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THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH TODAY:  
A THEOLOGICAL BASIS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology


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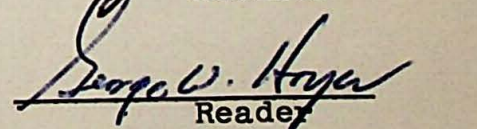
by

Murv R. Kentel

May 1973

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. PROLOGUE. . . . .	1
II. THE OLD TESTAMENT UNDERSTANDING OF LAITY. .	5
III. THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF LAITY. . . . .	9
IV. THE LAOS THEOU AND THEIR FUNCTIONS. . . . .	19
Marturia. . . . .	20
Koinonia. . . . .	23
Leitourgia. . . . .	27
Paideia . . . . .	30
Diakonia. . . . .	33
V. THE LUTHERAN UNDERSTANDING OF LAITY . . . . .	38
Luther and the Reformation. . . . .	38
The Confessions . . . . .	43
VI. TIME FOR RENEWAL. . . . .	47
VII. A PRACTICAL PROGRAMME FOR THE GATHERED CHURCH	54
Marturia. . . . .	55
Koinonia. . . . .	65
Leitourgia. . . . .	67
Paideia . . . . .	73
Diakonia. . . . .	78
VIII. SOME PRACTICAL SITUATIONS FOR THE SCATTERED CHURCH. . . . .	83
Marturia. . . . .	85
Koinonia. . . . .	90
Leitourgia. . . . .	92
Paideia . . . . .	95
Diakonia. . . . .	100
IX. THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY . . . . .	104
X. CONCLUSION. . . . .	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	115

## CHAPTER I

### PROLOGUE

Each age in the long and eventful life of the Church has its distinguishing characteristics. When the history of the second half of the twentieth century is written, it could well be that one of the more striking notes will be the emergence of the laity into a strong and active role in carrying out the mission of God. In the past two decades there has been a growing consciousness that the laity are the church indeed; that they need to step into the spotlight of the church's mission; that they need to commit themselves to the cause of Kingdom work. Laity are the Church indeed; and one is compelled to say that the Church needs to get busy with the real business of the Church. The laity need to become more active participants, and not remain passive spectators; they need to be workers and not mere watchers.

When one examines the derivation of the word "lay" or "laity," it can be readily seen why the role of the laity should be active, not passive. The word "laity" goes back to the Greek word laikos. It means originally: belonging to the laos, that is, the chosen people of God both in the Old and New Testaments. In this light all members of the Church, the non-ordained, as well as the ordained are laikoi, and only on this basis can they get other more specific qualifications. But as one writer on the subject observed:

As early as at the end of the first century it becomes evident that the significance of laos and laikos is getting a turn, different from its basic significance in the New Testament. The main reason. . . is the emergence of an organized, duly ordained clergy as a closed "status" over against the laos the people, i.e., the ordinary congregation.<sup>1</sup>

Laos was also then regarded as a contrast to kleros, the term from which clergy stems. But its primary meaning is "lot," then "portion" or "heritage." In New Testament theology the two words denote the same people; not different people. There is no idea of a definite body called clergy. All Christians are God's laos and all people are God's kleros. Again, the "ordained" and the "non-ordained" as well, are both part of the larger segment, o laos theou.

In viewing particularly the role of the "non-ordained" today, one is compelled to note that their position demands much more aggressive activity than sitting, standing, and kneeling. Yet, because of the dichotomy which developed between them and the "ordained," with the latter emerging as a "professional" and "paid" class, the non-ordained laity sat back, and became rather passive spectators in Kingdom work. Far too long the feeling has prevailed that the "spiritual" work is in the hands of the "ordained," and the "non-ordained" are to busy themselves with the "other" work. They are not really called and equipped; they are only to pray, pay, and

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<sup>1</sup>Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 50.

obey. The "non-ordained" were soon pushed into the background and given the impression that "the Church is Clergy."

This kind of sentiment has permeated the community of the Church for centuries. No significant practical change has been realized even in our day. Perhaps the reason for this is twofold. On the one hand, the "ordained" have not been very eager as yet to release the "non-ordained," to let them go, to do their "thing" as o laos theou. It is highly probable that the "ordained" lack confidence in the ability of the "non-ordained." Conversely, the "non-ordained" who have been let loose, who have been called, invited, encouraged to serve, but have turned a deaf ear, are quite satisfied to let the "paid professionals" serve them, instead of serving with them.

For more than two decades world church leaders have recognized the fact, that the role of the laity in the church today should be significantly more active. A much greater proportion of the laity needs to step into the forefront of the Church's mission, or the Church will be strangled. The first assembly of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam, 1948) affirmed: "Only by the witness of a spiritually intelligent and active laity can the Church meet the modern world in its actual perplexities and life situations."<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup>Wilfred Scopes, editor, Training Voluntary Workers . . . NCC, Christian Literature Society (Mysore, India: Wesley Press, 1958), p. 2.

second assembly of the World Council of Churches (Evanston, 1954) asserted:

God calls His people, the Church, to share with Christ in His threefold ministry of prophet, priest, and King. Through its lay people the Church is virtually omnipresent and it is certainly not restricted to the limits of its organization. . . . the vocation of the layman as a living member of the Church does not lie in the Church building. . . . Some laymen need to be pushed out from the sheltering umbrella of the organized church in order to serve Christ where they earn and spend their money.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, when we address ourselves to the place of the laity in the church today, we are not dealing with an emphasis that is particularly new or revolutionary. What would be new, and certainly revolutionary for us today would be if the laity would ever really become active participants, not only as the "gathered" church, but primarily as the "scattered" church.

In the last ten to fifteen years, more has been written about the role of the laity in the church today, than during any other period in church history. Our purpose in this thesis, is to state, or rather, reexamine, the theological basis of the place of the laity today, in terms of a fivefold function of the New Testament Church, and then to blueprint some practical situations, in which these functions could and should find expression in the lives of God's people, both within the community of the Church, and the community of the world.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER II

### A THEOLOGICAL BASIS

#### The Old Testament Understanding of Laity

In the Septuagint, laos is used over fifteen hundred times in the sense of an ethnic group of the same stock and language and, in particular, of Israel herself. The expression laos theou becomes a technical term for Israel as the chosen people of God. God chose a special people to fulfill His purposes. Old Testament history relates the origin and call of Israel to be God's "peculiar" people (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:1-6). Accordingly, one writer states:

Of course the origin of God's people lies in His design when He created heaven and earth. But we can best understand the origin and responsibility of the laos if we begin with the call of Abraham and with the Covenant made on Mount Sinai.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Old Testament further relates how God helped and aided His people in order that they might be the instrument of His universal purposes. God did not choose Israel because of her own qualities and virtues, but rather for "His name's sake."<sup>2</sup> The reason for this choice is to be found in God alone.

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<sup>1</sup>Hans-Ruedi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Deut. 9:4-5.

It is also to be noted that Israel is elected not to privilege, but to service, to further God's purpose for the nations. This is made rather explicit, notably in two Old Testament passages:

Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.<sup>3</sup>

Parallel to this are the words of the prophet, "But you shall be called the priests of the Lord, men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God."<sup>4</sup> These passages are crucial when we speak of the role of the laity in the Church today. God calls Israel. God designates Israel as laos theou. God makes a covenant with Israel. All of Israel is a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. All of Israel are "ministers of our God." Thus, Israel is a kingdom set apart to represent God to the world and the needs of the world to God. Israel is to be a dedicated nation, the light of the Gentiles.<sup>5</sup> She is set apart as a priesthood to the world, chosen to serve other nations, not to be served by them. Israel was redeemed from Egypt and made a holy people to the Lord,<sup>6</sup> in order that she might serve God,<sup>7</sup> and His purpose for the nations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ex. 19:5,6a.

<sup>4</sup>Is. 61:6.

<sup>5</sup>Is. 42:6.

<sup>6</sup>Deut. 7:6.

<sup>7</sup>Deut. 7:11.

<sup>8</sup>Is. 45:4-6.

This does not mean that God has no interest in the rest of the nations. God has a concern for "all the earth," but Israel was chosen to serve the nations so that they would not have to be rejected by God. All the people of Israel are priests. All members of this kingdom of priests were privileged to draw near to God in dedication, worship, and service. In so doing, they might learn how their mission to the world was to be fulfilled. This privilege belonged to the Lord's people as a corporate body and not to any exclusive class of specialists.

Though all of Israel is a kingdom of priests, "ministers of our God," it is noteworthy to recognize the consecration of "special" priests within the total priesthood (Num. 8:14-19). The Levites and the sons of Aaron were appointed as high priests. In reality, the Levites were to act as assistants to the sons of Aaron, "for all the service of the tent" (Num. 18:4). The Levites were the guardians of the sanctuary. God specially chose them and entrusted to them the care and administration of holy things.

Hence, in the Old Testament all the people are God's people, chosen to serve as a light to the Gentiles. But in the administration of tabernacle services, God set apart certain ones from among the laos for special ministrations.

Thus, the laos theou in the Old Testament, and the Universal Priesthood of all believers, are unquestionably related in the Old Testament. This was the Church in the

Old Testament--all the people of God. With the exception of a minority remnant, Israel did not carry out her responsibility as God wanted it. God chose His people to do sacrifice for Him and to serve Him by serving the nations, but they did not fulfill this function. Israel failed desperately, but God did not. At the proper time God Himself made a new arrangement with His people, by fulfilling and focusing the priesthood in Christ, the Great High Priest.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF LAITY

With the advent of Christ, God opened up a new and living way between the world and Himself. God loved the world. God gave the world His Son. In Christ, God served, suffered and sacrificed. Christ is the new Israel. Through Christ, a new covenant was established. In this sense, the priesthood is focused in Christ. The priesthood of our Lord is central to New Testament theology. This is also the highest form of priesthood. Here we see a non-professional, a "lay" carpenter giving His body as a single sacrifice. This layman bent to scrub some sweaty feet. He sloshed water on the road-dirty disciples. Then "when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and resumed His place, He said to them . . . 'I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.'"<sup>1</sup> Christ sacrificed and through His sweat and blood God called into being a new community. A new nation was established which was grounded in Jesus' death. A new people, a new priesthood--a corporate priesthood--was established to carry on the suffering and serving action of the one Mediator between God and men.

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<sup>1</sup>John 13:15.

It must be noted then, that when we speak of the New Testament concept of "laity," we are really dealing with "priesthood" of all believers. To speak of the priesthood of the laity, seems to be a contradiction in terms, at first. But this is not so. The two terms are identical in nature. The priesthood is comprised of laity and all laity are priests.<sup>2</sup>

Basically, the concept of priesthood in the New Testament is identical to that of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, ritualism did demand a human priesthood, a human mediator, which the New Testament interpreted as a foreshadow of the priesthood of Christ. But in terms of priesthood belonging to the people of God, the laos, there is essentially no difference.

The locus classicus in the New Testament, for the role of the laity in the Church today, is 1 Peter 2:9. Here we see that God's people are God's "own," God's "chosen ones," God's "called-out ones." This is what the ecclesia is all about. The Hebrew equivalent for ecclesia is qahal.<sup>3</sup> The basic meaning is, "meeting" or "gathering." People gather or are summoned for any and every purpose. Most significantly, the assembling of Israel before God on Horeb<sup>4</sup> when

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<sup>2</sup>A. J. MacLean, "Laity, Laymen," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), VII, 767.

<sup>3</sup>The LXX uses ecclesia almost a hundred times as a translation for qahal.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Deut. 4:10; 9:10; 10:4; 18:16.

God sealed His covenant with them. It is most generally used in connection with religious associations. This is particularly true in the New Testament where it is frequently used also in reference to a congregation gathering for prayer, instruction and deliberation.<sup>5</sup> The ecclesia then, is a community called by God through Christ.<sup>6</sup> As one writer observes; "the ecclesia belongs to God because He has called it into being, dwells within it, rules over it, and realizes his purpose through it."<sup>7</sup> The Church is called by God and belongs to God; it constitutes a single reality, described in the New Testament as o laos theou, the people of God.<sup>8</sup> As in the Old Testament, the "called-out ones" are priests. All those who comprise the laos theou, are priests and priestesses unto God. One writer on this point argues,

The New Testament clearly teaches that all Christians are to be ministers. Anything else clearly violates Christ's demands of discipleship. When he spoke of self-denial, of taking up the cross daily, and of comradeship with him, there was never the vaguest hint

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Acts 11:26; 12:51; 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:4-5,19,28; 1 Cor. 34-35; Col. 4:16.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16,22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Tim. 3:5,15.

<sup>7</sup>P. S. Minear, "Idea of Church," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, George Arthur Buttrick, general editor (New York--Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 608.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. P. S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960) for a description of other terms used for God's people.

of a select upper crust of professional Christians under which lay a stratum of amateurs from whom a lower level of dedication was acceptable.<sup>9</sup>

The term o laos theou, in New Testament usage, is certainly evocative of the sense of identity and mission. They belong to God. The mission of the laos is to exercise their priesthood in relation to the world outside the Church:

The priestly people are placed in this world in order to bring all the needs, frustrations, and glories of the world before God, and in order to transmit God's judgment, promise, and blessing to the world.<sup>10</sup>

The mission then of the priesthood in the New Testament is to be a priest-nation to the Gentiles.

Furthermore, in 1 Peter 2:5, the emphasis is on "sacrifice," sacrifices which are "acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." These sacrifices are not material, as was the case under the old dispensation, but spiritual. Man is unworthy to bring to God any offering at all, but through Christ a way has been opened to God's presence and the sacrifices of the priesthood may be laid upon God's altar. St. Paul reminds us that these are to be "living sacrifices."<sup>11</sup>

The mission of the priesthood is finally, to "declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness

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<sup>9</sup>Howard E. Butt, Jr., "The Layman As Witness," Christianity Today, XII (August 1968), 1128.

<sup>10</sup>Weber, Salty Christians (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>11</sup>Rom. 12:1.



into His marvelous light."<sup>12</sup> The role of the priesthood, the laos theou, is to be active, not passive or static. The New Testament is unaware of two types of laity, namely active and passive. It knows only the former. Through Christ, God has called his people out of darkness. They participate in God's act in Christ by giving life and light to others, to the world. This is the mission of the priesthood, the Church, the community of the faithful, the company of the committed,<sup>13</sup> the laity. It is a matter of being called out of the world and sent back into the world with a mission.<sup>14</sup> There is no classification of laymen and clergymen in the Church's mission. All are members of the "royal priesthood." The whole Church is a priesthood; every member has a share in priestly service.

Thus the name "priest" belongs to every believer. It is no longer reserved for any particular order within the Church. And this name is not a mere empty title; it gives expression to the rights and powers of Christ's people. It also reminds them of their duties and responsibilities.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup><sub>1</sub> Peter 2:9.

<sup>13</sup>Elton Trueblood, The Company of the Committed (New York: Harper & Bros., 1961).

<sup>14</sup>Cf. John H. Elliott, Doxology: God's People Called to Celebrate His Glory (St. Louis: LLL, 1966). He gives excellent support to the idea that the people of God are in this mission together; that all are called to celebrate His glory.

<sup>15</sup>L. W. Spitz, "The Universal Priesthood of Believers," Abiding Word (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), I, 329.

This requires total commitment on the part of every believer, every priest, regardless of his station in the Church or in the secular world. Whether kleros, or laos, both refer to the same group of people. One writer on this subject states, "I defy the idea that because a man makes his livelihood in the secular world, God expects only a partial commitment of his life."<sup>16</sup>

The New Testament therefore, knows of no classification of the ordinary and specialists. Every baptized believer is a "priest." It must be noted that the New Testament is rather explicit in viewing Baptism as the means through which people become "people of God." It is at Baptism that we obtain our part and lot, our individual ministry, within the total priesthood of the Church of God. One might regard Baptism as the ordination, the laying-on of hands, of a new member of the royal priesthood. Baptism makes us eligible for priestly service. As one writer argues, "If you are a baptized Christian, you are already a minister . . . therefore fulfill your ministry in Him. (Col. 4:17)."<sup>17</sup> Baptism is the making of a layman in the Church of Christ. In the New Testament a layman, a member of the laos theou, is not one who has no "ministerial" responsibility, or who has

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<sup>16</sup>Butt, XII, 1128.

<sup>17</sup>Francis O. Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 25.

handed over his functions of the priesthood to a "professional paid priest." All the laity are ministers of the Church of Jesus Christ. All baptized Christians are called to participate in diakonia.

Once a man has been baptized, he is a minister, and there is not a thing he can do about it. A man can change his citizenship or renounce it. He cannot change or renounce his ministry, for in Baptism God has acted, and what God has done cannot be undone by man.<sup>18</sup>

At first glance, one is tempted to disagree with the above statement, for there are those who in renouncing their baptism, would also renounce their ministry. In Baptism God acts so decisively, and says in effect, "Now, you are mine; and since you are my property, you have the right and the privilege, the duty and responsibility to serve."

Though all Christians are priests, ministers in the New Testament sense, there is a variety of gifted people within the body of Christ. One writer compares these diverse gifts and services found in Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor. 12:28, and Rom. 12:6-8. The Ephesians' passage, he points out, is the only one which mentions pastors and evangelists. But if one parallels it with the other two, then it must be understood in an entirely different light. Paul has in mind the same general structure in the life of the Church. Some kind of service is expected from every single member of the Church. Furthermore, there is no elite category in the spectrum of

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

ministries.<sup>19</sup> Whatever one does is an act of diakonia for the benefit of the total body, "for the equipment of the saints for the work of the ministry."

There is a difference in function when we view the role of the pastoral office, but technically, there is no essential distinction. As noted above, kleros and laos both refer to the same group of people. Gibbs and Morton give the true New Testament picture of this by means of a diagram, which puts everyone, including pastors, in a fundamental equality under God.

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<sup>19</sup>Arnold B. Come, Agents of Reconciliation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 81-85.

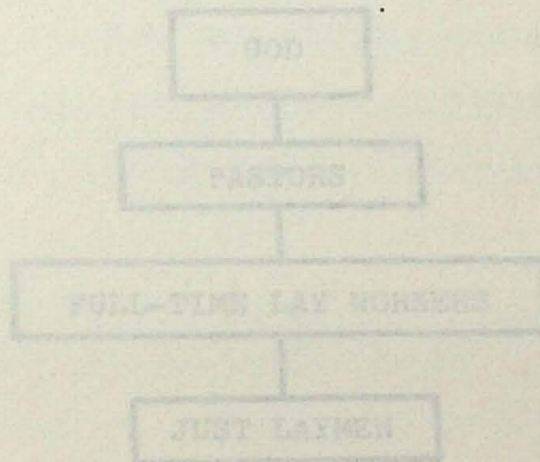


Diagram 1. Wrong Conception of the Body of Christ  
--The Church

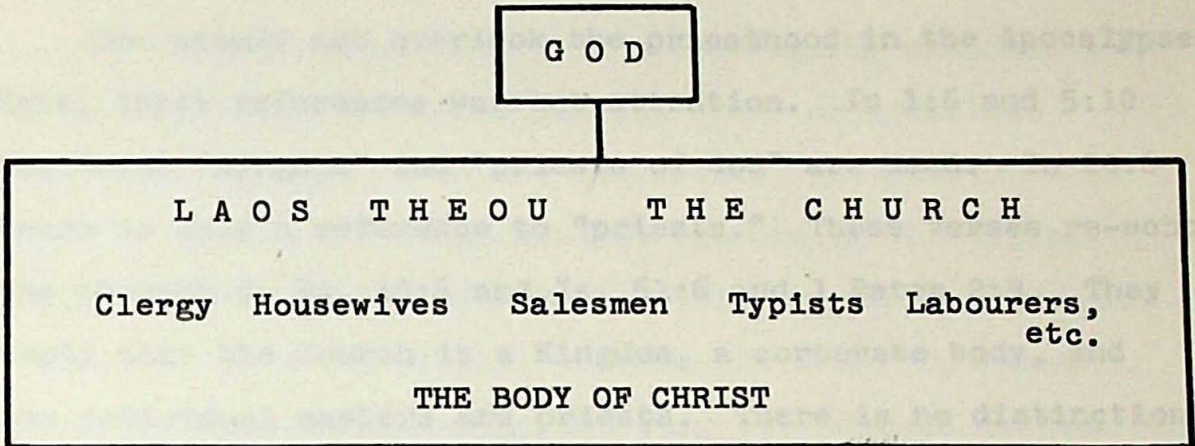


Diagram 1. The Body of Christ by Gibbs & Morton\*

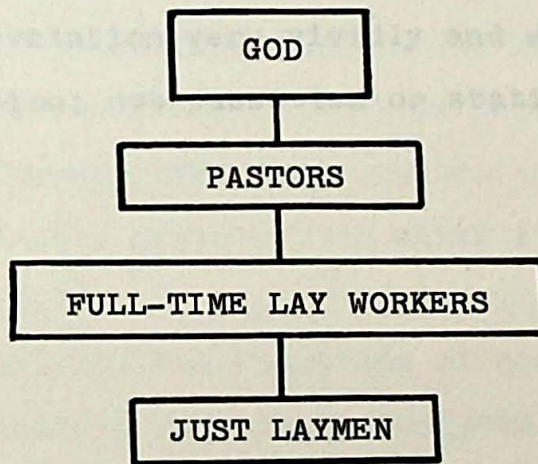


Diagram 2. Wrong Conception of the Body of Christ  
--The Church

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\*Mark Gibbs and R. T. Morton, God's Frozen People (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 14.

It is totally unbiblical to diagram a picture of the Church as illustrated in Diagram 2. Yet, this is the distinction that has been made, not only in theory, but also in practice.

One should not overlook the priesthood in the Apocalypse. Here, three references warrant attention. In 1:6 and 5:10 the terms "kingdom" and "priests of God" are used. In 20:6 there is only a reference to "priests." These verses re-echo the thought in Ex. 19:6 and Is. 61:6 and 1 Peter 2:9. They imply that the Church is a Kingdom, a corporate body, and the individual members are priests. There is no distinction between the various members. The Church, like Israel, is a great sacerdotal society. Its "ministry" is the rightful duty of every baptized "priest"; the "priesthood" is shared by all Christians. Thus, the role of the laity according to the Book of Revelation very vividly and strongly urges active participation; not passivism or static spectatoritis.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAOS THEOU AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

Up to this point we have dealt basically with who the laity are. They are God's people. They comprise the societas fidelium. They are the Church. Obviously, this implies something living, active. To use an old cliché, "the church is not a building." It is not an organization of Ladies' Aids and Finance Boards, but a living community of people whom God has made His very own through baptism and the gospel. A living community is a doing community. The people of God have specific functions, and these functions are rather definitive in the New Testament. It must be noted that these are functions of the whole church. And even if there are specialized ministries, these are exercised on behalf of the whole church and together with it. As one writer observes, "The whole Church constitutes an apostolic and priestly ministry, in which every individual member has a share."<sup>1</sup>

One could describe the functions of the laos in terms of prophetic, priestly, and kingly responsibilities. Indeed, some writers do portray the role of the laity in

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 312.

this way.<sup>2</sup> However, the New Testament appears to be much more specific in outlining the functions of the people of God. Each one of the functions given, can certainly be viewed as being either prophetic, priestly, or kingly. As we define five functions of the laos theou, we must recognize the fact, that these are by no means exhaustive. There are a variety of other related functions and other ministries carried out by the people of God. But the functions we discuss now are basic, and of course they are all interrelated, like the fingers and thumb of our hand.<sup>3</sup>

#### MARTURIA

A martus was probably one who remembers, "who has knowledge of something by recollection and can thus tell about it."<sup>4</sup> His task in the early Christian sense, is to make known a specific fact or truth. This usage is rather dominant in the Johannine writings. But it is also expressed

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<sup>2</sup>Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1959). Father Congar gives an excellent and exhaustive study in this threefold function.

<sup>3</sup>See William J. Danker, "Five Fingers for God," Interaction (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), II (January 1971), 9-11, in which Dr. Danker gives a rather vivid description of the five functions of the church, comparing them to the fingers and thumb of our hand.

<sup>4</sup>H. Strathmann, "Martus, Martureo, Marturia, Marturion," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, and translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967) IV, 475.



by St. Luke in his Gospel, and the Acts.<sup>5</sup> Marturia, which is a form of the verb "to witness," occurs thirty times in the writings of John, and twenty-seven of these passages are dominated by the specific sense of the evangelistic witness to Christ's nature and significance which aims at faith. Marturia is used in the active sense of bearing witness.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere it has the passive sense of the witness given. It is given by the Baptist,<sup>7</sup> by Jesus,<sup>8</sup> by God through the works which He causes Jesus to do,<sup>9</sup> by the Evangelist, whose whole Book is called a marturia, as stated in 21:24.<sup>10</sup>

In 1 John 5:9-11, there is a reference to God's witness to His Son. The context points out that this is truly an evangelistic witness. "God gives us eternal life. . . . life is in His Son." This is why witness is so vital. It is an important and necessary function of the Church, the laos theou, and is not to be exercised only by an elite class.

Further, in the Book of Revelation, the phrase "to have the witness" occurs a number of times.<sup>11</sup> Very striking too,

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<sup>5</sup>Especially Acts 1:8, which is the missionary (witness) charge.

<sup>6</sup>John 1:7; Rev. 11:7.

<sup>7</sup>John 1:19.

<sup>8</sup>John 3:11,32,33; 8:13-20.

<sup>9</sup>John 5:32,36.

<sup>10</sup>Strathmann, IV, 500.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. 6:9; 12:17; 19:10.

is the occurrence of the phrase marturia Jesu.<sup>12</sup> One must note that in several cases the "Word of God"<sup>13</sup> or the commandments of God<sup>14</sup> are closely related to "the witness of Jesus." This would indicate a rather important principle, that the Word and witness are inseparably connected. The witness of Jesus is not something God's people securely possess. It is a task, something to be passed on. It must be stated also that witness, especially in Revelation, is used frequently "of those who have suffered death or are in the total situation of death."<sup>15</sup> There is a martyrological nuance.<sup>16</sup> A martyr is one therefore, who sealed his witness (marturia) with his death. This is an evangelistic confession and witness, culminating in the sacrifice of life. There are other passages in the New Testament which point out that marturion is used as a witness to something.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is synonymous with gospel, proclamation.

St. Luke's usage in 24:28 denotes "one who declares facts directly known to himself."<sup>18</sup> But this is a fact that

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<sup>12</sup>1:2,9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4.

<sup>13</sup>1:2,9; 6:9; 20:4.

<sup>14</sup>See 12:17.

<sup>15</sup>Strathmann, IV, 502.

<sup>16</sup>11:7; 12:11.

<sup>17</sup>E.g. Acts 4:33; 1 Cor. 1:6; 1 Cor. 2:1; 2 Tim. 1:8.

<sup>18</sup>Strathmann, IV, 492.

cannot be confirmed by witnesses. It can only be believed and then it should be shared or proclaimed. This is the burden of the function of marturia. The New Testament witnesses, were so called because they lived through the events of Christ's passion, but also because they were specifically called to be "witnesses."<sup>19</sup> Those early Christians had first hand knowledge. Thus, they were charged to proclaim the story of Jesus,<sup>20</sup> especially His resurrection,<sup>21</sup> and in so doing they would emphasize its saving significance. One can therefore readily see why marturia is a basic function of the laos theou.

#### KOINONIA

The New Testament concept of koinonia is portrayed as a three-pronged experience: participation, association, and communication. All of these are interrelated, and if one is absent, fellowship is incomplete.

The function of koinonia involves participation. This is a common sharing in God's grace,<sup>22</sup> and in the Gospel.<sup>23</sup> By the grace of God, Christians become partners in the

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<sup>19</sup>Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 22-26.

<sup>20</sup>Acts 1:22; 10:39.

<sup>21</sup>Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:29-32; 10:41,42.

<sup>22</sup>See Phil. 1:7.

<sup>23</sup>Phil. 1:5.

Gospel, for the furtherance of that Gospel. There is further, "the fellowship of His sufferings."<sup>24</sup> To the early Christians, it was an honor to participate with Christ in His sufferings. New Testament koinonia has the cross at its centre. This is essential to real Christian fellowship. In Philemon 6, we are alerted to yet another dimension, "the sharing (koinonia) of your faith." Thus, the nature and exercise of this fellowship are determined by a unifying principle here, by the unity of faith. Paul and Philemon share the same faith, and this common sharing compels them to common action in and by faith. This is koinonia in practice.<sup>25</sup>

Secondly, koinonia includes the aspect of association, in terms of mutual assistance. The most concrete example of this is Acts 2:42, viewed in the context of verses 44 and 45. Fellowship consisted in being together as a Christian community and having "all things in common." This denotes a "sharing." It is not limited to spiritual things alone. Material blessings were also shared. St. Paul refers to this.<sup>26</sup> Genuine koinonia demands sharing. He who shares, enters into fellowship with the person aided. In this

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. Phil. 3:10.

<sup>25</sup>There are additional references to common sharing: 1 Peter 5:1 (glory); Eph. 3:6 (promise); 1 Cor. 10:16 (body and blood); Phil. 2:1 (Holy Spirit); and perhaps the images expressed in John 15; Rom. 12:5-8; and 1 Cor. 12:12-26.

<sup>26</sup>Rom. 15:25-27.

respect, koinonia is also coupled with diakonia when the apostle praises the Macedonian Christians for their participation (koinonian) in mutual assistance (diakonias), "the relief of the saints."<sup>27</sup> The writer to the Hebrews, on the other hand, combines koinonia with eupoiias "doing good."<sup>28</sup> Communicating and doing good are not only parallel Christian acts, but eupoiias is an outcome of koinonia and koinonia is manifest in eupoiias.

The third dimension of koinonia as practiced in the New Testament is that of communication. This is fellowship in the sense of partnership. It is an intimate fellowship, a divinely created and established communion of the New Testament believers. The locus classicus is 1 Cor. 1:9, "called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The personal genitive denotes full fellowship with Christ, complete. That which creates and sustains this fellowship, is the koinonia pneumatos.<sup>29</sup> The "participation in the Spirit" is the unifying principle of the Christian community and the laos are all to "be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord."<sup>30</sup> St. John sums up the

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<sup>27</sup>2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13. Diakonia is also discussed below as a function of church.

<sup>28</sup>See 13:16.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1.

<sup>30</sup>Phil. 2:2.

rich intimacy of New Testament koinonia when he states:

"Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."<sup>31</sup> In the deepest Christocentric sense, there is fellowship with God. It is an indestructible fellowship. Christ is the life of all the living; the Lord of the dead. "The saints on earth and those above, but one communion make."

This fellowship then, as experienced by the laos theou in the New Testament, is both vertical and horizontal, or what F. E. Mayer called, "soteriological and sociological."<sup>32</sup> The former is engendered by faith, and the latter by love.

When one views the results of this New Testament koinonia, he is compelled to assert rather strongly, that here was an energizing, vital function of the people of God. For this koinonia resulted in a sort of "communism," a mutual giving and sharing. "They had all things in common."<sup>33</sup> It created a genuine concern for the poor<sup>34</sup> amid the laos, and there was no difference between Jewish and Greek Christian.<sup>35</sup> Koinonia in the New Testament is practised by the whole

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<sup>31</sup> John 1:3,6-7.

<sup>32</sup>F. E. Mayer, "The New Testament Concept of Fellowship," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXIII (September 1952), 635.

<sup>33</sup>See Acts 2:43-47.

<sup>34</sup>Rom. 15:26.

<sup>35</sup>Rom. 15:27.

Church, and is of course experienced in the exercise of every other function of the laos. It is the one function that is most interrelated with the other functions.

### LEITOURGIA

A third function of the laos theou, the whole church is leitourgia. It is interesting to note that the verb form of leitourgia is formed from leitōs, "concerning the people or national community," and the root erg(ergon), "work," in classical Greek. "It is thus linked with the national use of laos for the national community. Etymologically, it meant to render service to the people; to discharge a task for society. It was closely related to or was a form of diakonia."<sup>36</sup>

In biblical usage, leitourgia is seldom used in the sense of "service to man." It is generally used in reference to the priestly cultus in the Old Testament, the worship of Yahweh performed by the Priests and Levites either in the tabernacle or the temple. The Hebrew equivalent is 'avodah.' "Leitourgia is always used of the ministry of the Priests and Levites in and at the sanctuary, especially the ministry of priests at the altar."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>H. Strathmann and H. Meyer, "Leitourgeo, Leitourgia, Leitourgos, Leitourgikos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, IV, 216.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., IV, 221.

In the New Testament, the author of the book of Hebrews uses the term in the sense of the LXX usage,<sup>38</sup> namely the 'service' rendered by the Priests in the tabernacle. This is understandable. But then in the rest of the New Testament leitourgia or the verb form is used in contrast to the LXX, notably Acts 13:2, where the reference is obviously to a fellowship of prayer on the part of five worshippers. Thus the term leitourgein is used of common prayer, and this is foreign to LXX usage, and it opens the way to broader usage in the New Testament.

In Rom. 15:27 and 2 Cor. 9:12, it is rather difficult to determine what is meant. Both instances refer to the collection for the congregation in Jerusalem. If this is brought into a sacral and cultic relation then leitourgia could be viewed as an act of divine service of a high order. But the fact that in Phil. 2:30, Paul uses leitourgia as a monetary gift to himself, would refute that. However, in Phil. 2:17, leitourgia would appear to characterize the missionary work of Paul or the Christian walk of the Philippians.

In examining the noun leitourgos, it must be noted that Paul uses it three times,<sup>39</sup> and it has a cultic connotation, a sacral function. If not, then Paul could have used

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<sup>38</sup>See 8:6, 9:21. Also Num. 8:22; 16:9; 18:4 for LXX usage.

<sup>39</sup>Rom. 13:6; 15:16; Phil. 2:25.



diakonos. But the context of these verses shows that God or Christ is the recipient of the service, and it is therefore correct to use leitourgia in the sense of "worship" and as a function of God's priests.

It must be further noted, that leitourgia is never used for services or offices of apostles, teachers, prophets, presbyters, bishops. On the other hand, that it is a function of the laos, is not spelled out clearly either in the biblical record. It is used primarily in connection with the one who leads the "service" or "worship." It connects with the Old Testament concept of priestly ministry, and intends to bring about the ideal of self-sacrifice in the service of Christ, and to edify the faithful life of Christians. Again, if its root meaning is spiritualized, it can be viewed as a service rendered by the people of God, to God, and for their benefit. The fact that there was corporate participation in leitourgia, even though perhaps under the guidance of a "leader," made the laos active in leitourgia. The people of God in the New Testament offered leitourgia. The patterns and forms are not important. The function is; and it belongs to the whole church. Certainly St. Paul speaks to the total church, when he says: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>The Greek word used here in Rom. 12:1, is latreian. In contrast to leitourgia, it is more specific in the sense

PAIDEIAPaideia, and the verb form

denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is growing up to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching, instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement. Paideia is both the way of education and cultivation which has to be traversed and also the goal which is to be attained.<sup>41</sup>

In the Old Testament we find a whole series of words for teaching and direction, for chastisement and correction, but the one word which most closely denotes "to educate" is 'yasar'. In the Book of Proverbs, "education" is closely connected with "correction," "chastisement."<sup>42</sup> But education is not limited to children; the cultivation of adult character is also stressed.<sup>43</sup> We find a much broader meaning in prophetic revelation, where paideia is God's discipline on the chosen people as a whole.

We find many occurrences of the concept in the New Testament. In several instances, the function of paideia is not necessarily to bring the one "educated" to an intellectual understanding or simply to transmit a dogma.

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<sup>40</sup> of "worship." But there is a close relationship, for the Hebrew derivative is the same.

<sup>41</sup> Georg Bertram, "Paideuo, Paideia, Paideutes, Apaideutos, Paidagogos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, V, 596.

<sup>42</sup> 13:24; 19:18; 23:13.

<sup>43</sup> 1:7; 6:23; 10:17.

Paideia was to bring an influence to life and change in moral conduct. It was to supply practical guidance and direction. In the Book of Acts, we find two references.<sup>44</sup> Both denote a formal, didactic, transmissive function; in the case of Moses, by an Egyptian hierogrammateus, and in the case of Paul, by Gamaliel.

There are two occurrences in St. Luke's Gospel, where the verb form paideuein is employed.<sup>45</sup> This is the story of the passion, used in reference to Christ in the sense of castigare, meaning "to chastise." In the Greek world paideuein means to "treat as a child." In these Lucan references however, the word refers to the independent punishment of scourging which Pilate wished to inflict on Jesus. Hence, the aspect of direct, physical action. The intent of scourging was to combine a warning with a severely painful impression.

In Hebrews 12, we find a set of occurrences<sup>46</sup> which has a number of purposes. Here we see the discipleship of suffering. If one fails to recognize his sin, paideia is ✓ necessary. The "discipline" of the Father is given meaning through relationship (you are sons), and is seen as an instrument in the processes of growth which that relationship

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<sup>44</sup>7:22; 22:3.

<sup>45</sup>23:16,22.

<sup>46</sup>Especially vv. 5-11.

(sonship) involves. Furthermore, suffering for the Christian is also seen as a distinct evidence of relation to Christ and His sufferings. The "discipline" is more than a mere practice, fortifying a person against calamity. The experience of suffering under the auspices of a gracious and forgiving God, is the path to becoming a more genuine child of God, with the assurance that God loves him and that he has been adopted by Him.<sup>47</sup> This kind of paideia definitely requires strenuous exercise on the part of the laos, but then comes joy. The Father is the Educator. This is His way with His people, in order that they can partake of His holiness. Furthermore, the full impact of paideia is not realized in time. It is a gift of the end-time. Paideia then, is never a goal, but always a means. Perhaps the German "erziehung" would best describe the function here, or the word "nurture." Nevertheless, God is here involved in a disciplinary instruction of men, out of love for them.<sup>48</sup>

In Eph. 6:4, the basic rule of all Christian paideia is stated: "Fathers. . . . bring them [your children] up in the discipline. . . . of the Lord." This is education which the Lord gives through the father. This is an education by act, a responsibility given by the Lord to the Christian community

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<sup>47</sup>Cf. vv. 7-11.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Rev. 3:19 "Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten(paideuo)."

(fathers). The form kuriou is a subjective genitive, indicating that evangelical paideia is to be carried out by the Father through the father. It serves the purpose of teaching, correction, conversion, setting example and instruction in righteousness. This is what St. Paul refers to in that classic passage, 2 Tim. 3:16.<sup>49</sup> The sense of paideia here would better be seen as "education" rather than "discipline"; however, each supplements the other. An interesting parallel is oikodomeo (2 Cor. 12:19), meaning "to upbuild." That is what paideia is really all about.

Paideia is seen as a function of both God and His people, the laos. It is both received on their part, and thereby experienced, as well as ministered. It comes to the laos and is administered by the laos under the direction of the Word. It may involve suffering, but suffering is an assurance of one's election as well as an exercise leading to growth.

### DIAKONIA

We proceed now to the final function of God's people in the New Testament, within the realm of this thesis.

Outside of the New Testament, diakonia has a variety of meanings: to wait at table, to direct a marriage feast, to

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<sup>49</sup>There are other occurrences in the Pastorals. e.g. 1 Tim. 1:20 (learning); 2 Tim. 2:25 (correcting); Titus 2:11-12 (training).

provide or care for, or simply, to serve. To the Greek world, this was not a very dignified office. Hence, the person who performed it was most frequently referred to as a doulos. The LXX for example, does not use diakonein at all, but substitutes douleuein.

The original sense of diakonia in the New Testament, was a service that involved "waiting at table."<sup>50</sup> In a wider sense, it meant, "to supervise a meal,"<sup>51</sup> something like our everyday caterers. Diakonia is used of Martha "caring" for her guest.<sup>52</sup> Peter's mother-in-law "cares" for her guests.<sup>53</sup> It is also thus used of the angels who came and "ministered" to Jesus after His temptation.<sup>54</sup>

In Matt. 25:42-44, our Lord includes under diakonein many different activities. Here the term comes to have the full sense of active Christian love for the neighbor and as such is a mark of true Christian discipleship. Thus, any loving assistance rendered to the neighbor is diakonia. But Jesus does not stop at the picture of table service. To "minister" implies being a doulos, making sacrifice.<sup>55</sup> The

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<sup>50</sup>Luke 17:8; 12:37; 22:26-27.

<sup>51</sup>Acts 6:2; also John 2:5,9.

<sup>52</sup>Luke 10:40; (John 12:2). "Caring in the sense of providing bodily sustenance."

<sup>53</sup>Matt. 1:31.

<sup>54</sup>Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13.

<sup>55</sup>Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45.

fact that Christ links diakonia with discipleship,<sup>56</sup> indicates rather strongly that this is a vital function for God's people in the New Testament. Further, if one has this gift, it should be exercised also on the horizontal level. We owe it to the neighbor, as St. Peter asserts: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another . . . whoever renders service . . ." <sup>57</sup> Though this function concerns itself primarily with the physical, material needs of the recipients, we find that the preaching of the word, at least in one instance, is rendered as diakonia.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps this is why we can look upon the Word as the Bread of Life. It certainly also supports the fact that physical needs are not met at the expense of the spiritual, nor vice versa.

There is another dimension of diakonia which pervades the New Testament. It denotes the discharge of certain obligations in the community, but in the sense of the "ministry" of the Apostolic office. St. Paul says: "Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry . . ." <sup>59</sup> It is also used in this sense of the office of an

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<sup>56</sup>See John 12:26.

<sup>57</sup>1 Peter 4:10-11.

<sup>58</sup>Acts 6:4.

<sup>59</sup>Cf. Rom. 11:13. (The same sense is given in 2 Cor. 4:1; 6:3-10; 11:8; Acts 1:17, 25; 20:24; 21:19; 1 Tim. 1:12.)

evangelist,<sup>60</sup> or the activity of Mark who combines personal service and assistance with missionary work.<sup>61</sup>

It must not be overlooked, nor can it be denied, that in the New Testament, an individual who performed diakonia, possessed the special office of a diakonos. It is applied to the Apostles, as well as to our Lord, and in general, it signifies "servant," or "minister." Again, diakonos is a general appellation given to office bearers in the New Testament Church.<sup>62</sup> Acts 6 certainly supports the fact that this was a specially instituted office. Seven men were appointed "to serve tables." This specially recognized office was introduced however, not as a substitute for the "ministry of the Word," but to supplement it. That it was a special office, appears also to be supported by the fact that St. Paul addressed some of his letters to "bishops and deacons."<sup>63</sup> The more developed form of such an office is seen in the qualifications and duties of "deacons" set forth in 1 Tim. 3:8-12.

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<sup>60</sup> 2 Tim. 4:5.

<sup>61</sup> 2 Tim. 4:11.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Cor. 3:5: Paul and Appollos, diakonoi; Col. 4:7: Tychicus, a pistos diakonos.

<sup>63</sup> Phil. 1:1. This is where the diakonos, denoting social welfare ministry, really first seems to emerge.



Even though the office of the diakonos emerges, the whole Church is diakonia.<sup>64</sup> The idea of a social welfare ministry, of physical and material helpfulness, of rendering assistance as an act of Christian love,<sup>65</sup> was a function, a responsibility, a privilege, of the laos theou. This is supported somewhat by the fact that the term diakonia is used only once in the Gospels, but frequently in the Epistles, and eight times in Acts. The whole church serves Christ, by rendering diakonia. Christ serves the whole church. There is a mutuality here, in this important function of the people of God.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>See 2 Cor. 3:1-11; 5:18; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 2:19. St. Paul uses the pronoun, "us" and "gave gifts to the Church . . . for the work of ministry," which seem to imply that the total Church is involved here.

<sup>65</sup>The collection for Jerusalem, which Paul describes as a true act of love, is also rendered as diakonia. See Rom. 10:30; 2 Cor. 8:1-6.

<sup>66</sup>See again Matt. 20:28; Luke 12:37; 22:26-27. Christ serves; He expects the laos to serve. Also 1 Cor. 3:5-7, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

## CHAPTER V

### THE LUTHERAN UNDERSTANDING OF LAITY

#### Luther and the Reformation

Hendrik Kraemer warns against taking the priesthood of believers as a starting point in developing a theology of the laity. However, this is exactly the springboard that Luther used as he developed his understanding of the role of the laity. Kraemer does admit that the "priesthood of all believers" is a good biblical doctrine, but one which was insufficiently developed by the Reformation. He hesitates to use it as a starting point for his theology of the laity, because he feels "it is a too partial approach." He goes on to say,

Moreover, it has acquired more and more an individualistic accent, wholly alien and even contrary to the biblical notion which is the "priesthood of the whole Church." At the time of the Reformation it was not only a new discovery of biblical truth, but it was above all a cry of protest against a church wholly ruled by priestcraft . . . . In the doctrine of the "universal priesthood of all believers" there was an attempt to put right the distorted relation of "secular" and "religious" vocation. This character of protest, often expressed, especially by Luther, in such strong affirmations and claims that they could not but break down on the stubborn realities of life, has lent to the doctrine of the "universal priesthood of believers" a tendency towards a plea for lay religion and lay revolt towards disinterestedness in the Church as the "household of God." (Eph. 2:19) In this way, the case of the laity is too exclusively determined by the opposition to Rome, which appears from the word "priestly."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 94-95.

One can agree with Kraemer in part. Luther protested mightily against the idea of dividing the church into two classes of society, "worldly" and "spiritual," or laity and clergy, with the life of the former worth less than that of the latter. Thus, when the clergy assumed the title of "priest" and set themselves on a pedestal, and presumed to be in a different class, Luther was compelled to protest, but in the name of the Scriptural doctrine of the priesthood of believers. It was in this context then that Luther tossed around the statement, "Every Christian is a priest," and judging from his character, this was done at times for spite. Luther strongly asserted that all Christians are royal priests; all belong to the priesthood of all believers. One could also agree with Kraemer that the doctrine was insufficiently developed, but only from the point of view of practical implication and application. The laity certainly did not revolutionize the Church through their interest and activity. Luther's whole idea was to impress upon the Church of his day, that the Church is one community, living in one world. One writer makes this observation,

To Luther there were not two kinds of people and two worlds. He insisted that the sharp cleavage between the clergy and the laity and the demarcation between the holy life of the one over against the other had no Biblical justification. What was more, Luther could not accept the principle that the church is spiritual and the world is profane.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Harry G. Coiner, "The Role of the Laity in the Church," Toward Adult Christian Education: A Symposium, edited by

Theoretically, Luther and the Reformation developed the doctrine of the "Universal Priesthood," the role of the laity, beautifully, and in total agreement with New Testament theology. To Luther, Christ was the only Priest. He never discarded or abdicated or transferred His priestly office to anybody else. But He shares the office with the whole church, not merely St. Peter and the apostles, or the pope and the bishops. Luther goes on to assert,

He also bestows the title upon all Christians. As they are called God's children and heirs for His sake, so they are called priests after Him. Every baptized Christian is, and ought to be, called a priest, just as much as St. Peter or St. Paul. St. Peter was a priest because he believed in Christ. I am a priest for the same reason. Thus we all, as I have said before, have become priest's children through Baptism. Therefore it should be understood that the name "priest" ought to be the common possession of believers just as much as the name "Christian" or "child of God."<sup>3</sup>

Luther supports this further, when speaking on New Testament priests he says,

A priest must be born, not made. He is not ordained; he is created. He is born of the water and the Spirit in the washing of regeneration. Therefore, all Christians are priests, and all priests are Christians; and accursed be the statement that a priest is something different from a Christian.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Donald L. Deffner (River Forest: Lutheran Education Association, 1962), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Jarislav Pelikan, editor, Luther's Works (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), XIII, 330-331.

<sup>4</sup>Ewald Plass, editor, What Luther Says (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), III, 1139.

Again, Luther argues further:

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit carefully avoids giving the name "Sacerdos", priest, to any of the apostles or to any other office. Rather he applies this name to the baptized, or Christians, as their birthright and hereditary name from Baptism. For in baptism none of us is born an apostle, preacher, teacher, pastor, but there all of us are born solely priests.<sup>5</sup>

One can readily see from these statements that to Luther every baptized Christian had the responsibility of exercising the Christian faith. Baptism consecrated the believer to the priesthood. But Luther warned against anyone who of himself assumed a higher office.

Just because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and, without the consent and choice of the rest, presume to do that for which we all have equal authority. Only by the consent and command of the community should any individual person claim for himself what belongs equally to all.<sup>6</sup>

Luther felt therefore, that the only difference that existed between God's people within a congregation, and those selected from the midst of the congregation to serve as ministers, (Diener), and to act in the name of the congregation, was that of function. Luther also insisted however, that none should exercise a particular power publicly, unless elected to do so. At the same time, he strongly reminded those in such a particular office that "he who has such an office is

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., III, 1140.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (London: Epworth Press, 1960), p. 44.

not a priest because of his office but a servant of all the others, who are priests."<sup>7</sup> In Luther's thinking, the sequence was a rather obvious one. In order for a man to be a priest he had to be first and foremost, a Christian. He affirms,

Before anyone becomes a preacher or a bishop, he must first be a Christian, a born priest. No pope or any other man can make him a priest. But having been born a priest through Baptism, a man thereupon receives the office.<sup>8</sup>

Although Luther here spoke about the "priest" who was selected by the community, yet, he felt, that every Christian by virtue of his baptism had the same power. In this connection, Luther speaks of the common right of all Christians. As members of the "royal priesthood" all believers are called upon to "declare the wonderful deeds" of God. And Luther relates this to the Word and Sacrament, the giving and retaining of sins.<sup>9</sup> In relating this to the Word and Sacrament Luther does allow for a special office. He asserts, "For although we are all priests, this does not mean that all of us can preach, teach, and rule. Certain ones of the multitude must be selected and separated for

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<sup>7</sup>Pelikan, XIII, 332.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Luther develops this thought beautifully in his essay, "Concerning the Ministry," in Luther's Works, American Edition (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), XL, 21-44.

such an office."<sup>10</sup> Luther therefore carefully distinguished between the office of preaching and the general priesthood of all baptized Christians.

What Luther and the Reformation tried to emphasize was the fact that all believers share a common dignity, a common privilege. All Christians, ministers and laity, belong to the same order, and stand together as servants of God's purpose.<sup>11</sup>

### The Confessions

In the Apology of The Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon discusses the number and use of the Sacraments. In reference to priesthood, there is a strong insistence on the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross as taught in Hebrews, and on the fact that there is no need of a priesthood like the Levitical under the old dispensation. Technically, no reference is made to the "universal priesthood of believers." The word "priest" is used in the context of the priestcraft present in the church of that day or in the sense of what we today understand by the term "called and ordained minister of the word." The church has the right to "functionalize" the pastoral ministry by election and ordination.

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<sup>10</sup>Pelikan, XIII, 332.

<sup>11</sup>Eastwood, pp. 12-14.

For the ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises . . . . For the church has the command to appoint ministers which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry (that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men).<sup>12</sup>

There does not seem to be even an allusion to the place of the laity. But one can make a case for the laity's role in that they are the church, they are empowered to appoint the ministers, and they share in this ministry. It is "service"; it is diakonia.<sup>13</sup> This implies lay-ministry which, in turn, calls for much more than "an assistant to the clergy, or primarily a maintenance man in the institutional church."<sup>14</sup> One writer on this matter observes,

The Lutheran Confessions on the basis of Scripture likewise affirm that pastors are called by the church; are all equal; have the command to forgive sins; represent Christ, and not themselves; that the ministry of the Word and Sacraments is the highest office (function) in the church; that a regular call to the ministry is necessary; that the office has no earthly power, only spiritual; and that any separation of priesthood and ministry is improper.<sup>15</sup>

Article XXIV of the Apology also deals with the priesthood of Christ, as confirmed in the Book of Hebrews. No human mediator is required. Through the ministry of the Spirit, through Word and Sacrament, the sacrifice of Christ

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<sup>12</sup>Article XIII.

<sup>13</sup>Supra, pp. 26-28; also 12-13.

<sup>14</sup>Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 50.

<sup>15</sup>Coiner, p. 51.



is applied to the sinner, and appropriated by faith. There is no specific reference to the role of the laity as priests. However, we have already noted that Christ, our Great Priest, shares His priesthood with believers,<sup>16</sup> but this is not evidenced in The Confessions.

A further reference in the Confessions ought to be noted. In the Smalcald Articles, under the "Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops," Luther speaks about the bishop's authority to ordain. Then he proceeds to show that ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is also valid by divine law and that the authority of the public ministry really belongs to the Church as a whole.

For wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians, 4:8, when he says: He ascended, He gave gifts to men. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church pastors and teachers, and adds that such are given for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Hence, whenever there is a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves, and becomes the minister and pastor of another; as Augustine narrates the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after Baptism then absolved the Baptizer.

Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the Church, and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18:20, Where two or three are gathered together in My name, etc.

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<sup>16</sup>Supra, p. 8.

Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, 1 Pet. 2:9, Ye are a royal priesthood. These words pertain to the true Church, which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers since it alone has the priesthood.<sup>17</sup>

There is a very direct reference to the priesthood, and that it belongs to the whole Church, and only the Church. The Church here is the company of believers. The locus classicus of the New Testament is again quoted to support the fact, that the laos theou, clergy and laity together, has the priesthood. It must be observed in this instance however, that the laity are given more the power to ordain ministers, than to minister. Generally speaking, The Confessions say little about the ministry of the whole Church. The emphasis are largely on the office of the ordained. A clear cut reference to the role of the laity is made, but then it is only "in a case of necessity."

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<sup>17</sup>Concordia Triglotta (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), pp. 523-525.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

#### Time For Renewal

What is a practical, realistic role the laity can play in the Church today? On the basis of our theological review, what can the laity do they are not already doing? What should they and could they be doing?

As noted previously, the role of the laity in the past, has been rather noticeably passive. It is only in the last decade or so that the traditional leadership in the church, officialdom, has recognized the need for a more active role on the part of the laity. If, as Hendrik Kraemer suggests "the laity should become subjects and agents, spearheads of the Church, responsible partners in the Church's vocation," then in what ways can the laity give practical expression to this?

Perhaps at no hour in history, has there been a greater need than now, for the layman to ask himself, "Who am I as a Christian?" "Does my Christianity mean something? How is my Christian faith to find expression? What does God want me to do? What is my reasonable service?" Surely this involves much more than being in charge of the physical matters of the Church's business, like paying bills, attending meetings, and cleaning the sanctuary. These things do

not necessarily denote an active laity, or a church in action.

There is a need for the laity to give a more practical expression of their role as "God's people," not only when they are gathered together as the worshipping community, but also when they are the 'scattered' Church, in the community in which they live and work. God's people must realize that they are God's people, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Admittedly, some of this is happening here and there, and one dare not be too judgmental as to what some of God's people are or are not doing. Things are happening that we do not know about. But they need to be happening on a much wider scale, in a variety of ways, and in a variety of places. From a practical point of view, therefore, this is the time for renewal.

If the church today confines ministry to what the ordained clergy do, it is hopelessly inadequate for the demands of the times. The Church needs renewal. It needs reformation. It is not a matter of saying: Let's go back to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It is a matter of asserting: There is a crying need to complete the Reformation. Francis Ayres maintains that the renewal of the Church will take place in and through the development of a ministry of the laity.

Changes are needed in the direction, structure, and daily life of congregations. The first step in

renewal of the Church is to encourage as many laymen as possible to see themselves as ministers.<sup>1</sup>

Hendrik Kraemer contends "that both laity and ministry stand in need of a new vision of the nature and calling of the Church and their distinctive places in it."<sup>2</sup> Robert Raines voices the concern that

Too often the existing structure is not geared to facilitate mission. Churches suffer from hardening of institutional arteries. New blood is sometimes blocked; new life is sometimes stifled.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of the laity today still thinks of itself as assistant to the pastors in the mission of the Church. The layman sees his Christian duty as limited to being a handyman in the institutional structure of the Church, with no awareness that he is the Church within the world. If the Church is a living community in participation with Christ, then it is time that the laity recognize themselves as vital, mature "priests" in this society. As long as the laity are regarded as immature, they will remain immature. They need to be instructed, but they also need to instruct. As one writer observes:

Any rethinking of the nature of the Church which takes into full account the laity must be matched by the willingness of the laity to assume intelligently and

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<sup>1</sup>Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Raines, New Life in the Church (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 142.

zealously their full responsibility as participant servants among the people of God.<sup>4</sup>

In 1954, the second assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston declared:

The real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices, and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio, and television, in relationship of nations. Very often it is said that the Church should "go into these spheres," but the fact is that the Church is already in these spheres in the persons of the laity.<sup>5</sup>

Two basic truths emerge from this statement: The Church's mission is to the world; the Church is people, laity. E. W. Southcott asserts that the laity "can be an influence permeating society as the clergy never can."<sup>6</sup> Robert Raines maintains "that the Christian's job is meant to be a major vehicle of one's ministry."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the Church simply cannot fulfill her commission from Christ without the co-operation and participation of the Church, the laos theou. (What is needed more than anything else today is for the laity to be the Church out in the world. They are doing a fine job of being the Church within the confines of the "Church." They would likely do

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<sup>4</sup>Howard Grimes, The Rebirth of the Laity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Ernest Southcott, The Parish Comes Alive (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1964), p. 106.

<sup>7</sup>Raines, p. 63.

an even better job if they were trained and permitted to let go of the clerical apron-strings.) But this daily witness to the world is the crux of the problem. To be a "priest" on the job is where the "rubber hits the road." This is where the Church needs most to be renewed.

The renewal of the Church not only calls for a re-examination of its structure, the renewal of the Church calls for a rebirth of itself, rebirth of the laity in terms of commitment, concern, and mission. The Christian must realize that as a disciple of Christ, he is also called to be an apostle for Christ. But if the laity can execute its apostleship, its priesthood only and especially in a case of emergency, they had better begin now. For the whole Church and the entire world are in a state of "emergency." Further, the Church exists for the world and not for itself. Only then is it the Church. Although Congar still opts for the hierarchy and claims that the laity will always be subordinate, he nevertheless admits:

The laity are the Church and they make the Church. They have a function in the world and in the Church which no one else can fill. This function is necessary to the Church's mission. The community of the faithful is needed in the world, to extend the living organism, the Church.<sup>8</sup>

The Church needs renewal. It needs change. How drastic or radical a change is demanded today is difficult to

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<sup>8</sup>Congar, Lay People in the Church (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1959), p. 430.

determine. There are those who opt for renewal and change by means of weakening the role of the clergy, or even the elimination of the pastoral office. But it would be better and perhaps less revolutionary, to suggest the strengthening of laicism, and the elimination of pamsy-wamsy terminology, P like "clergy--laity." Arnold Come suggests "the complete abandonment of the clergy-laity distinction."<sup>9</sup> But in the light of New Testament teaching, this is much too radical. For the pastoral office is rather specific in the New Testament. Its primary function is to equip and enable the laity. P This will be discussed in detail in Chapter IX.

There are those who suggest that perhaps ordination, which created the distinction originally, should be re-examined. Perhaps there are those who have some reservations with this, especially among the clerics. It is doubtful whether "ordination" in our church today creates a hesitancy on the part of the laity to be "priests" in the full sense of the word. Therefore renewal or change in the church in this respect, would not necessarily solve the problem of an inactive, passive, laity. A renewal will come if laity are educated to:

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<sup>9</sup>Come, Agents of Reconciliation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 99.



- a. become subjects and agents, not passive objects.
- b. become spearheads of the Church and not hesitant rearguards.
- c. become responsible partners in the Church's vocation.
- d. realize they are as vital to the Church as breathing to the body.
- e. recognize that they are the dispersion (diaspora) of the Church in the world.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Kraemer, passim.

## CHAPTER VII

### A PRACTICAL PROGRAMME FOR THE GATHERED CHURCH

In examining the practical implications of the role of the laity in the church, we want to explore first of all, the laity's practical role within the Church, as the "gathered" community of God. We stated above, that the laity have done a fairly good and commendable job as the "gathered" Church. It is undeniably true, that a good many laymen today are active in the area of stewardship, evangelism visitations, the Christian education process, visiting the sick, the aged, the shut-in, singing in the choir, leading a society devotion, or even conducting a worship service. But our examination of the theological basis for the role of the laity certainly allows for and demands a much more imaginative role. Laity, as Arnold Come suggests, are "Agents for Reconciliation." Their role within the Church, in terms of the five functions which we examined theologically, should be much more in the forefront from the point of view of practical implications.

In order to help the laity exercise their priesthood, they need to be equipped. This equipping takes place primarily when they are the "gathered" Church. Here the soldiers of Jesus Christ are trained for the battles of daily life and activity. Here they are alerted to certain strategies they can utilize when engaging in spiritual

warfare. For our purpose here, this basic training takes place in five areas. They are taught to realize that as God's people, they have specific functions to carry out. A practical programme is designed to challenge them to fulfill these functions.

### Marturia

This is the function of "bearing witness," of confessing Christ before people, of "declaring the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light," as St. Peter asserts.

The "gathered" Church needs to be trained, equipped for marturia. The Lutheran Church, as others, has done a commendable task in preparing and supplying congregations with excellent training materials, designed to help the people of God become "witnesses" in practice.

Back in the mid-fifties, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod launched "Preaching-Teaching-Reaching" missions. This venture had a threefold purpose:

1. To strengthen the faith of God's people and to equip them for evangelism in their daily lives.
2. To bring the unreached to Jesus through His saving Word and Sacrament.
3. To provide instruction for year round evangelism in the local congregation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Evangelism Dept. Manual For Preaching Teaching Reaching Mission (St. Louis, Mo.: Evangelism Department, 210 North Broadway, n.d.), p. 2.

These missions, which were conducted by several congregations in a given area, usually lasted from Sunday to Thursday. Each congregation would invite a guest pastor from outside the area, who would lead inspirational services every night of the week, and train members to witness. The trainees would also conduct visitations every night prior to the service. The Preaching-Teaching-Reaching venture, was therefore designed to raise the witnessing level of the congregation. Unfortunately, however, failure to conduct some kind of follow-up programme eliminated any kind of spontaneity in marturia.

If the Church is to witness, then children and youth are included in this essential function. The Board for Evangelism of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, has also designed materials to be used by our Sunday School children to help them reach out for Christ. The program which originated in the mid-sixties, is entitled, "We, Too, Can Witness." Each pupil in the Sunday School class and the teacher is invited to give away at least one Gospel tract a week, for a period of ten weeks, and to enroll at least one person in Sunday School. A Class Chart is provided, with special stamps, in order to keep a record of who did what and when. This is a very practical and simple programme for the younger people of God, which has perhaps never really been tested.

With respect to the youth, it must be pointed out that some of the most dedicated people of God have been the young people. In the late fifties and early sixties, the youth rallied to a program known as Ambassadors for Christ. Young people in a given area were encouraged to come together for a week-end; they were inspired and trained, and challenged to conduct witness--survey calls on behalf of a local congregation. Much of this resulted in such enthusiasm that often a group of them would accept the challenge of serving as Ambassadors for Christ, in a given area for a definite period of time during their summer holidays. Today, this venture is known as "Ongoing Ambassadors For Christ, Inc.," and is under the direction of the Reverend Fred Darkow, of Brownsdale, Minnesota.

Marturia is "bearing witness," speaking simply and clearly of the things that have been revealed to you, that you have experienced, that you know to be true. It is a life-giving function of the Church, the laos theou. Every member of God's people then should see himself as a martus. This is not a task for a chosen few. Our Lord did not say, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon you and your preachers shall be my witnesses. . . . go to the end of the earth in the same old way." Dr. William Danker asserts, "Every individual Christian, every Christian household, every

Christian congregation is a finger pointing to Jesus Christ, who is the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

It seems where the laos should be the strongest, they are the weakest. We have had some of the best training materials for witnessing supplied to us over the years, but still there is a great hesitancy on the part of people to vocalize and verbalize Christ. They have been taught how, but they haven't been shown how. The early Christians "went everywhere preaching the Word."<sup>3</sup> In the early 1960s, Dr. D. James Kennedy, minister of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, devised a system of person-to-person Evangelism in which he conducted on-the-job training sessions for the laity and the result has been an "Evangelism Explosion" not only in Coral Ridge, but in many congregations of most denominations. In the Kennedy Plan, laymen are the strategic key, as of course was the principle in New Testament marturia. But one important factor is that laymen must be trained. The procedure is simply this: One trains two, the pastor will train two laymen. This training involves theology of witnessing, and also practice. The trainees, following each training session, will accompany the trainer on witnessing calls. One of the first things the

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<sup>2</sup>William Danker, "Five Fingers For God," Interaction, II (January 1971), 10. Dr. Danker compares the functions of the Church to the fingers and thumb of our hands. Here he likens the marturia function to the index finger.

<sup>3</sup>Acts 8:4.

trainees are expected to do, is to memorize pertinent Bible passages, and an outline of the Gospel presentation.<sup>4</sup> On-the-job training extends for a period of approximately seventeen weeks. Then, each of the three is to recruit two others and go through the same process. The principles in the Kennedy Plan are noteworthy:

1. The Church is a body under orders by Christ to share the Gospel with the whole world.
2. Laymen as well as ministers must be trained to evangelize.
3. Ministers should see themselves not as the star performer or virtuoso but rather as the coach of a well-trained and well co-ordinated team.
4. "Evangelism is more caught than taught."
5. It is more important to train a soul-winner than to win a soul.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Kennedy observes: "These principles and procedures have brought new life and vitality and have resulted in the conversion of thousands of people."<sup>6</sup>

Though this plan is theologically weak from a Lutheran standpoint, since it appears to give credit to the individual for making a decision, rather than to the Holy Spirit, and though a Lutheran cannot agree totally with some of the procedures, it is nevertheless a plan that has proven itself,

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup>Kennedy, pp. 2-7.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

and has been adopted, with some adaptations, by many Lutheran congregations, who in most cases, have likewise experienced explosion in marturia.<sup>7</sup>

A plan which uses a similar approach to the Kennedy Plan, is The ABC's of Life, produced by the Evangelism Department of The American Lutheran Church.<sup>8</sup> It is also called the 2:2 Plan, based on 2 Tim. 2:2, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

Though similar in approach, insofar as it involves the training of laity for marturia, there are some basic differences from the Kennedy Plan. The ABC's Plan suggests that only one trainee accompany the caller on a visitation. There are pros and cons to this method, which we will not discuss within the context of this thesis, but mechanically it may have preference over the Kennedy method. Another basic difference is that the training period is only six weeks. This appeals to both trainer and trainee. The writer has used both plans in his congregation and found the latter to be much more beneficial and edifying. However, in conjunction with The ABC's of Life, a six-lesson training course was

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<sup>7</sup>Dr. Kennedy also conducts training schools for pastors. It is reported that 50% of these trainees, are pastors from The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

<sup>8</sup>Material is available from their office, 422 South 5th Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415.



employed, based totally on the Scriptures.<sup>9</sup> There is no doubt, that because of this course, the ABC's won out over the Kennedy method. The laity desired a little more theological and spiritual meat.

The laos theou are to exercise marturia. They become much more effective if they are willing to submit to some training disciplines. More of this training is forthcoming no doubt, through Key 73, a continent-wide Evangelism effort, on the part of most Christian denominations. Much of Key 73 is designed to edify, strengthen, inspire, and to alert the people of God to the importance of marturia. It furthermore stresses that training for this vital function of the Church is essential. A quick glance at "My Key 73 Commitment" form bears this out.<sup>10</sup>

Operating under the theme "Calling Our Continent to Christ," Key 73 is suggesting a six phase emphasis:

- Phase One:        Calling Our Continent to Repentance and Prayer
- Phase Two:        Calling Our Continent to the Word of God
- Phase Three:     Calling Our Continent to the Resurrection

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<sup>9</sup>The course referred to is, "Witnessing for Our Lord," available through the Department of Evangelism of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 210 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri 63102. Also very helpful, is the Evangelism Resource Book, prepared by the same Department in 1970.

<sup>10</sup>The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Lutheran Key 73 Manual (St. Louis: Board for Evangelism, n.d.), p. 43.

Phase Four: Calling Our Continent to New Life

Phase Five: Calling Our Continent to Proclamation

Phase Six: Calling Our Continent to Commitment<sup>11</sup>

One can see that this venture will demand the participation of every member of the laos theou in this essential function of marturia. The objectives of Key 73 likewise seem to bear this out:

1. To share with every person in North America more fully and more forcefully the claims and message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. To employ every means and method of communicating the Gospel in order to create the conditions in which men may more readily respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
3. To apply the message and meaning of Jesus Christ to--the issues shaping man and his society in order that they may be resolved.
4. To develop new resources for effective evangelism --for consideration, adoption, adaptation, or rejection by the participating churches or Christian groups.
5. To assist the efforts of the Christian congregations and organizations in becoming more effective redemptive centers and more aggressive witnesses of God's redeeming power in the world.<sup>12</sup>

At this writing, the success and results of Key 73 cannot as yet be measured. There are many who feel negatively about this venture, claiming that only half of the continent will be contacted. A great deal of criticism has been raised against Key 73. In a recent issue of Christianity and Crisis, Elliott Wright points out that though Key 73 is

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<sup>11</sup>See p. 10 of the Lutheran Key 73 Manual.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

to be an ecumenical venture, a large number of Protestants has not endorsed it, among them, the Episcopal Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and the United Church of Christ. In addition, "about two-thirds of the Catholic dioceses are not participating." Some object to what appears as "excessive ecumenism," but "more likely, it speaks to an unhappiness with the roots and conception of evangelism in Key 73." Others are objecting because it does not take issue with the social needs of society. Wright feels that it may be just a "paper thing," and too much Billy Graham-like. Even those who are participating he claims, are standing "together apart."<sup>13</sup>

There are other Christians who are voicing the concern over the proselytizing of Jews. Solomon S. Bernards concurs with this when giving his Jewish view: "I am worried about the effect of this proselytizing effort on the Jewish community and especially on the current Jewish Christian dialogue."<sup>14</sup> Bernards feels that Key 73 threatens a setback for Jewish-Christian conversation.

Another critic of Key 73's aims, suggests that it may well turn out to be a virtually irrelevant expenditure of time and effort, which will do some good but will not really

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<sup>13</sup>Elliott Wright, "Raising the Christian Canopy: The Evangelicals' Burden," Christianity and Crisis, XXXIII (March 19, 1973), 35-41.

<sup>14</sup>Solomon S. Bernards, "Key 73--A Jewish View," The Christian Century, XC (January 3, 1973), 12.

matter. Key 73, as he sees it, is an expression of "village Christianity," an attempt to vindicate an out-dated message of redemption, which lacks a vision of "the Kingdom come."<sup>15</sup>

On a more positive note, Donald G. Bloesch makes this claim of Key 73: "Rightly, it recalls the Church to its primary mission: the proclamation of the gospel and the conversion of souls."<sup>16</sup> He is quick to caution however, that

An evangelistic crusade such as Key 73 must never be confused with an authentic spiritual revival; it can only prepare the way. For spiritual revival is the result not of human techniques and strategies but of a divine visitation . . . Key 73's awareness that repentance and prayer are the precondition for the renewal of the church and society in our time is a harbinger of hope.<sup>17</sup>

If God's people see Key 73 as a program, nothing much will happen. If they view it as a movement, with which every Christian congregation should feel compelled to move along, and allow themselves to be used as instruments of the Holy Spirit, the North American continent could well experience a spiritual awakening. This is an opportunity for God's people to carry out marturia.

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<sup>15</sup>Richard E. Wentz, "The Kingdom of God in America," The Christian Century, XC (January 3, 1973), 14-19.

<sup>16</sup>Donald G. Bloesch, "Key 73: Pathway to Renewal?," The Christian Century, XC (January 3, 1973), 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

Koinonia

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ."<sup>18</sup> This community he speaks of is "fellowship" or koinonia as expressed in the New Testament. It is seen as another function of the laos theou. It is a sharing in a common life, based on a common loyalty and in response to a common call. The purpose of koinonia is not to build what does not yet exist, but to build(up) what is already there. God's people need each other because they belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. This means, as Bonhoeffer states further,

First, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. Second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. Third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity.<sup>19</sup>

Only the people of God, then, know the presence of Jesus Christ among them. Only the Church is a fellowship of love. Christ's love masters the fellowship of the Church and builds it into a genuine unity. Nothing in human "fellowships" can be compared to the koinonia that is experienced by members of the laos theou. George Webber observes,

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<sup>18</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1954), p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

"There is a radical difference between the human fellowship which men seek in a multiplicity of human communities and that of which the Bible speaks."<sup>20</sup>

The New Testament points us to this Christian fellowship: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."<sup>21</sup> Saint Paul certainly describes the closeness of this fellowship, when he likens the Church to a human body. As the parts of the body need each other and depend on each other, so do also God's people.<sup>22</sup> This is koinonia and a vital function of the laos theou.

It has been noted that this function is experienced in the exercise of every other function. Even though all the functions are interrelated, koinonia "is in the middle of everything."<sup>23</sup> The importance of it is therefore recognized as practical situations are given in connection with the other functions.

A number of additional suggestions need to be given however, in which koinonia is rather prominent, and thus

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<sup>20</sup>George W. Webber, The Congregation in Mission (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 123.

<sup>21</sup>1 John 1:3.

<sup>22</sup>See Eph. 4:4,16; 1 Cor. 12:12-26.

<sup>23</sup>Danker, p. 10. "The middle finger stands for fellowship."

becomes much more meaningful. To exercise and experience koinonia to a much greater degree, many congregations have introduced the pattern of small groups. These groups usually meet in homes, or if they wish, in the church. There can be anywhere from three to six couples, preferably no more than twelve people. The group usually selects one of these to serve as leader. They may organize for a variety of purposes--Bible study, prayer, singspiration, and a host of others. Obviously, the training of the laity for witnessing, as discussed above, comprises a small group.

Perhaps there is a danger that these groups might lose sight of their purpose, or that one becomes an end in itself. However, with proper guidance and direction, they have a tremendous potential for real service to Christ and his Church.<sup>24</sup> One thing is certain, in a small group the function of koinonia becomes a much more vibrant reality. The "gathered" Church, through lay leadership, really learns what fellowship is all about.

#### Leitourgia

This is the function of worship, devotion, liturgy. In the exercise of this function God's people are edified,

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<sup>24</sup>See Clyde Reid, Groups Alive-Church Alive (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), for an excellent discussion on the dynamics of small groups and their effective use in the local church.

spiritually uplifted. They, for the most part, congregate for the purpose of giving God all the "worth." Hence, Dr. William Danker states, "The word 'Worship' is derived. . . . from an old Anglo-Saxon term, 'worthship.' It means to hold God to be worth more than anything in the universe."<sup>25</sup> As God's people assemble for worship, it must be recognized that the function of koinonia also plays a very prominent role here. The whole idea of participation, communication, association, is important as God's people do leitourgia, particularly in a public manner.

However, traditional worship patterns have not allowed for much participation on the part of the laos, and one is often tempted to ask whether leitourgia is in fact a function of the whole Church, or of just a few "leaders" of worship. One should not accuse those communions with a liturgical tradition of being weak in lay participation in the conduct of worship. Indeed, the liturgy demands congregational participation. But the laity's role in leitourgia has not been very imaginative, and hence a passivity has developed, which prevents God's people from taking a more meaningful part in worship. Worship has to be more than something God's people sit and listen to. It is more than watching someone perform. One writer argues,

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<sup>25</sup>W. Danker, "The Mission of God's People in the New Testament," A Team Ministry Approach for Multiple Rural Parishes (Workshop at Regina, Sask., April 29-30, 1965), p. 5.



The layman is not content now merely to attend the worship of his local Church. He knows that if the worship is to be worship for him he must participate. And participation means contribution.<sup>26</sup>

This calls for more than ushering, greeting people, lighting candles, ringing the bell, or playing the organ. Participation in worship must be of such a nature that God's people realize indeed that they are doing their "thing" because it is a function of the total Church.

There are some simple, practical ways by which participation can be escalated, and thus make the role of the laity more active, and leitourgia more meaningful to the participants. In the celebration of Holy Communion, the climax of worship, there can be more involvement than the partaking of the elements. The "handshake of peace" is being popularized now. This allows for the exchange of greeting "Peace (of Christ) be with you," among the entire congregation. It can have the form of a handshake, an embrace, or even a kiss, although the latter form may cause some embarrassment.

Traditionally, the Lutheran Church has celebrated communion around the Altar. This might be viewed as allowing limited participation on the part of the laity. A more meaningful role is realized when Holy Communion is distributed among God's people right in the pews. In this way, individual participants are given the opportunity to

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<sup>26</sup>Mark Gibbs, and T. R. Morton, God's Frozen People (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 112.

distribute the elements to each other. Furthermore, if participants can be seated around a table, family style, Holy Communion is seen as a meal, and hence may have more meaning and relevancy. After all, as Alfred Shands observes, "Before the Holy Communion was a service, it was a meal."<sup>27</sup>

Even though the Reformation stressed Holy Communion as a meal, the Church has deliberately worked to separate the agape feast from the sacrament. This emphasis needs to be regained in the local church. Some have attempted to accomplish this by celebrating the Sacrament in a domestic or even a secular setting. The example of St. Augustine's Parish in Washington is noteworthy. Alfred Shands observes,

Our own experience of celebrating the Holy Communion each Sunday in a restaurant has contributed more to a real understanding of this as a meal than almost anything possible . . . And the more it became a meal for us, the more real the holiness of it became. Indeed it was the secularity of it which brought the Holy Communion to life for us.<sup>28</sup>

House communions also help to recapture the 'meal' aspect of the Sacrament. The writer is presently introducing these in his own parish. Somehow we must find ways to make communion more than a service, a cut and dried routine.

For many traditionalists, the restaurant and house communions may be objectionable. Some of the reverence for the

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<sup>27</sup> Alfred Shands, The Liturgical Movement and the Local Church (New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1965), p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 109

Sacrament may be lost. But a greater degree of reverence can also be brought about when the connection between our participation in the Sacrament and our participation at a family meal is seen.

The Sacrament of Baptism is also administered by the Church. But is it the whole Church? To what extent do the people present feel that they are performing a function, that this is leitourgia? In Baptism, incorporation into the Body of Christ takes place. All of God's people should therefore be involved as much as possible. They are not mere spectators. They are exercising part of a function. God is receiving a child into a corporation, but the laos theou are that Corporation, the Body of Christ, the Church. It is for this reason that private baptisms should be avoided.

Thus, in the administration of Baptism, the Creed should by all means be confessed by all the people of God present. And, to help God's people realize that they are all in this together, pertinent questions regarding responsibility in spiritual nurture and Christian education may be addressed, not only to sponsors, but most of all, to the parents, and to the "gathered" Church as such.

That part of leitourgia in which the laity have been most passive, deals with the Word. In the majority of cases, the sermon today is still a monologue. The writer has used dialogue sermons. But this method does not necessarily

denote greater participation on the part of the laity, except of course, for those who dialogue. He has discovered however, that the question and answer method during the sermon, or a discussion of a certain part of the sermon, at the moment, have challenged the laity to participate to a much greater degree in this phase of leitourgia. Similarly, when object sermons are used, much more interest is shown and response on the part of the laity is facilitated.

A final aspect of the leitourgia function to be considered here is prayer. It has lacked much of the "we" the "fellowship of believers" spirit. Too often the General Prayers become a monologue. The language employed in fixed prayers is for the most part not the language of the general public. In order to have these prayers sense the common, everyday needs of God's people, Alfred Shands suggests that the laity should make their petitions known by entering them in a ledger. These are then collected, and included in a General Prayer. God's people then are really made to feel that they are included in the prayers of the Church. In addition, nothing should prevent any of God's people from leading in a prayer on behalf of them all.<sup>29</sup> This is part of the leitourgia function of the Church. Let the Church act, for leitourgia demands action.

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-131.

Paideia

When the New Testament speaks of the paideia function, it is really talking about Christian Education. This is the task of nurturing God's people. This is where the "equipping of the saints for the work of ministry" goes on. It is a function in which all have responsibility and in which all are needed. It is the function which concerns itself with training, discipline, growth. St. Peter reminds the church to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."<sup>30</sup> Likewise, the Apostle Paul exhorts, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."<sup>31</sup> This "bringing up," this "discipline and instruction," is contained in paideia.

The New Testament nowhere assumes that any of God's people have reached spiritual maturity, but that each one is in a "growing" stage. Whether child, youth, or adult, the Christian is always striving for, but never quite arriving at, spiritual maturity, in this age. The paideia function of the church is vital as an aid in this growing process.

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<sup>30</sup> 1 Peter 3:18.

<sup>31</sup> Eph. 6:4.

It is noteworthy that next to the command to preach His Word, our Savior placed the command, to teach His Word.<sup>32</sup>

One writer who comments on this matter, suggests,

The degree of the congregation's loyalty to Christ is measured by her obedience to that command, and the measure of her strength rests with the effectiveness of her program of Christian education. No effort should be spared by the church, therefore, to make that program the best possible.<sup>33</sup>

He states further,

In a certain sense Christian education embraces the total program of the church. For Christian education does not only mean teaching the Lord's will but also doing the Lord's will. And that embraces every activity of the church . . . . However, it is customary to speak of Christian education in the narrower sense of the term, by which we mean the formal instruction and, in part, the training the church gives to its members through its educational agencies.<sup>34</sup>

The exercise of paideia therefore, is one of the tests by which the Church stands or falls. Admittedly, the family is the stronghold in society. It is this in the Church also. Christian nurture originates in the family. That is where basic training takes place. The church only assists through its various agencies of paideia. But as William J. Danker argues,

In both, however, the accent throughout should not be on merely understanding or memorizing but rather on

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<sup>32</sup>See the Great Command in Matt. 28:18-20.

<sup>33</sup>R. C. Rein, The Congregation at Work (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 49.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

practicing the function of the church in mission. One does not learn to swim by hearing lectures or memorizing rules about it.<sup>35</sup>

The primary educational agency in terms of paideia has been the Sunday School.<sup>36</sup> The big criticism of the Sunday School, however, is the fact that there has been too much emphasis on "Sunday" and not enough emphasis on "School." Thus, in spite of excellent materials,<sup>37</sup> it has been in most cases impossible to implement a good program of Christian nurture. Time and space have been limited, two vital factors in any kind of operation. Generally speaking, the Church has very poor facilities, totally inadequate and unimpressive, not conducive to carrying out one of its most essential functions, that of "nurture."

Another criticism is the fact that the Sunday School has attracted only a small percentage of youth and adults. It has been looked upon as a "children's agency," one to which children are "brought." For God's people to realize that paideia is a function of the whole Church, there needs to be more of an emphasis on the nurture of youth and adults.

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<sup>35</sup>Danker, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup>In the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Christian Day Schools, High Schools, and Colleges, have also played a prominent role.

<sup>37</sup>As one example, in September 1971, Mission Life materials were introduced to congregations in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. These employ audio-visual aids, and demand much more creativity on the part of teacher and pupil.

When they serve as teachers and leaders they not only give nurture but they also receive it. They too, need to grow in faith and life.

To facilitate this, congregations should be urged to change their "nurture" time from Sunday morning to a week day evening.<sup>38</sup> This would allow for more time, and in many cases also, more space. It is quite possible too, that this might encourage more youth and adults to participate. In the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba, as surely also elsewhere, many churches are even conducting Vacation Bible School in the evening, in an effort to involve the youth and more adults in the paideia function of the church.

Paideia concerns itself not only with "growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," but also with training of the laos for consecrated work and service, and the proper fulfillment of all their functions as the Church of Christ.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, training courses should always be offered for youth and adults, to help them become more effective Christians and leaders. Where training programs provide the church with a skilled labor force, the results of service, may be much richer and more heartening. Some

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<sup>38</sup>There are quite a number of instances where this is already the case. In some instances, the week-day evening has replaced the Sunday morning hour. In other instances, it has been added as an additional opportunity for "nurture."

<sup>39</sup>This shows again how the functions of the laos are interrelated.



of these training programs could be incorporated into the week day evening "nurture" programs we referred to above. However, they may be offered as an addition and supplement, since they are basically different in nature.

The Bible Institutes conducted within the Lutheran Church some years ago, offered the laity opportunity to "upgrade" themselves. These were usually a joint effort on the part of a number of congregations in a concentrated area, and covered a period of eight weeks, once a year. The writer is convinced that such an "Institute" operated locally, perhaps two or three times a year, will attract a much larger proportion of God's people.

Another medium, of course, is retreats. These have a great appeal. A retreat takes the trainees out of the context of the church building, into a setting and an atmosphere in which they feel much more comfortable and relaxed. A retreat offers continuity and concentrated work,<sup>40</sup> plus the opportunity for "free time" during which participants can become even better acquainted through recreational activities. Congregations which conduct retreats with catechumens, youth, officers and leaders, families, or just anyone in a lay--workers training program, soon learn to know the importance of the paideia function for the whole church.

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<sup>40</sup> Usually it is conducted on a week-end, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. Where circumstances allow, an entire week is designated.

Diakonia

Diakonia is a prominent function in the New Testament. It denotes "service." Christians are to serve God, each other and non-Christians. Jesus set the example for diakonia, for we read, "The Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."<sup>41</sup> Christ demonstrated diakonia, by travelling the Via Dolorosa, to the place of a skull, in order to give His life on a rough hewn cross. He also commanded his disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."<sup>42</sup> St. Paul exhorts the people of God in Galatia, to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."<sup>43</sup> He furthermore praises the great gift of Christian love in 1 Corinthians 13, which is the motivation for diakonia.

It can be stated therefore, that this function is really about a "faith that is active in love." If one has faith at all, he will exercise diakonia, and especially among those who belong to the same Corporation, the Church. It can be called Social Ministry, Social Welfare, Social Services, Social Action, whatever. It is all part of

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<sup>41</sup>Mark 10:45.

<sup>42</sup>See Matt. 5:16.

<sup>43</sup>Gal. 6:10.

diakonia, and is a strong reminder to the people of God, that our neighbor has need of our deeds. That's love.

Hence, as one writer argues,

It should be a major concern of the Christian congregation, to show charity to its members and to all who are in need. In so doing the Christian congregation follows in the footsteps of her Lord, whose loving heart was filled with compassion for all who were in need and "who went about doing good." (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:15; John 11:35; Acts 10:38)<sup>44</sup>

Martin Luther emphasized this kind of service, although he was unjustly accused of being one-sided in his emphasis on Justification by grace through faith.

Christian faith must demonstrate itself in a life of love and good works. Why did Jesus heal the sick and feed the hungry? Could it not also have been in order to show the "church" of His day the needs of people around it? The people of God today live in the midst of these needs, but sometimes they are completely oblivious to these needs. The laos theou are often so preoccupied with self, with cathedralism, that there is no time for faith to be active in good works. Many of God's people can be likened to modern day priests and Levites, "passing by on the other side." If salvation were dependent on good works, by demonstrating love through deeds, then God's people would be in for "future shock," a damning shock. And yet, this is

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<sup>44</sup> Rein, pp. 72-73.

one of the functions of the Church. The faithful are called to demonstrate their faith through love and good works.

Each year the people of God through their respective church bodies have the opportunity to exercise diakonia in terms of pecuniary contributions, gifts of clothing, and other necessary personal items. World Relief, Welfare Societies, Care, and other agencies grant these opportunities; but that is often a very cold and impersonal form of diakonia. It would appear that New Testament "service" and the way it needs to be practised today, should be much more meaningful, a person to person affair. This suggests to the well-fed, to supply the hungry with food; to the affluent, to help provide clothing and shelter for the less fortunate. It calls for the "released" to visit the imprisoned; for the well to visit the sick.

There are a number of practical ways in which the individual of the "gathered" Church, can be of service, especially "to one who is of the household of faith." Faith is active in love, when help is offered in time of need. In time of illness and hospitalization, the people of God must realize there is a great opportunity for diakonia, which is not limited to the sending of a "Get Well" card, or a bouquet of flowers. Diakonia calls for visitation to the home, to the hospital, wherever, to discover in what way and when further "service" can be

rendered. This kind of diakonia will sacrifice time and effort to assist the household of the ailing in any way possible. How true this is also in time of death, especially when there is a lone survivor. Because the Church is diakonia, any member of the church should feel compelled to provide periodic companionship. Need calls for a Christian deed. Diakonia consists of meeting needs. Further, there is opportunity for 'service' when a family experiences disaster or misfortune, the loss of its home. So often, the Church sits back to see first what the people of the community will do.

Diakonia is a function of the whole Church. There is a practical way in which the youth for example, can help fulfill this function. When adults are involved in other activities of the congregation, it is an act of love and good works for youth to offer to baby sit, free of charge. Or, where the elderly are quite incapable of keeping up the house or cleaning the yard, it is a form of diakonia for the youth to offer their time and serve older members of the household of faith. Very often, the handicapped can be served by simply making it possible for them to join the "gathered" church for worship.

The point of diakonia is this. It is not limited to "service" in the sense of a ladies' aid catering for a congregational supper, or the sending of a box of candy to someone who is not allowed to eat it anyway. Some of these

things are not done in love. Greed, status, and tradition often are the motivating factors. Diakonia does not go through the motions, by simply talking, debating, hoping and praying. Diakonia goes where the action is. Diakonia is action. It is an action of love, to be demonstrated by the whole Church. Diakonia demands something from the Christian surrounded by social concerns.<sup>45</sup> It should not be viewed as the social gospel, substituting for the saving Gospel. Rather, it demonstrates that faith in the saving Gospel is active through love.

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<sup>45</sup>For an excellent and comprehensive study of this subject, Cf. Rudolph F. Norden, The Christian and Social Concerns, edited by Oscar E. Feucht, issued by the Board of Parish Education, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).

One must recognize that not all the practical implications of the role of the laity are experienced and expressed within the walls of the institution among those of the "household of faith," nor only within their homes among their own kind. Theoretically, these are the basic training stations. But the need in the world, is to put more of this theory into practice. The role of the laity needs to find expression to a much greater degree in the outside world, in

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<sup>1</sup>See our Lord's High Priestly prayer in John 17, especially vs. 11 & 14.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME PRACTICAL SITUATIONS FOR THE SCATTERED CHURCH

The functions of the laos as defined in Chapter IV, and discussed again in Chapter VII, serve as a reminder to God's people, that these are their common tasks and responsibilities. To this all of them have been called. But in the exercise of these functions, the gathered Church is also to become better equipped to be God's people in the diaspora. The Church exists for the world. It gathers to be equipped, not to serve only itself, but also to reach out into the world, without becoming like the world. The Great High Priest reminded His heavenly Father, that His disciples "are in the world, but not of the world."<sup>1</sup>

One must recognize that not all the practical implications of the role of the laity are experienced and expressed within the walls of the institution among those of the "household of faith," nor only within their homes among their own kind. Theoretically, these are the basic training stations. But the need in the world, is to put more of this theory into practice. The role of the laity needs to find expression to a much greater degree in the outside world, in

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the places where people work, where they relax, where they socialize, where they make their money, where they spend their money.<sup>2</sup>

In such places the Church's major battle front is situated. This is where the laos have an opportunity and a challenge to be what they are, the Church. Here the layman is a much more vital cog, for he has much greater insight into and understanding of his place of work than does the professional clergyman. God called people in the Old Testament, and Christ called disciples in the New Testament, to be salt and light in the world in which they lived. The laos theou have been chosen, not to erect cathedrals, but to "build up" people through witness, fellowship, worship, nurture, and service, also in the outside world. They are the church in the community. Only then are they full-fledged laity, people of God, on a mission for God. Harry G. Coiner argues,

The Christian layman is most strategically situated to minister for Christ in the world in the place where he is. Wherever a Christian lives and whatever his work or vocation, there God calls him to be the medium through whom His truth and love may break through the fog of human deceit, exploitation, and enslavement. There is no village so small and remote, nor any aspect of life so insignificant and mean, that it may escape the concern and compassion of God's people.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Supra, p. 4

<sup>3</sup>Coiner, "The Role of the Laity in the Church," Toward Adult Christian Education: A Symposium, edited by Donald L. Deffner (River Forest: Lutheran Education Association, 1962), p. 56.



H. Ralph Higgins insists, "The work of the Christian layman in secular society is that of leavening the whole social order."<sup>4</sup> And John M. Todd observes, "It is in the workplace above all, that the Christian can be the yeast in the loaf."<sup>5</sup>

With this in mind, we proceed to suggest some practical ways in which the laity as the "scattered Church" can exercise the functions of God's people today, and demonstrate that they indeed are the "yeast in the loaf."

#### Marturia

God's people have countless opportunities to witness where they are. The Church is in the factory, in the office, in the warehouse, through the laity. They need to be made aware of this, and encouraged to fulfill their call to marturia. One writer alludes to this rather strongly when he states,

Christians working in the factory, in the office, on the farm, in the school, living on "X" Street--side by side with the unchurched and the non-Christian--are called to assume the stance of Christian witness as they respond to every situation with the insight and

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<sup>4</sup>H. Ralph Higgins, "The Laity in Community Life," Symposium, The Laity: The Unused Assets of the Church, edited by Frederick Grant & Burton Easton, Anglican Theological Review, XXV (January 1943), 81.

<sup>5</sup>John M. Todd, The Laity: The People of God (New York: Paulist Press Dens Books, 1965), p. 99.

ability of new men. They are to become involved in the world, share its problems, its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears.<sup>6</sup>

Christians are present in all places of employment. But a witness of presence is not sufficient. Remember, a martus is one who tells. He should also listen. In other words, witness should be a dialogue in order to have any relevance and effect in the twentieth century. This is upheld by Gabriel Fackre, who states,

Evangelism for the new age is not monologue in which the world does all the talking and the Church all the listening. It is dialogue. It is partnership in conversation. It is a two-way give and take.<sup>7</sup>

He observes further,

Dialogical evangelism, therefore, is not only a matter of answering questioners; it is also a matter of questioning answerers. . . . it not only seeks to comfort the afflicted, it also strives to afflict the comfortable.<sup>8</sup>

In the workplaces, in factory and office, opportunities for dialogical marturia are innumerable. Coffee breaks and lunch hours are excellent times to invite a fellow employee to dialogue about the Bread and the Water of Life. The laos should also be encouraged to host a business men's breakfast occasionally, inviting their fellow workers and discussing with them what it means to be a Christian in the world today.

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<sup>6</sup>Coiner, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup>Gabriel Fackre, "Witness Is a Two-Way Street," Creative Ministries, edited by David F. Marshall (Philadelphia/Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), p. 43.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

The Church is also in resort and recreation areas, in taverns and restaurants, through its people. The challenges to fulfill the function of marturia should not be overlooked here. The institutional Church has been somewhat remiss in encouraging and utilizing the witnessing potential that is present where the action is. It is virtually a "cop-out" on the part of the Church to delegate this task to an individually hired and paid "chaplain." Proudly, it is labeled a "Special Ministry." Special it is, in the sense that "special" people are already on the scene, who have been called to carry out the function of marturia in these places. These "special" people are the tavern and resort "chaplains" appointed to witness.

There has also been a sizeable movement toward providing a "preaching" ministry in resort areas. In some instances, this ministry is provided on a year round basis. But generally, it is limited to summer months. This kind of ministry needs to be creative in order to have appeal. If people are escaping from routine, then the sort of "preaching" witnessing which is offered is not going to attract many people. The Lutheran Churches of Manitoba are presently sponsoring a summer ministry in the Falcon Lake Resort Area. A Seminary student is hired to serve in this capacity. The major event is the public service in the local Roman Catholic Chapel on Sunday morning. The response has been less than gratifying. The approach is too uncreative and stereotyped. Although

there is no evidence to support this, person-to-person witnessing, dialogue evangelism, may certainly prove to be more satisfying from the standpoint of confronting people with Christ. Christian cottagers who frequent resort and recreation areas, must be made aware of the fact that only through them will the Gospel of Christ have any influence. They ought to band together, and visit all cottagers in their "community" to share Christ with those who do not know Him. Their home congregations could certainly play a vital role in this form of witnessing by providing them with Christian literature, such as devotional material, appropriate tracts, or copies of "Good News For Modern Man." Distribution of these materials often opens the door to face to face witnessing.

It is difficult to suggest a form of marturia in places like restaurants and dining areas. It seems obvious that personal confrontation would result in almost total failure. However, the Church in general could witness through the medium of printed material. Perhaps churches should provide these dining areas with Table Prayer cards.<sup>9</sup> Possibly a suitable Christian tract could be available at the coat-check or the cashier's counter. Naturally, these matters would

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<sup>9</sup>The Concordia Tract Mission, Box 201, St. Louis, Missouri, make such cards available.

have to be discussed with and approved by the management. Nonetheless, it is a form of marturia, which the church in general should not overlook.

There is a tremendous need today for God's people to exercise the function of marturia among the "cliff--dwellers." More high rise apartments are emerging today in our metropolitan areas. A greater number of people is escaping into them than ever before. The Church through its laity needs to initiate some kind of "Operation--Apartment" movement, in order to reach these people who are virtually in a world of their own. Certainly the Christians in those complexes ought to be motivated and trained to be the salt and the light in those places. Christian couples resident there should be encouraged to open their "homes" to other residents and share with them the meaning of the Christian life. If there are no Christians in those complexes, then perhaps the church should go to considerable pains in placing several "member" couples into such places with the thought of their exercising marturia. This might be much more beneficial to the Kingdom than erecting a \$200,000 cathedral in a quiet residential area.

In addition, a local congregation can do some general witnessing to apartment dwellers by designating a specific Sunday as "Rotunda Towers" day. Residents are contacted by phone or through the mail to inform them of this special day for them at St. Peter's Lutheran Church. They are invited

to a special "worship activity" on that day. They are recognized, and asked to stay for a fellowship--discussion period. Knox United Church of Canada, in downtown Winnipeg, Manitoba, uses this approach to the "cliff-dwellers" and reports reasonable success. It is a form of marturia which can certainly open "locked" doors to a more direct, personal, and dialogical witness.

### Koinonia

"Fellowship." Sharing! Communication! That is what koinonia is all about. But if fellowship is first and foremost with God, then how can there be fellowship with one who is "not of God"? Perhaps one can only speak in terms of human fellowship here, which may just develop into a fellowship with God. Or, if one thinks of koinonia only in terms of sharing, then this could remove the crux somewhat.

The people of God, as the "scattered" Church need to present more opportunities for koinonia. The Christian family should see its home as the Church of the Street, the Neighborhood Church, "the Church in your house." The Christian family often opens its home for gatherings like Tupperware parties, bridal and baby showers. On occasions like these, the Christian hostess could certainly add a touch of the spiritual. This may take the form of a brief devotional, familiar hymn sing, or other brief sharing of Christian faith. Surely, this would make koinonia more than human.

The Christian family should certainly also open its home for cell groups. These were referred to in the previous chapter. As the Church meets in small groups on a given street, it should reach out to those "outside" the Church, and share with them in prayer and the study of God's Word. Very often, the "outsider" will feel much more at ease and open than in a cathedral setting.

Vocational groups could likewise meet in a home setting. Those of like occupations in the community such as doctors, lawyers, teachers and business managers, could band together to discuss the common problems of work and family life. In this context, God's people could add the Christian dimension and be a leaven to those 'outside' the Church. The Church would experience a koinonia not otherwise realized.

In addition, Christian business men need to be encouraged to open their offices, at suitable times, to similar cell groups. Surely staff meetings are periodically conducted, and these could develop into more than a "meeting," if the leaven of Christian faith is added by the employer. He is in a position to discuss the problems and concerns of the business from a Christian perspective. In most cases then, labor would not be regarded as totally monotonous, dirty, and dangerous. Dignity, meaning, and wholeness would be restored to it.

Generally, small groups are unstructured, informal, open. It is advisable that the leader be trained to guide such face

to face confrontations. Above all, participants must be aware that they are meeting in the name of Christ, not that of the company or the family. The Holy Spirit is present, informing, directing, and uniting the group through koinonia.

### Leitourgia

When a Christian layman views his work as a service to God, and not "to please men," or merely as a method of self-preservation, then he is already performing the function of worship. The Apostle Paul stated, "Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men."<sup>10</sup> He furthermore wrote, "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."<sup>11</sup> Leitourgia is exercised when work is done to the glory of Christ, our Master. Somehow, the people of God have to instil this kind of attitude into their fellow employees. They can express this attitude by example, by being good and faithful employees themselves.

One of the best ways to exhibit this is to conduct an actual brief period of worship in the office, shop, or other place of business, prior to opening time. This could consist of a brief passage from Scripture, which speaks to the needs of the staff, followed by a relevant comment. It could simply be a thought for the day, impressed upon the

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. Col. 3:23-24; also Eph. 6:6-8.

<sup>11</sup>See 1 Cor. 10:31b.



minds of the employees. Or, it need only consist of a prayer asking for help to work faithfully, honestly, and cheerfully. Naturally, not all the workers would "dig" this kind of pattern, and they should not be forced into participation. There may even be a feeling on the part of some, that management is trying to exploit labor. Nonetheless it does show that a Christian's work and his worship are closely related. It is a way to demonstrate leitourgia more specifically, while on the job.

It is essential too, that if any period of worship is provided, that the pattern be applicable to the world in which people work, not "what I have been used to." Twentieth-century man needs to see the relevance of worship and life. He requires patterns of worship which aim at: (1) relating the Christian faith to work, and (2) communicating the truths of the faith in a way the modern world understands. Man is working with twentieth century equipment and supplies. Twentieth-century methods of worship are therefore most desirable. The "gathered" Church at worship has only recently been awakened to this reality.

Shopping centers can be the scene of another practical way in which the laos in diaspora can carry out the function of leitourgia. Here we simply wish to cite an example.

This year a group of laymen in a Church at Tallahassee, Florida, decided that they needed to give a witness about the true significance of Christmas at the time when the community celebrates this holiday as part of American culture. They thought witness should be

positive. They made arrangements to have a group of laymen conduct brief, but well planned devotional services in all the shopping centers in the city. The format was simple . . . it was an exciting time.<sup>12</sup>

This sounds exciting indeed, challenging too. Here is witness and worship! In speaking of carrying out leitourgia in the community, in the neighborhood, one must not overlook the dimension of the "house church." We alluded to this above, in reference to small groups. These groups meeting regularly for discussion purposes, can certainly add the dimension of worship. Leitourgia can be enriched. Seasonal worship programs can become more meaningful. The current Key 73 movement is suggesting, for example, that the small study groups continue through Lent, replacing traditional worship service. Thus, the "house church." Clyde Reid supports this idea, when he observes,

It has been my experience that when church people are honest, they will admit that they are weary to death of attending a series of Lenten worship services. They are tired of adding one more boring repetition of the Sunday service, with some "outside" speaker delivering the sermon in place of the regular minister. Even if the choir does sing. Even if a common theme unites the series of speeches! Even if there is a special "congregational sing" preceding the pastoral prayer!<sup>13</sup>

One must agree with Reid in part, in the sense that people are tired of sameness. However, there is nothing which

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<sup>12</sup>Kenneth Chafin, "Help! I'm a Layman" (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1966), p. 109.

<sup>13</sup>Reid, Groups Alive-Church Alive (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 22.

prevents the initiation of more imaginative, participatory forms of public worship. People today see action all around them. They want to see it in the Church. And they want to get into the act. When action is seen in the laos, then there is action in the Church. The "house church" allows for some of this action, but action within the community. Therefore every effort should be made to invite the neighbors down the street to join in leitourgia in the "church in your house." As observed previously, the "outsider" may be hesitant to come to your cathedral church. But he will be less prone to refuse the invitation to your "house church." Here is an opportunity for all to express themselves in and through the function of leitourgia.

#### Paideia

How does the Gospel get through to what some have called "technological man"? It is through "nurture." The people of God are not only "nurtured" they need also to "nurture" as the scattered Church. This "nurture" does not always have to be promoted institutionally, among members of the "gathered" Church, in Christian education classes for children, youth, and adults. But "nurture" should be designed to help individuals handle the main issues of day by day living, by helping them improve communication between employees and management.

Norman Cryer, in describing the activities of the Detroit Institutional Mission, gives a good example of the paideia function of the Church in the factory. The Church shows its concern for people and their jobs. There is access to the company's conference room after working hours. Employees are invited to discuss topics of interest that will be of help to them on the job. Cryer states,

The basic approach is to get into a plant and build contacts with men who organize small discussion groups. Instead of trying to get people to church, DIM takes the church to people. Discussion topics are drawn from the concerns of the group.<sup>14</sup>

To what extent the outsider is reached is not known, but it does demonstrate how the church in this instance carries out part of its paideia mission through the laity. Hence, Cryer observes,

The Church sees more clearly its mission in and through its laity. We believe the DIM has demonstrated that the ministry of the laity can happen at the local level. In the past, the Church has been slow to risk new effort as part of its responsibility. We think we have helped show at least one way to penetrate the city of today and tomorrow.<sup>15</sup>

When speaking of the paideia function to the outside world, one should not overlook the role played by the Evangelical Academies in Germany. The first of these was founded in April, 1945. Here, people of different

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<sup>14</sup>Norman Cryer, "Taking The Church To The Factory," Creative Ministries, edited by David F. Marshall (Philadelphia--Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), p. 63.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 67

occupations gather with representatives of the Church to discuss their everyday problems of belief and behavior.

Hendrik Kraemer observes,

The E.A. are places of discourse, of fundamental rethinking and of research. They serve to meet modern man in his workaday world problems; to help him to find a way in the midst of these problems in the light of the Gospel and by so doing to testify to the unity of life in the liberty of the Gospel . . . The service they want to render is to demonstrate that the Church, because it is a ministry, creates the place where all people can meet each other in mutual respect and complete freedom . . . These Academies are new nerve-centres in the body of old German Christendom. They launch out for a new understanding of the Church, translation of its witness, and a new understanding of the world.<sup>16</sup>

Closely related to these Academies, is the German Evangelical Kirchentag. The Kirchentag however, moves more in the ecumenical sphere. Kraemer states,

It is a large-scale effort to bring together the laity of all Churches in order to develop and express a new sense of Christian responsibility for and in all the life-sectors of the world, and to educate the laity for a courageous and spiritually intelligent witness in the world.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Kirchentag encourages and educates the laity to enter into the world and its problems and find there the real place of Christian witness. Kirchentag guides the laity in elaborating their new understanding of the Church, their place in it as its members, and their place in the world. The

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<sup>16</sup>Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), pp. 39-40.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

world should be able to see in and through the laity, that the Church is a place of light and healing for the nations.

The writer has no knowledge of any ventures like this in North America. But with such high aims and purposes, the Church here, as God's people, would do well to attempt such a project, and in so doing would exercise paideia.

The coffee house is another way in which paideia is carried out in the outside world. John H. Bing talks about Chicago's North Side Co-operative Ministry--The Door. In the coffee house, "nurture" takes place largely through talking and listening. Bing argues, "it is not a drinking, or a cruising, or a pick up place, but a talking place . . . Here they can ask questions . . . for many, The Door is simply a place where someone will listen."<sup>18</sup> He observes further, how the "scattered" Church can be a leaven in the world.

Here they face the possibility that life as a Christian can have vitality and integrity, as they understand them. In another sense, The Door is an opening for the Church into the world . . . .<sup>19</sup>

Another way by which the youth in the community can be reached, is to have Church youth groups sponsor recreation--study activities at local high schools. Most schools are willing to make their gymnasiums available for a community

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<sup>18</sup>John H. Bing, "Door To The World," in David Marshall, Creative Ministries (Philadelphia/Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), p. 36.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

cause on a weekly basis or at least once a month. In this instance, a period of recreation followed by a period of Bible Study related to the needs of youth today could be most rewarding.

To discuss another opportunity for the Church to "nurture," we must once again return to the home, to the mothers and wives, who are not employed outside of the home. Several times a week they get together for a neighborhood or street "kaffee--klatch." Here the dimension of "nurture" could be added. The impetus must naturally come from those who belong to the laos theou. Again, "nurture" through Bible Study, topic discussions, such as child training, parent-child relationships, could be on the agenda. These "Neighborhood Mother's Clubs" could soon affect the entire community, simply because a representative of God's people was concerned about her part in the paideia function of the Church.

Speaking generally, the Church should also be willing to open its doors to community ventures, especially if it has adequate and suitable facilities. The Church building can be used as a meeting place, a communications center, a recreational area (if so equipped), an educational facility for a neighborhood nursery school, or a Senior Citizen's Group. Most Church buildings by design, are not that functional. They are basically only worship centers. They need to be more than that. There has to be more emphasis on the

"nurture" process, both locally, and as a center for the community. There is life and action in the community. The Church building should be open for action by the community. And God's people must by all means get into this action through the function of paideia.

### Diakonia

The Church is in service. Diakonia basically denotes the total "ministry" of the Church. Hendrik Kraemer expresses it this way: "The Church is ministry, and therefore has ministries."<sup>20</sup> In one sense, diakonia embraces all the functions of the Church, for all the functions are a "service" which the Church seeks to carry out. But for our purposes here, we will again confine our discussion of diakonia to the aspect of social "service" or social action.

We have seen that God's people are to practice diakonia especially among "the members of the household of faith." In a wider scope however, diakonia extends into the community, beyond the realm of the "gathered" Church. The laos are to interpenetrate the world with love and care. Here, God's people should seize the countless opportunities which present themselves. Diakonia extends beyond the scope of contributions to money raising campaigns, such as United Appeal, Red Feather, or the Heart Fund. This is often the easy way out.

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<sup>20</sup>Kraemer, p. 137.



The Church could also exercise diakonia by sponsoring Red Cross blood donor clinics, spearheading campaigns through which help would be received for the relief of the suffering, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the lonely and despairing, the delinquent and the drug addicts. The people of God ought to get involved in many of the voluntary societies that exist. In the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, there are constant appeals for volunteer service. Many elderly persons need people who will shop for them, prepare a well-balanced meal for them, chauffeur them to their various appointments, or simply give them companionship and help in their homes several times a week. If the Church is diakonia and wants to fulfill this function, then it should be the first to adopt one or several of such cases as Project Diakonia. God's people should be there to offer service to meet those various needs. In fact, they constitute an opportunity for personalized, satisfying, and meaningful diakonia.

Diakonia also presents the opportunity for Christians to work co-operatively across denominational lines. They should band together in helping families find better homes. They can promote better housing by spearheading the replacement of rotten tenements. Above all, each church should gear itself toward taking responsibility for a specific part of social action. If it is transportation for the handicapped, St. Paul's Lutheran could assume that responsibility; if it is food and clothing for a needy family, that

responsibility could rest on the shoulders of Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, and if it is companionship for some lonely individual, St. Mark's Anglican Church could assume that task. The people of God in each case would have to be mobilized for their respective responsibilities. This is diakonia carried out by the Church at large in the community.

The Church can also practice diakonia through a representative. Several denominations in San Francisco cooperate in what is called a Night Ministry. This is a ministry to the despairing, the lonely and those attempting suicide. Lynn Fenstermacher describes the activities of Night Minister Don Stuart:

Many times he has hurried to the side of some desperate person contemplating suicide. He has helped sober up the intoxicated, arranged lodging for the stranded, comforted the sick, counselled distraught couples on the verge of separation.<sup>21</sup>

Night Minister Don Stuart frequents bars, hotels, all-night restaurants, bus and railroad depots, police stations. He takes innumerable "journeys into the night." Fenstermacher comments on Stuart's reaction to this kind of diakonia: "In his view, the Church sometimes places too much emphasis on self-perpetuation. It too often thinks only in terms of the respectable."<sup>22</sup> The Night ministry is indeed one way of

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<sup>21</sup>Lynn Fenstermacher, "Journeys Into The Night," Creative Ministries, edited by David F. Marshall (Philadelphia--Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), p. 52.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

representing the concern of the Church to serve the needs of the world.

There is another form of "service" which the Church has exercised in recent years. It has been demonstrated primarily by the youth of the Church. We refer to Hunger Strikes, Hunger Walkathons, Miles for Millions. Sponsors are solicited from the community residents, who will contribute a definite sum of money for every hour or mile endured by the participants, and the proceeds go towards the relief of the hungry in the world. The idea is good, but the method is questionable. It would seem that participants could do something much more constructive than famishing themselves or walking. Why could they not volunteer an equal amount of time helping the elderly, ailing, and incapacitated, by digging gardens, trimming hedges, cutting lawns, cleaning up yards, and washing windows? This would be a much more concrete form of diakonia.

The people of God are called to diakonia, a function to be performed in love, in a world that is loveless and hapless.

Mat. 13:20.

John 10:11.

1 Peter 2:25.

1 Peter 5:4.

1 Tim. 3:1.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

Before we proceed to draw any conclusions, it is well for us to examine the role of the laity in relationship to the pastoral ministry.

The New Testament portrays Christ as the "Great Shepherd of the sheep,"<sup>1</sup> "The Good Shepherd,"<sup>2</sup> "The Shepherd and Bishop of your souls,"<sup>3</sup> "The Chief Shepherd."<sup>4</sup> The Church is apostolic, sent by God to bear witness to the world. But within this apostolic body a particular apostolic ministry, consisting of those chosen to bear rule over the churches and to exercise pastoral oversight, is present.<sup>5</sup> The very conception of Israel or the Church as a flock involves the institution of pastoral rule and oversight. The flock must have shepherds who nurture it and guide it under the ultimate supervision of the Chief Shepherd Himself. The term "Chief Shepherd" implies a pastoral ministry of under-shepherds who are commissioned to exercise a particular office within the flock of Christ, the laos theou. The name

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<sup>1</sup>Heb. 13:20.

<sup>2</sup>John 10:11.

<sup>3</sup>1 Peter 2:25.

<sup>4</sup>1 Peter 5:4.

<sup>5</sup>See 1 Tim. 3:1.

commonly applied to this special office was episkopos. One writer on this subject points out:

This was a new name given by the Church to the higher ministry, those responsible for the spiritual life of the community . . . . In the towns of Palestine this name was applied to those who supervised the construction of public buildings. Thus, by conferring this title upon her leaders, the community expressed exactly her chief concern. . . . the building or edifying of the people of God. . . . to serve was the highest honor, for they served the people whom God had sanctified to be his own . . . . All are builders, all are made alive through the life of the community, all are made active by her call. It was in order that this activity should be harmonious and purposeful that she appointed her supervisors.<sup>6</sup>

This is what St. Peter enjoins upon the presbyters.

"Tend the flock . . . . not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock."<sup>7</sup> This clearly attests the existence of a pastoral ministry, which is an instrument of the ministry of Christ Himself as Chief Shepherd. To the "pastor" is assigned a share in the ministry of Christ in His Church. This is the office of "oversight" or pastoral rule; his role is the faithful discharge of this office, which will bring due reward at the parousia of the Chief Shepherd. His privilege is to have a part in the ministry of Him Who is Himself the Shepherd and Bishop of the flock. Thus, the shepherd--bishop--pastor feeds that portion of the flock which is committed to his care. He

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<sup>6</sup> Adolf Schlatter, The Church in the New Testament Period (London: SPCK, 1965), p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> See 1 Peter 5:2-3.

bears the shepherd's staff, the symbol of his pastoral rule. The "rod and staff" in the hand of the shepherd (pastor) are for the disciplining as well as for the protecting and guiding of the flock.<sup>8</sup>

Can we not assume that our Risen Lord Himself implied a pastoral ministry when He spoke to Peter saying, "Feed my lambs; tend my sheep"?<sup>9</sup> It is therefore especially noteworthy to find Peter urging his fellow presbyters to "tend the flock of God that is your charge,"<sup>10</sup> realizing no doubt, the high seriousness with which the office was regarded in the apostolic Church. To this we must also add the testimony of St. Paul, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood."<sup>11</sup> One should note that during apostolic days, "elders" and "bishops" appeared to be two different names for the same office. In the absence of an apostle, pastoral rule of the local churches was delegated to them. P

The New Testament views the pastoral ministry as a vital and necessary part of the total priesthood. This was

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. 1 Tim. 3:4-5.

<sup>9</sup>John 21:15-17.

<sup>10</sup>1 Peter 5:2.

<sup>11</sup>Acts 20:28.

Luther's contention.<sup>12</sup> Luther gave support to the office of the ministry in spite of the fact that it was being abused in his day. The Confessions of The Lutheran Church likewise uphold the pastoral office.<sup>13</sup>

The need today is to rethink our false notions regarding the "function" of the pastor. It is safe to say, that the pastor ranks higher in importance or status than any other member of the laos, because of his function. He does have a different function. In this regard it is important to view his relationship to the rest of the flock. In discussing the relationship between pastor and people, William Danker states,

While there is a biblical office of proclaiming the Gospel in preached Word and Sacrament, all Christians are called to witness as God's Apostles. The layman is not to be an assistant pastor, but the pastor is an assistant layman. He is an enabler, a facilitator, a playing coach. But he is not necessarily the star.<sup>14</sup>

Richard Caemmerer has a similar view.

The pastor is not to be thought of as a spearhead which the people of the congregation thrust by a long shaft into one another and into the community, but he is a man with a fork which has as many tines as there are people of God to whom he ministers, and he is thrusting the fork into the community.<sup>15</sup>

Robert Raines, quoting from a letter of a layman to his

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<sup>12</sup>Supra, p. 39.

<sup>13</sup>Supra, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>William Danker, Two Worlds or None (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 34.

<sup>15</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, The Pastor at Work (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 11.

pastor, states:

Your job is like that of a foreman in a plant. A foreman has a twofold responsibility. First, he must teach and train his men to do their work. Second, he is responsible for their production. He must watch over them guiding and encouraging them to produce. So, you as a clergyman have to train us for our ministry, and then help us to fulfill our mission, to produce. We are called to "go and bear fruit"; you are called to see that we do it.<sup>16</sup>

The above views indicate strongly that pastor and people, need each other if the Church is to do an adequate job of missionizing the world. [ Pastor and people complete each other. Together they constitute the whole. But a proper relationship must be maintained. The pastor should work with the laity, not for them. He should complement and supplement, but not substitute. He is to train and equip for service. He is to enable. He does not do the work but he sees to it that it gets done. The pastor is there to show enthusiasm, stimulate, guide, clarify, heal and to demand, if necessary. Only then can there be a proper relationship between the ordained and the non-ordained laity. Let the pastor beware of having a "messiah" complex and of becoming a perfectionist! Let him also remember that it is from the ranks of the laity that he is called.] Caemmerer summarizes this relationship well when he states:

In all of this the pastor as feeder and leader plays two roles. He preaches and teaches the Gospel of God,

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<sup>16</sup>Raines, New Life in the Church (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 142.



which converts to Christ and edifies men already in the Body of Christ. He trains the Christians of the Church to speak that Gospel so that they edify one another within the Church and bear witness to their surrounding world so that its people give the Gospel a hearing. Thus the pastor simultaneously feeds and leads, trains, and oversees the labors of those who are trained.<sup>17</sup>

If the laymen look upon their pastor as their inspirer, informer, trainer, equipper, enabler, overseer, and not as their "joe-boy" and "Jack-of-all-trades," then a proper relationship will exist. Then pastors assume their proper place and with God's help, properly fulfill it in our church today. Pastor and laity alike must recognize that the pastor is not "to perform like a gladiator before spectators but to help equip every person for his ministry."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, if the pastor is ready to accept what the laymen do, he will be prevented from underestimating their abilities and under-training them for service. Someone has said, "It is better for a pastor to 'lose' time helping a lay person fill a certain responsibility than it is for him to 'save' time by doing it himself." In this way, the laity will also enable the pastor. When a proper relationship between laity and pastor is really spelled out in practice, the pastoral office will not be endangered or eliminated, it will be enhanced.

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<sup>17</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, Feeding and Leading (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>R. Eugene Sterner, You have a Ministry: Christian Laymen are Called to Serve (Anderson, Ind.: Warner Press, 1963), p. 85.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

The Church of Jesus Christ will never perish. But that statement is no cause for over-confidence and self-satisfaction. The need today is to encourage God's people in the Church Militant to live out the full potential of their priesthood. If there is activity at all on the part of the laity, it is frequently limited to the local congregation, where it often becomes a case of self-service. There is a great need to arouse the laity in a much greater measure, to their calling in the world of daily life and work. There, the Church can live out her full potential only through the laity. That potential can be approximated only if lay people are trained and equipped.

The New Testament gives conclusive evidence that the Church is one community, not a double community of clergy and laity. The ministry of the former is only a specialized activity within the latter. The non-ordained are indeed sharers in the work of Christ. They have an active task in bringing Christ to the world. The time has come when the laity must crawl off the "clerical laps" and be what God, by virtue of their Baptism, has called them to be. The functions of the Church are to be carried out in them and through them. In view of this, pastor and people have a common ministry.

It is therefore essential that there be a return to a more Biblical concept of the role of the laity in the Church. Emphasis on the laity is by no means a form of anti-clericalism. Nor does it seek to "clericalize" the laity. Alden Kelly argues,

A high doctrine of the laity seems to strengthen, rather than diminish, a high doctrine of the ministry of ordained ministers and clergy. Any view of the ministry is, like freedom, all of one piece. If one suffers, all suffer. This is because the Church does not have a ministry or various ministries. The Church is ministry. This is to say that the laity, the people of God, is what it does.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that the New Testament knows of no distinction between the two terms "Clergy" and "Laity." Perhaps for God's people to realize their ministry more fully, it would be well to eliminate these terms entirely. Obviously, this would call for a somewhat radical ecclesiological change.

There are those who opt for the dissolution of the "ordained" laity, or ministry, as it is commonly termed. This is a way of expressing their negative reaction to authoritarianism, hierarchical systems, and institutionalism. From a Lutheran viewpoint, this would be objectionable, even though ordination is not a divine institution. The Confessions of The Lutheran Church make ordination the public ratification of the acceptance of a call to a certain congregation. Regardless of how active the laity becomes, there

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<sup>1</sup>Alden D. Kelley, The People of God (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1962), p. 33.

will never come a time when the pastoral office will cease to be. However, the Church needs a greater awareness of the proper relationship between this specialized office and the laos theou in general. There is need for the "ordained" laos to become more aware of their proper function, that of enabling and not disabling, the "non-ordained." There are many among the "non-ordained" who are clamoring for direction and help and training. To whom can they go at this time? To the "ordained." The "non-ordained" generally have the zeal. They are much better educated today than ever before. They want to get into the act, but they need the wisdom. As John M. Todd observes: "The lay people who have seen the need for apostolic activity have often had more zeal than wisdom, because they have not received any adequate training or deepening of their spiritual lives."<sup>2</sup> Hence, from the viewpoint of training and equipping the "non-ordained," the "ordained" will always have a vital function to fulfill. The "ordained" displays something of the total response by Christ demanded of His disciples; he enables the "non-ordained" to see more clearly what is meant by Christian discipleship, though this does not imply that he excels the laity in Christian discipleship. The "ordained" should certainly encourage the involvement of the total Church in

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<sup>2</sup>John M. Todd, "The Apostolate of the Laity," Cross Currents, II (Spring 1952), 29.

its God-given tasks. In this way the "ordained" not only assists the "non-ordained," but is also assisted by him.

It was further observed in this thesis, that the Church through the laity needs to become much more of a light and a salt in the world around it. "The Church cannot aim at conquering, but must aim at interpenetrating the world and so communicating with it."<sup>3</sup> "Church in the world is the situation or dimension where one most clearly discerns the meaning of the laity."<sup>4</sup> It has been amply demonstrated throughout this thesis, and alluded to in the opening paragraph of this chapter, that in Church--World relationships, the laity plays a much more decisive role than the clergy can. Since the world is the object of God's concern, the theatre and purpose of the divine drama of redemption, it is time for the people of God "to turn away from self-preoccupation and begin to take seriously their calling to be in the world as the servant community."<sup>5</sup> The Church today needs to learn a new way of talking to the world, of "interfering" with the world, in order to bring to light its real needs and perplexities. Thus, as Truman B. Douglas argues, "The Church . . . must find its way to places and groups of people where it has

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<sup>3</sup>Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 179.

<sup>4</sup>Kelly, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup>Truman B. Douglas, "Introduction," Creative Ministries, edited by David F. Marshall (Philadelphia--Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), p. 16.

been largely a stranger but where the shape of our culture for the future is being decisively determined."<sup>6</sup> Again, this can be most effectively carried out through the laity who are already there. This will necessarily demand some remoulding of the laity, the "non-ordained," but it will require an equally drastic remoulding of the "ordained."

In this thesis, frequent references have been made to small groups such as the house church. We have observed that forms like this can help generate effective action on the part of God's people. It is therefore strongly suggested that this kind of change in the structure of the church will activate the laos in living out, to a greater degree, their proper role as the people of God. Conventional church programs have for the most part been unsuccessful. In small groups there is opportunity for dialogue. Participants can ask questions and voice their doubts. This action through word, conversation, can lead to action through deed. The small group can help the people of God see more clearly their functions of witness, fellowship, worship, nurture, and service, and exercise these more extensively, not only within the boundaries of their church building and denominational community, but also and above all in their fields of labor, in the world into which God has placed them.

TO HIM WHO LOVES US AND HAS FREED US FROM OUR SINS BY HIS BLOOD, AND MADE US A KINGDOM, PRIESTS TO HIS GOD AND FATHER, TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN (Rev. 1:5,6).

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

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