

The Pastor: Where Did He Come From?

by Frank Viola

It is a universal tendency in the Christian religion, as in many other religions, to give a theological interpretation to institutions which have developed gradually through a period of time for the sake of practical usefulness, and then read that interpretation back into the earliest periods and infancy of these institutions, attaching them to an age when in fact nobody imagined that they had such a meaning.

-Richard Hanson

The Pastor. [1] He is the fundamental figure of the Protestant faith. He is the chief, cook, and bottle-washer of today's Christianity. So prevailing is the Pastor in the minds of most Christians that he is better known, more highly praised, and more heavily relied upon than Jesus Christ Himself!

Remove the Pastor and modern Christianity collapses. Remove the Pastor and virtually every Protestant church would be thrown into a panic. Remove the Pastor and Protestantism as we know it dies. The Pastor is the dominating focal point, mainstay, and centerpiece of the modern church. He is the embodiment of Protestant Christianity.

But here is the profound irony. There is not a single verse in the entire NT that supports the existence of the modern day Pastor! He simply did not exist in the early church.

(Note that I am using the term "Pastor" throughout this booklet to depict the modern pastoral *office* and *role*. I am not speaking of the specific *individuals* who fill this role. By and large, those who serve in the office of Pastor are wonderful people. They are honorable, decent, and often gifted Christians who love God and have a zeal to serve His people. But it is the role they are fulfilling that both Scripture and church history are opposed to as this article will show.) [2]

The Pastor is in the Bible . . . Right?

The word "Pastor" does appear in the NT:

And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as PASTORS and teachers (Ephesians 4:11, NASB).

The following observations are to be made about this text.

* This is the only verse in the NT where the word "Pastor" is used. [3] One solitary verse is a mighty scanty piece of evidence on which to hang the entire Protestant faith! In this regard, there is more Biblical authority for snake handling than there is for the modern Pastor. (Mark 16:18 and Acts 28:3-6 both mention handling snakes. So snake handling wins out two verses to one verse.) [4]

* The word is used in the *plural*. It is “Pastors.” This is significant. For whoever these “Pastors” are, they are plural in the church, not singular. Consequently, there is no Biblical support for the practice of Sola Pastora (single Pastor).

* The Greek word translated “Pastors” is *poimen*. It means shepherds. (“Pastor” is the Latin word for shepherd.) “Pastor,” then, is a metaphor to describe a particular function in the church. It is not an office or a title. [5] A first-century shepherd had nothing to do with the specialized and professional sense it has come to have in modern Christianity. Therefore, Ephesians 4:11 does not envision a pastoral office, but merely one of many functions in the church. Shepherds are those who naturally provide nurture and care for God’s sheep. It is a profound error, therefore, to confuse shepherds with an office or title as is commonly conceived today. [6]

* At best, this text is oblique. It offers absolutely no definition or description of who Pastors are. It simply mentions them. Regrettably, we have filled this word with our own Western concept of what a Pastor is. We have read the modern idea of the modern Pastor back into the NT. Never in the imagination of a hallucinating man would any first-century Christian conceive of the modern pastoral office! Catholics have made the same error with the word “priest.” You can find the word “priest” used in the NT to refer to a Christian three times. [7] Yet a priest in the first-century church was a far cry from the man who dresses in black and wears a backwards collar!

Richard Hanson makes this point plain when he says, “*For us the words bishops, presbyters, and deacons are stored with the associations of nearly two thousand years. For the people who first used them the titles of these offices can have meant little more than inspectors, older men and helpers . . . it was when unsuitable theological significance began to be attached to them that the distortion of the concept of Christian ministry began.*” [8]

In my books *Rethinking the Wineskin and Who is Your Covering?*, I show that first-century shepherds were the local elders (presbyters) [9] and overseers of the church. [10] And their function was completely at odds with the modern pastoral role.

Where Did He Come From?

If the modern Pastor was absent from the early church, where did he come from? And how did he rise to such a prominent position in the Christian faith? It is a painful tale, the roots of which are tangled and complex. Those roots reach as far back as the fall of man.

With the fall came an implicit desire in man to have a physical leader to bring him to God. For this reason, human societies throughout history have consistently created a special spiritual caste of religious icons. The medicine man, the shaman, the rhapsodist, the miracle worker, the witch-doctor, the soothsayer, the wise-man, and the priest have all been with us since Adam’s blunder. [12]

Fallen man has always had the desire to erect a special priestly caste who is uniquely endowed to beseech the gods on his behalf. [13] This quest is in our bloodstream. It lives in the marrow of our bones. As fallen creatures, we seek a person who is endowed with special spiritual powers. And that person is always marked by special training, special garb, a special vocabulary, and a special way of life. [14]

We can see this instinct rear its ugly head in the history of ancient Israel. It made its first appearance during the time of Moses. Two servants of the Lord, Eldad and Medad, received God's Spirit and began to prophesy. In hasty response, a young zealot urged Moses to "restrain them!" [15] Moses reproved the young suppressor saying that all of God's people may prophesy. Moses had set himself against a clerical spirit that had tried to control God's people.

We see it again when Moses ascended Mount Horeb. The people wanted Moses to be a physical mediator between them and God. For they feared a personal relationship with the Almighty. [16]

This fallen instinct made another appearance during the time of Samuel. God wanted His people to live under His direct Headship. But Israel clamored for a human king instead. [17]

The seeds of the modern Pastor can even be detected in the NT era. Diotrephes, who "loved to have the preeminence" in the church, illegitimately took control of its affairs. [18] In addition, some scholars have suggested that the doctrine of the Nicolaitans that Jesus condemns in Revelation 2:6 is a reference to the rise of an early clergy. [19]

Alongside of man's fallen quest for a human spiritual mediator is his obsession with the hierarchical form of leadership. All ancient cultures were hierarchical in their social structures to one degree or another. Regrettably, the post-apostolic Christians adopted and adapted these structures into their church life as we shall see.

The Birth of One-Bishop-Rule

Up until the second century, the church had no official leadership. In this regard, the first-century churches were an oddity indeed. They were religious groups without priest, temple, or sacrifice. [20] The Christians themselves led the church under Christ's direct Headship.

Among the flock were the elders (shepherds or overseers). These men all stood on an equal footing. There was no hierarchy among them. [21] Also present were extra-local workers who planted churches. These were called "sent-ones" or apostles. But they did not take up residency in the churches for which they cared. Nor did they control them. [22] The vocabulary of NT leadership allows no pyramidal structures. It is rather a language of horizontal relationships that includes exemplary action. [23]

This was all true until Ignatius of Antioch (35-107) stepped on the stage. Ignatius was the first figure in church history to take the initial step down the slippery slope toward a single leader in the church. We can trace the origin of the modern Pastor and church hierarchy to him.

Ignatius elevated one of the elders above all the others. The elevated elder was now called "the bishop." All the responsibilities that belonged to the college of elders were exercised by the bishop. [24]

In A.D. 107, Ignatius wrote a series of letters when on his way to be martyred in Rome. Six out of seven of these letters strike the same chord. They are filled with an exaggerated exaltation of the authority and importance of the bishop's office. [25]

According to Ignatius, the bishop has ultimate power and should be obeyed absolutely. Consider the following excerpts from his letters: "*All of you follow the bishop as Jesus Christ*

follows the Father . . . No one is to do any church business without the bishop . . . Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be . . . You yourselves must never act independently of your bishop and clergy. You should look on your bishop as a type of the Father . . . Whatever he approves, that is pleasing to God . . . [26]

For Ignatius, the bishop stood in the place of God while the presbyters stood in the place of the twelve apostles. [27] It fell to the bishop alone to celebrate the Lord's Supper, conduct baptisms, give counsel, discipline church members, approve marriages, and preach sermons. [28]

The elders sat with the bishop at the Lord's Supper. But it was the bishop who presided over it. He took charge of leading public prayers and ministry. [29] Only in the most extreme cases could a so-called "layman" take the Lord's Supper without the bishop present. [30] For the bishop, said Ignatius, must "preside" over the elements and distribute them.

To Ignatius' mind, the bishop was the remedy for dispelling false doctrine and establishing church unity. [31] Ignatius believed that if the church would survive the onslaught of heresy, it had to develop a rigid power structure patterned after the centralized political structure of Rome. [32] Single-bishop-rule would rescue the church from heresy and internal strife. [33]

Historically this is known as the "monoepiscopate" or "the monarchical episcopacy." It is the type of organization where the bishop is distinguished from the elders (the presbytery) and ranks above them.

At the time of Ignatius, the one-bishop-rule had not caught on in other regions. [34] But by the mid-second century, this model was firmly established in most churches. [35] By the end of the third century, it prevailed everywhere. [36]

The bishop eventually became the main administrator and distributor of the church's wealth. [37] He was the man responsible for teaching the faith and knowing what Christianity was all about. [38] The congregation, once active, was now rendered deaf and mute. The saints merely watched the bishop perform.

In effect, the bishop became *the* solo Pastor of the church [39]—the professional in common worship. [40] He was seen as the spokesperson and head of the congregation. The one through whose hands ran all the threads of control. All of these roles made the bishop the forerunner of the modern Pastor.

From Presbyter to Priest

By the mid-third century, the authority of the bishop had hardened into a fixed office. [41] Then Cyprian of Carthage (200-258) appeared, furthering the damage.

Cyprian was a former pagan orator and teacher of rhetoric. [42] When he became a Christian, he began to write prolifically. But some of Cyprian's pagan ideas were never abandoned.

Due to Cyprian's influence, the door was open to resurrect the Old Testament economy of priests, temples, altars, and sacrifices. [43] Bishops began to be called "priests," [44] a custom that became common by the third century. [45] They were also called "Pastors" on occasion. [46]

In the third century, every church had its own bishop. [47] And bishops and presbyters together started to be called “the clergy.” [48]

The origin of the unbiblical doctrine of “covering” can be laid at the feet of Cyprian also. [49] Cyprian taught that the bishop has no superior but God. He was accountable to God alone. Anyone who separates himself from the bishop separates himself from God. [50] Cyprian also taught that a portion of the Lord’s flock was assigned to each individual shepherd (bishop). [51]

After the Council of Nicea (325), bishops began to delegate the responsibility of the Lord’s Supper to the presbyters. [52] Presbyters were little more than deputies of the bishop, exercising his authority in his churches.

Because the presbyters were the ones administering the Lord’s Supper, they began to be called “priests.” [53] More startling, the bishop came to be regarded as “the high priest” who could forgive sins! [54] All of these trends obscured the NT reality that all believers are priests unto God.

By the fourth century, this graded hierarchy dominated the Christian faith. [55] The clergy caste was now cemented. At the head of the church stood the bishop. Under him was the college of presbyters. Under them stood the deacons. [56] And under all of them crawled the poor, miserable “laymen.” One-bishop-rule became the accepted form of church government throughout the Roman Empire. (During this time, certain churches began to exercise authority over other churches—thus broadening the hierarchical structure.) [57]

By the end of the fourth century, the bishops walked with the great. They were given tremendous privileges. They got involved in politics which separated them further from the presbyters. [58] In his attempts to strengthen the bishop’s office, Cyprian argued for an unbroken succession of bishops that traced back to Peter. [59] This idea is known as “apostolic succession.” [60]

Throughout his writings, Cyprian employs the official language of the Old Testament priesthood to justify this practice. [61] Like Tertullian (160-225) and Hippolytus (170-236) before him, Cyprian used the term sacerdotes to describe the presbyters and bishops. [62] But he went a step further.

It is upon Cyprian’s lap that we can lay the non-NT concept of sacerdotalism—the belief that there exists a Divinely appointed person to mediate between God and the people. Cyprian argued that because the Christian clergy are priests who offer the holy sacrifice (the Eucharist) they are sacrosanct (holy) themselves! [63]

We can also credit Cyprian with the notion that when the priest offers the Eucharist, he is actually offering up the death of Christ on behalf of the congregation. [64] To Cyprian’s mind, the body and blood of Christ are once again sacrificed through the Eucharist. [65] Consequently, it is in Cyprian that we find the seeds of the medieval Catholic Mass. [66] This idea widened the wedge between clergy and laity. It also created an unhealthy dependence of the laity upon the clergy.

The Role of the Priest

Up until the Middle Ages, the presbyters (now commonly called “priests”) played second fiddle to the bishop. But during the Middle Ages there was a shift. The presbyters began to

represent the priesthood while the bishops were occupied with political duties. [67] The parish (local) priests became more central to the life of the church than the bishop. [68] It was the priest who now stood in God's place and controlled the sacraments.

As Latin became the common language in the mid-fourth century, the priest would invoke the words *hoc est corpus meum*. These Latin words mean "This is my body."

With these words, the priest became the overseer of the supercilious hokum that began to mark the Catholic Mass. Ambrose of Milan (339-397) can be credited for the idea that the mere utterance of *hoc est corpus meum* magically converted bread and wine into the Lord's physical body and blood. [69] (The stage magic phrase "hocus pocus" comes from *hoc est corpus meum*.) According to Ambrose, the priest was endowed with special powers to call God down out of heaven into bread!

Because of his sacramental function, the word *presbyteros* came to mean *sacerdos* (priest). Consequently, when the Latin word "presbyter" was taken into English, it had the meaning of "priest" rather than "elder." [70] Thus in the Roman Catholic church, "priest" was the widely used term to refer to the local presbyter.

The Influence of Greco-Roman Culture

The Greco-Roman culture that surrounded the early Christians reinforced the graded hierarchy that was slowly infiltrating the church. Greco-Roman culture was hierarchical by nature. This influence seeped into the church when new converts brought their cultural baggage into the believing community. [71]

Human hierarchy and "official" ministry institutionalized the church of Jesus Christ. By the fourth century, these elements hardened the arteries of the once living, breathing *ekklesia* of God—within which ministry was functional, Spirit-led, organic, and shared by all believers.

But how and why did this happen?

We may trace it to the time of the death of the itinerant apostolic workers (church planters). In the late first and early second centuries, local presbyters began to emerge as the resident "successors" to the unique leadership role played by the apostolic workers. [72] This gave rise to a single leading figure in each church. [73] Without the influence of the extra-local workers who had been mentored by the NT apostles, the church began to drift toward the organizational patterns of her surrounding culture. [74]

Prominent teachers in the church who had adopted pagan thinking also had a great influence. Following on the heels of Ignatius of Antioch, Cyprian made the case that the organization of the church should be modeled after the Roman Empire. As a result, imperialism and an impregnable hierarchy made inroads into the Christian faith. [75]

As we have already seen, the role of the bishop began to change from being the head of a local church to becoming the representative of everybody in a given area. [76] Bishops ruled over the churches just like Roman governors ruled over their provinces. [77] Eventually, the bishop of Rome was given the most authority of all and finally evolved into the "Pope." [78]

Thus between the years A.D. 100 and A.D. 300, church leadership came to be patterned after the leadership of the Roman government. [79] And the hierarchy of the Old Testament was used to justify it. [80] The one-bishop-rule had swallowed up the priesthood of all believers.

Ignatius effectively made the bishop the local authority. Cyprian made him a representative of all the churches by his doctrine of apostolic succession. [81]

Constantine and Roman Hierarchy

Keep in mind that the social world into which Christianity spread was governed by a single ruler—the Emperor. Soon after Constantine took the throne in the early fourth century, the church became a full-fledged, top-down, hierarchically organized society. [82]

Edwin Hatch writes, *“For the most part the Christian churches associated themselves together upon the lines of the Roman Empire [83] . . . The development of the organization of the Christian churches was gradual [and] the elements of which that organization were composed were already existing in human society.”*[84]

We can trace the hierarchical leadership structure as early as ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Persia. [85] It was later carried over into the Greek and Roman culture where it was perfected.

Historian D.C. Trueman writes, *“The Persians made two outstanding contributions to the ancient world: The organization of their empire and their religion. Both of these contributions have had considerable influence on our western world. The system of imperial administration was inherited by Alexander the Great, adopted by the Roman Empire, and eventually bequeathed to modern Europe.”* [86]

Will Durant makes a similar point saying that Christianity *“grew by the absorption of pagan faith and ritual; it became a triumphant church by inheriting the organizing patterns and genius of Rome . . . As Judea had given Christianity ethics, and Greece had given it theology, so now Rome gave it organization; all these, with a dozen absorbed and rival faiths, entered into the Christian synthesis.”* [87]

By the fourth century, the church followed in the same steps of the Roman Empire. Emperor Constantine organized the church into dioceses along the pattern of the Roman regional districts. [88] (The word “diocese” was a secular term that referred to the larger administrative units of the Roman Empire.) [89] Later, Pope Gregory shaped the ministry of the entire church after Roman Law. [90]

Again Durant laments, *“When Christianity conquered Rome the ecclesiastical structure of the pagan church, the title and vestments of the pontifex maximus . . . and the pageantry of immemorial ceremony, passed like maternal blood into the new religion, and captive Rome captured her conqueror.”* [91]

All of this was at gross odds with God’s way for His church. When Jesus entered the drama of human history, He obliterated both the religious professional icon as well as the hierarchical form of leadership. [92] As an extension of Christ’s nature and mission, the early church was the first “lay-led” movement in history. But with the death of the apostles and the men they trained, things began to change. [93]

Since that time, the church of Jesus Christ has sought its pattern for church organization from the societies in which it has been placed. This despite our Lord's warning that He would be initiating a new society with a unique character. [94] In striking contrast to the Old Testament provisions made at Mt. Sinai, neither Jesus nor Paul imposed any fixed organizational patterns for the New Israel.

Constantine and the Glorification of the Clergy

From A.D. 313-325, Christianity was no longer a struggling religion trying to survive the Roman government. It was basking in the sun of imperialism, loaded with money and status. [95] To be a Christian under Constantine's reign was no longer a handicap. It was an advantage. It was fashionable to become a part of the Emperor's religion. And to be among the clergy was to receive the greatest of advantages. [96]

Constantine exalted the clergy. In A.D. 313, he gave the Christian clergy exemption from paying taxes—something that pagan priests had traditionally enjoyed. [97] He also made them exempt from mandatory public office and other civic duties. [98] They were freed from being tried by secular courts and from serving in the army. [99] (Bishops could be tried only by a bishop's court, not by ordinary law courts.) [100]

In all these things the clergy was given special class status. Constantine was the first to use the words "clerical" and "clerics" to depict a higher social class. [101] He also felt that the Christian clergy deserved the same privileges as governmental officials. So bishops sat in judgment like secular judges. [102]

Clergymen received the same honors as the highest officials of the Roman Empire and even the Emperor himself. [103] The brute fact is that Constantine gave the bishops of Rome more power than he gave Roman governors! [104] He also ordered that the clergy receive fixed annual allowances (ministerial pay)!

The net result of this was alarming: The clergy had the prestige of church office-bearers, the privileges of a favored class, and the power of a wealthy elite. [105] They had become an isolated class with a separate civil status and way of life. (This included clergy celibacy.) [106]

They even dressed and groomed differently from the common people. [107] Bishops and priests shaved their heads. This practice, known as the *tonsure*, comes from the old Roman ceremony of adoption. All those who had shaved heads were known as "clerks" or "clergy." [108] They also began wearing the clothes of Roman officials. [109]

It should come as no surprise that so many people in Constantine's day experienced a sudden "call to the ministry." [110] To their minds, being a church officer had become more of a career than a calling. [111]

A False Dichotomy

Under Constantine, Christianity was both recognized and honored by the State. This blurred the line between the church and the world. The Christian faith was no longer a minority religion. Instead, it was protected by Emperors. As a consequence, church membership grew rapidly. Truck loads of new converts were made who were barely converted. They brought into the church a wide variety of pagan ideas. In the words of Will Durant, "*While Christianity*

converted the world; the world converted Christianity, and displayed the natural paganism of mankind." [112]

As we have already seen, the practices of the mystery religions began to be employed into the church's worship. [113] And the pagan notion of the dichotomy between the sacred and profane found its way into the Christian mindset. [114] It can be rightfully said that the clergy/laity class distinction grew out of this very dichotomy. The Christian life was now being divided into two parts: Secular and spiritual—sacred and profane.

But by the fourth century, this false idea was universally embraced by Christians. And it led to the profoundly mistaken idea that there are sacred professions (a call to the "ministry") and ordinary professions (a call to a worldly vocation). [115] Historian Philip Schaff rightly describes these factors as creating "the secularization of the church" where the "pure stream of Christianity" had become polluted. [116] Take note that this mistaken dichotomy still lives in the minds of most believers today. But the concept is pagan, not Christian. It ruptures the NT reality that everyday life is sanctified by God. [117]

Clement of Rome (died in 100) was the first Christian writer to make a distinction in status between Christian leaders and non-leaders. He is the first to use the word "laity" in contrast to ministers. [118] Clement argued that the Old Testament order of priests should find fulfillment in the Christian church. [119]

Tertullian is the first writer to use the word "clergy" to refer to a separate class of Christians. [120] Both Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria (150-215) popularized the word "clergy" in their writings. [121]

By the third century, the clergy/laity gap widened to the point of no return. [122] Clergymen were the trained leaders of the church—the guardians of orthodoxy—the rulers and teachers of the people. They possessed gifts and graces not available to lesser mortals.

The laity were the second-class, untrained Christians. The great theologian Karl Barth rightly said, "*The term 'laity' is one of the worst in the vocabulary of religion and ought to be banished from the Christian conversation.*" [123]

The terms "clergy" and "laity" do not appear in the NT. [124] Neither does the concept that there are those who do ministry (clergy) and those to whom ministry is done (laity). Thus what we have in Tertullian and the two Clements is a clear break from the first-century Christian mindset where all believers shared the same status.

The distinction between clergy and laity—pulpiteer and pew-sitter—belongs to the other side of the cross. With the New Covenant in Christ, clergy and laity are abolished. There is only the people of God.

Along with these mindset changes came a new vocabulary. Christians began to adopt the vocabulary of the pagan cults. The title *pontifex* (pontiff, a pagan title) became a common term for Christian clergy in the fourth century. So did "Master of Ceremonies," and "Grand Master of the Lodge." [125] All of this reinforced the mystique of the clergy as the custodians of the mysteries of God. [126]

By the fifth century, the thought of the priesthood of all believers had completely disappeared from the Christian horizon. Access to God was now controlled by the clergy caste.

Clerical celibacy began to be enforced. Infrequent communion became a regular habit of the so-called laity. The church building was now veiled with incense and smoke. Clergy prayers were said in secret. And the small but profoundly significant screen that separated clergy from laity was introduced.

In a word, by the end of the fourth century on into the fifth, the clergy had become a sacerdotal caste—a spiritually elite group of “holy men.” [127] This leads us to the thorny subject of ordination.

The Fallacy of Ordination

In the fourth century, theology and ministry were the domain of the priests. Work and war were the domain of the laity. [128] What was the rite of passage into the sacred realm of the priest? *Ordination*. [129]

Before we examine the historical roots of ordination, let us look at how leadership was recognized in the early church. The apostolic workers (church planters) of the first century would revisit a church after a period of time. In some of those churches, the workers would publicly acknowledge elders. In every case, the elders were already “in place” before they were publicly endorsed. [130]

Elders naturally emerged in a church through the process of time. They were not appointed to an external office. [131] Instead, they were recognized by virtue of their seniority and contribution to the church. According to the NT, recognition of certain gifted members is something that is instinctive and organic. [132] There is an internal principle within every believer of recognizing the various ministries in the church.

Strikingly, there are only three passages in the NT that tell us that elders were publicly recognized. Elders were acknowledged in the churches in Galatia. Paul told Timothy to acknowledge elders in Ephesus. He also told Titus to recognize them in the churches in Crete.

The words “ordain” (KJV) in these passages do not mean to place into office. [133] They rather carry the idea of endorsing, affirming, and showing forth what has already been happening. [134] They also carry the thought of blessing. [135] Public recognition of elders and other ministries was typically accompanied by the laying on of hands by apostolic workers. (In the case of workers being sent out, this was done by the church or the elders.) [136]

In the first century, the laying on of hands merely meant the endorsement or affirmation of a function, not the installment into an office or the giving of special status. Regrettably, it came to mean the latter in the late second and early third centuries. [137]

During the third century, “ordination” took on an entirely different meaning. It was a formalized Christian rite. [138] By the fourth century, the ceremony of ordination was embellished by symbolic garments and solemn ritual. [139] Ordination produced an ecclesiastical caste that usurped the believing priesthood.

From where do you suppose the Christians got their pattern of ordination? They patterned their ordination ceremony after the Roman custom of appointing men to civil office. [140] The entire process down to the very words came straight from the Roman civic world! [141]

By the fourth century, the terms used for appointment to Roman office and for Christian ordination became synonymous. [142] When Constantine made Christianity the religion of choice, church leadership structures were now buttressed by political sanction. The forms of the Old Testament priesthood were combined with Greek hierarchy. [143] Sadly, the church was secure in this new form—just as it is today.

Augustine (293-373) lowered the bar more by teaching that ordination confers a “definite irremovable imprint” on the priest that empowers him to fulfill his priestly functions! [144] For Augustine, ordination was a permanent possession that could not be revoked. [145]

Christian ordination, then, came to be understood as that which constitutes the essential difference between clergy and laity. By it, the clergy was empowered to administer the sacraments. It was believed that the priest, who performs the Divine service, should be the most perfect and holy of all Christians. [146]

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389) and Chrysostom (347-407) raised the standard so high for priests that danger loomed for them if they failed to live up to the holiness of their service. [147] According to Chrysostom, the priest is like an angel. He is not made of the same frail stuff as the rest of men! [148]

How was the priest to live in such a state of pure holiness? How was he to be worthy to serve in “the choir of angels”? The answer was ordination. By ordination, the stream of Divine graces flowed into the priest, making him a fit vessel for God’s use. This idea, also known as “sacerdotal endowment,” first appears in Gregory of Nyssa (330-395).

Gregory argued that ordination makes the priest, “invisibly but actually a different, better man,” raising him high above the laity. [149] *“The same power of the word,”* says Gregory, *“makes the priest venerable and honorable, separated . . . While but yesterday he was one of the mass, one of the people, he is suddenly rendered a guide, a president, a teacher of righteousness, an instructor in hidden mysteries . . .”* [150]

Listen to the words of one fourth century document: *“The bishop, he is the minister of the Word, the keeper of knowledge, the mediator between God and you in several parts of your Divine worship . . . He is your ruler and governor . . . He is next after God your earthly god, who has a right to be honored by you.”* [151]

Through ordination, the priest (or bishop) was granted special Divine powers to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. Ordination also made him a completely separate and holy class of man! [152] Priests came to be identified as the “vicars of God on the earth.” They became part of a special order of men. An order set apart from the so-called “lay members” of the church.

To show this difference, both the priest’s life-style and dress were different from that of laymen. [153] Regrettably, this concept of ordination has never left the Christian faith. It is alive and well in modern Christianity. In fact, if you are wondering why and how the modern Pastor got to be so exalted as the “holy man of God,” these are his roots.

Eduard Schweizer, in his classic work *Church Order in the New Testament*, argues that Paul knew nothing about an ordination that confers ministerial or clerical powers to a Christian. [154] First-century shepherds (elders, overseers) did not receive anything that resembles modern

ordination. They were not set above the rest of the flock. They were those who served among them. [155]

First-century elders were merely endorsed publicly by outside workers as being those who cared for the church. Such acknowledgment was simply the recognition of a function. It did not confer special powers. Nor was it a permanent possession as Augustine believed.

The modern practice of ordination creates a special caste of Christian. Whether it be the priest in Catholicism or the Pastor in Protestantism, the result is the same: The most important ministry is closeted among a few “special” believers.

Such an idea is as damaging as it is nonscriptural. The NT nowhere limits preaching, baptizing, or distributing the Lord’s Supper to the “ordained.” [156] Eminent scholar James D.G. Dunn put it best when he said that the clergy-laity tradition has done more to undermine NT authority than most heresies! [157]

Since church office could only be held through the rite of ordination, the power to ordain became the crucial issue in holding religious authority. The Biblical context was lost. And proof-texting methods were used to justify the clergy/laity hierarchy. [158] The ordinary believer, generally uneducated and ignorant, was at the mercy of a professional clergy! [159]

The Reformation

The Reformers of the 16th century brought the Catholic priesthood sharply into question. They attacked the idea that the priest had special powers to convert wine into blood. They rejected apostolic succession. They encouraged the clergy to marry. They revised the liturgy to give the congregation more participation. They also abolished the office of the bishop and reduced the priest back to a presbyter. [160]

Unfortunately, however, the Reformers carried the Roman Catholic clergy/laity distinction straight into the Protestant movement. They also kept the Catholic idea of ordination. [161] Although they abolished the office of the bishop, they resurrected the one-bishop-rule, clothing it in new garb.

The rallying cry of the Reformation was the restoration of the priesthood of all believers. However, this restoration was only partial. Luther (1483-1546), Calvin (1509-1564), and Zwingli (1484-1531) affirmed the believing priesthood with respect to one’s *individual* relationship to God. They rightly taught that every Christian has direct access to God without the need of a human mediator. This was a wonderful restoration. But it was one-sided.

What the Reformers failed to do was to recover the corporate dimension of the believing priesthood. They restored the doctrine of the believing priesthood *soteriologically*—i.e., as it related to salvation. But they failed to restore it *ecclesiologically*—i.e., as it related to the church. [162]

In other words, the Reformers only recovered the priesthood of the *believer* (singular). They reminded us that every Christian has individual and immediate access to God. As wonderful as that is, they did not recover the priesthood of *all* believers (collective plural). This is the blessed truth that every Christian is part of a clan that shares God’s Word one with another. (It was the Anabaptists who recovered this practice. Regrettably, this recovery was one of the reasons why Protestant and Catholic swords were red with Anabaptist blood.) [163]

While the Reformers opposed the Pope and his religious hierarchy, they still held to the narrow view of ministry which they inherited. They believed that “ministry” was an institution that was closeted among the few who were “called” and “ordained.” [164] Thus the Reformers still affirmed the clergy-laity split. Only in their rhetoric did they state that all believers were priests and ministers. In their practice they denied it. So after the smoke cleared from the Reformation, we ended up with the same thing that the Catholics gave us—a selective priesthood!

Luther held to the idea that those who preach needed to be specially trained. [165] Like the Catholics, the Reformers held that only the “ordained minister” could preach, baptize, and administer the Lord’s Supper. [166] As a result, ordination gave the minister a special aura of Divine favor that could not be questioned.

Tragically, Luther and the other Reformers violently denounced the Anabaptists for practicing every-member functioning in the church. [167] The Anabaptists believed it was every Christian’s right to stand up and speak in a meeting. It was not the domain of the clergy. Luther was so opposed to this practice that he said it came from “the pit of hell” and those who were guilty of it should be put to death! [168] (Behold your heritage dear Protestant Christian!)

In short, the Reformers retained the idea that ordination was the key to having power in the church. It was the ordained minister’s duty to convey God’s revelation to His people. [169] And he was paid for this role.

Like the Catholic priest, the Reformed minister was viewed by the church as the “man of God”—the paid mediator between God and His people. [170] Not a mediator to forgive sins, but a mediator to communicate the Divine will. [171] So in Protestantism an old problem took on a new form. The jargon changed, but the poison remained.

From Priest to Pastor

John Calvin did not like the word “priest” to refer to ministers. [172] He preferred the term “Pastor.” [173] In Calvin’s mind, “Pastor” was the highest word one could use for ministry. He liked it because the Bible referred to Jesus Christ, “the great Shepherd of the sheep” (Heb. 13:20). [174] Ironically, Calvin believed that he was restoring the NT bishop (*episkopos*) in the person of the Pastor! [175]

Luther also did not like the word “priest” to define the new Protestant ministers. He wrote, “*We neither can nor ought to give the name priest to those who are in charge of the Word and sacrament among the people. The reason they have been called priests is either because of the custom of the heathen people or as a vestige of the Jewish nation. The result is injurious to the church.*” [176] So he too adopted the terms “preacher,” “minister,” and “Pastor” to refer to this new office.

Zwingli and Martin Bucer (1491-1551) also favored the word “Pastor.” They wrote popular treatises on it. [177] As a result, the term began to permeate the churches of the Reformation. [178] However, given their obsession with preaching, the Reformers’ favorite term for the minister was “preacher.” [179] And this was what the common people generally called them. [180]

It was not until the 18th century that the term “Pastor” came into common use, eclipsing “preacher” and “minister.” [181] This influence came from the Lutheran Pietists. [182] Since then the term has become widespread in mainstream Christianity. [183]

Even so, the Reformers elevated the Pastor to be the functioning head of the church. According to Calvin, *“The pastoral office is necessary to preserve the church on earth in a greater way than the sun, food, and drink are necessary to nourish and sustain the present life.”* [184]

The Reformers believed that the Pastor possessed Divine power and authority. He did not speak in his own name, but in the name of God. Calvin further reinforced the primacy of the Pastor by treating acts of contempt or ridicule toward the minister as serious public offenses. [185]

This should come as no surprise when you realize what Calvin took as his model for ministry. He did not take the church of the apostolic age. Instead, he took as his pattern the one-bishop-rule of the second century! [186] This was true for the other Reformers as well. [187]

The irony here is that John Calvin bemoaned the Roman Catholic church because it built its practices on “human inventions” rather than on the Bible. [188] But Calvin did the same thing! In this regard, Protestants are just as guilty as are Catholics. Both denominations base their practices on human tradition.

Calvin taught that the preaching of the Word of God and the proper administration of the sacraments are the marks of a true church. [189] To his mind, preaching, baptism, and the Eucharist were to be carried out by the Pastor and not the congregation. [190] For all the Reformers, the primary function of a minister is preaching. [191]

Like Calvin, Luther also made the Pastor a separate and exalted office. While he argued that the keys of the kingdom belonged to all believers, Luther confined their use to those who held offices in the church. [192] *“We are all priests,”* said Luther, *“insofar as we are Christians, but those whom we call priests are ministers selected from our midst to act in our name, and their priesthood is our ministry.”* [193]

Sadly, Luther believed that all are in the priesthood, but not all can exercise the priesthood. [194] This is sacerdotalism, pure and simple. Luther broke from the Catholic camp in that he rejected a sacrificing priesthood. But in its place, he believed that the ministry of God’s Word belonged to a special order. [195]

The following are characteristic statements made by Luther in his exaltation of the Pastor: *“God speaks through the preacher . . . A Christian preacher is a minister of God who is set apart, yea, he is an angel of God, a very bishop sent by God, a savior of many people, a king and prince in the Kingdom of Christ . . . There is nothing more precious or nobler in the earth and in this life than a true, faithful parson or preacher.”* [196]

Said Luther, *“We should not permit our pastor to speak Christ’s words by himself as though he were speaking them for his own person; rather, he is the mouth of all of us and we all speak them with him in our hearts . . . It is a wonderful thing that the mouth of every pastor is the mouth of Christ, therefore you ought to listen to the pastor not as a man, but as God.”* [197] You can hear the echoes of Ignatius ringing through the words of Luther.

These ideas corrupted Luther's view of the church. He felt it was nothing more than a preaching station. "*The Christian congregation*," said Luther, "*never should assemble unless God's Word is preached and prayer is made, no matter for how brief a time this may be.*" [198] Luther believed that the church is simply a gathering of people who listen to preaching. For this reason, he called the church building a *Mundhaus*, which means a mouth or speech-house! [199] He also made this statement: "*The ears are the only organs of a Christian.*" [200]

Dear Protestant Christian, behold your roots!

The Cure of Souls

Both Calvin and Luther shared the view that the two key functions of the Pastor were the proclamation of the Word (preaching) and the celebration of the Eucharist (communion). But Calvin added a third element. He emphasized that the Pastor had a duty to provide care and healing to the congregation. [201] This is known as the "cure of souls."

The "cure of souls" goes back to the fourth and fifth centuries. [202] We find it in the teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus. Gregory called the bishop a "Pastor"—a physician of souls who diagnoses his patient's maladies and prescribes either medicine or the knife. [203]

Luther's early followers also practiced the care of souls. [204] But in Calvin's Geneva, it was raised to an art form. Each Pastor and one elder were required to visit the homes of their congregants. Regular visits to the sick and those in prison were also observed. [205]

For Calvin and Bucer, the Pastor was not merely a preacher and a dispenser of the sacraments. He was the "cure of souls" or the "curate." His task was to bring healing, cure, and compassion to God's hurting people. [206]

This idea lives in the Protestant world today. It is readily seen in the modern concepts of "pastoral care," "pastoral counseling," and "Christian psychobabble." In the modern church, the burden of such care falls on the shoulders of one man—the Pastor. (In the first century, it fell on the shoulders of the entire church and to a group of seasoned men called "elders.") [207]

The Primacy of the Pastor

In short, the Protestant Reformation struck a blow to Roman Catholic sacerdotalism. But it was not a fatal blow. The Reformers still retained the one-bishop-rule. It merely underwent a semantic change. The Pastor now played the role of the bishop. He came to be regarded as the local head of a church—the leading elder. [208] As one writer put it, "*In Protestantism, the preachers tend to be the spokesmen and representatives of the church and the church is often the preacher's church. This is a great danger and threat to the Christian religion, not unrelated to clericalism.*" [209]

The reforms made by the Reformers were not radical enough to turn the tide that began with Ignatius and Cyprian. The Reformation embraced the Catholic hierarchical structure with unthinking acceptance. It also maintained the unscriptural distinction between the ordained and unordained.

In its rhetoric the Reformers decried the clergy-laity split. But in their practice they fully retained it. As Kevin Giles says, "*Differences between Catholic and Protestant clergy were*

blurred in practice and theology. In both kinds of churches, the clergy were a class apart; in both, their special status was based on Divine initiatives (mediated in different ways); and in both, certain duties were reserved to them.” [210]

The long-standing, post-Biblical tradition of the one-bishop-rule (now embodied in the Pastor) prevails in the Protestant church today. Because the clergy/laity faultline is etched in stone, there exists tremendous psychological pressures that make so-called “lay” people feel that ministry is the responsibility of the Pastor. “It is his job. He is the expert,” is the thinking.

The NT word for minister is *diakonos*. It means “servant.” But this word has been prostituted because men have professionalized the ministry. We have taken the word “minister” and equated it with the Pastor with no Scriptural justification whatsoever. In like manner, we have mistakenly equated preaching and ministry with the pulpit sermon. Again, without Biblical justification.

Following the trend of Calvin and Luther, Puritan writers John Owen (1616-1683) and Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) elevated the Pastorate as a permanent fixture in God’s house. [211] Owen and Goodwin led the Puritans to focus all authority into the pastoral role. [212] To their minds, the Pastor is given “the power of the keys.” He alone is ordained to preach, [213] administer the sacraments, [214] read Scripture publicly, [215] and be trained in the original Biblical languages, as well as logic and philosophy.

Both the Reformers and the Puritans held the idea that God’s ministers must be competent professionals. Therefore, Pastors had to have extensive academic training to fulfill their office. [216]

All of these features explain how and why the Pastor is now treated as an elite class . . . a special Christian . . . someone to be revered (hence the title “Reverend”). The Pastor and his pulpit are central to Protestant worship. [217]

How the Pastor Destroys Body Life

Now that we have unearthed the roots of the modern Pastor, let us shift our attention to the practical effects a Pastor has on the people of God.

The unscriptural clergy/laity distinction has done untold harm to the Body of Christ. It has ruptured the believing community into first and second-class Christians. The clergy/laity dichotomy perpetuates an awful falsehood. Namely, that some Christians are more privileged than others to serve the Lord.

Our ignorance of church history has allowed us to be robbed blind. The one-man ministry is entirely foreign to the NT, yet we embrace it while it suffocates our functioning. We are living stones, not dead ones. However, the pastoral office has transformed us into stones that do not breathe.

Permit me to get personal. The pastoral office has stolen your right to function as a member of Christ’s Body! It has shut your mouth and strapped you to a pew. It has distorted the reality of the Body, making the Pastor a giant mouth and transforming you into a tiny ear. [218] It has rendered you a mute spectator who is proficient at taking sermon notes and passing an offering plate!

But that is not all. The modern pastoral office has overthrown the main thrust of the letter to the Hebrews—the ending of the old priesthood. It has made ineffectual the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12-14, that every member has both the right and the privilege to minister in a church meeting. It has voided the message of 1 Peter 2 that every brother and sister is a functioning priest.

Being a functioning priest does not mean that you may only perform pinched forms of ministry like singing songs in your pew, raising your hands during worship, flipping transparencies, or teaching a Sunday school class. That is not the NT idea of ministry. These are mere aids for the Pastor's ministry! As one scholar put it, "*Much Protestant worship, up to the present day, has also been infected by an overwhelming tendency to regard worship as the work of the Pastor (and perhaps the choir) with the majority of the laity having very little to do but sing a few hymns and listen in a prayerful and attentive way.*" [219]

We treat the Pastor as if he were the professional expert. We expect doctors and lawyers to serve us, not to train us to serve others. And why? Because they are the experts. They are trained professionals. Unfortunately, we look upon the Pastor in the same way. All of this does violence to the fact that every believer is a priest. Not only before God, but to one another.

But there is something more. The modern Pastorate rivals the functional Headship of Christ in His church. It illegitimately holds the unique place of centrality and headship among God's people. A place that is only reserved for one Person—the Lord Jesus. Jesus Christ is the only Head over a church and the final word to it. [220] By his office, the Pastor displaces and supplants Christ's Headship by setting himself up as the church's human head.

For this reason, nothing so hinders the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose as does the modern pastoral role. Why? Because that purpose is centered on making Christ's Headship visibly manifested in the church through the free, open, every-member functioning of the Body. As long as the pastoral office is present, you will never witness such a thing.

How the Pastor Destroys Himself

The modern Pastor not only does damage to God's people, he does damage to himself. The pastoral office has a way of chewing up all who come within its pale. Depression, burn-out, stress, and emotional breakdown are terribly high among Pastors. At the time of this writing, there are reportedly more than 500,000 Pastors serving churches in the U.S. [221] Of this mass number, consider the following statistics that lay bare the lethal danger of the pastoral office:

- * 94% feel pressured to have an ideal family.
- * 90% work more than 46 hours a week.
- * 81% say they have insufficient time with their spouses.
- * 80% believe that pastoral ministry affects their family negatively.
- * 70% do not have someone they consider a close friend.
- * 70% have lower self-esteem than when they entered the ministry.

- * 50% feel unable to meet the needs of the job. [222]
- * 80% are discouraged or deal with depression.
- * 40%+ report that they are suffering from burnout, frantic schedules, and unrealistic expectations. [223]
- * 33% consider pastoral ministry an outright hazard to the family. [224]
- * 33% have seriously considered leaving their position in the past year. [225]
- * 40% of pastoral resignations are due to burnout. [226]
- * Roughly 30% to 40% of religious leaders eventually drop out of the ministry and about 75% go through a period of stress so great that they seriously consider quitting. [227]
- * Most Pastors are expected to juggle 16 major tasks at once. [228] And most crumble under the pressure. For this reason, 1,600 ministers in all denominations across the U.S. are fired or forced to resign each month. [229] Over the past 20 years, the average length of a pastorate has declined from seven years to just over two years! [230]

Unfortunately, few Pastors have connected the dots to discover that it is their office that causes this underlying turbulence. [231] Simply put: Jesus Christ never intended any person to sport all the hats the Pastor is expected to wear! He never intended any man to bear such a load.

The demands of the pastorate are crushing. So much so they will drain any mortal dry. Imagine for a moment that you were working for a company that paid you on the basis of how good you made your people feel? What if your pay depended on how entertaining you were, how friendly you were, how popular your wife and children were, how well-dressed you were, and how perfect was your behavior?

Can you imagine the unmitigated stress this would cause you? Can you see how such pressure would force you into playing to a pretentious role—all to keep your power, your prestige, and your job security? (For this reason, most Pastors are impervious to receiving any kind of help.)

The pastoral profession dictates standards of conduct like any other profession, whether it be teacher, doctor, or lawyer. The profession dictates how Pastors are to dress, speak, and act. This is one of the major reasons why many Pastors live very artificial lives.

In this regard, the pastoral role fosters dishonesty. Congregants expect their Pastor to always be cheerful, available at a moment's call, never resentful, never bitter, have perfectly disciplined families, and to be completely spiritual at all times. [232] Pastors play to this role like actors in a Greek drama. This accounts for the strange voice change when most Pastors pray. It accounts for the pious way they fold their hands. The unique way they say "the Lord" (typically pronounced "the Lawd"). And the special way they dress. [233]

All of these things are largely smoke and moon beams—utterly void of spiritual reality. Most Pastors cannot stay in their office without being corrupted on some level. The power-politics

endemic to the office is a huge problem that isolates many of them and poisons their relationship with others.

In an insightful article to Pastors entitled *Preventing Clergy Burnout*, the author suggests something startling. His advice to Pastors gives us a clear peek into the power-politics that goes with the pastorate. [234] He implores Pastors to “*Fellowship with clergy of other denominations. These persons cannot harm you ecclesiastically, because they are not of your official circle. There is no political string they can pull to undo you.*” [235]

Professional loneliness is another virus that runs high among Pastors. The lone-ranger plague drives some ministers into other careers. It drives others into crueler fates. [236]

All of these pathologies find their root in the history of the pastorate. It is “lonely at the top” because God never intended for anyone to be at the top—except His Son! In effect, the modern Pastor tries to shoulder the 58 NT “one another” exhortations all by himself. [237] It is no wonder that most of them get crushed under the weight. [238]

Conclusion

The modern Pastor is the most unquestioned element in modern Christianity. Yet he does not have a strand of Scripture to support his existence nor a fig leaf to cover it!

Rather, the modern Pastor was born out of the single-bishop-rule first spawned by Ignatius and Cyprian. The bishop evolved into the local presbyter. In the Middle Ages, the presbyter grew into the Catholic priest. During the Reformation, he was transformed into the “Preacher,” “the Minister,” and finally “the Pastor”—the man upon whom all of Protestantism hangs. To juice it all down to one sentence: The Protestant Pastor is nothing more than a slightly reformed Catholic priest!

Catholic priests had seven duties at the time of the Reformation: Preaching, the sacraments, prayers for the flock, a godly life, discipline, church rites, supporting the poor, and visiting the sick. [239] The Protestant Pastor takes upon himself all of these responsibilities—plus he sometimes blesses civic events.

The famed poet John Milton put it best when he said: “*New presbyter is but old priest writ large!*” [240] This being interpreted means: The modern Pastor is but an old priest written in larger letters!

I majored in Bible in college. I went to the seminary and I majored in the only thing they teach there: the professional ministry. When I graduated, I realized that I could speak Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and the only thing on earth I was qualified for was to be Pope. But someone else had the job.

-Anonymous Pastor

This article has been excerpted from Frank Viola's book *Pagan Christianity: The Origins of Our Modern Church Practices*. www.ptmin.org/pagan.htm and has been copied exactly from the source website:

<http://www.ptmin.org/thepastor.htm>

The Calf-Path

One day, through the primeval wood,
A calf walked home, as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.

Since then three hundred years have fled,
And, I infer, the calf is dead.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,

And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.
And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made.

And many men wound in and out,
And dodged, and turned, and bent about
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path.

But still they followed—do not laugh—
The first migrations of that calf,
And through this winding wood-way stalked,
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,
That bent, and turned, and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load

Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And traveled some three miles in one.
And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street;
And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare;

And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis;
And men two centuries and a half
Trode in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zigzag calf about;
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.
They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;

For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.
A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach;

For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.

They keep the path a sacred groove,
Along which all their lives they move.
But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf!

Ah! Many things this tale might teach—
But I am not ordained to preach.

-Sam Walter Foss

Endnotes

- [1] I am capitalizing the word "Pastor" in this booklet to draw attention to the office rather than to the person that fills it.
- [2] Most men and women who become Pastors have never considered the roots of this office. And they were never offered any other alternative way by which to serve God. This, indeed, is a terrible tragedy. (See the Calf-Path poem above.) Nevertheless, though their office is without Scriptural merit, Pastors often do help people. But they help people despite their office, not because of it.
- [3] A derivative from of the word poimen is used in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2-3.
- [4] There is just as much Biblical support for the Pastor as there is for baptisms for the dead. Both are mentioned only once in the entire Bible! (1 Cor. 15:29).
- [5] The NT never uses the secular Greek words for civil and religious authorities to depict ministers in the church. Further, even though most NT authors were steeped in the Jewish priestly system of the Old Testament, they never use hierous (priest) to refer to Christian ministry. Ordination to office presupposes a static and definable church leadership role that did not exist in the apostolic churches. Marjorie Warkentin, *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 160-161, 166; Frank Viola, *Who is Your Covering?* (Brandon: Present Testimony Ministry, 2001), Chapters 1-3.
- [6] Tragically, some men would give their teeth just to be called "Pastor" or "Reverend." The words of Job come to mind: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man" (Job 32:21).
- [7] Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6. Every believer is a priest according to the NT. R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 173-181.
- [8] Richard Hanson, *Christian Priesthood Examined* (Guildford and London: Lutterworth Press, 1979), pp. 34-35.
- [9] This word is the spelling into English letters of the Greek word for "elder" (presbuteros).
- [10] The terms "overseers" and "servants" were later ecclesiasticized into the words "bishops" and "deacons" (M. Smith, *From Christ to Constantine*, Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1971, p. 32).
- [11] Frank Viola, *Rethinking the Wineskin*, (Brandon: Present Testimony Ministry, 2001), Chapters 5-6; *Who is Your Covering?*, Chapters 1-2.
- [12] "Christianity . . . learnt from the example of pagan religions that most men find it difficult to understand or approach God without the aid of a man who in some sense stands for God, represents Him, and feels called to devote himself to this representative ministry" (*Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 100).
- [13] A distinguishing feature of every religion is a separate human priesthood.
- [14] Walter Klassen, "New Presbyter is Old Priest Writ Large," *Concern* 17, 1969, p. 5. See also W. Klassen, J.L. Burkholder, and John Yoder, *The Relation of Elders to the Priesthood of Believers* (Washington: Sojourner's Book Service, 1969).
- [15] Numbers 11:26-28.
- [16] Exodus 20:19.
- [17] 1 Samuel 8:19.
- [18] 3 John 9-10.
- [19] F.W. Grant, *Nicolaitanism or the Rise and Growth of Clerisy* (Bedford: MWTB), pp. 3-6. The Greek word nicolaitane means "conquering the people." Nikos mean "to conquer over" and laos means "the people." Grant believes that Nicolaitans are those who make "laity" out of God's people by raising up "clergy" to lord it over them. See also Alexander Hay, *What Is Wrong in the Church?*, p. 54.
- [20] James D.G. Dunn, *New Testament Theology in Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), pp. 123, 127-129.
- [21] In the writings of the early church fathers, the words "shepherd," "overseers," and "elder" are always used interchangeably, as is the case in the NT. F.F. Bruce states, "That the language of the New Testament does not allow us to press a distinction between the Greek word translated "bishop" (episkopos) and that translated "elder" (presbyteros) need not be argued at length. Paul could address the assembled elders of the church of Ephesus as those whom the Holy Spirit had made bishops. Later, in the Pastoral Epistles (those to Timothy and Titus), the two terms still appear to be used interchangeably" (*The Spreading Flame*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958, p. 65). In fact, bishops, elders, and shepherds (always in the plural) continue to be regarded as identical in the writings of 1 Clement, the Didache, and Hermas. They were seen as identical up until the beginning of the second century. See also James Mackinnon, *Calvin and the Reformation* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), pp. 80-81; Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries* (Abilene: A.C.U. Press, Third Edition, 1999), pp. 169-173.

- [22] See Chapter 5 of *Who is Your Covering?* for details.
- [23] 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 5:3.
- [24] *Early Christians Speak*, p. 173.
- [25] *The Spreading Flame*, pp. 66-67.
- [26] These quotes appear in Ignatius' letters to the churches in Asia Minor. *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Dorset Press, 1968), pp. 75-123.
- [27] Edwin Hatch, *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1895), p. 185. p. 106; *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 88. Hatch's book shows that the gradual evolution of the organization of the church and various elements of that organization were borrowed from Greco-Roman society.
- [28] Robert M. Grant, *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary, 6 Volumes* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), Vol. 1, pp. 58, 171.
- [29] R. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority Within Earliest Christianity* (Clark T & T, 1994) p. 229.
- [30] *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 124.
- [31] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- [32] Kenneth Strand, "The Rise of the Monarchical Episcopate," in *Three Essays on Church History* (Ann Arbor: Braun-Brumfield, 1967); *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, p. 175.
- [33] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 69; *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 63-72.
- [34] *The Spreading Flame*, pp. 66-69; H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, ed. *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1956), pp. 23-25. When Ignatius wrote his letters, the one-bishop-rule was being practiced in such Asian cities as Ephesus, Philadelphia, Magnesia, and Smyrna. But it had not yet reached Greece or the West, such as Rome. It appears that the one-bishop-rule moved in a westward direction from Syria across the Empire.
- [35] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 67; *The Spreading Flame*, p. 69. J.B. Lightfoot's *The Christian Ministry* is the most satisfactory explanation of the historical evidence of how the bishop gradually developed out of the presbytery.
- [36] *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, p. 25.
- [37] S.L. Greenslade, *Shepherding the Flock*, p. 8.
- [38] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 68.
- [39] Edwin Hatch, *The Growth of Church Institutions* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), p. 35.
- [40] James F. White, *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 65-66.
- [41] *The Early Christian Church*, p. 92. For a brief synopsis of how the clergy developed, see *The Other Six Days*, pp. 39-48.
- [42] St. Cyprian of Carthage (<http://www.comeandseeicons.com/phm12.htm>).
- [43] James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 25.
- [44] *Early Christians Speak*, p. 168. Cyprian normally called the bishop sacerdos, which is Latin for "priest." Sacerdotal language taken from the Old Testament to define church offices quickly caught on (*Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, p. 177; *From Christ to Constantine*, p. 136). J. B. Lightfoot wrote that the "sacerdotal view of the ministry is one of the most striking and important phenomena in the history of the church" (J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, London: Macmillan & Co, 1888, p. 144).
- [45] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, pp. 35, 95. There is no evidence that anyone thought of Christian ministers as priests until the year A.D. 200. Tertullian is the first to apply the term "priest" to bishops and presbyters. Throughout his writings, he calls the bishop and the presbyters sacerdos (priests) and he calls the bishop sacerdos summus (high priest). He does so without any explanation, indicating that his readers were familiar with these titles (p. 38). See also Hans Von Campenhausen, *Tradition and Life in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 220. Cyprian is also credited for saying that the bishop is the equivalent of the Old Testament high priest (*From Christ to Constantine*, p. 136). The historian Eusebius regularly calls clergy "priests" in his voluminous writings (*Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 61).
- [46] "Thus it was the bishop, as chief Pastor of the local church, who came to represent the fullness of the ministry. He was prophet, teacher, chief celebrant at the liturgical assembly, and chairman of the board of overseers of the Christian 'synagogue'" (*The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, p. 28). Gregory the Great's work *The Book of Pastoral Rule* written in A.D. 591 is a discussion on the duties of the bishop's office. To Gregory, the bishop is a Pastor, and preaching is one of his most important duties. Gregory's book is a Christian classic and is still used to train Pastors in Protestant seminaries today. See also Philip Culbertson and Arthur Bradford Shippee, *The Pastor: Readings from the Patristic Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

- [47] Note that the bishops at this time were essentially heads over local churches. They were not diocesan superintendents as they are today in Roman Catholicism. For a discussion of this development see *Early Christians Speak*, pp. 13-14.
- [48] *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, p. 28.
- [49] For a thorough discussion of this doctrine and its refutation, see my book *Who is Your Covering?*.
- [50] *The Other Six Days*, pp. 41-42.
- [51] *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 171.
- [52] *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, pp. 28-29.
- [53] *The Elders*, p. 231; *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, p. 29.
- [54] J.G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church: A History of Its First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1965), p. 131; *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, trans. Burton S. Easton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934). Hippolytus distinguishes sharply between the powers of the bishop and the presbyters. His writings give the bishop the power to forgive sins and to allot penance (*Christian Priesthood Examined*, pp. 39-40). Presbyters and deacons could only baptize with the bishop's authority (*The Elders*, p. 233).
- [55] *The Early Christian Church*, p. 187. In A.D. 318, Constantine recognized the jurisdiction of the bishop. In A.D. 333, the bishops were placed on an equal footing with Roman magistrates (p. 188).
- [56] Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church, Volume II* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1953), p. 247.
- [57] According to the canons of the Council of Nicea, Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch had special authority over the regions around them (*From Christ to Constantine*, p. 95).
- [58] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 72. Hanson explains how the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century strengthened the bishop's office (pp. 72-77).
- [59] Ann Fremantle, ed., *A Treasury of Early Christianity* (Viking Press, 1953), p. 301.
- [60] Apostolic succession first appears in the writings of Clement of Rome and Irenaeus. It also appears in Hippolytus. But Cyprian turned it into a coherent doctrine (Robert M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society*, San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977, p. 38; N. Sykes, *Old Priest and New Presbyter*, Cambridge, 1956, p. 240).
- [61] G.S.M. Walker, *The Churchmanship of Cyprian*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), p. 38. Many of the church fathers treated the Old Testament Scriptures as containing a normative ordering of the church. The use of Old Testament priest terminology for church office-bearers became common as early as the second century (*Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, pp. 50, 161; *Christian Priesthood Examined*, pp. 46, 51).
- [62] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 59; *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, p. 39.
- [63] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 54.
- [64] *Ibid.*, p. 58. In both the *Didache* and 1 Clement, the Eucharist is referred to as a "sacrifice" and an "offering" performed by the bishops (*Tradition and Life in the Church*, p. 220).
- [65] The word "sacrifice" as used in a liturgical sense first appears in the *Didache* (*Tradition and Life in the Church*, p. 220).
- [66] The idea that the priest offers the sacrifice of Christ through the Eucharist is sacerdotalism. On this score, Richard Hanson poignantly remarks, "This sacerdotal concept of priesthood appears to obscure, if not actually abolish, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. It drains believers' priesthood all away into the priesthood of the clergy" (*Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 98).
- [67] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- [68] In the third century, each priest chose a bishop to oversee and coordinate his functioning. In the fourth century, things got more complex. Bishops needed supervision. Hence was born archbishops and metropolitans who governed the churches of a province (Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1950, pp. 45, 756-760).
- [69] *Concerning the Mysteries*, 9:52,54. In the Eastern churches a prayer is offered for the Spirit to do the magic. In the western churches, the prayer was left out, for the words themselves did the trick (Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London: Dacre Press, 1964, p. 240-241, 275; Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, New York: Benziger, 1951-55, Volume 1, p. 52).
- [70] *The Elders*, pp. 234-235. The word "priest" is etymologically a contraction of "presbyter." By the close of the Old English period, the English term "priest" had become the current word for "presbyter" and "sacerdos" (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Third Edition, p. 1325).
- [71] *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, pp. 30-31.
- [72] *Early Christians Speak*, p. 172.
- [73] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- [74] David Norrington gives an indepth discussion of how hierarchical structures and ecclesiastical specialists began to emerge in the church (*To Preach or Not to Preach?*, pp. 24-25).
- [75] *Early Christianity and Society*, p. 43.

[76] Christian Priesthood Examined, p. 71.

[77] Robert F. Evans, *One and Holy: The Church in Latin and Patristic Thought* (London: Camelot Press, 1972), p. 48.

[78] Before Constantine, the Roman bishop exercised no jurisdiction outside of Rome. While he was honored, he did not have that kind of ecclesiastical authority (*Church History in Plain Language*, p. 151). The word "pope" comes from the title "papa," a term used to express the fatherly care of any bishop. It was not until the sixth century that the term began to be used exclusively for the bishop of Rome. Here is a brief sketch of the origin of the Roman Catholic Pope: At the end of the second century, Roman bishops were given great honor. Stephen I (d. 257) was the first to use the Petrine text (Matthew 16:18) to support the preeminence of the Roman bishop. But this was not universally held. The emergence of the modern Pope can be traced to Leo the Great (440-461). Leo was the first to make a theological and Biblical claim for the primacy of the Roman bishop. Under him, the primacy of Rome was finally established. With the coming of Gregory the Great (540-604), the "papal chair" was extended and enhanced. (Incidentally, Gregory became by far the largest landowner in Italy, setting a precedent for rich and powerful Popes to follow.) By the mid-third century, the Roman church had 30,000 members, 150 clergyman, and 1500 widows and poor people (Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1*, p. 242; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Volume 4*, pp. 212, 218-219; Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, Waco: Word Books, 1982, pp. 150-151; *The Early Christian Church*, pp. 135-136, 250; *The Age of Faith*, p. 521; *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 76ff.). Gregory is also the first to use the term "servant of the servants of God" (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Volume 3*, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1910, p. 534; *Volume 4*, p. 329).

[79] *Early Christianity and Society*, p. 43; *The Early Christian Church*, pp. 188-189.

[80] *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, pp. 35, 48. Church officers were regarded as the successors of the Levites (p. 168).

[81] *A Treasury of Early Christianity*, p. 301.

[82] *Early Christianity and Society*, pp. 11-12. "The organization of the church adapted itself to the political and geographical divisions of the Empire" (*History of the Christian Church: Volume 3*, p. 7).

[83] This not only applied to the graded hierarchy it adopted into its leadership structure, but also to the way the church divided itself up into gradations of dioceses, provinces, and municipalities all controlled by a top-down leadership system (*The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 185). As Shelley put it, "As the church grew, it adopted, quite naturally, the structure of the Empire" (Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, Waco: Word Books, 1982, p. 152).

[84] *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 213.

[85] Will Durant, *Caesar to Christ* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1950), pp. 670-671.

[86] D.C. Trueman, *The Pageant of the Past: The Origins of Civilization* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), p. 105.

[87] *Caesar to Christ*, pp. 575, 618. Durant writes, "The Roman Church followed in the footsteps of the Roman State" (p. 618).

[88] *The Other Six Days*, p. 44; *The Pageant of the Past*, p. 311; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986), p. 573).

[89] *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Third Edition, p. 482.

[90] *The Other Six Days*, p. 44.

[91] *Caesar and Christ*, pp. 671-672.

[92] Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-12; Luke 22:25-27. In *Who is Your Covering?*, I explore the significance of these passages in detail.

[93] Paul trained a number of men to take his place. Among them were Timothy, Titus, Gaius, Trophimus, Tychichus, etc. See Gene Edwards' *Overlooked Christianity* (Sargent: Seedsowers, 1997) for details.

[94] Matthew 23:8-11; Mark 10:42ff.

[95] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 62.

[96] At this time, the term "clergy" broadened to include all officials in the church (*The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, p. 29). See also Norman Towar Boggs, *The Christian Saga* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1931), pp. 206-207.

[97] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 62; *Caesar and Christ*, pp. 656-657, 668.

[98] Monsignor Louis Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church: From Its Foundation to the End of the Fifth Century* (London: John Murray, 1912), p. 50; Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), p. 77; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1987), p. 667.

[99] Such exemptions had been granted to such professions as physicians and professors. Dave Andrews, *Christian Anarchy* (Lion Publications, 1999), p. 26.

[100] Father Michael Collins and Matthew A. Price, *The Story of Christianity* (DK Publishing, 1999), p.74.

[101] *A History of Christianity*, p. 77. A century later, Julian the Apostate was using these same terms (clerical, clerics) in a negative sense.

- [102] Pagans and Christians, p. 667.
- [103] Josef A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1959), pp. 130-131.
- [104] *Caesar and Christ*, pp. 618-619.
- [105] *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, pp. 153-155.
- [106] *Ibid.*, p. 163. In the first three centuries of Christianity, priests were not required to be celibate. In the West, the Spanish Council of Elivra held in A.D. 306 was the first to require clergy to be celibate. This was reasserted by Pope Siricius in A.D. 386. Any priest who married or continued to live with his wife was defrocked. In the East, priests and deacons could marry before ordination, but not after. Bishops had to be celibate. Gregory the Great did a great deal to promote clerical celibacy, which many were not following. Clerical celibacy only widened the gulf between clergy and the so-called "ordinary" people of God (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Third Edition, p. 310; *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 1, pp. 441-446; *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1* (Gonzalez), p. 246; *The Age of Faith*, p. 45).
- [107] The bishop's dress was that of the ancient robe of a Roman magistrate. Clergy were not to let their hair grow long like the pagan philosophers (*The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, pp. 164-165).
- [108] *The Story of Christianity*, p. 74.
- [109] Frank Viola, *Pagan Christianity* (Brandon: Present Testimony Ministry, 2003), Chapter 5.
- [110] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 62
- [111] *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, p. 29.
- [112] *Caesar and Christ*, p. 657.
- [113] See *Pagan Christianity*, Chapter 1.
- [114] Frank C. Senn, *Christian Worship and Its Cultural Setting* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 40-41.
- [115] Everything ought to be done for God's glory, for He has sanctified the mundane (1 Cor. 10:31). The false dichotomy between the sacred and profane has been forever abolished in Christ. Such thinking belongs to both paganism and ancient Judaism. For the Christian, "Nothing is unclean in itself," and "What God has cleansed do not make common" (Acts 10:15; Rom. 14:14). For an indepth discussion on the fallacy of the sacred/profane disjunction, see J.G. Davies, *The Secular Use of Church Buildings* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), pp. 222-237.
- [116] *The History of Christianity: Volume 3*, pp. 125-126.
- [117] *New Testament Theology in Dialogue*, p. 127.
- [118] 1 Clement 40:5. See also *Early Christians Speak*, p. 168; R. Paul Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), p. 5.
- [119] *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, p. 38.
- [120] *On Monogamy*, 12.
- [121] *The Abolition of the Laity*, p. 28.
- [122] *To Preach or Not to Preach?*, p. 25.
- [123] *The Abolition of the Laity*, p. 24.
- [124] The term "laity" is derived from the Greek word *laos* which means the people of God (see 1 Pet. 2:9-10). The term "clergy" is derived from the Greek word *kleros* which means a lot, a share, or an inheritance. The NT never uses the word *kleros* for leaders. It rather uses it for the whole people of God. For it is God's people that are God's inheritance (see Col. 1:12; Eph. 1:11; Gal. 3:29; 1 Pet. 5:3). In this connection, it is ironic that Peter in 1 Peter 5:3 exhorts the elders of the church to not lord over the *kleros* ("clergy")! Again, *kleros* and *laos* both refer to the whole of God's flock.
- [125] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 64. Terms like *coryphaeus* (Master of Ceremonies) and *hierophant* (Grand Master of the Lodge) were freely borrowed from pagan cults and used for the Christian clergy. Tertullian was the first to use the term "supreme pontiff" (bishop of bishops) to refer to the bishop of Rome in his work *On Chastity* written at about A.D. 218. Tertullian, however, uses the term sarcastically (*The Spreading Flame*, p. 322).
- [126] *Christian Priesthood Examined*, p. 64.
- [127] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66; *Tradition and Life in the Church*, pp. 222-223.
- [128] *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*, p. 40.
- [129] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- [130] See *Rethinking the Wineskin*, Chapter 5; *Who is Your Covering*, Chapter 2.
- [131] According to Bible commentator Alfred Plummer, the Greek words translated "ordain" in the NT do not have special ecclesiastical meanings. None of them implies the rite of ordination or a special ceremony ("The Pastoral Epistles," in *The Expositor's Bible*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, New York: Armstrong, 1903, Vol. 23, pp. 219-221). See also *Who is Your Covering?* Chapters 1-3.
- [132] Acts 16:2; 1 Thess. 1:5; 5:12; 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 8:22; Php. 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:10.

- [133] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 4. Translators of the KJV have used ordain for 21 different Hebrew and Greek words. 17th-century ecclesiastical misunderstanding influenced this poor word choice.
- [134] The Greek word cheirotoneo in Acts 14:23 literally means "to stretch forth the hand" as in voting. Hence, it is likely that the apostles laid hands on those whom the majority of the church deemed were already functioning as overseers among them.
- [135] The Elders, pp. 169-170.
- [136] Acts 13:2; 1 Tim. 4:14. Paul, an older worker, also laid hands on Timothy, a younger worker (2 Tim. 1:6).
- [137] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, pp. 104, 111, 127, 130. Warkentin does a thorough study on the NT meaning of the "laying on of hands" in Chapters 9-11 of her book. Her conclusion: "The laying on of hands has nothing to do with routine installation into office in the church, whether as elder, deacon, pastor, or missionary" (p. 156).
- [138] The earliest record of the ordination rite is found in the Apostolic Traditions of Hippolytus (200-220). By the fourth century, references abound to it (Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, pp. 25, 41).
- [139] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 104.
- [140] The Organization of the Early Christian Churches, pp. 129-133.
- [141] Ibid. This same tendency was picked up by Judaism as early as the first century. Jewish scribes who were proficient in the interpretation of the Torah and the oral traditions ordained men for office in the Sanhedrin. These men were viewed as mediators of the will of God to all of Israel. The "ordained" of the Sanhedrin became so powerful that by the early second century the Romans put to death anyone who performed Jewish ordination! (Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, pp. 16, 21-23, 25).
- [142] Ibid., p. 35. This is evident from the Apostolic Constitutions (A.D. 350-375).
- [143] Ibid., p. 45.
- [144] Tradition and Life in the Church, p. 224.
- [145] Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 75.
- [146] Tradition and Life in the Church, p. 227.
- [147] Ibid., p. 228.
- [148] Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 71.
- [149] Tradition and Life in the Church, p. 229.
- [150] Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 75. Ordination was believed to confer upon the recipient a character indelibilis. That is, something sacred had entered into him (Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 42; History of the Christian Church: Volume 3, p. 489).
- [151] The Apostolic Constitutions II.4.26.
- [152] Kevin Giles, Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1991), p. 195.
- [153] David D. Hall, The Faithful Shepherd (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 6.
- [154] Eduard Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament (Chatham: W. & J. Mackay, 1961), p. 207.
- [155] Acts 20:28, NASB; 1 Peter 5:2-3.
- [156] New Testament Theology in Dialogue, p. 138ff.
- [157] Ibid., pp. 126-129.
- [158] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 45.
- [159] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 51; The Organization of the Early Christian Churches, pp. 126-131. Ordination grew into an instrument to consolidate clerical power. Through it, the clergy could lord over God's people as well as secular authorities. The net effect is that modern ordination sets up artificial barriers between Christians and hinders mutual ministry.
- [160] Christian Priesthood Examined, p. 82.
- [161] While Luther rejected the idea that ordination changes the ordained person's character, he nevertheless held to its importance. To Luther's mind, ordination is a rite of the church. And a special ceremony was necessary for the carrying out of pastoral duties (Christian Liturgy, p. 297).
- [162] "The priesthood of all believers refers not only to each person's relation to God and to one's priesthood to neighbor, as in Luther; it refers also to the equality of all people in the Christian community with respect to formal function" (John Dillenberger, Protestant Christianity: Interpreted Throughout Its Development, p. 61).
- [163] The Faithful Shepherd, p. 8. For a compelling treatment of the Anabaptist story, see Peter Hoover's The Secret of the Strength: What Would the Anabaptists Tell This Generation? (Shippensburg: Benchmark Press, 1998).
- [164] J.L. Ainslie, The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the 16th and 17th Centuries (Edinburgh, 1940), pp. 2,5.
- [165] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, pp. 57-58.
- [166] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

[167] The Anabaptists both believed and practiced Paul's injunction in 1 Corinthians 14:26, 30-31 that every believer has the right to function at any time in a church meeting. In Luther's day, this practice was known as the Sitzrecht—"the sitter's right" (The Secret of the Strength, pp. 58-59).

[168] Luther announced that "the Sitzrecht was from the pit of hell" and was a "perversion of public order . . . undermining respect for authority." Within 20 years, over 116 laws were passed in German lands throughout Europe making this "Anabaptist heresy" a capital offense (The Secret of the Strength, p. 59, 198). Further, Luther felt that if the whole church publicly administered the Lord's Supper it would be a "deplorable confusion." To Luther's mind, one person must take on this task—the Pastor (Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, p. 323).

[169] Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 105.

[170] Ibid., p. 105. Protestants today speak of "the ministry" as a mediatorial body set within the larger Body of Christ rather than a function shared by all.

[171] Just as the Roman Catholic clergy was seen as the gatekeeper of salvation, the Protestant clergy was viewed as the trustee of Divine revelation. According to the Augsburg Confession of 1530, the highest office in the church was the preaching office. In ancient Judaism, the rabbi interpreted the Torah for the people. In the Protestant church, the minister is regarded as the custodian of God's mysteries (Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View, p. 168).

[172] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Westminster Press, 1960), Bk. 4, Ch. 8, No. 14.

[173] "Pastor" is from the Latin which was used to translate "shepherd." William Tyndale preferred the term "Pastor" in his Bible translation. Tyndale debated Sir Thomas More over the issue of "Pastor" vs. "priest."

Tyndale, a Protestant, took the position that "Pastor" was exegetically correct (see The Parker Society Series on the English Reformers for this exchange).

[174] The Faithful Shepherd, p. 16.

[175] Old Priest and New Presbyter, p. 111.

[176] Luther's Works, 40, 35.

[177] One of the most influential books during the Reformation was Bucer's The Pastorale. In the same spirit, Zwingli published a tract entitled The Pastor.

[178] Calvin's church order of Pastors with governing elders in Geneva became the most influential model during the Reformation. It became the pattern of the Protestant churches in France, Holland, Hungary, Scotland, as well as among the English Puritans and their descendants (Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 131, 115-117.). Calvin also gave rise to the idea that the Pastor and teacher were the only two "ordinary" officers in Ephesians 4:11-12 that continue perpetually in the church (The Faithful Shepherd, p. 28). During the 17th century, the Puritans used the term "Pastor" in some of their published works. 17th-century Anglican and Puritan works on pastoral care referred to parish (local) clergy as "parsons" (George Herbert's The Country Parson) and "Pastors" (Richard Baxter's The Reformed Pastor).

[179] Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 116. "The German Reformers also adhered to the medieval usage and called the preacher Pfarrer, i.e. parson (derived from parochia—parish and parochus—parson). While Lutheran preachers are called "Pastors" in the United States, they are still called Pfarrer (head of the parish) in Germany. Given the gradual transition from Catholic priest to Protestant Pastor, it was not uncommon for people to still call their new Protestant preachers by the old Catholic titles like "priest."

[180] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 116.

[181] The word "Pastor" has always appeared in theological literature dating as far back as the Patristic period. The word choice was dependent on the function you wished to highlight: A Pastor guided in moral and spiritual ways. The priest officiated the sacraments. Even so, the term "Pastor" was not on the lips of the common believer until after the Reformation.

[182] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 116.

[183] Ibid. The word "priest" belongs to the Catholic/Anglican tradition, the word "minister" belongs to the Reformed tradition, and the word "Pastor" belongs to the Lutheran and evangelical tradition (p. viii). The Reformers did speak of their minister as "Pastor," but they mostly called him "preacher." The word "Pastor" later evolved to become the predominant term in Christianity for this office. This was due to the mainstreaming of these groups which sought distance from "high church" vocabulary. The term "minister" was introduced gradually into the English-speaking world by the Nonconformists and Dissenters. They wished to distinguish the Protestant "ministry" from the Anglican clergy (The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 116).

[184] Institutes, IV: 3:2, p. 1055.

[185] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 138.

[186] "For his (Calvin's) model of the ministry goes back to the church of the early second century rather than to that of the strictly apostolic age. In the apostolic age the local Christian community was under the charge not of a single pastor, but of a number of functionaries known interchangeably, as he notes, as presbyters (elders) and bishops. It was only in the second century that the single bishop or pastor of the Christian community came

into existence, as in the Epistles of Ignatius . . . It was at this stage of the development of the ministerial office in the early second-century church that Calvin took as his model” (Calvin and the Reformation, pp. 81-82).

[187] James H. Nichols writes, “The Reformers also generally accepted the second-century system of an institutionalized ministry of pastors or bishops to lead the laity in worship . . . They did not attempt to return to the age of the apostles . . .” (Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition, p. 21).

[188] Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 111.

[189] Institutes, IV:1:9, p. 1023.

[190] John H. Yoder, “The Fullness of Christ,” Concern 17, 1969, p. 71.

[191] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 131. The preeminent place of preaching is best reflected in Luther’s German Mass: Three services on Sunday. In the early morning at five or six o’clock, a sermon was given on the Epistle of the day. At the main service at eight or nine o’clock, the minister preached on the Gospel of the day. The sermon at the Vesper service in the afternoon was based on the Old Testament. The rest of the days of the week were devoted to preaching as well (p. 131). Luther was abrasive, powerful, and dramatic. He communicated his own person in his sermons without superimposing himself on the message. He was a voracious preacher, delivering an estimated 4,000 sermons (Christian History, Volume XII, No. 3, Issue 39, p. 27). His messages were awe-inspiring, poetic, and creative. Zwingli preached directly and naturally, yet he was too intellectual. Calvin was consistent in his exhaustive expounding of passages, but he was always impersonal. Bucer was long-winded and had a penchant for rambling (p. 133). Even so, early Protestant preaching was very doctrinaire, being obsessed with “correct and pure doctrine.” For this reason, Reformation preachers were primarily Bible teachers (p. 135).

[192] The Faithful Shepherd, p. 8.

[193] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 112. The Reformers substituted the word “minister” for “priest.” Iliion T. Jones, A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 141.

[194] “This notion became the common property of the Reformation” (Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 113).

[195] B.A. Gerrish, “Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther,” Church History, XXXIV (1965), pp. 404-422.

[196] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, pp. 114-115.

[197] The Theology of Martin Luther, p. 326.

[198] “Concerning the Ordering of Divine Worship in the Congregation,” Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), VI, p. 60.

[199] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 114.

[200] Luther’s Works, Vol. 29, p. 224.

[201] John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

[202] Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Gregory the Great wrote a good deal on the “cure of souls” (A History of the Cure of Souls, p. 100). In A.D. 591, Gregory wrote a treatise for Pastors called The Book of Pastoral Rule. This work is still used in seminaries today. And it owes a great deal to Gregory of Nazianzus (p. 109). Gregory the Great was more of a Pastor to the Western church than any of the other Popes.

[203] A History of the Cure of Souls, p. 108. Gregory Nazianzus articulated these things in his Second Oration penned in A.D. 362.

[204] A History of the Cure of Souls, p. 177.

[205] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 136. In 1550, an order was issued that ministers should visit each home at least once a year.

the Reformed tradition.

[206] Bucer wrote the most outstanding of all the books on the “cure of souls” entitled True Cure of Souls in 1538. This book came out in German and Latin versions (A History of the Cure of Souls, p. 177).

[207] See Rethinking the Wineskin, Chapters 5-6 and Who is Your Covering? Chapter 1.

[208] Many Reformed churches distinguish between “teaching” elders and “ruling” elders. Teaching elders occupy the traditional position of bishop or minister, while ruling elders handle administration and discipline. This form of church polity was brought to New England from Europe (David Hall, The Faithful Shepherd, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972, p. 95). Eventually, due to the unpopularity of the office, the ruling elders were dropped and the teaching elder remained. This was also true in the Baptist churches of the 18th and 19th centuries. Often these churches lacked the financial resources to support one “minister.” In this way, by the end of the 19th century, the evangelical churches adopted the “single Pastor” tradition (Mark Dever, A Display of God’s Glory, Washington D.C.: Center for Church Reform, 2001, p. 20; R.E.H. Uprichard, Irish Biblical Studies Journal, June 18, 1996, pp. 149, 154). So the single Pastor in evangelical churches evolved from a plurality of elders in the Reformed tradition.

- [209] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, p. 114. The so-called "lay-preacher" emerged out of the evangelical revivals of the 18th century (p. 206).
- [210] Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians, pp. 195-196.
- [211] John Owen, True Nature of a Gospel Church (Abridged Edition), pp. 41, 99.
- [212] Ibid., p. 55
- [213] The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the 16th and 17th Centuries, pp. 37, 49, 59, 61-69.
- [214] True Nature of a Gospel Church, p. 68; The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the 16th and 17th Centuries, pp. 56, 63, 65; Thomas Goodwin, Works, Vol. 11, p. 309.
- [215] Baptist Reformation Review: Vol. 10, No. 2, 1981, pp. 21-22.
- [216] The Faithful Shepherd, pp. 28-29.
- [217] The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the 16th and 17th Centuries, p. 51.
- [218] To put this tragedy in the form of a Biblical question, "And if they were all one member, where would the Body be?" (1 Cor. 12:19).
- [219] J.G. Davies, The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship, 1st American Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), p. 292.
- [220] In this regard (and contrary to popular opinion), the Pastor is not "the cerebellum, the center for communicating messages, coordinating functions, and conducting responses between the Head and the Body." He is not called to give "authoritative communication of the truth from the Head to the Body." And he is not the "accurate communicator of the needs from the Body to the Head." The Pastor is described with these inflated terms in the David L. McKenna's "The Ministry's Gordian Knot," Leadership, Winter, 1980, pp. 50-51.
- [221] This figure comes from the Barna Research Group (East Hillsborough Christian Voice, February 2002, p. 3). Half of these churches have fewer than 100 active members ("Flocks in Need of Shepherds", The Washington Times, July 2, 2001).
- [222] 1991 Survey of Pastors (Fuller Institute of Church Growth) quoted by London and Wiseman, Pastors at Risk, Victor Books, 1993; "Is the Pastor's Family Safe at Home?," Leadership, Fall 1992; Physician Magazine, September/October 1999, p. 22.
- [223] Compilation of surveys from Focus on the Family Pastors Gatherings.
- [224] Fuller Institute of Church Growth (Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991).
- [225] "Flocks in Need of Shepherds," The Washington Times, July 2, 2001.
- [226] Vantage Point, Denver Seminary, June 1998, p. 2.
- [227] "Pastoral Pressure," Clergy/Leaders Mail List No. 850, June 25, 1999.
- [228] East Hillsborough Christian Voice, February 2002, p. 3.
- [229] Ibid. From July 2nd to July 6th, 2001, The Christian Citizen (November 2000) reported that 1400 Pastors leave the pastorate each month. In the same vein, The Washington Times ran a series of five articles on the "clergy crisis" that is sweeping America (by Larry Witham). It stated the following: Very few of the clergy in this country are young. Only 8% are 35 or younger. Of the 70,000 students enrolled in the nation's 237 accredited theological seminaries, only a third want to lead a church as a Pastor. The pastorate draws more older candidates. Usually those who arrive after dead-end jobs or divorces. In like manner, a clergy shortage has hit most mainline Protestant churches in Canada. "While it may be personally enriching to minister to a flock, it's also daunting—for not a lot of money—to meet expectations as a theologian, counselor, public speaker, administrator and community organizer all in one" (Christian Century, October 10, 2001, p. 13).
- [230] Vantage Point, Denver Seminary, June 1998, p. 2.
- [231] Marketing for The Zondervan 2002 Pastor's Annual, a famous book distributor used this ironic promotion: "Man works from sun to sun, but a Pastor's work is never done. That's because he must wear so many different hats: preacher, teacher, counselor, administrator, worship leader, and oftentimes fixer of the furniture too! For Pastors who'd like a hand with some of these hats, we here at Christianbook.com have just the resource for you." By the same token, a web-page designed to encourage wounded and burned-out clergy flies under the name www.woundedshepherds.com. These resources are like applying bandaids over cancer. They treat the symptom and ignore the root problem: The pastoral office.
- [232] East Hillsborough Christian Voice, February 2002, p. 3.
- [233] I realize that not all Pastors play to this role. But the few who manage to resist this incredible pressure are exotically rare. They are dramatic exceptions to an all-too tragic norm.
- [234] Alarming, 23% of Protestant clergy have been fired at least once, and 41% of congregations have fired at least two Pastors (Survey done by Leadership printed in G. Lloyd Rediger's Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox, 1997).
- [235] J. Grant Swank, "Preventing Clergy Burnout," Ministry, November 1998, p. 20.

[236] Larry Yeagley, "The Lonely Pastor," *Ministry*, September 2001, p. 28; Michael L. Hill and Sharon P. Hill, *The Healing of a Warrior: A Protocol for the Prevention and Restoration of Ministers Engaging in Destructive Behavior* (Cyberbook, 2000).

[237] For a list of the "one another" exhortations, see *Who is Your Covering?*, Chapter 1.

[238] *Searching Together*, Volume 23:4, Winter 1995 discusses this issue at length.

[239] Johann Gerhard in *Church Ministry* by Eugene F.A. King (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), p. 181.

[240] From Milton's 1653 poem *On the New Forces of Conscience*.

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