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## The Public Ministry in the Apostolic Age

By H. G. BRUEGGEMANN

### EDITORIAL PREFACE

In the hope of resolving the points of disagreement relating to the doctrine of the call, the ministry, and the Church, which for a number of years threatened the unity of the constituent bodies of the Synodical Conference, the convention in 1946 appointed an Interim Committee. In 1948 this committee of eight men submitted its findings to the Synodical Conference in a majority and a minority report. The salient section of the majority committee's report, signed by seven men, is as follows:

#### I

A thorough study of the question of Church and Synod on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions compels us to the following conclusions:

- a. That a congregation is a group of confessing Christians who by God's command regularly assemble for worship (Col. 3:16) and are united for the purpose of maintaining the ministry of the Word in their midst (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Cor. 16:19; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5 f.; Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 11:20 ff.);
- b. That the congregation is the only divinely designated body or unit of the visible Church (1 Cor. 16:19; Matt. 18:17; Acts 20:28);
- c. That the congregation exercises its powers (i. e., calls pastors, uses the Keys, etc.) only by virtue of the believers in it (1 Cor. 3:21; Col. 3:16; Rom. 16:17; Matt. 18:17 f.; John 20:22-23).

#### II

Synods and other co-operative organizations (pastoral conferences, mission societies, children's friend societies, etc.) may be formed for the purpose of carrying out certain specific commands of the Lord

(Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:19-20) which the individual congregation, because of human weakness and other limitations, may not be able to carry out by itself (Gal. 6:2). But such organizations are an outgrowth of Christian love and Christian liberty. The work so done is both *divinely appointed and God-pleasing* (Matt. 28:19) so long as it does not violate the authority vested by God in the local congregation (e. g., Matt. 18:17 f.).

Synod is not a congregation as defined in Par. I, but an association of such congregations. Synod, therefore, has and exercises only those rights and powers which are delegated to it by the constituent congregations, which, in turn, possess these rights and powers by virtue of the believers in their midst (1 Cor. 3:21; 1 Pet. 2:9).

### III

The formation of a congregation or the exercise of its functions does not deprive the individual believer of any of the inherent rights, duties, or privileges of the royal priesthood. However, the Scriptures clearly indicate that these rights may be exercised publicly (i. e., by order and in the name of the congregation, *von Gemeinschafts wegen*) only by authority of the local congregation (Titus 1:5; Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 11:24).

### IV

God has instituted also the office of the so-called public ministry of the Word. According to Scripture this office is to be clearly distinguished from the general priesthood of all believers:

- a. Since no one may execute this office except he have a proper call thereto (cf. Rom. 10:15; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Jer. 23:21). . . .
- b. Since a particular aptitude and an exemplary walk of life are required of the incumbents of this office (1 Cor. 12:29; 1 Pet. 5:3; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-12).

### V

The calling of ministers of the Word is the obligation and sole right of the local congregation (Acts 1:15-26; Acts 14:23). . . .

- A. The obligation to call rests upon the congregation
  - a. by the express will of God that congregations should maintain the ministry of the Word in their midst (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Eph. 4:11);
  - b. by the implied will of God, which is evident from the description the Bible furnishes of a Christian congregation and the office of the ministry (1 Cor. 3:21-23; 1 Cor. 4:1-3; Rom. 10:15; Acts 13:2; 14:26; 1 Cor. 9:14);
  - c. by the command of Jesus to preach the Gospel (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15).

- B. The authority and validity of the call stems
  - a. from the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 3:21-23);
  - b. from the divine institution of the ministry (Acts 20:28; Rom. 1:1-5; Galatians 1; Eph. 4:8; Rom. 15:15-16; 1 Cor. 9:14, 16; Jer. 3:15; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2).
- C. In order to expedite the work of the Church, the congregation may delegate its authority and power to call (Acts 13:2). This includes the calling of pastors, missionaries, professors, teachers, etc., who are gifts of God to the Church. When this is done, it is solely by Christian liberty and in accordance with the law of love.
- D. The call may be terminated any time that God removes the gift, or the field, or when the qualifications demanded are no longer met (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 1:7; 5:22; 3:1-15).

According to the author of the minority report the differences are not in doctrines as such, but in application. The pertinent section of the minority report reads as follows:

Some restrict the concept of a divinely instituted church local (the Church of Christ as it appears on earth—*ekklesia*, Matthew 18) to the local congregation and consider all gatherings of believers, groups of Christians beyond the local congregation, such as synods, conferences, etc., a purely human arrangement.

Others find in the descriptive name of church (*ekklesia*, they who are called out) a term which applies with equal propriety to the various groupings into which the Holy Spirit has gathered His believers, local congregations as well as larger groups.

Some restrict the idea of a divinely instituted ministry to the pastorate of a local congregation and consider such offices as teachers, professors, synodical officials, etc., branches of this office without a specific command of God, established in Christian liberty.

Others see in "ministry" a comprehensive term which covers the various special offices with which the ascended Lord has endowed His Church.

Whereas the Interim Committee had been unable to complete its work, the Synodical Conference resolved

"4. That individuals and groups of our Synods be urged prayerfully to restudy the doctrine of the Church, in order to obtain the true Scriptural answer to the questions raised in the reports." (*Proceedings of the Synodical Conference, 1948*, pp. 135—144).

As a contribution to the study suggested by the Synodical Conference we are herewith submitting for careful examination the article on "The Public Ministry in the Apostolic Age."—F. E. M.

**A**DVOCATES of the various types of church polity that prevail in Christendom have endeavored to defend their position by the example of the Apostolic Church, and few denominations have escaped the temptation to regard their particular form of church organization as the original and Apostolic form, but the fact is that ecclesiastical polity during the first century was in a fluid and emergent state, and the evidence advanced for any particular form of church government is inconclusive.

#### THE PUBLIC MINISTRY AND THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

There can be no question about the fact that there was a public ministry in the Apostolic age and that this ministry was divinely instituted.<sup>1</sup> In Eph. 4:11-12 we read: "He gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The duty to proclaim the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and exercise church discipline is vested in the believers, but this does not eliminate the necessity for a public ministry. It is important to note that the universal priesthood of believers and the public ministry are not identical. That the congregation conferred the office of the ministry upon the individual office-bearers is apparent from the selection of Matthias in Acts 1:15, the choosing of the Seven in Acts 6, the sending of Paul in Acts 13, the election of "the brother" in 2 Cor. 8:18-19, and other instances.<sup>3</sup>

Since the New Testament speaks of ministers as being chosen by God (Acts 20:28), and also as being chosen by the *ecclesia* (Acts 1:15), it is correct to say with Walther: "The ministry is conferred by God through the congregation." There have been those who have criticized this "*Uebertragungslehre*" by insisting that the public ministry exists as a superior estate or holy order, which is conferred upon God's chosen individuals without the instrumentality of the *ecclesia*.<sup>4</sup> Men like Stephan, Loehe, Kliefoth, and Grabau in 19th-century Lutheranism represent a view of the ministry which had dangerous hierarchical tendencies. The idea that the ministry is not conferred through the congregation, but is a special office conferred by the Apostles upon their disciples and perpetuated through the rite of ordination, is without support in the New Testament.<sup>5</sup>

## ORDINATION

It is difficult to determine the significance of ordination in the Apostolic age. In Titus 1:5 Paul instructs Titus to "ordain" elders in every city, and the word used here (*kathisteemi*) is used also in Acts 6:3, where the choosing of the Seven is described. In the Jerusalem case we know that the Seven were selected by the *ecclesia* and then were "appointed" by the Apostles. Whether the same procedure was followed in Crete cannot be determined. In Acts 14:23 we are informed that Paul and Barnabas "ordained" elders in every church, but the word used here (*cheirotoneoo*) can refer either to election or appointment; and in the only other passage in which it is used in the New Testament, in 2 Cor. 8:19, it refers to selection by the churches. In this connection it might be pointed out that the "laying on of hands" apparently took place in connection with the appointment of officers to the public ministry, but the "laying on of hands" was not used exclusively for this purpose. It was most likely a ceremony of consecration symbolizing the bestowal of spiritual gifts. On the evidence available in the New Testament no dogmatic conclusions can be reached on the nature and the necessity of ordination, and ecclesiastical practice in the matter of ordination must be regarded as an adiaphoron. Which workers received the imposition of hands and were appointed or ordained in the Apostolic age no one can say. From Acts 13:2-3, which describes the selection of Barnabas and Paul for a missionary task, we can conclude that ordination was a ceremony of consecration. The words read: "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." If this is a reference to the rite of ordination, as it apparently is, then it would be in the Apostolic tradition to ordain all who are set apart and separated for the work of the public ministry.

## THE APOSTOLATE

It is essential for an understanding of church polity in the Apostolic age to understand the place of the Apostles in the constitution of the Early Church. The term "Apostle" is used of the Lord Himself in Heb. 3:1. The twelve disciples chosen by Christ for special service in the Kingdom are given the name "Apostles" by the Lord

(Luke 6:13). St. Paul was an Apostle and vigorously defended his right to this title. But the term is used also of others, even of false apostles. We know that the original Twelve and St. Paul received the apostolate directly from Christ. How many other Apostles there were, and how they qualified for this position in the Church, and what authority they exercised, cannot be determined. In any case, we know that the original Apostles and Paul commanded great respect and authority in the Early Church (Mark 3:14; Acts 5:12-13).<sup>6</sup>

The Apostles were occupied with prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). It was their duty to preach the Gospel (Rom. 15:19). They were stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1) and the ministers of the New Testament (2 Cor. 3:6) and the ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

When our Lord instituted the apostolate, He instituted the ministry of the New Testament (2 Cor. 3:6), or the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). In other words, by instituting the apostolate our Lord instituted the public ministry. There is no evidence in the New Testament that the original authority and power of the first Apostles was perpetuated in their successors, but it can be said that all the other and later ecclesiastical offices that have been known in the Church derive from the original apostolate. Walther says: "With the apostolate the Lord has established in the Church only one office, which embraces all offices of the Church" (Thesis VIII, "On the Ministry").<sup>7</sup>

#### THE PLACE OF THE PROPHETS IN THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

The place of the prophets in the constitution of the early public ministry is difficult to determine. That they occupied a prominent and important place in the Apostolic Church is apparent. In Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 they are named immediately after the Apostles. In enumerating the gifts that are given to the Church (Romans 12), the Apostle mentions the gift of prophecy first. In Eph. 3:5 it is stated that the Apostles and prophets have been given special revelation by the Spirit, and in the previous chapter (2:20) it is stated that the Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets.<sup>8</sup> The fact that the prophets play an important part in the commissioning of Barnabas and Saul, and that they dis-

charged certain responsibilities in connection with the ordination of Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14), suggests that they occupied a significant place in the organization of the Early Church.

Paul's discussion of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14, in which it is described as a gift which all should desire, leads to the conclusion that prophecy was often a function and a gift rather than an office.<sup>9</sup> However, it cannot be denied that while any individual in the *ecclesia* might be given the gift of prophecy, there were individuals who bore the title "prophet."<sup>10</sup> Whether this was an office or a profession, one cannot say. It is possible that the term was used in the way the term "preacher" is used today, referring sometimes to an office, sometimes to a profession, and sometimes to a talent or gift.

We learn from Acts 15 that preaching was the principal function of the prophets, and this preaching was sometimes in response to special revelations<sup>11</sup> and sometimes involved the prediction of future events (Acts 11:28; 21:11). In differentiating between the functions of the prophets and that of the Apostles, it is often assumed that the Apostles were distinguished by their missionary responsibilities and that the prophets originally performed the ministry of preaching in established congregations.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE EVANGELISTS

The ministry of the evangelists, mentioned in Ephesians 4 after that of the Apostles and prophets, is referred to in the New Testament in only two other passages. Philip, one of the Seven of Acts 6, is called an evangelist in Acts 21:8. In Paul's Second Letter to Timothy (4:5) we read the words: "Do the work of an evangelist." From this meager evidence it is impossible to give an authoritative definition of the functions of the evangelists. Judging by the activities of Timothy, however, it is probably correct to assume that evangelists were itinerant preachers of the Gospel who acted as delegates of the Apostles and were fellow laborers with them in the establishment of new congregations. Whether the title indicated a formal position, with formal ordination, we do not know.

#### THE TEACHERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

There were also individuals in the Apostolic ministry who bore the designation "teacher." In Romans 12 teaching is mentioned as a special gift. In 1 Cor. 12:28 teachers are mentioned after

Apostles and prophets, and in Eph. 4:11 St. Paul, after listing Apostles, prophets, and evangelists refers to "pastors and teachers," which is a twofold designation for the same individuals. The Apostle Paul calls himself a teacher (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). In Acts 13:1 various individuals are described as "prophets and teachers" at Antioch. In endeavoring to ascertain the function of these individuals and their status in the Early Church, we can perhaps assume that their duty was to instruct and indoctrinate the members of the congregations, and it is not unlikely that their place in the Christian *ecclesia* was comparable to that of the teachers of Israel in the synagog (Luke 2:46; John 3:10). Whether theirs was an itinerant or a resident ministry cannot be known today, although the reference in Acts 13 suggests that these teachers were associated with the church in Antioch. The following analysis of the status of the teachers involves some element of speculation, but there is nothing in the available evidence to discredit the theory that the work of the teachers complemented that of the prophets and that the teachers were assistants to the prophets in the early years. Later, as the office of prophet became more and more itinerant, the teachers took over the ministry of the Word in the congregation, and functioned as the pastors of the congregation until a permanent local ministry was established. This would explain the phrase "prophets and teachers" in Acts 13, as well as the phrase "pastors and teachers" in Ephesians 4.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE CHARISMATA

Since teachers, together with prophets and Apostles, are referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 as recipients of spiritual endowments called *charismata*, it may be well at this point in our study to examine the significance of these spiritual gifts. The term is used twice in Paul's Letter to the Romans. In chap. 1:11 he states that it is his desire to impart some *charisma* to the saints at Rome. In chap. 12:6 he says that Christians have *charismata* that differ according to the grace (*charis*) given them; and while he does in this passage refer to endowments that were associated with the public ministry (prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, rulership), he does not refer exclusively to such gifts, but regards the ability to give and to do mercy as *charismata*. In 1 Cor. 1:7 the term is again applied

in a general way to all Christians. "You are not lacking in any *charismata*." Also in 1 Cor. 7:7. In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians the information is given us (v.4) that there is a diversity of *charismata*; and while the term is twice associated in this chapter with the ability to heal (vv.9,30), the last verse of the chapter indicates that the *charismata* referred to all manner of endowments possessed by the Christians of the congregation.<sup>14</sup>

These spiritual endowments are special gifts of grace which God has given to the saints, and presumably in special measure to those who performed the work of the public ministry, but the possession of *charismata* did not distinguish the clergy from the laity. It is entirely possible that those who possessed an exceptional measure of spiritual endowment were chosen for the ministry, but the idea that the ministry of the Apostolic age differed from the later ministry because it was performed by these so-called pneumatics, who occupied their position by virtue of their *charismata*, is unsupported by Scriptural evidence. Moreover, the fact that individuals in the Apostolic age possessed *charismata* which are no longer in evidence in the Church today should lead no one to the conclusion that the bestowal of *charismata* terminated with the first century.

#### THE TEMPORARY AND THE PERMANENT MINISTRY

The view that the Apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers constituted a special charismatic ministry, and that these pneumatics differed in function from the local clergy or office-bearers of the congregation and distinguished the Apostolic age from all future periods of church history,<sup>15</sup> is a view that cannot be defended by Scriptural evidence. There evidently were in the Early Church both resident and itinerant ministers,<sup>16</sup> and there were individuals who in their ministry served the whole *ecclesia* rather than a local Christian community; but it is incorrect to conclude that certain individuals belonged to one ministry and certain others to another. There were Apostles who occupied a local ministry in Antioch.<sup>17</sup> To contend that in the first century "there is a clearly marked separation between two different kinds of ministry, the prophetic and the local," or to say that "the Apostles, prophets, and teachers belonged to the church at large, and not merely to some local congregation," or to conclude that the ministry of the Word was per-

formed exclusively by the Apostles, prophets, and teachers, while other ecclesiastical service was rendered by the local ministry, is to follow a line of reasoning which is based on historical speculation rather than on Scriptural evidence.<sup>18</sup>

If a distinction is to be made between the Apostles, prophets, and teachers, and the elders, or bishops, who gradually assumed their functions and duties, it is this that the former constituted a temporary ministry and the latter a permanent ministry. Originally the Apostles, and with them the evangelists, were the leaders of the congregation. (Acts 6:1 f.; 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 13:2; Thess. 2:11; 1 Tim. 5:20). It appears from the picture given of the Corinthian situation<sup>19</sup> that the local congregation had at first no authoritative rule other than that provided by the Apostles. This direct supervision of the Apostles or their delegates, the evangelists, was a temporary arrangement, and as soon as circumstances warranted, issued in a permanent ministry.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF THE PERMANENT LOCAL MINISTRY

How the development took place in the individual Christian community cannot be described in detail, but it is reasonable to suppose that as the *ecclesia* grew larger and the personal supervision of the Apostles necessarily diminished, local brethren were chosen to perform the work of the public ministry. It is probable that these local leaders at first occupied a position subordinate to that of the Apostles, prophets, and teachers, but in the course of time, control of affairs in the congregation passed into their hands. This was a natural development, and St. Paul in his Second Letter to Timothy, as he faces the end of his own ministry, is perhaps referring to this transition when he charges Timothy (chap. 2:2) with the duty of preparing faithful men to carry on the ministry.<sup>20</sup>

The permanent ministry apparently, and quite naturally, was established at an earlier date in Asia Minor than in the Western churches.<sup>21</sup> We know that around 50 A. D. elders were chosen in the Eastern churches (Acts 14:23), and seven years later, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, they apparently were still without a permanent local ministry, although the reference in 1 Cor. 12:28 to "helpers, administrators," is very likely an anticipation of such a ministry and indicates that the necessity for a permanent ministry was already felt.

It is probable that some of the permanent church officers at first performed service to the church which did not directly involve the ministry of the Word;<sup>22</sup> and the passage in 1 Tim. 5:17 tells us that certain of these officers confined their activities to ruling and did not labor in "the Word and doctrine" in their official capacity, but eventually these local office-bearers replaced the Apostles, prophets, and teachers altogether. That this development had Apostolic sanction is evident from Paul's statement that bishops must be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2), from the approval that he gives to those elders who *did* labor in the Word and doctrine, and from his instructions to them on the matter of heresy (Acts 20: 28-31).

We must not assume that there was an official distinction between ruling elders and teaching elders. The passage in 1 Tim. 5:17, on which this distinction is maintained in certain areas of Protestantism, speaks of two functions within the same office.<sup>23</sup>

#### THE ELDER-BISHOP CONTROVERSY

It might be well at this point to consider the question whether the terms "elder" and "bishop" designated the same office in the Apostolic Church. There are some who maintain that a distinction between them must be made. It has been suggested, for instance, that bishops were individuals chosen from the elders and that while all bishops were elders, not all elders were bishops.<sup>24</sup> Hatch of Oxford and Harnack of Berlin contend that the elders and bishops must be distinguished and maintain that the former constituted a council over which the latter presided. Hatch maintained that the presbyters were in charge of church discipline and the bishop, as a kind of superintendent or executive secretary of the congregation, controlled the financial and administrative affairs.<sup>25</sup> This viewpoint is based on the theory that church organization was modeled after the prevailing social institutions of the time, but it finds no support in the New Testament writings.

The evidence of Scripture is overwhelmingly in favor of the view that the term "elder" and the term "bishop" originally signified the same office. In Acts 20:17, 28 the elders of Ephesus are called bishops. In Titus 1:5 Paul refers to elders and two verses later used the term "bishop" to describe the same officers. In First

Timothy the terms are used interchangeably (1 Tim. 3:1:7; 5:5-17). Paul in Phil. 1:1 addresses bishops and deacons and makes no special reference to elders, which again implies that the terms referred to the same individuals and to the same office. This is the view shared by most scholars.<sup>26</sup>

#### OTHER APPELLATIONS OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE

These incumbents of the permanent ministry were already in the Apostolic age designated as "pastors." While the term may not have been an official designation, it was a descriptive appellation apparently in common use. The reference in Eph. 4:11 to "pastors and teachers" might be cited here. In Acts 20:28 the pastoral functions are ascribed to the elder-bishop. Peter's reference (1 Pet. 2:25) to Jesus as the divine Shepherd and Bishop implies that the two terms designated the same individual, and again in 1 Pet. 5:1, 2, 4 the eldership is conceived of as a pastorate.

In all probability the term *heegoumenoi* in Heb. 13:7, 17, 24 is also a reference to the same ecclesiastical officers. They are described as individuals who occupied a position of leadership in the *ecclesia*: they "spoke the Word of God"; they "watch over your souls."

Another descriptive title given these officers is the term *proistamenoi* (rulers). When we read in 1 Thess. 5:12 that these individuals labored among the people, admonished them, and supervised congregational life, we are justified in the assumption that these men were the elder-bishops of the *ecclesia* at Thessalonica.<sup>27</sup>

Whether the term "angels" in Rev. 2:1 is also a reference to these same church officers cannot be determined because the literary style of this book admits the possibility of a symbolic interpretation of the term. Some have held that these "angels" were bishops of the congregation and that the responsibilities given them and the authority vested in them suggest that we have here the first instance of a monarchical episcopate; but others, like Lightfoot, insist that we cannot be certain that the term refers to an actual person.<sup>28</sup> The question is important because it is related to the history of the episcopal development in the Church, but a decisive solution to the problem cannot be found.<sup>29</sup>

It is apparent that in the Apostolic age a uniform nomenclature for church officers had not as yet been established. Knopf is cor-

rect when he says: "In some congregations the old designation *proistamenoí* was retained, in others the same individuals were called *heegoumenoi*, in others they were called pastors, in others presbyters, in others bishops."<sup>30</sup>

### THE PRESBYTERAL COLLEGE

It appears that these officers originally functioned as a group. They are repeatedly referred to in the plural. In Acts 11:30; 15:2; 16:4; etc., the elders at Jerusalem are described as a group. The *ecclesia* at Ephesus was served by a college of elders (Acts 20:17). The use of the plural in Phil. 1:1 tells us that a similar arrangement obtained at Philippi, and in the Letter of James (5:14) the sick are instructed to call for the "elders of the church."

This evidence has led some to the conclusion that the modern arrangement whereby one individual occupies the pastorate of a Christian congregation was unknown in Apostolic times. Lindsay, for instance, says: "There is no trace of one man, one pastor, at the head of any community."<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the description of a bishop's (singular!)<sup>32</sup> qualifications in the Pastoral Epistles, and particularly the picture of the bishop ruling the congregation as a father rules his household, suggests that the arrangement whereby a single pastor served a particular congregation was not unknown in Apostolic times.

A possible explanation of the difficulty is that the eldership belonged not to the individual congregation, but to the entire *ecclesia* in certain areas.<sup>33</sup> The Christians in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Philippi, Crete, and so on, were originally served by a college of presbyters, some of whom labored in Word and doctrine; but as time went on, multiple congregations within these areas were organized, and it seems likely that these small communities of Christian disciples were then served by a single elder or bishop who was "apt to teach." These individuals, then, belonged to the ministerium of the locality and, at the same time, occupied the pastorate of some individual assembly of Christians. This reconstruction of the situation admittedly involves an element of speculation, but it does not conflict with the New Testament evidence available; and in the light of the post-Apostolic emergence of the diocesan episcopacy, it is certainly tenable from the historical viewpoint.

## THE OFFICE OF DEACON

The office of deacon was established by the time the Pastoral Epistles were written. The term "deacon" is used only twice in the New Testament to denote an ecclesiastical office: in Phil. 1:1, where Paul addresses the bishops and deacons, and in 1 Tim. 3:8-13, where Paul describes their qualifications.<sup>34</sup>

It is commonly assumed that the diaconate as a special office in the Church was instituted with the election of the Seven, described in Acts 6:1-6. However, the Seven are not called "deacons" in Acts 6, and there is good reason to believe that in this chapter we have a description of the original of the presbyterate rather than the diaconate. It is significant that the Book of Acts never refers to deacons, but often refers to elders of the Jerusalem church, and subsequent references to the Seven, after their election, describe them as performing tasks of preaching and teaching which suggest that they were elders rather than deacons in the church. Whether the Seven were the first deacons or the first elders of the *ecclesia* must therefore remain an unsettled question.

In any case, by the time of the writing of the Epistle to the Philippians, the diaconate existed. Together with the bishops, the deacons constitute the recognized ministry of the church. A few years later the Apostle, in his First Epistle to Timothy, outlines the necessary qualifications for this office. They are to be men of steady character, with a sturdy faith, who have survived a period of trial and who are responsible heads of a Christian household. No description of their functions and duties is given. The fact that "aptness to teach" is not listed among the requirements of this office may mean that deacons were not engaged in the ministry of the Word, but in a non-teaching ministry.<sup>35</sup> The fact that they are always mentioned with the bishops, and after them, seems to imply that they were assistants to the bishops, and this was in fact the position they occupied in the second century. In First Timothy it is required of the bishop, but not of the deacon, that he be no novice, and we may therefore assume that the deacons were often younger in age or spiritual experience than the elders whom they aided.

## THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY

It is possible that First Timothy 3:11 refers to a female diaconate in the Apostolic age. There are those who contend that the "women" referred to in this verse were simply the wives of the deacons and that deaconesses were unknown in the time of Paul.<sup>36</sup> The Authorized Version translates *gyneikas* "wives"; so does Luther; so does Goodspeed. Others, like the Revised Standard Version, translate "women." Newport White represents the view of those who believe that this is a reference to a female diaconate. He says, in *Expositor's Greek Testament*: "These are the deaconesses, of whom Phoebe in Romans 16:1 is an example. They performed for the women of the early church the same sort of ministrations that the deacons did for the men."<sup>37</sup> Deaconesses, no doubt, served the church in many capacities, and the reference to Phoebe in Rom. 16:1 indicates that women performed a useful ministry in the Apostolic age. We can conclude from 1 Tim. 2:11-12 that if they shared in the public ministry of the Word, their activities were confined to the teaching of women and children.

## ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION IN THE FIRST CENTURY

It will be apparent from the foregoing study of ministerial offices in the Apostolic age that in the time of the Apostles offices were created and officers were elected to meet those needs that arose in the changing circumstances of the *ecclesia*.<sup>38</sup> No ordinances are prescribed in Scripture which might determine the form in which the public ministry should be constituted, and it was not until a later period that an established church polity emerged. In the Apostolic age we find that the public ministry functioned amid a diversity of ecclesiastical organizations.

Compare, for example, the congregations of Corinth and Jerusalem. In Corinth there is a very noticeable lack of church organization. While the congregation was served by Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus (2 Cor. 1:19), we see from First Corinthians 14 that a church polity governing the ministerial office was in a very rudimentary stage. By way of contrast, we find in Jerusalem at an early date a well-established organization. The official head of the congregation was James, the Lord's brother, and he apparently presided over a council of Apostles and elders, who constituted the govern-

ing body. (Acts 11:30; 15:6; 16:4; etc.) Whether Acts 6 refers to the institution of the presbytery or the diaconate, it also supports the belief that the congregation at Jerusalem was well organized at a very early date.

The light thrown by patristic literature on the labors of St. John and his successors in Asia Minor makes it clear that also among these congregations a permanent and well-organized ministry was established already during the first century.

There were undoubtedly many co-workers of Paul who served in the public ministry in various capacities, but just what their official status was in the embryonic organization of the Early Church cannot be determined. Presumably they were missionaries, organizers, preachers, administrators, and served as the need arose in any capacity that was required for the establishment and the extension of the Kingdom.<sup>39</sup>

It is unquestionably true that the constitution of the ministry in the Early Church was in a fluid and formative state. Supporting this contention is the fact that some individuals bore several official titles, suggesting that the various duties of the different offices within the church were not as yet clearly defined. Thus Silas is called an apostle in 1 Thess. 2:6; in Acts 15:22 he is described as one of the *heegoumenoi* in Jerusalem; and in Acts 15:32 it is stated that he was a prophet. Peter is both an Apostle and an elder (1 Pet. 5:1). So is John (2 John 1; 3 John 1). St. Paul in 2 Tim. 1:11 calls himself a "preacher (*keeryx*), Apostle, and teacher." In Acts 13 Barnabas is numbered among the prophets and teachers at Antioch, and in the next chapter he is called an apostle (14:14). Philip, according to Acts 6, was an elder (deacon?); according to Acts 21, he was an evangelist.<sup>40</sup> The conclusion is inescapable that in Apostolic times individual ministers often performed a variety of functions, and, conversely, various functions of the ministry were often performed by a number of officials.<sup>41</sup>

### PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH POLITY

Though the structure of the ministerial constitution is indefinite, there are certain underlying principles governing the church polity of the Apostolic age which are clearly discernible. The practice of delegating ministerial duties among several church officers was

apparently well established. We think here of the election of the Seven in the Jerusalem congregation, the place of the deacons and deaconesses in the Early Church, the plurality of officers at Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, and elsewhere, the emphasis on the diversity of gifts in the Church, Paul's willingness to leave the administration of the Sacraments to others, etc.

The modern church could increase its effectiveness very greatly by following the pattern of the Apostolic Church in this matter. Most Christian congregations in contemporary Christendom are served by a ministry of one man, upon whom devolve all the duties and responsibilities of the ministerial office. It might prove profitable to remember that this is a departure from the practice of Apostolic times.

It should be noted that the delegation of ministerial duties is the prerogative of the *ecclesia*. In the Apostolic age the congregation was autonomous, and the officers of the church were not regarded as having exclusive powers. The epistles which deal with congregational life and work are always addressed to the saints, and the admonitions and instructions contained in them are directed to the entire Christian community rather than to any local officer in authority over them. The same principle is evident in the exercise of church discipline: in First Corinthians 5 the assembled congregation is instructed to expel a man (1 Cor. 5:1-5; see also 2 Cor. 2:5-7). Acts 15 describes how the church commissioned apostles to go from Antioch to Jerusalem, how the church at Jerusalem was asked to discuss the controversy that had arisen, and how the church at Antioch received the report and rejoiced in it. Financial affairs were in the hands of the congregation as a whole. (Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8 f.; etc.)

This fact that the ministry functioned distributively in the Early Church, and that the *ecclesia* possessed the right to delegate duties, leads to the conclusion that while the public ministry is divinely instituted, the form which the ministry assumes in any given generation, or any given situation, should be determined by the *ecclesia*, which has complete liberty in the matter.<sup>42</sup> The *ecclesia* may include in its ministerium such officers as its changing circumstances require, and even as the Early Church had Apostles, prophets, teachers, deacons, elders, etc., so the needs of the contemporary

Church may be met by missionaries, synodical officials, pastors, parish teachers, superintendents, vicars, stewardship secretaries, college professors, deaconesses, etc. All belong to the ministry of the Church.

In considering the question of rank within the office of the public ministry and the relative authority of the different ecclesiastical officers, we must examine various factors. There is, first of all, the basic principle laid down by our Lord: "And there was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest. And He said unto them: The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so. But he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." (Luke 22:24-26. See also Matt. 18:1; 23:10-11; Mark 9:34.) The later hierarchical development in the constitution of the ministry was a departure from this principle of equality within the office of the ministry. It is true that certain ministerial functions are regarded as more important than others. There is certainly significance in the pre-eminence given to the office of the Apostles in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 (see especially v. 31). Undoubtedly the references to bishops and deacons in Philippians and in First Timothy imply that the former occupied a more responsible position than the latter. We know, too, that Paul exercised authority over Timothy, and in the opinion of many Timothy, in turn, exercised authority over the elders at Ephesus (1 Tim. 5: 17-20).

On the other hand, when Paul and Barnabas had a dispute about Mark (Acts 15:37 f.), they settled the question as equals, and there is no indication whatever that Paul held a higher rank in the ministry than Barnabas. Peter in his epistle calls himself a "fellow elder" (1 Pet. 5:1). In the controversy at Jerusalem (Acts 15) a conclusion is reached after a general discussion among the Apostles, elders, and members of the *ecclesia*, and again we find no hint of hierarchical authority.

It is plain therefore that whatever pre-eminence exists within the ministerium of the church, and whatever relative authority is vested in an incumbent of the ministerial office, must be regarded as entirely functional, and not official, in origin. In other words, one

church officer may occupy a position of leadership over others, or a teacher may become a superintendent of teachers, or a pastor may be the chief pastor of a congregation, or a professor may become the president of a college, but this is never a matter of rank, but of responsibility.

### THE PASTORATE IN THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

This basic principle must be kept in mind in understanding the place of the pastorate in the public ministry of the modern church. It is a mistake to identify the pastorate with the ministry or to speak of other church offices as auxiliary offices to the pastorate. To assume that the pastorate is the one divinely instituted office and that all other offices flow out of the pastorate is a misapprehension. The ministry of the Word is the one divinely instituted office, and the pastorate is a branch of that ministry, just as other church offices are a branch of the same ministry.

A pastor's divinely ordained responsibility is to preach the Word, but he may also be expected to perform auxiliary functions. This is what Luther had in mind when he called the ministry of the Word the "highest office in Christendom." He goes on to say: "If he does not wish to do this (i. e., baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, attend to pastoral duties), he may adhere to preaching and leave the other secondary offices (*Unteraemter*) to others, as Christ and all the Apostles did."<sup>43</sup>

This principle applies not only to the pastorate. The teacher, the stewardship secretary, the college professor, the deaconess, the institutional missionary, and all others who constitute the *ministerium ecclesiae*, are sometimes required to serve in subordinate capacities and must perform secondary tasks in the ministry.

The Lutheran Confessions speak of the ministry of the Word as the "highest office in the Church": "Of all acts of worship that is the greatest, most holy, most necessary and highest, which God has required in the First and Second Commandments, namely, to preach the Word of God. For the ministry is the highest office in the Church."<sup>44</sup> This was written in opposition to the papists, who attached great importance to ceremonial observances and often regarded the proclamation of the Word as a secondary factor in the duties of the minister.

Walther's position on this question is difficult to determine, but apparently he did identify the ministry with the pastorate; and when he speaks of deacons as incumbents of an inferior office, and speaks of "other public offices" in the church as "auxiliary offices," the conclusion is almost inescapable that he regarded the pastorate as the highest office in the church and all other ecclesiastical offices as subordinate and auxiliary.<sup>45</sup>

The *ministerium ecclesiae* has many branches, and the incumbents of the public ministry perform a multiplicity of functions, not all of which are of equal importance and urgency; and if a comparison of these offices is to be made, and one is to be regarded as a higher, or as "the highest," office in the ministry, this differentiation must be made, not on the basis of station or position, but on the basis of function. The question is not: who holds the highest office? but: what is the highest office? And the answer is: the highest office in the public ministry is the ministry of the Word. The Seven in Acts 6 accepted an auxiliary function of the ministry when they were ordained to take over the work of the daily ministrations, but we know that at least two of them<sup>46</sup> also engaged in the "highest office of the ministry," the preaching of the Word. The officers referred to in 1 Tim. 5:17 were all members of the *ministerium*, and all shared the position of elder in the church and as such were all overseers of the flock, but their functions were not identical. Thus, in the modern church, within the various offices of the church, there are some functions which are more honorable than others. Thus a pastor is performing the highest office in the church when he preaches a sermon, instructs his catechumens, or brings the Gospel to the deathbed of a sinner. He performs an inferior, an auxiliary, a subordinate, office when he presides over his church council, when he meets with his budget committee, when he distributes alms (and Luther would add, when he administers the Sacraments). A schoolteacher performs the highest office in the ministry when he teaches the Word to his class of children, when he teaches the Bible to a youth group, when he addresses the congregation on the need for Christian training. He performs an auxiliary office in the ministry when he acts as secretary of the voters' assembly, when he plays the organ at a wedding, when he gives instruction in penmanship.

The public ministry in the Apostolic age was not confined to the ministry of the Word. The Seven in Acts 6 were called and ordained to the task of serving tables. 1 Tim. 5:17 tells us that there were elders who did not labor in the Word and doctrine. And it is very possible that the deacons of 1 Timothy did not perform the ministry of the Word, since their qualifications do not include "aptness to teach." In other words, we cannot identify the *ministerium ecclesiae* with the *ministerium verbi*.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND PREROGATIVES OF MINISTERS

We, then, are to be regarded as incumbents of the public ministry, and how can we differentiate between clergy and laity? To arrive at a conclusion in this matter, it is necessary to examine the ministry of the Apostolic age in terms of its function and purpose. The purpose of the ministry is stated in Eph. 4:11-12: "He gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The purpose of the ministry is to equip the believers in every way for the service they have to do, so that the Body of Christ might be built up. The building of the Church is the great and ultimate objective of the public ministry.

To achieve this high purpose, the principal emphasis in the work of the ministry must be placed upon the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. The Apostle tells Timothy: "Till I come, attend to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, to teaching" (1 Tim. 4:13, RSV). "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2). To Titus (1:9) he writes that a bishop will "hold fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." In Acts 20:24 Paul describes to the elders at Ephesus his own work and expresses the hope that he might finish "the ministry which [he] had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Since the aim of the ministry is the conversion and edification and preservation of human souls (1 Cor. 19:22; Eph. 4:13-16; 1 Cor. 1:21), it must be regarded as self-evident that the public preaching of the Gospel is the central and most important function of the public ministry.

However, it was *not* the *only* function of the public ministry. We know that the incumbents of the ministry shared a great diversity of responsibilities. Their task included the visitation of the sick (James 5:14), the daily ministration to the needy (Acts 6:2-4), and many administrative duties (1 Tim. 5:17) which did not involve the public preaching of the Word. It must be noted, therefore, that the preaching and teaching of the Word was not the only function of the ministry, nor was it the function only of the ministry (Acts 8:1-4). Witnessing in public is not the point of differentiation between the clergy and the laity.

In this connection it should be pointed out that in the Early Church those who were regarded as members of the public ministry were always occupied with the needs of human souls. If there were functionaries and officials in the Early Church whose duties had no direct relation to the building of the Body of Christ and the edification of the saints — officials comparable to our contemporary trustees, church secretaries, janitors, etc. — these were not regarded as incumbents of the public ministry.

It is probable that the members of the Apostolic ministry devoted their entire time to the service of the Church (2 Tim. 2:4), and the passages in Scripture which speak of the duty of the saints to provide for their leaders support this belief, but we cannot conclude from this that only those were regarded as members of the ministry who gave their full time to the work of the Church.

To understand the constitution of the ministry in New Testament times, it is important to note that the idea of rulership is consistently associated with the office of the ministry. It is true, the officers of the Church were servants both of Christ and of the *ecclesia*, and their relationship to the saints was always that of stewards, in whom a trust had been placed (1 Cor. 4:1-2), and yet there are numerous references in the New Testament which establish the fact that the ministerial office included the responsibility of leadership and authority. In Luke 10:16 the Lord tells the Seventy: "He that heareth you, heareth Me." Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:18-20) that those who perform the ministry of reconciliation are the "ambassadors of Christ." The elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28) are described as "overseers of the flock." The brethren are told to submit themselves to men like Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:15-16). The

saints at Thessalonica are instructed to "esteem very highly" those that "are over you in the Lord." The Letter to the Hebrews (13:17) gives the very plain admonition to the people: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." The Apostle Peter instructs the elders to "take the oversight" of the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2). In 1 Tim. 3:5 we are informed that the ability to rule is one of the qualifications of a bishop. And v. 12 implies that deacons, too, should be capable of leadership. It is noteworthy, moreover, that many of the terms designating officers in the early Christian communities imply a position of presidency and authority. Bishop, presbyter, pastor, *begoumenoi*, *proistamenoi*—all imply leadership and rulership.<sup>47</sup>

In this matter of the relationship between clergy and laity, it may be well to inject the remark that the modern tendency to minimize the laity's responsibility for the preaching of the Word while we emphasize the need for "lay leadership" in the Church is a trend in the wrong direction. If we reverse the trend, we shall achieve closer conformity to the practice of the New Testament Church. We ought to emphasize the laity's responsibility for the preaching of the Gospel and the evangelization of the world and re-emphasize the clergy's responsibility to supervise, to lead, to admonish, to direct (Acts 8:4; 1 Cor. 14:5, 31).

Of course, it is true, as St. Peter points out (1 Pet. 5:2), that the leadership of the clergy is not to be tyrannical or dictatorial, but pastoral. Though the term "pastor" is rarely used in the New Testament, the pastoral relationship between the clergy and the laity is constantly emphasized. One historian, in discussing the difficulty of tracing the historical development of the official leadership of the Church, says: "This much must be pointed out. In most of its various forms it included the pastoral function, the care of individuals, with the ideal of loving, self-forgetful effort to win them to what the Christian conceives as the highest life and to help them to grow in it."<sup>48</sup>

From the preceding we can surmise that those were regarded as incumbents of the public ministry in the Apostolic age who occupied a position which involved representative functions, super-

visory authority, and pastoral responsibilities. It is unwise arbitrarily to establish a line of demarcation between the clergy and the laity, and it is likely that in the Early Church, when the constitution of the public ministry was in a formative state, the differentiation was not always clearly defined. It is not always possible today to state categorically which church officers in the contemporary Church belong to the public ministry and which do not. However, there is sufficient evidence in the New Testament to justify the conclusion that those who have been called to serve the *ecclesia* in a representative capacity, and who have been given supervisory responsibility, and who have been charged with the care of souls for the purpose of edifying the saints and building the Body of Christ, are all members of the public ministry, be they pastors, parish teachers, college professors, chaplains, superintendents, synodical officials, or institutional missionaries.

In this matter, as in all matters pertaining to the constitution of the public ministry, it must be remembered and emphasized that the *ecclesia* has the liberty to determine how, in any given generation, or in any given area, or in any given organization, the public ministry should be constituted. No church body can claim divine sanction for any particular official order or form, and by the same token no church body has the right to condemn all forms of church polity which differ from its own. The functions of the ministry are clearly set forth in Scripture. The basic principles which are to govern the relationship between clergy and laity can be established from the example of Apostolic times, but the specific form in which the public ministry is constituted in any age, or in any church, must be regarded as an adiaphoron.

#### REFERENCES

1. C. F. W. Walther, *The Church and the Ministry*, Theses II and III.
2. See also Titus 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:29; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Pet. 5:1; Rom. 10:15; Acts 20:28. . . . Also Apology, Art. 13, 11, and Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 506.
3. Cf. Walther, *op. cit.*, VIII. Also J. B. Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry*, page 5.
4. This position is defended by August Vilmar, *Die Lehre vom geistlichen Amt*.
5. Certainly there were in the Apostolic age incumbents of the ministerial office who occupied their position by virtue of an immediate call, but there is no evidence that these chosen individuals were charged with the perpetuation of the ministry, and there is very considerable evidence in support of

- the principle that the ministry was conferred by the *ecclesia*. First Clement, xlv, 3 — "with the consent of the whole church."
6. Epistles of Ignatius, Romans, iv, 3: "I do not order you as did Peter and Paul; they were Apostles."
  7. Schaff says: "The ministry originally coincided with the apostolate. No other offices are mentioned in the Gospels and the first five chapters of the Acts. But when the believers began to number thousands, the apostles could not possibly perform all the functions of teaching, conducting worship, and administering discipline. There arose gradually, out of the need of the church, the various general and congregational offices. As these all have their common root in the apostolate, so they partake also, in different degrees, of its divine origin, authority, privilege, and responsibility." — *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I, *Apostolic Christianity*, p. 488.
  8. Whether the term "prophets" refers here to Old or New Testament prophets is debatable, but the latter interpretation seems indicated by the sequence. One would expect "Prophets and Apostles" if Old Testament Prophets were meant.
  9. In Acts 21:9 and 1 Cor. 11:5, women are described as having the gift of prophecy. . . . See also Karl von Weizsaecker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, p. 291.
  10. In Acts 11:27 we are told of a delegation of prophets, one of whom was Agabus, being sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem congregation. In Acts 13: 1-3 individuals are named who apparently were resident prophets in the Antioch congregation. In Acts 15:32 Judas and Silas are called prophets.
  11. *Shepherd of Hermas*, mand. xi, 7-9: "The true prophet does not speak of himself, for the Holy Spirit does not speak when a man wishes to speak, but he speaks at that time when God wishes him to speak. Therefore, when the man who has the Divine Spirit comes into a meeting of righteous men, then the angel of the prophetic spirit rests on him and fills the man, and the man, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the congregation as the Lord wills."
  12. McGiffert's description of the place of the prophets in the Church of the Apostolic age is an accurate summary of the available evidence: "The gift of prophecy was exercised not exclusively by any particular class in the church but by disciples of all classes. At the same time there were those who possessed the gift in eminent degree, and who exercised it so frequently that they acquired the name of 'prophets' and were distinguished thereby from the brethren in general. They possessed, as the apostles did, a large measure of authority, but their mission was regarded as less exalted and responsible than that of the apostles. All the apostles were prophets endowed by the Spirit with the power to proclaim the truth of God, but not all the prophets were apostles, for the latter were called to the special and more laborious work of preaching the Gospel and planting the church in new territory, but it would be a mistake to draw hard and fast lines in this connection and to suppose that the functions of the apostles in those early days were carefully distinguished from the functions of the prophets." Arthur C. McGiffert, *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, p. 651. In the *Didache*, xi, 3-12, the terms "Apostles" and "prophets" are used interchangeably: "Let every Apostle who comes to you be received . . . but if he stay, he is a false prophet."
  13. In the *Didache*, xiii, 1-2, and xv, 1-2, the juxtaposition of the terms "prophet" and "teacher" gives support to the view that they shared a common ministry, and the statement that the bishops and deacons "are your

honorable men, together with the prophets and teachers," supports the belief that the latter were the predecessors of the former.

14. It is evident that we must not identify the bestowal of the *charismata* with the bestowal of the ministerial office. It is significant that in Ephesians 4, where we have an enumeration of ministerial offices and a specific reference to the function and purpose of the public ministry, the term *charismata* is not used. In 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 the performance of ministerial duties is implicitly dependent upon *charismata*, but these passages do not deal with church offices. On this see F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 157.
15. This is the position of T. M. Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, p. 106.
16. The "brethren" in 3 John may have been such wandering preachers.
17. Acts 8:14; 13:1; etc.
18. Cf. Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 62; McGiffert, *op. cit.*, p. 656; Knopf, *Das nach-apostolische Zeitalter*, p. 173.
19. Note esp. 1 Cor. 6:1-6.
20. First Clement, xlii, 4: "They (the apostles) preached from district to district and from city to city, and they appointed their first converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of the future believers." Cf. F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The History of the Christian Church*, p. 219, and Burton Scott Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 225. Also Philip Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 491.
21. That the constitution of the permanent ministry differed at first in the Asiatic and the Western churches is evident from the Apostolic Fathers. The writings of Ignatius reveal an early development of the monarchical episcopate (though not a diocesan episcopate) in the Church of Asia Minor (ad Eph., ii, 2; ad Magn. ii, 1; ad Trall., ii, 3; iii, 1; ad Phil., vii, 1; ad Smyrn., viii, 2; ad Polycarp, vi, 1). Though it is possible that Ignatius in his repeated references to the bishop-presbyter-deacon arrangement, and in his constant emphasis on the episcopal authority, is advocating this system rather than describing its universal acceptance, we nevertheless cannot escape the conclusion that a well-developed ministerial organization with episcopal church polity prevailed at the turn of the first century in Asia Minor. The threefold ministry merged also in the Western churches but at a much later date. It is significant that while Ignatius constantly reiterates his position on the threefold ministry and insists on episcopal pre-eminence in his letter to the churches in Asia, he omits mention of this favorite subject when he writes to the Romans. Even more significant is the fact that the author of First Clement, a contemporary of Ignatius, writing from Rome to Corinth, makes no reference to an episcopal system such as Ignatius describes. It is noteworthy, too, that Polycarp, writing to the Philippian, urges the people to be "subject to the presbyters and deacons" (v. 3). And the absence of any reference here to a bishop, though Polycarp himself was bishop of Smyrna, also supports the belief that while the episcopal system emerged very soon after the Apostolic age in the Eastern church, its development in the Western church was considerably slower.
22. Foakes-Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 213, 222.
23. Lightfoot is correct when he says: "There is no ground for supposing that the work of teaching and the work of governing pertain to separate members of the presbyteral college. As each has his special gift, so would he devote himself more or less exclusively to the one or the other of these sacred functions." J. B. Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry*, p. 28.

24. This is the view of W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire Before 170 A. D.*, p. 198. Also Karl von Weizsäcker, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
25. Edwin Hatch, *The Organization of the Early Church*, p. 67.
26. Bernhard Weiss, *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 104. Also Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 366; Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Foakes-Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
27. In Rom. 12:8 there seems to be a reference to the *proistamenoi*, but it cannot be conclusively shown that the term here has any official connotation. It is perhaps significant that in 1 Tim. 3:5 and 5:17 the Apostle, in describing the supervisory duties of the elder-bishops, uses the verb *proisteemi*.
28. Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Also Easton, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
29. Easton, *ibid.*, p. 175, says that the only monarchical bishop named in the New Testament is Diotrophes in 3 John 10, who not only "loves the pre-eminence" but is accorded it, for he apparently has the right to excommunicate his adversaries.
30. Knopf, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
31. Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
32. It is possible that the article before bishop is generic, but not likely, because in the same context the plural is used for deacons.
33. It is interesting to note in this connection that in Luther's time certain churches were ordination centers, where ministers were ordained before their installation in a local congregation, the idea being that the ministry is, on the one hand, an office of the local *ecclesia*, and, on the other, an office of the whole Church. WA, 34, I, 437, 16.
34. The words *diakonos*, *diakonia*, and *diakonein* are used frequently in the New Testament writings, but in all other instances they refer either to any service rendered by anyone or to the special service of the public ministry, but never to the office of the ministry. The former usage is found in Matt. 20:28; John 12:26; Rom. 12:7; etc., and the latter in Acts 1:17; 6:4; 1 Cor. 3:5; Col. 1:23, 25; etc.
35. Some find support for this view in 1 Pet. 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister (*diakonei*), let him do it as of the ability which God giveth."
36. E. g., Easton, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
37. The church widows referred to in 1 Timothy 5 were not deaconesses. However, the term "widow" became generic. Ignatius (ad Smyrn., xiii, 1) speaks of virgins who were "widows," and so we may assume that the later institution of widows as an order with official duties was suggested by the Timothy passage, but it is unlikely that these widows were deaconesses who belonged to the public ministry in the Apostolic age.
38. See Herman Sasse, "On the Problem of the Relation Between the Ministry and the Congregation," tr. by E. Reim in *Quartalschrift*, January, 1950.
39. Co-workers of Paul included Timothy, Titus, Epaphras, Tychicus, Silvanus (Silas), Barnabas, Archippus, Stephanas, Onesiphorus, etc.
40. Polycarp is called an "apostolic and prophetic teacher, bishop of the catholic church in Smyrna." *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, xvi, 2.
41. Chemnitz, *Examen Decretum Concilii Tridentini*, Berlin, 1861, p. 475, in "De Sacramento Ordinis" states: "There is no command of God as to which, or how many, of such divisions or classes there should be. At the time of the Apostles there were not in all churches the same divisions or classes, nor the same number of classes or divisions, and there was not such

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- a distribution of those divisions, but that often one and the same person took over and executed all of those offices which pertain to the ministry, as we know from Apostolic history." (Transl. by A. C. Mueller.)
42. Schaller says: "The congregation has freedom to provide officials for various tasks. The ministry is in every place and every time what the church makes it. It is true that the institution of the office of public preaching must in some form or other exist because of the very nature of the congregation, but the institution of other services in the congregation depends entirely upon the will and the need of the congregation." J. Schaller, *Pastorale Praxis*, pp. 1—7.
  43. St. Louis, x:1548. See also Francis Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 526, and article by A. C. Stellhorn, "The Lutheran Teacher's Position in the Ministry of the Congregation," publ. in *Report of 1949 Educational Conference*, Seward, Nebr., p. 47 ff.
  44. Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. xv.
  45. C. F. W. Walther, *The Church and the Ministry*, Thesis VIII ("On the Ministry").
  46. Stephen and Philip. Cf. Acts 6:8; 7:2 f.; 8:35.
  47. On this see Edwin Hatch, *op. cit.*, 113, and note also that obedience and submission to the leaders of the church is emphasized in the early Apostolic Fathers. Cf., e. g., First Clement, xxxvii, 1—5; lvii, 1.
  48. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, *The First Five Centuries*, p. 252.

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