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A THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY AND APPLICATION OF THE NATURE
AND SCOPE OF MINISTRY AS IT RELATES TO THE LAITY

BY

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Problem

The first six years of ministry as pastor of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church was congested with many problems. Volunteer jobs had to be filled annually by the laity. The pastor served as the leader, director, and sometimes authoritarian dictator. Appointments were often made by arm twisting and persuasion.

Most of the 15-20 percent of the members who were serving, were unhappy and frustrated because of misplacement, doing what they were appointed to do only because they were asked by the pastor or the church board. The other 80-85 percent were spectators, standing by while others did the work.

Under these circumstances, the major role of the pastor was administrative. He was responsible to make the church function as an organization and institution.

Most of the laity were serving because they were dedicated to the church and to the pastor. The call of God and the use of spiritual gifts were not factors in determining their place of service in ministry.

The Problem

This study will focus on the problem of the ineffective function of the laity in ministry. This is illustrated by lay people who are not serving the church in any capacity of ministry. The church relies

on the "faithful few" to do all the work. Lay people may be effective in a job, yet fail to accomplish the primary goal of the church. For the function of the laity to be effective, it must edify and move the congregation toward becoming the body of Christ.

This problem draws attention to that segment of the laity who fail to recognize their ministry in the body of Christ. Furthermore, consideration will be given to the laity who serve in ministry but fail to know why. The role of the clergy will be seen as an enabler of the people.

This problem brings into focus several questions: What is the church? Who belongs to the church? Can people understand ministry without understanding the nature of the church? God has called the church and the church exists to serve God's purpose in the world.

Are the clergy the only people called into ministry? Is the role of the clergy to serve as enablers of the people? Are the laity called into ministry? What is the relationship between the laity and the clergy? How do the laity serve in the body of Christ? Are all the people of God called to serve in ministry?

What are spiritual gifts and how are they used in ministry? Do all the people of God have spiritual gift(s)? How can people discover their gifts? Does the use of spiritual gifts constitute ministry? These questions form the basis for the reasoning and research of this dissertation.

Delimitations

Related to this study are many important areas of research. This study is not a research on the theology of the church. It is not an

attempt to search out every word or concept in the Bible related to the nature of the church.

This research is not a study on church government and organization. The organizational structure of the church would affect the ministry of the laity, but this particular aspect is excluded from this study.

A complete history of the laity and their relationship to the church and the clergy is not within the scope and purpose of this study. A brief historical review seems imperative for one's understanding of ministry as it is related to the laity.

This study is not a research on discovering spiritual gifts. The emphasis of this research is on the function of spiritual gifts and how they relate to ministry.

This study will focus attention on the nature of the church to the extent of showing the basic relationship between God and His people. The history of the laity will be reviewed in the context of the major historical developments in the church from the time of Christ to the present. Spiritual gifts will be defined in relationship to their function in the church and how they relate to the ministry of the laity.

The research for this study has been limited in its scope of time. Research began in the Summer of 1978 and will extend through April, 1981.

The sources of information were limited to the B. L. Fisher Library of Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, and the library of United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. Resource persons included Dr. Wayne Goodwin, Director of Doctor of Ministry Degree Program, Asbury Theological Seminary; Dr. J. T. Seamands, Faculty Advisor, Asbury Theological Seminary; the Congregational Reflection Group Committee of the

Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church and the local congregation of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church, Covington, Kentucky.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will be divided into three categories : the basic assumptions which can be identified from the onset of this study, the definition of terms for clarification in reading, and the identification of the major disciplines used in the research.

Basic Assumptions

Several basic assumptions can be identified from the onset of this study.

1. The church exists on earth and can be identified by the nature of its character and being. All the people of God belong and participate in the church.
2. The Bible is the Word of God. It contains the basis for the understanding of God, man, and their relationships to each other. It reveals the nature of the church and the function and meaning of ministry.
3. God's plan for the church is universal and can be applied to all the people of God in the world. The nature of the church and ministry are universal and applicable to all the people of God.

Definition of Terms

The clarification of some words is important for the understanding of this study. The word "clergy" simply means those members who function in an official capacity in the local congregation, usually referred to as

pastor, preacher, or minister. In a strict sense, "laity" refers to all the people of God--clergy and lay people alike. However, in most cases in this study, "laity" refers to those who are part of the body of Christ but do not serve in an ordained capacity as do the clergy. This will be understood in its particular context. The term "ministry" is not limited to the work of the minister. It describes the function and work of each particular member of the body of Christ. "Spiritual gifts" do not necessarily apply to natural ability or talent. They refer to the Spirit-endowed gifts one has for ministry in the church.

Disciplines Identified

This research is not a sociological study of people. Human behavior in the institutional church is critical and important, however, it is not within the scope of this study to focus on this particular aspect of human relationships.

This research is not a study of the emotional and behavioral characteristics of people. Although the psychological responses of people are relevant to the subject, it is not the primary focus of this study.

The major disciplines used in this research will be biblical and theological in nature and scope. It is a study of the biblical concepts concerning the nature of the church. It presents a theology of ministry subject to the biblical research.

Review of Related Literature

The related literature will be divided into three categories: the nature of the church, the laity in history and service, and spiritual

gifts.

The Nature of the Church

Old Testament. An older volume by A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, 1904, is comprehensive and important to any study of the Old Testament. A more recent work by Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. I and II, 1962, provides a detailed account of Israel's historical and prophetic traditions. J. B. Payne, in his volume, The Theology of the Older Testament, 1962, is important for the understanding of the covenant relationship. In part II, his discussion of b'rith and its New Testament counterpart diatheke is thorough and complete.

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament by Gerhard Kittel, 1950, under diatheke has an invaluable reservoir of information on the etymology of the word covenant. Also, the Dictionary of New Testament Theology, edited by Colin Brown, 1976, Volumes I and II under covenant (diatheke) and people (laos) respectively, provides significant insight into these concepts.

New Testament Word Study. J. Robert Nelson, in The Realm of Redemption, 1951, is an important volume in understanding the meaning of ekklesia, especially in the transition from the Old Testament into the New Testament. Emil Brunner, in The Misunderstanding of the Church, 1953, identifies the church as the New Testament ecclesia, the people of God, and describes the ecclesiastical development of the church throughout history. This book is important for one's understanding of the nature of the church.

Royal Priesthood by T. F. Torrance, 1955, is probably the most comprehensive work on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. It is an essential volume in understanding the New Testament Church. T. W. Manson, in his book, Ministry and Priesthood: Christ's and Ours, 1956, describes the meaning of priesthood which is significant for one's understanding of ministry. The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry by H. Richard Niebuhr, 1956, moves toward a definition of the church and the emerging new concepts of ministry.

The Priesthood of All Believers by Cyril Eastwood, 1960, is a review of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers from the Reformation to the present day. His conclusions are important for the study on the nature of the church.

P. S. Minear in Images of the Church in the New Testament, 1960, is a major work on the New Testament Church. It identifies the images of the church in the New Testament and how they relate to the people of God. The Church by Hans King, 1967, is a comprehensive work on the nature of the church. It is particularly helpful to this study in its description and use of ecclesia, the body of Christ, and the priesthood of all believers. J. K. W. Stott in One People, 1971, provides some significant insight into the nature of the church, especially as it relates to ecclesia, diakonia, and koinonia.

Laity in History

The Ministry in Historical Perspectives by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, 1956, describes the history of the ministry of the laity from the primitive church in the New Testament through the middle of the 20th century. Hendrik Kraemer in A Theology of the Laity, 1957,

discusses the place of the laity in ministry and the church. His study on the people of God is helpful to this research. Some of the most comprehensive work on the laity and ministry was published in the Bulletin of the Laity by the World Council of Churches. All those dated No. 1 (Feb. 1956) to No. 4 (Nov. 1957) provide a running store of information on the ministry of the laity and equipping them for service.

In The Rebirth of the Laity by Howard Grimes, 1962, there is meaningful historical and biblical background on the laity with some emerging patterns of ministry in the future. Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber, 1963, in their volume, The Layman in Christian History, provide the most comprehensive study on the history of the laity. It gives a detailed historical account from the time of the early church to the "rediscovery" of lay ministry in the ecumenical movement. It is an important resource for Chapter Five of this study.

There are two related doctoral dissertations which provide information on the laity. The Ministry of the Laity and the People of God by Robert C. Harder, 1951, Boston University, deals with the historical development of the laity, the priesthood of all believers, and the laity in the ecumenical movement. John Wesley's Understanding of the Laity as Demonstrated by His Use of the Lay Preacher by James I. Garlow, 1979, is a study of Wesley as a leader of the Methodist and his use of the lay preacher. His understanding of the laity is examined in relation to the nature of the church and the people of God. Both of these dissertations were helpful in writing Chapters Three and Four of this study.

Spiritual Gifts

Leslie Flynn, in his book, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, 1977, provides some practical help in defining spiritual gifts and how they may be used for today. The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts by William McRae, 1976, offers some sound advice on the meaning of spiritual gifts. The Gifts of the Spirit by Kenneth Kinghorn, 1976, lists all the gifts and shows how they may be used for ministry. These three books offer general and practical information for Chapter Five of this dissertation.

A questionnaire, Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts by Kenneth Kinghorn, 1981, is a helpful tool. It will be used in the Contextual Project. A more comprehensive questionnaire is the Houts Questionnaire by Peter Wagner of the Fuller Evangelistic Association, 1978.

Another related source of practical help is the Lay Institute to Equip by James L. Garlow, 1980. This institute is designed to help with four stages: a called people, a gifted people, a trained people, and a sent people.

Research Design

This study will use some historical research in its survey of the history of the church and lay ministry. Some experimental techniques will be used in the Contextual Project. The basic research method of study will be descriptive. It will expand and make application of already existing principles and concepts.

The exact data and information needed to test the hypothesis will come from the research of numerous books and periodicals. This research will formulate the basis on which Chapters Two through Five will be

written. It will provide the biblical and historical concepts necessary for one to understand lay ministry.

The practical application of these concepts will be applied to the local congregation of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church, Covington, Kentucky. This contextual project will involve seminars, teaching, preaching, films, questionnaires, and an evaluation by the people.

The design of the research will be as follows:

Chapter One will introduce the study. It will describe the problem, the hypothesis, delimitations, theoretical framework, related literature, and research method.

Chapter Two will be an Old Testament study of God calling His church and the covenant relationship that was established. It will emphasize the importance of the relationship God had with His people.

Chapter Three will be a New Testament study of several concepts related to the nature of the church. Included in this research will be the concepts of the church, the people of God, the body of Christ, the community of believers, the priesthood of all believers, and the meaning of ministry. These concepts will show the basic nature of the church.

Chapter Four will give a brief historical survey of lay ministry. Lay ministry will be shown along with various dates and stages of history from the early church up to present time.

The fifth chapter will introduce the concept of spiritual gifts. It will show that ministry is to be fulfilled by the identification and utilization of one's spiritual gifts.

Chapter Six will synthesize the first four chapters and show how they are related to the Contextual Project and to each other. It will

explain and evaluate the application of these concepts in the local church.

The last chapter will summarize the study. It will refocus the problem and research. The findings will be listed and evaluated. Conclusions and goals will be presented in view of their value to the church and pastor. Projections for the future will be suggested and analyzed.

Summary

This chapter has introduced and stated the problem as the ineffective function of the laity in ministry. Flowing out of this problem are several basic questions. What is the church? What is the nature of the church? Can people understand ministry without understanding the nature of the church? What is the role of the clergy in the church? What is the function of the laity? How are spiritual gifts related to ministry? How can people discover their spiritual gifts?

This chapter established the limitations of the study. It is not a research on the theology of the church. It is not a study of the organizational structure of the church. It will not provide a detailed history of the laity. It is not thorough research on discovering spiritual gifts. Its purpose is to focus attention on the nature of the church to the extent of showing the basic relationship between God and His people. A brief historical review of the laity will be given. Spiritual gifts will be defined and described in their relationship to ministry.

The theoretical framework consists of the basic assumptions, definition of terms, and the identification of disciplines used for the

study. The major disciplines used in this research will be biblical and theological in scope. The review of related literature consisted of three divisions: the nature of the church, laity in history, and spiritual gifts. The design of this research is basically descriptive. It will expand and make application of already existing principles and concepts.

The next chapter will focus on God calling His people to be the church in the Old Testament. The New International Version of the Bible is used for all Scripture references unless otherwise indicated.

Chapter Two

THE SEEDS OF THE CHURCH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

An adequate concept of ministry rests on one's understanding of the nature of the church. The covenantial relationship between God and His people in the Old Testament is an example of this biblical principle.

The Tragedy

The human race as set forth in Genesis began in a deliberate harmony. People were made to live in fellowship with a holy God. They were set in a universe which was good. They were to utilize the harmony of nature for constructive needs. They were to build a society wherein they could realize their highest freedom in obedience to God and achieve the greatest measure of self-development. But the harmony did not proceed far before discord and confusion erupted and the whole experience ended in chaos.

Man and woman rebelled against God so that the harmony of the fundamental relationship of life was lost (Gen. 3:1-10). But when they were no longer in right relationship with God, the security of other relationships was undermined. The oneness of husband and wife was soon broken. The disharmony spread until family relationships were completely broken and brother murdered brother (Gen. 4:8). The discord spread beyond the limit of the family and touched the whole of mankind. It soon became so powerful that "the Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain" (Gen. 6:6).

A fresh start with Noah, after the flood, brought renewed hope to harmony in history. But the promises vanished in early disappointment. Soon people are seen once again trying to rear a society completely independent of God with the results that their relationship to their fellowman was broken and the end was Babel, disunity, and chaos (Gen. 11:1-9).

The question was, is there hope for the problem of broken relationships. Was God ready to abandon His creation? What would be His next move to reestablish harmony with and among His people?

The Call

The next historical event was the call of Abraham recorded in Genesis, Chapter 12:

The Lord said to Abram, Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those that bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Gen. 12:1-3).

Abraham left his home and country, and this marked the beginning of a unique people. The descendants of Abraham would always look back to this event as their beginning as a people--the people of God.¹

The call of Abraham constituted the beginning of the covenant relationship between God and His people. From this point on, they identified themselves as the children of Abraham. They laid claim to the fact that their God was the same as the God of Abraham. This held the people together as a particular people through the years of

¹James H. Manson, What is the Church (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Pub. House, 1971), p. 8.

wandering as a slave people in Egypt.

It is not enough to say, "back to the reformation" or "back to the New Testament." One must go "back to Abraham" if he is to understand the church and its beginning.² This assertion is not meant to minimize the unique element which entered into the world in the new covenant through Jesus Christ. However, it is to insist that one must not miss the first acts of God's redemption---those He performed through Israel---if he is to understand the church and the ministry in the church.

Call of Moses

The next meaningful event in the life of the church was the Israelites deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Moses was also called by God through the unique experience of the burning bush (Ex. 3).

Moses regrouped the Israelites scattered throughout Egypt. In the name of Yahweh, men, women, and children left Egypt. They went forward into the desert grumbling and rebelling, yet all marching toward the same goal of the promised land.

The regrouping of these Semite tribes was consecrated by the event of Sinai which gave it a transcendent and definitive sense (Ex. 19). The meaning of this event was too much for these poor people, and that is understandable, for something tremendous had happened. God had chosen, as His own special people, this collection of intractable nomads and had linked them positively to Himself as though He had genuine need of

²Robert N. Brown, The Significance of the Church (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 34.

them.³ He revealed this in His own words which must have been above the heads of the mass of the people: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5, 6).

Of course, the Old Testament includes much more of the story of the early days in the life of the people of God. However, one must make note of the particular significance of the covenant relationship between God and His chosen people.

The Covenant

"I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you" (Lev. 26:11). These words exemplify the covenant--the fact that controls the religion of Israel and finds its full development in the church of Jesus Christ.

Israel's faith was a covenant faith. But what is a covenant? The covenant was experienced as a fact before it was expressed as a formula. In ancient times, many covenants were made between man and man or clan and clan. The ultimate goal of the covenant was to establish peace and friendship. The will to peace was expressed in a solemn act which bound the contracting parties to mutual friendship. The promises might be sealed by oath, handshake, or sometimes a sacrifice was offered. It was often agreed that a memorial be erected as a testimony and pledge of the covenant, as was the case with Abraham who planted a tree as a sign of his agreement with Abimelech (Gen. 21:33). Also, Jacob

³ Andre De Bovis, What is the Church (New York: Hawthorn Pub., 1961), p. 22.

made a pile of stone to signify his agreement (Gen. 31:48-52)

J. Guhrt, in the Dictionary of New Testament Theology, suggests that there was a common pattern in the making of a covenant. He points out six vital elements in such a ceremony: (1) the preamble mentions the names of the partners; (2) a preliminary history of the relationship of those entering the covenant; (3) a basic declaration about the future relationship of the partners; (4) details of the new relationship; (5) an invocation of the respective gods worshipped by both sides to act as witnesses; and (6) a pronouncement of curses and blessings.⁴

The use of the covenant has occupied a unique place in the religious thought of the Hebrew people and their descendants. The Hebrew berith (covenant) occurs 285 times in the Old Testament. The translation of this word in both the Septuagint and New Testament is usually (διαθήκη) diatheke.

The covenant with the Hebrew people could only have been initiated by God. He chose this people and enlisted them in His service in a special manner. The word covenant does not proclaim that all people belong to God. On the contrary, it means that God has turned toward this section of mankind and has attached them to Himself. As Strathmann suggests, it means a direct entry into possession so that this race became "Yahweh's people," His property in this world. From the time of their inception, the Hebrew people were called the "people of God." There was no longer any need to talk explicitly of them belonging to God. The word people was sufficient to indicate the people of God. It was this characteristic

⁴J. Guhrt, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, I, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), p. 366.

that distinguished Israel from all the others who were only nations.⁵ It is important to note that it was all of Israel that was called to be God's people. "And you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).

People of God

The concept of the people of God is at the heart of Judaism. The whole faith of Judaism can be summed up in one phrase: Yahweh is the God of Israel and Israel is the people of Yahweh.

This is the meaning of God's call to Abraham and the subsequent promise. This is the meaning of the mission of Moses when God said, "I am your Lord and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them and will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment" (Ex. 6:6). This is the meaning of God's revelation on Sinai: "If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19: 5, 6).

This is the meaning of the covenant words in Leviticus 26:9, 11, 12:

I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

The corresponding Greek word in the Septuagint and the New Testament for the Hebrew word people (am) is laos. While the other Hebrew

⁵H. Strathmann, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IV, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1967), pp. 32, 35.

word for people (goy) is generally used for the Gentile people, laos is regularly used for Israel.

The word laos means people, not in the sense of population or mass but in the sense of nation and community. With few exceptions, it is deliberately restricted to describing the people of Israel. It characterized the special dignity of Israel by using a special word (laos Theo) to indicate that they were the people of God. The phrase "people of God" is used over and over again (laos Theo) and the old fashioned and solemn word laos has had the same overtones even if the genitive Theo is not added.⁶

As Bietenhard put it in his edition of The Dictionary of the New Testament,

To the translators of the Septuagint the term laos, derived from the language of high style and ceremony, and infrequently used in the Greek of their time, seemed ideally suited for expressing the special relationship of Israel to Yahweh. Laos serves in the overwhelming majority of cases in a translation of the Hebraic am and means Israel as the chosen people of God, just as, on the other hand, the Hebraic goy is used particularly for the Gentiles ethne.⁷

The idea of the people of God runs through the whole of the Old Testament. The Lord of the earth--the Lord of all nations--is the God of Israel. Conversely, Israel is the "people of Yahweh," "his people," "his possession," and "his own." Israel is the "vine," the "flock," and the "bride of Yahweh." God and His people belong together, linked by that covenant which God in His free mercy made with this small band of people.

⁶Hans Kung, The Church (New York: Shedd and Ward, 1967), p. 116.

⁷H. Bietenhard, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, II, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1971), p. 796.

The union between God and His people did not depend on national necessity but rather on the free historical activity of God in the life of His people. God acted in the very dawn of history by choosing the forefathers of the nation and giving them His promises. He acted by freeing the tribes from Egyptian slavery and by establishing the covenant and giving the law at Sinai.

It was this community of Israel, this assembly of people which looked upon itself as sanctified by God and consecrated to a service which engaged the whole life of every member. All were obliged to serve Yahweh.

The major significance of this Old Testament study is in the covenant relationship. Here is God's original pattern for the church.

1. The covenant involved the relationship of a personal God with a chosen nation. It was not the discovery on the part of the Jews of certain laws and religious ideas but rather the free act of a people entering into a binding agreement which became the decisive factor in the whole course of their history.

2. The covenant relation was first established by God then received by man. It was not an agreement between equals. God chose them before they chose Him to be their God. They could accept but could not determine the condition of the covenant.

3. The covenant was grounded in God's mercy. It was not established on the worthiness or achievement of men or women. The Israelites could never claim the covenant because of their number, power, or goodness. Rather, they were the unworthy objects of God's love. God did not need to be appeased. He did not demand gifts nor did He wait for

them to achieve something of worth. It was simply God's gracious act of redemption. Love had stepped into history, broken the bands of Egyptian cruelty, and made a people out of those who were no people.

4. The covenant demanded a response from the people. If God in His mercy brought them out of Egyptian bondage, then this laid upon the people whom He had chosen the responsibility to respond to Him. Their response was, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey" (Ex. 24:7).

5. The covenant carried with it responsibility. Obedience to the covenant meant to carry out in life the will of the one who is obeyed. It meant a community based on God's will. The whole nation was so much of a unity that each individual dwelt in the whole, and the whole dwelt in the individual. When one man sinned, the whole nation sinned. The unity of the nation was such that the whole group could be designated by an individual name--Israel.

6. The covenant demanded service to those outside the covenant community. God showed Israel His love so that they in turn could make His love known to all men. Abraham was called so that in him "all peoples on earth, will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3).

7. Worship was a significant element in the covenant relationship. How could Israel reinforce the experience born out of the Exodus? The solution to this problem lay largely in Israel's worship. In fact, worship brought to focus every element of the covenant. God said, "have them to make a sanctuary for me, for I will dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8). Their worship reminded them of God's initiative in redeeming them. It quickened their response to God and enforced their responsibility to Him.

Their communal life and character was strengthened in worship. Their worship focused their attention on the covenant demand for service.⁸

Herein lies the roots of the church. But why did God not complete what He set out to do? Why the apparent failure of the covenant? The answer is in Israel's failure to keep the promise.

Defection from the covenant followed closely upon the heels of the Exodus. Disloyalty grew even worse after they had settled in the promised land. Under the courageous leadership of some of the judges and later such prophets as Elijah and Elisha, the nation was called back to God, but recovery was only temporary. It finally became clear to the prophets that God could never achieve what He had set out to do with the nation of Israel. What then?

At first it was felt that God's purpose would be achieved through a remnant--a small nucleus of faithful ones within the nation. Judgment would fall but the remnant would be spared to carry on Israel's mission.

However, it finally became clear that not even the remnant could live in full obedience of the covenant. Therefore, if the purpose of the covenant was to ever be fulfilled, something new would have to take place.

The Prophet Jeremiah saw this most clearly in his revelation,

The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt (Jer. 31:31, 32).

In the new covenant, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on

⁸Howard Grimes. The Rebirth of the Laity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 22.

their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people" (Jer. 31:33). What the old covenant had failed to do the new covenant would accomplish.

Synagogue

Another important Old Testament development was the establishing of the synagogue. The synagogue originated during the Babylonian Captivity as an institution for public worship and instruction.⁹ At that time, the more devout Jews, far away from home, were drawn together in order to listen to the Word of God and engage in worship.

The character of the synagogue, often called "The Child of the Dispersion," represented from its beginning a radical departure from that of earlier places of worship. It was not restricted to any geographic location; it had no sacrifice or sacramental ritual; it did not require the intermediary of a special priesthood. Any group of Jews, regardless of place, may establish a synagogue and share the responsibility for the conduct of its affairs.¹⁰

After the exile, the synagogue remained and even developed as a counterpoise to the absolute sacerdotalism of the temple.¹¹

The development and place of the synagogue had an inevitable impression on the early church in the New Testament. In the Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, the author suggests four areas in which the synagogue worship effected the early

⁹Eugene Mihaly. Encyclopedia Britannica (1965), XII, 704.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 705.

¹¹Paul Levertoff, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1965), V, 2878.

church.

1. "From the synagogue came the use of fixed forms of prayer." For the early church, this was a true pattern of devotion. There was nothing inconsistent with worship in the recurrence of a fixed order.

2. The didactic element in the Christian worship was derived from the synagogue worship. The reading of the law, the prophets, the exposition, and sermon were all a part of Christian worship influenced by the synagogue.

3. The conformity "extended to the time of prayer." The third, sixth, and ninth hours were used in synagogue worship before the time of the New Testament Church.

4. There were other less conspicuous practices such as standing for prayer and the responsive amen of the congregation to the prayer.¹²

The synagogue was an Old Testament lay movement and was the most influential development on the nature of worship in the New Testament Church.

Summary

This chapter has focused attention on the covenant God made with His people. It began with the call of Abraham and the promises given to him and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3). Later on, Moses was called to lead the people out of bondage. In each instance the covenant establishes the relationship between God and His people. God chose them and they became the people of God (Lev. 26:9, 11, 12).

¹²John M'Clintock and James Strong, The Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (1889), X, 80, 81.

The synagogue was started and developed to meet the need of worship. It became a continuing influence on their life style and had significant influence on the New Testament Church.

However, the primary importance of this chapter is to reveal the covenant relationship God had with His people and to point to a new covenant God will make with His people as seen by the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31, 32).

The next chapter will focus on the nature of the New Testament Church.

Chapter Three

CHRIST CREATES THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Jewish people failed again and again. The prophets spoke in an attempt to convert them, but only a small number of men would assimilate their truth--only the remnant.

If the covenant was renewed and carried forward, it would demand a new act of grace from God. We might interpret what happened in this way. Jesus Christ was the one who fulfilled the old covenant demands. In fulfilling the old covenant, He established a new one. It became faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ who reestablished a new relationship with God. At the moment of His death, He was the one faithful reminder of the Old Testament people of God. And through His resurrection, the people of God were resurrected. It was now possible for Israel to begin a new growth from the stem of Jesse, the Son of David. Now would begin the faithful Israel whom God had loved from all eternity. This Israel became the holy assembly, the New Testament people of God. From now on, the new covenant stands open to all who will receive it. The finished work of Christ provides the basis for all new covenant blessings.

And so,

the New Israel is formed from the humble poor, from the sick and the outcast, from fishermen and tax collectors who listen and follow. God works his new miracle through Jesus Christ, the suffering servant, who ends the old age and inaugurates the new, putting an end to the sacrificial system of Judaism, drawing man to God by the power of suffering love.¹

The sense of divine mission that so characterized Israel was accepted by the early Christians by virtue of the new revelation which had occurred in Jesus Christ.

This new community of believers would bear the title, "the elect" (ἐκκληστοί), "the saints" (ἄγιοι). They formed a community which can, with justice, take over the great title of the Old Testament, "Kahal Yahweh," the "community of God." The corresponding Greek word which became established as the name of the community was "Ekklesia of God" (ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ) today simply called the "church."²

The New Community

The Greek word ekklesia means those who are summoned or called out and refers to a convened assembly, a meeting of the people. "It was originally a secular word in Greek, used in the Septuagint as an equivalent for the Hebrew Qahal, and taken over by many of the New Testament writers as a way of describing the assembling of Christians."³ Perhaps the most important thing for the New Testament ekklesia is not Greek etymology but the use of the word in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

In the translation of the Septuagint, "ekklesia is only used where it is a question of the people as God's assembly characterized by having

¹Howard Grimes, The Rebirth of the Laity (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 26.

²Hans Küng, The Church (New York: Shedd and Ward, 1967), p. 81.

³Grimes, p. 28.

answered Yahweh's call". . . . In other passages regulating the life of the community. "Qahal is translated by synagogue."⁴

Although the use of ekklesia in the Septuagint, based upon the meaning of qahal, does not reveal any of the technical sense or the full meaning of the New Testament ekklesia, its use for a worshipping assembly makes it the most suitable biblical word for the early meeting of the New Testament believers. This is the primary meaning of the word in the New Testament. Synagogue meant essentially the same thing to the Jewish people and was used for an early Christian meeting, but its distinct Jewish reference, along with the fact that synagogue came to have particular reference as the place of meeting, hindered its general acceptance by the Christian community.⁵

The New Testament reveals a development of the true ekklesia from the simple non-technical meaning of assembly to the full-blown designation for the Christian people of God. However, this did not happen immediately. For instance, in Acts 19, the secular meaning is used twice pertaining to an unruly mob (vv. 32, 41). Shortly, however, ekklesia developed into its full technical sense. It became so completely identified with the Christian assembly that it could be spoken of without identification or reference to any other group or assembly. The majority of the New Testament references have this meaning.

Ekklesia occurs 114 times in the New Testament. Five of these have no reference to the church. Ekklesia does not occur in the gospels

⁴L. Coenen, Dictionary of the New Testament, I, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1975), p. 296.

⁵Robert L. Saucy, The Church in God's Program (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), pp. 14, 15.

except for two references in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17. It is also absent from II Timothy, Titus, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, and Jude. However, ekklesia predominantly applies to an assembly of those who profess faith and allegiance to Christ.⁶

Hans Küng in his book, The Church, draws some conclusions concerning the New Testament usage of the word ekklesia.

1. Ekklesia means both the actual process of congregating and the congregated community itself. In other words, it is not something that is formed once and for all. It becomes an ekklesia by the fact of a repeated event, coming together, congregating for the purpose of worshipping God.

2. Each ekklesia (individual church or congregation) is not the ekklesia (the whole church) but none the less fully represents it. The ekklesia is not made by adding together the local churches nor can it be broken down into them. Rather, the ekklesia of God exist in each place. There is not a Corinthian ekklesia, but the ekklesia of God which is at Corinth. Each ekklesia, however small, poor, or insignificant is a full and perfect manifestation of the ekklesia of God.

3. Ekklesia is a meeting together of people who in faith acknowledge their fellowship.⁷ It is the fellowship of believers, the foundation and creation of God who calls.⁸

⁶Robert Young, Young's Concordance of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: E. Erdman's Pub., (n.d.).

⁷Küng, pp. 84-87.

⁸William Barclay, A New Testament Wordbook (London: SCM Press, 1955), p. 35.

In essence, therefore, the church, the ekklesia, is a body of people, not so much assembling because they have chosen to come together but assembling because God has called them to Himself; not so much assembling to share their own thoughts and opinions but assembling to listen to the voice of God.

To confine the consideration of the church to this one word is to miss the richness of the New Testament writers' understanding of the Christian community. To understand the New Testament Church, one must try to leave the twentieth century and the tendency to identify the church with a building, an organization, a denomination, or the ordained ministry. One must think of it rather as a people called of God through Christ. To describe its manifold meaning, the New Testament writers employed numerous expressions.

Miner estimates the number of New Testament images referring to the church conservatively at more than 80 and adds that the number could easily be increased to 100 if the different Greek words were counted separately.⁹ However, a study of the New Testament Church in this context demands a great deal of selectivity. In keeping with the major objective of this study, five of the more meaningful concepts are discussed.

The New People of God

The concept of the people of God is at the heart of Judaism, and it is not at all surprising that the Old Testament conception of the

⁹P. S. Miner, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 28.

people of God should be applied to the New Testament Church which had gathered together in a common faith in Jesus as their Messiah.

This is perhaps one of the most illuminating concepts used in the New Testament. Minear points out, "to apply this analogy to the Christian Community was to assert an enduring solidarity with that Israel of whose story the Law and the prophets provided the authoritative account."¹⁰

In the New Testament the word laos (λαός) is used to describe people in the sense of nation or crowd, but more importantly to describe the people of God, to describe Israel as opposed to the heathen, the ethne (ἔθνη).

Laos (λαός) carries with it the idea that Israel has been chosen as "his people," "God's people." And more significantly, laos is used to describe the fellowship of the disciples and the community of Jesus Christ. In addition to Israel, another people of God is envisaged, a people of God composed of Jew and Gentile. It is to the entire church that the words are spoken: "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Lev. 26:11).

A number of the New Testament Scriptures contain the word laos, e.g.: Luke 1:17 where the author quotes from Malachi 4:5, 6, "And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Again, in Romans 9:26, Paul quotes the Prophet Hosea,

I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my beloved one' who is not my loved one, and it will happen that

¹⁰Minear, p. 70.

in the very place where it was said to them, 'you are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'

Titus 2:14 says, when speaking of the work of Christ, "Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."

The writer of Hebrews says,

The time is coming declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people (Heb. 8:8-10).

Perhaps this metaphor stands out in its most unmistakable clarity in I Peter 2:4, 5, 9, 10:

As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

To a greater degree, and even more importantly than the word laos (λαός), is the reality of the people of God in the New Testament. The meaning of ekklesia was discussed earlier in this study but in this context there is new insight and meaning.

As Brunner suggests in his book, The Misunderstanding of the Church, "The ekklesia of Jesus Christ is God's people, the elect people--that was the rightful description of Israel."¹¹ It would seem, according

¹¹Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 19.

to the purpose of God, that the ekklesia was to be identified with the elect people of the Old Testament, identified with, yet different in at least three ways.

1. The ceremonial and cultic law of Israel and Judaism is no longer valid for the ekklesia. The sacrifice of Christ supercedes the temple cultus and, therefore, the sacrifice has been offered once and for all. With this recognition, the idea of a distinction between priesthood and laity has forever ceased to be tenable.

2. There is a clear discrimination between membership of a nation or race and membership of a community of believers. The wall of partition has been broken down. The Gentiles who are in Christ are as fully citizens of the new people as are the Jews.

3. The civil laws of the Old Testament prescribed for Israel as a national political entity are no longer relevant. Ekklesia renounces every kind of theocratic pretension. Theocracy is given up, just as much as the temple priesthood, the sabbath, and circumcision.¹²

These three facts seem to indicate the basic difference between the new dispensation and the old. But the differences cannot be fully grasped by these facts alone. It also consists above all,

in the new dimension of life in the Holy Spirit and the new aeon, which Jesus Christ has not merely announced, but also inaugurated. Therefore, there now ensues the plain and unambiguous outward secession from Judaism to which there corresponds inwardly the self-description of the Ecclesia as the true Israel.¹³

¹²Brunner, pp. 21, 22.

¹³Ibid., p. 22.

The church of the New Testament is the new people of God; it is the true Israel, the seed of Abraham, and the true temple of God. What does this mean to the church today when it sees itself as the people of God? In his book, The Church, Hans Küng says,

1. "All the faithful belong to the people of God; there must be no clericalization of the church."¹⁴ It is interesting to note that the word laos (λαός), with the meaning "people of God," is so often used for the Christian community, whereas the word laikos (λαϊκός). "layman" (plural), simply does not occur in the New Testament. It would have been impossible to use it "ecclesiologically," since in the New Testament no reference is made to a group, but only to the whole company of "the elect," all having one Lord and one Master alone. There is no distinction within the community as between priest (clergy) and people (laity). Of course there are within the people of God differences of function which shall be discussed later, but these are never characterized by the word laos (λαός).

2. "Everyone belongs to the people of God through God's call; there must be no attempt to make the church permanent and exclusive."¹⁵ The church is dependent on the free choice and call of God who wills the salvation of all men. If the church really is the people of God, it is impossible to see the organism of the church in individuals. True, the church is made up of individuals, but the church can only be seen in terms of the individuals, in as far as the individual is a member of the

¹⁴Hans Küng, The Church (New York: Shedd and Ward, 1967), p. 125.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 126.

church from God's point of view. The church is more than the sum of the individuals which compose it and more than the product of an urge toward religious fellowship.

3. "We all belong to the people of God through our human decision; there must be no hypostatization of the church."¹⁶ It is clear that the church can never be a super entity posed above real human beings and thus real decisions. The church is decreed by God, but there can be no church without men. The faith and obedience of men is necessary to the people of God. The church is anything but a flock of sheep with no will of their own. Without the people and outside the people, there can be no church.

4. "The people of God is an historical people; there must be no idealization of the church."¹⁷ The church is not a static, undisturbed phenomenon which exists in time and history. It is always journeying through the midst of time toward the final perfection. It is a church in transition and, therefore, not a church of fear but of expectation and hope. It is impossible to set it apart from everything earthly. It is not to become a distinct ideal surrounded by a false halo. Rather, the church journeys through the darkness of failure and wrong, constantly in need of God's grace and mercy. The way of the people of God is not easy, but its struggle and its tribulation, its persistence and its trust can be seen in the context of God's promise of certain victory.

¹⁶ Küng, p. 129.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

Body of Christ

A second image which contributes to the understanding of the church is that of the body. used exclusively by the Apostle Paul. He utilizes the picture of the body of Christ (soma christou) to express the essential nature and character of the Christian church.

In I Corinthians 12:12-30, his exposition takes up the Greek thought of the organism basing the necessity of the different functions of the members upon the unity of the body. The body constitutes the unity, and in this sense, it can be described as the body of Christ. It is based on Christ Himself.¹⁸

This provokes the question concerning the relationship between Christ and the church. According to Hans Küng, in his book, The Church, there are at least three significant principles to understand here.

1. "Christ is present in the church."¹⁹ Christ is present as the risen Lord. The church does not exist without Christ. It derives its life from the work of Christ in the past, the presence of Christ in the present, and the future consummation of His coming. Every congregation in worship is in the fullest sense Christ's body. Each community is truly God's ecclesia because Christ is present in each.

2. "Christ is not wholly contained in the church."²⁰ There is unity between Christ and the church, but the relationship can never be interpreted to make the church the head of the body. Christ gives

¹⁸J. A. Motyer, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, I, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1975), p. 237.

¹⁹Küng, p. 234.

²⁰Ibid., p. 236.

Himself to the church, but He is never wholly contained in it. He is the head and remains the head which controls the body. Of course, the head and the body cannot be divided, yet, they must be identified. Their distinctions can never be overcome by the intimacy of their relationship.

3. "The church develops in obedience to Christ."²¹ It is an important aspect to note that the body of Christ grows. Christ as the head of the body is the beginning of growth, and the body grows toward its head. "We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ" (Eph. 4:14). In fact, Christ becomes the goal of our growth, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Given the fact that Christ is the head of the church and the origin and goal of its growth, growth is only possible through obedience to the head. A disobedient church cannot grow. The only valid movements in the church are those set in motion by obedience to Christ as the Head.

With this relationship of Christ to the church in focus, what does it mean to speak of the body of Christ?

First of all, the body is composed of all those who are united to Christ through the baptism of the Spirit. Paul says, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (I Cor. 12:13).

The act of incorporation through baptism does not mean that the body of Christ is the issue of a community that constitutes itself and grows by a right of initiation. Rather, the description of the

²¹King, p. 238.

church as the body of Christ means that Christ constitutes the existence of the individual as a member of his body.²²

Second, there is the fact of unity. "The body is a unity, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they are one body" (I Cor. 12:12). Paul emphasizes unity particularly in his discussion on spiritual gifts. He declares there must be no schism in the body caused by disorderly display of gifts (I Cor. 14:33). A similar exhortation is given when he states that the purpose of gifted members is "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:12). A further application concerning the unity of the church is made in relation to the Lord's Supper. "Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (I Cor. 10:17).

The third truth derived from the analogy of the body is diversity. Just as all the members of the body are a unity, it is equally significant to note that the body is composed of diverse members. The physical body is not composed of one member, but many. All the members are different and vary in function.

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, everyone of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be" As it is, there are many parts, but one body (I Cor. 12:14, 18-20).

There is a similar variation in the members of the body of Christ, and yet, all are necessary to the body. The diversity calls for faithful identification, acceptance, and use of one's own gifts to the operation of

²²Motyer, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, p. 237.

the body along with the recognition of the absolute necessity of the contribution of the other members.

The fourth truth that one must not overlook is mutuality in the body. As the operation of the human body demands cooperation and is dependent of its members one upon another, so the body of Christ demands mutuality. The members are not only related to Christ but they are related to each other. "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom. 12:5). This means the necessity of dependence upon one another and the corporate functioning of the body.²³ As the body of Christ, there must be mutual concern and love for each member. As one member of the human body cannot help but be affected by the conduct of another, so the members of the body of Christ are to share with each other their suffering and rejoicing. There are no separated individuals in the church. All are mutually accepted by God and, therefore, must be mutually accepted by each other.

Community of Believers

Another concept which deserves consideration develops from the word koinonia (κοινωνία). The primary purpose of the biblical church metaphors is to illustrate the relationship of all God's people to Himself and to each other. It is this word koinonia which gives a description of the latter.

At the heart of koinonia is the basic word "koinos (κοινός)"--common; koinoneo (κοινωνώ)--share or participate in; and koinonia

²³Robert L. Saucy, The Church in God's Program (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), pp. 26, 27.

(κοινωνία)--communion, fellowship, association."²⁴ Near the heart of the meaning of the church is this concept of koinonia. Brunner suggests that "the togetherness of the Christian man is thus not secondary or contingent; it is integral to their life just as is their abiding in Christ."²⁵ And in summary he says, "yet just here lies the essence of the New Testament Ecclesia--the oneness of communion with Christ by faith and brotherhood in love."²⁶

Howard Grimes in The Church Redemptive, suggests several mistakes often made concerning the nature of koinonia.

First, there is the impression that fellowship can be produced as one builds a table. Devices and tricks of the trade are often employed to bring about fellowship. To be sure there are means to encourage fellowship, yet there can be no real assurance that they can lead to real fellowship which is the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The second mistake is to think that fellowship is a distinct and separate phase of the work of the church. To appoint a committee who is responsible for fellowship is functional, but to think of this group as being wholly responsible in making the church into a fellowship is a mistake.

A third common error is to think that the church is on a human level only or to think that fellowship of the Spirit is an individual

²⁴J. Schattenmann, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, I, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1975), p. 639.

²⁵Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 12.

²⁶Brunner, p. 118.

fellowship, while fellowship with one another is social.

A fourth error is to think that religious exercise will be true fellowship. Religious activity does not produce fellowship in the Spirit.²⁷

"In the New Testament Koinonia is absent from the synoptics and John. But occurs 13 times in Paul and is a typical Pauline term."²⁸

In Paul, koinonia and the associated words have a central significance. For him koinonia refers strictly to the relation of faith to Christ. "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" (I Cor. 1:9). Again in II Corinthians 13:14 he speaks about the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Also, in Galatians 2:9 where Paul and Barnabas are greeted by Peter, James, and John. It was not just a handshake over a deal but mutual recognition of being in Christ. "James, Peter, and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me."

Paul speaks of the same principle in I Corinthians 10:16 where he says, "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ?" Here Paul means participation in the body and blood of Christ and, therefore, union with Christ. This fellowship with Christ comes about through the creative intervention of God. It happens through the transformation of man to the very roots of

²⁷Howard Grimes, The Church Redemptive (Nashville, TN: Abindgon Press, 1958), pp. 48, 49.

²⁸J. Schattenmann, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, I, p. 641.

his being. This new existence is not a divinization in the sense of mysticism and the mystery religions, but incorporation into Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and glory.²⁹

Most scholars agree that the fundamental idea which koinonia conveys is that of "participation in something which others participate." This definition is sharply distinguished from the generally held, but inaccurate notion, that the word means simply "fellowship" in the sense of association with other persons.³⁰

The inescapable conclusion is that the New Testament concept of koinonia implies more than mere human association. It involves participation in something which is held in common, that common reality being the Spirit that was in Christ and that is still here through the Holy Spirit. No view of church fellowship which conceives of it as common association alone is true to the New Testament view.

John R. W. Stott says that real New Testament koinonia will take the following form.

First, "it is what we share together, our common Christian inheritance."³¹ It is a common faith and, therefore, a common salvation, being joint partakers of grace. Faith, salvation, and grace are the common denominators among Christians. It is this that makes the church one. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8, 9). This is the fundamental

²⁹J. Schattenmann, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, I, p. 643.

³⁰Robert J. Nelson, The Realm of Redemption (Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1954), p. 53.

³¹John R. W. Stott, One People (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971), p. 75.

meaning of koinonia--the common participation in grace now and in glory hereafter.

In the second place, fellowship is more than what the church shares together. It also involves "what we share out together."³² Paul refers to his co-labourers Titus and Philemon as his koinonia. "As for Titus, he is my partner (koinonos) and fellow worker" (II Cor. 8:23). In this instance the emphasis is not on what they possess but on what they share or do together--their common service to the world and the church.

In the third place, koinonia "concerns what the church shares with one another."³³ Luke said on the Day of Pentecost, "All the believers were together and had everything in common" (Acts 2:44). He meant that they shared with each other what they all possessed.

For Paul, koinonia meant a strong mutual responsibility and interdependence between Christians. All the members of the body should have the same care for one another. "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (I Cor. 12:26). This togetherness is an essential part of what the New Testament means by fellowship.

In summary, koinonia speaks of our common inheritance (what we share in together), of our co-operative service (what we share out together), and of our reciprocal responsibilities (what we share with one another). In the first we are receiving together, in the second we are giving together, while in the third there is a mutual give and take.³⁴

³²Stott, p. 77.

³³Ibid., p. 80

³⁴Ibid., p. 81.

One cannot build koinonia; it is in the final analysis God's gift. It is God's gift to those who possess His salvation by faith. As they respond to God's gift, it becomes the means whereby they share out together in service to the world and reciprocate love and responsibility to other members of the body.

Priesthood of All Believers

Another New Testament concept which is vitally important to one's understanding of the church and ministry is the priesthood of all believers. Obviously, there are at least three phases of this concept which must be surveyed: (1) the nature of the Old Testament priesthood, (2) the priesthood of Christ, and (3) the New Testament priesthood of all believers.

Old Testament Priesthood

In the Old Testament the word for priest "קֹהֵן" or "קֹהֵן," translated kohen and kaken,³⁵ respectively, means "seer or soothsayer."³⁶

Originally the main task of the priest was not sacrificial service, but oracular divination (cf. Judg. 17:5; 18:5; I Sam. 14:36-42) and instruction in the Torah (Deut. 27:9f; 31:4ff).³⁷ Primarily, priest denotes a truthsayer or one who has to do with the Word of God. This is apparent with regard to the Levitical priesthood which was

³⁵Robert Young, Young's Analytical Concordance (Grand Rapids, MI: E. Erdman's Pub., (n.d.).

³⁶J. Bachr, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1975), p. 33.

³⁷Ibid.

concerned with the Holy Place of God's Word, the debir (דְּבַר) as it was called. All that the priest does, all liturgical action, answers to the Word given to the priest who hear that Word and mediate it to men, and only in relation to that primary function does he have the other functions of oblation and sacrifice.³⁸

The priesthood is understood as functioning only within the covenant and the Word of God which that covenant brought to Israel. It was within this covenant relationship that all priestly actions were carried out.

The liturgy of worship was regarded by the Old Testament as an ordinance of grace initiated by God Himself and appointed by Him. It was an undertaking on the part of mankind. It was God Himself who provided the sacrifice, and the whole action is described, therefore, in the form of a divinely appointed response to God's Word (Ex. 25:22, "I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites," and Numbers 7:89, "When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him and he spoke with him.")

The sacrifice and oblations were not regarded as having any efficacy in themselves but as having efficacy only in so far as they were liturgical obedience to the divine ordinance. They were designed to point beyond themselves to God's will to be gracious and to pardon. They were essentially witnesses and were performed within the Tabernacle of Witness or the Dwelling Place of Testimony. All priestly action within

³⁸T. F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood (Edinburgh, London: Oliver and Boyd, 1955), p. 1.

the place of meeting was by way of acknowledgment and witness to God's testimony of Himself in the covenant.³⁹

To be sure, the office of the priest in the Old Testament was of supreme importance. It was in virtue of the priestly office that the chosen people were brought into their close relations with God. It was the ministration of the office that the people were instructed in the doctrines of sin and its expiation in forgiveness and worship. It was the indispensable service of religious knowledge for the people and the channel through which religious life was communicated.

William Moorehead, in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, draws these conclusions about the Old Testament priesthood:

First, Old Testament "priesthood implies choice."⁴⁰ Not only was the office of divine institution, but the priest himself was divinely appointed. "No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called of God, just as Aaron was" (Heb. 5:4). He was not elected by the people, neither was he self-appointed. He received his commission and authority from God.

Second, Old Testament priesthood "implies the principle of representation."⁴¹ The institution of the office was God's provision for a people at a distance from Him. The priest was the mediator who ministered for the guilty. He represented the whole people. His official action was accepted as their action. "For every priest is

³⁹Torrance, pp. 2, 3.

⁴⁰William C. Moorehead, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, (1939), IV, p. 2439.

⁴¹Ibid.

selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1).

In the third place, the Old Testament priesthood "implies offering sacrifice."⁴² One of the chief duties of the priest was to offer sacrifice for the atonement of the sins of the people. This atonement was affected by means of blood-shedding. The priest carried the blood of the sin offering into the Holy Place and sprinkled it on the mercy seat that it may be a sign of propitiation in the sight of Jehovah.

Finally, Old Testament priesthood "implies intercession."⁴³ Intercession is grounded in the concept of atonement. The sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat served to cover the guilt from the face of God, and at the same time it was an appeal for pardon and acceptance. After the sprinkling of the blood, the priest came forth from the sanctuary and blessed the people.

The Priesthood of Christ

Priesthood appears to have existed from the earliest times. In patriarchal times the office was held and its duties discharged by those who had some sort of headship by the father or chief of the tribe. Noah, in his capacity of priest, built an altar and offered burnt offering (Gen. 8:20). Abraham offered the ram instead of his son (Gen. 22:13). Issac built an altar (Gen. 26:25) as did Jacob (Gen. 33:20).

A regular priestly succession in a single family was established by Moses (Ex. 28:1-3). From this time onward, the priesthood in Israel

⁴²Moorehead, p. 2440.

⁴³Ibid.

was confined to the family of Aaron. However, in certain situations others beside the priest offered sacrifices to the Lord. Gideon offered sacrifices in time of great crisis (Judg. 6:24-26). The Prophet Samuel offered sacrifice (I Sam. 7:9). King David offered sacrifice (II Sam. 6:3-17), and Elijah offered sacrifice (I Kings 18:23, 32-38).

When the temple was built and dedicated, priestly action was confined to Jerusalem and to the regular priestly household. As pharisaism rose with its rigid legalism, all liberty of worship and service largely disappeared. The religious life of Israel stiffened into a dreadful monotony. The Torah became more and more the concern of the Scribes as specialists who took over the custody, study, and application of the law. The priest acquired and retained executive and juridical powers.⁴⁴

For whatever priesthood may have meant in the early days, in the New Testament and at the coming of Christ, it was "chiefly associated with the offering of sacrifice to God."⁴⁵ It was into this situation that Jesus Christ was born. At last "the Word became flesh and lived for a while among us . . . full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). When the Word of God was made flesh, two important aspects of priesthood were fulfilled. "Jesus Christ comprised in Himself both God's coming action toward man, and man's perfect obedience toward God."⁴⁶ He was in Himself the "complete form of the divine action," the Word made flesh, and "the

⁴⁴Moorehead, p. 2444.

⁴⁵T. W. Manson, Ministry and Priesthood: Christ and Ours (Richmond, VA: John Know Press, 1956), p. 38.

⁴⁶Torrance, pp. 7, 8.

perfect form of the human response in obedience to the Father." (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).

It is in Christ that one can have the perfect high priesthood. On the one side is the unbreakable link with God the Father and on the other is the unbreakable link with man through an unfailing sympathy and understanding. This unique position with God and man fits Christ to be the mediator, to represent God to man and man to God, to make Jehovah real to His children, and to fit sinful children to enter into His divine presence.

In his excellent book, Royal Priesthood, T. F. Torrance suggests three vital principles in relation to Christ and New Testament priesthood.

First, "In Jesus Christ, as Apostle and High Priest, both aspects of priesthood are fulfilled."⁴⁷ He does not symbolize or witness to, but He is the Son of God. It is here that we pass beyond the Aaronic priesthood to the priesthood of another order. His offering is identical with His person.

Second, "the act of God in Christ for us, and the act of man in Christ for us are inseparable."⁴⁸ It is not only as Son of God that Christ has done for mankind what it could not do, but also as High Priest he has done for all what they could not do. He has once and for all offered to God the sacrifice of obedience and witness.

In the third place, Jesus Christ "has ascended and ever lives as our intercessor."⁴⁹ He has presented Himself before the Father as the

⁴⁷Torrance, p. 14.

⁴⁸Ibid

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 15

representative of mankind. Toward God He is the High Priest, but toward mankind He is the assurance of God's acceptance of all people in Himself.

It is clear that the coming of Christ and His eventual death, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven has fulfilled and done away with the priesthood of the Old Testament. It is fulfilled and finalized by the unrepeatable and unlimited sacrifice of the eternal High Priest.

As Hans Küng so aptly states in his book, The Church,

the perfect self-offering sacrifice replaces all cultic sacrifices offered by man. The perfect priest replaces all human priests. Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the new covenant, the representative, the vicarius of his people before God.⁵⁰

In summary, (1) Christ the High Priest gave Himself, making the unblemished offering; (2) The act takes place once and for all. It is unique and unrepeatable; (3) It is not to be thought of as an isolated event in history, but the offering is perpetually effective and constantly operative; and (4) It is an offering to God for wrongs done and a means of expiation whereby the things in mankind which make it impossible for him to come to God are removed.

The Priesthood of All Believers

What does this mean for the church of the New Covenant? How is this concept reflected in the body of Christ in the New Testament? And what is the application of this to ministry?

The writer of the book of Hebrews gives significant insight at this point.

⁵⁰Hans Küng, The Church (New York: Shedd and Ward, 1967), pp. 366, 367.

This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. Then he adds: Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more. And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful (Heb. 10:16-23).

Since Christ is the High Priest and mediator between God and all people, all who believe in Him have immediate access to God through Him. The whole idea of sacrifice has undergone a radical change. No longer are sacrifices made by people from their own strength, but through the mediation of Christ. There are no longer sacrifices of atonement but sacrifices of thanks and praise and the offering of oneself.

It is in this particular way that all believers have a priestly function. The abolition of a special caste and its replacement with the one new and eternal High Priest has as its consequences the fact that all believers share in a universal priesthood.

Jesus' death on the cross represents the high priestly sacrifice of the eternal Son of God. His sacrifice surpasses all other sacrifices. Christ as the eternal and heavenly High Priest now gives to those who hold firm to their confession of Him a present guarantee of immediate access to God and future guarantee of entrance into the lasting heavenly world.⁵¹

⁵¹J. Baehr, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1975), p. 42.

Perhaps the most appropriate way to further clarify this concept would be a survey of New Testament Scriptures. The New Testament word for priest is bierius (ιερευς).

In Greek, from Homer down, this word had a single unambiguous meaning. It meant a man appointed, or consecrated or otherwise endowed with power to perform certain technical functions of ritual worship, especially to offer acceptable sacrifices, and to make effectual prayers.⁵²

Priests are mentioned frequently in the New Testament. Most references refer to a Jewish priest who performs a special function in the temple worship in Jerusalem. As a special point of interest, there is no place in the New Testament an identification of or illusion to a Christian priest. If the early church knew of such an order or office of priest, it left no evidence of the fact. "The remarkable fact is that the word priest is not used anywhere in the New Testament for someone who holds office in the church."⁵³

The New Testament never refers to an individual Christian as priest. There are five passages in which the word priest or priesthood is used with reference to Christians but not as individuals. They are always used with reference to the corporate body.

I Peter 2:4, 5 says,

As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood (εις ιερατευον αιγιον), offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁵²Henry Grady Davis, "The Ministry in the New Testament," The Chicago Luthern Theological Seminary Record, 57, No. 3 (1952), p. 9.

⁵³King, p. 364.

Again, in I Peter 2:9, 10, Peter says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, (βασιλεῖον ἱεράτευμα), a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

John says in Revelation, Chapter 1:5, 6, "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and has made us to be a kingdom and priests (καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλεῖαν) to serve his God and Father."

Also, in Chapter 5:9, 10, John says, "and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priest (καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλεῖον καὶ ἱερεῖς) to serve our God."

Finally, in Chapter 20:6, John says, "Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection . . . they will be priests of God (ἀλλ' ἔσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ χριστοῦ) and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years."⁵⁴

These five passages are the only New Testament references to priest or priesthood related to the New Testament Church. The word priest does not occur in the singular in these contexts. It is always addressed to a group of Christians who are priests together. In these five passages, priest is never attributed to a single individual or to a group of people within the church but rather to the church itself, the whole church as a unit.

What is the meaning of the priesthood of all believers? What does

⁵⁴ Alfred Marshall, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament Nestle Greek Text (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1958).

it mean to and for the church? How is this doctrine related to ministry and how far is the whole people of God priestly? What does it really mean to say the priesthood of all believers? Hans Küng and his book, The Church, gives five positive facts.

First, the priesthood of all believers means "direct access to God."⁵⁵ In faith all have access to grace. This is where the Christian finds freedom and ultimate responsibility.

Secondly, the priesthood of all believers means "spiritual sacrifice."⁵⁶ I Peter 2:5 speaks of the Christian offering "sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." The Apostle Paul said, "to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy, and pleasing to God--which is your spiritual worship" (Rom. 12:1).

In the third place, the priesthood of all believers means the "preaching of the word."⁵⁷ The preaching of the word is entrusted to all, not just a few. "But . . . you are a royal priesthood . . . that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (I Pet. 2:9). Also, Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world." The Christian message is to be spread by all members.

Fourth, the priesthood of all believers means the "administering of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and forgiveness of sin."⁵⁸ The command to

⁵⁵Küng, p. 373.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 375.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 379.

perform these three activities is not addressed to a select few, but to all the disciples of Jesus, to the whole church. The great commission is a command to the entire church, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father" (Matt. 28:19). Also, in Luke 22:19 Jesus gave the command to "do this in remembrance of me" in reference to the Lord's Supper. This indicates that even in formal worship the priesthood of all believers is a concrete reality.

Finally, the priesthood of all believers means a "mediating function."⁵⁹ It is not just a private relationship with God. What has been said about direct access to God, spiritual sacrifices, preaching of the word, the administering of baptism, and Lord's Supper and forgiveness of sins must ultimately be to the advantage of all mankind. It must always be a service of one's responsibility to the world.

In this way all believers are in the mediation work of the one and only mediator--Christ. The function of the Christian is to mediate between God and the world. Therefore, every Christian is a priest of God by being a witness to God before the world and he is a priest for the world by having free access to God on behalf of others.

The priesthood of all believers consists in the calling of the faithful to witness to God and his will before the world, and to offer up their lives in the service of the world. It is a fellowship in which each Christian, instead of living for himself, lives before God for others and is in turn supported by others.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Küng, p. 380.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 381.

Ministry or Diakonia

Up to this point, this New Testament study has focused on five major concepts or words: the New Community (ecclesia); the people of God (laos); the body of Christ (soma); the community of believers (koinonia); and the priesthood of all believers. However, before any conclusive statements on the nature of the church are given, there must be an understanding of New Testament ministry or diakonia.

What is the general and popular idea of ministry? What is the divine teaching concerning it? The popular notion prevails that whatever is said about priests or Levites in the Old Testament and about bishops and ministers in the New Testament is to be applied to Christian ministry--that a minister is a priest, and a person holding this office is in some way to be ordained to it by other priests or ministers. By virtue of his office, he is to preach, pray, visit the sick, and look after the salvation of the souls of lost men. In many ways he is to be more pious than the laity. to be called reverend, and generally manage everything that belongs to religion.

It is not in the interest of the writer at this point to subvert all established arrangements and try to restore God's order over the order of man. However, it is important that people broaden their concept of ministry.

The pattern for ministry in the New Testament is Jesus. He both taught and lived the ministry of service which was continued in the practice of the early church. The ministry of the New Testament Church is in reality the ministry of Christ. The church ministers because of what Christ has done for it.

The ministry of Christ was characterized by the theme of service. When Jesus served His disciples and men in general, it was a demonstration of the love of God and of humanity as God willed it. Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27; John 13:1-13), and "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). He also washed the feet of His disciples as an example of His service (John 13:15). He said anyone giving food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, clothes to the naked, or visiting the sick and imprisoned is serving Christ Himself (Matt. 25:33ff).⁶¹

This same spirit that characterized Christ and His ministry prevailed in the ministry of the early church. Three words in particular describe the service of all New Testament believers.

The first of these words is doulos (δοῦλος). The doulos belonged by nature not to himself but to someone else. It involved the abrogation of one's autonomy and the subordination of one's will to that of another. Doulos appears frequently in the Pauline writings in comparison to the rest of the New Testament.⁶² It is used primarily to denote the relationship of believers to their Lord. They are bondslaves of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; James 1:1; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:1; and I Pet. 2:16). This relationship implies that voluntary subjection can be the only fitting response of the life of Christ who bought them for Himself. "For you have been bought with a price, therefore, glorify God in your body" (I Cor. 6:20).

⁶¹K. Hess, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1971), p. 547.

⁶²R. Tuente, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1971), p. 595.

This word also expresses the most absolute form of service to mankind. Paul said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants (δούλους) for Jesus sake" (II Cor. 4:5). He said, "I made myself servant (ἐδούλωσα) unto all, that I might gain more" (I Cor. 9:19).

The ministry of the members of the church is slavery both to Christ and to one another. In other words, he who would be first in Christ's community must be a slave. All are to subject themselves to the Lord and in mutual treatment to one another. It is not left up to the people whether they subject themselves, rather, it is precisely the concept of doulos that emphasizes the obligatory character of their service for God and to their neighbor. It is the duty of the community of those who have been set free by Jesus Christ.⁶³

Ministry in the New Testament is also conceived as leitourgeo (Λειτουργέω) from which is derived the term liturgy. This word is a compound from laos, people and ergon, work. It means to do public work at one's own expense. In the beginning this word was a political and legal concept. However, its use in the Septuagint clearly meant the service of the priest and Levites in the temple. It described priestly function and ritual.⁶⁴

In later Judaism, especially as it was developed in the synagogue, there is a gradual spiritualizing of the concept.⁶⁵ In the New Testament,

⁶³Tuente, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, p. 598.

⁶⁴Hess, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, p. 551.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 552.

the believer does not have a liturgy to be fulfilled in the Old Testament sense, yet his ministry can be described by this term in the general sense of service to God and the church. For example, the collection made by the Gentiles' churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem is leitourgia (Rom. 15:27; II Cor. 9:12). Paul's preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles is done as leitourgos of Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:16). And what is understood as prayer and worship is described as ministering (leitourgein) to the Lord (Acts 13:2). But neither of these words, doulos or leitourgeo give an adequate understanding of ministry in the New Testament. The most characteristic word to describe Christian ministry is diakonia (διακονία).

Diakoneo (διακονέω) is translated to minister to one or render ministering offices to someone (Luke 22:26; John 15:16). It is also used to denote waiting at tables and offering food to the guest (Matt. 8:15), and taking care of the poor and sick in the church (I Tim. 3:10).⁶⁶

Diakonia (διακονία) is translated as the service or ministering of those who execute the commands of others (I Tim. 4:11), or those who by the command of God proclaim and promote religion (Acts 1:17; Rom. 11:3; II Cor. 4:1). It also indicates the services of those who render to others the office of Christian affection (I Cor. 16:15; Rom. 2:19; II Cor. 9:13).⁶⁷

Diakonos (διακονός) is translated as one who executes the commands of another or one who is a servant, attendant, or minister. It may refer to the servant of a king (Matt. 22:13), one who promotes the welfare of

⁶⁶ Joseph H. Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1962), p. 137.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 138.

the church (Col. 1:25), or a teacher of religion (I Cor. 3:5). It is also translated deacon or one who by the virtue of his office assigned him by the church cares for the people (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8; 3:10; 3:13).⁶⁸

It would seem sufficient to say from this array of Scriptures that the diaknoia of the New Testament is anyone who serves Christ. It does not mean a clerical or special function but has the meaning of service in every instance where it is an expression of the action of Christians, and it frequently refers to all the service of all the saints to one another.

Service becomes binding because behind it stands the sacrifice of Jesus, who came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Service where strength and possession are used for others can be seen as the principle and maintaining element of fellowship. It is extended from the local church to other churches that needed help (Acts 11:29; I Cor. 8:3). Service became a means of edification of the whole body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). The whole church, all the people of God became a body for service in the world, a church composed of members who are servants and who function in preparation for the Lord's return.⁶⁹

New Testament ministry is summarized in Documents No. VII, October 1958, by the World Council of Churches, in an article entitled "The Ministry of the Church and Its Ministries."

⁶⁸Thayer, p. 138.

⁶⁹Hess, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III, pp. 547, 548.

First of all, the church is a corporate body. This means two things: (1) that all are basically one in Christ, and (2) that the body as a whole can only work rightly if different members perform different tasks and make different movement, as the hand can only grasp things firmly if each of the fingers make its own specific movement.

Second, the church does not only have various ministries, the church is ministry. The church is the instrument of God's redemptive purpose for the world and the sign of God's present and final kingdom for all the world. The church is for the world both in what it is and in what it does. These two aspects—its nature and its mission must never be separated.

Third, the church is set apart from the world in order to be for the world. It could not do its real service to the world if it were just a part of the world and in conformity to it.

In the fourth place, every believer shares in the total ministry of the church. One shares individually in being set apart from the others in order that one may be of real service to the others.

Last, not every believer can individually perform the total ministry of the church. Various gifts are given and different functions are to be exercised which are all related to the ministry of the church to the world. As the church is set apart for the sake of the world, some within the church may be set apart in order to serve the whole more specifically.⁷⁰

⁷⁰World Council of Churches, Geneva, The Ministry of the Church and Its Ministries. Interim Report of the Study Group, Documents No. 7, October, 1958.

Summary

In this chapter the writer has discussed six important New Testament concepts: the New Community (ekklesia); the new people of God (laos); the body of Christ (soma Christou); the community of believers (koinonia); the priesthood of all believers; and ministry (diakonia).

The new community was the people of God. They were His because He chose them and they assembled together to listen to the voice of God. The New Testament Church is the "true Israel," the "Seed of Abraham."

The New Testament Church is the body of Christ. It is unified in and with Christ as the head of the body, yet diversified in their functions.

The New Testament Church possessed a common denominator in which all things were held in common--the common reality being the Spirit of Christ which was in them.

All members of the body of Christ are priests to each other and to the world. All believers have a priestly function in that they all have direct access to God. Every Christian is a priest of God by being a witness to God before the world, and he is a priest for the world by having free access to God on behalf of others.

Through baptism of faith into the fellowship of believers, all are to minister. All are servants of Christ and, therefore, contract for some form of ministry.

The evidence from this study on the nature of the church seems to be explicitly clear that all are called to serve. To be a member of the body of Christ means to be called into ministry.

How, then, does one reconcile the apparent lack of a ministry on the part of the laity today? Why do the clergy perform most of the

functions of ministry? How did the separation between clergy and laity develop? What is the present situation?

The next chapter will develop a brief historical sketch of the history of the laity in the ministry of the church.

Chapter Four

HISTORY OF THE LAITY

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the ministry of the laity in an abbreviated form throughout the history of the church. It is not within the scope or purpose of this study to present a systematic and detailed account of the history of the laity, however, a brief historical summary seems appropriate.

The history of the laity and their ministry may be viewed in the following major steps.

1. There was no essential difference in the order of the ministry in the New Testament era.
2. There was a gradual separation in the early church between the laity and clergy.
3. The trend toward separation of laity and clergy crystalized in the middle ages.
4. There was protest against this crystalization in the form of monasticism and sectarian movements.
5. There was a brief break in the wall of separation at the time of the Reformation.
6. After the Reformation, there was a continuation of clericalism in American Christianity.
7. In the twentieth century American Christianity turned toward professionalism.
8. There was a resurrection of the ministry of the laity in the

contemporary ecumenical movement.¹

The Early Church

It should not be surprising that the question of the laity never arose in the apostolic church. The early church always acted as a whole; any action taken by part of its members involved the action of the whole church. Action undertaken by the laity was also action by the hierarchy, and action by the leaders was action by the laity. They could not act independently because neither of them constituted the church when separated from the other.²

From this point of view, Christianity was largely a lay movement. The early Christians came to think of themselves by virtue of their baptismal incorporation unto him as constituting collectively a priestly kingdom and a royal priesthood (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6), and as such, they carried into the world the promises and prerogatives of the ancient people of God (I Pet. 2:10).³

In the apostolic church there were two essential characteristics of the apostles--the twelve appointed by Jesus. They had seen Christ and they had been sent out by Christ. These two elements were also the characteristics of the ministry of the apostolic church. The apostles were called to be with Christ in order to be sent out. The purpose of

¹Howard Grimes, The Rebirth of the Laity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 42.

²N. Afanassieff, The Ministry of the Laity in the Church. World Council of Churches, Geneva, Documents No. 3, X, April, 1958.

³Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber, The Layman in Christian History (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 28, 29.

this calling and sending out was its service to the world.

At first the early church appeared to be nothing more than a religious party within a Jewish nation. They did not withdraw from the life of Judaism; they met in the temple (Acts 2:46), they apparently approved the sacrificial system (Matt. 5:21), and they paid tax (Matt. 17:24-27).

It took some time and various historical experiences before the disciples saw themselves as the new Israel. But the foundation had been laid in the personal encounter with the risen Christ. In the light of this saving event, they could remain members of the people of Israel, share in its cult, keep its laws, and yet see all things in a fundamentally new way because of Jesus Christ.

The early Christian community, for all its links with Jewish nation as a whole, soon possessed certain peculiar forms which pointed to a distinctive development.

Baptism was a sign of repentance and purification from sin. From the very beginning this was the initiation rite into the new fellowship (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 9:18; 10:48; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:1-11). It became a mark of separation from the Jewish nation as a whole.

The communal service of prayer in small groups or private houses was an occasion for saying the Lord's Prayer, reading sacred texts, and studying the Old Testament (Acts 2:46; 12:12).

The communal meal was celebrated probably in association with the simple service of prayer and in memory of the Last Supper. It recalled the Lord before His death and looked forward to His near return (I Cor. 11:11-29).

The community had its own leaders composed at first of the twelve. Peter seemed to play a leading role at first. Paul refers to Peter, James, and John as the pillars of the community (Gal. 1:18, 2:9).

The community seemed to be a fellowship of love. The koinonia (Acts 2:42) linked together all the members which found expression in mutual help, shared suffering, and to a certain extent, common ownership.

In the primitive community the ecclesiastical forms were rarely developed at all. Life in the apostolic church, to which every Christian was called through baptism, was a permanent ministry. This new principle which was unknown to human society was the basis of the early church life.⁴

The early Christians were perhaps best portrayed by one named Diognetus:

Christians are not different from the rest of men in nationality, speech or customs . . . they are not outstanding in human learning as others are. Whether fortune has given them a home in a Greek or foreign city, they follow local custom in the matter of dress, food, and way of life. . . . They dwell on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the laws that man make, but their laws are better than the laws. They love all men but are persecuted by all. They are put to death, yet more alive than ever. They are paupers, but they make many rich. They are attacked by the Jews as Gentiles and are persecuted by the Greek,⁵ yet those who hate them can give no reason for their hatred.

By the time of the pastoral epistles, there were two kinds of ministry which developed within the church: one accomplished by the whole people, the other accomplished by certain persons who were especially called. As a result of this, there soon developed a difference between members who exercised a special ministry and those who exercised a general ministry.

⁴Hans King, The Church (New York: Shedd and Ward, 1967), pp. 109, 110.

⁵Francis Glimm, Joseph Marque, and Gerald Walsh, The Apostolic Fathers (New York: CIMA Pub. Co., 1947), pp. 359, 360.

From I and II Timothy and Titus, bishops (episkopoi or overseer) and deacons (diakonoi or servant) had developed as church officers (I Tim. 3:1-13). Whether or not the elders mentioned in I Timothy 5:17 (presbuteroi) represent the same office as the bishop, is not known.

The growing distinction finds further expression in the early church fathers. St. Clement of Rome wrote near the close of the first century, "Our Apostles knew that there would be contention over the bishops office."⁶ St. Ignatius of Antioch declared,

In the same way all should respect the deacons as they would Jesus Christ, just as they respect the bishop as representing the Father and the priest as the Council of God and the calling of the Apostles. Apart from this there is nothing that can be called a church.⁷

By the time of Irenaeus in the late second century, the stratification had become clear so that he writes,

Therefore it is right to obey the presbyter in the church, these, that is, who possess the succession from the apostles, as I have shown, who, together with their succession in the episcopate, received the sure gift of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father.⁸

Certainly by the turn of the third century the bishops had assumed supervisory power over the lesser clergy, and the clergy had assumed more control over the laity.

Another important development in the early church was the use of the word clergy (κλήρες). In Acts 1:26 the word kleros (κλῆρος) is used in its original sense, meaning the lot used as an expression of the

⁶Glimm, "Letter to the Corinthians, 44:1," The Apostolic Fathers by St. Clement of Rome, p. 43.

⁷Glimm, "Letter to the Trallians," The Apostolic Fathers by St. Ignatius of Antioch, p. 103.

⁸Grimes, p. 45.

will of God to determine who should be the successor of Judas. Also it is used in Mark 15:24 of the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' clothes. From this original meaning, the word began to take on a more general concept such as a share which is allotted to someone. For example, Judas was allotted his share in the ministry (Acts 1:17). This led to the use of the word kleros to indicate a share in the presbyterium, and finally to refer to all holders of ecclesiastical offices. It became an established term for all who hold office as opposed to the people.

The word laikos (laikos -layman) which meant uneducated masses, does not occur in the New Testament. Clement of Rome was the first to refer to the simple faithful by contrast with the high priest, priest, and Levites.⁹

From the third century lay persons were referred to as the laikos or the uneducated masses. This seemed to further solidify the tension between the laity and the clergy. The clergy were accorded an increasingly privileged position and grew into a sociological class. They were the educated people who could understand Latin, read, and write. On the other side were the laity. the idioti (ιδιωτοι), the illiterate, the people.¹⁰

The Middle Ages

By the time Christianity was established as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the process of separation of the clergy and laity was clearly established. Only the priest would partake of both elements

⁹Glimm, "Letter to the Corinthians, 40:5," The Apostolic Fathers by St. Clement of Rome, p. 41

¹⁰Küng, p. 386.

at communion. Relics of all kinds stirred the religious life of this period to its most animalistic forms of expression. Spiritual examination of the laity was given through the confession booth. Penances were instituted as a way of commuting sins. There was the development of tithe which was compulsory under pain or penalty. The sharp division between the literate and illiterate was a major factor in this period.

The position of the laity in the church during this time of history is perhaps described best by Christopher Brook in The Layman in Christian History when he says,

The official view of the medieval church or the relation of cleric and layman started from the presupposition that the two were utterly different in status and function, and must be kept apart. 'Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together,' says the book of Deuteronomy (22:10). The second Council of Seville in 619 quoted this text in support of a canon forbidding layman to hold office in the church. It was to this canon that an educated cleric would first turn in the middle ages if he wanted to know about the layman's place in the church.¹¹

Although the church gave little place for lay activity during this long period, not all lay people were content with the situation. Many early ascetic movements were started, such as Montanism, but were declared heretical. Lay people played an important role in the monastic movements which absorbed most of the schismatic groups. Francis of Assisi considered his order a lay movement. Peter Waldo and his missionary work was looked upon as heresy. They were ousted from the church and eventually formed a separate group. The Waldenses denounced the ecclesiastical powers. They stressed the importance of lay participation, but the church denounced

¹¹Christopher Brook, "The Church of the Middle Ages," The Layman in Christian History, eds. Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 113.

their activity.

In most cases if a sect or group posed a threat to the institutional religion, the activity was either destroyed or forced out of the institutional church.

The Reformation Period

The Reformation, like the endeavors toward it in the preceding movements, was mostly a lay movement. The laity made the claim that the affairs of the church were their responsibility.¹² It is not within the scope of this study to detail the work of the Reformation, but whatever else one may say, it obviously broke down the rigid wall between the clergy and laity. It was a renewed attempt to once again see the church as the whole people of God.

"Three great abuses have befallen the service of God," wrote Luther.

First, God's Word is not proclaimed, there is only reading and singing in the churches. Second, because God's Word has been suppressed, many unchristian inventions and lies have sneaked into the service of reading, singing, and preaching and they are horrible to see. Third, such service of God is being undertaken as a good work by which one hopes to obtain God's grace and salvation. Therefore, faith has perished and everyone wishes to endow churches or to become a priest, monk, or nun.¹³

¹²Henrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 23.

¹³W. A. Weimar, Luther Works, XII, p. 32 cited by Wilhelm Pauck, "The Ministry in the Time of the Continental Reformation," in The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, eds. H. Richard Niebuhr and D. D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, Pub.), p. 111.

Luther's insistence upon the common priesthood is crucial at this point. This was the new concept of the ministry that was to determine the whole history of Protestant Christianity. "We are all priests" wrote Luther, "insofar as we are Christians, but those who we call priests are ministers selected from our midst to act in our name, and their priesthood is our ministry."¹⁴

Luther's concept implied a tremendous simplification of Christianity. Two things mattered most: the Word of God and faith. Every believer of the gospel is a priest, a mediator between God and man, therefore, all Christians are ministers, servants by virtue of their faith in the Word of God. New light has now dawned upon the separation of the clergy and layman.

Of course, the practical difficulties which Luther encountered in carrying out these principles were so great they were never completely implemented by him. It was the turning point in history that would eventually make it possible for a biblical understanding of the ministry of the people of God.

E. Gordon Rupp describes the reformation age by saying,

The layman lost, for the most part, his pictures and his windows; his beads and primers; his procession, candles, pilgrimages, his feasts and facts. But he gained his Bible, his catechism, his prayer Book, his hymns; he had worship in which he could share with intelligent awareness.¹⁵

¹⁴Pauck, p. 112.

¹⁵E. Gordon Rupp, "The Age of the Reformation," The Layman in Christian History, eds., Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 147.

The Post-Reformation Era

In spite of the fact that the layman's place of responsibility in the church and the principle of the Universal Priesthood of Believers were strong ingredients in the Reformation Movement, the laity receded into the background and the ministry or clergy, although with different motivation and in different forms, was again established as the office and body which represented the church.¹⁶

Of course, there were some radical groups who believed that the main line reforms had not gone far enough. As a result, the laity continued to stir in mysticism and pietism. The leaders of these groups believed that reform of the present church, despite the Reformation, was inadequate. What was needed was the installation of the primitive church. Most of these groups insisted upon a new understanding of the laity and the implementation of the idea in the church life.

Philip Spener (1675) saw the layman as the salt of the earth. August Franke (1663-1727) called men to use their gifts and led them to build the orphanage at Halle. The lay theologian, Count Nikolaus Zinzendorf, was able to bring into existence a real lay fellowship of Christians. The Quaker movement is another example of the laity's practical significance at this time.¹⁷ John Wesley and his use of the lay preacher would be another example of the lay movement in the post-

¹⁶Kraemer, p. 25.

¹⁷Martin Schmidt, "The Continent of Europe," The Layman in Christian History, eds. Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 166-169.

reformation era.¹⁸

At any rate one would concede that these groups were successful in raising the esteem in which the laity was held and also in opening out before them an unlimited field of activity. However, with few exceptions, these groups never gained much of a foothold in Europe. Although the main Reformation churches continued in many ways to emphasize the laity, the continued tendency toward a new clericalism grew stronger.¹⁹

Laity in the New World

From the beginning, Christianity in the United States has been characterized by great diversity and multiplication of denominations. In his book, The Rebirth of the Laity, Howard Grimes suggests four conditions that converged to bring the laity to a position of eminence in American Protestantism: the tendency toward lay control and initiation from the beginning of the colonies; the democratic milieu of political and social life, especially the migration to the New World of the more radical "free churches"; the effect of the Great Awakening; and the growth in the nineteenth century church which confirmed the trend.²⁰

Also, with the separation of church and state, it became necessary for the members to assume responsibility for the total life of the church. In this atmosphere the "free church" flourished. By the

¹⁸James Garlow, "John Wesley's Use of the Lay Preacher" (PhD dissertation, Drew University, 1979) Microfilm Cat. No. 7922432.

¹⁹Howard Grimes, The Rebirth of the Laity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 54.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 57.

eighteenth century, the Baptists were one of the most influential groups in this regard. A second group was the Methodists. Although its government was episcopal in form, its generous use of lay preachers and class leaders made its appeal to the frontiers. A third group was the Disciples of Christ. Its extreme lay-centeredness fitted it for the frontier so that growth was very rapid.

Another experience which affected these and other churches was the outbreak of revivalism. These forces and others led to a distinctive kind of laicized Christianity in nineteenth century America. By 1850, approximately one-third of the total membership of the American Church was in Free Churches (not including Methodist). In all of these, by their very nature, the lay person had a significant share in church government.²¹

At the turn of the twentieth century most of these endeavors continued to exist. The amount of lay activity in the church was staggering, especially in the south, midwest, and southwest where Protestantism was still growing and dynamic. Yet, despite this growth, there was no significant change in the direction of the church as it relates to the ministry of the laity. Instead, a polarization began to form in the church. With the multiplication of activities, the church became a seven-day-a-week activity center. Accompanying this expansion were national boards and agencies which promoted their own interest in the local church. The growth of administrative responsibility

²¹Howard Grimes, "The United States," The Layman in Christian History, eds. Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 241-245.

began to use up most of the time of the clergy. Specialized ministries were added to the complexity of the picture. There was an overall tendency toward professionalism in the church. All these tempted the lay person to leave the work of the church to the professional. Perhaps to a greater and more serious degree, there was a failure on the part of many lay people and clergy to understand the deeper dimensions of the Christian Gospel.²²

In essence, the twentieth century American Church became an institution of professionals. To put it in the words of Howard Grimes, "Too much of what the church now does is to use laymen rather than helping laity be the church in the world."²³

The Rediscovery of the Laity

Hans-Ruedi Weber emphasizes the rediscovery of the laity with this expression:

Never in Church history, since its initial period has the role and responsibility of the laity in the Church and world been a matter of so basic . . . and extensive discussion. . . . This discussion is a totally new phenomenon, it implies a new examination and general reshaping of all ecclesiologies which we have had for centuries and it is the most important aspect of the longing for the renewal of the church which arises in the Church all over the world.²⁴

The lay membership has always played a role in the life and mission of the church but never became so much a theological discussion

²²Grimes, "The United States," pp. 251-253.

²³Ibid., p. 256.

²⁴Hans-Ruedi Weber, "The Rediscovery of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement," The Layman in Christian History, eds. Stephen Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 377.

as it is today. Whenever the nature of the church is discussed, inevitably the question of the laity becomes paramount.

There are two main causes which have contributed to the call for fuller participation of the laity in the life of the church. These two causes are "the various attempts to embody in new Centres new possibilities of the laity's part of the verbal and active witness of the church in modern society and the Ecumenical Movement."²⁵

These new centers for activity of the laity were formed in the Evangelical Academies in Germany and all over the European country. They provided places where people of different occupations would be able to discuss with representatives of the church their everyday problems of belief and behavior. These academies served to meet man in his everyday problems and to help him find a way to testify to the Gospel.²⁶

The second major cause in the rediscovery of the laity was the ecumenical movement. In 1948 the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches was convened. A committee on "The Significance of the Laity in the Church" was appointed in order to meet the widespread need expressed by the church in many parts of the world for a consideration of the urgent question of the right use and training of laity in the service of the church.²⁷

When the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches gathered in 1954, the laity became one of the six major subjects of discussion. At

²⁵Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 37

²⁶Ibid., pp. 36-42.

²⁷Weber, p. 378.

this council they acknowledged the emphasis on the laity by giving it departmental status--The Department of Laity.²⁸ It is from this department, its meetings and publications, especially in the periodical, Laity, that we find the pioneer work in the theological and historical study of the laity.

This line of thought was given a new and vivid expression at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961. In a summary statement it was declared,

Within this whole enterprise of corporate witness, every individual Christian will play his own unique part according to the gift of the Spirit with which he is endowed. It is obvious that, if the Christian witness is to penetrate into all those areas where the work of the world is carried on, it must be carried there by layman.²⁹

What are the main assertions of the ecumenical rediscovery of the laity? H. R. Weber suggests at least four are necessary for our understanding.

1. The growing emphasis on the ministry of the laity must not be understood as an attempt to secure for the laity some larger place of recognition in the church, nor is it a means to supplement an overburdened clergy. Rather, it springs from the rediscovery of the true nature of the church as the people of God. One must learn that the laity are really the laos, that is, the whole people of God, including those who have been ordained.

2. The laity share in Christ's ministry not only when it is assembled for worship but also when it is scattered abroad in every

²⁸Weber, p. 379.

²⁹Ibid., p. 382.

department of life. It is the recovery of the necessary rhythm of the church which is being assembled and sent out.

3. Another assertion is that God gives His gifts in variety to His people. One of the primary callings of the serving church is to discover and use these gifts for the sake of the world. This emphasis on the charismata promised to each believer and giving each his own responsible function within Christ's ministry is vital to the rediscovery of the laity. The task of the ordained clergy is to help the charismatic laity to grow finally into its ministry both in the church and in the daily business of the world.

4. The fourth assertion is that in order to be a Christian in and for the world means self-offering. To be the laos means to abandon all self-glorification and live by grace. It means to exist for service, not for self-edification but to be spent for others. It means to offer ourselves in love and obedience to God and in love and service to men.³⁰

Since 1960, the emphasis on the ministry of the laity has moved into the evangelical circles. The lay-witness movements in many of the major denominations gave birth to lay ministry in a new and meaningful way. Numerous denominations and local churches are beginning extensive programs for the equipping of the laity. Hundreds of seminars, films, and periodicals are being published and used weekly for the ministry of the laity. However, it is still too early to tell whether the church is making a significant step toward lay ministry. Perhaps the decade of the 80's will bring significant gains toward the church becoming the whole people

³⁰Weber, pp. 388-390.

of God in ministry to the world.

Summary

In this chapter the writer has given a brief history of the ministry of the laity. In the apostolic era there was little difference in the people of God. With the initiation by baptism, all were called into service. By the time of Constantine the clergy had taken over the ministry. The laity were pushed into the background except for a few surges here and there by ascetic groups.

Luther and the Reformation brought renewed interest in the ministry of the laity. But even the Reformation did not bring about a real discovery of the laity and their ministry. The "Free Church" of America provided many opportunities for lay ministry but by the turn of the twentieth century, the church had slipped into a pattern of professionalism. Again, the laity were pushed into the background.

From 1948-1961 the World Council of Churches provided the historical and theological information which led to the rediscovery of the ministry of the laity.

Today, in most churches, the universal theme is on how to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Perhaps the church is turning back to its real nature where all are called by God to minister by the use of their spiritual gifts.

At this point, this study has given a theological and historical survey of the ministry of the laity. These concepts have been defined in describing the nature of the church: (1) the Old Testament covenant relationship God had with His people; (2) the New Testament concept of

the church--ecclesia; (3) the people of God; (4) the body of Christ; (5) the community of believers; (6) the priesthood of all believers; and (7) ministry. All of these concepts have given substantial evidence concerning the nature of the church.

Chapter Four gave a brief history of the ministry of the laity. It allows one to put into proper perspective the historical role of the laity in relationship to the true nature of the church.

The next chapter will show the means and methods whereby the people are to minister to the church and the world. It will show that ministry is to be accomplished through the use of the spiritual gifts.

Chapter Five

MINISTRY THROUGH THE GIFTS

It is the purpose of this chapter to establish a theological concept of the use of spiritual gifts and how they may be applied to the ministry of the people of God.

Spiritual Gifts Defined

The New Testament term for spiritual gifts has its root in the word grace (χάρις). Its basic meaning is to "indicate things which produce well being."¹ From this basic meaning stems several words such as "grace, favor, beauty, gratitude, and kindness."² The New Testament employs the term "charis (χάρις) 155 times, mostly in the Pauline letters (100 times) especially in I and II Corinthians (28 times), Romans (24 times), and Ephesians (12 times)."³

With the exception of one text in I Peter 4:10, charisma (χάρισμα) is an exclusively Pauline concept.⁴ The investigation of this study will limit itself to Paul's use of this word exclusively. The Apostle Paul stressed charis (χάρις) as the essence of God's decisive saving act in

¹E. Esser, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, II, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1967), p. 115.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 117.

⁴Ibid., pp. 115-118.

Jesus Christ which took place in His sacrificial death, and also of all its consequence in the future. For example, Romans 3:24, "All are justified freely by his grace (χάριτι) through the redemption that comes by Christ Jesus." In Christ, God's grace is a precious gift (I Cor. 1:4). It can never be a quality which an individual can possess in his own right. The whole movement of the Christian life is grace.⁵

Paul's use of the word charisma (χάρισμα) shows the outworkings of grace through the Spirit. It is a personal endowment with grace. Paul develops the meaning of this special spiritual endowment for service for the life of the church and community in Romans, Chapter 12 and I Corinthians, Chapter 12.

Romans, Chapter 12, points out that we are one body with many members and the members do not all have the same function, so in Christ all who are many form one body. and each member belongs to each other. All have different gifts (χαρίσματα) according to the grace (χάριτι) given to them (Rom. 12:4-6).

Paul says in I Corinthians, Chapter 12, "There are different kinds of gifts (χαρισμάτων), but the same Spirit" (I Cor. 12:4). His conclusion of the chapter is that "everybody desire the greater gifts" (I Cor. 12:31) (χαρίσματα).

One can readily see, for Paul, there is the gift of God (χάρις) and there are spiritual gifts (χαρίσματα). When people by faith in Christ are brought into the kingdom of God, they receive both the gift

⁵ Esser, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, II, pp. 119-121.

(χαρίσ) of God imparted to them in the life of Jesus Christ and also the spiritual gift or gifts (χαρίσματα) which they are responsible to discover and exercise for the edification of the body of Christ.

There have been many attempts to define spiritual gifts. Perhaps one area of clarification concerns the distinction between gifts and talents or abilities.

Talent or ability does not necessarily mean one has a spiritual gift. All people have some talent or ability; only believers are gifted spiritually. Of course talents are given by God to all mankind, but they are not to be considered as spiritual gifts. Gifts are a special grace of the Spirit. Gifts are a special endowment by God on the believer. They are given for the spiritual growth of the saint and Christian service. Talents may be used in the implementation of one's gifts, but they are not to be considered gifts within themselves.

Spiritual gifts are not to be considered as the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22, 23) has to do with the character of the Christian life; it is what a person is, produced from all these characteristics. The gifts of the Spirit have to do with service and ministry to the church and community. It is what a person has to give in service.⁶

Therefore, spiritual gifts are not talents or the fruit of the Spirit. These distinctions must be preserved. What then is the definition of spiritual gifts? A spiritual gift is a divine endowment

⁶Leslie Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1977), pp. 22-25.

of special ability for service in the kingdom of God, upon a member of the body of Christ.

Perhaps one could better understand this definition by the following six assertions:

1. All spiritual gifts come from God. Paul said, "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (I Cor. 12:7). This is why it says, "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:7, 8). Here he is referring to the Old Testament psalm which he now interprets messianically (Ps. 68:18). He sees Christ's ascension as a triumphal victory march into heaven. He is seated upon the throne, as the Conqueror distributing spiritual gifts to his people.⁷

Paul reaffirms this in I Corinthians 12:6, "There are different kinds of workings, but the same God works all of these in all men." Also in Romans 12:6, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."

2. Spiritual gifts are given to every individual believer. Paul said on four different occasions, "We have different gifts according to the grace given to us" (Rom. 12:6); "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (I Cor. 12:7); "All these are the works of the one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each man, just as he determines" (I Cor. 12:11); and finally, "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Eph. 4:7). Also Peter makes note of this when he says, "Each one should use whatever gifts he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace

⁷William McRae, The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1976), p. 27

in its various forms" (I Pet. 4:10).

God does not give spiritual gifts to a few selected individuals. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift. The gifts are not exclusively for the clergy or certain groups of Christians within the body. They belong to every member of the body of Christ.

3. Spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of others. Paul makes it plain in his concept of the body of Christ. "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom. 12:4, 5), therefore, "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (I Cor 12:7). It is in error to think that gifts are for self-edification. They are always given for the profit of others. Any failure to function in this capacity will inevitably result in the impoverishment of the whole body of Christ.

4. Spiritual gifts are given for ministry and service. The purpose of the gift is not for self-gratification but for service. It is to enable one to be active in the ministry (I Cor. 12:7; I Pet. 4:10). Anytime spiritual gifts are used apart from service and ministry, it inevitably ends in an unhealthy body. Mere talent or ability is not adequate for ministry. The body of Christ is to function according to the gifts dispersed to all of its members.

5. Gifts are given at the time of salvation in one's life. Perhaps one could not explicitly state this from biblical evidence, but from the inferences one can make these conclusions. First, gifts are bestowed by the Holy Spirit, which seems to eliminate any pre-conversion

act. Second, they are given to every believer with the emphasis on service. Third, gifts are given for the edification of the church. The most natural deduction would seem to be that God bestows these gifts at the time of conversion.⁸ However, to say that they are given at conversion does not mean that all Christians would immediately begin to use their gift. It does not eliminate the process of identifying and using the gift in ministry. This process varies from person to person.

6. Gifts are given on the basis of grace. They are not given on the basis of maturity, talents, or ability of the individual. They are given on the basis of grace alone.⁹

The Function of Spiritual Gifts

It is not the purpose of this study to list the biblical gifts and define how they may be used in the church today. However, it seems appropriate to list the gifts in order to understand how they may function individually and corporately.

The Apostle Paul makes a list of the gifts in three different chapters and in three different epistles.

<u>Romans 12:3-8</u>	<u>I Cor. 12:8-10; 28-30</u>	<u>Eph. 4:11, 12</u>
Prophecy	Word of Wisdom	Apostleship
Ministering	Word of Knowledge	Prophecy
Teaching	Faith	Evangelism
Exhorting	Healing	Pastor
Giving	Miracles	Teaching
Government	Prophecy	
Mercy	Discernment	

⁸McRae, p. 35.

⁹Ibid., pp. 27-38.

I Cor. 12:8-10; 28-30 (cont'd)

Tongues
 Interpretation of
 Tongues
 Apostleship v. 28-30
 Prophet
 Teaching
 Government
 Healing
 Ministration
 Tongues

Prophecy and teaching are the only two gifts repeated in all three lists. A total of 18 gifts are categorized.

Numerous attempts have been made to categorize and classify these list of gifts. Kenneth Kinghorn divides the gifts under these headings.¹⁰

<u>Enabling Gifts</u>	<u>Speaking Gifts</u>	<u>Tongues</u>
Apostleship	Word of Wisdom	Tongues
Evangelism	Word of Knowledge	Interpreation of
Shepherding	Faith	Tongues
Teaching	Healing	
	Miracles	
	Discernment	
	Helps and service	
	Administration	
	Giving aid	
	Exhortation	
	Giving	
	Compassion	

Leslie Flynn classified the gifts under these groupings:¹¹

¹⁰Kenneth Kinghorn, Gifts of the Spirit (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 41.

¹¹Leslie Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1977), p. 32.

<u>Speaking</u>	<u>Ministering</u>	<u>Signifying</u>
Apostleship	Administration (helps)	Miracles
Prophecy	Giving	Healing
Evangelism	Government	Tongues
Pastoring	Mercy	Interpretation
Teaching	Faith	of Tongues
Exhorting	Discernment	
Word of Wisdom	Miracles	
Word of Knowledge	Healing	
Tongues		
Interpretation		
of Tongues		

Ray Stedman sees three divisions of spiritual gifts: There are gifts; there are ministries; and there are workings. Gifts are linked to the Spirit, ministries are linked to the Lord Jesus, and workings are linked to God (I Cor. 12:4-6). The gifts are a specific capacity or function. The workings refer to the degree of power by which a gift is manifested or ministered on a specific occasion.¹²

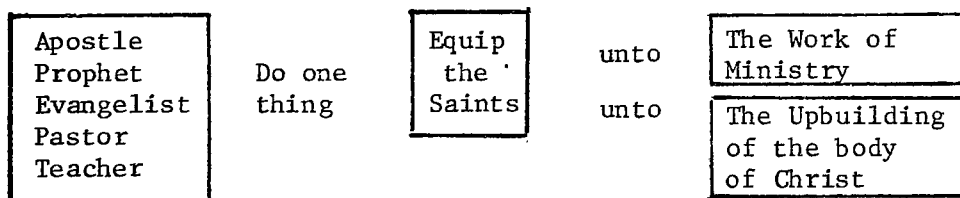
Perhaps any attempt to classify the gifts seems artificial and meaningless, however, for the benefit of this study the writer would like to make two classifications from Scripture. Classification does not mean difference in quality or measure, rather, it means the classification of the function of the gifts.

There are two functions or classifications of the gifts, the enabling gifts and the serving gifts. The enabling gifts or the set-apart ministries in the church today are apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, shepherding, and teaching. All other gifts fall under the classification of serving gifts.

¹²Ray Stedman, Body Life (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1972), pp. 42, 43.

What then is the basic function of these two classifications of gifts? The enabling gifts are described in Ephesians 4:11, 12. This Scripture brings the relationship of the clergy and laity into focus. The KJV states, "He gave some apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Erase the comma after the word saints and it gives an altogether different meaning.¹³ Notice the NIV translation, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11, 12).

Ray Stedman diagrams the function of the enabling gifts in the following manner:¹⁴



In other words, the enabling gifts exist for one purpose and function--to equip the saints to do the work of ministry. The enabling gifts become an equipping ministry. The word Paul uses here for "perfecting" (KJV) or "prepare" (NIV) is katartismos (καταρτισμος). The word is used to describe surgery in setting a broken limb or putting a joint back into place. In politics it is used for bringing opposing factions together

¹³Alfred Marshall, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament Nestles Greek Text (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1967).

¹⁴Stedman, p. 81.

so that the government may continue. In the New Testament it is used for mending nets (Mark 1:19) and discipling an offender until he is fit to take his place again in the fellowship of the church (Gal. 6:1). The basic idea is that of putting a thing back into its original or preferred state. The enabling gifts are used to educate and care for the body.¹⁵

It may be argued if the relation of the clergy to the laity is that of enabler, then are they not back where they started? This is certainly a danger one cannot escape. At the same time, one must repudiate any feeling of lordship or paternalism. The great purpose of the enabling ministry is not to tie the people to the clergy but to lend them to spiritual maturity and active ministry. One must give up defining the laity in relation to and in distinction from the clergy. Rather, one must start defining the clergy in relation to the laity. The laity are the whole people of God and some are given the great privilege of enabling others to serve Christ.¹⁶

Therefore, the primary function of the enabling gifts, whether it is apostleship, prophecy, evangelizing, shepherding, or teaching, is to equip or prepare the laity to do the work of the ministry according to their Spirit-endowed gifts.

If this is the function of the enabling gifts, then how would one describe the function and purpose of the serving gifts? How are they related to the laity and to each other? Serving gifts are bestowed for

¹⁵William Barclay, Letters to Galatians and Ephesians (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 149.

¹⁶John R. W. Stott, One People (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), pp. 46, 47.

the specific purpose of ministering to the church and to the community. Perhaps two important concepts are evident here. First, there is unity in diversity. There are some things that all believers have in common. All have the same Spirit of God. All are the temple of the Holy Spirit. All are members of the body of Christ. But at the same time, they all have different gifts and different degrees of the same gift.

Paul illustrates this concept in I Corinthians 12:12-17 with the analogy of the body. He writes:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. . . . If the fool should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body. . . . But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

In this analogy Paul points out both the unity and the diversity of the body. The unity of the body is seen throughout the nature of the church. Unity between the many members who have received various gifts and who perform various ministries. There is one body and one Spirit, just as all were called to one hope. All are admonished to make every effort to seek the unit of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Eph. 4:3-5). The body cannot exist or function without this essential unity.

The diversity of the body is seen in the fact that the Holy Spirit bestows upon all believers different gifts and different degrees of the same gift. Just as the human body contains its many parts, so does the body of Christ contain many different gifts for various ministries.

The second concept concerning the function of the serving gifts

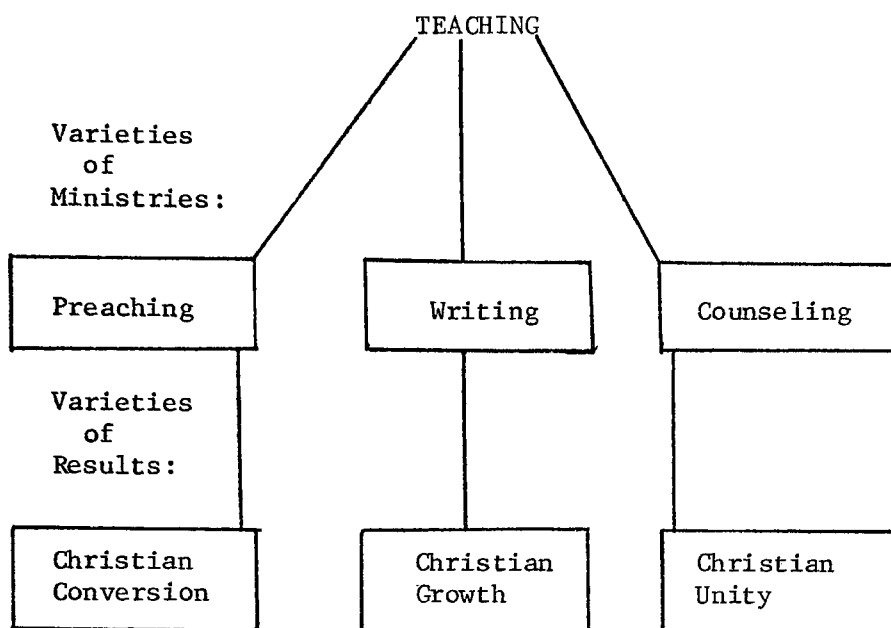
is that each member is vitally needed in order for the body to function properly. Paul emphasized the contribution each member of the church makes to the whole. All the members are needed. Each one has a separate part to play without which the body is broken and destroyed. If one member is hurt or cut off, then all the members are hurt and weakened (I Cor. 12:26). When any member fails to function in his/her respective role, the body is less than a whole body. So in order for the church to function as the body of Christ all the members must identify, accept, and utilize their spiritual gifts.

This chapter has classified spiritual gifts into two basic functions: the enabling gifts and the serving gifts. However, there remains the question concerning the function of the individual gifts and how they are expressed in different ministries which bring a variety of results.

Kenneth Kinghorn in his book, Gifts of the Spirit, provides a diagram which clarifies this concept.

Suppose a person receives the gift of teaching, and he exercises his gift through the ministry of preaching. And suppose another person exercises his gift of teaching through the ministry of counseling. A third person may exercise his gift through the ministry of writing. In each case, the same gift expresses itself through various ministries--preaching, counseling and writing.¹⁷

¹⁷Kenneth Kinghorn, Gifts of the Spirit (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 37.



These different ministries will likely produce different results. One ministry may lead to Christian conversion; another ministry may aid Christian growth; and another ministry may heal discord and division. There are a variety of gifts . . . there are a variety of services . . . there are a variety of workings (results).

So the basic function of the serving gifts is that they may be used for a variety of ministries for a variety of results. Therefore, a spiritual gift may be used for several different ministries or several people could use the same gift in separate ministries for different results.

Discovering Spiritual Gifts

The church cannot function as the body of Christ until all the people of God identify, accept, and use their gifts. It is evident that the Spirit bestows upon every believer spiritual gift(s) to be used for ministry either as an enabler or in a serving capacity. To complete this chapter, it is important to understand some of the concepts or

principles in discovering spiritual gifts. Perhaps there is no single way or process, yet some basic principles seem evident.

William McRae, in his book, The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts, suggests five concepts. (1) The process of discovering spiritual gifts is always initiated by prayer. Present your request to God (Phil. 4:6). (2) Study the New Testament to understand the Scriptural basis for spiritual gifts. (3) A strong desire may indicate God's way of revealing one's gift. (4) In the area that people are gifted, the Lord will confirm it by their ability to be successful. (5) God will bless the efforts of those who exercise their gifts.¹⁸

Kenneth Kinghorn, in his book, Gifts of the Spirit, lists six guidelines to aid a believer in discovering spiritual gifts. (1) Open yourself to God as a channel for His use. (2) Examine your aspiration for Christian service and ministry. (3) Identify the needs that you believe to be most crucial in the life of the church. (4) Evaluate the results of your efforts to serve and to minister. (5) Follow the guiding of the Holy Spirit as He leads you into obedience to Christ. (6) Remain alert to the responses of other Christians.¹⁹

There are many other sources available as tools to help discover spiritual gifts. The film, Discover Your Gift, by the Institute for American Church Growth, is helpful in this area. Questionnaires such as the Modified Houts Questionnaire by Peter Wagner and Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts by Kenneth Kinghorn of Asbury Theological Seminary serve

¹⁸William McRae, The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1976), p. 110.

¹⁹Kinghorn, pp. 108-114.

as useful tools in discovering spiritual gifts.

It is evident from all of these suggestions and programs that one cannot establish a set process or procedure to discover spiritual gifts. However, there seems to be four overriding concepts in all these methods mentioned and surveyed.

1. First, there must be an attitude of total cooperation with God in one's willingness to be used for service. People should not come to God with preconceived ideas of what they should or should not do or be. This attitude of willingness will be exemplified in their prayers, dedication, study, and desire to minister for Christ.

2. In the process of discovering spiritual gifts, people must undertake some type of ministry. They need to expose themselves to various kinds of Christian service by active involvement. This would happen at first in the area of their natural abilities and talents. Some proficiency in any area may suggest a potential gift. They cannot wait until they are confirmed in their gifts in order to minister. They must be unreservedly willing to serve if they would know the fullest use of their gifts.

3. People must be willing to accept the gift of God in their life. A gift naturally brings responsibility. A feeling of inferiority or inability to do the job hinders the acceptance of spiritual gifts. People need not act out of intuition or selfish desires but purely from the standpoint that they can accept and assume the ministry for which God is calling them.

4. Confirmation of spiritual gifts in people will be evidenced by several things: (1) The witness of the Spirit of God with their spirit

that they are in obedience to His will in their life. (2) Other Christians will affirm their gifts by words of encouragement and appointments to special ministries. (3) The success of their ministry will be another means of confirmation. Success in doing what God wants them to do and to the best of their ability.

These principles should only serve as guidelines. They are not exhaustive but are a means toward an end--the discovery of one's spiritual gifts.

Summary

In this chapter spiritual gifts have been defined as a divine endowment of a special ability for service in the kingdom of God upon all members of the body of Christ. The gifts were separated into two functions: the enabling gifts and the serving gifts. The function of the enabling gifts is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The function of the serving gifts is for the specific purpose of ministering to the church and the community. A gift may be used for a variety of ministries with a variety of results.

Also included in this chapter were some of the basic principles and guidelines for discovering spiritual gifts. People must have a positive attitude in cooperation with God for service; they must undertake some type of ministry and expose themselves to various kinds of service; they must be willing to accept God's gift in their life and confirmation will come by the witness of the Spirit, encouragement by other Christians, and their success in ministry.

The following chapter will define the Contextual Project for

the Doctor of Ministry Program. It will show how one local church proceeded to understand the nature of the church and how that understanding helped the members to identify, accept, and use their spiritual gifts.

Chapter Six

THE CONTEXTUAL PROJECT

The previous four chapters (2, 3, 4, 5) have provided the basic research for the theological and historical study of this dissertation. At this point, it is important for the reader to understand how these chapters are synthesized and how they relate to the contextual project.

First, this study was about the ministry of the laity. To understand ministry one must understand the nature of the church; this was a basic presupposition. Therefore, Chapters Two and Three were presented for the primary purpose of helping the reader understand the nature of the church.

The emphasis of Chapter Two was to highlight the concept of the church as the people of God. God called His people and established His covenant with them. The covenant relationship was not only the beginning of the process but is the basis in a continuing relationship between God and His people.

The purpose of this chapter was to reveal the significance of the relationship between God and His chosen people. The covenant relationship shows God's original pattern for the church. To understand the nature of this relationship will help one to understand ministry in the church.

Chapter Three continues to discuss the nature of the church. In the New Testament there are basic words and concepts which give the nature and character of God's people. There is not a single concept or word to fully describe the church, but with several word studies, one

can draw some clear conclusions concerning the nature of the church.

In the New Testament the word ekklesia was used to denote the church. It means a body of people who have assembled together because God has called them to Himself, assembled to listen to the voice of God.

The concept of the people of God (laos) was used to describe the fellowship of the disciples and the community of Jesus Christ. In addition to Israel, another people of God was envisaged, a people of God composed of Jew and Gentile.

The concept of the body of Christ shows the people of God unified in and with Christ as the head of the body. The members are diversified in their functions and share mutual concern and love for each other.

The word koinonia gives a description of the relationship of all God's people to Himself and to each other. It meant to participate in something which was held in common--that common reality being the Spirit that was in Christ and that is still here through the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers implies that all believers were called to witness to God and His will before the world and to offer up their lives in the service of the world. Every Christian was a priest of God by being a witness to God before the world, and he was a priest for the world by having free access to God on behalf of others.

The word ministry (diakonia) does not mean clerical or special function in the church but has the meaning of service in every instance where it was an expression of the actions of Christians. To be a servant of Christ was to be in ministry.

The purpose of these six New Testament concepts was to reveal

the nature of the church. These concepts provide the basic underlying principles concerning the nature of the church and are necessary to one's understanding of ministry.

Second, this study was about the ministry of the laity in relation to history. One cannot research the ministry of the laity without knowing the historical record of their ministries and how their ministry was reflected in the church at different stages and at different times. Chapter Four was written to inform the reader of the history of lay ministry.

The early church came to think of themselves by virtue of their baptismal incorporation into Christ as constituting collectively a priestly kingdom. They had seen Christ and they had been sent out by Christ. However, there soon developed two kinds of ministry within the church: one accomplished by the whole people, the other by certain persons who were especially called. This distinction was soon solidified in the tension between the laity and the clergy. By the middle ages, the laity were considered the uneducated masses while the clergy were the educated people who could understand Latin, read, and write.

The Reformation period was mostly a lay movement. It broke down the rigid wall between the clergy and laity. It was the turning point in history that would eventually make it possible for a biblical understanding of the ministry of the people of God.

Following the Reformation, the tendency toward a new clericalism grew stronger. In essence the twentieth century American church became an institution of professionalism.

To a great degree, the rediscovery of the laity came through the Department of the Laity in the World Council of Churches. They have

provided the bulk of written material and theological thinking in this area. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the ministry of the laity has become a dominant subject of all major denominations and para-church groups.

The purpose of this chapter was to show the historical relationship of the laity with the church and clergy. It allows one to put into proper perspective the historical role of the laity in relationship to the true nature of the church.

Third, this study was about the ministry of the laity and how they were to serve Christ and the church. Chapter Five was written to provide the biblical basis for ministry through the use of spiritual gifts.

All gifts come from God and are given to be used in ministry. All members of the church have spiritual gifts. Every Christian was challenged to identify, accept, and use their gifts for ministry.

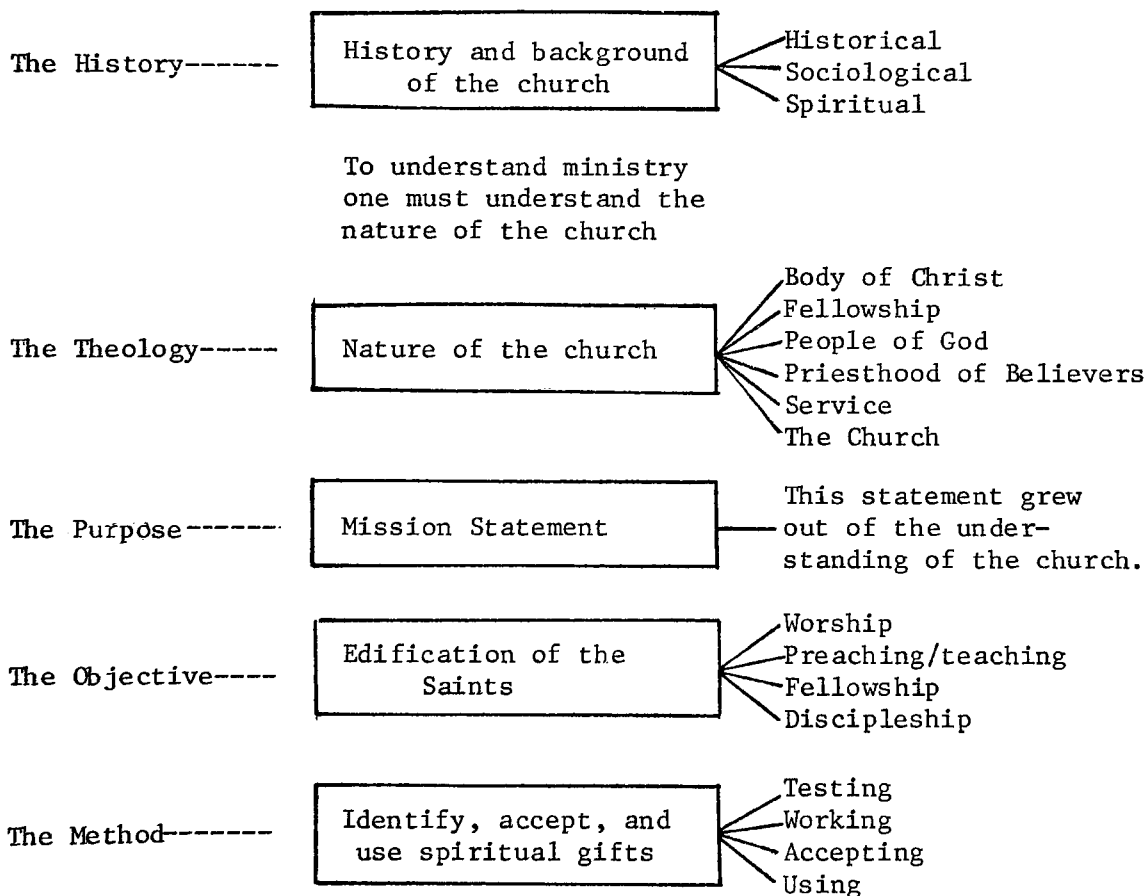
This theological and historical study has provided the basic research necessary for the underlying principles which govern the contextual project. The contextual project will show how the members of one church, through their understanding of the nature of the church and the nature and meaning of spiritual gifts, identified, accepted, and utilized their gifts in ministry.

One of the requirements for receiving the Doctor of Ministry degree is the Contextual Project. The participant in the program is responsible, in cooperation with the Congregation Reflection Group, to initiate and implement a program in the local church setting which developed out of the assessed needs of the congregation and utilizes the insight and learning gained in the readings and intensive seminars.

This project is to continue for the duration of the program. It is not to be confused with the written dissertation; however, it may be a part of the written project.¹

For the benefit of this study, the writer has chosen to include the Contextual Project as part of the written dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is to show the practical application of the ministry of the laity in the local church; how it may be implemented--its strengths and weaknesses.

The structure of the Contextual Project may be diagrammed as follows :



¹The Document for the Doctor of Ministry Professional Degree Program, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1978, pp. 11, 12.

The Goal-----

That the saints may do
the work of ministry

To identify, accept,
and use our gifts is
to do the work of
ministry.

The Results-----

The people of God
The body of Christ
Ministry to the Church
and to the Community

History and Background

In 1893, Richmond Reed, along with a small band of other Christians, opened a mission in Covington, Kentucky. It was known throughout this area as the Life Boat Mission. It continued as a mission for many years with much of the work and service conducted by the students and workers from God's Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 1917, property was purchased at the corner of Pike and Banklick in Covington, and in May of 1918, under the direction of Pastor Lawrence Woods, the congregation joined the International Apostolic Holiness Church which later became the Pilgrim Holiness Church with headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In 1925, the old frame building was torn down and a brick structure was erected which served the people for many years. In 1955, under the direction of Rev. E. R. Mitchell, the church relocated at 729 Highland Avenue and continues to worship today at this location. In 1968, the Pilgrim Holiness denomination merged with the Wesleyan Methodist denomination to become the Wesleyan Church.

The doctrinal and sociological background can be summarized by an excerpt from the Discipline of the Wesleyan Church:

The Wesleyan Church has grown out of a revival movement which has always given itself to one mission--the spreading throughout every land of the gospel of Jesus Christ with its provision for Scriptural holiness. The Wesleyan Church is a product of the holiness message, and appreciates its rich heritage of spiritual values that cluster around this message.²

Revivalism and the proclamation of the holiness message are the spiritual roots of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church. The emphasis on evangelism as the primary mission of the church has produced many conversions over the past few years. However, with little emphasis on nurture and discipleship, the seed has fallen on rocky ground.

I was called to pastor the church in the Spring of 1970. As a young pastor just out of seminary, I found myself in a situation that had taken years to develop. Statistically, the attendance and offerings were very low. The average attendance for 1970 was 78 people while the annual budget was \$17,000. The spiritual life of the people was depressed, but they were willing to work with the pastor toward a new direction and a new day.

Over the past eleven years we have seen many changes. There have been some defeats but many victories. Perhaps the point most relevant to this study is the pastor's role in developing a ministry of the laity.

For the first six years of my ministry, there was little thought given to the idea of the ministry of the laity. I took a more authoritarian role. It was as if I was called to do the ministry and felt free to use the people to get the job accomplished. Statistically, we were

²The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church (Marion, IN: The Wesleyan Pub. House, 1976), p. 17.

seeing progress in every area but we were producing a people who were more like puppets with a director running frantically here and there to keep the program moving ahead. This approach to ministry proved to be unhealthy for both the pastor and the people.

After six years of service here at the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church, I began to analyze and evaluate my concept of ministry. Why am I here and what am I called to do? What is the purpose of the church, and how does the body of Christ function? For two years I struggled with these issues--changing some things and rearranging others. I began to see my position as an enabler of the people. It was not my primary function to do the serving as it was to help the people prepare themselves for service. As I worked through this concept in my theology and thinking, it became evident to me that I was not prepared at that point to become an enabler of my people.

It was this awareness that motivated me to apply for admission to the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary. I was aware of the direction the church should go but did not have the tools or means to develop the program.

I was accepted into the Doctor of Ministry Program in the Spring of 1978. During the first seminar in July, 1978, new concepts of ministry began to challenge my mind. But it wasn't until the winter seminar, January, 1979, that I began to see the church and my function in new perspective.

In Seminar II, Module 3, Dr. Wayne Goodwin shared his development on a theology of ministry. He presented three areas of study: (1) a historical survey of the laity in the church, (2) a study of biblical

words to indicate the nature of the church, and (3) a practical model for the church.³

The concept of ministry presented by Dr. Goodwin in this seminar confirmed and brought new insight into my thinking. With the cooperation of the local church board, the Congregational Reflection Group, and the local congregation, we immediately developed plans toward a better understanding of ministry.

Week-end Seminar

The church contracted with Dr. Goodwin to conduct a week-end seminar in May, 1979. This seminar was recommended by the pastor and approved and accepted by the local church board and the congregation. The purpose of the seminar was to help the local church develop a plan and theology for a more effective ministry with the emphasis on the purpose and mission of the church.

There were sixteen participants from the local congregation who attended this seminar. These were the key leaders of the church: board members, Congregation Reflection Group members, and Sunday School staff members. They were asked to attend the entire seminar with a commitment to participate in any follow-up seminar necessary for the completion of the program.

The emphasis of the seminar was given over to three primary areas of concern. In the discussion of each of these areas, the participants

³Class lecture by Dr. Wayne Goodwin, January 1979, Seminar II, Module 3. Class notes taken by participant.

were divided into small groups and later brought together for group discussion.

1. The first area of discussion concerned the nature of the church. The biblical passages for study were: Romans 12; I Corinthians 12; Acts 1:8; I Peter 1:9, 10; Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-16; and John 17:13-19. After a study of these passages, Dr. Goodwin presented a brief study on the "people of God (laos)" concept, the body of Christ, the history of the laity, and the use of the spiritual gifts.

The group was asked to write a corporate statement describing their definition of the church. It reads as follows: "The universal church is the body of Christ, founded upon the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit; a unit of saints gifted to perform various functions of the body."⁴

The second part of the study was to define the mission of the church. We reviewed the same Scriptures with the purpose of lifting out those ideas which define and describe the mission of the church.

We described the mission of the church as follows: "The mission of the universal church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is to nurture and edify the saints to enable them to reach the lost through the communication of the Gospel so that all may know and glorify Him in His fulness."⁵

We did not write the mission statement for the local church during this seminar with Dr. Goodwin. However, the group rescheduled another

⁴See Mission Statement, Appendix A

⁵See Mission Statement, Appendix A

seminar to be led by the pastor for the purpose of forming and writing a mission statement.

On July 31, 1979, the group met together to write the mission statement for the local church. They reviewed the theological basis for the nature and mission of the church. After much discussion, they corporately drew together a mission statement concerning the purpose and mission of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church.

The mission statement reads:

The mission and purpose of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church is to worship God in the fullness of His Spirit. Our objective is to edify the saints that they may through their various gifts minister to the people and needs of the community without respect to persons.⁶

After completing this process of discovering the theological understanding of the church and the actual writing of the purpose and mission of the church and specifically the mission of the local church, we felt we had arrived at a historical milestone. For the first time in the life of the local church we had defined our purpose and reason for being.

The Objective

The stated objective was to edify the saints through worship. The word edify means "to instruct or enlighten so as to encourage moral or spiritual improvement."⁷ We began to emphasize spiritual development in at least four areas:

⁶ See Mission Statement, Appendix A

⁷ William Morris, ed. The American Heritage Dictionary (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980).

1. The teaching ministry became a central focus of attention. Wednesday evening services became a time of fewer testimonies and more Bible study. Sunday evening became less of an evangelistic hour. A teaching ministry with emphasis on nurture and guidance of the saints was conducted.

2. The preaching of the Word was directed to nurture and edification of the saints. The preaching had been a tool for evangelism. It was a message for the sinner. This emphasis has changed; preaching and worship are now the basic source of spiritual strength and development of the saints.

3. Fellowship in our church became more than talking over a cup of coffee; it became a way of life. The people became more open toward those inside and outside the church. There was no longer the feeling of a closed communion where you had to identify with the people by the way you look or act. Instead, it became a communion of believers whose common denominator was Jesus Christ as our Saviour. The members became more receptive and benevolent to each other; not because of unity of belief but because of their common goal and faith in Christ.

4. The fourth area of emphasis for edifying the saints was in the discipling program. The major focus of attention was in getting the people committed to a daily devotional life. They were challenged to begin a daily devotional life. This included a twelve-lesson study for all believers. These lessons were referred to as the "Timothy Lessons." They were provided by the General Department of Extension and Evangelism of the Wesleyan Church.⁸ All participants were asked to complete one lesson each week as part of their daily devotional life of prayer and

Bible reading.

After the completion of the twelve lessons, the participant began phase two of the program which involved the use of the Spiritual Notebook.⁹ This notebook was arranged by the pastor and the Congregational Reflection Group to meet the specific needs of the people. The four areas of concern were: (1) church attendance, (2) Bible reading, (3) prayer life, and (4) sermon note taking.

New participants in the program were assisted by persons who were in phase two. This particular aspect of the program was referred to as the Shepherding Program.

The Method

The method involved the people identifying and using their spiritual gifts for service. The concept of spiritual gifts and how they may be used in the local church was first introduced by a series of sermons by the pastor. The series started May 13, 1980, and continued through August 10, 1980.¹⁰ The purpose of the sermons was to establish the theological understanding and application of spiritual gifts in the local church.

The practical application of this concept was applied to all areas of ministry in the church. All who were used in ministry were asked to cooperate in three areas:

⁸ John Maxwell and Joe Sawyer, Timothy Lessons, The Wesleyan Church, 1976, Marion, IN.

⁹ See Spiritual Notebook, Appendix B

¹⁰ See Sermons, Appendix C

1. They were asked to identify their spiritual gifts by the use of the questionnaire, Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts, by Kenneth Kinghorn. After completing this questionnaire, they transferred the results into present day ministries in the local church.¹¹

2. After they identified their area of service for the coming year, they were asked to accept a position given to them by the local church board and the congregation. Their acceptance of the appointment was one method of confirming their spiritual gift.¹²

3. After they identified and accepted a position of service, they were to use their God-given abilities to carry out the duties of the job description for that particular position of service.¹³

This contextual project can be illustrated by examples of people in the church who have identified and used their spiritual gifts for ministry. These illustrations are true accounts of members in the local congregation who volunteered their testimony concerning their personal life in the church.

Example One

Mr. Wilson has been a member of the church for over forty years. He has served in various ways, always "trying to follow the leading of the Lord." For the past few years he has ministered in singing and outreach services. He has natural ability and talent in these areas and is

¹¹Kenneth Kinghorn, Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky. A questionnaire on discovering your spiritual gifts. Used by permission.

¹²See List of Ministries in Local Church, Appendix D.

¹³See illustration of Job Description, Appendix E.

willing to use them in any way possible.

In the last three years, Mr. Wilson has been able to affirm his spiritual gifts in singing and outreach ministry. This affirmation has brought new confidence and spiritual maturity into his life. He now serves out of a deep commitment to identify, accept, and use his spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ.

Example Two

Gayle has been attending the church for the past five years. She has natural ability and talent in many areas and is willing to serve wherever needed.

Last year she came into the office to discuss her future plans in the church and her ministry. She related how God had been affirming her in the gift of teaching and that she felt led into the youth ministry. At that time the youth director had resigned and the position was open. As a result of our conversation, she was appointed as youth director.

This appointment has proven to be profitable for both Gayle and the church. It was a commitment on the basis of identifying and using her spiritual gifts. She describes her feeling and attitude as "I feel good inside, and I am enthused. There is a positive emotional, psychological, and spiritual contentment."

Of course, Gayle does not limit her service to the youth ministry. She serves in other areas but feels God has definitely led her into the ministry for youth at the present time.

Example Three

Bob is a retired businessman who has felt God calling him into

teaching from the time of his conversion. The contextual project has not been so useful in helping him identify his gifts as it has been in helping him affirm his spiritual gifts.

Bob has taught the adult class for years and has given himself to preparation and study. His gift of teaching has been affirmed by the success of his ministry and also the questionnaire. He also is able to utilize his gift in teaching the Wesleyan Evangelical Leadership Development course for the past two years. He describes his ministry as "fresh today and even deeper than when I first found Christ. Fulfilling my gift of teaching has greatly helped my spiritual growth and has brought success to my service."

Example Four

Sheila has been a member of the church approximately eight years. Even though she taught prior to this program, she is now able to see her ministry in a different perspective.

She has natural talent and ability working with children, but it was not until the last two years that she has been able to identify these talents as spiritual gifts. By the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the use of the questionnaire, she has been able to affirm her gift of teaching. Her service to the church is based on God's call and not on duty of appointment. As a result, her life is blessed with doing God's will and spiritual maturity.

Example Five

Ken is a licensed plumber in the state of Kentucky. He is cooperative and faithful in many areas of service, but during the past

two years, he has been able to identify his ability in repairs and maintenance as a gift of God to be used for the church. He feels this is a gift of God in his life and is, therefore, willing to give of his time and service to the church.

What may normally be considered as a "non-spiritual" job, Ken has been able to identify as his gift to be used for the church.

The Goal

The objective was to edify the saints so they may do the work of ministry. The method was for each member of the body of Christ to identify, accept, and use their spiritual gifts for ministry. The goal was that all the saints may do the work of ministry. We are still in the process but are looking and working toward this church becoming a healthy body of Christ--the people of God.

Evaluation

A detailed evaluation of the Contextual Project may be premature considering the short time of exposure and application of these concepts. However, we can clearly see some evidence of both positive and negative aspects of these concepts as they relate to the ministry in the local church.

Some of the apparent concerns and weaknesses of the program are:

1. It is not a short-range program that will instantly revolutionize the church. This perhaps is negative in that most churches are looking for instant success. This is our third year in the program, and we feel there is so much to learn and initiate in the area of lay ministry.

2. The Contextual Project is not an automatic solution to an increase in statistics. The emphasis is on the quality of the people who serve. However, it is not totally at the expense of statistical increases. Statistical increases seem to be inevitable when the church is functioning as the people of God and all are ministering in their God-given capacity.

3. Most of the participants were under fifty years of age. It was difficult to get the older people involved in ministry. It has not been a lifestyle or a theological question of concern. This perhaps is not unique to this project because older people are slower and more reserved in accepting new concepts and ideas. However, as a result of this, some feel alienated from the project because of their own lack of participation. This brings confusion and lack of enthusiasm to those who do not participate.

4. There has been a tendency to keep the project within the bounds of the Congregational Reflection Group, the local church board, and the Sunday School staff. Often the flow of information, participation, and enthusiasm seemed to stop at this level. We were often confronted with the problem of getting all the people to see and understand what we were doing.

It seems that the positive aspects in our church were overwhelming and far outweighed the weaknesses. Several results have developed from the study and initiation of the Contextual Project.

1. The pastor sees his position as an enabler of the people to help them identify and use their gifts in ministry. This has now lowered the concept of the clergy but has elevated the functions of the clergy and laity to their God-given place in the body of Christ. This has been

a positive aspect for several reasons: (1) It has clearly identified the role of the pastor as an enabler of the flock. He is not called to do the work of ministry, rather, he is called to enable or provide its people with the direction, help, and assistance so they may do the work of ministry. (2) It has resolved much of the frustration the pastor felt from the expectations of the people. For the people to feel they have called a pastor to do the work of the ministry is a very frustrating and sometimes an impossible task. For the people to understand their role as one of ministry and the pastor's function as an enabler provides a healthy environment for the church. (3) It has provided a wholesome psychological and spiritual feeling in the life of the pastor. He is not driven into a frenzy at the thought of a statistical report. Rather, he is led by a God-given call in a certain direction with a purpose in mind, which gives a feeling of wholeness to life. It gives purpose and meaning to ministry. (4) It provided the pastor with more trust and confidence in the ability of the people. He no longer expects performance beyond God-given ability. The laity are elevated to the function of ministry as God calls and uses them.

2. This Contextual Project produced a very positive response in the congregation: (1) From the time of the seminar with Dr. Goodwin, the people felt they were working toward a definite purpose and mission. It was not a confused assortment of programs, ideas, and directions but an orderly and purposeful direction for the future of the church. (2) Participation of the new people for different types of ministry is attributed to this project. When people understand the nature of the church and the concept of serving, they are motivated into action. We

are not at the point where all are serving or actively involved, but the increase in participation has been meaningful and significant. (3) The confidence of the people to do ministry has produced greater self-esteem and self-worth. They see themselves as gifted and, therefore, are able to do the work of ministry. (4) We have far less problems with attrition and drop-outs. This is because the people are doing what they are called to do and not as a result of pressure or impulse from the pastor or local church board.¹⁴

In this Contextual Project the emphasis was placed on the church as the body of Christ. It was insisted that in the final analysis it was the individual who was called of God; it was he who stands before God; it was he who must personally relate to God.

We are not presenting a blueprint or a set of steps to be taken which can be pursued with a guaranteed result. However, the congregation is aware of its mission and is responsible to God's call. We can allow him to use us to serve His purpose. The acceptance of that responsibility assures us of the gift of His power.

Then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every word of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in the deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph. 4:14-16).

¹⁴See further evaluation of people, Appendix F.

Chapter Seven

THE SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary statement concerning this study. A statement of the problem, the research methodology, the basic findings, conclusions and projections will be given.

The Problem

This study has addressed the problem of the ineffective function of the laity in ministry. Many lay people are not serving the church in any capacity. Some are working with little results. Many are serving and appear to be effective, but in the long range, they do not contribute to the body of Christ. Generally, lay people are not using their gifts of ministry, therefore, the church operates beneath its potential and responsibility.

The problem brought into focus several underlying questions. What is the church? What is the nature of the church? How do laity serve in the church? How are spiritual gifts related to ministry? What is the relationship between the laity and the clergy? What are the basic roles of the clergy? These questions formed the basis for the reasoning and research of this study.

The Research

The research for this study has combined both theory and practice.

The biblical study has focused on the nature of the church and the basic relationship between God and His people. A brief history of the laity was described to show their relationship to the church at different periods of church history. Spiritual gifts were defined and described. The Contextual Project provided an opportunity to make a practical application of the biblical concepts of ministry.

The basic research method used in this study was descriptive. It expanded and made application of already existing principles and concepts. Some historical data was used in this study on the history of the laity and the early church. In the Contextual Project there was some utilization of experimental techniques for evaluation and clarification.

Chapter One was the introduction. It described the problem, the hypotheses, delimitations, theoretical framework, related literature, and the research methods used in the study.

Chapter Two was a study of the Old Testament covenant relationship between God and His chosen people. Chapter Three was a New Testament study of several concepts related to the nature of the church.

Chapter Four was a brief historical summary of lay ministry. Lay participation in the church was shown in relationship to the various stages of church history. Chapter Five introduced the concept of spiritual gifts. It defined and described their function in ministry.

Chapter Six synthesized the previous four chapters and showed how they were related to the contextual project. It explained how these concepts of lay ministry were used in the local church.

The Findings

As a result of this study, the basic findings are:

1. The Old Testament covenant relationship between God and His people constitute the beginning of the church--the called people of God. It was a call initiated by God. He chose His people and enlisted them in His service in a special manner (Ch. 2, pp. 20, 21). This covenant relationship demanded a response from the people. It carried with it responsibility and service to those inside the community and those outside the covenant community (Ch. 2, p. 20).

2. All the New Testament word studies pointed to two basic concepts: (1) All believers are one in Christ; (2) The body of Christ can function only if different members perform different tasks and different services (Ch. 3, pp. 60, 61).

3. The church is the body of Christ and all the people of God are members of that body. This concept eliminates all barriers of race or creed and makes all the people of God equal on the basis of their identification with and in Christ. All believers belong to the people of God by God's own choice and through their own human decision (Ch. 3, pp. 36-39).

4. All the people of God have distinct functions in the body of Christ. The body as a whole can only function if all the members serve in their respective roles. (Ch. 3, pp. 34, 35).

5. The New Testament concepts of ecclesia (Ch. 3, pp. 27-30), the body of Christ (Ch. 3, pp. 36-39), and ministry (Ch. 3, pp. 56-61) affirm the following principles: (1) The church does not only have ministry, the church is ministry. It is the instrument of God's redemptive purpose for the world. It is for the world both in what it is and in what it does (Ch. 3, pp. 60, 61). (2) Every believer shares in the total

ministry of the church. The body is composed of all who are united to Christ through baptism of the Spirit. The body is a unit, though it is composed of many parts. Just as all the members of the body are a unit, it is equally significant that the body is composed of different members (Ch. 3, pp. 37, 38).

6. The use of spiritual gifts constitutes ministry in the church. Paul's concept of grace and gifts in Chapter Five provides the basis for this summary (Ch. 5, pp. 82-87). (1) All gifts come from God (Eph. 4:11, 12; I Cor. 12:6; Rom. 12:6). (2) Spiritual gifts are given to every believer. (3) Spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of others (Rom. 12:4, 5; I Cor. 12:7). (4) Spiritual gifts are to be used for ministry and service (I Cor. 12:7; I Pet. 4:10). (5) The church exists in so far as it can fulfill the purpose for which it is called. The church cannot be the true people of God if the members are not serving the purpose to which they are called. The only way the local church can fulfill its mission is for each individual member to function and serve in the body according to his/her spiritual gifts (Ch. 5, pp. 90-94).

Conclusions and Projections

This study has been a source of inspiration and challenge to the writer as a pastor and enabler of the flock. The following conclusions and projections are important for this summary chapter.

1. The academic process of research and writing has provided meaningful insight into an area of interest. It has provided the biblical evidence necessary to confirm the basic understanding of the nature of the church and ministry. This study has increased the writer's confidence

in the laity and their ability to do the work of ministry. The laity are no longer seen as tools to be used, but as equal parts of the body to do the work of ministry. This study has established the basis for further research and development in lay ministry.

2. The concepts arrived at in this study are not a panacea for all the distress and trouble in the local church. It is a biblical and healthy concept of ministry and will eliminate much of the frustration felt by the church. It is not an antidote to all its problems.

3. There is the danger that in the pursuit of the particular gifts some may neglect the duties that are normative for all Christians. For example, someone may say, "I contribute occasionally to the church, but I don't attempt anything like tithing. I haven't been blessed with the gift of giving." This attitude is an abuse of the concept of lay ministry. One cannot allow the gifts to obliterate the privileges and responsibilities of all believers to worship, pray, give and witness.

4. The concluding evidence shows that all believers have a ministry in the church. The emphasis is on doing, working, and performing. It would be a false interpretation of this study to conclude that doing ministry is more important than being in Christ. It was not the intent of the writer to overemphasize doing ministry at the expense of being in Christ.

5. Some may conclude from this study that the writer is anti-clergy and sees no meaningful function for them in the church. However, in the writer's position, the opposite is evident and true. To lift the position of the laity up to ministry enhances the function of the clergy. When the laity begin to serve in their respective roles according to their gifts, the clergy will be able to function as God has called them

to serve. These concepts enhance both the clergy and the lay position in the body of Christ.

6. The pastor's role as an enabler of the people has produced some significant changes over the past three years. He is not frustrated in his efforts to get the "job done." The purpose and emphasis of his ministry has developed into nurture and discipleship of his people. His faith in the lay people to work in ministry has increased and produced confidence and faith in their ability to serve. His actual work load has decreased because the people are responding to their call to ministry in the church. Many more people are serving the church today than before. Attendance and offerings this year have exceeded any previous year.

7. Here are some observations from a survey of the congregation of the Highland Ave. Wesleyan Church. This survey represents a cross-section of the membership in age and service to the church.¹

(1) It is evident that many of the people were not aware of the contextual project. Only 63% were aware of the mission and purpose statement of the church. However, the same percentage (63%) felt the program had made a significant contribution to the church.

(2) Under the church section of the survey, a large percent of the people knew the concepts related to the biblical nature of the church (90%), but only 50-60% were able to affirm that they knew the purpose, objective, and goals of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church. Over 90% said they were in harmony with their relationship to the church and the direction it had taken.

¹See Appendix G.

(3) Over 95% said they believe that all the people of God possess spiritual gifts but only 57% are using their gifts at the present time. Approximately 50% said they had been confirmed in the spiritual gifts while 60% said they had been able to identify their gifts. This represents excellent progress in their knowledge of the gifts but a slow process in the people identifying and using their gifts in ministry.

(4) Under the discipleship section, 60% said they were aware of the discipleship program in the church while 37% said they were participating in the program. Over 90% said they feel daily devotions are essential to their spiritual life and 77% are presently having daily devotions.

(5) Under the section on the pastor, 83% feel they see significant changes in his leadership ability. Ninety-three percent see the pastor's role as an enabler of the people. Over 80% feel it is easy to communicate with the pastor about their ministry in the church and 83% feel the pastor is presently meeting the needs of the church.

This survey does not reveal all the details of the Contextual Project or the feeling of all the people. It is indicative of the general feeling and understanding of the people about what has been happening in their church over the past three years. These brief conclusions could be drawn from this survey: (1) Generally, the people have the biblical knowledge concerning the nature of the church, gifts and lay ministry; but they are slow in getting the application of these concepts into a practical and workable function in the local church. (2) The program was not communicated sufficiently to the lay person in the pew who was not serving on the Congregational Reflection Group, the local church

board, or the Sunday School staff. These lay people seem to be far less informed than those serving on important boards and committees. (3) The people overwhelmingly favor the concepts and programs being utilized in the church. They are pleased with the pastor's role as an enabler. They are committed to the identification and utilization of spiritual gifts.

There are several projections to be identified as a result of this project dissertation. These projections are:

(1) The local church government may be altered by these concepts of lay ministry and the use of spiritual gifts. Some positions are presently filled by the election process. A high view of lay ministry may develop a "consensus" or "common agreement" approach to church government. The local church will have to analyze and accommodate the church government with its theology of lay ministry.

(2) The church is committed to seeing every believer confirmed for ministry. Perhaps such a confirmation should be a prerequisite for church membership. When new believers are received into the church, they are confirmed into ministry. However, there would have to be some caution in becoming legalistic and dogmatic in this approach.

(3) Further research and study is a priority of the pastor. The Contextual Project will be refined by an annual evaluation of the mission and purpose statement. Each believer will be asked to give an annual evaluation of his/her own ministry. The goal is for all the people of God to identify, accept, and use their spiritual gifts for ministry.

(4) These concepts on the nature of the church and lay ministry will be translated into a seminar format. The purpose will be to share these principles with other congregations.

(5) Moving to a new congregation would inevitably mean some adjustment in leadership on the part of this pastor. A temporary change in leadership style would be appropriate if it is for the purpose of leading the people of the congregation toward an understanding of the nature of the church and utilizing their gifts for ministry.

This project dissertation has been an exciting and challenging opportunity for this writer. It has made an invaluable contribution to his life and ministry.

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APPENDIX A

The Mission and Purpose of the Church

The Universal Church is the Body of Christ, founded upon the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit; a unit of Saints gifted to perform the various functions of the body.

The mission of the Universal Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is to nurture and edify the Saints to enable them to reach the lost through the communication of the Gospel, so that all may know and glorify Him in His fullness.

The Mission and Purpose of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church

The mission and purpose of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church is to worship God in the fullness of His Spirit. Our objective is to edify the Saints that they may, through their various gifts, minister to the people and needs of this community without respect to persons.

APPENDIX B

The Spiritual Notebook sections are printed on 8½ by 5¼ sheets of paper which makes it difficult to insert original copies into this appendix. However, here are examples of the four sections of the book.

Section I - Church Attendance Record

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, July 5, 12, 19, 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27 Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27.

MORNING WORSHIP: Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, July 5, 12, 19, 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27.

EVENING SERVICE: Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, July 5, 12, 19, 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Sept. 6, 13, 20, 26, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27.

BIBLE STUDY: Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27, June 3, 19, 17, 24, July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Aug. 5, 12, 19, 26, Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Oct. 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov. 4, 11, 18, 25, Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.

Circle date for present--Mark X for absent.

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Section II - Scripture Reading for 1981

We have outlined the entire New Testament for devotional reading this year illustrated as follows:

JANUARY	1 -	MATTHEW	1:1-17
	2 -		1:18-25
	3 -		2:1-23
	4 -		3:1-17
	5 -		4:1-17
	6 -		4:18-25
	7 -		5:1-26
	8 -		5:27-48
	9 -		6:1-18
	10 -		6:19-34
	11 -		7:1-12
	12 -		7:13-29
	13 -		8:1-17
	14 -		8:18-34
	15 -		9:1-17

After they read the scripture, they are to fill out this short response form:

BIBLE READING

DATE:

SCRIPTURE:

MAIN SUBJECT:

THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

HOW CAN THIS BE APPLIED TO MY LIFE:

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Section III - Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF _____ 1981

I AM THANKFUL FOR:MY PRAYER REQUEST:

SPIRITUAL NEEDS:

PHYSICAL NEEDS:

OTHERS:

ANSWERS TO PRAYER:

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Section IV - Sermon Notes

Each participant is asked to take notes of all sermons as follows:

MORNING WORSHIP

DATE:

SUBJECT:

SCRIPTURE:

MAIN THOUGHTS:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME THROUGH HIS SPOKEN WORD?

EVENING VESPERS

DATE:

SUBJECT:

SCRIPTURE:

MAIN THOUGHTS:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME THROUGH HIS SPOKEN WORD?

APPENDIX C

Series of Sermons

Scriptural basis used: I Corinthians 12
Romans 12
Ephesians 4

This was a three-part series of sermons:

Part I - What is a Spiritual Gift?

Part II - The Enabling Gifts

Part III - The Serving Gifts

In Part I we defined spiritual gifts by showing that they are:

1. Not singular
2. Gifts are not talents.
3. Gifts are not offices.
4. Gifts are not ministries.
5. Gifts are not the fruit of the Spirit.

We defined a spiritual gift as a special qualification granted by the Spirit to every believer to empower him to serve within the framework of the body of Christ.

In Part II we gave scriptural evidence and defined the enabling gifts as apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, shepherding, and teaching. In each instance we emphasized two areas of concern:

1. The New Testament concept of the gift and how it was used in that day.
2. How the gift may be translated into today's church and used for ministry.

APPENDIX C (cont'd)

In Part III we discussed the serving gifts. We listed them as the gifts of exhortation, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, discernment, helps, serving administration, giving aid, giving, compassion, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. In each instance we emphasized two areas of concern:

1. The New Testament concept of the gift and how it was used in that day.
2. How the gift may be translated into today's church and used for service.

This series was given on Sunday evenings, May 13, 1980 through August 10, 1980.

APPENDIX E

(Example)

Job Description for Local Church Youth Director

Elected or Appointed _____

1. Be in charge of weekly youth fellowship.
2. Attend all staff meetings.
3. Plan monthly party or outing for youth.
4. Attend and promote monthly skating party.
5. Promote youth camp.
6. Visit homes of kids once during year.
7. Call or visit all absentees.
8. Plan transportation for all kids.
9. Be at youth building by 7:20 P.M.
10. Make sure youth building is locked and lights out.
11. Organize and promote fund raising each year.
12. Plan and promote annual youth revival.
13. Give diligent attention to Standard for Service

 Signed

 Pastor
Our Standard for Service

1. Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of my life.
2. I will give wholehearted support to my church, my fellow workers, and my pastor.
3. I will pay my tithe into this church.
4. I will make an honest effort to attend all services.
5. Devotions will be part of my walk with God.
6. I will fulfill by job description as it relates to my area of responsibility.
7. I adhere to the basic doctrine of the Wesleyan Church.

APPENDIX F

On February 23, 1981, we called a meeting of many of the participating members for the purpose of evaluating the Contextual Project. Here are some excerpts from their written evaluations:

The people are more receptive to each other. There is a general feeling of happiness in the church. K. Eaton

The last three years have been especially blessed by God giving leadership and help to the people in using their gifts in the ministry. W. Wilson

My pastor has helped me to understand and use my gifts. . . . There is a unified spirit in the church. . . . It is constantly moving forward without being driven. J. Caudill

I can see a definite pattern developing in our church. . . . I think it is the best approach in having laity realize their position in respect to the body of Christ. B. Starks

I sense a new awareness of an excitement in the atmosphere of the church. . . . I feel a close tie with my brothers and sisters. . . . The spiritual notebooks are a great help to me. . . . My devotions are more meaningful and consistent. P. Blackburn

The seminars by Dr. Goodwin were a very enlightening and definitely a turning point for our church. . . . Our pastor has been nurturing the saints in his preaching. . . . The spiritual notebooks are very helpful. . . . I feel we have been discovering where God wants us to serve. T. Caudill

The emphasis has been on the laity discovering their gifts and putting them to work in the kingdom. B. Bramel

I have a greater understanding of myself and have found my place in the church. G. Edwards

The program has definitely helped our church. . . . The people are beginning to volunteer for different duties. I have become excited about knowing there are things I can help with. . . . To identify my gifts was to find myself in God's kingdom. . . . The program has given us a new sense of direction and togetherness. . . . I am proud to be a part of such an endeavor. P. Doellman

Dr. Goodwin's seminar enlightened us to the purpose and goals of our church. . . . Our pastor has showed us how to examine ourselves and to know the will of God in our life. . . . People have been awakened to their responsibilities. . . . We realize that the ministry of the church is not the pastor's responsibility alone. S. Yeary

APPENDIX G

This survey was given to the congregation of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church on Sunday evening, April 26, 1981.

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
	(Percentage)		
1. I attended the week-end seminar held by Dr. Wayne Goodwin in May, 1979.	<u>40</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>7</u>
2. Are you familiar with the mission and purpose statement of our church?	<u>63</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>23</u>
3. Are you able to verbalize our mission statement?	<u>43</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>10</u>
4. The Contextual Project is a program to help the laity identify their place in ministry.	<u>63</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>27</u>
5. Do you know what the Congregational Reflection Committee is?	<u>67</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>10</u>
6. Do you know who serves on this committee?	<u>50</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>27</u>
7. Do you know when your pastor entered the Doctor of Ministry Program?	<u>57</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>13</u>
8. Do you know when he plans to receive his degree?	<u>73</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>3</u>
9. Do you occasionally discuss this program with other members of the church?	<u>33</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>3</u>
10. Do you feel this program has made a significant contribution to our church?	<u>63</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>CHURCH</u>			
1. Do you know the mission of the Highland Avenue Wesleyan Church?	<u>83</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>3</u>
2. To understand ministry, we must first understand the nature of the church.	<u>87</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>10</u>
3. The body of Christ illustrated by Paul is a good example of the nature of the church.	<u>80</u>		<u>20</u>
4. For the church to function as the body of Christ, all the members must serve in ministry.	<u>73</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>

APPENDIX G (cont'd)

<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
	(Percentage)		
5. The main purpose of this church is to provide a place of worship.	<u>63</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>3</u>
6. The main objective of this church is to edify the saints.	<u>47</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>13</u>
7. The goal of this church is that all may do the work of ministry.	<u>67</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>
8. I see significant spiritual growth in our church over the past three years.	<u>93</u>		<u>7</u>
9. I feel more at peace in my relationship to the church than ever before.	<u>97</u>	<u>3</u>	
10. I am encouraged in the direction my church is taking.	<u>93</u>		<u>7</u>
<u>GIFTS</u>			
1. Our pastor preached a series of sermons on How to Discover Spiritual Gifts.	<u>93</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
2. Do you believe that all the people of God have gifts.	<u>97</u>		<u>3</u>
3. Have you been able to identify your spiritual gift?	<u>60</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>33</u>
4. Are you using your gift in ministry at the present time?	<u>57</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>33</u>
5. Do you believe that the use of spiritual gifts constitutes ministry?	<u>70</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>
6. There are several helpful tools and ways to identify spiritual gifts.	<u>90</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>
7. People who use their gifts in ministry are usually more spiritually mature.	<u>67</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>
8. The biblical method for working in the church is through the use of spiritual gifts.	<u>77</u>		<u>23</u>
9. I feel like I have been confirmed in my spiritual gift.	<u>50</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>7</u>
10. Paul talks about spiritual gifts in I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4.	<u>67</u>		<u>33</u>

APPENDIX G (cont'd)

DISCIPLESHIP

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
	(Percentage)		
1. Are you aware of any discipleship program in the church?	<u>60</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>
2. Do you know about the Timothy Lessons?	<u>43</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>
3. Discipleship and nurture is more important than evangelism.	<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>43</u>
4. Are you presently engaged in the discipleship program?	<u>37</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>17</u>
5. Have you completed the Timothy Lessons?	<u>37</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>7</u>
6. Are you familiar with the spiritual notebook?	<u>70</u>	<u>30</u>	
7. Are you presently using the spiritual notebook?	<u>57</u>	<u>43</u>	
8. Do you feel daily devotions are essential for one's spiritual life?	<u>97</u>	<u>3</u>	
9. Do you presently have a consistent daily devotional life?	<u>77</u>	<u>23</u>	
10. Are you presently serving as a shepherd?	<u>30</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>13</u>

PASTOR

1. I have seen significant change in the leadership of our pastor.	<u>83</u>		<u>17</u>
2. I see my pastor's role as an enabler of the people.	<u>93</u>		<u>7</u>
3. Eph. 4:11-12 is Scriptural basis for the pastor's role and function.	<u>53</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>40</u>
4. Preaching is more for nurture of the saints than for evangelism.	<u>53</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>30</u>
5. Nurture has been the emphasis of our church for the past three years.	<u>57</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>
6. Do you consider your pastor to be frustrated in his role as an enabler?	<u>17</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>7</u>
7. My pastor has helped me to identify my place in this church.	<u>83</u>		<u>17</u>
8. It is easy to communicate with my pastor about my ministry in the church.	<u>83</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>
9. Do you feel your pastor is serving the needs of the church.	<u>83</u>		<u>17</u>
10. Are you satisfied with your pastor's role as an enabler of the people?	<u>83</u>		<u>17</u>

Your time and cooperation is appreciated. Pastor Larry E. Freels



APR 82



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