charge [kleros], but [as] being examples to the flock." In this context the kleros was the flock over whom the elders were given charge. But none of these meanings carry any suggestion of a church office.

The word "laity" is related to the Greek term laos

²⁹ Joseph M. Smith, Encounter, Vol 23 (Winter, 1962) p. 83.

³⁰ Col. 1:12; also Act 26:18 although kleros is usually translated "place" in this verse.

which means "people." It is used in the New Testament to refer to the whole people of God and never to a separate, somewhat lower class or grade of people within the Church. Arnold Come has suggested that the clergy-laity distinction with which kleros and laos are often associated had its origin in the Graeco-Roman political environment in which the "government was divided between the kleros, or 'magistrate,' and the laos, or 'people.'" The kleros "were those who possessed wisdom, were trained, and had power to act" while the laos "were ignorant, uneducated, and so were to submit passively to direction."³¹

While there obviously was a common ministry in the early church in which all Christians served and ministered, yet at the same time we must be aware of the fact that everyone did not share equally in all ministerial functions. Writing to the Romans, Paul asserted, " . . . we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, . . ."³² Thus, we are now brought to the matter of the special ministry within the early church. Along with the common ministry there was also a special ministry. In this vein, Smart has maintained, "That there is need of a special ministry, called of God and set apart for a special

³¹ Come, op. cit., p. 88.

³² Rom. 12:4.

service of God within his Church, stands forth clearly in Scriptures."³³ But it can also be stated that while both a special and common ministry exist and have being in the New Testament, yet no clear line of distinction and separation can be found anywhere in Scripture. In the early church the common ministry and the special ministry belong together and cannot be separated. Each supplemented the other.

Divine, special calls are not unusual in the Bible. There was the initial calling of Abraham to be the father and leader of a great nation. There was the experience of Moses in the midst of the burning bush. There was the summoning by God of the boy Samuel to service. Likewise, there was the moving experience of young Isaiah in the Temple "in the year that King Ussiah died." Also, there was the calling of the Twelve by Jesus to a significant ministry. And then there was the encounter of Saul of Tarsus with the Lord on the road to Damascus. More than any of the other apostles Paul was acutely conscious of his divine calling. Probably because he was not one of the original Twelve and because he once persecuted the Christians, Paul may have been branded a false apostle by some Christians especially the Judaizers in Jerusalem.

³³Smart, op. cit., p. 11.

But Paul responded in his letter to Galatians, "Paul, an apostle--not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, . . ."³⁴ Again, speaking to the Roman church, the Apostle contended, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God . . ."³⁵

Special ministries are always related to divine gifts in the New Testament. Hence, Franklin M. Segler insisted, "Involved in the divine call to the ministry is the recognition of the divine gift of ministry. Only one who has received the 'gift' (dorea) of God's Spirit is qualified to speak for God."³⁶ In each of the listings of special ministries, Paul and the Ephesian author both stressed the fact that ministry is the gift of God through the grace given in Christ. "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; . . ."³⁷ Likewise, we read in Ephesians, "But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."³⁸

³⁴Gal. 1:1.

³⁵Rom. 1:1.

³⁶Franklin M. Segler, A Theology of Church and Ministry (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), p. 45.

³⁷Rom. 12:6.

³⁸Eph. 4:7.

These gifts or ministries or functions were that some should be:

I Corinthians 12:28	Romans 12:6-8	Ephesians 4:11
apostles		apostles
prophets	prophecy	prophets
		evangelists
teachers	teaching	pastors
workers of miracles	service	teachers
healers	exhortation	
helpers	contributing	
administrators	aid	
speaking in tongues	acts of mercy	

Several conclusions have been and can be reached from these lists. First, it can be established especially from the passages that are definitely Pauline that every Christian possesses some special ministry whether it be the apostleship or given to acts of mercy. The Ephesian list may suggest a development that has taken place in the church in that the ecstatic gifts of Paul are omitted in favor of the more common special ministries of the Church. While it seems that every follower had some special ministry to fulfill, probably the gifts of apostleship and prophecy were held in a somewhat higher rank than the other ministries. The mere order of the listings gives rise to such a conclusion.³⁹ However, these "higher" gifts gave their owners no superiority in the sight of God although they called for added responsibility.⁴⁰ All are equal before God. All

³⁹Also see I Cor. 14:5.

⁴⁰Luke 12:48.

Christians are called by God to some ministry according to their God-given ability.

Then, there is the ecclesiastical call or the summons of the Christian community to service. In this relationship the Church endeavors to determine how the gifts and abilities of its individual members can be used for the "best possible advancement of the life of the church in Christ."⁴¹ Perhaps the best example of the call of the Church in the early Christian groupings would be the local selection of administrative officers such as bishops, elders and deacons. Also, there is good reason to assume from I Corinthians 12 that the Corinthian church may have made some determination in reference to the ecstatic gifts especially the speaking in tongues. Again in the fourteenth chapter of the same Epistle, Paul, endeavoring to overcome some of the obvious confusion in the church at Corinth, recommends the subjection of the more "spiritual" gifts to the discretion of the brethren. ". . . the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. . . . If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized."⁴² Thus, it is apparent

⁴¹ Come, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴²I Cor. 14:32-33; 37-38.

that at least at Corinth the body of believers, the church, was to make some determination as to the validity of gifts and to their employment. Such subjection was required "for the common good,"⁴³ "that there may be no discord in the body,"⁴⁴ and that "all things should be done decently and in order."⁴⁵

As we relate to the recognition of gifts and ministries by the Church, some consideration must be given to the subject of ordination in the New Testament.

The instances in the early church of the laying on of hands which we have come to call "ordination" can be divided into two general groups. First, there was a type of general ordination for many of the early Christians in which the Holy Spirit was imparted through the laying on of hands. Baptism is sometimes related to this ceremony but not always. Sometimes baptism preceded the laying on of hands and the coming of the Holy Spirit as in the case of the first Christians at Samaria and Ephesus. But in the conversion experience of Paul, Ananias first laid his hands on him, then Paul received the Holy Spirit and was baptized. In the instance of Cornelius and the Gentiles at Caesarea, they received the Holy Spirit and then were baptized. However, there is no mention there or in Peter's declaration

⁴³I Cor. 12:7.

⁴⁴I Cor. 12:25.

⁴⁵I Cor. 14:40.

on Pentecost of the laying on of hands. But in the three places when it is mentioned, the laying on of hands always preceded the gift of the Holy Spirit. Except in the case of Paul, the laying on of hands seems to have been employed to confirm a previous baptism. However, the few passages in which this general ordination was used do not at all indicate universality or uniformity either in meaning or in practice.

The second type of ordination found in the New Testament is the laying on of hands in the setting apart of men for a special ministry in the Church. Again, as was true with the general ordination above, the ordination for a special function was only practiced in a very limited way. We read of the setting aside of the Seven to aid and assist the apostles in Christian service, of the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries, of the consecration of Timothy for the ministry of the Church, and of the warning addressed to Timothy not to be "hasty in the laying on of hands."⁴⁶ From these few passages we can conclude that there was no regular and rigid system of ordination in the New Testament for the setting apart of Christians for special functions. It would appear that the ceremony of the laying on of hands in the early church was a formal expression of the church's act of recognition and of the individual's response of subjection. However, there

⁴⁶I Tim. 5:22.

was no uniformity as to the ministry or gift to be recognized by the church or subjected to the church. Sometimes the function was a general responsibility of service as in the setting apart of the Seven to care for the poor. Likewise, the task was sometimes of a more specific nature as in the appointing of Paul and Barnabas. Timothy seems to have been ordained to a general ministry within the local church although we cannot be certain of the unspecified "gift of God" which he possessed. Obviously the early church did not employ the formal act of ordination for the same types of ministries, everywhere and all the time. From the New Testament record we can only conclude that ordination was seldom used in the light of the many, many ministerial functions of the early church where there is no report of the laying on of hands. Further, it seems to be apparent that ordination was only used when the church felt the necessity of giving its spiritual force and authority to a specific responsibility or when the church wished to guarantee that all things would be done "decently and in order."

Probably the early Christians adopted ordination from Judaism where the act was established in the Torah and continued in the later Jewish synagogues. The rite was practiced among the Jews in imitation of the consecration of Joshua by Moses.⁴⁷ There is a close resemblance to the

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Num. 27:18, 23; Deut. 34:9.

anointing of the Levites to the priesthood and the laying on of hands upon Paul and Barnabas.⁴⁸ Basically in the Jewish community the act of ordination, the laying on of hands could be and often was performed by an individual rabbi acting on behalf of the religious community although the elders of the people occasionally assisted in the ceremony. The rite symbolized the giving of spiritual authority and power from a community to an individual or group of individuals who were to serve as representatives of the community. Ordination did not grant any special authority or grace that was not already a part of the community. Likewise, it did not give any special or personal status or privilege.⁴⁹

All of these meanings from Judaism are associated with the early church practice of ordination. As many Biblical scholars have maintained, the laying on of hands did not bestow any special gifts or power upon the individual. William J. Moore argued, "Where the 'laying on of hands' occurred, it was not interpreted as conferring special gifts and power to an office holder."⁵⁰ This seems to be a valid statement. We have already established that the natural ability of a person in the New Testament appears to be accentuated and intensified in the encounter with the Holy

⁴⁸Num. 8:11, 14; Acts 13:2. ⁴⁹Come, op. cit., p. 110.

⁵⁰William J. Moore, New Testament Concept of the Ministry (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1956), p. 79.

Spirit and becomes very evidently the gift of God. In all but a very few instances there is no record of the laying on of hands. But the ordination of Timothy raises some questions. The following are the passages which describe that ordination: "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you."⁵¹ "Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands."⁵² There are several ways in which these passages can be interpreted. But at any rate there seems to be some correlation between the laying on of hands and the reception of God's gift. At least the ordination act was the time and place at which the gift was manifested. We might say that the Pastoral Epistles display a later development in the Church. Perhaps at the point of ordination the Holy Spirit came upon Timothy and he became aware of his gift and his responsibility. However, not too much stock can be placed in this isolated situation except to state again that there appears to be some relationship between the imposition of hands and the cognizance of the divine gift.

Another question concerning ordination in the New Testament is frequently posed: Does ordination in the early church divide the Christian community into two distinct

⁵¹I Tim. 4:14.

⁵²II Tim. 1:6.

groups similar to the clergy-laity division of our day? Arnold Come has insisted that the ordination of the early Christian community "clearly did not divide the church into two distinct classes, clergy and laity."⁵³ There are hardly enough instances of ordination to make much of a judgment at this point. But we can agree with Come that there were certainly no distinctive groups drawn by the laying on of hands. Yet, apparently there was some division as these individuals were separated and set apart from the rest of the community in function to fulfill some specific responsibilities. However, the separation was not an expression of superiority but a manifestation of the diversity of gifts.

There is a meaningful principle that underlies the whole New Testament practice of ordination that needs to be studied. It seems that the early church employed the laying on of hands only when the times and conditions sufficiently warranted such ordination. There is a principle of expediency and fluidity in the New Testament practice of ordination that cannot be overlooked. Accepting this thesis, we can argue that the Church does not necessarily have to ordain to the same offices or functions throughout its history. This means that when the specific functions of any office cease to exist, it is certainly highly

⁵³Come, op. cit., p. 113.

artificial for the church to continue ordaining persons to that meaningless office. And when we endeavor to fabricate new responsibilities for the office just for the sake of dignifying it and giving ourselves some justification for ordaining individuals to the office, we are guilty of a gross misunderstanding of the meaning of ordination. Moreover, as Come concluded, "The medieval development of a theology of ordination that absolutized and finalized definite forms and meanings of ordination must be judged to have been a serious mistake."⁵⁴

The General Ministries

Now let us give some consideration to what may be called the more general ministries of the New Testament--the apostles, bishops, deacons, elders. The first distinguishable ministry in the early church was that of the apostles. The apostles were the first ministers of the early Christian community not only in the sense of being the earliest but also in that they were the "most responsible and most revered."⁵⁵ This view was held by Luke in both his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles. The primacy of the apostles is implied in the other Gospels. Also, Paul obviously cherished a similar viewpoint which

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 114.

⁵⁵Knox, op. cit., p. 4.

was expressed in his ardent defense of his own apostleship and in his listing of the ministries of the Church.⁵⁶

The term "apostle" meaning "one set out" could have been applied to many if not all the early disciples and it did occasionally take on that more general meaning.⁵⁷ But for the most part it was applied to those who had had an intimate relationship with the ministry and resurrection experience of Jesus. Besides the original Twelve, only Paul and possibly James, the brother of Jesus, and Barnabas are considered to have been apostles. Paul insisted that his encounter and experience on the Damascus Road qualified him to be an apostle and the Church ever since the Apostolic era has always maintained his apostleship. The apostleship of James is somewhat more questionable although Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and other Christians have always accepted his apostleship. Paul implied both in Galatians and I Corinthians that James was one of the select apostles.⁵⁸ Paul made much the same implication in the case of Barnabas.⁵⁹ It is maintained by some that the early Jewish-Christian church at Jerusalem adopted the High Priestly hierarchy from the Jews and that James was

⁵⁶I Cor. 12:28.

⁵⁷Acts 14:4; II Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25.

⁵⁸Gal. 1:19; I Cor. 15:7.

⁵⁹I Cor. 9:6.

the first High Priest.⁶⁰ Tradition holds that James was the first bishop of the church in Jerusalem. It is believed that James was the leader of the Jerusalem church in the capacity of apostle and bishop or high priest until he was supposedly stoned to death at the instigation of Annas, a renegade high priest in 62 A.D.

There is probably more basis for regarding the apostle as filling an office than any of the other New Testament ministries. As we have seen, all Christians could fulfill some ministry in the early church but only a few could be apostles. The specific qualifications for an apostle were that he had "seen the Lord" and been commissioned by him. "It is simple historical fact," maintained Smart, "that no one in all time has stood in the same relation with Jesus Christ as the original apostles."⁶¹ From these facts we must conclude that their function as apostles was not transferable. Their message, their mission, their ministry can be shared by every Christian in every age, but not their apostleship.

The primary function of the apostles was the preaching of the gospel, the proclamation that "God, when the time had fully come," sent his Son into the world to redeem

⁶⁰ Arnold Ehrhardt, The Apostolic Succession (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p. 5.

⁶¹ Smart, op. cit., p. 34.

the world and to fulfill the Old Covenant. Further, they bore witness to the new creation established in the death and resurrection of Christ. The apostles were commissioned to go to all nations, to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach. The apostleship certainly possessed an itinerant character. We do not know where most of the apostles journeyed. The travels of Paul are obvious. Peter probably went to Rome and John may have gone to Ephesus. Fulfilling the Lord's commission meant the establishment of churches which implied the duty and authority of supervision.⁶²

It is apparent through the writings of Paul that the apostles appointed the first leaders in the churches which they formed, provided the basis for Christian teaching and doctrine, and pronounced discipline when necessary upon wayward believers. The authority of the apostles was assumed temporarily by local leadership during the absence of the apostles. With the death of the apostles that local authority became permanent.

Also, the apostles seem to have been endowed with a power to perform signs, wonders, and miracles. There was the instance of Peter and John healing the lame beggar at the gate of the temple.⁶³ Likewise, there was the healing and restoration of the sick at Ephesus by Paul.⁶⁴ Such powers,

⁶²Knox, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶³Acts 3. Also Acts 14:3. ⁶⁴Acts 19:11-12.

Paul insisted, were the "signs of a true apostle" which "were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works."⁶⁵ From this statement and from the evidence of the New Testament, it appears that such power resided only in the apostles in the early Church. Moreover, while the authority of the apostles was ultimately assumed by others, their supernatural power seems to have died with them.

The apostles formed the first ministry of the Church and established the pattern of ministry for all Christians for all time everywhere. And it is to that pattern that all Christians succeed. Inclusive in the apostolic ministry, as Manson has maintained, are basically three things: "the need of the world, the call of Christ, and the tradition of his ministry in the flesh . . . throughout the world. And, so far as I can see, it is the Church that succeeds to these things."⁶⁶

Can a line of distinction be drawn between the "charismatic" or Spirit-given ministry and the "institutional" ministry of the early church as some scholars have suggested? By the "charismatic" ministry is meant apostles, prophets, teachers, and the more ecstatic gifts mentioned

⁶⁵ II Cor. 12:12. Also, Rom. 15:18-19.

⁶⁶ Manson, op. cit., p. 55.

by Paul. Under the "institutional" ministry we would include apostles, bishops, elders, and deacons. But John Knox has concluded that "if such a distinction was made by others in the primitive period--which seems rather dubious--it certainly was not made by Paul."⁶⁷ While neither Paul nor any of the other New Testament commentators made any differentiation, nevertheless, I believe a slight but evident distinction did exist.

As we have already asserted, the apostles formed a ministerial order that was their own. They were first both in the "charismatic" and "institutional" ministries. The ministry of the apostles possessed an itinerant character. The "charismatic" ministry which appears to have been both local and universal in scope was directed more toward the pastoral, instructional and nurturing functions of the early church. The third ministry--the "institutional"--was much more local and was directed toward the organizational structure of the church. "It is clear," Come argued, "that there was organizational leadership that was distinct from ministerial structures."⁶⁸ Yet, as we shall see there was an overlapping between these latter two ministries which prohibits the formulation of a real clear-cut distinction.

⁶⁷Knox, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶⁸Come, op. cit., p. 90.

In the main, these ministries are directed in the areas which we have designated but occasionally they do cross the line and serve in the other ministry.

To care for the institutional functions of the church and to make sure that things were done "decently and in order," the several congregations appointed bishops or elders and deacons. Some scholars tended to differentiate between bishops and elders contending that elder was an earlier and more inclusive term under which the term bishop was subsequently classified. Knox has remarked that where the two terms are synonymous, the word episkopos (bishop) was probably used to make the meaning of presbyteros (elder) more intelligible to the Gentiles.⁶⁹ Obviously, presbyteros was used in the New Testament much more frequently than episkopos and when used episkopos was directed to the Gentiles as in Philippians and the Pastoral Epistles. But when employed in the New Testament, especially in Acts, presbyteros most of the time referred specifically to the elders of the Jerusalem church who probably adopted the Jewish custom of a council of elders.⁷⁰ While presbyteros may have been a Jewish expression and episkopos may have been Gentile, the two terms appear to possess identical functions and, hence, we shall refer to them synonymously. In the first chapter of Titus they are connected and interrelated.

⁶⁹Knox, op. cit., p. 21.

⁷⁰In Acts, eight of the ten references to the Christian presbyteros refer to the Jerusalem elders.

In the beginning, the elders were appointed by the apostles who founded the several churches. Relating to the activities of Paul and Barnabas, Luke wrote, "And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed."⁷¹ Later, each congregation probably chose their own elders and deacons. There has always been some question as to the place of elders and deacons in the order of ministerial functions or gifts in the early church. While neither Paul nor the Ephesian writer mentioned elders or deacons in their lists of ministerial gifts from Christ, the Apostle did list administrators and helpers which seem to have been the chief duties of elders and deacons respectively. Further, there is no indication that any organizational leadership was conferred only on certain kinds of ministries (apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, etc.). Nor is there any mention that the possessors of these ministerial gifts were automatically included in the eldership or the deaconship. Surely Paul was aware of elders and deacons and of their functions and responsibilities. Certainly he would have named them to his ministerial enumerations if he thought they belonged there. Does this mean that Paul did not consider the duties of elders and deacons to be spiritual gifts? No! On the contrary, the Apostle did

⁷¹Acts 14:23. Also, Titus, 1:5.

hold the eldership and deaconship in high regard. But here as in the case of the apostles we are not considering just individual functions which the ministerial listings are but rather we are relating to an office in which several of these functions might have been included. Certainly by the end of the second century the office of bishop was almost completely inclusive of all ministerial responsibilities. But even in the New Testament era there was a development in that direction.

At first, no doubt the principal duties of elders and deacons were strictly administrative in nature. They had been selected for their administrative gifts of wisdom, efficiency, tact, planning. Living in the contemporary church where administration and organization often seem to be awesome tasks, we are prone to picture the "paper work" of the early church as being a small matter. But probably it was a rather large responsibility. The elders and deacons had to be constantly setting up times and places for the meeting of the fellowship. The church had to be informed of the impending visit of an apostle or of some other Christian leader such as a prophet or teacher. Likewise, there were the letters from the apostles and fellow Christians and churches to be publicly read and answered. Perhaps a member of the local congregation was planning to visit a church abroad and needed a letter of introduction.

Then, there were crises that arose from time to time. There was the question of the good faith or true doctrine of a visiting Christian. There was a legal dispute between two members of the church and some decision had to be made. There were the matters of discipline within the fellowship concerning morals and beliefs. There were the situations of need within the community, the widows, the orphans, the aged, the hungry, the sick. Perhaps an offering had to be taken for Christians in need in other places such as the saints in Jerusalem.⁷²

In the beginning the congregation in assembly probably decided in most of these cases. But with more and more precedents being established, the eldership made more decisions themselves. With the passage of time, pastoral tasks and those of presiding at the worship of the church fell also to the eldership. The writer of James exhorted those who were sick to "call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; . . ."⁷³ Much the same idea is found in I Peter where elders are charged to tend the flock of God, "not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock."⁷⁴ Also, it is likely that the elders

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Knox, op. cit., p. 11.

⁷³James 5:14. ⁷⁴I Peter 5:2-3.

frequently presided over the Eucharist and at the service of Christian baptism. Likewise, being a leader and prominent figure in the congregation, probably the elder came to be looked upon as a prophet and teacher. All that I have portrayed as being a part of the office of elder may not have occurred in the first century but at least the developmental process did begin in the New Testament era.

The responsibilities of deacons were much the same as those of elders. They were to assist the eldership in the business of the Church. The Seven chosen early in the history of the Church to serve the needs of the brethren are often thought of as being the first deacons. Paul directed the Corinthian Christians to "be subject" to the "household of Stephanas" who have "devoted themselves to the service [diakonia] of the saints."⁷⁵ Stephanas has frequently been characterized as a deacon. Although Paul was quite explicit in one of his more extreme moments insisting that "women should keep silence in the churches,"⁷⁶ we must not assume that all the ministers in the Apostolic Age were men. In Romans, Phoebe is described as a diakonos or deacon of the church at Cenchreae. In the same sixteenth chapter of Romans "Mary" is characterized as having "worked hard among you," and Tryphaena and Tryphosa are referred to as "those workers in the Lord." These Christian women were

⁷⁵I Cor. 16:15-16. ⁷⁶I Cor. 14:34.

in effect deaconesses. There can be no doubt but that women contributed mightily to the ministry of the early church. Probably they visited and cared for the sick, comforted the bereaved, contributed to the needs of the saints everywhere. Likewise, women served in other roles as well. Priscilla was likely a prophet or teacher.⁷⁷ Again Luke spoke of the four unmarried daughters of Philip, the evangelist, and described them as prophetesses at Caesarea.⁷⁸

The qualifications for elders and deacons are firmly stated in the Pastoral Epistles.⁷⁹ The declaration of qualifications provided the several congregations with a helpful guide in their selection of elders and deacons.

It is likely that the elders and deacons were local officers since they were appointed in each congregation for leadership in that particular community. Further, it seems that in most congregations there was a plurality of elders and deacons. The number of these officers depended upon the size and needs of each church. Thus, in most instances we can say that there was a council of elders who with the deacons comprised the organizational leadership of the church.

⁷⁷Acts 18:26.

⁷⁸Acts 21:9.

⁷⁹I Tim. 3:2-12; Titus 1:5-9.

What was the purpose of the New Testament ministry which we have pictured? The task of the ministry of the early church was basically two-fold: to preach and proclaim the Gospel to the world-at-large and to continually manifest it within the borders of the Christian community. The early ministry was called to convert the heathen and to edify the saints. This mission was very succinctly stated in the Ephesian letter. The ministry was "for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, . . ."⁸⁰ Hence, the chief responsibility of the ministry was to equip the saints for the work of ministry and to build the Church. Also, to use Come's terminology, the ministry of the early church was one of reconciliation. It was an initial reconciliation to the non-Christian and a constant reconciliation to the Christian. But there is no suggestion in the New Testament of the ministry being able to perform any tasks which the Church as a whole cannot do. In fact, the ministry and the Church are identical although some are set apart for specific responsibilities of leadership [apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, etc.] to guide and direct the whole fellowship. Hence, to employ Hanson's theme, the

⁸⁰Eph. 4:12. The comma after "saints" is omitted in accordance with the Greek text. In agreement with this omission are Come, op. cit., 84; Moore, op. cit., p. 50. Robinson, op. cit., p. 18.

New Testament ministry "is the pioneer in Christian living for the Church, as Christ was the pioneer for all of us."⁸¹

There was little outright authority established in the early ministry of the Church beyond that which has been mentioned or implied already. But contrary to some egalitarian scholars there was not complete equality in the New Testament in regard to authority. As we have said, the apostles, Paul, in particular, exerted some authority in the establishment of churches and in their appointment of local officers. Likewise, with the passage of time, the elders in local congregations exerted some authority. The passage in I Peter where the presbyteroi are exhorted in the exercise of their office to act, "not as domineering over those in your charge, but [as] being examples to the flock,"⁸² certainly implies authority in the eldership. But beyond these instances, there are few, if any, other indications of ministerial authority. We can speculate that authority was respectfully bestowed upon certain ministers, like prophets and teachers, because of their personal piety, dedication and consecration in service to the Church. But in the absence of any evidence we can only theorize such a conclusion. It can be safely asserted that the emphasis of

⁸¹Hanson, op. cit., p. 62.

⁸²I Peter 5:3.

the early ministry was on service rather than on authority and that there was no centered or central authority in the Scriptures that resembles the ecclesiasticism that developed in the Church in later centuries.

The Pragmatic Development

One further aspect of the New Testament ministry must be mentioned. The development of the ministry in the early church was a pragmatic and expedient process. As we have already contended in regard to ordination, there was a fluidity in the early church that called for an ever changing and renewed ministry to face the challenges of new and different situations. In reference to the early church officers, W. T. Moore observed, "Evidently officers must be regarded as only an expedient; an expedient doubtless of great value, so far as the efficiency of the Church is concerned, but an expedient nevertheless, which must never be regarded as a necessity, . . ."⁸³ Thus, it follows that from this principle the Church does not have to have the same officers, the same ministry with the same functions for time immemorial. When the need for certain ministries ceases, then those ministries, likewise, should cease. When new situations develop demanding new ministerial functions

⁸³W. T. Moore, The Plea of the Disciples of Christ (Chicago: The Christian Century Company, 1906), p. 46.

then the necessary new ministries should be created. The ministry of the Apostolic Era was not static and passive. Rather it was mobile, relevant, efficient. To absolutize and finalize the ministerial forms of the New Testament is to disregard and deny the principle of necessity and expediency that brought them into existence. Moreover, as Smart pointed out, "To imitate Jesus or the apostles laboriously in the form of our ministry today would be merely to produce an anachronism."⁸⁴ Our unity with Jesus Christ is in the Word and Spirit and not in an external uniformity.

Summary

In summary, we have said that like the Hebrew nation before it, the whole Christian community was called to serve and minister. They were summoned to witness continually to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That witness was directed both to the heathen and the saint. It was a ministry of constant reconciliation. Following in the train of Jesus, the early Christians took up the Servant concept of Deutero-Isaiah and exemplified it in all of life. While all Christians were called to minister, there were some who were called out of the community to special and specific ministries such as apostles, prophets, teachers, elders, deacons, etc. While the emphasis in the early church was on function rather than

⁸⁴Smart, op. cit., p. 37.

office, the apostleship most closely resembled the status of an office. Only a select few, those who had been commissioned by Christ, belonged to the apostleship. The apostles possessed authority granted to them by Christ in the establishment of churches and in the appointment of local church officials. Also, the apostles were endowed with power to perform signs, wonders, and miracles. Though that power died with the apostles, their authority at least to some degree was assumed by local church officers. The administration and organizational functions in the several churches fell to elders and deacons who were first appointed by the apostles and later were chosen by the congregations. It is quite possible that toward the end of the Apostolic Era the eldership may have assumed many other tasks beyond those of an administrative nature and may have resembled an office similar, though of lesser status, to that of the apostleship. There was probably a plurality of elders in each congregation, but there is no evidence that there was a plurality of congregations over which there was one bishop or elder. In the main during the New Testament period, the authority of each church seems to have resided in the congregation although they may have delegated some of their authority to the elected officers.

Finally, there was a principle of expediency and fluidity present in the New Testament ministry that cannot be overlooked. The early Christians initiated and developed

specific ministries for particular needs. When these needs had been adequately fulfilled, these ministries were suspended because they were irrelevant and obsolete.

In all of our study of the early ministry we must constantly be aware of the fact that the Church was in a state of rapid development. Also, the lines and directions of that early development were not the same in every part of the Church and, as Knox has concluded, "even where the general pattern was identical, the growth was not proceeding everywhere at the same rate."⁸⁵

⁸⁵Knox, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL MINISTRY

In this chapter I shall attempt to trace the development of ministerial structures from the Biblical period to the present era, the mid-twentieth century. Obviously, this is a rather awesome task and I cannot hope to cover thoroughly all the historical material involved in the brief expanse of this chapter. But I shall give emphasis to those individuals, events, and movements that seem to be the significant peaks in the development of the Christian ministry.

To some more radical Protestants including some Disciples of Christ, this chapter in itself may appear to be irrelevant and immaterial because they insist that any and every development beyond the actual order and conditions of the New Testament community must be considered a perversion. This kind of thinking and understanding is firmly supported by the old Disciple cliché, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Yet, on the other hand, Disciples would be among the first to repudiate any idea that God

has left his followers desolate and alone in the world. No. God through the Holy Spirit comes to assist and guide his followers "even to the end of the age." Then, the question must be asked: Did the Holy Spirit suspend its workings at the close of the New Testament era, not again to be operative until 1850? No! The difficulty here lies in the fact that church theologians in general, and not only Disciples, ever since the second century have adroitly avoided articulating a complete doctrine of the workings and operations of the Holy Spirit. Disciples of Christ in particular have said and written very little about the Holy Spirit. It is not so much that Disciples have a warped or antiquated view of the Holy Spirit but rather that they almost have no view at all.

The proposition which I hold and which is a basic premise for this paper is that the Holy Spirit has been leading and guiding the Church since Pentecost and continues to be active this day in the affairs of men. T. W. Manson was correct in maintaining that "to set up the Church of the first or any other century as the final court of appeal, while professing faith in the continuing presence of Christ in his Church and the continuing guidance of his Spirit," is to "savor of inconsistency."¹ Trouble has always occurred whenever the Church has endeavored to absolutize some specific order or form of ministerial structure and set it up as final

¹T. W. Manson, The Church's Ministry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948), p. 92.

and perfect. Rather, down through the history of the Church those structures which have been really life-giving and meaningful have been those that have been subject to change and have changed when prevalent circumstances deemed it necessary.

Thus, it will be my purpose in this segment of the paper to discover and understand the major developments of the Christian ministry in church history in the light of and in relation to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the world.

Ante-Nicene Period

As we have observed in the Biblical period there were three major ministerial functions--the apostles, bishops or elders, and deacons. The laity was an essential part of the Christian ministry as they served side by side with the officials which they had elected. In the second century and succeeding centuries there was a gradual movement toward the establishment of an official hierarchy separate and distinct from the laity in which the laity was given less and less voice in the affairs of the Church. But it is a mistake to assume that this process occurred in a few years or in a few decades. Rather, the establishment of the moniscopacy throughout Christendom was not completed until at least the end of the third century and in some rural areas until the middle of the fourth century.

With the death of the apostles, the Church was left

with the elders and deacons to lead and to guide. In most Christian communities there was a plurality of both elders and deacons, the number depending upon the size and needs of a particular community. The initial move toward the monepiscopacy was election by the individual councils of elders or presbyters, as they became known, of a president or chairman. That person became the bishop or chief pastor of the Christian community whose responsibilities came to be those of prophet, teacher, celebrant at the liturgical service, and president of the board of overseers. Finally, as George H. Williams discovered, the chief pastor of the local churches came to think of himself as "an elder of a Christian sanhedrin, as an apostle, as a prophet of God or Christ to the Christian people."² Further, it is interesting to note the change in the role of the bishop from priest to judge. During the second century, the functions of the bishop and the presbyters were mostly those of a priestly nature although the bishop did begin to exert some authority over the presbyters and the congregation. But by the third century the bishop began to assume the magisterial chair, the liturgical bench, and the judicial throne. Thus, by the time of Nicaea the bishop was the manager and administrator. The presbyters were the priests and pastors.

²George H. Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, ed. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 33.

The deacons were the servants of both the bishop and the presbyters.

As we study the data of the second and third centuries, one of the earliest documents to be considered is the Third Epistle of John in the New Testament Canon. In the letter, the author, probably a presbyter or some officer in the church, challenged the rule of one Diotrephes who may also have been a presbyter in the church. Some interpreters hold that the portion of the Epistle in question represents a protest against the new system of monepiscopacy.³ However, there is no certainty that Diotrephes was a bishop. He may have been only "a successful ecclesiastical demagogue."⁴ It is quite possible that the controversy of III John represents an early struggle for power and authority between the author of the Epistle and Diotrephes. We have no way of knowing which of the two had a rightful claim to that power or how that authority was delegated or assumed.

The Didache is primarily concerned with the regular appointment of officers for the guidance and direction of the church. Written at the end of the first century, The Didache takes into consideration the fact that the church might not at a future time have prophets and thus to fulfill their functions, the church is counseled to appoint bishops

³John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, ed. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 23.

⁴Manson, op. cit., p. 65.

and deacons that "they also minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers."⁵ Also, in The Didache the words "apostles" and "prophets" are used interchangeably and seem to be of a higher order than bishops and deacons. The Didache follows closely the pattern of the New Testament in reference to ministerial functions and we find no evidence for the establishment of the monepiscopacy.

However, as we come to examine the letters of Ignatius of Antioch in Syria we discover that the monepiscopacy has either already been established in Asia Minor or is in the process thereof. Ignatius was a prophet and the bishop of the church at Antioch in the sense of being the chief authority over a board of presbyters. During his journey from Antioch across the provinces of Asia and Macedonia on his way to Rome presumably to be martyred, Ignatius had occasion to write several letters to the churches especially those of Asia who had sent delegations to visit and assist him. These letters reveal not only that Ignatius was the bishop and ecclesiastical ruler at Antioch but also that probably several other churches of Asia--Smyrna, Philadelphia, Magnesia, Ephesus--had single rulers. Further, the letters also point to the existence

⁵The Didache, 15:1, trans. Kirsopp Lake, The Apostolic Fathers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 331.

in most churches of a council of presbyters and a body of deacons presided over by the bishop. The fact that Ignatius went to such extremes to describe the offices of bishop, presbyter and deacon gives rise to the view that the system was of recent origin.

Ignatius exhorted the Magnesians to do all things in harmony with God and with the bishop "presiding in the place of God and the presbyters in the place of the Council of the Apostles, and the deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ, . . ."⁶ The bishop of Antioch also wrote that the bishop must be regarded as the Lord himself.⁷ Further amplifying the office of the bishop, Ignatius commanded the Smyrnaeans not to do any thing appertaining to the church without the presence of the bishop. "Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints. . . . It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold an "agape" without the bishop; . . ."⁸ In his correspondence to the Philadelphians, Ignatius maintained that the apostolic writings were to the total church what the

⁶Ignatius to the Magnesians, VI, trans. Lake, op. cit., p. 203.

⁷Ignatius to the Ephesians, VI, op. cit., p. 181.

⁸Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, VIII, op. cit., p. 261.

presbytery was to the local church and above each respectively is God and the bishop.⁹ Further, endeavoring to be the imitation of Christ which Ignatius claimed to be an episcopal responsibility, the bishop cautioned the Christians at Rome not to interfere with his execution lest once more he would only be a mere echo instead of becoming one with the Word of God.¹⁰

In the Ignatian letters we find no evidence for succession, at least as we understand it today. In fact, if Ignatius held any thought of succession to the apostles, it would not be the bishop as such a successor but rather the presbytery. Yet, even the presbyterate was not really the successor to the apostles from the perspective of Ignatius but rather the "contemporary image of, or parallel to, the apostles."¹¹

From the writings of the early bishop of Antioch we can conclude that the moniscopacy and system of a threefold ministry was not yet universal since in his letter to the church at Rome, Ignatius makes no mention of its bishop. Further, Manson has asserted that Ignatius is really "pressing for a fuller recognition of this threefold

⁹Ignatius to the Philadelphians, V, op. cit., p. 243.

¹⁰Ignatius to the Romans, II, op. cit., pp. 227-228.

¹¹Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, The Pioneer Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 114.

ministry by the churches," and that "the other evidence from the sub-Apostolic Age does not show the same clear distinction of three orders of ministry."¹²

Manson's statement is valid in so far as there probably was not any clear distinction between the orders of the ministry in the second century. However, the monepiscopacy was probably established throughout the major centers of Christendom by the beginning of the third century though not in the less populated areas until one hundred to one hundred and fifty years later. While the author of the Shepherd of Hermas, probably an early Roman father, spoke indifferently of bishops and presbyters, both Polycarp of Smyrna and Clement of Rome give some recognition to the establishment of the office of the bishop over the presbyterate.

Although in his Letter to the Philippians (c. 135), Polycarp does not mention bishops and neither does he claim the office for himself, yet some of his contemporaries referred to him as the bishop of Smyrna. In the opening greeting of his letter to Polycarp, Ignatius salutes him as "bishop of the Church of the Smyrnaeans."¹³ Polycarp's immediate followers and companions spoke of him as "an apostolic and prophetic teacher, bishop of the Catholic

¹² Manson, op. cit., p. 63.

¹³ Ignatius to Polycarp, op. cit., p. 267.

Church in Smyrna."¹⁴ Yet, Irenaeus referred to him as "apostolic presbyter." George Williams has argued that while Polycarp in his own writings mentioned only presbyters and deacons, "his own effectual position must have been very much like that of Ignatius."¹⁵ However, unlike Ignatius, Polycarp called the Philippians "to be subject to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ."¹⁶ There is one further piece of evidence that might shed some light upon Polycarp's status in the church at Smyrna. After traveling to Rome about 150 for a discourse with Bishop Anicetus over the question of conflicting dates for Easter, Polycarp celebrated the Eucharist with the Roman bishop. "Anicetus yielded the celebration [of the Eucharist] to Polycarp obviously out of respect."¹⁷

It would appear that although Polycarp did not claim the office of bishop for himself but instead directed that power and authority which Ignatius had given the bishop be granted to the whole presbyterate, he was

¹⁴Martyrdom of Polycarp, XVI. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I. eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957).

¹⁵Williams, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁶Polycarp to the Philippians, V, trans. Lake, op. cit., p. 291.

¹⁷The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, trans. Christian Frederick Cruse (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1869), IV, 24, 17.

probably the chairman or president of the presbytery in Smyrna.

As we come to study Clement of Rome, we find that he frequently mentioned bishops and deacons in lieu of presbyters. It would seem that he was not referring to the established three orders of the ministry but rather to two orders in which he employed the term "bishops" instead of "elders" or "presbyters." However, we cannot be certain at this point since on a few occasions Clement does speak of "episcopos" instead of "episcopoi." The significant aspect of Clement's thought is that he is the only early Father to mention succession. Clement declared that the Apostles appointed bishops and deacons in every city for the future believers and further, made provision that should they die "approved men should succeed to their ministry."¹⁸ This certainly carries the idea of succession. However, because of the silence of the other data of the period we cannot assume that succession was a very well established tenet of the Christian faith at that time. Moreover, it is more tenable that Clement emphasized succession in his Epistle to the Corinthians in order to raise their whole perspective on the ministry of the Church, in particular the ministry of the bishops. Thus, he wrote,

¹⁸ I Clement to the Corinthians, XLIV, trans. Lake, op. cit., p. 85.

"We consider therefore that it is not just to remove from their ministry those who were appointed by them [apostles], or later on by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, . . ."¹⁹

The major difference between the contemporary conception of apostolic succession and that found in Clement is the statement in the above quotation--"with the consent of the whole Church, . . ." Hanson held that in Clement we find an idea of continuance rather than of succession since "the ministry is still very closely associated in its appointment with the rest of the local church."²⁰

Apologist Justin Martyr was a Christian teacher in Rome about 150. In his writings Justin usually referred to the bishop as president. However, as Williams held that "usage may have been dictated by a concern to avoid specifically ecclesiastical language in addressing the pagan world."²¹ In his frequent disputations with the Jews, Justin maintained that the whole Christian community was a high-priestly race of God which through the giving of their eucharistic offerings in the name of Christ replaced both the priesthood of Aaron and the eternal Melchizedek. Further, from the works of Justin Martyr,

¹⁹ Ibid. ²⁰ Hanson, op. cit., p. 112.

²¹ Williams, op. cit., p. 33.

we have one of the earliest accounts of Christian worship and the responsibilities of church officers in the service. The service began with the reading of the writings of the apostles and the prophets. This function was performed by a reader or lector. Then, the president presumably using the afore-read scripture as a text followed with a sermon "to the imitation of these noble things." Next, the congregation stood and offered prayers while the Eucharistic bread, wine and water were brought to the president who also offered prayers and thanksgiving "to the best of his ability." After the elements had been distributed and received by the congregation, the deacons took the elements to the absent. Then, followed the offering to which everyone was invited to contribute "as much as he chooses. . . ." The offering was then given to the president who was responsible for the care of orphans, widows, prisoners and strangers. The president "is the protector of all those in need."²²

Also, Dionysius, bishop of Corinth about 165 spoke of the concern which a bishop should have for the impoverished and the imprisoned. Further, according to Dionysius the bishop was likewise a correspondent and apologist. Moreover, this bishop of Corinth agreed with Justin in

²² The First Apology of Justin, The Martyr, 67, ed. & trans. Edward Rochie Hardy, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. I, Early Christian Fathers, trans. & ed. Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 287.

referring to the bishop as president.²³

The writings of Irenaeus, presbyter and later bishop of Lyons, are the final works of the second century that are pertinent to our study. Although Irenaeus used the terms "bishop" and "presbyter" interchangeably, he attached specific significance to the role and the responsibility of the chief pastor or the president of the presbytery. Irenaeus proclaimed that the leader of the presbytery was endowed with "the certain gift of truth," though he agreed with Justin that "all disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests."²⁴ Yet, he called the whole Church to obey the presbyters because they "possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth," Likewise, he suggested that the Church should "hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession,"²⁵ We can only speculate as to the significance and importance that Irenaeus attached to the whole idea of succession since the above statement is the only mention that he made of succession in his writings.

²³Eusebius, op. cit., IV, 23, 158-160.

²⁴Irenaeus Against Heresies, V, 34, 3. Ante-Nicene Christian Library, trans. Alexander Roberts & W. H. Rambaut, Vol. II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869).

²⁵Irenaeus, op. cit., IV, 26, 2.

Looking back over the somewhat fragmentary and disconnected data of the second century, we can agree with Manson that at this stage of development "it is idle to look for any hard-and-fast system, for rigid uniformity of worship or organization."²⁶ Yet, we must admit that probably by the year 200 at least an infant system of mon-episcopacy had been established in the more populated centers where Christianity had a large following. By monepiscopacy I mean that in all those centers there was a bishop or president who presided over the presbyterate and the diaconate. In the East by the third century the bishop had separated himself from the presbytery and had founded the distinct office of the bishop. In the Western churches the process was somewhat slower and the separate episcopal office was not firmly established until the mid-third century.

At this juncture it might be well that we reflect upon the factors that contributed to the rise of monarchical bishops. All of these factors can be categorized under the general heading of leadership. The Church itself which was rapidly becoming a large organization was calling for dynamic leadership and the culture and society of which the Church was a part was in need of direction.

²⁶ Manson, op. cit., p. 70.

First, there was the call for creative individuals to assume leadership in the worship, organizational, and administrative activities of the Church. The apostles, prophets, and teachers who had been close to the primary sources of the historical development of Christianity had gradually passed off the scene. Their places and functions had to be filled and enlarged.

Second, there was the necessity for unifying and vigorous leadership within the Christian community to withstand the devastating persecutions of the first three centuries. Without the strong leadership which it possessed during that perilous period, it is doubtful that the Church would have been able to assume the role granted to it by Constantine in the fourth century.

Third, there was the need for a clear and authoritative voice in doctrinal matters when the Church became plagued by such heresies as Gnosticism and Montanism. If the Church had not had positive leadership to decide theological controversies such as that between Arius and Athanasius, it would have become hopelessly divided just at a time in its infancy when decisive inner conflict would have meant ruin and destruction for the Church itself.

Fourth, there was the call for cultural leadership in the midst of the gradual collapse and mounting chaos of the very fabric and structure of the Roman civilization.

Eventually the Church had to assume the responsibility of being the principal force for cultural continuity and unity.

Turning now to the third century, one of the most significant documents for our study is the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus which described Roman church customs and practices about 200. The Apostolic Tradition was basically a manual on church order. One of the earliest services of ministerial ordination and consecration is to be found in The Apostolic Tradition. Only bishops, presbyters, and deacons are to be ordained.

The ordination of a bishop is preceded by his election to that high office by the people, presumably the people of the congregation which he serves. The formal ordination took place on Sunday in the presence of bishops who had been invited from surrounding communities with the local presbytery and the whole congregation. The company of bishops laid hands on him to be consecrated while the presbytery stood near by in silence, praying for the descent of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands. Then, one of the assembled bishops by the ad hoc appointment of his colleagues laid hands upon the newly elected bishop and offered the consecration prayer. Williams suggested that these two distinct acts of the imposition of hands may reveal a double origin for ministerial consecration. The group act of the imposition of hands may have been

derived from the early Jewish presbyters representing tactile succession in the presbyterate. The imposition of hands and prayer being offered by a single bishop probably represented the invocation of the Holy Spirit "in the spiritual restoration of the apostolate."²⁷ After the formal consecration, the newly ordained bishop celebrated the Eucharist.

The presbyters were ordained by their bishop who while laying his hand on the presbyter's head invoked the Holy Spirit. The other presbyters stood around the newly consecrated presbyter laying their hands on him. Though a presbyter was a member of the priesthood, yet he only had "power to receive." He possessed no power to give. It was for this reason that a presbyter never ordained the clergy. At the consecration of a presbyter, the presbyter "seals while the bishop ordains."²⁸

The bishop alone presided at the ordination of a deacon. The deacons were not ordained to the priesthood but "to serve the bishop and to carry out the bishop's commands." Further, the deacons did not "receive that Spirit that is possessed by the presbytery, in which the

²⁷Williams, op. cit., p. 37.

²⁸The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, trans. Burton Scott Easton (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 38.

presbyters share; . . ."²⁹ The place and function of the deacon became rather rigid and fixed at the time of the Apostolic Tradition. From that document we discover that the deacon is little more than an adjutant to the bishop. He has no place in the council of the bishop and the presbyters. His principal responsibilities were the charitable ministrations of the church in searching out cases of need and rendering service. At the worship of the Roman Christian community deacons were responsible for bringing forth the elements to the bishop at the Eucharist and for the distribution of the same after they had been consecrated by the bishop.

There is a development in the writings of Hippolytus with regard to the Eucharist. The presbyters standing with the bishop laid their hands upon the oblation while the bishop now offers the eucharistic prayer. Earlier, it is to be remembered, the consecration or eucharistic prayer was offered by the presbyters on a rotating basis. Also, the bishop assumed the principal role in the baptism of the catechumens. It may be that from his unique function in the baptismal symbolism of rebirth the bishop came to be revered as the spiritual father by the congregation.

Further, we learn from the ordination prayer that the bishop was authorized to bind and to loose on earth like

²⁹Ibid.

an apostle--that is, he was commanded to forgive sins, and probably to cure diseases. Yet, this matter of forgiving sins especially after baptism was the subject of intense controversy in Rome and elsewhere. The argument centered around the bishop's power to forgive the gravest sins such as adultery, murder, and apostacy after one's baptism.

Obviously, Justin's "president" and the "presbyter-bishop" of Irenaeus has evolved in the Apostolic Tradition to the positions of high priest, teacher, judge, chief pastor and administrator. With the exception of functions included under the command to "bind and loose," Manson is correct in contending that "the normal daily duties of the Hippolytean bishop are precisely those that are nowadays performed by the parish priest or the minister of a nonepiscopal church."³⁰

In reference to apostolic succession, the views of Hippolytus were similar to those of Irenaeus. Speaking against the Gnostic errors in the Refutation of All Heresies which is also known as the Philosophoumena, Hippolytus described bishops as being the rightful successors of the apostles and as participators in this grace, high-priesthood, and office of teaching, as well as being reputed guardians of the Church, . . . "³¹

³⁰Manson, op. cit., p. 72.

³¹Hippolytus, The Refutation of All Heresies, trans. J. H. MacMahon, Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1868), VI, 28.

Beside the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, the Apostolic Tradition mentioned a few subordinate offices--confessors, widows, readers, virgins, subdeacons, and exorcists--which while being recognized did not belong to the clergy proper.

In the next fifty years there was significant evolution in clerical ministrations, authority, and power in the church at Rome. About 250 Fabian established the now traditional seven deaconal districts of Rome under the direction of seven deacons respectively who were to serve and administer these distinct areas. Although there is little evidence at this point, it can be presumed that the liturgical service or worship of the city was similarly divided under the supervision of the presbyters. However, in spite of the immensity of Rome and of the scattered liturgical services, the Eucharist was still felt to be one celebration. In order to preserve this spirit of oneness and unity, the acolytes carried the eucharized bread (fermentum) from the bishop's altar to the city or titular churches of Rome. It is not difficult to envision why the presbyters came to be regarded as the delegates of the bishop during this period. But the stock of the presbyters was raised somewhat in the next decade when the practice of literally running the eucharized bread to the city churches was terminated mostly because of the rapidly increasing size

of the Roman Christian community.

Fabian's successor Cornelius in his letter to Fabius of Antioch about 252 described the size of the Roman clergy. In addition to the one bishop--Cornelius--there were 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 subdeacons, 42 acolytes, 52 exorcists, readers and doorkeepers. According to Cornelius there were about fifteen hundred widows and thirty to fifty thousand laymen and women.³² The subdeacons were the servants of the deacons and the acolytes bore much the same relationship to the presbyters. The exorcists were commissioned to care for the mentally ill. The widows usually were responsible for visiting and caring for the sick of the community.

There is a further significant aspect to the letter addressed to Fabius in that Cornelius relates to the bishop of Antioch that he has deposed three Italian bishops because they participated in the consecration of his rival Novatian. This is probably the first and earliest assertion of metropolitan rights which were eventually claimed by the bishops of the great cities of which Rome was among the largest and the strongest.

As we turn now from Rome to North Africa, we first encounter the works of the former lawyer and courageous presbyter, Tertullian. Tertullian developed a rather high

³²Eusebius, op. cit., VI, 43, 265.

view of the clergy in which he referred to the bishop as the high priest and to the concelebrating presbyters as priests. But any duties which the presbyters or even the deacons carried out that belonged to the bishop's functions they did only by license of the bishop. Later in life, after falling under the influence of Montanism, Tertullian emphasized the charismatic ministries and a responsible lay ministry. In emergencies, Tertullian maintained that a layman could preside at the offering of the Eucharist or at baptism. Speaking to the latter subject, Tertullian wrote that at baptism, the bishop or chief priest has the first right to preside and "in the next place, the presbyters and deacons yet not without the bishop's authority, . . ." Concluding his statement, he added, "Beside these, even laymen have the right; for what is equally received can be equally given."³²

It is quite noticeable that the views of Tertullian clashed significantly with those of Hippolytus who it will be remembered held in the Apostolic Tradition that not even presbyters had the power to give but only the power to receive. Thus, it is Tertullian who while articulating a somewhat "advanced catholic sacerdotal view of the office of the bishop and presbyter," yet at the same time presented what might be called "a radical Spiritual doctrine of the

³²Tertullian, On Baptism, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, ed., The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), III, 17, 677.

priesthood of all believers."³³

From Tertullian we move to Clement of Alexandria. Since the beginning of the Christian community in Alexandria late in the first century, the church had had a sanhedrin of twelve presbyters. The bishop was chosen from their own number by the presbyters. The Alexandrian Christians may have adopted a rather peculiar form of consecration of a new bishop in that it is quite possible that the newly elected bishop was consecrated "by the hand of his deceased predecessor who was suitably robed and propped in his episcopal throne for a final gesture of legitimation and benediction."³⁴

Clement, our chief source of late second and early third century Alexandrian Christianity was the only bishop in all of Egypt up to 189. Under Clement's rule all the communities outside Alexandria were administered by presbyters. However, during the episcopate of Demetrius (189-232), the larger communities surrounding the capital city did acquire bishops of their own.

The Alexandrians contended that the bishop not only stood in a direct line of succession to the New Testament Apostles but also to the prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament. Further, Clement held as did most of the Christian

³³Williams, op. cit., p. 42.

³⁴Ibid.

leaders in Alexandria that behind the ministerial orders of the church were ministering angels. Thus, declared Clement, "Since, according to my opinion, the grades here in the Church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory, . . ."³⁵ Although Clement was a firm advocate of the importance of the ordained clergy, yet he asserted that the enlightened pneumatic or gnostic Christian, though not a member of the clergy, was spiritually well on his way to becoming himself an angel.³⁶ It is not surprising that Clement's devoted pupil, Origen, adopted most of his master's views and was finally deposed because of his spiritualization perspectives from the leadership of the Alexandrian School by Bishop Demetrius who was pressing for greater episcopal supervision and authority.

Clement and Origen did not possess a "priesthood of all believers" concept similar to that of Tertullian although they did hold a common Spiritualist viewpoint. Clement and Origen did not claim for laymen the obligation of presiding at the offering of the Eucharist or at baptism even in cases of emergency. However, all three of these men gave great prominence to the spiritually enlightened, gnostic Christian

³⁵ Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds. The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), II, BK VI, Chap. 13, 505.

³⁶ Ibid.

thinker. But even this spiritually endowed believer always fell under the command and authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Yet, because of their many, many affirmations and assertions concerning the elevated place of the gnostic enlightened Christian, the role of clerical authority seems to be secondary in their writings.

Therefore, it is not surprising that there should come upon the scene of North Africa a stronger defender of ecclesiastical power and authority in the person of Cyprian of Carthage. Cyprian was among the first to designate Peter as a bishop and to refer to every bishop as the vicar of Christ. Cyprian wrote that every bishop was filled by the Holy Spirit and that all bishops "by vicarious ordination succeed to the apostles: . . ."³⁷ The bishop of Carthage, however, did not refer to the bishop as the high priest as had Tertullian but reserved that role for Christ alone as the eternal Melchizedek. But he did agree with Tertullian that the presbytery participated in the sacrificatory office of the bishop only by delegation. In another move to increase the prominence of the bishop, Cyprian discounted the claim of the confessors, a ministerial order that had arisen both in North Africa and Rome which at that time possessed considerable authority, to forgive the lapsed independently of the

³⁷The Writings of Cyprian, trans. Robert Ernest Wallis, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. The Ante-Nicene Library (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), VIII, IXVII, 4, 246.

bishop. Further, Cyprian gave his full support to the growing confraternity of bishops. While insisting that every properly elected and ordained bishop should have ultimate authority in his own church, nevertheless he argued that any morally derelict bishop should be removed from his church and from the confraternity. But only the local church had the authority to remove such a lapsed bishop. Cyprian believed that the people of God should have the power of choosing worthy bishops, presbyters, and deacons or of "rejecting unworthy ones."³⁸ The election of the clergy by the whole church persisted in North Africa for many decades while in the rest of the Church bishops began to be chosen by councils of bishops early in the fourth century. An outstanding example of the election of a bishop by the laity in North Africa is Augustine who in the fifth century was literally forced to the episcopal seat by the congregation. Yet, that was one of the very few choices that remained open for the consideration of the laity.

By the time of Cyprian, the clergy was becoming more and more distinct and separate from the people. The hierarchy now proclaimed a direct descent from the apostles not through the Church but via itself alone. "The logical conclusion of this," wrote Hanson, "is a doctrine of manual succession, and the obvious danger is sacerdotalism,

³⁸Ibid., LXVII, 3, 238.

whereby the minister says in effect to the laity: 'You cannot continue without us, but we can continue without you'--. . ."³⁹

With few exceptions the ministerial order and hierarchy of the Eastern churches was similar to that of North Africa and Rome. One notable exception was that the presbyters were generally chosen by the bishop instead of by the people.

Before concluding our discussion of the Christian ministry of the third century, some consideration must be given to the role of the rural bishops. The village bishops known as the chorepiskopoi had the responsibility of ministering to the scattered Christians in rural areas. While Lightfoot characterized them as a survival of the original presbyter-bishops, they are more commonly accepted to be similar to the modern suffragen bishops with strictly limited powers--limited by the municipal bishops. With the increased influence and authority of the city bishops, the chorepiskopoi were continually demoted through successive canonical legislation. Nevertheless, until full sacerdotal power was delegated to the presbyters, the chorepiskopoi especially in the East "continued to serve a useful purpose in extending the ministry of baptism and the Eucharist into the countryside. . . ."⁴⁰

³⁹Hanson, op. cit., p. 118.

⁴⁰Williams, op. cit., p. 57.

By the time of the Nicene Council, the bishop's parish had grown into a diocese and the bishop himself had for all intents and purposes become a great administrator and organizer. The pastoral duties which had been the special responsibility of the Hippolytean bishop and even some of the sacerdotal functions had been handed over to the presbyters--the new priests. Metropolitans, the head bishops of provincial capitals, had also emerged and had begun to be authoritative in the provincial councils. Canon 4 of Nicaea required that at least three bishops of a province be present at the consecration of a new bishop in the province "but in every province the ratification of what is done should be left to the Metropolitan."⁴¹

Post-Nicene Period

The clergy was now composed of three rigidly defined classes--the bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The elevation to the clerical ranks through ordination sharply separated the clergy from the laity. By Nicaea ordination had become similar to a kind of second baptism in that according to Canon 9 of Neocaesarea all but carnal sin was blotted out in the ritual. Adding to the ever-widening gulf between the clergy and the laity was Canon 13 of the Council of Laodicea in 380 which proclaimed: "The election of those who are to be appointed to the priesthood is not to

⁴¹ Council of Nice (325), Canon IV, Philip Schaff & Henry Mace, eds., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), XIV, 11.

be committed to the multitude."⁴² Thus, the voice of the people in the election of a bishop was reduced to the thrice-recited cry: "He is worthy!"⁴³

Then the real fellowship and intimacy between the bishop and the people was severed with the elimination of the chorepiskopoi. Canon 6 of the Council of Sardica decreed that chorepiskopoi shall no longer be appointed. Laodicea, Canon 57, sought to replace all rural bishops with priests who were under the supervision of city bishops. Further, the bishops enlarged their domain of authority when it was decreed at Chalcedon: "Let the clergy of the poor-houses, monasteries, and martyries remain under the authority of the bishops in every city according to the tradition of the holy Fathers; . . ."⁴⁴

The authority of the metropolitan of Rome reached a crescendo with the assumption of Leo the Great, bishop of Rome, 440-461, to the papacy. Leo asserted that he, the bishop of Rome, was himself the true priest, being fully human and fully divine. Moreover, Leo affirmed that the ministries of all bishops and their clerical subordinates were only valid in proportion to the measure of their

⁴²Council of Laodicea (343-381), Canon XIII, op. cit., XIV, 131.

⁴³The Testament of our Lord, trans. James Cooper and Arthur John MacLean (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 67.

⁴⁴Council of Chalcedon (451), Canon VIII, op. cit., XIV, p. 273.

participation in the communion with the eternal and universal bishop--the pope. All bishops were called to share in the pastoral care of the Roman bishop but none can share in his power. Hence, Leo decreed that through the first apostle and prince of the apostles, Peter, the Roman Church possessed complete sovereignty over all the churches of the world.

The Middle Ages

During the sixth and seventh centuries, the Church became a gigantic organization in which the clergy were the executives and rulers. The Church of the early centuries had forbidden the clergy from activities of the secular world. But now the Church under the leadership of the hierarchy freely indulged.

The first of these was business. The bishop especially the bishop of Rome became a vast business administrator. The operation of the hierarchy itself was a large endeavor and investment but now the Church became involved in trades and businesses of all descriptions. Roland Bainton has pointed to the striking contrast of the letters of Augustine as compared with those of Gregory I, bishop of Rome, 590-604. Augustine was primarily concerned with the cure of souls while those of Gregory were concerned with the care of estates. "The epistles of Gregory read like the correspondence of a dean. Every letter renders a decision."⁴⁵

⁴⁵Roland H. Bainton, "The Ministry in the Middle Ages," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, ed. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 86.

Secondly, the clergy became involved in the functions of government and politics. With the breakdown and fall of the Roman Empire, the Church reluctantly took over the reigns of government. This is not to say that the Church was the sole government of the world completely replacing the fallen Empire. With the exception of Italy, monarchies were established in the rest of the world. But even in these newly created monarchies the Church was often the power behind the thrones. Under the feudal system, bishops and abbots frequently became rulers in their own domains. Likewise, in such a situation where the Church and State were one, secular rulers often procured for themselves appointments to high clerical posts even to the bishopric of Rome.

Placed in such circumstances of wealth and political power, the clergy could hardly obviate involvement in war. In the time of the Muslim invasions the bishops along with the rest of the clergy donned armor over their cassocks to repel the raiders. Such behavior could be condoned on the basis of self-defense. But all too frequently after the invasions, it became predatory as the clergy attempted to enlarge and strengthen its power in the world.

In the midst of this clerical confusion came the great Gregorian reforms of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The first reform was aimed at the independence of the clergy

from secular control. They were not to be subject to the decisions of civil courts. The clergy was to be judged by the hierarchy of the Church. Further, the clergy was to be free from all secular interference both in the conduct and the inception of their office. The Church should determine the members of its clergy who should swear allegiance only to the pope. Such a demand might have been easily met had not the Church owned such a preponderance of real estate which it, of course, refused to renounce. But in order to wrestle away the appointment of bishops by lay patrons and lay rulers, the Church developed a special machinery called the College of Cardinals who acted as assistants to the pope. Through the College, the central administration of the Church was strengthened and the local metropolitans were moved down a step in the hierarchical ladder. In the eleventh century the College of Cardinals began to elect popes. By the creation of the College, the hierarchy became more elaborate and the cleavage between the clergy and the laity became greater.

The second major reform aimed at the purity of the Church was the adoption of clerical celibacy. Bainton contended that "nothing did so much to set the clergy apart from the body of the faithful as did the imposition of celibacy."⁴⁶ Prior to that time, the Church had never made

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 91.

such a demand. The Church had, however, always considered celibacy to be a high virtue. Yet, most of the clergy of the period were married and some more than once. Thus, for the ascetic reason that virginity was considered higher than marriage and in order to halt the system of hereditary bishoprics, the Church endeavored to make the rule universal. Eventually, though there was intense opposition, celibacy became canon law.

However, the Gregorian reforms were short lived. Celibacy was a fine ideal but was never widely practiced during the period. Many clergymen refused to abandon their wives while others took up the practice of concubinage which came to be condoned and even taxed by the Church. On one occasion, it was reported, after a revival in Wales, the clergy resolved and attempted to rid themselves of their concubines, but they were forbidden to do so by the bishop who feared the loss of revenue gained from such infractions of the canon law.⁴⁷

Likewise, the Church had become too large and powerful to isolate its clergy suddenly from the secular world. The Gregorian peace campaign ended in the Crusades which finally themselves fell into disrepute when the financing of these "Holy Wars" became a racket and when Christian princes willingly sold Christian slaves to the Turks. Add to this

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

the continuing and mounting business enterprise of the Church and you have the low spiritual and moral level which characterized the Church from the thirteenth century to the Reformation.

One of the outstanding examples of Christian business success during this period is that of the monks. The monk in the fourth century and the fifth century had become the successor of the Ante-Nicene confessor with his power to forgive. The monastic movement's great force in the world was the self-discipline and self-denial of its members who withdrew from the world to accept and condition themselves in the common and simple life. Their rigid self-denial and withdrawal from the world came to be construed as a kind of higher ordination and eventually the monks were respected and esteemed by the world as clergy par excellence. But their arduous labors and enterprising ventures frequently became their downfall. Usually they were so successful in agrarian labors that they produced much more than they needed and hence entered their products on the market which in the end undermined their whole moral and self-giving system. This was true of the Cistercians and the Dominicans. The Benedictines in their acquisition of new lands were often forced to accept the serfs with the soil. Though they had once lived by their own labors, now many Benedictines became scholars and business administrators

while others became just plain sluggards and drones.

To counteract this low state of affairs there were spasmodic reform movements in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. In contrast to the earlier Gregorian reforms which were basically aimed at the inner life of the clergy and at the clerical relationships with the secular world through the imposition of canon law, these later reforms are best characterized as revivals in preaching in which the laity was exhorted to press for the renewal of the whole Church. These courageous iconoclasts stood in the great preaching tradition of Augustine and Chrysostom. There were Peter Waldo, Francis of Assisi, Savonarola, Wycliff, and Hus. These were the forerunners of the Reformation and the revival which they had given to preaching found its consummation and fulfillment in the Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation

One of the main emphases of the Reformation was upon the proclamation of the Word in the Church through preaching. Melancthon summarized the faith of the Lutherans in the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession as he defined the Church as being "the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered."⁴⁸ The lack of the Word of God being

⁴⁸The Augsburg Confession, Article VII, The Book of Concord, ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1916), p. 39.

rightly proclaimed became one of the early cries of the Reformers. Martin Luther declared that "he who does not preach the Word, being called to this very office by the Church, is in no way a priest, . . ." ⁴⁹

Championing the cause of preaching, the Reformers vigorously chastised the Roman Church primarily on two counts--the unwarranted and non-Biblical concentration of all authority in the Papal hierarchy and the somewhat supernatural and indelible status that has been claimed for the priesthood. The Reformers denied the power of the Pope and argued that authority rests in the congregation of the faithful as a whole. Referring to the supposed authority granted to Peter when he was given the keys of the Kingdom, Luther insisted that "the keys were not given to St. Peter alone, but to the whole community." ⁵⁰ The clergy, priests or ministers, only exercise power and authority on the consent and election of the congregation. With this concept Luther anteceded by more than a hundred years the famous proposition of John Locke of "Government by the consent of the governed."

⁴⁹ Martin Luther, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," Luther's Primary Works, eds. Henry Wace and C. A. Buckheim (London: Hoddler & Stoughton, 1896), p. 396.

⁵⁰ Luther, "To the Christian Nobility," op. cit., p. 170.

Luther carried his whole idea of consent and election by the congregation into the area of ordination of the priesthood. In one of his more radical tracts, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," the German reformer attacked the sacraments of the Roman Church and reduced the number from seven to two. Luther eliminated confirmation, marriage, penance, extreme unction, and ordination. Only the Lord's Supper and baptism remained. Luther insisted that a sacrament was valid only if it had been directly instituted by Christ and was distinctively Christian. Repudiating ordination as a sacrament, Luther destroyed the whole clerical caste system and at the same time provided a firm foundation for his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Luther believed that in ordination a minister is commissioned by the Church to perform the functions of a particular office. "He receives no indelible character, is not exempt from the jurisdiction of the civil courts, and is not empowered by ordination to perform the other sacraments."⁵¹ Moreover, since all Christians are priests by virtue of their common baptism any Christian can do what the priest does if he has been appointed to that function by the congregation. Luther carried out his principles on ordination where in 1542 a new bishop was required in Naumburg.

⁵¹ Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 137.

Instead of employing the services of some available Prussian Lutheran bishops who had been episcopally consecrated, Luther appears to have deliberately overlooked them in preference for three evangelical superintendents who served with him at the ordination. A similar incident occurred in 1544.⁵²

On the other hand, Calvin was much more stern than Luther about the necessary and proper conditions for ordination. According to the French reformer only those to whom he refers as "pastors," "bishops," or "ruling elders" have the right to ordain. "Presbyters" or "teaching elders" do not possess the power of ordination. Because of this concept, Calvin was forced to interpret the "laying on of hands by the presbyters" in I Timothy 4:14 not that the presbyters laid hands on Timothy but rather as "the laying-on of hands when I made you a presbyter."⁵³ Yet, Calvin, whose doctrine of the ministry was similar to that of Cyprian, maintained that the congregation should elect and call those persons deemed worthy for ordination and should reject the unworthy. Calvin advised: "Paul's course of action for

⁵² K. D. Mackenzie, "Sidelights from the Non-Episcopal Communion," The Apostolic Ministry ed. Kenneth Kirk (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1946), p. 468.

⁵³ Jean Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), XXI, Bk. 4, ch. 3. 16, 1067-1068.

excommunicating a man is the lawful one, provided the elders do not do it by themselves alone, but with the knowledge and approval of the Church; . . ."⁵⁴

For Luther the Church is first and the ministry is a part of the Church. For Calvin the ministry is of supreme and ultimate importance. The ministry is that element which binds and unites the Church. Calvin was very traditional in his view of the relation of the Church to the ministry. Like Cyprian, he believed that Christ had instituted a ministry to which he had committed almost all rule and authority. "For neither the light and heat of the sun, nor food and drink," declared Calvin, "are so necessary to nourish and sustain the present life as the apostolic and pastoral office is necessary to preserve the Church on earth."⁵⁵

Luther's great contribution to the insights of the Reformation on the ministry was his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. From "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," we read: "Thus all we who are Christians are priests; those whom we call priests are ministers chosen from among us to do all things in our name; . . ."⁵⁶

⁵⁴Ibid., Bk. 4, ch. 12. 7, 1235.

⁵⁵Ibid., Bk. 4, ch. 3. 2, 1055.

⁵⁶Luther, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," op. cit., p. 396.

By this affirmation Luther did not mean the practice of an egalitarian individualism whereby every Christian is to act as his own priest and to interpret the Scriptures to suit himself. On the contrary, Luther meant that "all Christians are spiritually equal."⁵⁷ While all Christians may be priests, only a few are called and set aside by the congregation to perform certain acts of leadership in the Church such as preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments. "For though it is true that we are all equally priests, yet we cannot, nor, if we could, ought we all to, minister and teach publicly."⁵⁸ But in cases of emergency any Christian could perform the functions of a duly ordained minister.

Further, in his discourse on "Secular Authority," Luther called to mind the New Testament perspective in that the real function of the priesthood is not that of power and authority but rather it is one of service.⁵⁹

As we contrast the views on the ministry of both Luther and Calvin, we immediately become aware of the fact that Luther was the greater reformer in this specific area. Calvin certainly abhorred the authority and awesome power of the Roman Catholic hierarchy but he still formulated a

⁵⁷Roland H. Bainton, Encounter, Vol. 18 (Spring, 1957), p. 131.

⁵⁸Luther, "Concerning Christian Liberty," op. cit., p. 269.

⁵⁹Luther, "Secular Authority," Martin Luther, ed. John Dillenberger (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1961), p. 392.

rather high doctrine of the ministry in which the congregation had little voice. On the other side, Luther believed that the seat of authority rested in the congregation whose responsibility it was to elect and ordain its own ministry. Yet, they both agreed that the difference between the layman and the minister was not the difference in vocation but a difference of office. All Christians, minister and layman alike, have the same vocation to serve Christ and to serve one another. The doctrine of vocation as developed by the Reformers was a significant contribution of the Reformation and cannot be overlooked. The priesthood of all believers is really a corollary to it. I shall give more emphasis to the whole idea of Christian vocation in the final chapter of this paper.

The most liberal and radical group of Reformers were those who became known as the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists declaring the Bible to be their only directive did away completely with all ministerial forms. Their appeal was to the more common and uneducated people of Switzerland and the German states. Though they were severely persecuted both by the Reformers and the Roman Church, they were able to survive and eventually their descendants migrated to Great Britain and the United States.

The Reformation in England was far less drastic and much less systematic than were the reforms on the

Continent. The worship of the Church of England was simplified. English replaced Latin. But the ministerial structures of the church, the dioceses and the parishes with their bishops and priests, largely remained intact. However, gradually the functions of the clergy changed from being purely priestly to more pastoral and preaching concerns. These modifications largely occurred through the influence of Puritanism brought both from the Continent and Scotland. But with the restoration of the Stuarts in England, Anglicanism became permanently established. Yet through the Toleration Act of 1689, the Anglicans were forced to share the field with Presbyterians, Independents or Congregationalists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, and Quakers. By the eighteenth century, Scotland had become firmly Presbyterian. While Ireland was predominantly Roman Catholic, North Ireland which had been a century earlier invaded by the Scots was Presbyterian.

On the Continent, the Lutherans became dominant in northern Germany and in the Scandinavian countries. Calvinism or the Reformed Movement became strong in parts of Switzerland, France and the Netherlands, migrated in the form of Presbyterianism to Scotland and produced the Puritanism of England. And scattered across Europe there were the separate and independent movements which included the Anabaptists, the Socinians, the Waldensians, and the Bohemian Brethren.

All of these different Christian communions eventually migrated to the United States of America to be part and parcel of the noble, new experiment--the separation of Church and State.

The origins of the Disciples of Christ came in the persons of Thomas and Alexander Campbell and the Presbyterianism of North Ireland although in America they adopted purely Congregational or Independent ministerial and governmental forms.

The Contemporary Situation

The Christian communions of contemporary America present at least four different views or doctrines of the ministry.

First, there is the medieval Roman Catholic concept that the priesthood and hierarchy are the Church. The Church can exist without the laity, but the laity cannot exist without the priesthood. The Pope in Rome is infallible when he speaks on matters of religious faith or morals. Men are ordained to the priesthood by the bishop of each diocese which also is responsible for their periodic movement and placement. The laity has no voice whatsoever in these matters. Some contemporary Roman Catholics have taken issue with the lowly position afforded the laity in the Roman Church. Yves Congar has contended that the priests, monks, and

laity together are the Church. "The laity (and monks as such) are not the subject of the acts by which the Church receives her structure of salvation, . . ." ⁶⁰ We can hope that such voices of reform will be sufficiently influential to persuade the Roman Catholic hierarchy to change its medieval view of the Church and the priesthood.

The second perspective that the priesthood or ministry is the essence of the Church is held by the Anglicans and Eastern Orthodox. Here again we have an hierarchy which is more prominent in Europe than in the United States. In America bishops preside over separate dioceses and like the Roman bishops ordain men to the priesthood.

The third view maintained by the majority of Protestants is that the ministry is a part of and within the framework of the Church. The minister is the servant of the Church. In this general grouping can be classed Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Disciples, Baptists, Congregationalists, and some Quakers. With the first three of this classification--Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists--candidates for the ministry are ordained by the presbytery, the synod and the area conference respectively. The ordination services are presided over entirely by clergymen. Prior to ordination all candidates must be seminary graduates or the equivalent, as the Methodists require,

⁶⁰Yves M. J. Congar, Lay People in the Church, trans. Donald Attwater (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1959), p. 429.

and must pass an examination testing their doctrinal affirmations.

Disciples, Baptists, Congregationalists, and a few Quakers ordain their candidates for the ministry in the local congregations where laymen as well as clergymen participate in the service of consecration.

So far the American communions are very similar to their European counterparts. But there is a difference, a significant difference. The diversity is not noticeable until we begin to consider ministerial placement and the voice of the laity in these Protestant congregations. And the variances discernible in the United States are due, I believe, to the tenet of the separation of Church from State within the whole framework of unique American democracy. It is often assumed that within the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran communions ministers are placed in congregations by the bishop, or synod, or presbytery. To some degree this was true fifty or sixty years ago; but now in each of these denominations, the local congregation plays the main role in the calling and whenever necessary the dismissal of ministers. Of course, these congregations cannot call a new minister to their pulpits without the permission of the higher authority but usually the higher authority such as a bishop or a synod ratifies the decisions of the local congregations. In the Methodist

Church, the bishop at the area conference each year appoints many ministers to new charges but usually only after the congregations involved have made the necessary negotiations and arrangements prior to the conference.

The fourth view on the ministry is the sectarian anti-clericalism which completely rejects the formal ministry. The advocates of this position radically interpret Luther's "priesthood of all believers" to mean that every Christian is a priest or minister formally and informally to others and to himself. They insist upon the elimination of all ministerial diversification and the return to a simple undifferentiated Christian community. The Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Churches of Christ, and many small sects comprise this group.

CHAPTER IV

REBIRTH OF MINISTRY

The Minister's Dilemma

The Disciples of Christ have grown to be a rather large and significant denomination, numbering in the United States approximately 8,000 congregations with a total membership exceeding 1,800,000. Yet, despite their size and outreach, Disciples have to this time failed to formulate and articulate any very clear concepts of the Church and of the Christian ministry. But Disciples are not the only ones that face this predicament. Almost all of Protestantism and to some degree even Roman Catholicism¹ are faced with the dilemma of adequately relating the Church to the ministry and the ministry to the Church in the midst of our highly complex and specialized society.

While all Christian communions are a part of the problem, Disciples and other congregational groups have arrived at the ministerial dilemma from a different direction than has the rest of Protestantism. Although founded by four outstanding clergymen, the Disciples during the first eighty years of their existence were primarily a

¹See Yves M. J. Congar, Lay People in the Church, trans. Donald Attwater (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1959).

laymen's movement. But with the inception of the settled minister, the laity gradually and sometimes grudgingly accepted a secondary role in the ministry of the church. This distinction between the clergy and the laity among Disciples has become more and more amplified in the past thirty years to the point that many Disciple laymen have almost completely abdicated their responsibilities of fifty years ago.

Whereas Disciples have failed to formulate an accurate concept of the ministry which would include both the clergy and the laity, other Protestant communions such as the Anglicans and Presbyterians while possessing doctrines on the ministry have neglected to renew and revitalize those doctrines in the light of the contemporary situation.

Hence, many Protestant leaders are quite concerned about the apparent confusion and lack of definition in reference to the Christian ministry. This confusion is amply documented by the many recent articles appearing in both the popular and religious press speaking to the ambiguities often connected with the role of the contemporary minister. Volumes like The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry by H. Richard Niebuhr, The Rebirth of Ministry by James D. Smart, Agents of Reconciliation by Arnold B. Come, and The Renewal of the Ministry by Thomas J. Mullin all unequivocally assert that "at the heart of the problem is an

inability of our churches to say what a minister is intended to be."² Vagueness and confusion as to the meaning of the ministry are true not only of clergymen themselves but also of the seminaries that produce them. H. Richard Niebuhr complained, "Neither ministers nor the schools that nurture them are guided today by a clear-cut generally accepted conception of the office of the ministry, . . ."³

As I have said before, it is my opinion that one of the direct results of this confusion as to the role of the minister is the decline in recent years in the field of ministerial recruitment. How can we honestly recruit young men and women for the ministry when we do not know what it is ourselves?

Another result of the dilemma has been the rejection on the part of some ministerial candidates of the pastoral ministry for more specialized and better defined fields such as the chaplaincy, college and seminary teaching, and institutional administrative positions.

Of course, the major result of this lack of a clear-cut conception of the ministry of the clergy and the laity has led inevitably to a decline of the Church's total ministry.

²James D. Smart, The Rebirth of Ministry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 17.

³H. Richard Niebuhr, The Purposes of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 50.

Speaking of his own communion, Ernest W. Southcott has maintained that "one reason for the weakness of the Anglican Church has been the false distinction between the clergy and laity."⁴ Unconsciously much of Protestantism has moved fairly close to the Roman Catholic view of the ministry in our acceptance of the premise that the ministry is the exclusive responsibility of the ordained clergy. There is prevalent across Protestantism the idea that only the clergy and special Church officers are called to minister. The ordinary Christian considers himself to be on an entirely different and somewhat lower plane than the clergy. For the most part the layman does not feel that he is called to any ministry whatsoever.

While clergymen in particular have expressed dissatisfaction with regard to their superior and unwholesome role in the ministry of the Church, the majority of laymen have not revolted against their inferior position. Arnold Come has proposed that "there are also signs of a more restricted but just as intense a dissatisfaction of laymen with their religious immaturity and their secondary status in the life and work of the Church."⁵ However, I fail to see this intense unrest and discontent on the part of the contemporary Christian layman. There certainly are

⁴Ernest W. Southcott, The Parish Comes Alive (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1956), p. 95.

⁵Arnold B. Come, Agents of Reconciliation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 101.

a few laymen who have endeavored to prod the Church into a reevaluation of the ministry through such agencies as the current Department of the Laity in the World Council of Churches. But this is a minority of the laity. I agree with Hendrik Kraemer that "most lay people are quite satisfied with the 'contributory' place accorded them, because they have never thought about their true place nor have ever been encouraged to think in that line."⁶ Unfortunately, the Church has experienced real difficulty in recent years in the development of churchmanship among the laity. However, this lack of commitment on the part of Christians is not just a contemporary predicament. It has always plagued the Church since the day of Pentecost. In the New Testament era the stewardship or lack thereof on behalf of Ananias and Sapphira is an excellent illustration.

But looking to the other side of the coin, as Kraemer has suggested, the clergy has failed to encourage many times a real ministry for and of the laity. As a result of this clerical deficiency some laymen not finding an outlet for creative activity within the ministry and leadership of the Church have devoted much of their talents and abilities in their leisure time to other worthwhile community pursuits such as Boy Scouts, YMCA, United Fund, and

⁶ Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 161.

clubs and lodges.

Not only has the total ministry and outreach of the Church been lessened by the general misunderstanding of the ministry but also the whole ecumenical movement has been affected by it. Protestants together must come to a better understanding and a more mature view of the ministry for as Kenneth E. Kirk affirmed, "It has become generally recognized that the crux of the whole matter

[Christian unity] is the doctrine of the ministry."⁷

Also, Professor Keith Watkins indicated that one of the major reasons for all of the recent literature in the general area of the Christian ministry "has been the growing realization that the Church's impasse concerning the nature and function of the ministry is one of the foremost hindrances to the greater unity of Christendom."⁸

Christian Vocation

An adequate doctrine of the Christian ministry should include the following basic propositions. First, for Protestants in general and Disciples in particular we must recapture the essential idea of Christian vocation.

⁷Kenneth E. Kirk, The Apostolic Ministry (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1946), p. v.

⁸Harold Keith Watkins, Encounter, Vol. 23 (Winter, 1962), p. 91.

Both the New Testament community and the Reformers of the sixteenth century possessed and pursued this perspective. All Christians are called by God to minister and to serve both within the Christian community and outside of it. We have frequently overworked the whole idea of the divine calling to special ministries and have been prone to overlook the calling of God which comes to all Christians to the common ministries of the Church. All Christians are summoned to the common ministry. A few are called out to special ministries of leadership in the Church. But the "calling process" is the same and identical for both the common and special ministries. The only difference is in the functions or responsibilities to which one is called.

Thus, to use H. Richard Niebuhr's categories,⁹ there is first of all the call to be a Christian. This is the call perhaps initiated through the proclamation of the Word either formally or informally to confession and baptism. This call can also be characterized as the private encounter between God and the non-believer from which there comes the decision to take up His Cross and follow Christ. When baptism occurs, it is the ordination ceremony of all Christians to the common vocation of service

⁹Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 64.

and ministry in the Church. Then, there is the providential call which is really the continuing call throughout life to minister in the name of Christ through divine guidance. A part of this call is the recognition of the committed Christian of the talents and abilities which he possesses and their employment on behalf of the Church. Finally, there is the call of the Church or the ecclesiastical call which is the recognition by the Church of the gifts of each Christian and their suitable use. Every Christian is endowed with some abilities, at least one talent. The Apostle Paul's admonition to the Romans is appropriate at this juncture: "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:

. . ."¹⁰ Every Christian has some gift to offer upon the altar of service. To some are given many talents and abilities and Luke reminds them, "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; . . ."¹¹ All Christians, both those called to common ministries and those summoned to special ministries stand under the judgment of God for the manner in which they have been stewards of the gifts with which they have been endowed.

This means we must recapture the whole servant concept of Jesus. All Christians are elected through their

¹⁰Romans 12:6.

¹¹Luke 12:48.

common baptism to be servants for the sake of and in the stead of Christ in the affairs of men. Following the example of Jesus, all Christians are ministers "for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ, . . ."¹² While God through what we have labeled "the providential call" seeks to prod continually all Christians to accept their obligations of ministry, yet the leadership of the Church bears much of the responsibility in this matter. The Church must constantly recognize the gifts of Christians and point these believers to the employment of their abilities. The Church must be ever proclaiming the priesthood of all believers from a Scriptural standpoint. Thus, we read in I Peter: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, . . ."¹³ From the Scriptures, we find that every Christian is to be a minister to his fellow men and "decidedly not that every Christian is his own minister."¹⁴ This interpretation must be firmly directed toward Disciples who feel and advocate the radical premise that one can be a minister to himself. For the study committee on the Christian Ministry of the 1955 World Convention of Disciples of Christ held to the extension

¹²Ephesians 4:12.

¹³I Peter 2:9.

¹⁴Smart, op. cit., p. 183.

of the principle of the priesthood of all believers to include "ministering to others as well as to or for oneself."¹⁵ Such an interpretation, as we have already asserted, is a perversion of the New Testament ministry and a misrepresentation of Martin Luther.

Not only must the leadership of the Church proclaim the ideal of Christian ministering but also must implement that ideal with practical applications. Now most of these applications I shall outline under a later segment of this chapter on the specific functions of the special and common ministries. But it is necessary to say at this point that the Church should insist upon the fulfillment of at least one specific function by every believer beside attendance at worship. The nature of this function would depend upon the abilities and talents of the individual church member after he or she has been nurtured about the ministry of the Church through a school in churchmanship. At the conclusion of such a study in churchmanship, each new member should be invited to assume some responsibility in the ministry of the total church. These ministerial functions such as serving on some committee, assisting in the church school, helping in the maintenance of the church's property should

¹⁵World Convention of Churches of Christ, 1955, Doctrines of the Christian Faith, "The Christian Ministry," No. 5, prepared by Study Committee (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1956), p. 5.

be outlined in the course on churchmanship. Now it is quite possible that there will not be meaningful functions available for every new member. In that case after giving some indication of the area in which they desire to serve, they should be asked to wait until a suitable opening is available. Yet, at once they should be included in a church school class and/or a study group. What I am saying is that for too long Disciples and much of evangelical Protestantism have been preaching "Whoever will may come" and giving little direction in churchmanship to those who do come.

Special Ministries

As a corollary of the doctrine of vocation, there are the special ministries. There is clear Scriptural evidence for a special ministry within the Church. God called the leaders and prophets of the Hebrew nation to a special ministry in Israel. Likewise, Jesus called the Twelve and others later to specific and special ministries. The apostles appointed Christians in the early churches to the special ministries of elder and deacon. And so throughout the Christian era there have been these particular ministries. Quite obviously without these special ministries the Church would not have long endured. The evidence for this statement is to be

found in the experience of some sect groups who have abolished all clerical forms only to find that they ceased to exist without the special ministries. The ministerial problems which the Church has experienced in the past two thousand years have usually arisen when the special ministries have completely engulfed the functions of the common ministry and there has developed a wide gulf of distinction between the clergy and the rest of the Church.

Whereas there is not and should never be any distinction as to superiority, there is some distinction as to the respective responsibilities of the special and common ministries. This is important. For to advocate an idea of no distinctions is to foster the anarchy of some sects who insist upon only the common ministry. For all decency and good order there must be some definitive responsibilities placed and accepted. Thus, the special ministry is separate from the common ministry on two counts--leadership and full-time vocational employment.

Above and beyond all else the special minister is called to lead and direct the program of the Church. Every collective and social entity must have a leader. There must be one who is responsible for the program of the Christian community. Now the special minister may have and should have fellow leaders but ultimately and finally he

is the leader of the leaders and accountable for the program of the church. The minister is the leader in worship, in preaching, in shepherding the flock, in administering and organizing the Church's program, and in nurturing the Christian community.

The calling of men and women to the special ministry is similar to that of the calling of Christians to the common ministries except that in the realm of the providential call through the insistence of the Holy Spirit, the candidate for the special ministry becomes acutely aware of his leadership abilities and his suitability and disposition for extensive Christian service. There has always been some controversy among Disciples as to the validity of the divine, private calling to the ministry. It is to be remembered that Alexander Campbell discounted all such calls. However, in recent years there has been a decided swing among Disciples toward the acceptance of such private calls and in a few cases some Disciples have gone so far as to make the divine, inner call a prerequisite prior to ordination. My opinion is that every person entering a special ministry of leadership in the Church should possess a positive feeling that God has called him to Christian service. Now this feeling may not be the result of a private encounter with God. It may have grown out of an experience with another person. Or it may have developed

out of a crisis situation in the life of the individual. I do not believe that we can restrict the workings of God to one particular avenue or method. "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

Then, the Church calls the candidate for the special ministry to service in its vineyard and gives recognition to his gift of leadership through the formal service of ordination. Ordination is not to be conceived as a ritual of the bestowal of the gift of Christ but rather it is the recognition of that gift with which the candidate has been previously endowed. Also, ordination is a solemn act of dedication and consecration by the Church in which the Christian community sets apart one of its servants to be a leader of leaders and at the same time the servant of servants. In reference to formal ordination Manson has argued, "If he has been called and equipped by Christ, all the bishops, presbyteries, and congregational meetings in the world cannot make him any more a minister than he already is."¹⁶ I must disagree with this statement. Formal ordination is an important act of the Church not only for the reasons that have already been mentioned but also because the candidate is literally encircled and surrounded by an atmosphere of support. He is not alone in the ministry

¹⁶ T. W. Manson, The Church's Ministry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948), p. 102.

of Jesus Christ. He stands with fellow ministers, both special and common ministers, to lead the Church courageously and victoriously.

Also a part of the ordination experience is the bestowal by the congregation of the faithful upon the candidate the authority and responsibility of leadership. The matter of authority is a rather delicate subject with Disciples but it seems to me that as we survey the ordination practices of the early church prior to the establishment of the rigid authoritarian hierarchical system that the congregation in setting aside their chosen servants granted them authority to lead the congregation in the way of Christ. This is not to be construed to be the giving of unlimited powers to an individual who can then dictate to the congregation dogmas which must be rigidly followed but it is declaring as Hanson has envisioned that "the ministry leads the way in doing what the Church must do, and acts as the Church must act."¹⁷ Of course, the congregation can and should withdraw this authority to lead when such authority is misused.

Disciples are to be applauded for the raising of their standards in recent years in relation to ordination.

¹⁷ Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, The Pioneer Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 155.

The creation of state commissions and boards who in cooperation with local congregations examine all candidates for ordination, the emphasis placed upon formal education especially graduate training, the inclusion in the ordination ceremony of churchmen from beyond the local congregation have all added to this maturing development of the status of the special ministry. The involvement of Christians from outside the borders of the local community is rather important. One of the major criticisms of the congregational form of ordination has been that frequently the composition of the ordaining body has been purely local thus implying that a congregation can be completely autonomous and independent of the rest of the Church. Therefore, it seems to me that whenever possible at ordination services there should be a representative of some Disciple agency which is international in scope or even a foreign missionary or foreign churchman who in his person asserts the outreach and universality of the Church. When it is impossible to have the presence of such a representative, then at some juncture during the ordination ritual the universality of the Church and its ministry should be explicitly stated.

Roles of the Common and Special Ministries

Turning our attention now to the roles and functions of the special and common ministries, we are immediately faced

with many problems. In my research of the roles of the ordained minister, I have discovered many listings. Here is a sampling of the parish minister's responsibilities. The minister is: preacher, prophet, evangelist, priest, teacher, administrator, organizer, pastor, social reformer, promoter, and civic leader. No doubt more functions could be added to this list, but as it is, the list speaks to the multiplicity of the contemporary minister's functions and the overwhelming responsibilities that he bears.

In a very startling article in Life Magazine a few years ago on "Why Ministers Break Down,"¹⁸ the author, Dr. Wesley Shrader, maintained that the modern ministry demands so much specialization in a variety of fields and requires such a large amount of time that the minister's mental health is seriously jeopardized. There are some revealing facts in the article; for instance, Shrader related the experience of one minister who prepared a questionnaire for his congregation asking how much time should be devoted per week to the principal ministerial roles--preacher, pastor, priest, teacher, administrator. One questionnaire was returned expecting a total of two hundred hours a week for all functions, the average number of hours for all questionnaires was eighty. In an actual survey conducted by Shrader, it was discovered that the average minister spends almost

¹⁸ Wesley Shrader, "Why Ministers Break Down," Life, August 20, 1956, p. 55.

fourteen hours a day, seven days a week performing his ministerial duties. However, I feel that this latter figure is a little high, and my opinion was substantiated by the Blizzard investigation which from 480 ministers surveyed reported on the average approximately ten hours per work day devoted to ministerial activities. There was no indication from this study whether this statistic was based on a seven-day working week or less.¹⁹ Yet, obviously the average minister is overworked.

In 1956, Samuel W. Blizzard, sociologist at Pennsylvania State University undertook a study for Union Theological Seminary, New York, on "The Dilemma of the Protestant Parish Minister." The ministers surveyed by Blizzard were asked to classify the various ministerial roles in order of importance and in order of time allocated to each function. It was discovered that while the ministers considered preaching most important and administration of least significance, the order was just reversed in terms of time spent in the different functions. In other words, ministers devoted most of their time doing what they considered least important. Further, Blizzard found that the average minister frequently finds himself being evaluated by two different sets of standards. "On the one hand," wrote Blizzard, "the Church has a traditional set of norms,

¹⁹Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Dilemma of the Protestant Parish Minister," (paper prepared for the Training for the Ministry Project, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1956), p.9. (Mimeographed.)

by which he is expected to be guided. On the other hand, the parishioner has a set of functional expectations by which the minister's professional service is judged."²⁰ Thus, Blizzard concluded, "This is the minister's dilemma."²¹

Thirty years ago in another investigation in the same area, Mark May came to a similar conclusion. May contended: "This denominational conception of the minister as a holy man who holds fast to the doctrines of the church is often in conflict with the demands made by the local congregation which is dominated by the psychology of the modern business world."²² Several other articles have also been written dealing with the same problem.²³

First of all I believe we must admit that this conflict will never be completely resolved. It has always been a problem in the Christian ministry and probably always will be. The ideal and the pragmatic will never meet. To strive to reach the ideal is always a noble goal but to attain it is perfection which is beyond finite human beings. But

²⁰Ibid., p. 12.

²¹Ibid.

²²Mark A. May, The Profession of the Ministry: Its Status and Problems, Vol. II: The Education of American Ministers (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934), p. 387.

²³See James B. Moore, "Why Young Ministers are Leaving the Church," Harper's July, 1957, p. 65, and Thomas J. Mullin, The Renewal of the Ministry (New York: Abington Press, 1963).

much of the confusion can be resolved through the formulation of a more definite doctrine of the Christian ministry which is both true to Christian principles and at the same time broad enough to be adapted to the contemporary American parish situation.

Second, the Church has often become immersed in the societal, perhaps suicidal, idol of bigness. Congregations are becoming larger and larger. There are several hundred Protestant congregations in the United States that number more than a thousand members. Of course, this problem of bigness has been partially remedied by the creation of the staff ministry but still difficulties persist. Intimacy is lost and the total ministry of the Church is fragmented. Further, the whole psychology of the staff ministry has a tendency to lessen the ministry of the laity and the common ministries. I believe we would do well to follow the example of the Mormons who limit their congregations to five hundred members. Associated with bigness is busyness. Too often the ministry and the outreach of the Church has been spread thin by the participation of the congregation in too many activities and too much program. Every congregation should periodically reevaluate its total program to determine whether or not there are some areas in which its service could be or should be limited. Obviously, it is better to minister and serve in a few fields properly than

to work in many areas poorly. Bainton has counseled, "Perhaps we should look over our programs and see whether they are compatible with our resources."²⁴

Third, more and more the special ministry must relinquish its sometimes avid activist role. No one man can properly minister to every activity and function of the congregation. He cannot do everything. And I am of the opinion that the majority of a congregation do not expect the minister to do everything. Several years ago, Graham Frank, in an article in The Christian-Evangelist posed an interesting question, "Who expect him [the minister] to be such a 'jack of all trades?'"²⁵ I am personally convinced that the average congregation is not nearly as exacting in its demands upon the minister as some ministers think they are. In my way of thinking, the minister is called to lead the Church but not to be the Church. Therefore, the minister must be willing to share the load of the total ministry of the Church. Sharing in the ministry with the rest of the congregation certainly is in line with the ministerial principles of the early Church. Moreover, as Hunter Beckelhymer has remarked, no minister should

²⁴Roland H. Bainton, Encounter (Vol. 18, Spring, 1957), p. 138.

²⁵Graham Frank, The Christian-Evangelist (Vol. LXVII, October 30, 1930), p. 1423.

expect to excel in all the functions of the ministry.

"He might expect to excel in one, be proficient in two more, and be barely competent in the rest."²⁶

With these basic axioms before us, let us deal specifically with the functions of the special and common ministries. In this survey of responsibilities, I shall relate to these six principal roles--preacher, pastor, teacher, priest, administrator, community citizen. In regard to the total ministry of the Church I do not feel that any one of these functions is more important than any other one. All of them are important and should be considered on an equal basis.

Let us first consider administration. Administration is probably the most underrated function in the whole ministry of the Church. Ministers are prone to dislike administration because it is so time-consuming and its benefits are only realized over a long length of time. The other areas of the Christian ministry always seem to be more important. A Christian Standard editorial of a few years ago directed the minister to "escape from the office desk as much as is necessary in order to prepare for the pulpit."²⁷ However, administration is important

²⁶ Hunter Beckelhymer, Encounter (Vol. 23, Winter, 1962), p. 60.

²⁷ "Preacher or Promoter?" Christian Standard (Vol. XCIV, May 9, 1959), p. 2.

and crucial. No social entity, religious or secular, can long survive in our complex society without adequate preparation and planning of its program. Further, administration has always been an essential element in the life of the Church. Ronald E. Osborn in an excellent article on "The Minister's Role as Administrator," (one of the few I have found in this area) has traced the significant role administration has played in the Church since the Biblical era. Speaking about the early Church, Osborn declared, "Talk about promotion! How many offerings did Paul take up for the poor saints at Jerusalem? How many committees did he have to work with and how many assistants did he have to appoint?"²⁸

Administration is an area in which the common ministries of the laity should play a large part. There is perhaps no other field in the work of the Church where laymen are more competent. The minister should lead and direct the program but laymen can be very close assistants. All the committees of the congregation should have lay chairmen. It would be advantageous for the chairmen of regular, standing committees to preside over these committees for a term of at least three years thereby removing from the minister's responsibility the annual re-orienting of a new chairman to the functions of his committee. The minister

²⁸Ronald E. Osborn, Encounter (Vol. 18, Spring, 1957), p. 190.

should meet with each chairman at least bi-monthly but only with the full committee when absolutely necessary. The major planning and preparation of administration should be assumed by the laity.

Again in the pastoral field much of the responsibility can be shared with the laity. The minister should be obligated to do all the pastoral counseling but pastoral calling especially evangelistic calling and visiting the sick, shut-in, and hospitalized can be adequately done by the laity. This is not to say that the minister does all the pastoral counseling and the laity does all the pastoral calling. They are partners in the ministry of Christ and share the responsibilities of the work of the Church. Hence, for instance, if a couple in the congregation are having marital difficulties, then on occasion the minister might properly invite some mature couple to counsel with them. Likewise, the minister should lead in the program of pastoral calling with the continued assistance of the laity when called upon to serve.

Also in the area of teaching and Christian education, laymen are usually very competent. Probably twice a year the minister should conduct a school for lay teachers in which he gives emphasis to the theological principles that are basic to Christian instruction. Almost every denomination now has very adequate periodic teachers' training programs for the laity.

Under the area of civic relationships, I am including all community, denominational and inter-denominational affairs. No minister can completely isolate himself from the secular affairs of the community. It is imperative that the minister be a good example of worthy citizenship. But at the same time he must limit his activity in the community or else we will forsake his leadership responsibilities in the Church. Thus, P. H. Welshimer counseled ministers, "Be a good citizen of your community, but do not think you must head every committee and every organization for the moral uplifting and civil welfare of the community."²⁹ Most ministers can probably afford the time to be active in one or perhaps two community enterprises. Much the same thing could be said about denominational and inter-denominational programs. Once again the minister should take some part in these affairs but as Hampton Adams directed, "The minister himself will have to limit his service to a very few agencies."³⁰ Obviously, the major responsibility in the community should be assumed by Christian laymen. The shape of the total community should be largely determined by consecrated

²⁹P. H. Welshimer, Christian Standard (Vol. LXIII, February 21, 1931), p. 3.

³⁰Hampton Adams, You and Your Minister (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1940), p. 154.

Christian laymen who witness to Christ not only within the congregation but also in the world. Twenty years ago, William Temple, the late archbishop of Canterbury, had a noble goal in mind when he asserted, "We must move nearer to a state of affairs where the minister stands for the things of God before the congregation while the congregation stands for the things of God before the outside world."³¹

The preaching and priestly functions have been left until last because I feel that these ministries lie primarily within the realm of the minister. The minister should be the preacher. Preaching is his responsibility. In cases of emergency when the minister is ill or away at a convention or vacationing, then laymen can be enlisted to preach. But for the most part it is the function of the minister to proclaim the Word to the faithful believers through preaching. The same principle is applicable when considering the priestly ministry. By priestly function I mean presiding over worship including baptism and the Lord's Supper and conducting weddings and funerals. Again in cases of emergency the laymen can be called into service except where prohibited by law as with the marriage ceremony. Tertullian, Luther, and Alexander Campbell all adhered to

³¹William Temple, The Hope of a New World (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 106.

the employment of the laity in these more formal functions only in unusual circumstances. The declaration of Campbell at this point is noteworthy. Campbell held that "to employ all the members of the community, either at one time, or in rotation, to preach, teach, or exhort" was adverse to divine wisdom and human prudence.³²

The whole basis of such an interrelated ministry on the part of both clergy and the laity is commitment and dedication to Christ. The entire Christian community must be willing to commit themselves to sharing in the ministry of Christ and to submit themselves to a rigorous training program so that they can be adequately equipped to serve. As the special ministers and the common ministers consider themselves to be partners in furthering the cause of Christ, there will be no line of distinction. But when either the special ministers or the common ministers consider themselves or their roles to be superior to the other, then disunity within the ministry of the Christian community exists.

This paper has been an attempted reformation in the area of the Christian ministry. The Church in the tradition of its founder, Jesus Christ, is always in the process of repeated reformations "as it comes under the

³²A. Campbell, The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. VI (May, 1835), p. 228.

judgment and hears anew the promise of God's word in Scripture."³³ Arnold Come has sounded a vibrant chord with which it is fitting that we close this chapter.

"Whenever a particular formation of the Church's ministerial functions fails any longer to impart to the whole membership a sense of mission to the world, then that formation lies under the judgment of God."³⁴

³³ Smart, op. cit., p. 176.

³⁴ Come, op. cit., p. 94.

APPENDIX

MINISTERIAL PLACEMENT

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. THE DYNAMIC OF MINISTERIAL PLACEMENT SYSTEM

One cardinal fact must be kept in mind in considering ministerial placement among the Christian Churches and that is that we are and always have been a dynamic, developmental body. Modes and procedures of organization have been adapted and changed as needs arose.

However, the Disciples of Christ have not been without certain basic principles which have made responsible freedom and order possible and preserved us from anarchy of irresponsible freedom. In ministerial placement this might be best stated in the phrase -- A Free and Responsible Ministry for a Free and Responsible Church. It remains true that these are two facets of a principle which any ministerial placement program must face, both ideally and pragmatically.

2. A FREE AND RESPONSIBLE CHURCH

a. Freedom

The congregation is the basic unit in our Brotherhood.

Fundamental to any ministerial placement service is the principle that within our Brotherhood the call to serve is functionally and, to some extent, theologically the call of a particular congregation. All methods and procedures must aim to strengthen the congregation's ability to effectively function in this primary capacity of calling its own leadership, while at the same time recognizing its interdependence with, and responsibility to, the Brotherhood of Christian Churches. Methods which compromise this or fail to provide effective help, no matter how efficient, are inconsistent with this basic principle.

a. Responsibility

While the congregation has the right to call or revoke a call of its ministerial leadership, it also has the obligation to use all means to exercise this right in a responsible manner so that it may secure the right ministerial leadership.

By its own decisions, congregations may choose to cooperate with each other in creating and developing agencies and common procedures whereby this responsibility inherent in its right may be more effectively, both spiritually and intelligently, discharged. However, such agencies and procedures as they may create should never infringe on the right and the obligation of any individual congregation engaging in a free search leading to an intelligent decision concerning the calling of its ministerial leader.

3. A FREE AND RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY

a. Freedom

Any ministerial placement system must recognize the principle of the free nature of the ministry. While every minister has the right to choose the type of ministry that shall be his and to accept or reject any opportunity without prejudicing his standing in the system, it is his obligation to use all means to exercise this right in a responsible manner so that he may accept an opportunity of service in the light of the church's need and his ability to serve.

b. Responsibility

By acting responsibly it is assumed that the minister, by his own free choice will accept the Ministerial Code of Ethics as a guide as it relates to Ministerial Placement and will cooperate readily with the accepted Brotherhood Placement Procedures.

4. A RESPONSIBLE SYSTEM AND A FREE CHURCH PLACEMENT

Any ministerial placement system should, therefore:

- A. Promote the highest standards of confidentiality with reference to sources and the use of information pertaining to individual ministers; and, promote the practice of honest and straight-forward recommendations concerning ministers under consideration.
- B. Enable and aid a congregation to exercise its right to search for and choose a minister as its leader more effectively than it could do by operating solely by itself;
- C. Aid the church in the discharge of its responsibility by providing personal and individual counseling in an advisory capacity only;
- D. Provide protection for both the congregations and ministers, through counseling, against those of obviously questionable character but in a manner so as to be redemptive.
- E. Provide assistance to a church that shall be non-competitive, orderly, quick and smooth.

5. A RESPONSIBLE SYSTEM AND A FREE MINISTRY

Any ministerial placement system should:

- A. Provide a diligent and aggressive method whereby fair, equal and impartial consideration and help will be given to all ministers and will seek to eliminate all partiality, both conscious and unconscious.
- B. Provide safeguards to the ministers against bureaucratic "blackball".
- C. Provide personal and individual attention and counseling to ministers as they seek to be placed.

II. PROPOSED PATTERNS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

In keeping with these principles the following are the proposed patterns of responsibility and communication for the agencies and persons who may be involved in ministerial placement.

A. THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY:

The United Society, through the office of Ministerial Services, will provide the following services as a "communications center" for ministerial placement:

1. Will receive, duplicate, and place before the state secretaries any Minister's Information and Placement Schedule from a minister desiring to be placed who is listed in the Yearbook of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) or endorsed by a state organization of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ).
2. Will maintain a central file of factual biographical information.
3. Will provide a system of confidential communication of verifiable facts to state secretaries relating to problem placement cases.
4. Will provide to pulpit and personnel committees specific Minister's Information Schedules on request (not Placement Schedules).
5. Will refer pulpit committees to state secretaries when an initial request for names is received.
6. May, upon receipt of a second request provide a pulpit committee with carefully selected names. Care will be taken to insure that the pulpit committee in such cases is advised that the provision of names does not necessarily constitute a recommendation.
7. Will provide copies or notice of all placement communications to the state secretary concerned.
8. Will alert the state secretary whenever it is noted that a church is considering a minister whose record is in extreme doubt.
9. When requested, will investigate and arrange for transfer of ministerial status from other communions in cooperation with whatever State Commission on the Ministry is involved.
10. Will alert state secretaries to special placement needs.

B. STATE SECRETARIES

The State Secretary, or his chosen delegate, relates most directly the minister to the local church. As such he will provide the following services:

1. Will be directly responsible for counsel to pulpit committees and will, if he needs to, initiate contacts with these committees. This includes orienting the pulpit committee to the facilities available for their use and the standard methods of procedures, i.e.:
 - a. Shall make available to pulpit committees a selection of names of ministers along with verified information concerning their life, ministry, abilities, and validity of educational degrees.
 - b. Will pass on to the pulpit committee any nominations received from responsible persons.
 - c. Will so operate, after counseling, as to leave the free choice with the congregation.
2. Must be equally sympathetic to ministers and churches and their needs.
3. Is obligated to give personal concern to each minister in the state and to those who may desire to come into the state.
4. Is obligated to make thorough investigation of these ministers and not ignore any sources of information.
5. Shall be responsible for educating the ministers in his state to the Brotherhood placement procedures and when they desire to move across state lines shall relate them to the facilities of the National Office of Ministerial Services.
6. Must give personal and immediate attention to pulpit committees.
7. Has a moral responsibility to make careful and responsible use of the Minister's Information and Placement Schedules by reviewing each one individually.
8. Will refer pulpit committees to Ministerial Services for Information Schedules on specific ministers if such information is not available in state files, or obtain them for the church.
9. Will alert the Office of Ministerial Services and the state secretaries involved to problem cases.
10. Will, when a request is received from a pulpit committee of a church located in another state:
 - a. Refer the pulpit committee to the Office of the State Secretary in their own state.
 - b. Provide copies of all correspondence with the committee to that state secretary, including evaluations which have been asked from him.

C. COLLEGES AND SEMINARIES

Colleges and Seminaries, working through their field placement offices will provide the following services:

1. Will be responsible for dealing with student ministries served by their students. This will be done in cooperation with the office of the State Secretary.
2. Will, in other cases, when an initial request for name is received, refer pulpit committees to the office of the state secretary.
3. May upon receipt of a second request, provide the pulpit committee with names; sent, if possible, through the office of the state secretary.
4. Will provide copies of all placement correspondence to the office of the state secretary.
5. Will be responsible for providing the office of the state secretary with a full and objective evaluation of the Minister's record so far as the institution knows it, when he is referred to a local church.
6. Will be responsible for relating their graduating students to the national placement services.
7. When involved in the placement of alumni shall work through the office of the state secretary in accordance with the above principles.

D. EXECUTIVES OF NATIONAL AGENCIES

Executives of National Agencies, when concerned with placement procedures, will observe the following:

1. Will normally not deal in placement unless it is a clearly stated and budgeted item of their portfolio.
2. Will refer pulpit committees to the national placement service through the office of the state secretary and/or Ministerial Services on the receipt of an initial request for names.
3. Will, if the nomination of names is unavoidable, provide them through the office of the state secretary.
4. Will provide copies or notice of all placement communications, including recommendations, to the office of the state secretary.
5. Shall be responsible to provide a full and objective evaluation of men whom they nominate to the Office of the State Secretary; or, upon request, to both the State Secretary and the local pulpit or personnel committee.

6. Will refer ministers desiring assistance in changing pastorates to the Office of Ministerial Services.
7. Will refer to the state secretary the names of ministers who desire recommendation to a specific church.

E. EXECUTIVES OF CITY, DISTRICT, AND/OR AREA ORGANIZATIONS

Executives of City, District, and/or area agencies (where those organizations are unrelated to the state organization), when concerned with placement procedures, will observe the following:

1. Will refer pulpit committees to the national placement service through the office of the state secretary and/or Ministerial Services on the receipt of an initial request for names.
2. Will, if the nomination of names is unavoidable, provide them through the office of the state secretary.
3. Will provide copies of all placement correspondence including recommendations to the office of the state secretary.
4. Shall be responsible to provide a full and objective evaluation of men whom they nominate to the office of state secretary or, upon request, to both the state secretary and the local pulpit or personnel committee.
5. Will refer ministers desiring assistance in changing pastorates to the Office of Ministerial Services.
6. Will refer to the state secretary the names of ministers who desire recommendation to a specific church.

F. INTERDENOMINATIONAL AND ECUMENICAL AGENCIES

Executives of interdenominational and ecumenical agencies are encouraged to respect the above principles and procedures. Specifically they should follow the procedures as outlined for executives of agencies and organizations as noted in Section D and E above.

G. MEDIATION COMMITTEE

In order to facilitate the smooth functioning of this placement service, there shall be set up a Mediation Committee, a subcommittee of BOAIR. This committee will have responsibility for handling conflicts and differences in methods of procedure, or violations of agreement. It shall be responsible for implementing emergency procedures involving ministers in situations of extreme distress. It shall be responsible for such other assignments in this field as may be assigned by BOAIR.

H. INTERIM MINISTRY PLACEMENT

While the aforementioned basic principles are fully applicable to the interim ministry, there are certain differences which should be noted for the sake of clarity.

1. The Pension Fund of the Christian Churches will serve this group in the same basic manner as the Ministerial Services Section, The United Christian Missionary Society, serves the active ministry, with the following variations in procedure:
 - a. "Ad Interim Service Information Blank" furnished by the Pension Fund, will be used in lieu of the "Minister's Information Schedule" when information is to be provided to local pulpit and personnel committees. "Minister's Placement Schedule" will not be used.
 - b. Ministers of other communions desiring interim service and transfer of ministerial status will be referred to the Ministerial Services Section, The United Christian Missionary Society.
 - c. A quarterly listing of interim ministers will be provided to the office of the state secretary.

2. State Secretaries:

- a. Shall relate interim ministers who desire service to the facilities of the Pension Fund of the Disciples of Christ.
- b. Shall refer pulpit committees to the Pension Fund for information on specific ministers when such information is not available in state files.
- c. Shall notify the Pension Fund of changes of interim ministers within their states.

3. Other Agency Personnel:

Other agency personnel, including college and seminary faculty and administration, executives of national, area, district, city and interdenominational agencies will refer interim ministers desiring placement assistance to the Pension Fund and/or State Secretaries concerned.

4. Interim Ministers:

- a. Will be guided by "My Code of Ministerial Ethics".
- b. Will not become candidates for the pulpits of congregations in which they are called to serve on an interim basis.
- c. Will refrain from becoming involved in the process of selecting a minister but will constantly urge the church to work in close cooperation with the State Secretary.

I. AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONAL MINISTERIAL PERSONNEL

1. The same courtesies and ethical considerations should prevail in this area as in the area of pastoral ministerial placement.

2. All agencies and institutions shall be free to make personal contact with prospective employees, whether in local churches or other organizations, however, the state secretary of the state where the prospective employee is located shall be consulted in the early stages of consideration.
3. When a prospective employee is being sought from a church related organization, the executive to whom the employee is responsible will be notified in an early stage of negotiations and before a call is extended.
4. Recognizing the inter-relatedness of the agencies and institutions in the selection of personnel one of the criteria the employer should use in investigating the candidate should be an assurance that the prospective employee can satisfactorily work with other Brotherhood agencies and institutions.
5. The National Office of Ministerial Services shall act as an information center concerning ministers interested in "general work". The office of the Board of Higher Education will also render this service in the higher educational field.

J. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Upon approval of BOIAR, the Interim Committee, and the Council of Agencies this document shall be circulated to all agencies, institutions and individuals concerned, along with a commitment concerning Ministerial Placement (see below).
2. All agencies and institutions shall be asked to ratify this document and to accept it as a guide in matters dealing with ministerial placement.
3. After acceptance all agencies and institutions, shall be asked to present this document to all staff concerned, both present and future, of the agency and/or institution as a matter of policy.
4. Upon approval of the Council of Agencies the Chairman of BOIAR will be authorized to circulate this document and the commitment form and to secure the return of the commitment form.

Our Commitment Concerning Ministerial Placement

Name of Agency or Institution _____ Date _____

Our agency (institution) has received and considered the document entitled "Ministerial Placement". We note the request that we accept and ratify the principles set forth therein.

After careful consideration we took the following action:

1. Approval, with the understanding that we will interpret the document to our staff as the accepted procedure for ministerial placement for Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), and accept it as our method of operation. _____
2. Approval in principle with a request that the attached suggestions also be considered by the Council of Agencies in regard to Ministerial Placement _____
3. Disapproval _____

Signed _____

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