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**Short Title**

**THE MINISTRY ON MISSION FIELDS**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Christian Ministry, St. Louis,  
Department of Evangelical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
M.A. Program for the Degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

1953

1953

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

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DEVELOPING A MINISTRY ON MISSION FIELDS  
IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPTS  
OF CHURCH AND MINISTRY

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

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by

Maynard W. Dorow

May 1963

24476

Approved by:

Victor Barclay

Advisor

W. J. Dauber

Reader

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The general theme of this study was suggested by Dr. E. L. Lueker, chairman of the "Committee for Research on Church and Ministry" of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. This committee is undertaking a study of broad scope in regard to the doctrine of the church and the ministry and to related practices in the Lutheran Church. The problem of developing a ministry on the mission field has particular appeal to the writer because of his experience as a missionary in Korea since 1958. The writer has been involved in the planning and the execution of the first steps toward establishing a Lutheran church in Korea, a church to be founded on indigenous principles in which the development of the ministry is of key importance.

The study begins in Chapter II with a brief look at the concept of the church in the New Testament, aimed primarily at demonstrating that ministry in the broad sense belongs to all Christians. Chapter III treats some of the basic New Testament materials on ministry, showing that ministry originates with Christ and that it is characterized by the functioning of God-given gifts for the upbuilding of the church. Turning in Chapter IV to the Lutheran Confessions, we find that they also serve to bear out the functional nature of the church's ministry. The particular purpose of our study comes to focus in Chapter V where we sketch the history of modern



missions in regard to developing the ministry. The traditional pattern of ministerial development, some significant departures from it, and present trends are evaluated in terms of the New Testament concepts of church and ministry. Chapter VI summarizes the preceding chapters, draws certain conclusions for the development of a ministry in the light of the New Testament, and notes some questions raised but not answered by this study.

Over the past number of years a great deal of concern has been shown over the ministry on mission fields and in the non-Western churches. The Tambaram Meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1938 stated its conviction that the current state of theological education showed great weakness and instructed the Council to undertake a series of surveys of the situation in various countries. Action was delayed by the Second World War, but work began in 1948. The result has been a series of survey reports covering the training of the ministry in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. A similar survey in the Philippines was undertaken by the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches. While these reports were concerned primarily with the specific question of theological training, many other and wider questions regarding the nature and role of the ministry were raised. A study of the development of theological education in China from Protestant beginnings in 1807 to 1934 was undertaken in a dissertation by C. Stanley Smith, and a similar study in India was made by C. W. Ranson under the auspices of the National Christian Council of India. All of these studies



have been of great help in the preparation of this thesis and are noted in the bibliography.

In addition to the surveys mentioned above, the International Missionary Council has initiated a series of discussions on the forms of ministry and related matters. The International Missionary Council held at Willingen, Germany, in 1952, proposed that some study be given in regard to the question of a part-time ordained ministry. While no immediate action was taken, it was decided at the Ghana Assembly in 1957-58 to appoint a "Standing Committee on the Ministry." In July, 1960, Dr. Wilfred Scoopes was appointed to the staff of the International Missionary Council with responsibility for the concerns of this committee. In 1961 Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (now continuing the work of the International Missionary Council), produced a study entitled "The Pattern of the Ministry in a Missionary Church," which delineated the question of a part-time ordained ministry. This paper was distributed among concerned church leaders around the world, and was used as the basis for discussion at several international conferences held in 1962. A fruit of these discussions, at least in part, is the pamphlet entitled A Tent-Making Ministry: Towards a More Flexible Form of Ministry, currently being distributed by the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. This and other papers arising out of these discussions have been very useful in the course of this study,



and have been included in the bibliography.

The concern for theological training has not been limited to mission fields and non-Western churches. In 1953 "The Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada" was initiated under the leadership of the American Association of Theological Schools with the financial support of the Carnegie Corporation. This self-study has resulted in a report of considerable significance issued under the names of H. Richard Niebuhr, director, and his associates, Daniel Day Williams and James M. Gustafson.

In this paper we have used the terms "mission field" and "younger churches" (or "non-Western churches") with a certain amount of overlapping. Properly speaking "mission field" should apply primarily to areas of missionary endeavor in the early stages and perhaps before a church is well-established, though it is often applied to all areas in which evangelization has been undertaken since the beginning of the modern missionary movement. Over the past number of years the term "younger churches" has come into use in recognition of the sister churches that have arisen in the areas of missionary work. Recently these churches have more accurately been termed "non-Western churches." Our use of "mission fields" in the title is used in the more inclusive sense for the sake of brevity, and also because the ultimate concern of this study is more with churches in the beginning stages than with established churches.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

This study concerns the ministry of the church. To phrase the question in this way already demonstrates that ministry cannot be understood by itself but that it is to be studied in the context of the church. When we look at ministry in the New Testament we find that it is always involved with serving the purposes of the church. In this chapter, therefore, we will set forth in brief outline the concept of the church as presented in the New Testament in order that our study of ministry might be seen in proper perspective.

The "church" in the New Testament is always a gathering of people. In the Greek New Testament the word commonly used for "church" is ἐκκλησία. The nearest Old Testament equivalent is  $\text{קָהָל}$ , translated by ἐκκλησία in the Septuagint. The term  $\text{קָהָל}$  meant originally an assembly or gathering and came to denote an assembly of Israelites gathered for religious purposes, specifically to hear God's law and to worship him (cf. II Chron. 20:5; Ezra 10:12; Neh. 5:13; 8:2). The expression "the  $\text{קָהָל}$  of Jehovah" then came to signify the people of Israel as God's people, distinct from other peoples and set aside for His service. Thus in the Greek Old Testament God's chosen people are commonly called "the ἐκκλησία of the



Lord."<sup>1</sup>

The expression passed on to become the typical designation for the New Testament people of God.

Since Christians from a very early date regarded themselves as the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), a "chosen race" or "holy nation" as opposed to Jews who had rejected the Messiah (1 Peter 2:9), it is easy to understand why they called themselves "the ἐκκλησία of God."<sup>2</sup>

This "ἐκκλησία of God" is those people who have been called by God to be His people, His "saints," sanctified to God through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and set apart for His service.

Ἐκκλησία may refer to God's people in general (e.g., Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 15:9, Eph. 1:22). More typically however it refers to the Christians in a locality. The apostle Paul addresses the Christians at Corinth as "the church (ἐκκλησία) which is at Corinth." The stress on individual groups is apparent where the word ἐκκλησία is used in the plural, e.g., Acts 15:41; 16:5; Rom. 16:4,16; 1 Cor. 7:17; 11:16; et al. The ἐκκλησία in the place can also be seen as active in doing the tasks of God to which Christians have been called, such as prayer and witness (e.g., Acts 12:5; 14:23,27), worship (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:34) and works of charity (e.g., Phil. 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:16).

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce M. Metzger, "The New Testament View of the Church," Theology Today, XIX (October, 1962), 370.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



References to the church in the New Testament are of course not limited to the use of Ἐκκλησία, but there is a wealth of terms and images applied to the church.<sup>3</sup> The most common image for the church is the "body of Christ." While it may be that this expression has been overworked in recent years, it is used by St. Paul with such frequency and its implications are drawn out in such detail that it can be regarded as a standard idea with him. The use of "body of Christ" stresses both the corporate nature of the church and the interdependence of its members (note especially Rom. 12: 4ff. and 1 Cor. 12). The significance of this term for our discussion is apparent by its use in 1 Cor. 12 and Ephesians 4, two key passages for the study of the ministry which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

The tasks of the church are to be carried out by the members of the body. These tasks can be described under the headings of edification and witness. The work of edification, of building up the brother, is described in the New Testament not only where the terms edifying (οἰκοδομεῖν, e.g., 1 Cor. 10:23; 14:4) and edification (οἰκοδομή, e.g., Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 14:3) are found, but in every place where the mutual sharing and upbuilding of Christians is noted. This responsibility devolves upon each Christian,

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<sup>3</sup>A recent study surveys ninety-six analogies and images for the church in the New Testament. Cf. Paul S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960).



as one who is a member of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4ff.) and as one who is spiritual (Gal. 6:1-10). This responsibility aims at communicating spiritual life, seeking out the needy and speaking to him the forgiving Word of Life from God (Matt. 18), bearing one another's spiritual burdens (Gal. 6:1ff.), and by mutual encouragement stirring up to doing the works of God (Heb. 10:24-25). Edification is thus implemented by a variety of processes including worship, conversation, family life and business associations (Eph. 5:18-6:10).

Witness, the other dimension of the church's task, is concerned with outreach into the world. The term applies to the Christian's manifesting of the faith and life begun in him through Christ (Luke 24:46-48; John 15:27). Hence it applies already to the work of edification, but in particular it serves the winning of men for Christ. The structure of witness is apparent in 2 Cor. 5; 1 Peter 3, and elsewhere. Men who have experienced God's redeeming work in Christ are transformed in life, from selfishness or apathy for people to agape or active concern for people, and from impurity to new and fruitful behavior. The transformed life of the Christian serves to recommend the Gospel and to make the next man ready to hear it. The Christian will then also speak the Christian kerygma through which the next man too can experience salvation and the transformation of his life. Thus the Christian both by his life and by his message serves as a "witness" to what God has done and wills to do in every person.



To carry out its mission of edification and witness the church must use its basic resource, the Word of the Gospel. This is the message that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. It may be defined as the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16), the righteousness from God in Christ (Rom. 1:17), or God's Word (John 17:14). The attestation of the resurrection of Christ is an essential component of it (Rom. 4:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:1-11). This message of the Gospel is basic for the edification of the church. It is to be spoken for the sake of admonishing and reclaiming the fallen brother (Matt. 18:18; 2 Cor. 2:10), as well as contributing to the growth and unity of the body of Christ (Col. 3:1-16; Eph. 4 and 5). This message is also basic in the witness and outreach of the church. The everyday speech of Christians is to communicate this grace of God in associations with outsiders (Col. 4:3-6; 1 Pet. 3; Phil. 2:13-16), and all strategy for discipling the nations depends on the preaching of this Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20).

Speaking this Gospel that it may edify and witness to God's grace in Christ is the task of every Christian. The one who has come to faith by that Gospel will also make profession of it (Rom. 10:10; Hebrews 4:14). The profession of the Gospel is linked to the purpose of every Christian in the world (Phil. 2:13-16). While certain individuals may possess the gift of "utterance" in special measure (1 Cor. 12:8), the message of reconciliation has been entrusted to



every Christian (2 Cor. 4:17-20).<sup>4</sup>

To summarize what we have been saying thus far: The church is God's people called out from the world and set aside for God's service through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The "church of God" may refer to all believers, but it more often refers to the Christians in any place. The church's tasks of edification and witness are the responsibility of every Christian: empowered by the Gospel the Christian seeks to upbuild his fellow-member and to reach out to the unbeliever by that same message of the Gospel.

Thus it can be said that the ministry belongs to the whole church. The Gospel has been given to the church, i.e., entrusted to all believers. Under that Gospel the Christian assumes responsibility for his fellowman, to maintain and build up the Christian brother in the faith and to reach out to the unbeliever to bring him to faith. The Christian is a minister of the Gospel to his neighbor. The relation of this ministry to the specially called ministry (e.g., pastors) will be brought out in the following chapters.

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<sup>4</sup>For the general scheme of this chapter, as well as for many of the scripture references, I am indebted to materials presented in the classroom by Dr. Richard R. Caemmerer.



## CHAPTER III

### MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### Ministry Originates with Christ

Ministry in the New Testament gets its essential character directly from the person and work of Christ. As the word already implies, "ministry" is characterized by serving. Although the New Testament has a variety of terms for the act of serving, the characteristic Greek word for "serving" is δακονία.<sup>1</sup> The verb is δακονεῖν and the person who serves is called a δάκονος. Christ is called δάκονος only in Romans 15:8: "For I tell you that Christ became a servant (δάκονος) to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness. . . ." In Mark 10:45 (cf. Matt. 20:28; Luke 22:27) Christ Himself speaks of His work as δακονεῖν: "For the Son of man also came not to be served (δακονηθῆναι) but to serve (δακονῆσαι), and to give his life a ransom for many." It is significant that Christ applies "serving" to the giving of His life for man on the cross. Not only His three years of peripatetic "ministry" but particularly His death which fulfilled God's plan of redemption is spoken of as δακονεῖν on behalf

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. the opening paragraphs of the article by Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "δακονεῖν, δακονία, δάκονος," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 81-93.



of men.<sup>2</sup> Thus Christ comes as Servant, gives Himself in life and death and so sets the course for ministry.

Christ as the Servant par excellence is further evinced by His fulfilling the role of the "servant of the Lord." In the latter part of the book of Isaiah there are four passages (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) which are concerned with the "servant of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> In these so-called "Servant-poems" the Servant fulfills His divine mission through suffering and dying for the sins of others, and then is raised from death and exalted by God. While there is some disagreement as to whom the "Servant" originally referred, there is no doubt that this Servant's role is ultimately fulfilled by Christ. Christ Himself does not quote from the "Servant-poems" and apply them to Himself, but His references to the sufferings "written of him" (Matt. 26:24,54,56; Mark 9:12; etc.) would hardly exclude these Messianic poems from Isaiah.<sup>4</sup> In Matt. 12:18 the first of the Servant-poems is quoted as a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus, and it is almost certainly with

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<sup>2</sup>The noun, δ(α)κον(ι)α, is freighted with similar significance when the apostle Paul speaks of "the dispensation (δ(α)κον(ι)α) of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:8), and of "the ministry (δ(α)κον(ι)α) of reconciliation," (2 Cor. 5:18).

<sup>3</sup>The Hebrew word for "servant" here used is עֶבֶד. The LXX translates it παῖς, meaning "child," "son," or more appropriately here, "servant."

<sup>4</sup>C. R. North, "The Servant of the Lord," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, 293.



reference to this "Servant" that Jesus is called the "servant (παῖς) of God" in Acts 3:13,26; 4:27,30. Elsewhere both explicitly and implicitly Jesus is identified with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.<sup>5</sup>

The New Testament ministry as derived from Christ can also be seen in the use of the term "apostle." The word "apostle" (ἀπόστολος) "always means the designation of a man who is sent as ambassador, and indeed, an authorized ambassador."<sup>6</sup> The content of ἀπόστολος is derived from the Hebrew concept of the  $\text{נִרְצָף}$ , the one commissioned to represent fully and to exercise the rights of the sender.<sup>7</sup> Christ is called ἀπόστολος only in Hebrews 3:1, where it expresses emphatically that in the Son God Himself speaks and acts. It is possible that the idea is also contained in the

<sup>5</sup>"The Voice from heaven at our Lord's baptism identified Him with the Isaianic Servant: ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα (Mk. i.11; Lk. iii.22) echoes Isa. xlii.1, ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου, ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου as does also the word ἐκλελεγμένος in the Lukan version of the Voice at the Transfiguration (Lk. ix.35). . . . Our Lord himself explicitly interpreted His Messiahship in terms of the Isaianic Servant (in Lk. xii.37 He directly applies to Himself the words καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἐλογίσθη from Isa. liii.12, and 'many' in Mk. x.45; xiv.24 echoes 'many' in Isa. liii.11f.), and so do the NT writers generally (cf. Mt. viii.17; xii.18ff; Jn. xii.38; Rom. iv.25; x.16; Heb. ix.28; 1 Pet. ii.22-25; Rev. v.6)." F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 108.

<sup>6</sup>Karl H. Rengstorff, Apostleship, edited and translated by J. R. Coates from the article in Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1952), p. 26.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 14ff., 26ff.



Gospel of John, where the corresponding verb, ἀποστέλλειν , is frequently used to describe Jesus' divine commission.<sup>8</sup>

Thus when Christ appointed and sent out men as "apostles," He was commissioning them to continue His own mission (cf. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you," John 20:21). The mission and ministry of the apostles, and so that of the church, has its origin with Christ.

There is hardly any description of ministry in the New Testament that is not used of Christ. Above we have seen Him called "deacon," "servant," and "apostle." Elsewhere He is referred to as "slave" (Phil. 2:7), "teacher" (Matt. 23:8; John 13:13), "shepherd" (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Heb. 13:20), and "bishop" (1 Pet. 2:25). The prototype of all ministry is Jesus Christ.

This does not exhaust what the New Testament has to offer on Christ as the originator of the church's ministry. It is perhaps enough to point us in the direction that ministry begins with God and His sending of Christ as Servant to carry out a ministry for men. Christ is both the source and the pattern of ministry.

#### Ministry is Characterized by Service

When Jesus characterized His own work as that of serving, He also made this the stamp of His followers. Greatness in the community of believers is to be measured in terms of willingness to serve (Matt. 20:26-28 and parallels). Discipleship

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 63ff.



is described as serving Jesus: "If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26). Beyer comments: "Jesus sees in service just that attitude which makes a man his disciple."<sup>9</sup>

Service or ministry, δακονία, has a wide range of application. In classical Greek usage it refers to waiting on tables and similar service,<sup>10</sup> and is so used in the New Testament (Luke 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; John 12:2). It is used for the kindly personal service rendered to Jesus by Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:15 and par.) and by the women from Galilee (Matt. 27:55), for service given St. Paul by Timothy, Erastus and Onesimus (Acts 19:22; Philemon 13; 2 Tim. 1:18), and for the ministry of angels to Jesus and to men (Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13; Heb. 1:14).

Turning more specifically to the activity of the church in the New Testament we find δακονία and δακονεῖν used to describe a variety of "ministries." Δακονία is rendered to the church because of gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:6f.; 1 Cor. 12:4f.; 1 Pet. 4:10f.).

Δακονία is used to describe the feeding of the poor (Acts 6:1) and the providing of help in the time of famine (Acts 11:29; 12:25). It is also used to describe the

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<sup>9</sup>Beyer, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 83.



organizing, gathering and conveying of the great collection among the Gentile churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25,31; 2 Cor. 8 and 9).

Of particular significance is the "ministry ( $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}$ ) of the Word" (cf. Acts 6:4). St. Paul describes the proclamation of the Gospel as the  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}$  of the Spirit and of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:8-9). He refers to his responsibility to proclaim the Gospel as a  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}$  given him by God and Christ (2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12; Acts 20:24). He has been entrusted with the  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}$  of reconciliation, which is identified with the "word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Paul also speaks of his apostleship as  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}$  (Rom. 11:13; cf. Acts 21:19), and the same identification is made in Acts 1:17,25. He calls himself a  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$  of the church for the sake of proclaiming the Word (Col. 1:25), and together with his fellow workers, "ministers ( $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ) of a new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:6). Timothy is charged to do the work of an evangelist and to fulfill his  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\acute{\alpha}$  (2 Tim. 4:5), and is also called "God's minister ( $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ) in the gospel of Christ" (1 Thess. 3:2). Epaphras is called a  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$  of Christ (Col. 1:7), as is Apollos, together with Paul (1 Cor. 4:1).

$\Delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$  also comes to be used for office-bearers in a local church (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1). The two instances in which such "deacons" are noted do not give a clear idea of their functions, but it seems that they exercised a subordinate ministry in association with "bishops."



From the above discussion we see that in general διακονία and its derivatives apply to the character and activity of Christians in their concerns for others. It is descriptive of every kind of service rendered on behalf of the church. It bears particular weight as the διακονία of the Word or Gospel, and describes the person (διάκονος) especially charged with the proclamation of the Gospel. "In the primitive Church every activity or function which contributed to the upbuilding of the Christian community was brought under the category of diakonia."<sup>11</sup>

We can also see that the church by its ministry continues the ministry of Christ. By designating His disciples as servants even as He was a servant, by sending them out as His representatives, by committing to them the Word of reconciliation, Christ was committing His ministry to the church. "In and through the ministry of the Church it is always Christ Himself who is at work, nourishing, sustaining, ordering, and governing His Church on earth."<sup>12</sup> Manson sums it up in more detail:

The Church is the Body of Christ; and the life of the Church is the continuation of the Messianic Ministry. It follows that the nature of the Church's task can be defined by reference to the records of the public career of Jesus, His teaching and His acts. Here we are given

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<sup>11</sup>Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 139.

<sup>12</sup>T. F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1955), p. 37.



a clear lead. The Son of Man came not to be ministered to but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. In other words the Son of Man is the Servant of the Lord. But if the Messianic career has to be worked out in terms of service and sacrifice, the followers of the Messiah must find their destiny along the same lines. Every function of the members of Christ's Body is a diakonia, and Christ Himself is the primary holder of every diakonia. The spirit and manner of this diakonia is given by both precept and example.<sup>13</sup>

#### God Gives Gifts for the Church's Ministry

It was noted above that there is a connection between "service" (διδασκαλία) and "gifts" (χαρίσματα).<sup>14</sup> In 1 Cor. 12:4-5 service and gifts seem to be parallel or complementary and in 1 Pet. 4:10 the gift is for the sake of serving others. Commenting on the New Testament usage of "gifts," Lindsay writes:

Everywhere service and leadership go together. These two thoughts are continually associated with a third, that of "gifts"; for the qualifications which fit a man for service and therefore for rule within the Church of Christ are always looked upon as special "gifts" of the Spirit of God, or charismata.<sup>15</sup>

There are God-given gifts for service, for ministry, in the church. What are these "gifts"?

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<sup>13</sup> T. W. Manson, The Church's Ministry (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1948), pp. 24f.

<sup>14</sup> Supra, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), p. 63.



A χάρισμα is "a gift freely and graciously given," "a favor bestowed,"<sup>16</sup> and is used in the New Testament for a variety of God-given gifts. For this discussion we refer to gifts given in a special sense to Christians for the sake of their mutual service in the church. They are gifts of "prophecy," "service," "teaching," "exhortation," "contributing," "giving aid," "acts of mercy" (Rom. 12:6-8). These are gifts given to all for the "common good" of the church (1 Cor. 12:7). They are given in great variety but by "the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4ff.). They serve the worship of the congregation, the gift of speaking the Word being most valued (1 Cor. 14).

God's gifts to the church for the sake of its ministry are not limited to the charismatic type gifts indicated above. God also gives gifts of ministers, or ministerial functions, as those described in this key passage for our understanding of the ministry:

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. . . . And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ [Eph. 4:7,11-14].

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<sup>16</sup> Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted from the German of the fourth revised and augmented edition by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 887.



A somewhat parallel passage is found in 1 Cor. 12:27-28.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers of various kinds of tongues.

Although the functions of ministry here enumerated are not called *χαρίσματα*, it is plain that they are gifts of God from the phrases "his gifts" (*αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν*) and "God has appointed" (*ἔθετο ὁ θεός*). Moreover, the Corinthians passage stands in a chapter of which the whole content is concerned with "varieties of gifts" (*διαφόροις χαρισμάτων*) (1 Cor. 12:4). Also it is stated in the context that each Christian is given gifts: "But grace was given to each of us. . . ." (Eph. 4:7); "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit. . . ." (1 Cor. 12:7). What is made clear then is that every Christian receives some gift for serving the church, some of these gifts being enumerated in 1 Cor. 12:8-10, and that the ministerial functions listed in our two passages are special gifts to certain persons.

The nature of these gifts becomes more clear when we consider the purpose for which they are given. It will help to consider the Ephesians passage, 4:1-16, as a whole. Paul's primary concern here is the growth and development of the body of Christ "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (v.13). This will come about within the unity of the body as each member, "speaking the truth in love," contributes toward the growth of the whole (vv.15-16). To this end Paul begins by encouraging that walk of life which will



maintain the unity of the Spirit (vv. 1-3). The unity of the believers is emphasized by the "seven ones" (vv. 4-6). The thought then moves to a consideration of the gifts which the ascended Christ (vv. 8-10) has given to each believer (v. 7) and of the special gifts to some of them (v. 11). Now he states the purpose of the special gifts: their function is the equipping of the saints for their work of ministry (v. 12).

This interpretation of verse 12 is supported by the context and by our interpretation of *διακονία* as well as by the text itself, though the text does not demand it. In Greek it reads: *πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.* The punctuation in the RSV, quoted above, suggests that the three phrases are to be regarded as parallel. The meaning then would be that the gifts listed in verse 11 were given for three coordinate purposes: "for the equipment of the saints," "for the work of ministry," and "for building up the body of Christ." In that case *διακονία* is carried on only, or primarily, by those with special gifts. Abbott takes this position categorically.<sup>17</sup> But we have already seen above that

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<sup>17</sup>" . . . in a connection like this, where offices in the Church are in question, *διακονία* can only mean official service; and this does not belong to the saints in general." T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897), p. 119.



διακονία is essentially a function of serving and belongs to all Christians as well as to those especially appointed.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the phrase εἰς ἔργον διακονίας is most naturally taken as dependent on καταρτισμὸν.<sup>19</sup> The change of prepositions (from πρὸς to εἰς) may point in this direction, but is not to be regarded as decisive.<sup>20</sup> More conclusive is the stress in the whole passage on the activity of all the saints for the welfare of the whole body.<sup>21</sup> Most commentators agree that here διακονία is the ministry of all the saints and that the "gifts" of verse 11 are to equip them for their work.

We come to a similar conclusion regarding the gifts of ministry when we look more closely at 1 Corinthians 12. This chapter opens with a discussion of "spiritual gifts" (πνευματικῶν). This seems to have been one of the matters on the "questionnaire" of the Corinthian church to Paul and he gives chapters 12 to 14 in answer. The Corinthian Christians

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<sup>18</sup>Supra, pp. 15ff.

<sup>19</sup>J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Second edition; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1909), p. 182.

<sup>20</sup>Westcott however contends: "The change of prepositions shows clearly that the three clauses (πρὸς . . . εἰς . . . εἰς . . .) are not coordinate, and however foreign the idea of the spiritual ministry of all 'the saints' is to our mode of thinking, it was the life of the apostolic Church." Brooke Foss Westcott, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 62f.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. Cf. also Edwin D. Roels, God's Mission: The Epistle to the Ephesians in Mission Perspective (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962).



had apparently over-evaluated the gift of speaking in tongues and Paul seeks to bring it into proper perspective. The keynote to the passage is in verses 4-6 where he points out the essential oneness of the varied gifts given by the Triune God. There are "varieties of gifts" (διαίρεσις χαρισμάτων<sup>22</sup>), of service, and of working, but they are all given by the same God. These gifts are apportioned by the Spirit to individuals for the common good (vv. 7-11).

We pass on to an illustration (taken from the human body) of the truth that, though the gifts of God's Spirit may be many and various, yet those who are endowed with them constitute one organic whole<sup>23</sup> [vv. 12-31].

Within this framework Paul lists the "apostles, prophets," etc., whom "God has appointed in the church"<sup>24</sup> (v. 28). The point is that God has placed differently endowed members in the church, each one to make his particular contribution to the whole body. The image of the body here drawn out in detail suggests that each member, and especially those with

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<sup>22</sup>The word διαίρεσις appears only here in the New Testament. The phrase διαίρεσις χαρισμάτων is translated "allotments of spiritual gifts" in Bauer, op. cit., p. 182. This seems to support Robertson's statement that "the word refers to the gifts being distributed among different individuals rather than to the distinctions between the gifts themselves. Both meanings are true; but it is the dealing out of the gifts, rather than the variety of them, that is insisted upon here." Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Second edition; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1914), p. 263.

<sup>23</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>24</sup>"Church" here refers to the church universal, not to the church at Corinth.



particular gifts appointed by God (v. 28), is to serve for the proper functioning of the whole body, in which even the "weaker" parts have an indispensable role (v. 22). Thus our conclusion drawn from the Ephesians passage that the special functions of ministry given to the church serve the ministry of all, is at least supported by the parallel passage in 1 Corinthians 12, though it is not so explicit.

#### Ministry is a Function in Service of the Church

It will be noted that we have been referring to the "apostles, prophets," etc., as "functions" of ministry rather than as "offices." At least here, if not throughout the New Testament, the emphasis in regard to ministry is on the function of service within the Christian community. Writing on Ephesians 4, W. H. Griffith Thomas makes this point and marshals some of the evidence.

It is to be carefully noticed that we have to do here, not with offices, but with functions. The reference is not to so many different and separate offices exercised by so many separate officials; they are functions of the Body, and in certain cases several of these functions may have been, and doubtless were, exercised by one person. That they represent functions rather than offices may be argued from the difference found in the list here as compared with that in 1 Corinthians xii.28. These five functions are probably mentioned as examples and not as exhaustive, and also because they apply more to the Church as universal than as local.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"The Doctrine of the Church in the Epistle to the Ephesians," The Expositor, seventh series, II (1906), 326.



Not only does the difference between the lists of Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 argue the point, but also the fact that 1 Corinthians includes "gifts" which could hardly be considered offices, viz., "workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues" (v. 28). Hort writes of the Corinthian passage:

Much profitless labour has been spent on trying to force the various terms into meaning so many definite ecclesiastical offices. Not only is the feat impossible but the attempt carries us away from St Paul's purpose, which is to shew how the different functions are those which God has assigned to the different members of a single body.<sup>26</sup>

Schweizer is at pains to show that throughout the New Testament, ministry is concerned with forms of service given to all the members by the Spirit, and not with offices.<sup>27</sup> Not all commentators agree to this emphasis but the majority do.

To emphasize the functional nature of ministry is not to deny that apostles, prophets, etc., did serve in an official capacity. It was noted above that Christ appointed apostles to carry on His mission. Throughout his epistles Paul makes it clear that he acted with authority as one called and sent by Christ. Moreover he saw to the appointment of overseers of the church in every place (Titus 1). Even overseers thus appointed by some human method were regarded as being called

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<sup>26</sup>F. J. A. Hort, The Christian Ecclesia (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1897), pp. 157f.

<sup>27</sup>Eduard Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, translated from the German by Frank Clark (SCM Press, Ltd., 1961), passim.



by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). The fact that God gives the gift of ministers indicates that they are essential for the life of the church, and not something the church can dispense with if it chooses. While the function of ministry belongs to all Christians, the specially called or "gifted" servant fills a God-given office in his function as a "minister to ministers."<sup>28</sup> The ministry as an "office" of preaching the Gospel, which the church exercises in calling men to public ministry, is treated at greater length in Chapter IV below.

In the preceding chapter it was demonstrated that the church by its very nature calls for a ministry by each Christian on behalf of his brothers and toward the world. In this chapter we have seen that all ministry originates with Christ, who is both the source and the pattern for the ministry of the church. The church's ministry is characterized by *διακονία*, by service on behalf of others, especially the ministry of the Word but also any act of love for the welfare of the church. Christ provides specially gifted "ministers" who serve the whole church by helping each Christian to carry out his ministry. Thus ministry is not concerned primarily with office holders but with the functioning of God-given gifts for the upbuilding of the church.

For the service that God is getting done through ministers is precisely the service that God is getting done through all His Christians. The "work of the ministry"

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<sup>28</sup>Walter J. Bartling, "A Ministry to Ministers," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIII (June, 1962), 325-36.



that Paul makes the target of the pastorate in Ephesians 4 is the ministry in which every Christian engages on behalf of the spiritual life and place of every fellow-Christian in the body of Christ. Martin Luther described the distinction of the pastor among the laymen: "He is a layman who works for the other laymen." He is a minister to ministers.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Ministry is Ministry," The Seminarian, L (May, 1959), 33.



## CHAPTER IV

### MINISTRY IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

When we turn to the Lutheran Confessions we find a concept of the ministry essentially the same as that of the New Testament, although the later historical setting in which they were written gives a different viewpoint. Like the New Testament the Confessions have a functional approach to the ministry. They make it clear that the ministry is not determined from the standpoint of the person but of the divine institution. In the previous chapter we pointed out that the New Testament writings are concerned with ministry not primarily as an "office" but as a function of service, particularly the ministry of the Word, for the upbuilding of the church. In the Confessions we find a frequent use of the term "office." It will be seen, however, that "office" does not concern position and rank held by ministers, but it designates the divine institution of which the purpose is functional on behalf of the church.

**The Ministry is an Office of Preaching the Gospel**

The dominant theme in regard to ministry in the Confessions is that it is an office of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. The Augsburg Confession, under Article V entitled "The Office of the Ministry," states that "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the



ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments" (AC V, 1).<sup>1</sup> "The 'ministry' as presented in this article is the means of grace, the proclamation of the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> However, "office of the ministry" and "Gospel and sacraments" do not form a simple equation. These words are meant to convey the fact that the office of the ministry exercises the functions of the Gospel and the sacraments. This is evident by the opening phrase of AC V, "To obtain such faith." This refers to the previous article which reads:

It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness, as Paul says in Romans 3:21-26 and 4:5 [AC IV].

Through the redeeming work of Christ we obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God, "by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith." It was in order that men

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this chapter quotations from the Confessions will follow the modern English edition, viz., The Book of Concord, edited and translated by Theodore G. Tappert in collaboration with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer and Arthur C. Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959). The confessional writings cited are abbreviated as follows: Augsburg Confession, AC; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, AP; Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope, Tr. The quotations are referred to by Confession, Article (where applicable), and paragraph. Thus AC V, 1 means Augsburg Confession, Article V, paragraph 1.

<sup>2</sup>F. E. Mayer, "De Ministerio Ecclesiastico," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (December, 1950), 887.



might obtain such faith that God instituted the office of the ministry, or as the Latin text reads, "the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted" (AC V, 1).

It is here implied that men must be called and sent as ministers of the Gospel. Elsewhere this is explicitly stated thus:

. . . according to the Gospel the power of keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments [AC XXVIII, 5].

According to divine right . . . it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God's Word alone [AC XXVIII, 21].

"These remarks apply not only to the bishops in their capacity as overseers of the congregations but, as a matter of principle, to every pastor as the bishop of his congregation."<sup>3</sup> Bishops and pastors are, in principle, not distinguished here or elsewhere in the Confessions. ". . . this power [preaching the Gospel, etc.] belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops" (Tr, 61). There is only one office of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments, though its powers may be exercised by a variety of ministers.

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<sup>3</sup>Edmund Schlink, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions, translated from the German by Paul F. Koehnke and Herbert J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 230.



The doctrine of the ministry of the Gospel is inseparably connected with the doctrine of the church. "The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly" (AG VII, 2).

"Where the church is, there is also the ministry, and where there is preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments, there the church always is also."<sup>4</sup> As the church in the place, that is, the local congregation of believers, is not to be separated from the whole Christian church on earth, so the ministry in the local congregation is not to be differentiated from the ministry which serves a large number of congregations and pastors. Each congregation has the ministry in its full dimension. It participates in the commission of proclaiming the Gospel given to the whole church and so participates in the hierarchical or administrative government that serves the whole church.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Authority of the Ministry is Derived from the Word

The Confessions make it clear that the ministry of the Gospel carried out by men derives its authority from the Word of God. Civil and spiritual authority are handled by Schlink under one section headed "Civil and spiritual authority are divine ordinances and derive their dignity from the Word of

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



God."<sup>6</sup> Just as civil government is ordained by God and He is at work through men exercising civil authority, so God acts through men exercising the church's ministry. "The church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it" (Ap XIII, 12). We may give credence to ministers of the church because they speak "on the basis of another's Word rather than on the basis of their own" (Ap XXVIII, 18). Thus also in absolution, "it is not the voice or word of the man who speaks it, but it is the Word of God, who forgives sin, for it is spoken in God's stead and by God's command" (Ac XXV, 3). God is speaking through men as they carry out the ministry of the Gospel.

The parallel between civil and spiritual authority is again apparent when considering the fact that evil men may exercise such offices. In both civil and spiritual offices God "acts also through such men as are not members of the kingdom of God but of the kingdom of the devil. . . . Thus God acts even through a heathen in the office of civil government."<sup>7</sup> In the same way God is at work through the ministry, even though exercised by unbelievers. "Word and sacraments are efficacious even when wicked men administer them" (Ap VII, 19).

For they do not represent their own persons but the person of Christ, because of the church's call, as Christ

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 233.



testified (Luke 10:16), "He who hears you hears me." When they offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they do so in Christ's place and stead [Ap VII, 28].

This not only emphasizes that the authority of the ministry rests on God's Word but also bears out the functional character of the ministry. The ministry of the Gospel is not bound to places or persons but "exists wherever God gives his gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers. Nor is this ministry valid because of any individual's authority but because of the Word given by Christ" (Tr, 26).

All of these statements show clearly that the concept of office in the Confessions is a decidedly functional one. The office is not determined from the standpoint of the person but of the divine institution. The words and deeds performed in the office do not receive their quality from the person--for example, from the fact that this person is a member of Christ's kingdom--but only from the action of God who in his offices too acts even through his enemies. The boundary for the divine action through the civil and the spiritual office is not man as such but in every case it is the commission given by God with the office.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Ministry was Instituted in the Calling of the Apostles

The ministry was instituted in the commissioning of the apostles by Jesus Christ. He sent them out with divine authority with the command, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). Also the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19,20 is cited as a word by which the apostles were given spiritual power (Tr, 31). The Confessions repeatedly quote the words of Jesus, "He who hears you hears me" (Luke

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 235.



10:16), in connection with the authority of the ministry (cf. AC XXVIII, 22; Ap VII and VIII, 28; XII, 40).

Consistently these commands and promises given to the apostles are referred to the public ministry through which at all times the Gospel is to be preached in the midst of the congregation and before all the world. . . . The public ministry of all times was instituted with the calling of the apostles, without disparagement of the unique church-founding position of the apostles.<sup>9</sup>

Thus through the apostles Jesus establishes the authority of the church's ministry for all times. This is borne out by the fact that the power of the keys is entrusted not only to the apostles but to the whole church.

Here the words of Christ apply which testify that the keys were given to the church and not merely to certain individuals: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20) [Tr, 68].

That the power of the keys belongs to the whole church is also evident from the reference to testimony of the ancient church that a layman may in an emergency absolve and become the minister and pastor of another (Tr, 67).

" . . . wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists" (Tr, 67). The authority to preach the Gospel includes the authority to send out ministers to preach the Gospel. With the power of the keys committed to the whole church is given also the right to ordain ministers. "Where the true church is, therefore, the right of electing and ordaining ministers must of necessity also be" (Tr, 67).

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 241.



While the Confessions make it clear that the commission to preach the Gospel belongs to the whole church, they are also concerned that the public ministry be conducted in a proper manner. "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacrament in the church without a regular call" (AC XIV).

This article does not deny the royal priesthood of all believers but presupposes it. Because the spiritual office has been entrusted to all believers, its administration is not left to the whim of every individual believer. The public administration depends, rather, on the authorization of the assembly of believers. Because the ministry is entrusted to the church, the church calls the particular believer into the office of public preaching and administration of the sacraments.<sup>10</sup>

While the right to call to the public ministry belongs to the whole church, for the sake of order it is as a rule exercised through those men already properly called into the public ministry.

Ordination, which in the Confessions is not clearly distinguished from the call and election, is the function of pastors and bishops. But this does not abolish the right of all believers to ordain.<sup>11</sup>

At this point it should be made clear that while the church exercises its commission to preach the Gospel through called ministers, the church does not thereby create the ministry or even merely transfer its collective right to certain individuals. Rather the church acts to fill this office entrusted to it by God. The minister acts in the stead of Christ in the exercise of a ministry which He instituted.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 244.



**Function but not Form of the Ministry is given in the Word**

The Confessions do not make any concrete form or constitution of the ministerial office binding for the church. They "lack binding assertions of a specific nature delimiting the functions of pastorate and episcopate, even though a delimitation must take place."<sup>12</sup> They recognize the value of the church polity and ecclesiastical hierarchy as constituted at that time, "although they were created by human authority" (Ap XIV, 1). The power to preach the Gospel "belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops" (Tr, 60f.). There is no divinely commissioned office other than that of preaching the Gospel.

We are brought back once more to the functional character of the ministry. The Confessions see in the ministry an office of serving the Gospel committed to the church, which the church exercises in the calling of men to the public ministry. The idea of an "order" is absent. The Confessions make it clear that "the ministry is not an independently existing institution but only a service to the Gospel."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 202.



## CHAPTER V

### THE MINISTRY ON MISSION FIELDS

#### The Traditional Method of Developing the Ministry

Our particular interest in this study is the development of the church's ministry on mission fields and in the so-called younger churches of the present time. The modern missionary movement, however, is of such comparatively recent origin that the problems confronted today quite directly relate to the work of pioneer missionaries and the beginnings of the non-Western churches. For this reason we begin here with a brief sketch of the traditional method of developing the ministry in the early days of modern missions, and then turn to some notable exceptions to the pattern.

Churches normally start without ministries of their own. The missionary serves as the first minister, proclaiming the Gospel and leading in worship and study. Within a short time the need for a native ministry becomes apparent, to care for the growing number of Christians and to meet new opportunities for growth. The missionary seeks to duplicate himself in the training of native Christians for the work of ministry. In general, he has taken the most gifted of his converts, trained them as evangelists, and sent them out as paid agents of the mission to preach and to supervise the new congregations of Christians. Most typical perhaps of the areas where this pattern developed is India. In fact the beginnings of this



pattern may be traced to the work of the pioneer missionaries of the Tranquebar mission, Ziegenbalg and Plutschau, who followed such a course in opposition to their Danish supporters.<sup>1</sup> The indigenous ministry was started in the same way in China. When evangelists or "helpers," as they were called, were needed, converts were taken from field or shop and given training by the missionary in Bible and practical matters.<sup>2</sup> The lay catechist became the missionary's right arm also in Africa and remains today "the real hero of the Christian situation in Africa."<sup>3</sup>

Modern missions, in almost every part of the world, have proceeded in the way that Ziegenbalg proposed . . . These "mission agents" have been the infantrymen of the Church's advance during the whole of the "great century." Very rarely known outside the small circle of a mission district, often miserably underpaid, beset by all the spiritual power of evil in the pagan society around them, they have preached the Gospel, trained the converts, shepherded the congregations, healed the sick, helped the poor, lifted the whole of the society in which they were set. . . . One cannot withhold a tribute of admiration from this noble army of men and women.<sup>4</sup>

The lay catechist has proven a hardy variety of minister. They serve the churches in Africa today by the thousands.

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<sup>1</sup>Lesslie Newbigin, "The Pattern of the Ministry in a Missionary Church," a memorandum obtained from World Council of Churches, Division of World Mission and Evangelism, New York, 1961 (mimeographed), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>C. Stanley Smith, The Development of Protestant Theological Education in China (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1941), pp. 37f.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen Neill, Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa, Part I (London: International Missionary Council, 1950), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Newbigin, loc. cit.



Not only have they "for more than a century been the solid backbone of the ministry of the Church in India," but they are expected to continue "to render indispensable service in the work of evangelism and in the pastoral care of a growing church."<sup>5</sup>

As the churches developed and the need of ordained ministers was felt, the usual method was to select a number of the well-tried men from among the lay workers and to give them a certain amount of Biblical and pastoral training. They were then set to work, but in a strictly subordinate position, under the guidance of the missionaries. Such ordinations however were slow in coming. The missionaries had in mind that candidates for the ordained ministry should approximate their own training before standing for ordination. The low educational standards, not to speak of the complete lack of western educational facilities, made such an attainment impossible in most areas. Though the Tranquebar missionaries "never lost sight of the great object of forming a native class of ministers," it was twenty-seven years after the founding of the mission that the first Indian minister was ordained.<sup>6</sup> By 1851 there were only twenty-three native pastors under all Protestant societies in India, as against 493 catechists. The need for additional ordained workers led to a controversy as to whether "it was wise to ordain men

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<sup>5</sup>C. W. Ranson, The Christian Minister in India (London and Redhill: Lutterworth Press, 1946), pp. 56f.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 43f.



without English degrees or some equivalent form of ministerial training." The controversy was resolved by a decision to ordain increasing numbers of lay workers to the full ministry of the Word and sacraments, a policy initiated by the Lutherans and Anglicans and followed by other missions in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

In the introduction to his survey of the ministry in Africa, Bishop Neill notes that there were very few examples of the ordination of Africans to the ministry before the nineteenth century. He cites the two best known and adds, "It is to be noted that in both these cases, the African was ordained only after long residence and training in a European country."<sup>8</sup>

It was noted above that the first candidates for ordination were mature men chosen from among the lay workers. Their training was given individually, or in very small groups, by the missionary with whom the students worked. Later the schools established by the missions began to provide recruits from among the young men. Gradually classes were formed and in the course of time a Bible school or theological college was formed.

While the pattern as it developed may have appeared both logical and perhaps inevitable to those working it out, in

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 52f.

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., p. 5.



retrospect some weaknesses become apparent. While it was necessary that the missionary be the leader, he became too much of a leader. He trained the catechist and cared for him, and the catechist obediently carried out the instructions of the missionary. Too often the catechist who became ordained retained the same servile attitude toward the missionary.<sup>9</sup> This resulted in a certain stifling of the life of the church. Of the early work of the Tranquebar Mission, Bishop Neill writes, "The greatest weakness of all was that the whole work was centered in the missionaries; their control did not allow for the Indian Church to develop a strong and firm life of its own."<sup>10</sup>

The goal of ministerial training was to reproduce the type of minister that the missionary was. Thus it was assumed that ministers should be full-time paid workers who had received some measure of theological training. For all that, the ordained men in the early days were neither put in independent charge nor thought of as being on an equality with the Western missionary and sharing in his authority.<sup>11</sup> Still the ideal was that the native ordained minister should

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<sup>9</sup>Michael Hollis, Paternalism and the Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 87.

<sup>10</sup>Stephen Neill, Builders of the Indian Church (London: The Livingstone Press, 1934), p. 80.

<sup>11</sup>Hollis, op. cit., pp. 51f.



be able to compete on fairly equal terms with the missionary trained in the West. Consequently the training of the men to be ordained was modeled after that which the missionary had received.

One of the aims in the training of "leaders" has been to produce indigenous ministers who would be able to take equal place with the foreign missionaries, in those fields of labour which the missionaries were already occupying. But this meant, inevitably, that their training was planned as nearly as possible to resemble that which the missionaries had undergone in their own country, that is to say, it was European or American in conception, and not Indian, African or Chinese.<sup>12</sup>

There was thus a failure to take adequate consideration for the demands of the environment and the needs of the emerging church, with the result that theological education did not always make the normal adjustments to its environment.<sup>13</sup>

A more basic weakness was the misconception of the church and the ministry fostered by the missionary-centered approach to church development. New groups of Christians placed under the tutelage of a catechist paid and directed by the mission learned to accept dependence on others for their ministry. Their first concept of the ordained minister, viz., the missionary, was that of an administrator who travels to the various churches to supervise the work of the unordained workers and to administer the sacraments. Even the development

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<sup>12</sup> Stephen Neill, "African Theological Survey," International Review of Missions, XXXIX (1950), 207.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, op. cit., pp. 53ff.



of an indigenous ordained ministry did little to change the pattern, since the national minister did not become a resident pastor, except for larger congregations, but inherited the administrative task of the missionary. The continued growth of the churches demanded that the local pastoral ministry continue to be supplied by the lay catechist while the supervisory role of the missionary was multiplied and extended by the comparatively few ordained ministers. The pattern prevails in large measure today in much of Asia and Africa, where an ordained pastor may be nominally in charge of twenty, forty or more congregations.<sup>14</sup> Such a situation can hardly convey the Scriptural doctrine that the church in any place is wholly the church, and not just a sub-station of a larger body with headquarters elsewhere, and that every church is intended, as a gift of God, to have the ministry of Word and sacraments in its midst. It has been in part the concern for a ministry of the sacraments (which the lay catechist is not ordinarily allowed to administer) which has prompted a re-thinking of the traditional pattern and led to new developments, to which we shall turn our attention a bit later.

#### Early Experiments in Developing the Ministry

Throughout the early part of modern mission history the pattern of ministerial development described above could be

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<sup>14</sup> Newbigin, op. cit., p. 4.



said to be almost universal. Within the last hundred years however a number of significant experiments quite different from the traditional method have been developed. To speak of them as "experiments" is to emphasize their radical departure from the established pattern and not to detract from the fact that over the years the new methods have not only proven themselves but also have brought about great changes in the approach to planting churches. As in our treatment of the traditional method above, we can here give only a rapid survey of the more significant "experiments."

A radical departure from the traditional pattern was taken by the so-called "Nevius method," significant particularly for its highly successful use in Korea. Dr. John L. Nevius, a missionary for many years under the Northern Presbyterian Mission in Shantung, China, came to the conclusion that the traditional method of church planting was wrong and that a new method should be sought following what he felt were Scriptural principles. At the heart of the "Nevius Method" is the principle that from the beginning new churches should be self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting, the "three selfs" which are still today much in the forefront of all discussion about establishing an indigenous church. Dr. Nevius believed that local Christian groups should learn to be independent and self-reliant from the beginning. Basic to this approach was the use of natural local leaders. He proposed that the natural leaders, who in the past had been uprooted and employed as paid agents, would be far more useful



if left in their original homes and employments. In this way each local group could be self-governing from the start under its own unpaid leadership. These local leaders were brought to a central station from time to time for training, which was also augmented by a few itinerate better trained assistants called "helpers."<sup>15</sup> The goal was that as the churches grew in strength they would in time be able to appoint their own pastor. Nevius was strongly opposed to the system of paid agents. He felt that it harmed the local church, as it removed the natural leader and tended to stir envy and dissatisfaction in others; it aroused a mercenary interest and tended to discourage voluntary efforts; it created an unhealthy relationship of employer and employee between missionary and native evangelist.<sup>16</sup> Also basic to the Nevius method was systematic study of the Bible, with each believer being a teacher of someone and a learner from someone else, but these and other details of his method need not concern us here.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>It is to be noted that in contrast to an impression often held that Nevius advocated no foreign funds be used to pay native workers, these "helpers" were employed by the mission to help oversee new congregations and their untrained leaders. Cf. John L. Nevius, The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches (Philadelphia: The Reformed and Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 31f.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 8, 11ff., passim.

<sup>17</sup>For further explanation of the Nevius method, see Charles Allen Clark, The Nevius Plan for Mission Work (Seoul, Korea: Christian Literature Society, n.d.) and T. Stanley Soltau, Missions at the Crossroads (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, Inc., 1954).



Although Dr. Nevius' principles were criticized and its results in his own field questioned by a former colleague,<sup>18</sup> his plan was more than exonerated by its application in Korea. It is well known that in 1890 Dr. Nevius was invited to Korea by a group of seven young missionaries who were just beginning their work in a country only recently opened to the West. They asked him to give them two weeks of instructions in the missionary methods with which they had become acquainted through his series of articles in the Chinese Recorder in 1885. It is the opinion of most observers that the application of these methods with emphasis on self-support and Bible teaching was largely responsible for the remarkable growth of the church in Korea,<sup>19</sup> which today has self-supporting and self-governing Protestant churches totaling more than a million members. The principle that each local group shall have its own leader responsible for worship and pastoral care was written into the Rules and By-laws of the Northern Presbyterian Mission in 1891. Except in special cases they received no salary from the mission.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Cf. Clark, op. cit., pp. 44ff.

<sup>19</sup>While it is admitted that many factors entered into the rapid spread of the church in Korea, e.g., the sudden interest in things Western through the opening of the country to the outside world, the absence of any rival religion apart from animism, the presence of a simple alphabet that has enabled the rank and file Christian to read the Bible, the general consensus of opinion is that the application of the Nevius methods was the determining factor.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 86f.



The extent to which this was carried out is shown by a report in 1909 that ninety-four per cent of the 1052 native workers of the Presbyterian Mission were supported by the Koreans.<sup>21</sup> By 1936 the Presbyterian Church numbered about three thousand congregations of which two thousand had their own pastors and fully supported them. The remaining one thousand congregations were under the supervision of missionaries but their inner life and activities were directed by lay volunteer workers.<sup>22</sup> Although crediting the American missions for the early establishment of an indigenous ministry, a leading Korean pastor and educator has faulted them for an unnecessary delay in developing higher training for the clergy at a time when the younger generation was turning to the West for modern education. This delay invited an invidious comparison between the native pastor and the foreign missionary and postponed the assumption of authority by Korean leaders.<sup>23</sup> Today, with nine Protestant seminaries, Korea has by far the largest number of Protestant theological students of any single country in Africa, Asia or Latin America.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Harry A. Rhodes, History of the Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Seoul, Korea: Chosen Mission Presbyterian Church U.S.A., 1934), p. 399.

<sup>22</sup>J. Merle Davis, compiler, The Economic Basis of the Church, compiled for the International Missionary Council held at Tambaram, Madras, 1938 (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 369f.

<sup>23</sup>L. George Paik, The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910 (Pyeng Yang, Korea: Union Christian College Press, 1929), pp. 296ff.

<sup>24</sup>Yorke Allen, A Seminary Survey (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1960), p. 159.



Of greater current significance than the "Nevius method" are the writings of Roland Allen.<sup>25</sup> Using the work of St. Paul as his example, Allen followed a train of thought similar to that of Nevius. He pointed out that in the early church little time was wasted in appointing local men as presbyters and bishops to assume responsibility for young congregations, even though it may have been Paul or his representative who did the appointing. If there was financial support, it came from the local church.<sup>26</sup> Allen felt that these were Scriptural principles which should be followed everywhere in planting churches. "Leaders must be thrown up by the community, not dragged up by the missionary."<sup>27</sup> With God-given authority in the hands of local leaders there is freedom under the Spirit for "spontaneous" growth. "The very first groups of converts must be

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<sup>25</sup>Roland Allen joined the North China Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1895. He served for a time as lecturer in a school for Chinese clergy and later was sent to a country station near Yungching. Returning to England in 1903 due to poor health he became a Vicar in Buckinghamshire until his resignation in 1907. Becoming a "voluntary priest" he turned his energies to writing his convictions regarding principles for planting indigenous churches and raising a voluntary clergy, and to traveling, largely in Africa, where he attempted to get his ideas accepted and put into practice. For further biographical details, see the biographical memoir written by Alexander McLeish in the recent edition of Allen's writings, The Ministry of the Spirit: Selected Writings of Roland Allen, edited by David M. Paton (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), pp. ix-xvi.

<sup>26</sup>Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), pp. 99ff., passim.

<sup>27</sup>ibid., p. 154.



so fully equipped with all spiritual authority that they could multiply themselves without any necessary reference to us."<sup>28</sup>

In contrast to Nevius, Allen advocated ordaining the local leaders, which not only obviated the problem of support but also served to actualize the church among the people.

It is quite clear, and all experience proves it, that small groups cannot support stipendiary clergy. . . . The only possible way is to ordain voluntary clergy, and thus to establish the church with all the full life and rites and privileges of a properly constituted church. If we did that . . . men would speedily learn what the church is. There would be no groups in which marriages could not be solemnized, children baptized, the dead buried with proper Christian ceremony, and the Lord's Supper duly administered.<sup>29</sup>

While attracting little favorable attention in his day the writings of Roland Allen are presently being read with new interest, though not uncritically. Stephen Neill points out that St. Paul's missionary methods were determined at least in part by the presence of the liberal Jews of the dispersion and those Gentiles who had come under the influence of the synagogue and hence were particularly responsive to the Gospel. Account has to be taken of such differences and it is therefore in error merely to set up "the imitation of St. Paul" as a principle of missionary strategy.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Roland Allen, The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It (Second edition; London: World Dominion Press, 1949), p. 1.

<sup>29</sup>Allen, Ministry of the Spirit, p. 162.

<sup>30</sup>The Unfinished Task (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1957), p. 125.



Another attempt to break with the traditional pattern of planting churches is associated with the name of S. J. W. Clark and the London Missionary Society. Clark was a successful businessman who in later life devoted his time and fortune to furthering the missionary cause. He made several journeys overseas to study the situation and became convinced that the goals of "self-supporting" and "indigenous," instead of being left to the distant future, should belong to the starting point of a mission endeavor. He therefore provided in 1924 a grant to the London Missionary Society by which to maintain a number of itinerant bands of workers (later called "Clark Bands") who would aim to establish locally independent churches much more quickly than done previously. Many small groups were started and given freedom to develop their own organization. Emphasis was laid on natural leadership within the group and on the ability of the group, through Bible study, prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to provide for its own spiritual nurture. While the results of this work were not what Clark had envisioned, the experiment was sufficiently successful to warrant further trial by the London Missionary Society in North China.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Norman Goodall, A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 202f. Cf. also "Collation of Comments," responses by various church leaders and missionaries to "The Pattern of the Ministry in a Missionary Church" by Leslie Newbigin, collected and edited by Wilfred Scopes under the auspices of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches, New York, 1962 (mimeographed), pp. 15f.



We will consider one further "experiment," undertaken in quite different surroundings than those already discussed. This is the church established among the primitive Papuans of New Guinea by the Neuendettelsau and Rhenish Mission in the latter part of the nineteenth century. While great difficulties attended the early efforts, great strides were made in the working out of a method of "tribal conversion" under the leadership of Christian Keysser. This method was also of the greatest importance for the development of leadership in the Christian community. Basic to this method was the understanding that the Papuan did not think or act as an individual but always thought of himself as a member of the community. Since the Christians thought of themselves as God's clan, the individual was bound to serve the whole clan with his particular gifts and the clan as a whole was responsible for the life of the individual. Before conversion to Christianity the natural leadership was there in the elders of the tribe. Although it required much training to give them a truly Christian understanding of the office of elder, the leaders were supported in the exercise of their ministry by the sense of the responsibility of the community as a whole. The burden of pastoral work in the villages was borne by the elders. The celebration of Holy Communion, important for the regular renewal of the life of the congregation, was always preceded by the confession of sins by each member. The community appointed certain men to hear the confessions. Thus with little formal organization the Christian groups in New Guinea grew up to be inde-



pendent congregations. Missionary work to the unevangelized in neighboring areas came to be regarded as the responsibility of the Christian community, which sent out and supported evangelists. In the early days leadership was provided by the elders and by the school teachers, who also served as preachers and were supported by the congregations. Additional training for pastors was undertaken only with the approach of World War II when it became likely that the missionaries would have to leave.<sup>32</sup>

In each case described above it is evident that the development of a ministry was part of a larger pattern for establishing an indigenous church. The aim was the planting of a church that would stand on its own and continue to grow with a minimum of outside assistance and control. This required the appointing of leaders for each new group of Christians as it formed. The emphasis was on the natural leaders of the community, with a conscious avoiding of importing a paid leadership. Since these were all rural and economically undeveloped areas, the first "ministers" were laymen who remained in their jobs, or were supported by the Christian community in a meagre way. The aim was that the ministry be indigenous to the Christian community and develop along with it.

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<sup>32</sup> G. F. Vicedom, Church and People in New Guinea (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), pp. 30ff., 66ff., passim.



### Current Trends in Developing the Ministry

The experiments described above were involved primarily with the problem of developing a ministry for newly planted churches. The major concern at the present time is providing an adequate ministry for churches already planted and growing. The problem is highlighted by an almost universal shortage of ordained ministers. But the search for solutions to this problem has led to deeper inquiries about the nature of the ministry and of the church. It has led to the criticism of traditional patterns from a new vantage point and to some new experiments in adapting God's ever-present gift of the ministry to new situations.

The Willingen Meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1952 made the following statement:

In many parts of the world there is great concern over the paucity of suitable men hearing and responding to the call to the ministry. Where there are large accessions to the Church through group movements the question is especially urgent. The proposal for a part-time ordained ministry should be considered in this connexion. This proposal raises many fundamental issues; in fact, it touches on the basic question of the nature and function of the Christian ministry and the churches' traditional conception of this office. The dangers of a part-time ministry are serious. Nevertheless, the prevailing assumption that a full-time, paid ministry is the norm needs to be reconsidered. Is it fundamental to the nature of the Christian ministry or is it an uncritical transplantation to another soil of what was appropriate to a different environment? Amongst other gains, the development of a part-time ministry would bring the sacraments within reach of many remote congregations who are at present denied them except on rare occasions. It would also enable a newly-planted church the more effectively to extend its witness. The proposal calls



for study and experiment.<sup>33</sup>

This statement capsules the present problem, a possible solution, and some of the ramifications of a new departure from the established pattern.

The present concern for the ministry goes beyond the mere fact that there are not enough men to serve churches growing in numbers and rising in educational and cultural level. Questions are being asked as to whether the pattern of ministry inherited from the beginnings of the younger churches is not depriving them of some of the riches of God's gift. In a recent "Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa" by the International Missionary Council the following statements were made:

This church of Christ does not live by education, nor does its life-nerve lie in social and moral progress; it lives, strictly speaking, on the Word of God only. This church--whatever its order--must know that the Word of God is in its midst. In sign and seal of this there must be available to it the Christian sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as central to its life; and it must be cared for spiritually. The Christian minister is the "minister of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God"; his place is in the midst of the congregation, not as the administrative--and usually absent--head of a certain organizational structure.

. . . we risk the strong assertion that we are in danger of depriving this Christian community of the very roots of its Christian life, and we are doing this because we

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<sup>33</sup> Norman Goodall, editor, Missions under the Cross, Addresses delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements issued by the Meeting (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), pp. 197f.



have become involved--almost inextricably, it seems-- in a structural pattern for the church which is largely determined by economic considerations, educational standards and so on. We are in danger of making something other than the primacy of the Word the determining factor in the structure of the church and the form of the ministry.<sup>34</sup>

The "structural pattern" here referred to is largely that of the traditional method of developing the ministry described in the first part of this chapter.

It is being pointed out that our inherited pattern of the ministry was developed under conditions altogether different from those to which the attempt is now made to apply it. The form of our ministry grew out of medieval "Christendom," a society in some sense Christian. The ministry was thought of as essentially a pastoral office for the care of those within the church. Largely missing was the sense of a sending ministry to the world. The churches of Asia and Africa, like the church of the New Testament, are set within radically non-Christian societies. "It may well be that a pattern of ministry developed within Western Christendom needs drastic overhauling before it can be adequate for the work of the Church in Asia [and Africa] today."<sup>35</sup> An Asian leader has pointed out the irony of the fact that this "church-directed" pattern of ministry was exported to the younger churches

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<sup>34</sup>Norman Goodall and Eric W. Nielsen, Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa, Part III (London and New York: International Missionary Council, 1954), pp. 38f.

<sup>35</sup>Hollis, op. cit., pp. 97f.



through the modern missionary movement which is the outstanding example of the "world-directed" ministry in modern times.<sup>36</sup>

The Willingen statement quoted above pointed up the lack of suitable men being recruited for the ministry. The need for increasing numbers of highly-trained ministers is consistently reflected in the several surveys sponsored by the International Missionary Council over the past decade. A few statistics from the fields will illustrate the point. The ordained pastor in Africa serves a Christian constituency seldom less than one to five thousand, usually scattered in dozens of small groups over many miles which can be covered only by walking. One large mission in Belgian Congo reports eighteen pastors for seventy-five thousand communicant members and slightly less than one thousand places of worship. A large church body in the Cameroun has seventy-four pastors for seventy-two thousand communicants and a total of one hundred twenty thousand believers. In that body each pastor commonly serves one to four central churches, each of which has ten to twelve annexes.<sup>37</sup> The Church of South India is reported to have eight thousand congregations and only eight

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<sup>36</sup>C. H. Hwang, "A Rethinking of Theological Training for the Ministry in the Younger Churches Today," Tainan Theological College, [Taiwan], 1962 (mimeographed), p. 11.

<sup>37</sup>M. Searle Bates and Others, Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa, Part II (London: International Missionary Council, 1954), p. 36.



hundred ordained pastors.<sup>38</sup> These pastors are of course assisted by the lay catechists who carry on the day-by-day ministry of preaching and teaching and pastoral care. The ordained pastor is able to make only an occasional visit to each congregation, acting as an itinerant supervisor and purveyor of the sacraments.

In view of the serious shortage of ordained clergy there is a widespread demand for more lay and part-time workers. It is recognized that it would be impossible to provide in the near future a greatly increased number of theologically trained candidates for ordination. The task is compounded in many areas by a low level of education, by economic weakness, by the draining off of talented young men into government service, and in many instances by a rapidity of church growth with which educational facilities cannot begin to keep up. In many places it is simply a fact that small congregations living in a rural economy are unable to support a full-time and salaried clergy. Already the International Missionary Council meeting at Madras in 1938 recognized the need for voluntary lay workers.

In the vast rural fields of Asia, Africa and Latin America, with their low economic level and scarcity of paid Christian workers, the only hope for the firm planting and growth of the Church in village communities is the recognition of the immense possibilities

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<sup>38</sup> Hollis, op. cit., p. 58.



in the development of voluntary lay service.<sup>39</sup>

But beyond the lack of ordained clergy there are more positive reasons for the interest in the ministry of the laity. There is a growing recognition of the ministerial role which belongs to every Christian.

In recent years Christian leaders throughout the world have come to a new appreciation of the place of the laity in the total ministry of the Church, for the New Testament makes it clear that besides the set-apart ministry of the Apostles and others, there is the ministry of the whole people of God, which means the ministry of every Christian. Some laymen may be called for special service within the Church. All are called for witness in the world through their vocation.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, the growing role of the layman provides the church with a needed flexibility. In a dynamic society in which the church is constantly being called to proclaim the Gospel in new situations and new areas a ministry restricted to a "highly institutionalized professional class will make it impossible for the church to move swiftly and effectively."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>The World Mission of the Church, Findings and Recommendations of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, Madras, India, 1938 (London: International Missionary Council, 1939), p. 71.

<sup>40</sup>Wildred Scopes, editor, The Christian Ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean (Geneva: World Council of Churches, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, 1962), p. 186.

<sup>41</sup>A Tent-Making Ministry (Geneva: World Council of Churches, Division of World Mission and Evangelism, n.d.), p. 5.



The churches can meet situations of rapid change only if they are prepared to make far more use of lay people than, with some shining exceptions, they have been accustomed to do.<sup>42</sup>

The layman is being called on not only to bear faithful witness in his vocation but also to come forward and offer his services to the church as a "voluntary worker," even to surrender his role as a layman and become ordained as a part-time minister.

This brings us back once more to the Willingen statement in which the question was raised of ordaining part-time ministers, that is, ordaining secularly employed and perhaps non-theologically trained people to the ministry of the Word and sacraments. It has been pointed out that the Reformation abolished the "Massing Priest," who was incapable of preaching, that the Word and sacraments might be reunited in a true understanding of the Christian ministry. It is partly with the aim of again reuniting Word and sacraments, separated in much of Asia and Africa in that the normal pastoral care of the congregations depends on unordained preachers and catechists while the administration of the sacraments waits for the occasional visit of the ordained ministers, that many people are concerned with developing a local ordained ministry. Already deplored by Roland Allen, the inconsistency of thus separating Word and sacraments is pointed out by contrast with the early church.

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<sup>42</sup>Neill, The Unfinished Task, p. 61.



. . . from the point of view of the Early Church, we have got things thoroughly turned upside down. . . . In the early days the essential thing was that every Christian group should have the Eucharist every Lord's Day; a sermon would be provided when it was possible. . . . It is hardly too much to say that in those days almost anyone could celebrate the Holy Communion, and hardly anyone except the bishop could preach; whereas now almost anyone can preach (or, rather, is allowed to preach!) and hardly anyone can celebrate Holy Communion.<sup>43</sup>

A solution to this problem has been sought on occasion in the halfway measure of licensing unordained workers to the administration of the sacraments. During a period of rapid expansion of the Methodist Church in South India a number of village workers were licensed annually to administer the sacraments without being ordained. They were "half-laymen" in that they were full-time workers employed by the church, performing all the functions of an ordained pastor, yet unordained.<sup>44</sup> A similar experiment has been tried in the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika where laymen, after a three-months' course of training and a service of "Blessing," are licensed to administer the sacraments on an annually renewable basis. Intended to help bridge the gap until a greater number of fully-trained ministers were available, this practice has not proved popular with that Christian community.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>45</sup>"Record of the Conference on the Pattern of the Ministry in a Missionary Church," record of a conference held in Kampala, Uganda, January, 1962 [under the auspices of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches] (P.O. Box 1053, Nairobi, [Kenya]: Mercury Press, n.d.), pp. 8f.



### Experiments in Adapting the Ministry to Present Needs

A great deal of interest has been directed to experiments in the Church of South India where a change in circumstances has led to a new interest in voluntary workers. Much of the life of the village churches in India has been centered in the village schoolmaster, who often is also the catechist in charge of church services. A move toward more government control of the schools has threatened the system.<sup>46</sup> A result of this and other factors has led to strenuous efforts to train voluntary workers to provide leadership in the congregations. In one area it was decided to ordain voluntary workers as ministers with full authority to administer the sacraments. They must be proven men who are unanimously accepted by the congregations to which they belong and in which they minister. Of the first six chosen, one is a tanner, two are drummers, one is a "head-cooly," one a wood-cutter and one a retired elementary teacher. They were given a period of in-service training for three and a half years under the direction of the full-time minister in charge of the area. They have continued to live and to earn their living in their home villages. In the area where these men work the number of village congregations has quadrupled in a period of twelve years. Their ministry has reportedly been effective for the reason that

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<sup>46</sup> Neill, The Unfinished Task, pp. 62f.



they are fully part of the congregations in which they minister, and are not separated from them by a social and economic gulf. It is emphasized that this whole development would have been impossible apart from the fact that the work was integrated within the life of the church with its regular ministry of full-time trained presbyters and bishops.<sup>47</sup>

A similar move under quite different conditions has been put into practice in the Anglican Church in Hong Kong where thirteen men have been ordained under a special canon of the Chinese Church passed twenty years ago allowing the ordination of men who would remain in their secular employments. In contrast to the situation in India these are largely educated men: ten of the thirteen are university graduates, of whom eight are schoolmasters. This auxiliary clergy has enabled new small congregations to have the full sacramental life of the church from the beginning and to have adequate nurture until a full-time pastor became available. The intellectual ability of these men has enabled them to provide a ministry of outstanding importance.<sup>48</sup> It has been suggested that a similar practice might be applied in parts of Africa where the needs of the newly educated class are not being met by the old-style minister. Well-educated Christian laymen could become ordained as non-professional ministers to fill the gap until seminary-trained men can meet the need.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> A Tent-Making Ministry, p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 6.



The Anglicans in Korea have been moving in a direction similar to that taken in India. They were confronted with the problem of few priests and small, scattered congregations which were generally without the sacraments. Most of these churches had a simple local ministry of the Word, exercised by a man of exemplary character but with little education and receiving no remuneration. One of the most outstanding of these men came forward and asked if he might be ordained so that he could more adequately minister to the congregation which he had been serving for twenty-five years. His request was granted and others like him soon followed. This turn of events opened up the possibility of providing for the spiritual needs of each rural congregation without laying heavy financial burdens upon very poor people or over-taxing the few professional clergy. It is anticipated that such a diaconate will have a continuing place in the church. The work of the seminary-trained priest will be that of visiting the village clergy, guiding them in their studies and assisting them in their ministry.<sup>50</sup>

In Latin America we find a clergy that is theologically trained and ordained but part-time in that they have multiple employment. The situation has been influenced by a strong reaction to Roman Catholicism. There is a tendency to avoid anything that savors of clericalism. Ordination is often

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<sup>50</sup> John B. Whelan, "The Anglican Church in Korea," International Review of Missions, XLIX (1960), 157-66.



regarded as unnecessary and even the subject of ministerial support may provoke the thought of professionalism in a bad sense.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, in Latin America multiple employment is widely accepted as perfectly normal. Many university professors are employed by the hour and given only nominal remuneration and so have to depend on another job to provide sufficient income. The same is true of theological professors in many seminaries. Thus it is not regarded as strange to find a large proportion of Protestant pastors living in the cities who combine their church work with school teaching, the legal profession, business or even politics. There are of course ministers who give their full time to their pastoral charge, as well as a considerable number of laymen with only Bible school training who have the care of local congregations.<sup>52</sup>

Similar efforts to establish part-time voluntary ordained workers in local congregations, backed up and assisted by full-time and more highly trained ministers, are being made in Thailand, Dutch New Guinea, and the Philippines<sup>53</sup> (and perhaps elsewhere) but these add little to the patterns already noted in the situations above.

The idea of a variety of workers serving the church is not new. We have seen that throughout the areas of the non-Western churches a relatively small number of trained and

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<sup>51</sup>Scopes, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 184ff.

<sup>53</sup>"Collation of Comments," pp. 21ff.



ordained ministers function at the top while below them labor an army of various grades of teachers and catechists, usually unordained, often self-employed in schools or on lands provided by the people. What is new is a multi-level ministry in which each level is fully the ministry. The village-level worker, though remaining in his usual employment, is ordained to the ministry of Word and sacraments so that his congregation has the ministry fully in their midst; and he is their pastor and not merely an assistant to the itinerant and professional minister. The educated schoolmaster receives the orders of his church and, as one who knows and is known by the people, provides an adequate and full ministry for a new small congregation. A voluntary ordained ministry as advocated by Roland Allen two generations ago is coming into being.

Some of the advantages of such a part-time ministry are immediately apparent. Not only does it help solve the problem of the lack of ordained workers and bring a regular ministry of the sacraments to otherwise neglected congregations, but it has helped to restore the ministry to its proper place, i.e., in the congregation where the believers have the right and the responsibility to exercise it. It means that opportunities for growth need not be neglected for lack of funds to employ workers and that the churches can be flexible in meeting new and changing situations. Ministers in Latin America, while regretting the necessity of multiple employment, have noted that their secular roles enabled them to gain the respect of people strongly anti-clerical and also



enabled them to understand better the layman's point of view.<sup>54</sup> An Indian pastor has suggested that Indian ministers ought to depend on a handicraft for part of their maintenance, not only because of the meagre resources of the churches but also for a testimony to the place of work in God's order. "With the recognition of the importance of work in Christian life and in the economy of the Christian home and country, half our spiritual ills will disappear."<sup>55</sup>

Some of the disadvantages and "dangers" of a part-time ministry, referred to already in the Willingen statement, have been brought out in recent discussions sponsored by the World Council of Churches. There is the danger of the lowering of standards in attempting to provide training to equip part-time ministers for an adequate teaching and preaching ministry. Relationships between the full-time and part-time ministers may cause difficulties because of differences in disciplines, status and income. Churches presented with the possibility of being served by a part-time minister may seek to excuse themselves from sacrificial giving. Part-time ministers may be transferred through secular employment to places where their ministry is not needed or is unacceptable.<sup>56</sup> Or conversely,

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<sup>54</sup>Scopes, op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>55</sup>V. Jothipakiam, "The Training of Christian Church Leaders in India," International Review of Missions, XXXIX (1950), 428.

<sup>56</sup>"Collation of Comments," p. 3.



a minister may become ineffective in his congregation but can hardly be transferred elsewhere because of his local self-employment. But all of these problems are practical and administrative. Nowhere has a theological objection been raised against the ordination of part-time voluntary workers to the ministry.

It should be noted that part-time ministry is not limited to the areas of the younger churches. The Orthodox Church in Greece, working in a poor rural society similar to many in Africa and Asia, maintains a part-time clergy. The village priest is normally a member of his community, having a minimum of theological and clerical training. His stipend is usually very small, so he normally works as a farmer or tradesman. His ministry is almost entirely liturgical in character, conducting the services and administering the sacraments, marrying and burying. He is however not allowed to preach, since the ministry of the Word and absolution are retained by the bishop.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast to the ordination of those who would otherwise be regarded as laymen, the churches of the industrial West have sought to involve clergy in the life of the secular community. These are highly trained clergy who earn their living in industry and share the life of the workers as fully

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<sup>57</sup>Peter Hammond, The Waters of Marsh: The Present State of the Greek Church (London: Rockliff Publishing Corporation, 1956), pp. 29ff., 142f.



as possible. Most famous of these are the "worker priests" of the Roman Catholic Church in France, once suppressed by Rome on the grounds of their identification with left-wing politics and their loss of priestly character but now functioning again under a new form.<sup>58</sup> Others are exercising a similar type of ministry in various churches in Germany, England, Scotland, Japan, Switzerland and the United States. This form of the ministry is undertaken in the attempt to reclaim a whole section of society that has become alienated from the church. With the Christian witness largely absent from such a community these ministers seek to be pioneers in establishing the church there.<sup>59</sup>

In this connection the thinking of the Anglicans in Korea is noteworthy. Students in the theological training program, only recently gotten underway, are encouraged to take a degree in some field other than theology. Then in the eventuality that a political upheaval should result in the proscribing of ministerial work, the ordinands would be equipped to earn their living and assume positions in the community.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>As reported by Jacques Loew, the worker apostolate now takes the form of a group of priests and "laymen" who live in community and together administer a working-class parish. The "laymen" are candidates for the priesthood who have already finished their theological studies. These non-priests work in factory or warehouse as laborers and in free hours assist the priests. After working thus for five to eight years, they will proceed to ordination. Cf. "Apostles to the Workers, 1961," America, CV (June 10, 1961), 414.

<sup>59</sup>A Tent-Making Ministry, p. 14. <sup>60</sup>Whelan, op. cit., p. 165.



It may be worthwhile to take note of an article written by J. A. T. Robinson in 1952 in which he predicted that the future pattern of the ministry would be largely non-professional, i.e., a priesthood consisting of a great proportion of men working in secular jobs at every level. A relatively small but highly trained leadership would lead the regiment from behind, supplying directive, inspiration and ammunition. The day-to-day responsibility of the non-professional ministers would be the "house-church" in the street-block, the factory, the office or school, and we may add, the village. They would be trained without being taken out of the jobs and the milieu in which they are.<sup>61</sup> With many variations such a pattern is taking shape in various parts of the world today as the attempt is made to develop a ministry adequate to present needs and changing conditions.

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<sup>61</sup> John A. T. Robinson, "The Theological College in a Changing World," Theology, LV (June, 1952), 202-07.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our study of the ministry began with a brief look at the concept of the church in the New Testament, for the ministry is an integral part of the church. The church is the people of God, called out to fulfill His purposes which can be described in terms of the edification of each member and witness toward the world. These tasks are carried out through the ministry of the Gospel committed to the church, that is to all Christians.

Looking specifically at ministry in the New Testament we found that all ministry originates with Christ, who in His life and atoning death sets the pattern and provides the dynamic for the church's ministry. The ministry of the church is characterized by *δίακονία*, by every kind of service on behalf of others and especially by the ministry of the Word. God provides the gift of ministers, who through their various gifts serve the whole church by helping each Christian to carry out his ministry. Thus while ministry is an indispensable gift to be exercised by the church, also through the calling of men to office, ministry is not concerned with rank or distinction but with the functioning of God-given gifts for the upbuilding of the church.

The Lutheran Confessions emphasize that ministry is an office of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacra-



ments. To speak of ministry as an "office" is to make clear that it is a "given" from God which the church exercises in the calling of men to public ministry. It is not however an order or an independent institution but a service to the Gospel.

Sketching the history of modern missions, we saw that the early missionaries sought to develop a ministry patterned after their own training and experience. At first unable to do this they sent out "mission agents," lay catechists and teachers, to assist in the work of shepherding and evangelizing. Later a few of the most able of these were given special training and ordained as ministers. As the churches grew and schools were established, young men came forward as candidates and Bible schools and seminaries as known in the West were founded. The seminaries however have not been able to produce sufficient graduates to meet the needs of the churches, nor would the congregations often have been able to support full-time ministers even had they been available. The result has been a wide-spread pattern of relatively few ordained ministers supervising a large number of congregations with a local ministry carried on by a lay catechist.

This pattern of development was challenged by Nevius, Allen and others who sought to return to a more scriptural method of planting churches. Their methods included the appointing of natural leaders in each local congregation in order to place the responsibility for ministry with the young church from the very beginning. They thus departed from the



assumption that ordained ministers must be theologically trained and full-time paid workers.

The younger churches today which have inherited the pattern developed by the traditional method are making great efforts to increase the number of theologically trained ministers. Since this is a slow process, they are recognizing the need for an enlarged ministerial role of an increasing number of laymen. At the same time the recognition of the need of each congregation for the whole ministry, of Word and sacraments, in its midst has led to a number of experiments in ordaining non-theologically trained local leaders to the ministry. While this practice poses certain difficulties it seems to hold promise of helping to solve the clergy shortage besides serving as a theological corrective to certain misconceptions about the church and ministry.

What shall we say to these developments on the mission fields in the light of the New Testament? The traditional method, it would seem, developed out of a preoccupation with a particular form of the ministry, i.e., theologically trained full-time salaried ministers. If the early missionaries had looked more to the functional character of the ministry, they might have been more ready to adapt a public ministry to the needs and conditions of the churches which they were founding. This preoccupation with the form of the ministry may have resulted in a degree of stifling the church's life and the movement of the Spirit in the church. At least it seems that the methods of Nevius and Allen and others, with a stress on the



functioning of natural leaders as ministers and their dependence on the help of the Spirit, have resulted in more natural and spontaneous growth both as to the churches' inner strength and outward increase. At the same time the old pattern seems to have fostered misconceptions of the church and ministry by seeming to locate the ministry at some headquarters away from the congregation and by the system of administration that separated the ministry of Word and of sacraments. All of this however is meant in no way to detract from the heroic and largely successful work of previous generations of missionaries, nor to slight the high ideals which motivated their concerns for the ministry.

As to Nevius, Allen and those of like mind, we can say that they seem to have returned to a better understanding of ministry as a function, that therefore it could and should develop indigenously to the life of the church. Their approach emphasized and testified that God does provide gifts for the ministry of His church, gifts appropriate to the body of Christ as it grows.

Recent experiments in ordaining theologically untrained, though in some cases educated, men to the ministry have been in the first place largely a response to the need for more ordained ministers. At the same time however these experiments seem to have been motivated by insights gained both from a renewed interest in the writings of men like Roland Allen and from Biblical studies. It is certain that besides the pressure to provide a solution to the clergy problem there is



also the desire to establish the ministry in its fullness in old and new congregations and to foster the exercise of this "office" by the people of God. These experiments indicate a recognition of the functional nature of the ministry and hence the validity of adapting the form to present needs.

Thus in developing a ministry anywhere we may well begin with asking, "What kind (form) of ministry is needed?" We need not be limited by preconceived notions as to certain educational requirements, salaried position, and other characteristics of our ministry in the Western world. We will of course seek to use the highest and the full range of gifts which God provides. We will seek to mold a ministry to the needs of the church as it develops and to the environment in which it is growing. That specialized ministry will best serve the church which most readily aids the members to carry out their ministry of the Gospel to the upbuilding of the church. We stand on good Biblical ground in recognizing that the form of ministry is not predetermined but that it must provide a good and proper exercise of the office of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments.

Finally, we may turn to a few questions raised in the course of this study. It was noted that no one, to our knowledge, has raised a theological objection to the ordination of secularly employed men to a part-time ministry. The example of St. Paul and of the early church already recommend it. But what about ordaining to a ministry circumscribed as to time and place, which may be necessitated by the secular



employment or the limited abilities of the part-time minister? Normally we have thought of the ordained ministry as dedicated to life service anywhere in the church. The fact that we are apt to think of non-theologically trained ministers as "ordained laymen" and that the picture of a theologically trained and ordained minister earning his living by the sweat of his brow seems improper, reveals that our presuppositions about the ordained ministry are little different from those of the early missionaries discussed in Chapter V. Part of the difficulty lies in our conception of ordination. The practice of ordination is suggested by the "laying on of hands" and the "setting apart" in the New Testament. What does ordination mean? We noted that in the Lutheran Confessions ordination and the call are not clearly distinguished. Ordination may be thought of as the act of setting apart some one for a certain work in the church for which he has been prepared and "gifted" and to which God has called him. In much of the recent literature read for this study there is a preference for the term "set-apart ministry" in order to avoid certain connotations of the term "ordained." Further study of our practice of and assumptions about ordination may reveal that we have surrounded ordination with an unwarranted "aura." Clearing away such an aura may lead to a better understanding of the ministry that belongs to all Christians and to a more consistent practice of "setting apart" all ministers of the church rather than ordaining only certain ranks.

A few more general questions are suggested in regard to the training of a ministry for young churches: Although we



recognize the great need for a highly-trained ministry, has the seminary-trained ministry been emphasized to the neglect of training a variety of ministers adapted to local needs and conditions? Having patterned seminaries around the world largely after the seminaries in the West, to what extent have we isolated our theological training programs from the local educational and cultural currents with which there ought to be a healthy intercourse? While we are aware of the tremendous efforts of the sending missions to meet the needs of the people, especially in the areas of medicine and education, has our training of the national ministry been overly spiritualized to the neglect of a *δυναμικὴ* to the whole range of men's needs?



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