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The Universal Priesthood of All Believers: A Study of Its Major Revivals With Implications For the Christian in Life and Ministry

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THE UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS: A STUDY
OF ITS MAJOR REVIVALS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE
CHRISTIAN IN LIFE AND MINISTRY

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by
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in and emphasis upon the place of the lay believer in the work of the ministry. While this may be the result of the Body Life Ministry Movement, the Church Renewal Movement, or the Charismatic Movement, the fact remains that great care must be exercised in order that an accurate understanding of this concept as well as a balanced application be maintained. It is therefore important that the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers be reviewed in light of earlier lay movements which then will lend insight and allow for a more accurate application of this doctrine.

It is also important to realize the biblical nature of this doctrine and that this is not a doctrine which had its inception with Martin Luther as some have supposed but in truth is a doctrine which has its origins in the opening chapters of the Pentateuch. It is for these reasons that the following study is offered. This study is not designed to be an exhaustive treatment of the doctrine but to be complete enough to present the doctrine as it is emphasized at several points in Judeo-Christian history. As the study progresses it is hoped that the reader may then gauge his understanding of the doctrine and as well decide upon the degree of appropriateness for his life and ministry. It is also the desire of the writer that this study will not only facilitate greater understanding on the part of the reader but that further thought

and further study will result.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the Judeo-Christian history there has been a continuous, if subtle, tension between the cleric and the layman in the matter of just where the authority and responsibility for ministry rest. While throughout Christian church history there have been movements like the Quakers and the Mennonites who have actively engaged in establishing the place of the believer in ministry, and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches such as the Assemblies of God who have sought to stir up the operation of the Charismata among the laity, the general ecclesiastical trend seems to have mitigated against the placing of the individual believer in ministry. Further, this seemed to be not so much a distinction of whether there is any ministry among the laity but more a question of just how much of the ministry is released to the laity. Therefore this thesis seeks to show that God's plan for his chosen people is the priesthood of the laity and that an analysis of the biblical-theological literature, the literature centered on Martin Luther's life and theology, and literature from the church renewal movement will support this contention.

It is important for an understanding of this thesis to note something of the rationale for the choosing of these three eras out of the whole of the church history narrative. As the matter was studied, it became apparent that while there were many occasions of revival, there were only three which had a broad influence upon the whole church. An interesting phenomenon that surfaced in this study is that the acceptance or rejection of this doctrine in so far as the general church was concerned

seemed to be cyclical. That is to say that the doctrine seems to have moved through various stages of emphasis or lack thereof. It is at these points of revival that this study is centered.

Justification of the Problem

The Church Renewal Movement, the Body Life Ministry Movement, and the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement have once again called upon the church to review the place of the believer in ministry. In each of these cases, as with other movements throughout church history, the question of just what is the justification for the involvement of the laity and what balance is to be expected among the leadership of office gifts and the laity is present. Focusing upon this idea Eastwood notes,

The doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers underlies all the great and far reaching religious movements of the past five hundred years. Apart from that doctrine it is impossible either to understand or appreciate the cause of the Reformation, the impetus of the Puritan Movement, or the widespread influence of the Evangelical Revival.¹

A further justification for this study is the thought that believer-priesthood has its inception and development in the Reformation. There is, however, ample evidence that this doctrine has its origins not in the Reformation, not in even the New Testament but in the Old Testament.

Limitation of the Problem

There are three limitations which will be placed upon this study. First, the paper will not present subject matter in a cultural fashion

¹Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962), p. ix.

except as the various quotes and cites contain material relevant to the particular culture in which the author was situated. The cultural application is likewise absent from all sections of this study with the exception of the final one.

A second limitation is that while there have been other revivals of this doctrine throughout recorded history, this paper, because it does not treat those revivals, is in no way suggesting that they were of less value than the four with which it deals. For instance, the great Wesleyan Revivals occasioned the class meetings which involved lay believers extensively. Also the pietistic movement produced not only response on the part of the believer but also action. Moody, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Edwards, all of the great revivalists called people, not just to repentance but as well to action. Finally, the doctrinal thought of many denominational founders such as Menno Simons and George Fox was rich in thought regarding believer-priesthood.

The rationale for the study of the three eras of revival in this paper is that they have a greater general impact across political, geographic, and denominational lines than many of the previously alluded to movements. Another element of this limitation is the importance of the biblical section and the authority which must be accorded to them.

A third and final limitation is that this is not an apology for the doctrine of believer-priesthood or its application. This is simply an empirical study of the biblical record, historical thought, and current understanding. With this in mind, it is therefore important for the reader to come to some understanding of the facts which are represented in an objective manner. Any subjective reaction on the part of the reader is not intended to be a part of the result of this study.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In the course of this study the terminology employed will be based upon common usage contemporary to the writing of this paper. Even so there is a need for some clarification in order that a clear understanding of the various sections may be achieved.

The Universal Priesthood of the Believer

While the definition of the phrase, Universal Priesthood of the Believer, may well fit in the section devoted to Martin Luther, since it is the major theme of this paper, it will now be considered. The word universal seems to be a direct reference to the thought that the ". . . churchly priesthood . . . is now universally distinguished from the laity."² The thought seems to be that for Martin Luther the universal distinction between laity and clergy is no longer there, that in fact there is a universal priesthood that includes all.

Priesthood for Martin Luther means that every man who is a Christian is capable of ministry to others. This ministry included the administration of the Word of God as well as the sacraments. So, the believer-priest is authorized on the basis of scripture to do all that was formerly reserved for the cleric. It is significant that the word, all, appears as a modifier of believers. That is to say that every believer is capable although it seems that some do not choose to fulfill this responsibility.

Laity and/or Clergy

While most indepth definitions are usually included in the

²Hugh T. Kerr, ed., A Compend of Luther's Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 138.

section most favorable to the information contained in that definition because of the importance of the terms clergy and laity, they will be dealt with at the outset.

The laity, as it has evolved in the English language and throughout this paper, denotes those who are not of any priestly order or caste and as such are not clergy. First, general consideration will be given to the words for laity and clergy in the Old Testament. Following this, consideration will be given to the New Testament words for these concepts.

Laity in the Old Testament. Laity in the Old Testament with some exception is usually the word לֵוִי and is defined as, ". . . a people, so called from their being collected together . . ." ³ while there are variations in the contexts which Gesenius cites, there are two ideas which are common to all applications. These are, the idea of collected and the idea of people. Gesenius goes on to point out that this לֵוִי is from the root, לָוַי which adds two new ideas in the following definition ". . . to gather together, to collect, to join together . . ." ⁴ An example of this in scripture is in Deuteronomy 4:20.

A second word, קָהָל , appears but with a great deal less frequency. Again Gesenius points out that this word refers to ". . . an appointed meeting, an assembly, specifically . . . the congregation of Israelites, fully קָהָל לְאַתְנָחֵד Ex. 12:3; . . ." ⁵ Due to the infrequent use of the

³Samuel P. Tregelles, trans., Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), p. 635.

⁴Ibid., p. 639.

⁵Ibid., pp. 607-608

term however, it seems that the text places the greater emphasis on עָוָה .

There are several other words for people, but none of them seem to embody the three ideas of gathering, collection, and joining. For instance, עָוָה carries the idea of a general collection of people and is employed in Psalm 117:1,⁶ "Praise the Lord all nations, Laud Him, all peoples!" בְּנֵי is employed in the sense of sons,⁷ and finally עָוָה refers again to a general people, a nation⁸ but does not place stress on the previously noted three elements of עָוָה .

Thus, the elements common to the Laity, the people in the Old Testament are seen to be a gathering, a collection, and a joining together of people. These terms, however, do not seem to exclude the priesthood.

Clergy in the Old Testament. Clergy in the Old Testament is found centered in three words. These are קָהָן which in the context of this study refers to the ". . . use of the office of priest" ⁹ An example of this word is found in Exodus 31:10, ". . . with which to carry on their priesthood . . ." or ". . . with which to minister as priests."¹⁰ Similarly, כֹּהֵן , refers to office or function of a priest but is used with much less frequency.¹¹ The third word, הַכֹּהֵן , makes reference to a single priest, but also may refer to the high priest or the annointed high priest.¹²

⁶Ibid., p. 57.

⁷Ibid., pp. 125-127.

⁸Ibid., p. 427.

⁹Ibid., p. 385.

¹⁰Exodus 31:10 (NASB), with marginal notation.

¹¹Tregelles, p. 185.

¹²Ibid., p. 385.

The significance of this matter of priesthood in the Old Testament is that, "The first traces of priesthood in the earliest sources make it plain that originally the primary function of the priest is the delivery of oracles rather than sacrifice."¹³ Thus the thought does not seem to be so much a matter of a special caste but of a difference in function.

Laity in the New Testament. Laity in the New Testament is characterized by the word *λαός*. This is to be distinguished from *ὄχλος*, a crowd or multitude who have gathered, a throng¹⁴ and *ἐθνος*, a multitude associated or living together, a nation.¹⁵ These distinctions will be developed further in chapter three. The important point is that in each of these words there does not seem to be a pronounced emphasis upon a class system. The idea presented seems to be to the contrary--a comprehensive, inclusive gathering of a people. However, that is not to say that some social order is not to be a part of these gatherings for in all social interaction, a social order develops.

The Clergy in the New Testament. The matter of the place of the spiritual leader is one of the basic elements of chapter three. Therefore, no consideration will be given to it here.

The Distinction Between Laity and Clergy. There are points where the distinction between laity and clergy tend to appear. Referring to the

¹³Gottlob Schrenk, ". . .," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. III, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Fredrick (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 260.

¹⁴Joseph H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), p. 470.

¹⁵Thayer, p. 168.

period between the Old and the New Testament, Thayer notes, "ὁ λαός the people (of Israel) is distinguished from its princes and rulers [(1 Esdr. i.10; v. 45; Judith viii.9,11; etc.)]"16

Second, this thought is carried further in the usage of λαός in the early church.

The expression λαός is often used for the congregation assembled in worship (as distinct from its leaders). Cf. Just. AP., I, 67, 5: When the prayer is ended ὁ λαός ἐπευφημῇ λέγων τὸ Ἀμήν ,17

A third view of this thought is hinted at in Acts 13:15. In this scripture the synogogue officials seem to be also leading in the ministry or at least directing the activities of the gathering.

The reader is alerted to the repeated tendency for the evolvement of this distinction between the laity and clergy. This is a phenomenon which will be seen to characterize each period of this scenario to one degree or another. Therefore the term layman or laity in the course of this study will most often refer to those who are distinguished from the clergy.

Other Terms for Definition

Priesthood as it is employed in this paper is divided into two major categories. First is the priesthood of the individual as has already been discussed in the previous section. References in the text to this level of priesthood will be clear from the surrounding material. The second category of priesthood is that of the hierarchical model of

¹⁶Thayer, p. 372.

¹⁷Hermann Strathmen, "λαός," TDNT, Vol. IV, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 57.

priesthood. This category contains those, although variously titled, who saw themselves as functioning over other individuals. Included in this category are, Levitical and Aaronic priests, professional priests, professional clergy, hierarchical priests, and as well Roman hierarchy.

God's chosen people for the purposes of this study shift from the individual in Old Testament Judaism to the New Testament believer in Christ. This as well applies at the outset of the study to the corporate nation of Israel and later to the body of Christ as it progresses throughout history.

There are several terms in chapter four which need clarification. First, Roman, Romanist, Papal, and Roman Church are terms which are used interchangeably to refer to the Roman Catholic Church and its constituent parts. Second, Lutheranism is employed one time in the text and in that usage it refers to the Lutheran Church. All other references which contain the word "Luther" pertain to Martin Luther.

Servitude is another term which needs clarification, not so much because it is used with a meaning which is at variance with common usage but because, the church in many instances has tended to give the word a meaning associated with the already discussed hierarchical model of priesthood. The reader is alerted to the fact that servitude in this paper is in the traditional sense of the word, that is, taking on the work of a servant.¹⁸

Ministry is the final word to be considered. For the purposes

¹⁸Should the reader have any further interest in pursuing the matter of biblical servanthood, there is a very fine thesis by Mr. Wayne Schock that does an excellent job of covering this subject.

Wayne Schock, "Biblical Servanthood: A Pattern for Christian Life and Ministry" (unpublished Masters thesis, Western Evangelical Seminary, 1976).

of this paper ministry is not solely the activity of a professional clergy but the activity of all believers as they seek to meet the needs of others. The emphasis here is upon the individual aspects of ministry, as the believer functions in both the vertical relationships of service as well as the horizontal relationships of service.

PRESUPPOSITIONS

The one presupposition which is basic to this study is that the Word of God in the autographs is the infallible and unique measure of truth and faith. Carrying this a step further, the Bible is its own best commentary and as such should be the first source consulted in the establishment and subsequent activity of faith and life.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The method of this study will be to survey various periods of church history including the Old Testament and the New Testament, the life and writings of Martin Luther, and various works pertaining to the Body Life Movement and the Church Renewal Movement. Further, various works will be cited as they apply to matters under consideration. There are three overriding purposes in these procedures. First, there must be an accurate representation of the materials surveyed. The second purpose is to provide enough information to allow for an accurate understanding of how this doctrine was applied in the various periods surveyed. The third and final purpose is to reflect various elements of this doctrine which seem to be unique to various of its revivals.

ORGANIZATION

Chapter two, contains the Old Testament study. The basic premise is that although the Levitical Priesthood and to some degree the Aaronic Priesthood evolved into a hierarchical form, God's plan remained that the individual was to be the primary functionary in ministry and as such he was to be supported by the hierarchical priesthods.

Chapter three, reviews extensively the New Testament literature with the purpose of establishing the relationship of Jesus the High Priest to the believer-priest. Also included is a model for the church as it supports the believer-priest and something of just how the individual believer is to function in the kingdom of God is presented.

Chapter four, deals primarily with Martin Luther and how various factors in his life and experience contributed to his conception of the believer in ministry. It is here that some comment is offered regarding the degree to which this doctrine may be carried.

Chapter five, contains a contemporary view of the place of the believer in ministry. It is this chapter that reflects the writings of Elton Trueblood as well as other Renewal and Body Life writers.

Chapter six, summarizes the whole matter of the place of the believer in ministry. It seeks to draw together the doctrine as presented in the various chapters, and then present a precise look at the whole. This material will then be brought to bear upon the hypothesis statement.

Chapter seven, will conclude the paper with consideration of the process of implementation. It is in this chapter that something of the author's personal view of this doctrine will be presented.

Chapter 2

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL VIEW OF BELIEVER-PRIESTHOOD

The matter of believer-priesthood is often viewed from the perspective of the operation of the charismata found in Pauline corpus. While this treatment is in no way to be compromised, there is also a great deal to be learned from a study of the Old Testament literature with respect to the individual functioning as a priest on his own behalf. It is for this reason that the following treatment of the worship and the priesthood of the individual has its origin in the patriarchs and its development in the remainder of Old Testament scripture. At the point that the Hebrew system as revealed in the Old Testament failed, Christ appeared to re-establish the individual as priest. It is in the New Testament that a new view of the believer as priest is presented and further, with the coming of the Holy Spirit a special empowerment for ministry is made available to the individual believer-priest.

THE OLD TESTAMENT BELIEVER-PRIEST

In the Davidic Psalm, twenty-four, there are two provisions set forth that apply to those who would, ". . . ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place" (Psalm 24:3). It is significant to the matter of the place of the believer in Israel that no mention of the Aaronic or the Levitical priestly castes is found in this passage. A second matter important to the significance of this passage is that it

was written by a man who though a king, was a layman and who as such had sacrificed in the Temple. A third observation to be made here is that the only factors given as necessary are, first, a man's inner purity, and second, a man's external conformity.¹

The Old Testament presents us with three important patterns of thought: the People of God, the Servant of the Lord, and a Kingdom of Priests. The people of God are called and chosen by God to a priesthood of which sacrificial service is the characteristic feature. In the final consummation they, together with all people will be presented before God as a Kingdom of Priests.²

In the course of the following sections, the matter of the place of the individual Israelite will be treated as it relates to his service to the Lord, as a member of the "Kingdom of Priests" spoken about in Exodus 19:6.³ The structure of the following is basically in the chronological order of the Old Testament.

The Patriarchs

The opening pages of the Pentateuch gave ample evidence that man was intended to have accessibility to the divine creator. This is born out in the statement that God ". . . created man in His own image . . ." (Genesis 1:26-27). The Hebrew idea of image is from the word "tselem" () and it carries the idea of a shade, a phantom, a resemblance, and as Strong puts it, "hence a representative figure."⁴

¹Psalm 24:3

²Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), p. 1.

³Exodus 19:6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, (NASB).

⁴James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1890), p. 99.

It is because of this resemblance that the potential for communication existed, and in fact did exist in the case of Adam and Eve in communication with Jehovah (Genesis 3:8). While there is much that might be dealt with in the first family narrative, it does seem that after the fall of man, only a special people with a right heart could perform priestly duties before God. Thus, this sense of universal fellowship and worship was lost. Viewed in another manner, Christ was the creator of man (John 1:3) and since one of Christ's stated missions is the glorification of the Father (John 17:4), it would follow that the creation (man and to some degree nature) would also function in this relationship of glorification and worship.

Continuing this thought, it is interesting to note that the animal skins with which God clothed Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21) could only come as an animal was sacrificed for that purpose and this sacrifice may well have been an act of atonement and/or worship. While there is a great deal of speculation in the failure of Cain to achieve acceptance in worship, the Genesis four narrative does give some indication of the priestliness of two brothers, Cain and Abel. It is important to note that while they both were not successful in the attempt to offer sacrifice, they both had the desire which might give some indication, that even though fallen, man still had the desire to reach out to God. In addition, something of the place of the attitude of the priest is evident here and subsequently confirmed in the life of the man, Enoch (Genesis 5:19-24). While there is not a great deal written about Enoch, it is significant that the writer of the Hebrews later notes that, ". . . he was pleasing to God," (Hebrews 11:5). Again, here is a man who lived a life of inner purity and external

conformity and could well be considered to have lived a life of priestliness before God. In short, his very life seems to have been something of an act of worship and sacrifice.

In Genesis 4:26 it is pointed out that men ". . . began to call upon the name of the Lord." This is another case of the relationship that man sought to have with God. Noah was one who further demonstrated that man could find "grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). It is important to note that only in the sense of the priestliness of the head of the home was Noah any kind of clergy and/or priest. He was quite simply a man who was, ". . . a righteous man, blameless in his time," and who ". . . walked with God," (Genesis 6:9). A further point to consider is that after the flood, he built an altar and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord (Genesis 8:20) in this priestly capacity, although as previously noted he was not a part of any hierarchical priesthood.

Abraham is another example of a man who had a sense of his own priestliness. At various places throughout his travels he would build an altar that he might give expression to his faith and as well, worship God (Genesis 12:8; 13:17-18; 26:25). There are two important points to be noted in this man. First, it is of significance that it was to Abraham that God gave the instruction regarding circumcision and that it was to extend beyond the outward act to a circumcision of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16). Second and also of significance, although this is the period of time that the priesthood was centered in the patriarch of the home, there still was one that Abraham recognized as being of a superior nature, Melchizedek, King of Salem (Genesis 14:18). It was toward Melchizedek that Abraham performed an act of worship when he

gave him a tithe of the spoil (Hebrews 7:4).

While Melchizedek is introduced and briefly commented upon in the Old Testament, it is in the New Testament that the full significance of his work can be seen.⁵ First, he was a priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18), and as such his order reaches into the eternal past (Psalm 110:4). The writer of the Hebrews goes on and notes that Christ's priesthood was established upon the priesthood of Melchizedek. Notice, that Christ was not established after the Levitical Priesthood⁶ because, this would in a sense, have been condoning a hierarchical arrangement that made the worship of God dependent upon not one mediator but many.⁷ Melchizedek however, served God, received blessing from Abraham and as well, blessed Abraham, similar to the relationship that the believer would one day experience with God through Christ.

⁵See Chapter III p. 71

⁶It is at this point that an introduction of the three priestly orders which Jesus' priesthood could well have been structured after will be given.

First, He might well have been after the Levitical Priesthood but that priesthood was in error on several points which would have carried over into His ministry or at least there would have been an implication that He was condoning these problem areas. Another reason that Christ was not a priest after this order is that while this was a priesthood of service to God and man, its main function was to support the Aaronic Priesthood.

Second, Jesus might have established his priesthood after the Aaronic order. Here again, He would have faced problems, only this time in the behavior of the preceeding high priest. Further, the Aaronic Priesthood was not without time limits and in Christ's divine foresight He knew the future limits of the Aaronic Priesthood (A.D. 70). Christ conversely was a priest forever.

Third, Christ was established after the order of Melchizedek. This matter is discussed in Chapter III, p.71, where reasons are suggested for the inclusion of Christ in this order.

⁷See Chapter III p. 69

The Period of the Exodus

The second period to be considered in the matter of the priesthood of the Old Testament believer is that of the Great Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt to the Promise Land, which spans the period of time from the Passover, until the Battle of Ai. It is important to this period of time that,

. . . with the Exodus the Lord undertook a new beginning with His people, revealing Himself more fully not only in His works but also in His words through Moses His selected vessel.⁸

There were two major developments in this period. The first to be considered is the new beginning that the Lord sought with His people. This new beginning is centered in Exodus 19:6, which is the first direct statement in the period of the Great Exodus that speaks directly to the matter of the individual in direct relationship with God. The second element in this period which speaks to God's interest in receiving worship from the individual is the commands and instructions regarding the Tabernacle. These directions were for the purpose of allowing the people to express their priestliness in a corporate fashion. So it is that the priesthood of all Israel is the main consideration and not the priesthood of a special caste within Israel.

Individual Worship. As was seen in the patriarchal period the relationship of man with man was on a limited basis. In the case of man's relationship with God, at best it was on a one on one basis, or at least in a spiritual relationship with the extended family group. With this patriarch-priesthood there was little need for the establishment of a

⁸Robert G. Rayburn, O Come Let Us Worship (Grand Rapids: Baker 1980), p. 52.

priestly order to assist the individual in the worship of God. In the course of the growth of the nation of Israel, it became necessary for the individual to receive greater guidance in the matter of not only worship but his relationship (external and internal) with Jehovah. It was further essential that the divine principle of decency and order (I Corinthians 14:40) be maintained in this setting. It is important to note, however, that in this situation God's design was that every man would be established in a personal priesthood which would preclude an investment of the priesthood in a professional order of priests.

If Jehovah was as great and wise as they believed Him to be, He was wise enough and great enough to devise a means whereby they might enter into a full relationship with Him as well as understand its meaning and implications. A noble title, therefore, was bestowed upon them: they were to be a 'kingdom of priests' (Exodus xix. 6). A kingdom because God had chosen them as the instrument of His purpose; priests, because they were to become servants of His will by revealing His purpose to the world. Every member of the kingdom of priests was privileged to draw near to God in dedication, worship and service so that they might learn how their mission to the world was to be fulfilled.⁹

In viewing the Children of Israel before the institution of the Levitical and Aaronic Priesthoods, something of God's plan may be seen. It is significant that Moses and Aaron were at first the only priests for the Children of Israel and that they did function in a sense as high priests. Moses especially did this when he represented the people before God and received God's instruction to them (Exodus 19 and 20).

In Exodus twenty-four the record of the Covenant sacrifice is presented.

At the covenant sacrifice it was Moses who acted as priest. We are told that young men of the children of Israel offered whole burnt offerings and peace offerings, but since Moses

⁹Eastwood, p. 3.

disposed of the blood, it is apparent that he acted as the priest. The disposal of the blood is of particular importance in sacrifice, and always falls to the priest where a professional priest is present.¹⁰

It is evident from this statement and scripture that during the Great Exodus and the early years of habitation, there was a sense of community evident which included the involvement of many non-levitical priests in worshipping and sacrificing unto Jehovah.

From the story of Moses' grandson it would seem that there was a tendency for them to become priests as opportunity offered, for Micah seems to have found great satisfaction when he obtained a Levite to serve his shrine.¹¹

The matter of personal or the family altar is important for two reasons. First, it confirms the fact that there was a personal relationship that one could have with God exclusive of the presence of the Levitical or Aaronic Priesthood. Second, the kind of thinking that would allow for a personal altar would one day lead to the development of the synagogue.¹²

¹⁰H.H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning (London, SPCK, 1967), p. 52.

H.H. Rowley although strictly speaking not in the Evangelical Camp, does present significant information on the matter of the Old Testament believer-priest though perhaps for different reasons. While he does seem to trace a progression from left to right on the pantheism - monotheism continuum he does present information regarding the transition from an individual priesthood to a corporate priesthood. Another question pertains to his dating. He does seem to embrace the "Documentary Hypothesis" which would indicate a later dating and non-mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Because of these factors care must be taken in an open acceptance of his work. There is however, such a lack of other material it almost necessitates some consideration of his work.

¹¹Rowley, p. 62.

¹²Ibid.

While the following quote by Rowley applies to a later period, because of its appropriateness to the matter under study inclusion of it

It is on this point that Rowley concludes the matter of decentralized worship in Israel with the thought that, ". . . it is legitimate to conclude that no law of single sanctuary was known at this time."¹³ So it was that the single individual Hebrew could, as the need arose, establish an altar in which he could carry on a priestly relationship and function toward Jehovah. This may well have been simply an act of worship and devotion or it may have been a sacrifice according to a failure in his internal or external life.

Corporate Worship. During the period of the Great Exodus and early habitation the Lord set forth the laws regarding the establishment of corporate worship. More specifically, there are three elements that God established to assist the individual in his acts of corporate worship. First to be established was the Tabernacle. It is of interest that even though this was for the good of all, the instructions came through an individual who at the time was functioning as the priestly leader of all Israel, Moses (Exodus 26-28). The second matter is that there was established in Israel a sacrificial system that would allow the the individual to sacrifice at the Tabernacle site and later the Temple site (Exodus 29, Leviticus 1-27, Numbers 1-9). Third, the Aaronic Priesthood

is at this point.

Of the kind of worship that went on in the shrines during this period we have little knowledge. Sacrifice was offered there, though the act of sacrifice does not appear to have been restricted to a resident priesthood. Samuel is said to have offered sacrifice at more than one shrine. He sacrificed at Mispah and built an altar at Ramah, and planned to offer sacrifice at Gilgal, though in this Saul forestalled him. When we are told that he judged Israel in Bethel, in addition to these places, we are probably justified in assuming that he offered sacrifice there.

¹³Ibid.

as well as the Levitical Priesthood was established in order to assist the people in their acts of worship and repentance (sacrifice) and to teach the people.

While this was to facilitate the individual in his worship of God, and was not meant to interfere with the individual in his reach toward the divine, it did evolve to the point that Eastwood comments,

Difficulties arose when the Hebrews began to look upon the heritage as something which could be won by their own efforts, by temple ritual, sacrificial rites, ordinances and the setting up of shrines. The importance of this deviation for later Hebrew history cannot be overstressed. It implied an entirely different kind of religion. Ceasing to be regarded as a revelation of grace, religion became regarded as the observance of law.¹⁴

Given the above situation, it was only a small move on the part of the national outlook and view of the hierarchical priesthood to move the priestly function from the life of the individual and invest it in a professional priesthood. It is important to note that there no doubt were those who sought to maintain a relationship of personal priestliness while as a nation Israel had moved to a point of letting someone else do their religion for them.

The Eventual Results. This move in outlook and subsequent failure to maintain touch with the concept of the individual as priest was to progress to the point that the Pharisees and Rabbis of the New Testament era lost sight of the individual and thus saw Israel as a whole people that would not indeed, could not be seen as individuals before God.¹⁵

¹⁴ Eastwood, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ K. H. Rengsdorf, "δοῦλος . . .," TDNT, Vol. II, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 274.

Another outgrowth of the separation of the hierarchical priests from the functioning individual priest is that there evolved a class system among the Levitical Priesthood. This class involvement was to the point that the country priests were not considered to be on the same level as the temple priests although they did have every right to sacrifice and function in the temple (Deuteronomy 18:1 ff.).

This distinction was eventually to become so pronounced that it prompted comment during the Deuteronomy account. The problem seemed to be that the country priests were not allowed into the central sanctuary (Deuteronomy 18:6) and in fact they even failed in the eventual reform they sought on the matter (II Kings 23:9). It is of interest that the country priests were more in touch with the common man and in fact ended up being paid not as the Jerusalem priest, the professional hierarchy but ate unleavened bread with the people and were cared for by the common country people much like the widows and orphans.¹⁶

These two trends in thinking and reaction were the result of a failure to maintain the individual as the priest. It would have been far better if God's plan of allowing the individuals to bring his offering before the Lord (Leviticus 1:2-4), and sacrificing with the assistance of the priest¹⁷ had not been changed. The situation as outlined is another case where man's change has had a long and lasting result, but where God's plans are of a superior and eternal timeless nature.

¹⁶Rowley, p. 98.

¹⁷Rowley, p. 101.

Rowley notes that originally the priests assisted the sacrificer by disposing of the blood.

It is important to notice that soon after the setting aside of individuals to serve as priests in an official capacity, there was strong resistance from some of the people. If Korah's rebellion is now seen to be defective, it is only so in its method rather than in the principle it sought to affirm. The principle was right: 'All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them' (Numbers xvi, 3); it was the subsequent attack upon the persons of Moses and Aaron that was wrong.¹⁸

Later Eastwood goes on to note that there were three truths that were taught regarding priesthood in the Jewish economy. First, there was the priestly prerogative of the whole community. In Numbers 11:29 Moses expresses his desire that the Children of Israel would all experience and exercise their spiritual priestly duties. Second, in Eastwood's list, is the priestly duty of the whole community. It is in this capacity that many men offered sacrifices even though there was at times a strong move toward a priesthood which did the sacrificial offering. Third, Eastwood points out that there is an "individual responsibility" for the spiritual good of the whole community.¹⁹ It would then seem that the responsibility of the priesthood would have been better served if the priests had in fact functioned as facilitators of ministry among the people instead of doing the worshipping and sacrificing for the people.

So it was that the decisions that were made and the trends that were started in the period of the Great Exodus and early habitation were to have serious results in the lives and society of the Children of Israel. No longer would the individual be encouraged in his personal pursuit of Jehovah but only encouraged as he was involved with the community in worship under the hierarchical priesthood. This change in

¹⁸Eastwood, p. 18-19.

¹⁹Ibid.

relationship with Jehovah was to have a major result in the organization and operation of the country that they inhabited. This would result in the necessity of a king and in fact did result in the choosing of Saul as king (I Samuel 9:17 ff).

The Period of the Kings and Prophets

As movement is made into the period of the kings there are occasions when the priestliness of the individual is exercised. The incidents of this happening, however, were greatly reduced. This reduction seems to be so because, ". . . gradually over the period of the monarchy Levites were regarded as not merely to be preferred for the service of priest, but to be essential."²⁰ Yet there remained examples of the laity entering the temple. For instance, King David entered the holy place to eat the shew bread when he was hungry and was not punished (I Samuel 21:6). Later David himself offered a sacrifice when the ark was brought up to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:17-18). Uzziah is said to have on occasions performed priestly acts (II Chronicles 26:16-23). Although Rowley places it earlier, in the period of the Judges, he agrees with Eastwood on the matter of the priesthood of the individual when he writes, "We have seen that during the period of the Judges there developed a preference for a Levite as priest"²¹ As has already been briefly alluded to, Eastwood sees the move away from the priesthood of the individual as the result of Israel's attitude toward God's grace.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that this revelation of grace which was made to Israel as a whole could

²⁰Rowley, p. 99.

²¹Rowley, p. 95.

be forfeited. It was forfeited when it was divorced from the righteousness of God and the corporate duty of Israel. Israel's mistake was in regarding it as a right instead of a privilege. Just because they thought the revelation was their right, they were able to think of it as something entirely independent of their attitude and conduct.²²

He continues on focusing in on the matter of the division.

Speaking of Israel he writes,

They believed that their rights could be protected and their religious duties performed by a special class of men which had been set apart for this purpose. This class eventually became an hereditary caste and was largely restricted to certain priestly families. The result was that a cleavage appeared between those who fulfilled the religious duties and those who had neither the right nor the desire to do so. More seriously still, the attention of the people was focused upon holy persons, holy things and holy places instead of upon the Holy One.²³

This situation progressed during the time of the kings until Jeremiah the prophet was raised up with some very pointed statements about the situation in Israel. In His third prophecy the Lord speaks to Israel and points out that they have perverted the use of His house to their own ends (Jeremiah 7:1-10:35). In chapter seven, verse eleven the thought that Israel has come to a place where they feel that it is their privilege to sin is presented. This supposed privilege, a travesty of God's plan to say nothing of His justice, could only be so as the laity was separated from the ministry and more specifically, as the hierarchical priesthood gained in power and with the power the idea that it was priestly prerogative to reinterpret scripture. It is interesting to note that God's justice demanded that He would judge Israel, and Jeremiah compares the coming judgment to that of Shiloh. Not only is this so but God's

²²Eastwood, p. 3-4.

²³Ibid.

further judgment would be to cast the people out of His sight (v. 5).

There is a second result of separation from the priestly function and Eastwood goes on to note what it is.

Jeremiah's teaching is all the more significant because spiritual religion had almost disappeared in Judiasm and materialism had taken its place. This materialism which resulted in the glorification of the state led the prophet to emphasize another vital truth, namely, that the state may vanish but that Jehovah and the individual remain.²⁴

It is during this time that men continue to go through the motions of worship and in fact spend time at the Temple in Jerusalem. What needs to be decided is, was this an exercise in worship or an exercise in ritual. Referring to the Temple in the time of the Kings, Rowley writes,

Here it must suffice to say that people came to the Temple daily for a variety of purposes. In the court surroundings the Temple men could meet and the prophets could address them. Here men could offer their private prayer, as the Pharisee and the Publican did in the parable of our Lord. And when men came to worship, it was not just to watch a sacrificial act but to participate in an approach to God. That the prophets condemned men because they did not really so participate means that not all entered into the reality of worship, since true worship must be free and unconstrained, the offering of the worshipping spirit and not the mere attendance at a ceremony.²⁵

So it was that worship for the majority of the Children of Israel was their presence in a locale in which a professional priesthood was at least, in form, going through ceremonies of worship.

It is important to note that the call to a right relationship with God was not unique to Jeremiah but also a part of the message of many of the other Old Testament writers. Isaiah for instance writes that the people of Gomorrah should sacrifice not out of ritualistic observance

²⁴Eastwood, p. 8.

²⁵Rowley, p. 104.

but with a ". . . right heart" (Isaiah 1:10-11). It is important to note that in addition to the physical act that there must be an intellectual understanding (Hosea 4:14). Finally Amos speaks of bringing sacrifices and tithes unto the Lord (Amos 4:4-6). In these cases it is significant that the needs are not on the part of the hierarchical priesthood but on the part of the individual Israelite. It must be considered that in the unfolding of the Old Testament narrative, as the hierarchical priesthood took worship and sacrificial responsibility away from the common man he underwent a spiritual degeneration that resulted in not only a loss of the opportunity for sacrifice but also a gradual erosion of spiritual insight and desire.

GOD'S PLAN FOR PRIESTLY FUNCTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The elevation of the individual in the ministry may on the surface seem to bring into question the place of the priesthood. In reality it would elevate the priesthood to the proper level. The lives of the prophets spoke to the hierarchical priesthood with the message that there was more to service before the Lord than serving in the Temple.

The first element that was lost to the hierarchical priest but which was essential to Israel is that of the teacher. Eastwood writes,

The mouthpiece of God must teach the ways of God. Indeed, for their knowledge of God's ways the people were dependent upon the priest. This knowledge made them His people. They were not a people when they were ignorant of God's ways. Hence, the eternal pathos in the Lord's cry: 'Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider' (Isaiah 1:3). In so far as the priest did not fulfill his function the nation was to that extent, in danger of disintegration and destruction. Micah emphasizes this particular function of the priests when he says; 'The heads (of Jerusalem) judge, the priests teach, and the prophets divine' (Micah iii. 11).²⁶

²⁶Eastwood, p. 21.

Rowley expands the matter by addressing the expertise of the priest for teaching and advising.

The teaching function of the priest was of great importance. He was the depository of sacred lore and could advise a man in any ritual matter. In the Priestly law the priests are charged with the task of distinguishing between the holy and profane, . . . We should not think of the priest's function in any narrow or purely cultic way, however. He was familiar with precepts and precedents on a wide variety of matters and could advise on men's duty to God and relations with one another.²⁷

Thus it was more than just a sharing of philosophy, it was the sharing of the history of the people of Israel, it was the sharing of the truths of God, and it was the teaching of the relations of man with man. The Children of Israel demonstrate that a called apart people are only as strong as they are taught.

The second responsibility of the priesthood is clearly and best demonstrated by Isaiah's statement in Isaiah 61:1-3. As a result of the Spirit of the Lord being upon Isaiah he was anointed,

To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness. The planting of the Lord that He may be glorified.²⁸

Over and over the message to Israel was that,

. . . it is quite insufficient to pay attention to the forms alone. The quality of worship is to be found in the spirit even more than in the forms, for worship belongs to the heart rather than to the act.²⁹

²⁷Rowley, pp.101-103.

²⁸Isaiah 61:1-3 (NASB).

²⁹Rowley, p. 3.

Given the message of Isaiah, who was better qualified to tender the message of worship from the spirit than the priesthood, provided they conformed to Isaiah's ideal? This example points out that while the message was verbally directed to the people, the lives of the prophets were directing a stronger message to the hierarchical priesthood.

The third responsibility of the priesthood, an outgrowth of the message of Isaiah, is that of service. Eastwood notes,

Suffering, therefore, is inevitably bound up with the Servant's mission. It is in this concept that the priestly and prophetic ideas of the Old Testament are combined. The prophetic word and the priestly task are one. Salvation in the Old Testament means fellowship with God, and inasmuch as the prophetic word enshrines the hope of salvation, and the priestly sufferings provide the way of salvation, the Servant is both word and priest, and therefore the promise and pledge of salvation for all nations. Although the Servant's sufferings are undeserved, he bears them on behalf of others, for 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah Iiii.6).³⁰

It is important to note that in the foregoing statements there is a proper balance of the priest, the prophet, and the servant. It is in this balance that the Levitical Priesthood could have and indeed would have provided the support and servitude that would have allowed the people of Israel to function as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6).

³⁰Eastwood, pp. 12-13.

Chapter 3

THE NEW TESTAMENT RE-ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF BELIEVER-PRIESTHOOD

In order for the reader to come to a full understanding of this chapter on believer-priesthood as reflected in the New Testament, the following should be considered as the basis as well as limitation of this study. First, the sole authority for the doctrine of believer-priesthood is scripture. It is not only the specific instruction of scripture, it is directly referred to in the practice of many of the major figures of the New Testament.

Second, not only does scripture introduce the concept but also it expands and develops the subject to the point of providing a model for the church. Inherent in the presentation of this model will be the relationship of the church with the Word of God. Leon Morris, in his book I Believe in Revelation¹ refers to the Word of God as being the sufficient witness for salvation when he writes,

It is this that sets the Bible apart from all other literature. And it is this that means that we must not set the church (or anything else) above the Bible. Nothing can replace the authentic deposit of Christian truth. Indeed so far from the church being superior to the Bible the church must always submit itself to the Bible and test its teaching against the Bible. From time to time the church has found itself in need of reformation and doubtless the situation will recur. On what principle is the church to reform itself? Surely on none other than that of faithfulness to the

¹Leon Morris, I Believe in Revelation, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

Scripture. It is the Bible that gives the authentic Christian message.²

Third, as indicated in this quote, the church must maintain a proper relationship with scripture, holding it in the esteem that God intended it to be (II Timothy 3:16-17). Fourth, it is the position of this chapter that such a relationship of the believer with scripture is sufficiently narrow so as to require ministry on the part of every believer and sufficiently broad to allow for the inclusion, into various cultures and subcultures, the ministry of the redeemed both individually and corporately.

The matter of the difference between the laity (*λαὸς*) and the clergy (*κλῆρος*) while present in scripture is primarily an evolution of history which has then sought to reinterpret scripture. Possibly this may be one of the hermeneutical assumptions which is then brought to scripture in an attempt to support a hierarchical priesthood. In the New Testament,

There is no shimmer of an idea of a definite body, called Clergy. Just because the biblical content and intent of the concepts 'laos' and 'kleros' is essentially different from the meaning 'laity' and 'clergy' have historically acquired, it is confusing to use these terms with their very distinct connotations for biblical categories.³

So it is that the distinction between these two categories will be clarified in this chapter.

ORGANIZATION

The following study of the New Testament is organized primarily

²Ibid., p. 87

³Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 52.

by section although there is some carry over between sections. So it is that the Synoptic Gospels and John will be considered as they contain the message of Christ, the Acts of the Apostles, as it contains the emergence of the practice of believer-priesthood, the Pauline model for the church and its members from his writings, and finally a section will be devoted to various individual considerations, such as Peter's reference to royal priesthood, and the Hebrews picture of Jesus Christ the high priest. This is so because as Manson points out,

It seems to me that two things must be maintained: the New Testament doctrine of the high-priesthood of Christ and the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of believers. One thing we must attempt to clarify: the relations of the church's ministries to the high-priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of believers.⁴

In addition various of these sections lend themselves to a specialized inquiry such as, a study of the word for pastor, or a study of the offices in the church. These will be included at the most appropriate place according to the greatest frequency or usage or relationship with the subject under consideration in that particular section.

JESUS ELEVATES THE PLACE OF THE BELIEVER

One of the most significant features of the Gospel narrative is the calling of individuals to ministry. This was, as Eastwood points out, only possible because of the sacrifice Christ paid.

. . . the royal priesthood is dependent on the Sacrifice of Christ (Rev. i. 5-6). In verse 5 alone there are three references to the death of Christ; 'martyr,' may be translated

⁴T. W. Manson, Ministry and Priesthood Christ's and Ours (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 68.

'martyr' or one who is faithful unto death. Also Jesus is the 'First-born from the dead', and He 'loosed us from our sins by His blood'. It is significant that immediately after this threefold reference to the death of Christ, the writer says: 'And He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father.'⁵

The very idea is reflected in the calling of the disciples to service. In the case of Simon Peter and Andrew who were fishermen, for example, Christ called these brothers to be fishers of men. Notice that there is a progression. First, they were to come, then they were to follow and finally they were to be fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). It is significant that in this case, as with all the disciples, Christ did not call the ruling hierarchical priesthood of the day to be fishers of men but men who were of the laity. After a period of time Mark records the appointment of the twelve (Mark 3:13-19). It is in this passage that Christ commissioned these men to be with Him (v. 14), to go out to preach (v. 14), heal the sick (v. 15), and cast out demons (v. 15). This relationship was to remain so until in Matthew 9 through 11, when compassed with the need of the Jewish people, Christ commissioned the disciples, again the laity of the day, and sent them out.

As the commissioning indicates and as Manson points out,

It is true that Jesus does not call his disciples priests; but he does call them to share in the kind of self-sacrifice which makes it appropriate to use the term high priest of his own ministry. And in the early church we find ideas and the terminology of priesthood applied to the life and behavior of Christians.⁶

So, indirectly, through their association with Christ, and by His commissioning to service, the disciples functioned as priests.

⁵Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), p. 47.

⁶Manson, p. 48.

In the course of the commissioning Jesus gives a very specific command respecting the life-style of the disciples, which was to be very austere and in fact, at the mercy of the people whom the disciples would serve. While there may be many reasons for this command, there certainly would seem to be a built in check upon their becoming like the religious leaders of the day. A second element of their command was that they were to go out two by two (Mark 11:20-30). Here again, they would serve not only as a strength and support for each other but as well serve as a check upon each other, in order that none would be elevated to the level of a religious leader.

Jesus Provided an Example of Ministry as a Layman

One of the more significant arguments that can be put forward for believer-priesthood is the very life of Jesus. First, Jesus was of the lineage of Judah which eliminated the possibility of his being part of the Levitical or Aaronic Priesthood (Matthew 1:1-17). Second, Jesus was acquainted with the hierarchical priesthood of the day and did not choose to support it and did in fact on occasion oppose it.

Jesus Deals With the Levitical Hierarchy

One example of how Jesus dealt with the priestly hierarchy of the day is recorded in Matthew 23:1-38. At the outset of this passage he points out that the Scribes and Pharisees are quite capable of discussing the writings of Moses and in saying this he affirms that he did not come to do away with the law but to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17). The idea conveyed by the word for fulfill ($\pi \lambda \eta \rho \acute{o} \omega$) is that the law's requirements will be filled all the way to the top. That is there will be nothing more required to fulfill the demands placed upon the

individual by the law. The obvious ramification at this point is that the priestly hierarchy would no longer be able to hold control over the people. Putting aside the results of doing away with the law, in putting this as he did Jesus gave no opportunity for the Scribes and Pharisees to accuse him of doing away with Judaism. The only matter which he was dealing with was the behavior of the clergy of the day.

Also, it is interesting to note that in the list of objections that Jesus gave, there were matters which would in fact surface time and again in the history of the church. First, he addresses the matter of proving one's religion by practicing it before men (v. 5).⁷ Second, the element of just how the priests of the day viewed themselves and the demands that were put on the people to show them honor was addressed (v. 6). Third and finally, in the matter of one's title (v. 7) Jesus points out that the Scribes and Pharisees place great emphasis on their titles of leadership (and lordship). In reality, however, the greatest must humble himself and become the servant of all, a radical departure from another of the ideas put forth by the religious hierarchy of the day.

It was at this point that Jesus gave a model for believer-priesthood. The first element is that all Christians are brethren and thus there is no room for titles such as Rabbi (v. 8), Father (v. 9), or Master (v. 10). The second element is that the greatest is to be the servant (Matthew 20:27). Third and finally, in order to be exalted one must humble himself (v. 12). It is at this point (v. 13)

⁷It is interesting to note that Paul deals with the Corinthians on this point, when he establishes guides for the operation of spiritual gifts, communion, and Christian relationships.

and continuing through verse thirty-six, that Jesus pronounces a curse upon the hierarchical priesthood of Israel.

It is to be noted, however, that the place of the Temple was not compromised at all in Jesus' teaching or actions. Manson speaking of Jesus writes,

. . . he did think of the Temple as the natural place for men to go and worship God, as is shown by the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican; and he did take active steps, in the cleansing of the Temple, to ensure that the Court of the Gentiles should be, in fact as well as in theory, a place of prayer for all nations.⁸

So it was that Jesus did not propose to overthrow all of the Jewish religious system but only those parts in which the excesses were responsible for bringing the people into a role of servitude to the priesthood rather than the priesthood being in a role of servitude unto the people.

Jesus Teaches on Believer-Priesthood

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-8) contains several elements which are germane to the doctrine and practice of believer-priesthood. It is in this passage that Jesus deals with the duties and privileges of those who are believers. First, He speaks to the question of what constitutes true happiness by establishing the basis of true blessing in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-26). Second, he deals with the believer's purpose in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). It is at this point that Jesus establishes the believer as the salt of the earth (v. 13), and the light which is not to be hidden (V. 15). Continuing, Jesus commands his followers to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see

⁸Manson, p. 46.

your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (v. 16).

Following this Jesus dealt with the matter of the Law and the Prophets. It is of interest here that He did not include a statement of support for the Levitical Priesthood but simply stated that He was here to fulfill the Law and Prophets and in doing so He would re-establish the teaching contained therein (Matthew 5:17-19). It is significant that this statement was in proximity to references to the Scribes and Pharisees in the next section. Jesus put them in perspective by noting that ". . . unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (v. 20). This is the point that He opens and develops in the next section (Matthew 5:20-48), which is a practical comparison of the way of the Scribes and the Pharisees with that of Christianity. The next distinction is the contrast between genuine religion and the practice of religion before men (Matthew 6:1-18). It is at this point that various practices in organized religion such as "Practicing piety before men . . ." (v. 1), sounding of trumpet before the giving of alms (v. 2), praying in public (v. 5), praying with empty phrases (v. 7) and fasting or appearing to fast in public view (v. 16), are called into question. Following this Jesus deals with human values and how they compare to the divine ideal (Matthew 6:19-34). In this case the values of the Jewish economy which was in part the direct result of the Levitical influence, have impacted the people so in a sense the discussion of human values was a discussion of the values of the Jewish economy as influenced by the Levitical Priesthood. Finally, Jesus closes His discourse with a section on behavior in relationships with others (Matthew 7:1-12; Luke 6:37-42) and the place of the disciples in the work of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 7:24-29; Luke 6:46-49).

Jesus Describes the Ministering Laymen in Parable Format

In the course of Jesus' ministry two parables dealt specifically with the place of the laymen in comparison to the priesthood of the day. Both serve to illustrate and reinforce the place of the ministry of the laity, and this then was compared to the existing hierarchical priesthood of the day.

First, in the case of the good Samaritan, there was a comparison of behavior of the layman with the behavior of priestly hierarchy of the day (Luke 10:25-37). The lawyer who was talking with Jesus was a man who's business it was ". . . to interpret the Law and guide people on how to relate their lives to it."⁹ It was the lawyer that the individual would consult when there was a question as to how to behave in a certain area of life. So it was that this man who's function was also that of a teacher and an interpreter had approached Jesus.

While the basic message of Jesus pertained to the barrier of the Jew and the Samaritan, there is a second element in this narrative that speaks to the place of the layman in service to the needs of fellow man. It was the priest (v. 31) and the Levite (v. 32) who were of the hierarchical priesthood who passed by the man in need. Both of these men were representatives of the Jewish clerical system and in fact represented both segments, with one being of the Aaronic Priesthood and the other of the Levitical priesthood.¹⁰ It was not until the Samaritan, a layman, passed by that the man received ministrations to his needs and

⁹Herbert Lockyer, All the Parables of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), p. 260.

¹⁰The distinction as noted in chapter two is that the Levitical priesthood served in the Temple to assist the Aaronic priesthood who actually did the sacrificing.

that, not in a cursory manner but, as completely as possible even to the degree that the Samaritan served the man by the giving of his time and materialism.

The second parable contains the story of the Pharisee and Publican who went into the temple to pray (Luke 18:9-14). It is significant that Jesus describes as justified, the Publican (v. 14) who did not feel worthy enough to draw near the altar but remained at a distance (v. 13). This is simply a comparison between the Pharisee and the tax gatherer in the matter of worship before the Lord. One took pride in the religious office that he held in order to gain "standing" in his prayer, while the other came in humility of position, because of an accurate appraisal of his lack of standing.

Jesus as the Serving Layman

In John 13:1-20 the account of the washing of the disciples feet is recorded. This account while it would seem to be in stark contrast to the thinking of the priestly caste of the day, characterizes the servitude of Jesus. There are several interesting points to consider. First, Jesus washing the disciples feet gains in significance when compared to failure of the Pharisee to do so in Luke 7:36-50. A second element of importance in this narrative is that it was important that Peter allow Jesus to wash his feet much as Jesus allowed the woman in Luke 7 to wash his feet. There is in this act a demonstration of the idea of submission to a servant. The third element of this narrative is that servitude is so pronounced. So it is that the Servant of mankind demonstrated that in order to be the greatest one must become the least and in order for one to exalt another he must submit to that person.

John records another incident which points to the ministry Jesus had as a layman. It was in John 7:45-49 that as the people were testifying to the Pharisees about Jesus and His teaching that the religious leaders asked, "Have any of the authorities of the Pharisees believed in him?" (v. 48). The rather strong implication is that because Jesus was not on their level, or of their ranks that He or His teaching did not warrant acceptance or endorsement.

Jesus the Good Shepherd--Serving the Sheep

In John 10:1-21, the story of the Good Shepherd is given to describe the pastoral role of Jesus.¹¹ In the course of the communication of this truth, Jesus might well have described himself in many ways but chose to portray himself as the Good Shepherd.

At this point it is important to note that in the course of His earthly ministry Jesus not once established a title for Himself, although He allowed various people to address Him with a title. It would seem that this is another indication that Jesus sought to establish His ministry among the people as one of the people not through a hierarchical approach.

Following later in John's Gospel is another experience which brings into sharp focus the place of the "shepherd" attitude in ministry. This is the occasion of the thrice repeated command by Jesus to Peter to feed the Lord's sheep (John 21:15-19). Contained in this passage are three parallel questions and three parallel commands by Jesus to Peter. This exchange gains in importance when it is realized that Peter would one

¹¹It is significant that this same word is also translated Pastor in Ephesians.

day be the overseer in the area of Jerusalem (Act 8-10).

The metaphor of the shepherd is used here to command Peter to first "feed My lambs" (v. 15), then "shepherd the sheep" (v. 16) and finally, "feed My little sheep" (v. 17). A fuller significance of this passage comes into view when it is considered in light of the twenty-third Psalm picture of the shepherd.

Another point to be noted here is that the basis for serving the sheep is love. While the text seems to indicate that Jesus did not get what He was looking for in response from Peter, the question may presuppose that a correct answer would include to love the sheep in an "agape" fashion. This thought would once again point to the good shepherd of the twenty-third Psalm. It is also significant that the word for shepherd (*πολιμήν*) is translated as such ten times in the Gospels and twice more in the Epistles. However, it is also at one point translated "pastor" (Ephesians 4:11). The very thought of shepherd implies two further elements. First, is a process of shepherding or feeding (*πολιμαίνω*) used in the verse sixteen command to Peter. Second, there must be a flock (*πόλιμνη*) which will in turn receive the efforts of this ministry (v. 15-17).

Jesus Treats the Matter of True Worship

In the course of Jesus' ministry He dealt with the matter of true worship on two occasions. The first, was in His contact with the Samaritan woman (John 4:5-26). It was on this occasion that Jesus established the place and the mode of worship. That is, there was soon coming a time when worship would not be ". . . in this mountain"¹² nor

¹²Refers to Mt. Gerizim located in Samaria near Shechem, south of Mt. Ebal. It was the location of the Samaritan's Temple.

in Jerusalem . . ." (v. 21) but would be decentralized. Then two verses later (v. 23) Jesus points out that the hour ". . . now is, . . ." (notice that this is in the present tense) ". . . when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" It is not only interesting but highly significant that, in a context that would allow for a confirmation of Temple worship under the Aaronic and Levitical system of worship, Jesus introduces a decentralized worship that is more concerned with man and his need to worship in ". . . spirit and truth" (v. 23).

The second occasion at which Jesus dealt indirectly with true worship was at his transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). After the experience in which Peter, James and John saw not only Jesus in His glorified form but also Moses and Elijah, Peter proposed the construction of three booths. There may have been two possible reasons for this suggestion. First, there may have been some thought of remaining in the glory that was present, to in a sense personally institutionalize the experience. The second possibility may have been to construct a booth in order to enshrine the experience for others to come to and experience. While Jesus' reaction, if there was one, is not recorded, the remainder of the narrative gives no indication that this idea of constructing booths was accepted.

One of the basic truths in both of these instances seems to be that Jesus gave no occasion to localize the worship experience. It would seem that to do so would allow for the continued functioning of an organized hierarchical religiosity with its priesthood and localized temples.

Overview of Jesus' Model for the Believer

Finally, to conclude this section, it is well to come to the

realization that Jesus did not come to establish a priesthood that would function over the believer but one that would offer support for and to the believer in order to facilitate his relationship with God through Jesus. This relationship was accomplished, not through temples and shrines, not through a localized ministry, and certainly not through a ministry that functioned above and by the support of the people. Jesus resisting the culture of His time by His life and teaching suggest a ministry in support of the people, a ministry modeled by the Shepherd to the sheep, the Good Samaritan, and the serving servant.

ACTS--THE FURTHER EMERGENCE OF THE PRACTICE OF BELIEVER-PRIESTHOOD

In spite of the difficulty of formulating theology from narrative, there nonetheless is valuable support offered for the doctrine of believer-priesthood in the book of Acts. From the opening of the narrative the place of the believer plays an important role in the ministry and growth of the infant church, and in fact counts as one of the major themes of the book. This theme will be considered in two major ways. First, the development of the church with attention to indicators of growth will be considered as they relate to the believer in ministry. Second, consideration will be given to those figures who played important roles in the narrative but who did not seem to be of a clerical rank or order.

The Growth of the Church

Throughout the book of Acts, there are two major designations for the numerical growth of the church. These are cases in which specific numbers are cited (2:41; 4:1-4) and in other cases where words such as multitudes (5:14) are employed to describe the growth. In all of these

cases it is interesting to note that while the introduction of the individual into the church (salvation) might occur under the ministry of one person the growth spiritually would seem to indicate service by many. It is therefore the conclusion of this paper that the believer-priest, although not necessarily identified as such, was in operation to accomplish this end.

A further thought seems germane to this point. It must be realized that while the apostles and disciples were emerging as leaders, Paul in the early chapters was not present in the narrative and thus his influence in the area of organization had not yet been exerted upon the fledgling church. Therefore, the influence of organizational distinction which Paul established in such epistles as Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles had not yet been felt. While the foregoing would seem to characterize the general church, there are instances where the individual believer-priest was called upon to serve in a specific situation.

The Believer-Priest in Ministry

In the course of the narrative, there are two major occurrences which seem to speak to the place of the believer. The first occurs in chapter six at the appointment of the seven. It is at this point that the caliber of the early believer-priest may be seen. According to verse three these men were to be ". . . of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task." They were to be so in order that the apostles could devote themselves to the word and prayer.¹³ The following verse points out that this plan was accepted

¹³These criteria were later established by Paul in establishing for Timothy the qualifications of the offices of elder, deacon, and widows.

by the whole congregation, and that these men were then approved by the whole group. Notice that this approval was not without prayer and that they ". . . laid their hands upon them," which may well have been a form of ordination. The precedent established here was not only valuable in terms of the involvement of a greater number of people in a recognized ministry but as well something of their qualification and as well their endorsement may be seen.

The second occurrence to be considered is that of Anannias, who played a significant role in the healing of Paul shortly after the Damascus Road experience. It is interesting that Paul, a Pharisee of high standing would be prayed for and in a sense ordained by "just" a layman, instead of one such as Peter who by this time had evolved into something of a leader. A further point that needs emphasis at this point is that God did not direct Anannias through a leader or person, but in a direct fashion. As a result of Anannias' obedience, the healing of Paul resulted and the church would never be the same.

While as previously mentioned, it is important to exercise great care in formulating theology from a narrative, the facts of the Acts account seems to indicate that there was a move toward the inclusion of a broader and broader number of laymen in the ministry of the church. With such as the case, it is quite natural that one of Paul's major motifs would be the model for the church which includes the lay ministry.

PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

In order to come to a full understanding of Paul's message to the church and thus his view of believer-priesthood it must be remembered that in Paul's writings, with the exception of Timothy and Philemon he

addresses his letters to the whole church (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philemon 1:1; Colossians 1:2; Thessalonians 1:1; and II Thessalonians 1:1). Another major element in the salutation is that with the exception of Galatians (where he employs the word for churches), and the Thessalonian letters (where he employs the word for church) he employs the word "saints" (ἁγίους) some six times which gives each letter a distinctly personal lay tone. It is as if each letter was written to the "individuals" who are gathered into a group.¹⁴ So it is that as this study progresses through the Pauline letters, the "personal" or "individual" character of each of the epistles must not be lost and in fact must, where appropriate, contribute to the hermeneutic of each letter.

Salvation and Sins Forgiven

One of the basic doctrines which requires consideration is that of salvation and what its base is. Paul in Romans 5:1-2 discusses the basis of salvation and concludes that the Christian is justified by faith (v. 1) and by this faith is introduced into grace (v. 2). In the application of these principles the whole matter of a hierarchical priesthood is placed in a secondary support position to that of the individual in the matter of the establishing of one's relationship with God.

Paul treats this thought in two manners. First, he deals with the matter of the Levitical Priesthood. Second, he establishes the relationship that the Christian has with God.

¹⁴An important point to consider here is that there is no distinction made between the members (Romans 10:12-13; Galatians 3:28).

The Levitical Priesthood. While Paul at no place in his writings deals directly with the Levitical Priesthood, the book of Acts gives some indication of his view of this institution. In the twenty-third chapter Luke narrated the appearance of Paul before the Sanhedrin, as Paul presented the verbal defense to his Brethren of Judaism. One whom Paul did not know to be the high priest commanded those around Paul to strike him. Paul's response was to react, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall!" (v. 3). Those around questioned Paul's reviling of the high priest, where upon Paul noted that he was not aware of the man's position and that his reaction against the priest was wrong. A review of Paul will reveal that this is the limit to which he went. The remainder of the religious orders (Scribes, Pharisees, and Saducees) were the recipients of his displeasure in at least this one case.

This position with respect to these priestly castes is reflected indirectly at several other points in Pauline corpus. The first instance is in Paul's list of the advantages of being a Jew (Romans 5:1-5). With the exception of service (ἡ λατρεία) in verse four, no reference is made to the hierarchical priesthood. The verse four reference however, is in the sense of the sacrificial service unto God, so that while it hints at the Levitical Priesthood or one of the synagogue level orders, it does not directly speak of the priesthood, and may in fact refer to the individual Hebrew in the sacrificial relationship with God.¹⁵ Credence is offered to this suggestion when it is considered that Paul employed this same word in relation to the "living sacrifice" that the Christian makes in Romans 12:1. Again this has a strong tone of the individual in

¹⁵See page 28 in chapter two.

relationship with God.

The second passage to be considered is Ephesians 2:11-22. It is in this instance that Paul was discussing the place of the Christian in relationship to God through Jesus. While any direct reference to the Levitical or Aaronic Priesthood is omitted, Paul does speak of the commonwealth of Israel (v. 12), the law of commandments (v. 15), and ordinances (v. 15), which put the people in a position far off (v. 13). Again it would seem that if the professional priesthood had been an important matter to this former Pharisee (Acts 23:6) who at times still functioned as a Jew (Acts 21:26-27) some note would have been made of the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood at this point.

In a third instance, in which Paul deals with the Oral Law, he speaks of the tradition and rulers of men (Colossians 2:20-23). Notice however, in this passage that Paul associates the commandments and teachings of men with self-made religion (v. 23). That is to say that the true religion of God is not according to what man decrees no matter how wise sounding it may be or how systematic or complete the religious system may appear.

The fourth and final scripture to be noted is in Titus 1:14. This verse is in a passage in which Paul is dealing with those formerly of the circumcision (v. 10) who were currently involved in Jewish myths and commandments. This is very similar to Paul's injunction to Timothy, that he not occupy himself with ". . . myths and endless geneology which gives rise to mere speculation . . ." (I Timothy 1:4). In both cases there is a concern with the fact that men are teaching these matters. Guthrie notes that these were men ". . . whose main interest seems to have been to rival contemporary rabbinical exegesis, rather than to

expound the Gospel."¹⁶ So it was that Paul not only turned away from the institution of the priesthood but also their very teachings, in so far as they were the teachings of men (Colossians 2:8).

Even while Paul was doing away with one hierarchy he was establishing another. This however, was a return to a hierarchy of servitude. Servitude one to another by each for all and all for each, is the pattern set forth by the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 22:26 and again set forth by Paul in Ephesians 5:21.

Servitude--The Christians Relationship With God and Man. The element of servitude or the Christian as servant is a theme which is repeated throughout Pauline corpus. Following closely after the Romans twelve injunction to be a living sacrifice, which has serious implications for servitude in itself, Paul commands the Roman Christians to "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor," (v. 10). The idea presented in this instance is that love is to be as the "mutual love of parents and children"¹⁷ which requires a "tender affection one to another."¹⁸ It is this very element that allows for the second element in the verse which is that of "preference." This second element however is not preference in just any sense, it is the preference in the sense of "προηγέμενα" that is, it is selfless enough that it "goes before in order to show the way,"¹⁹ or "to lead the

¹⁶Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, ed. R.V.G. Tasker, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 60.

¹⁷Joseph H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), p. 655.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 539.

way for others."²⁰ It was this very idea of loving each fellow Christian with tender affection, in order to lead the way for him, that prompted the Apostle to write Ephesians 4:1-2. In this passage he stresses the need for humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance (v. 2). This listing of words was also put forth to the Colossian Christians, except he adds the words, compassion, kindness, and forgiveness (3:12-13). In short, he was concerned to put forth an attitude of servitude, preferring and honoring other Christians ahead of one's self while the opportunity was present (Galatians 6:10). Paul brings this matter into acute perspective in his treatment of Christ the servant (Philippians 2:11). In this passage he set the stage for the Philippians to follow Christ's example by challenging them to "do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another more important than himself." (Philippians 2:3) Then he carried the point further by admonishing them not to "look out for their own personal interests, but also for the interest of others." (v. 4) That is, there was no room for them to "proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition" (Philippians 1:17) but rather that they were to proclaim Christ "from pure motives" (Philippians 1:17).

Paul continues this thought in the second chapter of Philippians where he presented the believer with an example of servitude in the picture of Jesus the servant (Philippians 2:5-11). It is at this point that the "heir and joint-heir with Christ" (Romans 8:17a) is presented with the idea that he too must empty himself and become a servant of

²⁰James Strong, A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1890), p. 60.

Christ (I Corinthians 4:1), becoming humble, and being obedient to death of self (vv. 6-8). As with Christ, the example in doing the above, the Christian will be exalted along with Christ (vv. 9-11) and glorified along with Christ (Romans 8:17b).

The matter of servitude for Paul then would seem to be concluded in the thought that prompted his Corinthian letters; which was, to be the greatest requires that the person become the least, the servant of all. It is this servitude which contrasts with the New Testament picture of the Levitical Priesthood, which also is basic to the whole system of relationships in the body of Christ.

The Body of Christ--Paul's Model for Relationships and Ministry

There are several relations within the church which Paul sets forth in the Romans 12:4-5 description of the body of Christ.²¹

For just as we have man members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another (Romans 12:4-5).

Within this description, there are several important elements which will be discussed in two major areas, that of relationships and that of a model for ministry. In the first area is material regarding the position that each member occupies in relations with one another. That is each member is a "member one of another" (v. 5). Also, all the members of the body, "do not have the same function" (v. 4), so in a sense each believer is unique, and finally there is a strong suggestion of unity in the twice

²¹J. Paul Samplay and others, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, The Pastoral Epistles, ed. G. Krodel, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

Samplay presents excellent material on the Body of Christ which while it does not fit here, still requires acknowledgement.

repeated phrase "one body" (vv. 4-5). In the presentation of the model for ministry there will be a discussion of the model for ministry based on the Pauline metaphor of the body of Christ. Included will be the offices given to the church as well as the place of the believer-priest.

Paul's Model for Inter-Christian Relationships. While Paul writes much on the matter of Christian relationships, there are three themes that he seems to place special emphasis upon. These are, the position of the believer, the uniqueness of the believer, and the unity of all believers. It is these three themes which will be used then to consider Paul's view of Christian relationships.

1. Position. Eastwood speaking of these relationships notes that this is a relationship of position which extends vertically (faith) as well as horizontally (love). He in dealing with this seeks to bring the fruit of man's priesthood into perspective when he writes,

Faith receives God's gifts. Faith is a relationship not between man and man but between man and God. On the other hand, there exists a relationship between man and man and this is based on love. Love means distributing to our neighbor that which we have received from God. Man is justified by the righteousness of Christ and therefore he has not need of works. If man takes his works and offers them to God, he is committing a double offense, he is offering them to God who does not need them and he is taking them from his neighbor where they truly belong. Since God does not require man's works, they must be offered in service to man's neighbor.²²

After treating the matter of works in relationship with God, he goes on to lay out the balance between the relationship that the Christian has with God and with man.

Now all this springs from the fact that the Christian

²²Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962), p. 59.

shares the priesthood of Christ. This means that we are engaged in a twofold activity; we are engaged in the work of faith and hope (praying and praising) which is always directed toward God, and secondly, we are engaged in the work of love and sacrifice (offering and service) which is always directed toward man.²³

So it is that the Christian is positioned and thus functions in a two dimension relationship which while often considered separately is an extension of the relationship one has with God.

2. Uniqueness. Paul then goes on in chapter twelve to describe the uniqueness of the various parts in the body of Christ. The first element is that the body is made up of many members (vv. 12, 14). Second, the Holy Spirit is the way the individual is introduced into this body unit (v. 13). After Paul had thus established the unity of the body he goes on to discuss the lack of uniformity in the body (vv. 14-17). So his third point is that "God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired," (v. 18). Finally, Paul includes a brief section in which he reiterates his discussion of the diversity of the body members.

3. Unity. Time and again throughout Paul's letters the Apostle presents the reader with the idea of the unity or mutuality within the body of Christ. That is not to say that Paul was stressing a uniformity but that he was stressing unity in the body of Christ (v. 12). In the course of his writing to the Corinthians he employs the body of Christ simile to illustrate this relationship. The first occurrence in the Corinthian letters as they appear today is in I Corinthians 10:16-17; where Paul in discussing communion points out that by sharing the emblems ". . . we who are many are one body for we all partake of one bread,"

²³Ibid.

(v. 17). So it is ". . . there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care one of another," (v. 25). It is at this point that Paul explains unity in a deeper sense by pointing out that what happens to one member should influence others (vv. 25-26). Then Paul placed the summary statement "Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it," (v. 27). Both Strong²⁴ and Thayer²⁵ make the comparison that body ($\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$) is the united whole while the member ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta$) is only a part of the body which is unable to function in and by itself, but which in cooperation with other members allows for the functioning of the body. So the indispensibility of the unique individual is seen for the functioning of the church as a whole.

So it is that the body of Christ and the unity thereof cannot be construed to be a unity of all people but a unity of only those who are part of the body of Christ, and this then results in service to God (worship) and service to one another (fellowship). Wiley discusses these relationships in a somewhat different fashion when he writes,

It is the Body of Christ, as constituting a mystical extension of the nature of Christ, and consequently is composed of those who have been made partakers of that nature. The relation between Christ and the Church is organic. As such, it embodies and affords on earth, the conditions under which, and by means of which, the Holy Spirit supernaturally extends to men, the redemptive work of Christ. In it and from it, Christ communicates to the membership of his body, the quickening and sanctifying offices of the Holy Spirit, for the extension of His work among men.²⁶

It is therefore at this point that consideration will be given to Paul's

²⁴Strong, Greek Dictionary, pp. 47, 70.

²⁵Thayer, pp. 397, 611.

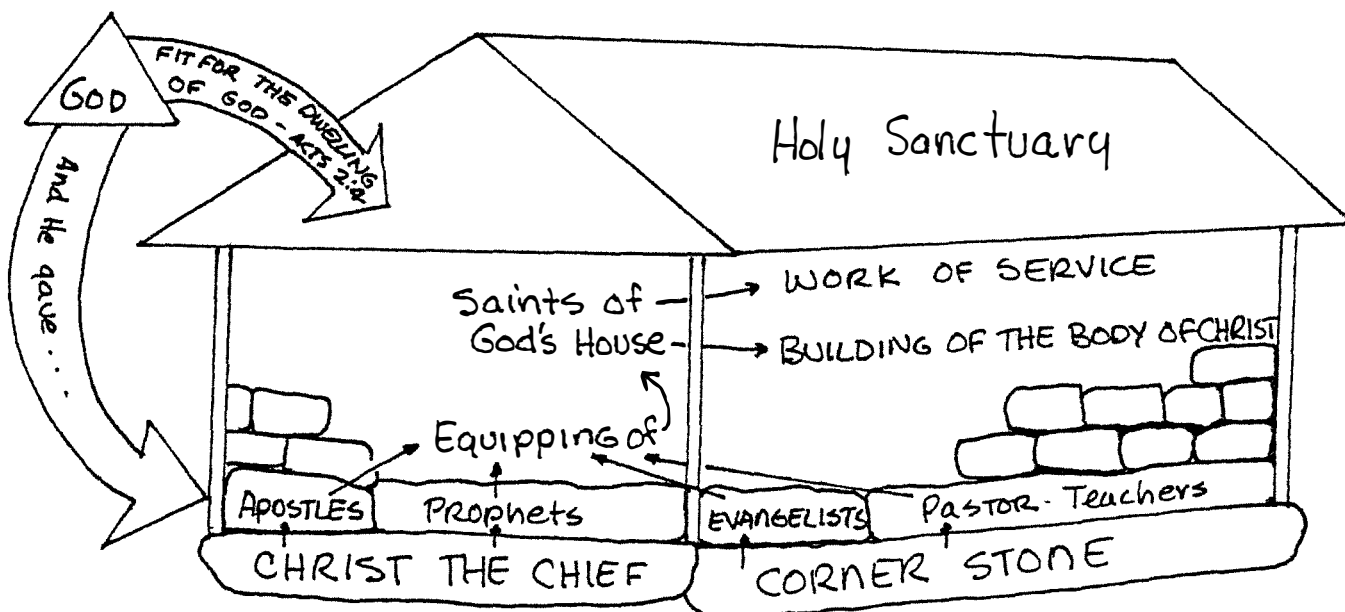
²⁶H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, III (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1943), p. 103.

model for ministry among men, that is to the redeemed (the church) and the world (the lost).

A Pauline Model for Ministry. The question that quite naturally arises then, is what is the place of ministry for the individual be he pastor-teacher, evangelist, prophet, apostle (Ephesians 4:11) or one of the saints (v. 12)? Paul in the course of his writings clearly sets forth not only the model but as well something of the behavior of the various elements in this model. It must be noted, however, that,

When we push our inquiries back into the New Testament we are at once confronted by the striking fact that in the fairly comprehensive catalogues of Church activities given in I Corinthians 12:28-30 and Ephesians 4:11-12 there is no mention of priests. One is tempted to conclude that at this stage in the history of the Christian community there was no room for a regular priesthood, as priesthood was understood at that time.²⁷

Manson's quote as well as the scripture in Ephesians 2:19-22 and Ephesians 4:11-16 seem to lend themselves to the following diagram. In the diagram other scriptures were brought to bear where appropriate to the matter under consideration.



²⁷ Manson, p. 44.

The two basic elements in this model are the functions of the foundation ministries and their spiritual gifts (offices), and the functioning of the saints and their spiritual gifts. The following model will be treated in these categories however, this is for ease of consideration and not to create a hierarchical distinction between the saints and officers of the church.

1. The Officers and Their Spiritual Gifts. The officers of the church are according to Ephesians 4:11 established by Christ, and function in relationship to Him.²⁸ These gifts are not operational gifts (I Corinthians 12:28), but office gifts and as with all gifts of the Holy Spirit, they are for the establishment of the Christian believer (Romans 1:11), the common good of the Christian (I Corinthians 12:7), and the building of the church into a dwelling for God by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). Samplay describes this household as follows:

²⁸Kenneth S. Wuest, Word Studies (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), pp. 110-111.

In verse eleven, Paul identifies the gifts spoken of in verse seven. They are gifted men, given to the church. There is an intensive pronoun in the Greek text. "He Himself gave," and no other. He gave some saints as apostles. The word speaks in a primary sense of the twelve apostles, and in a secondary sense, of those who proclaim the Word of God today. "Prophets" refer, not to those who foretell the future, but to preachers and expounders of the Word. Evangelists are the traveling missionaries both in home and foreign lands. The word "pastor" is poimen, "a shepherd." The words "pastors" and "teachers" are in a construction called Granvill Sharp's Rule which indicates that they refer to one individual. The one who shepherds God's flock is also a teacher of the Word, having both the gifts of shepherding and teaching the flock. God's ideal pastor is one who engages in a didactic ministry, feeding the saints on expository preaching, giving them the rich food of the Word. These gifted men are given the church "for the perfecting of the saints." The word "perfecting" is katartizo, "to equip for service." These gifted men are to specialize in equipping the saints for "the work of the ministry," that is, for ministering work, in short, Christian service. This is in order that the Body of Christ, the church, might be built up, by additions to its membership in lost souls being saved, and by the building up of individual saints.

In Ephesians the model of the 'holy temple' emerges from a concatenation of images near the end of chapter two. There proper citizenship merges into the notion of the household of God. The latter elicits the image of a structure, a building. The author of Ephesians used that opportunity to describe nearly everything about this structure but the shape of the roof! What is the foundation? It is the prophets and apostles. What is the cornerstone? It is Christ Jesus Himself. In Christ, 'The whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.' (2:21). Then, with somewhat cumbersome language, the author shows how the readers relate to that holy temple. In Christ they are built into the temple 'for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.' (2:22).²⁹

While each office is not considered individually there are examples from scripture as to how various men functioned in these offices in support of other believers who in turn worked in the building up of the body of Christ. Krodel addresses this with the thought that,

Thus an administrative structure begins to appear in the Pauline churches, in the bishops and deacons, in the 'fellow workers and laborers' to whom the Corinthians should submit, in the 'leaders' (proistamenoι), and in the charisma of 'helpers' and 'administrations.' These ministries are 'regulative' for the life of the community but not 'constitutive' of the Churches existence. What is constitutive is the one ministry of reconciliation in which different ministries participate and which they seek to express in various ways.³⁰

In the course of this quote Krodel makes several observations which are essential to the operation of the ministry throughout the body of the church. First, he notes that the administrative structure is not the purpose for the existence of the church but functions to help the church exist. Second, as has been one of the essential themes of this section is the element of unity that existed in the church which allowed

²⁹J. Paul Samplay and others, Ephesians, Colossians, II Thessalonians, The Pastoral Epistles, ed. Gerhard Krodel, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1946), p. 27.

³⁰Gerhard Krodel, "Forms and Functions of Ministries in the New Testament" Dialog, Vol. 8 (Summer 1969), p. 198.

for the individual expression of ministry. Third, there is a strong suggestion that there are two general classifications of supernatural endowments for service. That is the leadership gifts function to support and serve the broader based lay ministers who are endowed with the charismatic gifts. Therefore consideration will be given to the office gifts.

First consideration will be given to the office of Apostle (Ἀπόστολος). The man Paul is the foremost example of such an office in operation (Romans 1:1; I Corinthians 1:10). In this position he wrote thirteen books that we know of in an effort to correct, reprove and train in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16) that the individual Christian might be equipped for every good work (v. 17). So it was that Paul functioned as a support, as a servant of the believers in their growth and ministry.

Second, Philip would seem to be the best example of an evangelist. It was he who in Samaria proclaimed Christ (Acts 8:5). The ideas presented by ἐκήρυσεν (proclaim) is the "public proclamation of the Gospel and matters pertaining to it."³¹ This matter is further substantiated by the Gaza road experience at which time "Philip opened his mouth and preached Jesus . . ." to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26ff), and the preceeding verse which notes that they (including Philip) testified and (had) spoken the word of the Lord (v. 25). Again the connotation seems to be that it was more than a salvation message that Philip shared, that it was also an attempt to establish the believer. This would once again point to the servitude of the position.

The third office to be considered is that of the prophet,

³¹Thayer, p. 346.

(*προφήτας*) which seems to be related to the operation of the gift of prophecy (*προφητεύειν*), as Paul establishes the guides in I Corinthians (11:4; 14:1-6, 22-24). Of two cases of prophets in the book Acts, the daughters of Philip are listed in passing (Acts 21:8), and seem to be of some, but not stated significance, to the record. The other is Agabus who had a direct message once for the church to prepare for a famine (Acts 11:28) and once to indicate what awaited Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10). In both of these cases Agabus serves the church with his prophecy.

The fourth office to be considered is reflected in the two word designation for pastor-teacher or shepherd-teacher,³² (*πολιμένας-διδασκαλος*). It is this office that embodies the characteristics of the shepherd and the teacher. That is, there is an element of protection, as well as direction, ". . . concerning the things of God and the duties of man."³³ Put another way,

And if in Ephesians 4:11 the common article makes it plain that the *διδάσκαλος* are identical with the *πολιμένες*, this lies in the nature of the case; for the *πολιμήν* is the one who is responsible for the life of the community, and therefore *διδάσκειν* in the widest sense is part of his office.³⁴

From this statement it is possible to see that both concepts are contained in the work of the head of the church. It is at this point that consideration will be given to the Pastoral letters. The problem seems to be that there is not a definitive argument from Pauline corpus that

³²It is of significance that the word for Pastor (*πολιμήν*) is translated such only once but shepherd twelve times in other passages (Matthew 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Mark 6:34; 14:27; John 10:2, 11, 12, 14, 16; Hebrews 13:20; I Peter 2:25).

³³Thayer, p. 144.

³⁴Karl H. Rengstorff, "*διδάσκαλος*," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 158.

proves that the elder is the same as the pastor, although it does seem that there is a mutuality of work and responsibility. Therefore in the category of pastor-teacher, the office of elder, the office of deacon, and the office of widow will be considered. While these will be considered from Paul's letter to Timothy, they will be considered apart from Paul's personal instruction to Timothy who at the writing of this letter was in charge of the church at Ephesus (I Timothy 1:3). For this reason the instruction of Paul to Timothy will be considered first.

In Paul's instructions to the young pastor, Timothy there are basically two elements. First he instructs Timothy with respect to his personal life (I Timothy 1:18-19; 4:14-16; II Timothy 1:14; 2:1-4; 3:10). Then second, he goes on to deal with Timothy's ministry and its relationship with other people in the Ephesian Church.

Notice first that Timothy had a teaching responsibility among the people (I Timothy 1:2; 6:17-18), and he was to entrust this teaching to faithful men who were also able to teach (II Timothy 2:2). Second, Timothy was instructed to be careful of the teaching model of his life. He was to keep a good conscience (I Timothy 1:19) by paying close attention to himself and his teaching (I Timothy 4:16), by keeping himself free from sin (I Timothy 5:22), and finally by pursuing righteousness, Godliness, love, perseverance, and gentleness (I Timothy 6:11; II Timothy 2:22-26; 3:10).

The third instruction that Paul offered to Timothy was that he was to exercise great care in his relationship with his charges (I Timothy 5:1-3). Paul's instruction was that he should not accept criticism directed at an elder unless it was presented properly by three or more people (I Timothy 5:19). Further, in these relations he was to be

impartial (I Timothy 5:20).

Fourth and finally, Paul did not call Timothy an evangelist but admonished him to do the work of an evangelist (II Timothy 4:5). He follows this with the injunction "Timothy fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:5).

It is of significance that in these two books the office of elder, deacon, and widow are detailed in such a way that would seem to suggest that they are closely allied with the work that Timothy was seeking to do and might in fact have been the vehicle through which the Ephesian church was to be lead.

The bishop-elder, like the pastor, must be a man who is able to teach, not only verbally (I Timothy 3:2) but also able to teach by the various activities and roles that he assumes in life (I Timothy 3:1-7). Further, this teaching was to be in sound doctrine (Titus 1:7-9) which comes of being a seasoned Christian (I Timothy 3:6) and as well, be capable of refuting error according to sound doctrine (Titus 1:9). Finally, he was to be a man who was capable of preaching as well as teaching (I Timothy 5:17) and should if he works hard be honored for his labors (I Timothy 5:17-19).³⁵

The qualification for deacon is outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13.

³⁵Krodel, p. 198.

In Jewish communities a council of elders exercised disciplinary and judicial functions. In the synagogues the elders had places of honor, but were not directly involved in the services. The word elder could also signify a title of honor. "The elder" of II and III John is either the title of an office, referring to one member of a council of elders, or, more likely, it is a title of honor expressing the writer's personal authority and dignity. To his community "of friends" he was "the" elder, but to Diotrephes, he and his emissaries were "a pain in the neck." (III John 9ff.).

While the character qualifications remain much the same, it seems that the deacon does not have the emphasis upon the teaching and preaching aspects of the ministry. This distinction would seem to parallel the Acts six selection of the seven, two of which, Stephen and Phillip seem to have had a teaching-preaching ministry, while the five others do not appear in the Acts narrative to have such a public style of ministry.

Paul after establishing who qualified as a widow (I Timothy 5:3-16) points out the character qualifications for the office. She was to be a woman who was experienced in life (v. 9), who had fixed her hope on God (v. 5), who was involved in prayer (v. 5), who had a reputation for good works (v. 10), who showed hospitality to strangers (v. 10), who washed the saint's feet (v. 10), who assisted those in distress (v. 10), and who not only did good works but also was devoted to good works (v. 10). Again as with the deacon, the elements of teaching and preaching seem to be absent in a public sense. There is however, a strong tone of personal teaching associated with this description and in fact the older women were to teach the younger. Also Paul indicates that younger women who are of marriageable age though widowed should not aspire to this office. In addition to their maternal desires, one of the probable reasons for this was that without the experience of life to serve as the basis for her teaching she would have had little to share with those who would be little more than her peer.

It is of great significance that in the course of Paul's treatment of these offices that he repeatedly points toward the need of preparing the individual believer for ministry. The instruction that these people be of strong character and apt to teach, points to the function that was to be fulfilled by these officers. At no point does Paul suggest that

these offices are ends in themselves, in fact quite the opposite is the case, as he puts emphasis on the preparing or the equipping of the saints for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). The concept of function not for one's self but for others is also a distinct characteristic of servitude. As Eastwood notes,

Because Christians share in Christ's High Priestly Ministry, they are all priests--yet they are not so for their own sake, but for others. Every Christian may offer the sacrifice of himself³⁶

Somewhat later he directs this same thought toward the offices in the church when he writes,

The minister is first and foremost a member of the universal priesthood; his calling is confirmed by the congregation and charged with special duties. At his ordination he is publically recognized, proclaimed and commissioned by the whole Church, and in this way he becomes in St. Paul's phrase 'servant of all' (I Cor. 9:19).³⁷

Finally, it must be noted that this was a structure which allowed for great flexibility. Krodel deals with the matter of the organization or lack thereof in the early church as follows:

Turning to the churches established by Paul, we find that only a very loose structure existed in them. Absent are the councils of elders which developed in Palestinian churches and which supplemented and at times replaced the ministry of prophets and teachers³⁸

While this was the case it must not be forgotten that there was the divine principle of decency and order in effect. So it was that while there was not an institutional structure and an institutional organization present there was a pragmatic structure and organization present that would allow

³⁶Eastwood, Priesthood of All Believers, p. 45.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Krodel, p. 198.

for the individual to receive the support and teaching that he needed to minimize the discovery of, growth of, and operation of his spiritual gift(s) and thus his ministry. So it is that the matter of, the equipping of the saints for ministry arises.

2. The Equipping of the Individual with Spiritual Gifts. The matter of equipping the individual for ministry is categorized into two major areas. First, as has already been discussed, the individual must receive teaching and nurture according to Ephesians 4:11-12.³⁹ Second, and functioning in harmony with those who teach and serve the church (I Timothy 4:14) is the bestowing and operation of spiritual gifts. While there are several passages that list spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28; 12:29-30; Ephesians 4:11-12), primary consideration will be given to Paul's I Corinthians 12-14, with other scripture brought to bear as appropriate. Further, it must be noted that it is not the purpose of this paper to catalogue and list the various spiritual gifts, but to treat matters that deal with their operation in relation to the believer-priest.

At the outset of Paul's I Corinthians listing of spiritual gifts he set forth the guiding element in the matter of spiritual gifts. That is, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (I Corinthians 12:7). This was very similar to Romans 12:5 in which case Paul noted that all Christians are ". . . individually members one of another." This message was reflected once again in I Corinthians 14:26 which noted in part, ". . . Let all things be done for edification," or the building up of one another (Romans 14:19; 15:2).

³⁹See page 57 this chapter.

The idea that Paul seemed to be suggesting was that spiritual gifts were given to individuals for the purpose of promoting ". . . another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, (and) happiness."⁴⁰ Eastwood notes,

Our Lord now ensures that His priestly work may continue in the world, and therefore he bestows upon the Church and the world the fruits of His victory. St. Paul has this in mind in Ephesians Iv. 8: 'When He ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.'⁴¹

Eastwood after a brief section on the gift of God to the world moves on to the matter of the gift to the church.

The second gift is to the Church: It is the equipping of the Church with faithful officers and leaders, and the bestowing of spiritual gifts so that His work may be continued through them.⁴²

So it is that the High Priest, Christ, empowers the believer-priest with gifts so that the individual can minister to other believer-priests as well as to the world. Eastwood notes that this ". . . means that the Church possesses those gifts which will enable her to continue her mission forever."⁴³ The important point here is that it is the involvement of the believer which will allow this continued ministry. So it is that spiritual gifts are given to the believer.

In the course of Paul's treatment of spiritual gifts the matter of who is the recipient of these gifts will have bearing on the matter of the place of the individual believer in ministry. First, as has been previously alluded to, all of the letters which contain lists of spiritual gifts are addressed to churches (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:1; and

⁴⁰Thayer, p. 440.

⁴¹Eastwood, Royal Priesthood, p. 35.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

Ephesians 1:1). Second, in all three salutations there is a strongly individualistic tone (Romans 1:7-8; I Corinthians 1:2-3; Ephesians 1:12-14). Third and finally, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are offered to the individual in order to enable him to function as a believer-priest in the work of the ministry.

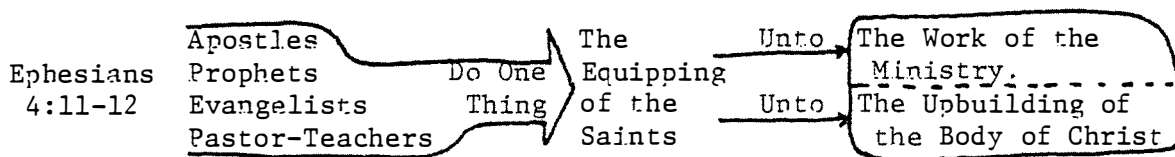
The Pauline View of Believer-Priesthood--An Overview

To conclude this section on Paul's view of the universal priesthood of the believer, it is important to give consideration to several points. First, while Paul does not repeatedly address the matter of the place of the believer in ministry, he does, as has been demonstrated give a high priority to the need of the church as well as the individual to be involved in the work of the ministry. The possibility that this doctrine was in wide practice might well explain his failure to deal with the subject in a more direct fashion.

Second, the matter of the individual in the body of Christ engaged in ministry is not to be without the support of the office gifts.⁴⁴ That is, as each of the officers of the church properly executes his office, the believer-priest receives the support of that office.

Third, the church functions not only in relationship to itself but also in relationship to the world.⁴⁵ That is, the church in

⁴⁴The following diagram may serve to clarify this point.



⁴⁵See page 88 this chapter.

relationship with itself is engaged in the ministry of fellowship (I Corinthians 1:9; II Corinthians 8:4; Philippians 2:1), and the ministry of nurture (Ephesians 6:4). The church in relationship with the world is engaged in the ministry of evangelism (Acts 6:7; Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:5). Lastly, the church in relationship with God is engaged in the ministry of worship (I Corinthians 14:25; Philippians 3:3). In all of these areas it is not the church as a whole but the church as individual believer-priests who are individually or corporately engaged in ministry. This is because,

Christ continues his ministry through the believing community. The Church does not exist for her own purpose but only as the servant of Christ. To speak of the Church as the servant of Christ is the equivalent of speaking of the Church's priesthood. This service is an obligation and no one may contract out of it.⁴⁶

So it is that as the church functions in its various relationships she does so under the headship of Christ, as His extension into the church and into the world. While Paul acknowledges this headship, he does not treat directly the matter of Christ in His High Priestly office. So it is that Hebrews presents the picture of Jesus the High Priest.

HEBREWS PICTURES THE BELIEVER-PRIEST'S HIGH PRIEST

The writer of the Hebrews in the course of explaining the supremacy of Christianity, sets forth the relationship that the believer-priest has with God. Referring to the writer of the letter, F. F. Bruce writes,

The purpose of our author's exegesis of Old Testament scripture, as of his general argument, is to establish the finality of the gospel by contrast with all that went before it (more particularly, by contrast with the Levitical cultus),

⁴⁶Eastwood, Royal Priesthood, p. 52.

as the way of perfection, the way which alone leads men to God without any barrier or interruption of access. He establishes the finality of Christianity by establishing the supremacy of Christ in His person and His work.⁴⁷

With this as the case, there are many possibilities for a study of Hebrews that would be germane to the matter of believer-priesthood. Manson referring to this book notes that ". . . it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews that we have the clearest picture . . . of the sacrifice in which Christ is at once priest and victim."⁴⁸ For the purpose of this study Christ as High Priest will be studied. However, His servitude will not be without impact upon this matter.

Jesus the Christian's Great High Priest (4:14-5:10)

The first section to be considered presents Jesus as the great High Priest. It is appropriate that Jesus is here compared to Aaron or put another way, Jesus the High Priest is compared to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Aaron, as high priest, is presented in 5:1-7. He on behalf of man (v. 1), dealt with the weak because he was weak (v. 2), and as such must offer sacrifice not only for the people but as well for himself (v. 3). Also it is significant that Aaron was dependent for his glory upon God's call (vv. 4-6), and was heard by God only because of his piety (v. 7). It is important to note that this piety was a conformity in his behavior but not necessarily in his nature.

However great Aaron may have been, Jesus is presented as superior (5:8-10). That is, He was the Son of God (v. 8), He suffered (v. 8), and

⁴⁷F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. lii.

⁴⁸Manson, p. 30.

from this suffering was able to more perfectly sympathize with the weaknesses of the Christian (4:14-16). He is the source of salvation being the perfect sacrifice (v. 9), and finally, was designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (v. 10).

Today the Aaronic priesthood no longer exists for the Lord Jesus Christ has become the mediator of the one new covenant which was established in His blood. Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, 'who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the three tabernacles, which the Lord pitched and not man.' (Heb. 8:1,2)⁴⁹

So it is that Jesus by His very nature and experience carries out the office of High Priest in a manner superior to the man Aaron. A major element of this superior priesthood is based in His understanding and relationship with man (4:14-16).

Jesus Was Like Man in Order to be Merciful and Faithful (2:1-18)

In the course of the second chapter of Hebrews the reader is presented with a picture of the relationships that exist between God, Jesus, angels, and man. These relationships however, are presented for one purpose, to demonstrate the importance of Christ Jesus to man, and man to Jesus. The relationship is that when man who was created a little lower than the angels (vv. 6-8), is in need, Jesus, because God placed Jesus in the same level (v. 9), that He might taste death for everyone (vv.9-15), is thus able to deliver the believer from the fear of death (v. 15). There however, are two further benefits for the Christian. First, God through Jesus gives help to the seed of Abraham (v. 16) which in the fullest New Testament sense includes the ingrafted branch (John 15).

⁴⁹Robert G. Rayburn, O Come Let Us Worship (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), pp. 61-62.

Second, Jesus is the High Priest, and as such is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted as He was (v. 16-18).

Jesus the High Priest that is Greater than Moses (3:2-6; 14)

The next comparison to be considered is that of Moses with Christ. It is important to note that in both cases there was a faithfulness to God (vv. 2,3). The difference is that faithfulness for Moses was servitude (v. 5), while for Jesus it is the occupation of His rightful place as the Son of God (v. 6). The second comparison is that Moses' house was the Children of Israel, while Christ's house was and continues to be the New Israel, the Community of Christians (v. 6). This relationship however is on the condition that the Christians maintain their position until the end of this earthly period (v. 14).

Just as Moses would only be a leader if the Children of Israel remained true (his servant relationship with God would remain unchanged), Jesus is the High Priestly Leader as long as the Christian maintains in his relationship of confidence and firm hope (vv. 6, 14).

Jesus a High Priest After the Order of Melchizedek

In Hebrews seven, the writer introduces another interesting parallel between the Old Testament and Christ. After a description of Melchizedek and Abraham's relationship with him (vv. 1-10), he gives consideration to the priestly order of Christ (vv. 11-25). Notice that with the assumption of the High Priestly office by Jesus the law changed (vv. 12-13), the qualification for the priest changed to that of an indestructable life (vv. 15-16), and there was established a better hope for a closer relationship with God (vv. 18-19). Another comparison is presented in Jesus the eternal High Priest, permanently enthroned, as

compared to the multitude of Israelite priests who were limited by death (vv. 23-25).

It is at this point after establishing the eternal perfect character of Christ's priesthood, that the writer points out that ". . . it was fitting that we should have such a high priest holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens . . ." (vv. 26-27). It is out of this relationship that the High Priest Christ did and does what no other high priest including Melchizedek is able to do. That is, He is able to present as pure and justified those who accept His sacrifice and submit to His priestliness. This is,

Because God sees all true believers in His Son He has given to them the special privileges and ministries of priests. All of them belong to a royal priesthood (I Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6).⁵⁰

So it is, the Priest that was after the order of Melchizedek, who was superior to the Aaronic High Priest, has a priesthood to serve him much as the Levitical Priesthood served the Aaronic Priesthood.

PETER'S VIEW OF BELIEVER-PRIESTHOOD

It is in Peter's writing that the major tie between the New Testament priesthood of the believer and the Old Testament priesthood is not only set forth but as well explained. Peter accomplished this by drawing upon the Old Testament concept of the Jewish community,⁵¹ which

⁵⁰Eastwood, Royal Priesthood, p. 34.

⁵¹Jewish community for the purposes of this paper is the Jewish nation including economics, social order, religion, and government. Community seems to indicate a restricted geographical area. This restriction is not applicable to the employment of the word in this context, for Jewish community existed throughout the Mediterranean region in various countries under various governments.

was then related to the New Testament Church in general. That is, Peter established for his readers⁵² that they are a part of the nation of priests and that as such they had to become acutely aware that in addition to an elevated position, they had various responsibilities.

Before dealing with Peter's view of the believer-priest something of just who Peter was may be helpful to an understanding of this study, and as such add emphasis to what he said. First, it was according to the Acts narrative that Peter was responsible for some of the leadership of the young church. He is first encountered in this role on the occasion of the appointment of Matthias (Acts 1:15) and as such may have been something of a leader among the disciples on other occasions unrecorded in scripture. Peter also seemed to have had some responsibility in the general locale of Jerusalem. Again the Acts narrative points out that he was involved with churches in Samaria (Acts 8:14-25), as well as Caesarea (Acts 10:10-48), and in fact, while he seems to have done some traveling (I Corinthians 1:12; 9:5) away from the Jerusalem area, his major work seemed to have been in the proximity of Jerusalem.

Supremacy of God's Word

While Peter establishes grace as the basis of salvation (I Peter 1:13) it is only through the living and abiding Word of God (I Peter 1:23-25), that salvation is possible. So it is that Peter's instruction is that the ". . . pure milk of the word," be a part of every believer's life (I Peter 2:2).

Peter's View of Love

Peter views love in two ways (*φιλαδέλφια* and

⁵²I Peter 2:5, 9.

ἀγαπᾷ) and as such suggested that love be pointed in three directions; God, man, and life. It is of interest that both of the words for love that Peter used are fairly balanced in incidents of use. It seemed that Peter in the use of these two words was seeking to establish the love relationship that was to exist between Christians. In I Peter 1:22 and II Peter 1:7, he suggested that there was to be a love of the brethren that bordered upon the love that was to exist between siblings,⁵³ and, that love was to be expanded to include the Christian's love of the brethren. This was a love which was akin to a love of one's fellow countryman (I Peter 3:8).⁵⁴ The significance of this hint at a "nationalism" will be dealt with later in this section.

The second perspective of love that Peter gave is in the sense of having a preference for the welfare of another (I Peter 1:22).⁵⁵ There was a hint of servitude here which would be in keeping with the concept put forth in the I Peter 2:17 idea of honoring all man. This servitude was in keeping with the 2:4 - 3:22 section which suggests the various situations that one might encounter and the proper response on the part of the believer-priest in that situation.

Peter's Discussion of the Spiritual Community

With the picture of love that is present in Peter as the basis, it is important to view Peter's concept of the place of the believer in relationships with other believers and in turn the relationship of

⁵³Thayer, p. 653.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Thayer, p. 3.

the corporate body with the world.

Israel under the Old Covenant is an 'elect race', and a 'people of God's own possession', inasmuch as it has been selected out of all the peoples of the earth to be at once the recipient and the instrument of God's saving purpose. It is a people set apart and dedicated to God, and therefore a 'holy nation', and because it has been set apart and dedicated for special service to God and man, it is a 'kingdom of priests'. That at any rate is what Israel was intended to be; that is the purpose of its election, and that is what God promised it should be when through Moses He established the Old Covenant (Exodus xix. 5-6).⁵⁶

The fact remains that when Israel failed, God had to establish a new order so,

The distinctive feature of the whole section (I Peter 2:1-10) is that the predicates of salvation and dignity, possession, temple and priesthood (with the sacrificial ministry) are consistently transferred from Israel to the Gentile Christian community.⁵⁷

The focal point of this passage seems to be in verse nine which contains the four elements which will be next considered. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (I Peter 2:9).

A Chosen Race. The picture that Peter seemed to have been presenting in this reference to the chosen status of the Children of Israel was that the Christian community, the chosen race (γένος ἐκλεκτόν) now occupied a special place in the affection of God (Deuteronomy 10:15). That is to say that God's love for the Christian was at that point as it had been for the believing Jew. "Indeed he loves the people, all thy holy ones are in thy hand, And they follow in they steps, Everyone

⁵⁶Eastwood, Royal Priesthood, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁷Gottlob Schrenk, "ἱερός . . .," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. III, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 250.

receives of thy word" (Deuteronomy 33:3). The idea according to Thayer is that the word for race refers to a nation or nationality which is descended from a particular people,⁵⁸ thus the Christian was and is a descendant of a particular people, possibly a reference to the regrafted branch of John's gospel.

The idea of chosen also deserves some comment. Barclay notes that,

From this we learn that the Christian is chosen for three things. (a) He is chosen for privilege. In Jesus Christ there is offered to him a new and intimate fellowship with God. God has become his friend and he has become God's friend. (b) He is chosen for obedience. Privilege brings with it responsibility. The Christian is chosen in order that he may become the obedient child of God. He is chosen not to do as he likes but to do as God likes. (c) He is chosen for service. His honour is that he is the servant of God. His privilege is used only when he brings to God the obedience he desires. Chosen for privilege, chosen for obedience, chosen for service--these three great facts go hand in hand.⁵⁹

It is these three points that Peter stresses by using the word, ἀγαπάω, in I Peter 1:8. Thayer notes that, "when used of love to a master, God or Christ, the word involves the idea of affectionate reverence, prompt obedience, (and) grateful recognition of benefits received."⁶⁰ So it is the chosen race is a race of people under the leadership of Christ with the privileges and responsibilities of any other national ethnic group.

A Royal Priesthood. The second picture that Peter uses in

⁵⁸Thayer, p. 133.

⁵⁹William Barclay, The Letters of James and Peter, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 199.

⁶⁰Thayer, pp. 3-4.

describing the place of the Christian is that of the Royal Priesthood. His phrase, βασιλείων ἱεράτευμα, is a direct quote from the Septuagint's rendering of Exodus 19:6, and gives some indication of Peter's view of the place of the individual as priest.

While Exodus 19:6 is taken literally, the thought is also present that as a priestly company the community is 'immediate to God.' This truth casts an astonishing light on Exodus 19:6. But it is a fulfillment which is granted to the Gentile Christian community through Christ. If elsewhere the priest is aloof from the people, here the whole new people of God is a priestly fellowship.⁶¹

While the word for priest (ἱεράτευμα) occurs only twice in Peter's writings (I Peter 2:5, 9), it is not to be compromised in importance. With respect to this word there are several elements to be noted.

First, Strong points out that this is "the priestly fraternity, i.e., a sacerdotal order." He further relates this word to several others which would tend to convey the idea of sacred and holy (ἱερός) functioning in a priestly manner (ἱερατεύω), and simply priest (ἱερεύς).⁶² The point is that this word in its purest form refers to someone who has priestly responsibility before God. It is this word that Peter has chosen to describe the place of the Christian in relationship with God.

Second, Thayer points out that in both cases of priesthood (Old Testament and New Testament) the people are priests". . . because they have access to God and offer not external but spiritual (πνευματικά) sacrifices."⁶³ Barclay in discussing this matter of the sacrificial

⁶¹Schrenk, p. 250.

⁶²Strong, p. 37.

⁶³Thayer, p. 298.

function of the Christian priest makes note of the fact that these sacrifices fall into two major areas. First, the Christian has access to God to bring others to him. Second, the believer-priest also brings offerings to God, such as spiritual sacrifices of his work, and his worship.⁶⁴

Third, Peter under the direction of the Holy Spirit and as previously noted, has transferred the Old Testament priesthood to the Christian. The main change seems to be that now the priest is not of an hierarchical caste, which precludes the involvement of all but a select few, but the priest is a part of the new people of God which is a priestly fellowship.⁶⁵

The result of these three points is that the whole of the priesthood and its function is once again returned to the people. That is, the believer-priest is a member of the holy priesthood (I Peter 2:5) in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, ". . . you will be called the priests of the Lord," (Isaiah 61:6).

The matter of the priesthood is further clarified by the words that Peter employed as the modifiers of priesthood. In I Peter 5:5, Peter uses the word holy (ἁγίου). The point seems to be that the believer-priest is set apart in two ways. First, he is set apart from the world and all that is of the world. Thus there is a righteousness which is to characterize the life of the believer-priest. The second way in which the believer-priest is to be set apart is in terms of his life of priestliness, which speaks to his function. This in turn allows him as

⁶⁴Barclay, p. 196.

⁶⁵Schrenck, p. 250.

previously noted to have access to God in order to be able to offer spiritual sacrifices of himself, his work, and his worship, which is well in keeping with the idea of submission and servitude.

The second modifier that Peter employed is that of royal (βασιλεῖον). The idea that seems to be present here is that of regal, . . . or priestly.⁶⁶ This concept is not that of an inherent quality but rather a relationship that the believer-priest has with God and Christ.⁶⁷

Eastwood, although drawing on other than Petrine scripture, speaks to this relationship in terms of community when he writes first of the Old Testament believer, then the New Testament believer,

They were His people not only as individuals but as a community. Yet these were God's people in a new way. They were not His people on the grounds of nationality or lineage or by the works of the Law but on the grounds of Christ's death. They had received the title-deeds of His sacrifice, and for this reason they believed they were His people directly and not indirectly. They had one Representative before God--their Savior. Now this was an entirely new relationship; it was a direct relationship with Christ based on His merits. When they spoke of it in its corporate sense they used phrases like 'the Body of Christ' (I Cor. xii. 27); the 'Household of God' (Ephesians ii. 19); 'an holy Temple in the Lord' (Eph. ii. 22). As the Body of which Christ was the Head, and Church naturally shared in the priestly character of Christ. As members of the universal priesthood of the Church they were justified in claiming to be a new community. It is this idea which distinguishes the People of God in the new dispensation from the People of God in the old.⁶⁸

So it is that Peter has established the Christian believer in a

⁶⁶Thayer, p. 98.

⁶⁷Karl Ludwig Schmidt, " βασιλεύς . . . ," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. I, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 591.

⁶⁸Eastwood, Royal Priesthood, p. 32.

priestliness which places him in company with other priests in the sacrificial ministry unto the Lord. This priestliness is the opposite of the following verse, ten, which makes the comparison with life before becoming the priest and member of the priesthood of the Lord.

A Holy Nation. The third picture of the Christian community that Peter gives is that of a Holy Nation (ἑθνος ἅγιον). That is the Christian is now involved in a relationship which is something more than a loosely structured social gathering of people but rather a system complete with a government, economics, and above all religion.

The Israelites were a holy nation as separated from the heathen and consecrated to God's service by circumcision. Christians of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, are one nation under one King, separated to his service, dedicated to him in holy baptism.⁶⁹

So it is that the circumcision of heart results in a difference that,

. . . lies in the fact that he is dedicated to God's will and to God's service. Other people may follow the standards of the world but for him the only standards are God's.⁷⁰

The idea that Peter seems to be suggesting then is that in this situation of being a chosen race and a holy priesthood that it is not acceptable to just exist but there are very real and personal responsibilities involved in this matter.

A People for God's Own Possession. The fourth and final picture that Peter gave in this section is that of a possession--God's possession,

⁶⁹B. C. Cattin, The First Epistle General of Peter, eds. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 22 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), p. 71.

⁷⁰Barclay, p. 199.

(περιποίησιν). The idea that is contained here is not only that of just any possession but of God's "own" or "owned" possession. Thus the Christian acquires a new value when acquired by God.

In this passage Peter quoting from the Septuagintal rendering of Isaiah 43:21, "The people whom I formed for Myself, Will declare My praise." An interesting point here is that the word for people is (λαὸς) which may be a reference back to the previous picture as the word shares a common etymology with the word for nation. So it is the nation of Christians is not just unique and set apart, but is the social system that is possessed by God.

The Common Position of All Believers. There is a final question to be considered which Peter clarifies in the course of his writing. That is, just what is the relationship between the offices that have been established in the church? First, notice at two points Peter refers to himself as an apostle (I Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:1). He uses the word one more time but with the idea the apostles were men who were a possession of the believers. Then in the fifth chapter of the first book, Peter opens what would seem to be a section addressed specifically to the elders, by writing "Therefore I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow-elder" (v. 1). The idea that Peter seems to be presenting is that in addition to being an apostle (according to the Acts one criterion) he was also an elder, or one who presided over the assemblies (or church).⁷¹

So it was that there seemed to have been the possibility that one could function in two offices at the same time. Peter does not stop

⁷¹Thayer, p. 536.

there however, but carries the thought further including the idea of shepherding the flock of God (I Peter 5:2) with honorable purposes (v. 2) and by example (v. 3). It is in this section of five verses that Peter is almost Pauline in detailing the place of the elder in the church.

Overview of Peter's Contribution to the Doctrine

Finally, to conclude the section on Peter's contribution to the reader's understanding of believer-priesthood, it is important to note that while the other New Testament writers seemed generally to present material that pointed to an acceptance of the place of the believer in ministry, Peter speaks directly to the Christian believer as being, not only of a chosen race, of a holy people, and possessed by God, but of a priesthood which was then and is today just as valid and just as relevant as the Levitical Priesthood was to the Jewish community.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BELIEVER-PRIEST

To conclude the matter of believer-priesthood as presented in the Old and New Testaments certain of the implications will now be considered as they speak to the value and application of this doctrine in the life of the believer. It also is to be noted that this section is an overview and a drawing together of all that has been covered in chapter two and chapter three, and therefore not given to a great deal of supporting detail.

Before consideration is given to the two major areas of this section, it is important to a complete understanding of this material for the reader to note that with the close of the Old Testament period, the first cycle had completed itself. That is, God's chosen people, the Hebrews, were in the close of the Old Testament, hopelessly entrenched

in a situation which had the professional clergy in a position over the believer-priest. The Children of Israel had moved from a place where every man was supported by the Levitical and Aaronic Priesthoods in his priesthood unto Jehovah, his family, and himself, to a situation where every man functioned in support of the Levitical Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood, as they attempted to fulfill those priestly functions.

Old Testament Implications

The Old Testament contains several matters which are important to the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. At this point it should be noted that if a hierarchical priesthood had been in God's original plan, to some degree it should have been a part of His original establishment in Genesis. While Melchizedek may be such, it is important to note that there is little to indicate that his influence extended beyond his immediate area which would seem to call into question any thought that a priest was necessary to gain access to God.

Family. The first matter of interest is that worship was at first one of the functions of the family unit. That is, it was Noah, Abraham, and other Patriarchs who sought to establish and foster the spiritual growth of the family. The implication for today is that the father of the family must take seriously the responsibility set forth in Deuteronomy 11:18-25 and to, as Barclay offered in the New Testament section, give spiritual sacrifices of one's work and one's worship. That is to say that the priesthood of the believer must begin not in the church or in the community but in the home.

Scripture. The second implication that is also found in the Deuteronomy passage is the supremacy of God's word. While in the

Patriarchical period there was an absence of written scripture, with the movement of the Children of Israel under Moses, came the transmission of the written word of God to man. This supremacy of scripture was to continue and also had a part in the work of Paul and Peter. The implication for today is that God's Word is available by the Holy Spirit to the believer-priest for his personal development and as well employment in his ministry.

Balance. The third matter which is germane to the functioning of the individual as a believer-priest is balance. The need is demonstrated by the failure of the Hebrew community to maintain a proper balance between the individual in his priestly functioning and the corporate functioning of many individuals under the direction of and in cooperation with the Levitical and Aaronic Priesthoods. This balance is not only a balance in the responsibility for ministry between the priestly leadership as well as the believer-priest but also a balance between servitude, position as the people of God, and priestly function.

In the course of the change that occurred, not only was the priestly function of the individual lost, so too was the whole sense of servitude, both on the part of the individual as well as the priestly leadership. Thus the priestly hierarchy was no longer a servant to the people but a recipient of the servitude of the people. This relational change was to influence not only the function of the individual but also the priest to the point that both became more concerned with the institutionalization of the priestly office instead of the support and care of the common people.

New Testament Implications

While the New Testament contains much regarding the individual

in ministry, again only the implications will be considered as they relate to the general doctrine of believer-priesthood. One of the important points to understand is that the truths of God are not bound by time or temporal organization. Therefore, there are matters which are common to both testaments.

Basis in Scripture. The basis for the doctrine of believer-priesthood is Scripture and it is to this base that the doctrine returns time and again. It is therefore incumbent upon the individual who embraces this doctrine to return to Scripture to understand its full application and potential. That is to say the believer-priest must come to a place of understanding what the scriptures teach on the matter of his ministry as well as guidelines for carrying out of that ministry. The matters in this section are presented under the guides and limitations of the foregoing statement on the scriptures.

Basis in Christ the High Priest. While it was the writer of the Hebrews that presented the reader with a picture of Jesus the High Priest, it was Peter who expanded the thought of Jesus' leadership to include all believers into a "race," a "nation," a "people for God's own possession," and finally, speaking to their spiritual functioning, a "royal priesthood." A new order replaced the Jewish order. This order is complete with a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, a nation of priests, rather than a priestly class, and a series of relationships with God, themselves, and man.

One of the significant elements in this new order is that the individual is positioned by Christ, in such a way that he is able to minister in several directions. These positionings are the previously

mentioned relationships and they extend to God, corporately and individually, to the church, corporately and individually, and to the world, corporately and individually. Because Christ is the High Priest and the provider to the individual of the power for ministry (the Holy Spirit), in none of these cases is a professional priest necessary. However, the key element in all cases is that of servitude on the part of the believer-priest. Christ gave the serving layman to the church, every bit as much as He did the serving shepherd.

Worship--A Relationship With God. The first of the relationships that the believer-priest is engaged in is that of worship. This vertical relationship is allowed by the individual's faith and in turn is facilitated by the Holy Spirit, which placed the individual believer-priest in contact with his high priest, Jesus. It is essential that the believer come to realize his own priestliness in this area in order that he offer sacrifices of praise and worship in addition to appropriate sacrifices of prayer.

Here as in other areas this may be an activity of the individual by himself or it may be that of an individual as he is engaged in corporate worship. This worship quite naturally leads to the second area, that of the relationship that one might have with other Christians.

Fellowship--The Relationship With the Church. General fellowship for the purposes of this section will be given a broader meaning to include all of the functions associated with the church in relationship to unity, mutuality, fellowship (in the sense of common usage), and organization. It must be remembered however, that these four elements are not in existence as an end in themselves but for the benefit and support of the

individual believer-priest.

Unity, is the first element which characterizes the relationship in general fellowship of believer-priests. It must be remembered however, that for this unity to be complete there is a need for uniqueness. That is to say that unity is not necessarily uniformity and is thus accomplished through a mature and a disciplined outlook in the church today.

Mutuality, is the second element which characterizes the relationship of the general fellowship of believer-priests. This element is based on a complete concept of servitude, and that God has blessed each believer with certain material blessings and certain spiritual blessings for the good of not only the local church but the church general.

Fellowship, in the common usage sense, is the third element which characterizes the relationships of the general fellowship of believer-priests. It is at this point that the believer-priest is most effective in the work of the ministry as he functions in relationship with those with which he has the greatest degree of common interest or purpose. It is for this reason that the local church has such a distinct personality. Fellowship warrants that it be so.

Organization is the final element which is to characterize the relationship of the general fellowship of believer-priests. This relationship is not so much an organization as it is an organism which possesses life and imparts life. This organization also functions in support of the laity as it is functioning in the work of the ministry. The hierarchical priesthood or the professional staff is not only supported in this model but they are involved in the support of the believer in the work of the ministry.

While something of the character of the fellowship of

believer-priests has been seen, it remains that these elements function for the purposes of nurturing and supporting new Christians, worshipping in a corporate manner, serving in a corporate fashion, and evangelizing in a corporate manner. It must be remembered however, that in all of these activities, it is the believer-priest who has the greatest potential for doing the work of the ministry and that it is the purpose of the office gifts to develop the facility for ministry in the individual believer.

Evangelism--The Relationship with the World. Growing out of the previous two areas is evangelism. It is in evangelism that the believer-priest functions much as the high priest, as a mediator between man and God, sharing the gospel and pleading the case of God before man. It must be remembered that man in the capacity is not the only medium to reach other man, but the primary one. A further point is that it is not the prerogative of a select few to be excused from this activity.

Spiritual Support of the Believer-Priest

In order to accomplish the maximum in these three areas of relationship, the believer-priest has been given a support system which is made up of the inner workings of the Holy Spirit within the individual believer-priest, the Word of God as illuminated by the Holy Spirit, interaction with other believer-priests, and finally the support of spiritual offices. The important point is that this support is for the purpose of nurture and development in order that the believer-priest be uniquely equipped in order that he may in turn be a viable, active, verile member of the kingdom of God on earth.

Chapter 4

THE HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS CENTERED IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF MARTIN LUTHER

In order to come to a clear understanding of Martin Luther's view of the priesthood of all believers, it is essential that the circumstances surrounding his treatment of the concept be understood. This includes the historical situation, the theological implications, and Martin Luther's life and theology. While these areas are not treated separately, they are the motifs which underlie the following historical-theological treatment of the universal priesthood of all believers. Further, it should be noted that the progression of Martin Luther's thought will be treated only as it relates directly to this subject.

LUTHER'S PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

W. Brunotte, in his book, Das Geistliche Amt bei Luther¹ has surveyed the Lutheran corpus available at the time of authorship and reduced Martin Luther's believer-priesthood into the following points:

1. Before God all Christians have the same standing, a priesthood in which we enter by baptism and through faith.
2. As a comrade and brother of Christ, each Christian is a priest and needs no mediator save Christ. He has access

¹Stephen C. Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber, eds., The Layman in Christian History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

to the Word.

3. Each Christian is a priest and has an office of sacrifice, not the Mass, but the dedication of himself to the praise and obedience of God, and to bearing the Cross.

4. Each Christian has a duty to hand on the gospel which he himself has received.²

While the doctrine has undergone some change, especially at the point that Lutheranism became the state church in many countries, its underlying principle of believer-priesthood remains largely unchanged. It must be further noted that this is a concept with which writers or theologians in Protestant thought would not disagree but which is often omitted from practice.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LUTHER'S VIEW OF THE BELIEVER

Martin Luther's concept of the priesthood of all believers, while thought to be based solely on his view of scripture, was in fact greatly influenced by many other factors. It might even be said that Luther's revival of the doctrine was the result of the focusing of these factors in the life of the great reformer. Therefore, the following survey is offered. It is important to note that these factors are divided into two classifications. They are scriptural considerations and situational considerations. It was while he was in the environs of the Roman Church that he viewed the situation of the church which convinced him of the validity of his rediscovery. Whatever might have been his discovery and observation in the latter, it always, for Luther, had to fit in the former.

²Ibid., p. 256.

Luther's Basis in Scripture

Luther's premise of Sola Scriptura, is the basis for not only the actions of the reformer but the authority with which he proceeded to take his message to the Roman Church. In fact, by the Fall of 1518, Luther was insisting that his only authority in the coming dispute would be neither the pope nor the church, but the Bible. The major reason he was successful in his dealings with scripture, was that he was able to take scripture to the deepest, innermost parts of his mind, away from all outside interference, for careful and concise examination.

Luther's spiritual development has it's starting point in the depths of his soul, where no external influence could penetrate. Whoever wishes to understand him must seek him first in his solitude.³

A passage from Kooiman's⁴ narrative of Martin Luther's life will serve to clarify this point.

I raged against it⁵ all with a wounded and confused conscience, and I was constantly coming in to collision with the phrase of Paul's and thinking eagerly to know what he meant by it.

Luther rose to his feet and strode to and fro in his cell. . . . He looked around and saw the great folies of the Fathers of the church, the theologians; but they were of no avail. He cried out to all the saints, but they gave no answer. . . . After a time, Luther again sat down and read once more the text in its context. Suddenly his vision cleared; he felt as if a veil had been taken away; he could see what Paul meant, . . .

It was in this context of his innerman that Luther could carefully examine scripture in light of scripture and not necessarily by what

³Gerhard Ritter, Luther His Life and Work (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1959), p. 23.

⁴W.J. Kooiman, By Faith Alone (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955).

⁵The thought that God in addition to sending man to Hell for his original sin would send a man distress and pain in this life because of

influence tradition may have exerted upon him.⁶

Luther: Christ and Man in Relationship

As a direct result of Luther's interaction with scripture and the authority thereof, and also because of his view of the believer's relationship with Christ, he took the believer-priest to be in direct relationship with Christ. He carried this to the point that this relationship was available to all men.

. . . He was convinced by a simple syllogism that in Christ all believers share equally in the priesthood, Christ is a priest; in Christ we become like him; therefore we too are priests. Or in his own words: 'Since (Christ) is a priest and we are his brethren, all Christians have the power and must fulfill the commandment to preach and to come before God with our intercessions for one another and to sacrifice ourselves to God' (Epistle S. Petri qeprdegt . . .).⁷

So it was that Luther saw a believer-priest and as well in relationship with the believer's high priest, Christ.

God's Word--The Equipper of Men. The third point which served to convince Martin Luther of the priesthood of all believers is that he viewed the Word of God as empowered by the Holy Spirit of Christ as the equipping agent of the saints.

It is this living word in a believer that creates a priest of God, that equips the Christian for a life of service to God. This Word involves the power of the Holy Spirit, which converts men and sets them on the path of sanctification. Luther described Christians as ones 'inwardly taught by God' and as having 'God's Word . . . on (their) side.' And this to Luther was the simple fact that made the humblest Christian peasant the equal to the

the way he lived life.

⁶Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁷Mark A. Noll, "Believer Priests in the Church: Luther's View." Christianity Today, October 26, 1973, p. 5.

mightiest Christian lord. Luther could boldly state: 'Therefore, when we grant the Word to anyone, we cannot deny anything to him pertaining to the exercise of his priesthood' (Concerning the Ministry).⁸

This belief was to result in Luther's translation of Erasmus' Greek text into German in order that the common man would have access to the scriptures. This he did during his enforced residence at Wartburg Castle between May of 1521 and March of 1522.⁹

Faith--The Relationship of Christ and Man. Although this might have been a part of the view of Christ and man, faith was such an important element in Luther's thinking that it demands special consideration.

Faith for Luther was intimately related to the grace of God which in fact results in a saving faith which '. . . throws itself entirely upon the mercy of God,'¹⁰ From that Luther concluded that the Christian must receive the gift of faith.¹¹ This is not a faith earned by works but a faith that results in works. One aspect of the saving faith is that it is by this faith which '. . . consecrates each individual as a priest of Christ, that is, as one who partakes in the redeeming grace of Christ, and is set in God's kingdom.'¹²

So it was that Luther saw any relationship that man might have with Christ as being based solely on faith. This faith relationship to Luther was the only basis of the believer's standing before God. Further this doctrine is the foundation on which he would base not only his theology but many of his criticisms of the abuses by the Roman Church.

⁸Noll, p. 5.

⁹Earle E. Cairns, Christianity Through the Centuries (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), p. 318.

¹⁰Cyril Eastwood, The Priesthood of All Believers (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962), p. 9.

¹¹Ibid., p. 15.

¹²Ibid., p. 21.

Luther the German

One of the more forgotten factors that influenced Luther was his mind-set. Ritter writes,

One thing above all appears to be determinative; that is his descent from peasant stock, and from the heart of the German country. His heritage is to an extraordinary degree German, and he was never for a moment able to put off the country boy, either outwardly or inwardly.¹³

It was this mind-set which was not only to accompany him but greatly facilitate the doctrine of grace and faith which would allow direct access to God through Christ.

In the ultimate analysis the problem with which Luther wrested in the monastery was not that of a single individual, but that of the whole Germanic mind The German had always regarded religion as a personal and individual experience. The idea of the mystical body of Christ embodied only in the Roman Church and the hierarchy always seemed foreign to Teutonic thought. The Roman mechanization of the whole sacramental system, making it the sole source of the means of grace, seemed strange to a people who felt they could go directly to their God In a sense Germany's choice was between the 'sacramental grace' of Rome and Luther's 'priesthood of all believers'.¹⁴

From the foregoing it is not hard to understand that Luther's deep, heart felt desire was for a relationship with Christ that was simple and available.

Luther Observes the Roman Hierarchy

As a result of Luther's interaction with scripture and subsequent views of grace and faith, he had a base from which to evaluate the organizations of ministry. In doing so he was faced with two very opposite views.

¹³Ritter, p. 25.

¹⁴E.G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), p. 157.

1. The Roman view which places the hierarchy above the congregation and regards it as a special state or caste.
2. The Lutheran view which sets the Ministry in the congregation and maintains that it may adequately fulfill its function there.¹⁵

It is in viewing the second position that Eastwood notes that there are two advantages of having the priesthood located in the congregation. First, the Gospel is mediated through the congregation. He follows this with the second thought that the ministry then becomes the function of the congregation.¹⁶

Luther Views the Scandalous Priesthood

Following closely on Luther's observation of how the priesthood might function within the congregation and above the congregation, he had occasion to see the results of the Romanist view.

The early Reformers were shocked and disgusted by the scandalous behavior of large sections of the pre-Reformation priesthood, and (were) in revolt against the tyrannical abuse of sacerdotal powers.¹⁷

Coupled with and growing out of this observation of the priesthood was another area of conflict.

The Reformation theology, with its tremendous emphasis on the once-for-allness and complete sufficiency of the mediatorial work of Christ, was not hospitable to the idea of mediation by priests either as a substitute for or as a supplement to what had been done by the great High Priest himself and made directly available to every believer.¹⁸

It was at this point that Luther called into question the power of the

¹⁵Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 4.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷T.W. Manson, Ministry and Priesthood Christ's and Our's (Richmond: Knox Press, 1959), p. 36.

¹⁸Ibid.

Roman priesthood. While this was out of his observation of fellow priests, it was more out of a conviction that the work of Christ the divine priest was sufficient without any assistance from the human priesthood. Here again the influence of scripture on Luther is seen, for while Luther made this observation it was not based upon his own standards of ministry and priestly behavior but upon the standard of life and faith that he saw set forth in scripture.

Luther and Humanism

Some have questioned the faith of the great reformer because it seemed that he was on the verge of humanism. In this respect Luther was greatly influenced by St. Augustine. This influence was not so much in the manner of Augustine's thinking as it was because St. Augustine had made ". . . a clean break with those who preferred humanism to orthodox Christianity".¹⁹ This break was also true of Luther as he too rejected anything that seemed to border on humanism. Ritter writes,

. . . He never based his right to proclaim a new teaching on a special gift of the spirit, on an extraordinary vocation by any sort of divine suggestion or miraculous revelation, as do most religious leaders of mankind, but exclusively--quite simply and naively--on pure study, on his profession (not even of his own choosing) as 'Doctor of Holy Scriptures'.²⁰

So it was that Luther sought to develop a priesthood which was based solely on scriptural teaching and not on the design of humanistic man, or a mystical thought. It was as though he wanted to empty his vessel in order to allow the infinite God to work by faith in and through finite man for the purposes of ministry (priesthood).

¹⁹Albert Hyma, New Light on Martin Luther (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 87.

²⁰Ritter, p. 48.

THE RESULTS OF LUTHER'S THINKING
OF BELIEVER PRIESTS

It is one thing for a man to re-discover truth but it is quite another for that same truth to impact his life. In Luther's case, he did not relate to these truths in an ambivalent manner but totally embraced and became immersed in them. He thus became convinced that the priesthood and thus the

. . . Ministry is not placed, . . . above the Church, but in the Church. According to the Episcopal view the Ministry is placed above the Church. In Luther's view the Ministry is placed in the congregation. This involves a different conception of grace from that which is held by those who accept the Episcopal view. For Luther, grace is God's favour expressed in the Gospel. Where there is faith in the Gospel, there is a listening congregation. Faith and Gospel are like two hands being shaken. The Church suffers whenever they are separated.

According to the Roman view, however, grace is not the favor of God expressed in the Gospel, but supernatural power in the Sacraments and this has no relation to faith. Such supernatural power does not require faith to make it effective, it operates by intrinsic authority which it is supposed to possess.²¹

So it was that Luther in his position of believer priesthood, called into question at the very foundation of Romanist theology. In these contrasting positions, the Roman Church viewed faith as being, ". . . Supernatural power in the Sacraments" ²² However, in Luther's position, faith is the basis of justification, exclusive of any intervention by man or any other agent with the exception of the Holy Spirit.

With faith and thus direct access to the High Priest, Christ,

²¹Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, pp. 3-4.

²²Ibid.

the earthly mediator is not needed. So it was that Luther developed the concept of the believer as priest.

While, as Hoyer points out,

An examination of the most significant documents in which Luther developed this accent, however, reveals that Luther's argument was structured on a semantic similarity between the word 'priest' as it was being used in the Roman Church and the word 'priest' that St. Peter employed in his first epistle and which was also used in Exodus 19 and Revelation 5.²³

Whatever the similarity, the basic truth of believer-priesthood caused Luther to reject,

. . . the distinction between the clergy and the laity, (and) the recognition of a special calling on the part of the former. Every calling, he believed, even that of the simplest folk was of God. In the Long Sermon on Usury, preached on Christmas Day, 1520, Luther for the first time stated his view of the 'priesthood of all believers', which wiped out with one stroke any special merit in the work of a regular or secular clergyman.²⁴

Again Luther called into question the organization of the Roman Church.

He wrote,

As I have written several times by now, it was through the pope's damned law and rule that the precious customary terms 'church,' 'priest,' 'spiritual,' and the like were taken away from the community and applied only to the smallest group, which we now call the spiritual and priestly estate and whose affairs we call the affairs of the church. Yet all of us are in a common church; we are all spiritual and priests, to the extent that we believe in Christ.²⁵

This was of great concern to Luther as long as,

powers claimed by the Romanists belonged only to the hierarchy, and functions that they claimed could be exercised

²³George W. Hoyer, "Christianhood, Priesthood, and Brotherhood", Accents in Luther's Theology (St. Louis: Concordia, 1967), p. 149.

²⁴Schwiebert, p. 157.

²⁵Helmut T. Lehmann and Eric W. Gritsch, eds., Church and Ministry I, Luther's Works, Vol. 39 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 157.

only by priests ordained according to the traditions and regulations of the Roman Church²⁶

Luther then had two tasks which at times seemed to merge. First he had to set forth his reform theology which was based on faith and the ministry of the individual. His second task was to stand against the Roman Church as it sought to establish itself against this "rebellious" priest, and to further its power in ecclesiastical and political situations.

Earlier in 1520, Luther wrote To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation²⁷ in an attempt to gather a powerful lay nobility in order to stand against the power of Rome. Accordingly, he spoke against the three presuppositions that Rome had established to keep the lay believer separated from the power which was based in the hierarchial priesthood. These three walls, as he called them were first,

It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office.²⁸

Second, was the matter of the Pope's interpretation of scripture.

They assume the sole authority for themselves, and, quite unashamed, they play about with words before our very eyes, trying to persuade us that the pope cannot err in matters of faith, regardless of whether he is righteous or wicked.²⁹

²⁶Hoyer, p. 149.

²⁷In addition, in October of that year he wrote his Babylonian Captivity which attacked the sacramental system of the Roman Church. Later he wrote On the Freedom of the Christian Man, in which he attacked the theology of the church.

²⁸Hoyer, p. 156.

²⁹Hoyer, p. 158.

The third wall, which Luther claimed would fall when the other two fell, was the authority of the pope to call a general church council. This authority was a right unique to the pope which gave him unlimited power in dealing with those who opposed him and the hierarchy over which he ruled.

These three walls were nothing new to Luther, for in the preceeding year, 1519, he debated John Eck³⁰ on this same question of papal authority. Even a cursory consideration of the situation of the great reformer, points out the profound affect he had on an already weakened Romanist foundation. He had effectively taken power away from the Roman hierarchy which had, ". . . intended to and did achieve a stranglehold on the people of God, putting the life of every Christian literally into the hands of the priests of Rome."³¹ Of course, the Roman Church, and specifically the pope, could not tolerate this "rebellion" so, it was quite natural that he convened a church council, the Council of Trent.

Here again it is important to note that Luther's original purpose was the reform of the Roman Church. It was when the papal hierarchy made it clear that they would not embrace what Luther was proposing and in fact persecuted those who embraced Luther's re-discovery, that the hopelessness of the situation became apparent. Even so, it was not Luther's desire to leave the Church. So it was that "In June, 1520 Leo X issued the papal bull Exsurge Domine which eventually resulted in

³⁰Luther's debate with Eck was the result of Luther's appeal for a general council to deal with the problem of how the Church viewed Scripture. Eck skillfully forced Luther into saying that he did not believe in the infallibility of the pope and church councils.

³¹Hoyer, p. 148.

the excommunication of Martin Luther.³²

The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent, (1545-1563)³³ called by Pope Paul III, at the encouragement of Charles V, Emperor of Germany, was called on the surface to heal the theological rift in the Roman Church. The underlying reason was to build a bulwark against the protestant beliefs of justification by faith, and the view that scripture is available to and the only authority for the believer.

The Tridentine theologians took the position that, "Justification is . . . a translation from the standing of sinful Adam into the standing of grace and adoption, and is affected by Baptism or the will to receive it."³⁴ Luther's position that justification is by faith in the grace of God and is open to all men meant that salvation, the subsequent relationship with God and worship came by and through the interaction of the individual with God. So it was that there was an impasse because Luther ". . . refused to recant unless he could be convinced of fault by 'the testimony of scripture' or reason."³⁵

The extent to which the Pope controlled the council was evidenced by the decisions of the council which only served to reinforce the Roman

³²Cairnes, p. 317.

³³H. Jedin, "Trent, Council of," New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. XIV (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967). The 19th Ecumenical Council, which opened at Trent, Italy, on December 13, 1545, and closed there on December 4, 1563, having held 75 sessions. The Council's objective was the order and clarification of Catholic doctrine and legislation for a thorough reform of the Church.

³⁴Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 9.

³⁵Cairnes, p. 317.

doctrine and the speed with which those decisions were reached. The fourth, fifth, and sixth sessions effectively did away with Martin Luther's basic positions of Sola Scriptura, Sola Fida, and Sola Gratia.

Faith and Grace

Luther answered the Council of Trent by a continued stand upon the authority and availability of the Word and the doctrine of grace.

In this position,

The Holy Spirit awakens faith within us, but it is faith not in the elements or in the priest, or in our own merits and self-righteousness, but in the disinterested love of our Benefactor. Thus the believer draws near to Christ, that loving and bounteous testator, and becomes a new and different man through and through³⁶

In the course of interacting with this position the question of "why?" arises. The answer is found in the relationship of the human and the divine something not possible in the Roman theology because of the mediating priest.

Man is not in a position to offer sacrifice to God; he is only in a position to receive from God. There is no propitiatory power whatever in the Eucharist, and only the once-for-all Atonement of Christ is effective for the remission of sins. The question of worthiness should not arise, for the believer does not approach Christ on the basis of his own worthiness but through faith alone.³⁷

So it was that Luther once again based on scripture, separated the believer-priest from the power of the pope.

Luther on Works

It is at this point that Luther's position on works should be noted. According to Luther there are three classes of works. Bromiley

³⁶Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 30.

³⁷Ibid., p. 24.

lists them as follows:

1. Works of the Law. By works of the law he does not mean works of the law in general, but 'those which take place outside faith and grace and are done at the urging of the law Such works cannot justify. They are in fact, an obstacle to justification'

2. Works of Faith. Luther obviously does not mean that no good works can be done in fulfillment of the law. His point is that such good works can be done only as works of faith, 'done out of a spirit of liberty and solely for the love of God'. It is through faith in Christ that we are 'righteous for the performance of works of righteousness.' As Luther put it, God does not accept the person because of works but the works because of the person We have to be righteous in order to do righteousness.

3. Preparatory Works. Nevertheless, preparatory works are good, for although they do not constitute righteousness they are a prayer for it in accordance with the principle of faith, not 'Do what I command,' but 'Give what you command'³⁸

Luther in this position does not completely negate the place of works but seeks to bring them into proper perspective by viewing them in the right relationship with saving grace and not as the cause of salvation.

It is in this sense that the Christian participates (works) in the functions of the priesthood. Not as one who is seeking to gain a right standing with God, or as one who is seeking to maintain a right standing with God, but as one who because of a right standing, seeks to do those things which are part of the general work of the church universal.

It is important to note that,

. . . Priesthood is here regarded as the functional participation of all believers in the Priesthood of Christ, and that the Ministry is within the universal priesthood and serves it in particular ways.³⁹

³⁸Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Historical Theology An Introduction (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 231.

³⁹Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), p. 23.

Carrying this thought further Eastwood writes,

Let it appear that the very object of insisting upon the Church's priestliness is to restore to the Christian laity that sense of their responsibility and privilege
⁴⁰

So then, the Christian's priesthood cannot be construed to be simply works, but a joyous responsibility, a privilege that a personal faith in the 'grace of Christ allows. It is only in this position that the believer priest can be the extension of the High Priest, Christ.

Reformer or Rebel

In the course of propogating the uniqueness of the believer-priest and his authority, Luther was called upon to walk a narrow line between rebellion and reformation. It is important that a clear distinction be made between these two labels in the life of the great reformer. Speaking of this situation Kraemer writes,

In these militant propositions there is a germ of individualism, of equalitarianism, which does not sound wholly consonant with the biblical view of the 'royal priesthood' which belongs to the body of Christian believers as a whole. This militance and this extravagance of expression is understandable in view of the fact that Luther had to fight a formidable system of hierarchical thinking deeply entrenched in the minds of men, borne by the prestige of ages, and had to call it to account before the forum of the biblical idea of the Church and its membership.⁴¹

Once again the importance of Luther's Sola Scriptura, Sola Fida and Sola Gratia, and the direct relationship he sees the believer having with God can be seen.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 62.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BELIEVERS

In order to gain further insight from Martin Luther's concept of the priesthood of all believers, it is important to view some of the implications for the believer-priest. The following section is for the purpose of expanding and viewing the application of believer-priesthood.

Unity

One of the major contributions of the concept of believer-priesthood is that the boundaries that preclude unity in the church are much more easily breached. In Luther's thinking,

All believers share a common dignity. It cannot be said that some Christians belong to a religious class and others do not. The honors and dignity conferred by Christ upon one are also conferred upon all. 'For all Christians whatsoever really and truly belong to the religious class, and there is no difference among them except in so far as they do different work.' That is St. Paul's meaning in I Corinthians 12, when he says, 'We are all one body, yet each member hath his own work for serving others.'⁴²

To some, especially his critics, there was concern because Luther on the surface did not seem to be a uniting force. So for some,

To speak of unity in connection with a man whose name is associated with the most conspicuous disruption in the history of the Church may seem ironical, but it must be made clear that Luther's main concern was the strengthening not the weakening of the fellowship of believers. He was opposed to those who weakened its message and challenged the authority of Christ.⁴³

Luther sought to place the individual Christian in a relationship with other believers. Instead of fellowship and a relationship with a

⁴²Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 12, citing Lee Wolf, Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, I. 113.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 6-7.

priest in a hierarchical setting, the believer with other Christians, functions in ministry with and to each other.

The end result of such an idea was that each man is responsible to discover his own special gifts and abilities and then move to exercise them in the service of all believers. Further, every man is responsible to interact with God's Word, the equipper of men. Luther emphasized this point with respect to the preaching of the Word, by the believer-priest to other believer-priests.

. . . Everyone who knows that he is a Christian should be fully assured that all of us alike are priests and that we all have the same authority in regard to the Word 'The priesthood is simply the ministry of the Word.' This being the case, all possess the same authority though all are not called to exercise it.⁴⁴

The ramification of this is that "All believers share a common privilege. If all believers are called upon to become true servants of Christ, it follows that laymen as well as priests are called to be servants."⁴⁵

Mutuality

This unity of fellowship and service also had other implications. That is, there is a whole life style which develops out of a proper perspective of the believer's place in the body of Christ. Luther wrote,

I believe that in this universal fellowship of Christendom, all things are in common, and the property of any belongs to all, and no one has anything of his own. Therefore all the prayers and good words of the entire fellowship must be of benefit to me and every believer, and must assist and strengthen us, and this at all times in life or death. Thus all bear one another's

⁴⁴Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 6, citing Lee Wolf, Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, I. 318.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 14.

burdens, as St. Paul says.⁴⁶

Luther's concept on commonness was not an end in itself but toward the purpose of developing a body fit for ministry both individually and corporately. A further implication is that this sharing must be in all areas of life. It is imperative that this concept be understood and taken to the very heart of the church's ministry. The Christian can in no sense of the word be an individual, but off from his spiritual family. This mutuality is so to the point that it is a responsibility. That is,

There is no such thing as a solitary disciple, for in accepting Christ the believer enters in a life already widely shared: he not only shares a common loyalty, but one and the Spirit dwells in the whole society, and so he shares a common responsibility too.⁴⁷

It is important to note that this responsibility is not only vertical but horizontal as well.

Fellowship and Communion

A natural outgrowth of unity and mutuality is fellowship. This fellowship is the essential element in the community of believer-priests which allows for their priesthood. That is the horizontal relationship of responsibility. Noll writes,

The communio sanctorum (communion of saints), which Luther saw as the key definition of the Church was ever to reflect its actual importance as that entity in which Christian priests are active. For it was in the communion of believers that priesthood played such an important role. If we in our day are to regain a sound view of the importance of the Church, we too will have to see it as a place in which Christian priests are active toward

⁴⁶Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 54, citing Lee Wolf, Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, I. 88.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 57.

one another and active corporately in the world.⁴⁸

Quite naturally at this point some consideration needs to be given to the place of the church.

The Place of the Church

Some believe that the concept of the believer-priest will seriously threaten the institution and structure of the church.

Luther's reply to this question was simply that the Church is important because it is made up exclusively of priests He did not see the priesthood of believers as a warrant for individualistic posturing before God and closed-hearted isolation from other members of the Church. On the contrary, a priest for Luther was one who, although he had the privilege of standing before God, also had definite rights and duties among men because of this special status as God's priest.⁴⁹

It is in this situation that Luther describes the "Royal Priest" as the one who is involved in the,

. . . Priestly service which the Church of Christ is expected to render as the manifestation of her union with her Lord. This is the Church's expression of her love and duty toward her master⁵⁰

So it is that there are several elements that exist in the life of the believer-priest and thus exist in the collection of those priests--the Church. These elements in addition to being responsibilities, are also relationships.

The Relationships of the Believer

The first relationship within the body of believer-priests to be considered is that between the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the

⁴⁸Noll, p. 6.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁰Ibid.

believer.

The exterior Word must always be there and the Holy Spirit is active through the proclamation of the Gospel. Not only is the fellowship of believers dependent upon the proclaimed Word; it is the result of it. Since the fellowship of believers cannot exist without the exterior Word, it follows that it does not exist apart from the Ministry.⁵¹

It is in this context; the Word, the Gospel, the Spirit, and the fellowship of believers, that the activities of the church can be carried out.

The second element in the church which is the natural outgrowth of the Word, the Holy Spirit, and fellowship is worship. It may have been part reaction, part study of the Word, or both that prompted Luther to say,

Now this worship has grown beyond measure and has given birth to an immoderation that is even greater. There is no limit or moderation to the churches, chapels, monasteries, building of altars, founding of masses and vigils, establishing of hours, vestments for mass, choir caps, chalices, monstrances, silver images and precious stones, candlesticks, candles, tapers, incense, memorial tablets, casting of bells--what an ocean. what a forest of such things we have here! All this fully absorbs the religious fervor of the laity; they give dues, money, and possessions, and so worship of God is increased and the ministers of God are cared for, as the pope states it in his sacred decrees.

Compare these things with the true worship of God and tell me; Where did God ever command one single letter of all this?⁵²

Luther then did not consider worship and works to be synonymous although they might occur at the same time. For him, worship was carried on in a deeper fashion.

Luther did not regard worship as a soporific; on the contrary,

⁵¹Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 3.

⁵²Helmut T. Lehmann and Hans J. Hillerbrand, eds., Sermons II, Luther's Works, Vol. 52 (Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1974), p. 247.

it was a mighty activity of the Spirit which made heavy demands upon those who were partakers in it. Luther does not hesitate to say that the praising congregation which responds to the Word proclaimed actually creates the Church.⁵³

The third element to be considered is that of the pastor. This question was one of the real conflicts among the Reformers because between Luther and Calvin there was a major difference in the position each took. The following is a discussion of their differences and can only be understood if priest is taken in the classical sense and not as presented in the above section.

. . . there could certainly be no opposition between priests and laymen in the Reform Church, since no real place was left for priests to exist in it. In the Zwinglian ideal there is no opposition either, for there are no laymen. Every member of the Church is his own priest and his own offering. In Lutheranism also the opposition has been done away; all are priests, and the priestly task is one of intercession. The sharp contrast between Calvinism, with no priests, on the one hand and Zwinglianism and Lutheranism with no laymen, on the other, arises from different conceptions of the priestly function. Calvin sees it as the offering of peculiar sacrifice to propitiate God; as this has been done perfectly once for all by Christ, there is, strictly speaking, no place for any further priestly activity. Zwingli and Luther, with their conception of priesthood as the offering of gifts or intercessions, clearly leave room for Christian priesthood of some sort so long as men have gifts to offer God or needs to be met by him.⁵⁴

For Luther then, the pastor-priest is one of the believer-priests who for a period of time serves in the office of pastor-teacher. It must be noted that this person does not serve above the congregation but within the congregation. It is in this sense that the Christian is ". . . given a special task within that priesthood by the call of God which is confirmed by the congregation."⁵⁵

⁵³Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 50.

⁵⁴Manson, p. 38.

⁵⁵Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 44.

In addition to this view and as a logical outcome, Luther put severe limitations upon the pastor-priest.

Just because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and, without the consent and choice of the rest, presume to do what for which we all have equal authority. Only by the consent and command of the community should any individual person claim for himself what belongs equally to all.⁵⁶

Luther carried this position to the point that even when a bishop consecrated a pastor-priest he was doing so not because of a hierarchical authority, but on behalf of the local congregation.

The Believer-Priest and Christ

The foundation upon which the above listed implications are built is Christ the High Priest. Thus it is not so much a question of roles or positions as it is of relationship. Referring to Luther,

Two kinds of priesthood stand out in his theology. First, there is the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, which means that He is eternally active in His self-giving to the world which is the expression of divine love. In addition to the priestly work of Christ, however, and as an outcome of it, there is a priestly service which the Church of Christ is expected to render as the manifestation of her union with her Lord. This is the Church's expression of her love and duty toward her Master, and in this consists her Royal Priesthood which is the equivalent of the priesthood of all believers.⁵⁷

It is out of this relationship that the believer-priest is empowered and authorized to carry out his priestly responsibility. It is important to understand however, that this is a relationship,

. . . firmly based on faith. This is the believer's standing before God. How is God presented to our faith? The answer is: in Jesus Christ. But how is it possible to be sure of His living

⁵⁶Eastwood, Priesthood of Believers, p. 44, citing Lee Wolf, Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, I. 115.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 48.

presence today? The Christian affirms that He is present with us in the Word and Sacraments of the Gospel. In the Word of the Gospel, Christ Himself is present in His saving power, to evoke faith, to reconcile sinful man with the holy God, and to build up the Church which is His Body by drawing all men to Himself.⁵⁸

THE FAR REACHING EFFECTS OF LUTHER

A consideration of the impact of Martin Luther would be less than complete without a consideration of the effects of his thinking.

Lutheran ideas laid the groundwork for the Reformation in Scotland under John Knox. Lutherans also spread their teachings in England Lutheranism was temporarily triumphant in Poland. . . . It was in Germany and the Scandinavian lands that Lutheranism made the greatest and most permanent gains. The authority of the Bible . . . and justification by faith became the watchwords of those lands in the sixteenth century.⁵⁹

Not only was Martin Luther's influence broad in a geographical sense, he ". . . was indeed one of the titanic figures of the Church because of his influence upon later times as well as upon his own era."⁶⁰ This influence would continue into the 20th century and in fact influence men such as Robert Raines, Francis Ayres, and Elton Trueblood who not only subscribe to the doctrine of believer-priesthood in practice but who also have done considerable reflection and writing in the area.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁹Cairns, p. 325.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 322.

Chapter 5

THE BELIEVER-PRIEST TODAY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a contemporary¹ view of believer-priesthood in the setting of church. It should be noted that while the believer in the local church is the primary focus of this section there are implications that carry over to the corporate² body of believers. The following sections are included in this treatment of the contemporary situation of the believer-priest. First, consideration will be given to the general situation of the church today. Second, a general model of the church, that is established on the premise that all believers are priests, will be given. Third, there will be a listing of the implications for the believer-priest and the church today. Fourth and finally, Elton Trueblood issues a warning regarding the believer-priest and the church.

It should be noted that in all cases the view of the church that is offered is the result of the observation and insight of those who are observers of contemporary church life. It should be further noted that although there is a strong Pentecostal tone to what is presented in the section on spiritual gifts and other places, in no case was a Pentecostal/

¹Contemporary for the purposes of this section refers to the period of time from 1960 through 1980.

²Corporate is used in the sense that all true Christians come under the headship of Christ and are fitly joined together.

Charismatic author cited. This is not because there is not available a great deal of well thought out, well presented material from this camp but that this work would gain a hearing ear among those who might not be comfortable with Pentecostalism.

THE SITUATION OF THE CHURCH TODAY

A look at the average church today will reveal that the age of specialization that is characteristic of life in the West has found its way into the church. Frequently this specialization has resulted in the attitude "We must hire someone to do it." While this may be valid for some of the more technical or cultural aspects of the operation of the Western church, it seems that the influence has not stopped there but has extended into areas that in the past have been reserved exclusively for lay ministry.

So it is that in many churches today there are the "professionals," those who are paid to handle various of the many aspects of ministry. While this has been the case in many churches, there are those churches, like the Friends, and the Mennonites, who have not only maintained a strong doctrinal plank regarding believer-priesthood but who in a practical way have demonstrated a belief in the doctrine. Another result of this "professionalism" is that lay movements like the Gideons, the Full Gospel Businessmen International, and the Christian Business Women have been organized.

Somehow, in the past several years, the church has lost some of its purpose and as such today seems to pose more questions than it answers. David Haney writes,

All paths of inquiry concerning the present and the future

of Christianity and the Gospel must ultimately arrive at the question of the Church, its nature and function. For many today a very good question is, 'What shall we do with the Church?' The better question, however, is: 'What is the Church to do?' This properly focuses the question on the purpose of the Church. But that purpose is not ours to decide--it is Christ's. This forces us, then, to raise the right question: How did Christ envision the Church? or, How does it fit into His strategy?³

The question of the situation of how the church compares with the New Testament pattern has also been raised by Elton Trueblood in his book The Company of the Committed.⁴ The real problem before us is not whether our faith has declined, but how it can be made more truly relevant to contemporary life and its urgent needs.⁵ Later Trueblood goes on to note,

It is hard to exaggerate the degree to which the modern Church seems irrelevant to modern man. The Church is looked upon as something to be neither seriously fought nor seriously defended. A church building is welcomed, partly because it provides such a nice place for a family wedding; and, after all, most families expect wedding, sooner or later. A church is also a good place to send the children on Sunday morning--they might learn something helpful, and certainly the experience of being sent will do them no harm. The point is that such conceptions are wholly consistent with the idea that the Church has only marginal relevance. We do not expect, for the most part to find the gospel centered in a burning conviction which will make men and women change occupations, go to the end of the earth, alter the practices of government, redirect culture, and remake civilization.⁶

The question then seems to be, is God's plan as effective today as it was in the Bible? If so, the question then is, just how far is the

³David Haney, The Idea of the Laity (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), p. 21.

⁴Elton Trueblood, The Company of the Committed (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

⁵Ibid., p. 6.

⁶Ibid., p. 17.

church willing to go to recapture it? Any other position or practice on the part of the church assumes that God's plan for the church has changed or is no longer relevant.

Believer-Priesthood in Practice--Why?

The practice of believer-priesthood in the local church, with the exception of the above referenced movements, usually lacks for several reasons. Referring to believer-priesthood Trueblood notes,

Let no one have the temerity to say that this is what we already have. It is not! There are thousands of contemporary churches in which nothing of the kind is even understood, let alone demonstrated. Most protestants pay lip service to the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of every believer, but they do not thereby mean to say that every Christian is a minister.⁷

So it is that the first reason that there is little if any believer-priesthood in the local church is that the concept is little understood and demonstrated even less. Trueblood goes on and gives a second reason.

Many hasten to add that all they mean by the familiar doctrine is that nobody needs to confess to a priest, since each can confess directly to God. The notion that this doctrine erases the distinction between laymen and ministers is seldom presented seriously, and would, to some, be shocking, but it does not take much study of the New Testament to realize that the early Christians actually operated on the revolutionary basis.⁸

The third reason is that there is a sharp distinction between the work of the clergy and the work of the laity. This results from a lack of clarity of the role of each. As it turns out,

'Ministry' is that catchall which gathers up all the

⁷Elton Trueblood, Your Other Vocation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 30.

⁸Ibid., p. 30.

working responsibilities of the churches, but its current definition is fuzzy at best. 'Identity crisis' is an overworked label in our culture, but it does help to isolate the source of the present clergy-laity-ministry impasse: ambiguity. 'What's a preacher to do?' 'What are laymen for?' Given the priority of the kingdom of God, and the function of the Church as the local branch office to demonstrate and spread it, where does the pastor fit in? The current answer is: the pastor is to do the Church's work, or at least he is doing it even if he is not supposed to do it--a sort of ministry by default.⁹

The next reason is that the church often is characterized by an unwillingness to change. It seems that in many cases the established order prevails and this at the expense of any new insight into biblical standard or rediscovery of divine truth.

The fifth and final reason to be cited is that in addition to the local church, the hierarchy of church organization and even ministerial training institutions have succumbed to the temptation to specialize the ministry. With such as the case men are trained for music, youth, Christian education, administration, or another specialty. It is in this situation that the laity seeks to invest its responsibilities in a professional staff.

The Results

Ray Stedman, pastor and author of the book, Body Life Ministry,¹⁰ is very aware of the choice that the local church has to make. Referring to the situation of the church he writes,

When the ministry was thus left to the professionals there was nothing left for the people to do other than come to church and listen. They were told that it was their responsibility to bring the world into the building to hear the pastor preach the

⁹Haney, Idea of Laity, p. 39.

¹⁰Ray C. Stedman, Body Life Ministry (Glendale: Regal, 1972).

gospel. Soon Christianity became nothing more than a spectator sport.¹¹

C. Marlin Harman, in an article, "What Can Laymen Do?" carries the point further when referring to the pastor, he writes,

When it comes to outfitting spiritual soldiers for the work of service, the one place most of our people are not is 'with us.' They are with us in committee meetings, services, board meetings, and social events, but not when they ought to be with us in order to be equipped.

What can laymen do? With proper training the right person in the right position can fulfill what God has called him to do.¹²

This has complete carry over to the situation of the church today. Stedman continues,

This unbiblical distortion has placed pastors under an unbearable burden. They have proved completely unequal to the task of evangelizing the world, counseling the distressed and brokenhearted, ministering to the poor and needy, relieving the oppressed and afflicted, expounding the Scriptures, and challenging the entrenched forces of evil in an increasingly darkened world. They were never meant to do it. To even attempt it is to end up frustrated, exhausted, and emotionally drained.¹³

The fact of the matter is that unless the church regains insight into the place of the laity in ministry this situation will continue. The point is that the church must come to a renewed understanding of the need for the clergy to invest its ministry in the laity and the need on the part of the laity to accept that ministry in order to continue in the fruit.

¹¹Ibid., p. 78.

¹²C. Marlin Harman, "What Can Laymen Do?" Christianity Today, July 26, 1974, p. 28.

¹³Stedman, p. 78.

The Need

The result of the situation as outlined above is that the church in order to carryout her mission on earth, needs to rediscover and return to a program which accurately and biblically involves the believer in the work of the ministry. As Trueblood has written,

Our task now is to try to see the entire problem of the ministry in adequate perspective. We may agree that a professionalized ministry is necessary but not sufficient. The chief reason that it is not sufficient is that the job to be done is too big to be accomplished by the work of a minority, no matter how gifted and trained that minority may be.¹⁴

He carries the idea further and concludes it when he writes,

Another idea of the lay ministry which is too mild is the notion that lay members are supposed to help the pastor with chores around the church building. The idea is that the pastor has a program, a ministry to perform, and ordinary members can be of assistance in the promotion of this work. These are volunteer, unpaid helpers, and thus take the places of paid assistants. But if this is all that we mean by the universal ministry it will never provide the explosive power which our civilization so greatly needs. What we require is not the perpetuation of the current system, but a genuinely new impetus.¹⁵

It is significant that Trueblood is not alone in his thinking on the matter. Karl H. Hertz corroborates him with the thought,

Still it may very well be that the renewed interest in the doctrine of the calling of the universal priesthood may have an important role to play in a Christian answer to the confusions and contradictions of our time. It may even be, as I firmly believe, that much of the apparent irrelevance of the activities of church members arises from a perversion of the doctrine of the universal priesthood and a retreat from the kinds of responsibilities which Christians should be assuming.¹⁶

¹⁴Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 60.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 61-62.

¹⁶Karl H. Hertz, Everyman a Priest (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), pp. 5-6.

As it turns out, the organization and operation of the ministry in the local church is basically determined by the outlook of the pastor and the outlook of the laity. Practically, this organization and operation is dependent upon the willingness of the laity to assume responsibility and the willingness of the pastor to release the ministry to the laity.

Without deliberate planning and certainly without any nefarious scheming on the part of the clergy, the congregation has developed a structure that depends entirely on the minister. The life of the congregation has grown up around him and depends on him and it does not matter whether he is called priest or pastor, rector or minister. His central position has determined the organizations and activities of the congregation and the nature of its piety. This is seen as so natural that most people will say that it is only right; that this is why you have ministers at all; that this is their job; for this they are trained. But for all that, this is what is crippling the life of the church.¹⁷

From this quote it is apparent that the pastor or priest has become a "torchbearer" instead of a "lighter of lamps."¹⁸ It is because of this that there is a need for a sweeping change--a return to the biblical pattern in the organization and operation of the local as well as the general church. It is for this reason and in order to gain a fuller understanding of the believer-priest in relationship with the church, that the following model is offered.

A MODEL FOR THE CHURCH

Following is a model for the church. This applies to the local church although it has implications for the general church. This is

¹⁷Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, God's Frozen People (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 49.

¹⁸Haney, Idea of Laity, p. 43.

a model that results from reading in several books by authors who have a great concern for the involvement of the laity in the ministry as well as the renewal of the church. Again David Haney writes,

Simultaneously, in 1960-61, without any comparison of notes, three to-be leaders of renewal published books on the theme of renewal via the lay ministry; Robert Raines (New Life in the Church), Francis O. Aures (The Ministry of the Laity), and Elton Trueblood, (Company of the Committed).¹⁹

It seems that from 1960-61, then, that there has been a renewed interest in the universal priesthood of all believers as it relates to renewal in the church. It is interesting that this idea by design or accident has been inherent in many of the renewal movements of the past. For instance, stressed in the Pentecostal revivals of the early 1900's was the idea that every man has at least one Gift of the Spirit operating in his life. It is that man's responsibility to "stir up" that Gift. Note that this operation of the Gift of the Holy Spirit is concert with the individual believer-priest, with the exception of one gift, in relationship with one or more other people. This simply resulted in a universal priesthood of believers.

More recently and contemporary with the above listed books and authors, the Jesus People's movement of the middle and late 60's incorporated this idea to the point that they were in practice all believer-priests. An interesting note here is that these people have been gradually assimilated into the local church and in many cases have caused a renewal as they continued and continue to practice their believer-priesthood. Writing on the subject of lay movements Littell notes,

¹⁹David Haney, Renew My Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p. 30.

The movements of lay renewal are, very simply, discovering the 'New Methods' appropriate for equipping and expressing that general ministry--'New Methods' which must be just as radical, and to some as scandalous, as confirmation training, field preaching, camp meetings, lay Bible study, and the Wesleyan class meetings were in the days of our fathers in the faith. The ministry of the laity is, very simply, the servanthship of the whole believing people to the whole world for which he died²⁰

So it is that for the church to carry out her divinely appointed mission, it is essential that the laity be not just the focus of the ministry but the carriers of the ministry. Again Trueblood writes,

The only kind of lay ministry which is worth encouraging is that which makes a radical difference in the entire Christian enterprise. To be truly effective it must erase any difference in kind between the lay and the clerical Christian. The way to erase the distinction, which is almost wholly harmful, is not by the exclusion of professionals from the ministry, as anticlerical movements have tended to do, but rather by the inclusion of all in the ministry.²¹

When one views this model of lay involvement in ministry as not being part of the church, but the church, it becomes apparent that there is a tension that arises. Applying this thought to renewal in the church, Haney notes, "Those committed to Christ's church and to its renewal in our time are also committed to a basic premise: that renewal will come only as we successfully activate the laity."²²

Church Structure and Organization

With the involvement of the laity of necessity the structure and organization of the local church has to go through some change in order to accomodate and give opportunity to the laity for ministry. The change

²⁰Franklin H. Littell, "The Ministry of the Laity," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 15 No. 149, December 1964, p. 12.

²¹Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 62.

²²Haney, p. 21.

that must take place has great difficulty in being established because of the influence of the standing order. Raines discusses this in his book New Life in the Church,²³ where he notes,

Too often the existing structure of the local church is not geared to facilitate mission. Churches suffer from hardening of the institutional arteries. New blood is sometimes blocked; new life is sometimes stifled. We are cursed with bigness. Our programming tends toward ever larger numbers, and we know that significant Personal changes seldom occur in crowds but, rather, in small groups. Much of our energy must go to keep the wheels of organizational life spinning. Our most devoted people spend their time in this apparently necessary busywork, too tired and overworked to grow in mind and spirit. As someone put it, 'We are so embroiled in church work that we have no time or energy for the work of the church.'²⁴

Raines continues, dealing with the power of koinonia²⁵ to determine the limits and structure in which believer-priest fits best.

We must have the courage to let koinonia determine and shape its own structure. We will seek to use existing organizations and groups to house koinonia, making whatever changes seem wise and necessary.²⁶

Thus it is in the context of koinonia that the believer-priest can function in relation to the other individuals as well as the group of believer-priests. It is however, imperative that this be done in a spirit of unity and bond of love.

Role of the Pastor

Outside of the laity the role which in most church structures

²³Robert A. Raines, New Life in the Church (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

²⁴ Ibid., p. 138

²⁵Koinonia includes the intimate fellowship of believers through the Holy Spirit in the various activities of the Christian life. Included are various acts of celebration, fellowship and generosity in times of prosperity as well as in times of suffering.

²⁶Raines, p. 139.

will undergo the greatest change is that of the pastor. The simple fact of the matter is that the role of pastoral ministry must be redefined to fit into the biblical pattern.²⁷

Haney points out that in light of the fact that our concept of the pastor is out of a past rural American model, a contemporary redefinition of the role and function of the pastor must be originated and brought into conformity with the biblical pattern.²⁸ Further, it is essential that this move be made, only with an understanding of Raine's thought when he notes,

. . . that some existing structures will remain impervious to the new life. Old soldiers may fade away, but old organizations in local churches have greater longevity than old soldiers. Some old structures in our churches may have to die, in order that new structures may come into being by the leading of the Spirit. This will not be easy, for many will prefer the old ways of doing things. There will be misunderstanding and criticism, as there always is when new ways are suggested, even though these new ways by a return to the old ways of the early church.²⁹

The thought to be considered is that if the pastor is as important to the functioning of the local church, as practice has made him, then he should seek to involve others in his activities to the limits that scripture allows. This results in the believer-priest seeking to discover what his ministry is and the pastor assisting the individual to develop in his potential ministry by equipping him.

The Equipping of Ministers

It is not only that the role of the pastor has to be redefined but the pastor as well must go on the offensive in equipping the laity

²⁷See. p.57, Chapter III.

²⁸Haney, Renew My Church, p. 31.

²⁹Raines, p. 139.

for universal ministry. Harman notes that there are two results of this kind of ministry by the pastor. First, ". . . people are recognizing their spiritual gifts"30 The second is that the people are ". . . comprehending the biblical concept of functioning as the Body of Christ."31

Elton Trueblood writes and Haney³² agrees,

The universal ministry is a great idea, one of the major ideas of the New Testament, but the hard truth is that it does not come to flower except as it is nourished deliberately. Indeed the paradox is that the nourishment of the lay or universal ministry is the chief reason for the development of a special or partially separate and professionalized ministry. We cannot have an effective universal ministry of housewives and farmers and merchants simply by announcing it. It is necessary to produce it. The only way in which this can be done is by the education of a gifted few, whose chief vocation is the liberation of the ministerial and witnessing power of many.³³

In order for the local church to embrace and encourage believer-priesthood, the view of what is involved in ministry must be revised. That is, "Our concept of ministry must also be amplified-- it is too small!! All believers are included in the New Testament definition of ministry."³⁴ Put another way,

The expanded dictum is that in the ministry of Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, neither laymen nor cleric, but all are one in Christ Jesus.³⁵

³⁰Harman, p. 30.

³¹Ibid.

³²See Haney, Idea of Laity, p. 14.

³³Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 63.

³⁴Haney, Idea of Laity, p. 45.

³⁵Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 62.

From this lack of distinction it is apparent that the object of the church must be to return to the congregational pattern of ministry.³⁶ That is,

The activation and deployment of the vast lay forces is priority business for the Church today simply because they are intrinsic to authentic Christianity. Biblically the laity, the laos (the 'People of God'), are the 'ministers' of Christ. Not 'pastors,' mind you, but 'ministers': for the pastor's ministry is to equip the ministers³⁷

If everyman is a priest, a minister, then the strong emphasis on one man being supported by the congregation so that he can be their minister and as such do their ministry must give way to one man supporting the congregation so that they can be ministers and do the work of the ministry!

The Emerging Ministry

It is obvious that with the emergence of the position of the believer-priest, the institution of the hierarchical church would be brought into proper relationship both with itself and the world. Early American church life provides us with a model of this for ". . . from the earliest days churches in America were voluntary associations of lay people rather than institutions imposed from above."³⁸

Stedman in speaking to the issue of the organization of the contemporary church writes,

. . . true Christians actually promote the cause of false Christianity when, through ignorance or mistaken zeal, they deviate from the divine strategy and do not obey their divine

³⁶Congregational form of ministry: In the congregational form, the work of the ministry, the polity, the organization, and the life of the church is based on the work of the Holy Spirit within the congregation of believers.

³⁷Haney, Idea of Laity, p. 22.

³⁸Gibbs, p. 46.

calling. We mere humans cannot improve on the divine program.³⁹

So it is that God has a plan that puts the ministry in the congregation. This is in three directions. First, there is a ministry to others within the local congregation. Second, there is a ministry to those outside of the local congregation. Included in this would be evangelism, home and foreign missions, and ministry to other believers who are not associated with the ministering believer's local church. Third, and finally, there is a ministry to the individual, both by the individual to himself and by his ministering to and from other individuals.

The Advantage of Ministry in the Congregation

The obvious result of placing the ministry in the congregation is that the ministry is then "tailor-made" to the situation of the members of the local body. Trueblood points out that,

The churches which are succeeding best are those in which the involvement of the rank and file of the members is most nearly complete. This means a general acceptance, on the part of the total membership, of the responsibility of being official representatives of Jesus Christ in daily life. It means a fundamental denial of that kind of division of labor in which the majority have a secular responsibility and a minority have a Christian responsibility. There is always some need of division of labor in life, partly because people have radically different gifts, but a division of labor is damaging and vicious when it leaves the promotion of the gospel to a few, while the others merely support them in such work.⁴⁰

That is, instead of paying a professional to come in and minister, people who are close to and deeply interested in the ministry are called upon to practice their ministry in and out of the local congregation.

³⁹Stedman, p. 12.

⁴⁰Trueblood, Your Other Vocation, p. 41

Evangelism

One particular aspect of this matter of lay ministry is that of evangelism. It is one thing for a pastor to evangelize a community but, it is quite another for the believer-priest to take on this responsibility. Raines notes,

There is no question that the witness of laymen is the most powerful weapon on the church's arsenal. It was this lay witness as described in Acts that was the strength of the early church. It is lay witness which promises a renewal of the church in our time. As laymen take up their ministry and go to witness in the church and in the world, only then does the church begin to recover her mission.⁴¹

David Haney, a commentator on the church renewal movement agrees with Raines when he writes that,

On the practical side, the mere numbers involved ought to say something to us. If ministering in the name of Christ is restricted to the professional clergy only, then the vast majority of Christians are excluded. If, however, all believers are ministers, then the situation is vastly and numerically altered.⁴²

It is plain to see that the effect upon the world not to mention the church, at the very least would be staggering. Trueblood also gives consideration to the thought when in the following quote he sees the practicality of the believer in ministry.

So far as the Christian faith is concerned the practical handle in our time is lay religion. If in the average church we should suddenly take seriously the notion that every lay member, man or woman, is really a minister of Christ suddenly the number of ministers in the average church would jump from one to five hundred. This is the way to employ valuable but largely wasted human resources.⁴³

⁴¹Raines, p. 64.

⁴²Haney, Renew My Church, pp. 30-31.

⁴³Trueblood, Your Other Vocation, p. 29.

In conclusion of the matter of the believer in evangelism, there is a consensus on the part of those in the church renewal movement, as well as those who hold to a strong position of believer-priesthood that if the unchurched are to be reached, the one who will be most effective, is one who is in daily contact with that person in his world. Who other than the believer-priest fits that criterion?

THE IMPLICATION FOR THE BELIEVER-PRIEST

The question arises of how the laity can be included in the ministry? The simple truth of the matter is that the laity must come to an understanding that they too are called to a specific ministry, and should stir up the Spiritual Gift that is given them. The next question that is posed: "Who does this equipping?" The simple answer is, that while He uses various agents and experiences to do so, it is the Holy Spirit who calls, occasions the commitment, and equips (gives Spiritual Gifts to) the saints. It must be noted, however, that this requires that the view of the laity undergo some change. This change is on the part of the laity as well as the clergy.

Haney points out that there are three changes which have to take place, if the laity are to be included in the ministry in an effective manner.

First, the 'balcony view' concept of the laity is out! We must view it from the stage itself where we are actors and only One constitutes the Audience.

Second, change of any kind, but especially in the Church, does not come without costs.

Third, it is obvious that if the lay forces are to be brought out of reserve and put into the fight, then the troops must be trained.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Haney, Renew My Church, pp. 34-35.

These three elements are decisions that are made in the will. After they are made then it is up to the Holy Spirit to call, occasion the commitment, and equip the saints with Spiritual Gifts.

The Call

So it is that the laity must be called out of their position in the local church building to begin building the church. It must be remembered that these believer-priests are called out to lead the church, leaven the church, preach in and to the church, and to train others for ministry in and out of the local body.⁴⁵

The lay ministry involves a 'call.' Paul urges the Ephesian members to 'walk worthy of your vocation'; not the pastor, but the members. And, the word 'vocation' comes from the Latin vocatio meaning 'to call'! We each have a call. In fact two calls. One is a General Call. That is, all believers are called to be those 'in whom Christ is felt to live again.' The other is a Specific Call--to a unique and personal ministry within the Kingdom of God.⁴⁶

Haney goes on to list several specific ministries as examples of how the layman can fulfill the divine calling to ministry and then he closes the section with the thought, ". . . we each have a specific ministry to which Christ calls us."⁴⁷ It is to be noted at this point that if Christ calls us He either will enable the servant for the task or He will provide the opportunity for enablement.

Involvement

A second element which follows close on to the call of Christ is the involvement of the believer-priest. It must be remembered that this

⁴⁵Raines, pp. 104-108.

⁴⁶Haney, Renew My Church, p. 33.

⁴⁷Ibid.

is not to the exclusion of the professional ministry but in addition to it. A further implication at this point is that for all of man's planning, organization, revival meetings, special programs, bus routes, and the like, it seems that revival and renewal come not to the degree of organization although this is important, but to the degree that the laity have caught a vision and are thus involved in the work of the ministry! So it is that "Pastors, particularly, must restore to the people the ministry which was taken from them with the best of intentions."⁴⁸

What we seek is not a fellowship of the righteous or of the self-righteous, but rather a fellowship of men and women who, though they recognize that they are inadequate, nevertheless can be personally involved in the effort to make Christ's kingdom prevail. Perhaps the greatest single weakness of the contemporary Christian Church is that millions of supposed members are not really involved at all and, what is worse, do not think it strange that they are not.⁴⁹

It is almost as if they have been brought up with the idea that it is the churches responsibility and that their full responsibility is fully executed with the signing of the tithe check. The truth is that involvement is directly related to the believer's perspective of ministry and commitment to that sense of ministry.

Commitment

Related directly to the matter of the involvement of the Christian lay priest is the matter of commitment. First it must be remembered that this is not commitment for the sake of commitment but for the cause of Christ, in the church and in the world. Trueblood notes,

⁴⁸Stedman, p. 78.

⁴⁹Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 38.

Commitment, then, is not sufficient; we must be committed in a particular way. Our commitment is outside the spirit of Christ if it involves an effort to ride over other men, or to see anything else as more important than the individual welfare of individual persons. For the Christian faith, when it understands itself, there is only one absolute, and that absolute is the genuine caring which is expressed in the Greek word agape.⁵⁰

In another place Trueblood writes,

Christians have no monopoly on commitment; they simply have a different object. A Christian is a person who confesses that, amidst the manifold and confusing voices heard in the world, there is one Voice which supremely wins his full assent, uniting all his powers, intellectual and emotional, into a single pattern of self-giving. That Voice is Jesus Christ. A Christian not only believes that He was; he believes in Him with all his heart and strength and mind.⁵¹

A second aspect of commitment is that it must have an object for devotion. This is one of the elements that makes Body Life Ministry so successful in the churches that emphasize this area. It is the hurt and crying world that is the object of their commitment to Christ. Stedman writes,

The work of the ministry . . . is directed toward a suffering and desperate world. It requires every member of the body of Christ to accomplish it effectively, as members of the body shall be spiritually healthy, vibrant with the life of Christ who indwells them through His Spirit.⁵²

So now the believer-priest is called, committed to Christ, and looking to a hurting world. There yet remains a need for the ability for ministry.

Spiritual Gifts

Christ has provided individuals within the church, Spiritual

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 98.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 23.

⁵²Stedman, p. 106.

Gifts, special abilities, that allow for ministry. Snyder writes in his book Community of the King,⁵³

I am convinced that a properly biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God is possible only if the Church is understood--predominately, if not exclusively--as a charismatic community and God's pilgrim people, his kingdom of priests.⁵⁴

Later in his book he writes,

The charismatic emphasis, and particularly the doctrine of spiritual gifts, is too important to be abandoned because of controversy over a word. Charismatic is a good and highly biblical term that needs to be restored to the Church in all its biblical significance. While the term is not the exclusive property of the charismatic movement, it does remind us that God has used this movement to call the larger body of Christ back to a neglected biblical emphasis.⁵⁵

Stedman continues this thought on Spiritual Gifts in relation to the Body of Christ when he writes, ". . . These may be found in various combinations within a single individual, each cluster of gifts opening the door to wide and varied ministry."⁵⁶ Later he points out and rightly so,

. . . There can be no hope of ever getting the church to operate as it was intended to do until each individual member recognizes and begins to exercise the spiritual gift or gifts which he has received.⁵⁷

Finally, in the matter of spiritual gifts, care must be taken that the gift or gifts resident within the individual be exercised. It is important that this go beyond what gifts may be popular or demonstrated

⁵³Howard A. Snyder, The Community of the King (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978).

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 66.

⁵⁶Stedman, p. 40.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 50.

by a popular leader, to that unique enablement of the Holy Spirit working in and through the individual Christian to the building up of the church general. MacArthur points out,

Diversity is vital to the functioning of the church. Spiritual gifts are a sovereign, God-given blessing. A Christian must use his The Bible doesn't say, 'Find an organization and assign your gift to it.' Since every believer has some spiritual gift, he can find a place to use it. There are many opportunities all around, in the church program and outside it Many Christians are idle, although they have spiritual gifts that the body of Christ is craving. Someone needs every Christian to minister his gifts. The Spirit didn't give Christians their gifts just to lie on a shelf.⁵⁸

So it is that spiritual gifts do not operate in a vacuum and, with the exception of one gift, are not for private edification. However, there are several elements which allow for the operation, in a proper manner, of spiritual gifts.

In the matter of spiritual gifts the environment in which they operate is of paramount importance. The basic element and basic to any other element is the dynamic of fellowship.

Fellowship/Unity/Koinonia

Throughout many of the books on believer-priesthood, there is a strong emphasis upon the matter of the close relationship that should exist among believers in order to facilitate ministry. W. Sanday while writing in relation to the early periods of the church (100 A.D.-1500 A.D.) made a comment which remains equally true today.

If the Church is something more than a mere metaphor of the Body of Christ, if there is circulating through it a continual flow and return of spiritual forces, derived directly from Him,

⁵⁸John MacArthur, The Church the Body of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), p. 29.

if the Spirit which animates the Body is One, then the Body itself also must be in essence one.⁵⁹

Raines, while putting this thought in somewhat different form agrees and in fact expands Sanday in a practical way when he writes,

The koinonia groups provide the context in which the institutional church may begin to become the Body of Christ, and in which nominal church members may become disciples of Christ. Within such groups Christians are being equipped for the work of ministry, first in the church then in the world. From such groups the lay ministers are coming. Genuine disciples of Christ inevitably want to take up thier ministry. They do not have to be exhorted; they only need guidance and opportunity.⁶⁰

Trueblood concurs as he points out that unity is essential to the contemporary church. That in fact, in the case of the individual,

. . . When we give our minds carefully to the question, that to be an effective Christian it is not enough to be an individual believer. Inadequate as the fellowshp of the Church may be, in many generations, including our own, there isnot the slightest chance of Christian vitality without it.⁶¹

Time and agina throughout the New Testament, inspite of the imperfection of the local church, the theme stressed is that of unity. This is to the point that David H. Madvig notes that in his estimation unity is the major theme of such books as Ephesians and Romans and that it is impossible to properly interpret either of these books without a hermeneutice that is based on unity.⁶² So it is that,

There is no room for hierarchy, no room for believers to

⁵⁹W. Sanday, The Conception of the Priesthood in the Early Church of England (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1898), p. 13.

⁶⁰Raines, p. 103.

⁶¹Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 21.

⁶²Donald H. Madvig, "The Missionary Preaching of Paul: A Problem in New Testament Theology," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June 1977), p. 151.

feel like either upper- or lower-class Christians. Jesus did not say there are long and short branches; He did not say there are blue-ribbon sheep and also-rans. Positionally, each believer stands on the same ground in Christ.⁶³

Second to fellowship/unity/koinonia and an outgrowth of these dynamics is the matter of worship and service. It is of significance to note that without a strong base of fellowship, unity and koinonia, the possibility is that worship or service, if there at all, will be stunted in development.

Worship/Service

In the safety and comfort of a body which shares together, service to God (worship) and service to man (service) is natural. Of course this again comes of commitment, practice, and training. Eastwood comments on this servitude,

By virtue of his priesthood the Christian is not only incorporated into the Body but simultaneously becomes its servant. Failure to realize this means that his priesthood is only nominal. There is a difference between 'being priest' and 'becoming priestly', and it is a difference which is not always realized. It is really the difference between privilege and responsibility. The Christian's priesthood begins when he recognizes his part in the redemptive purposes of the Body. It is when he has become capable of service that he can claim to be priestly. He may claim to be priest only as he becomes priestly.⁶⁴

Carrying this point further, it is essential that all partners in the local church, that is the pastor as well as the layman, serve each other in the pursuit of their spiritual priesthood. Trueblood notes,

The older idea was that the lay members were the pastor's helpers, but the new and vital idea is that the pastor is the helper of the ordinary lay member in the performance of their

⁶³MacArthur, p. 19.

⁶⁴Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), p. 232.

daily ministry in the midst of secular life. And always, the problem with which the members need the help of wise and compassionate pastors or teachers is that of how daily witness is to be made. Insofar as we really understand the strategy of the Christian revolution, we shall train our pastors for this highly specialized task. It cannot be pointed out too clearly, therefore, that emphasis on the vocation of universal Christian witness, far from lowering the vision of the function of the pastorate, immensely heightens it. Concern for the universal ministry, instead of making a specialized and highly trained ministry unnecessary, makes it all the more significant.⁶⁵

It must be remembered that this is not for part of the congregation, a spiritual elite, but for all who are called by the name of Christ. Again Trueblood writes, "The number one Christian task of our time is the enlargement and adequate training of our ministry which, in principle, includes our total membership."⁶⁶

The Results of Believer-Priesthood

Following close on to the responsibility of the professional staff for training the laymen for service, is that of the perspective taken of the laymen in ministry. "If belonging to the Universal Priesthood means to be an amateur 'holy man,' only the select few will ever attain this standing."⁶⁷ It also is essential that the implications for the believer-priest be viewed and accepted.

First, with the discovery of his spiritual gift the believer-priest is responsible for its operation. That is, he is responsible to his fellow Christians that he be an active member of the body of Christ. Second, in the spirit of unity he must remember that he

⁶⁵Trueblood, Company of Committed, p. 63.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 57.

⁶⁷Hertz, p. 10.

is responsible for a ministry that transcends the local church. Put another way, the believer-priest is responsible to operate his gift in the service of fellow man when that man is in need. Hertz writes,

As priest I must act on behalf of my neighbor who is in need. My neighbor is one in whom I must see the Lord, 'hungry, naked, imprisoned, sick' and be called into action. What is important here is what I do to serve my neighbor's needs, not whether I use pious words.⁶⁸

It might also be added here, "or not whether it is at the prescribed meeting times of the church, or in the manner deemed appropriate by that church." Hertz continues, "I need not see what I am doing as a religious act. But the heart of the Christian priesthood is just this intercessory action on behalf of others."⁶⁹ It is precisely at this point that the church can be said to be in revival for it is in this situation that people extend their ministry beyond the church to those who are in need.

Renewal

David Haney writing in his book, Renew My Church, speaks to the relationship of the believer-priest with the renewal of the church when he notes,

How will a renewed church come into being? Where is the pivotal point of turning? Those at the headwaters and in the mainstream of the renewal movement are in unanimous agreement that the hope for renewal lies in the liberation of the laity. Call it what you will--the lay ministry, the universal ministry, the equipping ministry--it all means the same: that every believer is called to be a minister.⁷⁰

So it is not the responsibility of the pastor, or the evangelist, or the board, but the responsibility is with the people. It has been said

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Haney, Renew My Church, p. 29.

that the congregation will very seldom go beyond the point that the pastor is. It would seem more appropriate to say that the congregation will seldom go beyond the point to which they are willing to progress in their pursuit of spiritual priesthood.

Recovery of Mission

One of the results of the ministry of the laity is that it is infectious and as it spreads in the church, it is not without influence in the remainder of the body. From this the church, as Raines points out, recovers its sense of mission.

The recovery of mission centers in the person and only with times becomes effective in the church. As the lay ministers become leaders in the church, as the leaven works in the lump, quietly and gradually the church may recover its mission. From the outside all may appear to be the same as ever. But on the inside there is ferment; there is rising concern, a dissatisfaction with what the church has been doing, an awareness that the church has mistaken her mission or has failed to fulfill it. There is a sense of urgency, a new dependence upon God, a willingness to experiment. A people who discover that they are chosen, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, are at the threshold of recovering their mission. First comes the awareness of who we are; then the conviction of what we should be doing.⁷¹

So it is that the emphasis should not be on the mission of the church as much as on the degree to which the laity can comprehend its responsibility and place in achieving that mission.

Kingdom Consciousness

Another result of the ministry of the believer-priest is a new consciousness of the Kingdom of God. Snyder sees the church as ". . . the community of God's people--a people called to serve him . . . the agent of God's mission on earth."⁷² So it is that the church in which there is

⁷¹Raines, p. 126.

⁷²Snyder, p. 12.

an active believer-priesthood will see itself as more than a facility of building, an institution or organization, or an opportunity for a limited few to be supported by many as they practice their spiritual trade. The church is seen as individuals whom God has redeemed and gifted, in relationship with one another for the purposes of facilitating their priestly function to one another (the Kingdom of God on earth) and to the unredeemed.

Lois LaBar in her book, Focus on People in Church Education⁷³ points out that the church has four functions. These are instruction, worship, expression, and fellowship, which she feels are an integral part and function of the local church.

While treating the matter of teaching she speaks to the whole matter of Christian ministry in these four areas and others when she writes,

The talent or ability that each of us possesses is God's gift to us; the development of that ability is our gift to Him. We will never know the thrill of fulfilling the purpose for which we were created until we have developed our gift. We will never know fulness of life until we are in the center of God's will making our unique contribution to the church.⁷⁴

It is this thought which is reflective of the thoughts of those who are involved in and write from the perspective of body life ministry and church renewal.

The church then must have a perspective of her function, her parts, and her purpose. The question that arises then is what is the result of the recognition of the church's function, parts, and purpose without an active assumption of responsibility by the laity? Elton

⁷³Lois LaBar, Focus on People in Church Education (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1968).

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 23.

Trueblood treats this matter in an example exterior to the church and notes that "The church has, for a generation, been beating a steady retreat, giving up positions which have been promptly occupied by commercial interests."⁷⁵

The question that the church must now face is, where will that retreat stop? Will it in fact reach within her gates to the point that a professional, paid commercial interest will occupy positions there too?

⁷⁵Elton Trueblood, The Common Ventures of Life (New York: Harper, 1949), p. 116.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the outset of this paper the following hypothesis was suggested as the guiding purpose of this study. This thesis seeks to show that God's plan for his chosen people is the priesthood of the laity and that an analysis of the biblical theological literature, the literature centered on Martin Luther's life and theology, and literature from the church renewal movement will support this contention. It is the purpose of this chapter, in summary form, to bring to bear upon this hypothesis the more salient points of chapters two, three, four, and five, in order to demonstrate that adequate support has been offered.

SUMMARY

The Biblical Evidence

The Old Testament. In chapter two the concept of believer-priesthood was seen to be part of God's plan for the various periods of the Old Testament, including the patriarchial period, the period of the Great Exodus and early habitation, and later the period of the kings and prophets. In these periods the individual was seen to have had the potential for priestly access to God and priestly responsibility for others. It was further demonstrated that the Levitical and Aaronic Priesthoods were originally designed with the purpose of supporting the individual in his priesthood through their teaching ministries, their

prophetic role, and their responsibility to become the servants of the Children of Israel.

Another matter demonstrated out of the Old Testament was that the institutionalization of the priesthood resulted in a burden not a blessing to the individual. While this was the case, there was present the divine example of priesthood in the person of Melchizedek, priest of Salem, who would later serve as the type of the priesthood that was designed by God.

The New Testament. Chapter three presents the doctrine of believer-priesthood as set forth in the New Testament. First, throughout the Gospels Jesus gives a clear picture of the believer in ministry, and in fact elevates the place of the layman. It was Jesus who stood against the hierarchical priesthood of the day and in doing so presented the ministering layman in parables such as the Good Samaritan. Finally, Jesus taught by his own life and ministry that the real priest is the one who serves God and as well serves his fellow man.

It was in the Acts narrative that believer-priesthood was seen to develop along with the spread of the young church. This development was to provide a direct lead into Paul's theology of the church which was based upon the concept that every man was to be a minister. It is to be noted that Paul, like Jesus, turned away from the hierarchical priesthood and in fact by his life and ministry, established the norm for ministry as servitude.

The major contribution of Paul to the subject under study was the model for ministry that he offers in the picture that he provides of the church. In this model he presents material on Christian relationships,

a model for ministry, spiritual gifts, and spiritual offices. It is significant to the theme of this paper that Paul repeatedly returns to the place of the individual in ministry.

In the book of Hebrews, Jesus the High Priest is seen leading the cadre of believer-priests in service to God and to their fellow man. It is in this picture of Jesus that He is presented as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and is even as He is in the high priestly office, serving the individual believer-priest.

Peter's view of the believer as priest is used to conclude the New Testament section. Peter presents a somewhat different picture of the spiritual community, beyond that of Paul's church to the idea of kingdom. This invisible kingdom of priests is tied more directly to the Old Testament concept of a priestly order. The major difference however, is that this is a kingdom of priests that include all believers not just a few from a priestly class.

As one reviews the matter of believer-priesthood as it is set forth in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is readily apparent that the concept must occupy more than a minor position and thus demands more than a cursory treatment. It is therefore concluded that this paper has presented the reader with enough biblical-theological data to support this contention.

The Lutheran Evidence

Chapter four presents the reader with the second major revival of the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers. It was this occurrence under the influence of Martin Luther that was to leave the church with a renewed emphasis upon the individual in ministry. It was demonstrated in the data set forth that while there may have been factors

which made Luther sensitive to the doctrine, ultimately, it was his conviction on the basis of scripture that would result in his belief. Along with the doctrine of believer-priesthood, Luther revived several related concepts such as commonness or mutuality, unity, fellowship and communion, and an emphasis upon the relationship that the believer has with the Word of God and with the Holy Spirit.

As one views the reformational revival of the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers, it is obvious that the doctrine occupies more than an insignificant place. This review of Lutheran thought in fact is seen as supporting the contention of this paper that this doctrine is an essential part of God's plan for his redeemed.

Contemporary Evidence

In chapter five, the doctrine is discussed in the contemporary setting as viewed by several renewal writers. It is at this point that the doctrine is seen to be as relevant and as needed as it was in the Reformation and the New Testament. This chapter is especially significant as it addresses the subject from the point of view of men such as Elton Trueblood and Ray Stedman, who have a practical understanding of how this doctrine applies to the western church of the late 20th century. Here again the individual is seen as essential to the functioning of the church today. Further, the concepts that are related to believer-priesthood, such as unity, fellowship, servitude, and worship, are seen to be as essential today as they were in the past. This conclusion on the part of these men is not out of an historical consideration but as a result of scripture and the church today.

As the observations and thoughts of the writers cited in the

contemporary section are reviewed, it becomes apparent that this doctrine is as relevant for today as any point in the history of the church. This review is seen as supporting the contention of this paper that this doctrine is an essential part of God's plan for the redeemed in the contemporary church.

Conclusion of the Summary

With the closing of chapter five the survey of the materials set forth supporting the contention of this paper was complete. It is therefore the position of this paper that the hypothesis was supported in such a way so as not to conclude the matter but to present the reader with the possibility for further study. It is hoped that this paper has served to open the door to other studies and not become an end in itself.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon this study there are several conclusions which require a concise restatement. In the case of many of these, there is the possibility for further study and exploration.

1. Believer-priesthood was seen to be related to other concepts such as mutuality or commonness, unity, servitude, and fellowship.
2. Believer-priesthood was seen to be a thread which runs through all of church history.
3. Believer-priesthood was seen to be based upon the Old Testament scriptures, and revived in the New Testament era, the Reformation, and on the contemporary church scene.
4. Believer-priesthood was seen to be the essential element to

propagation and growth of the kingdom of God.

5. Believer-priesthood was seen to be a priesthood not of an earthly organization although the church is an essential element, but under the direct supervision of the High Priest, Jesus.

6. Jesus was seen to be the one High Priest based upon the divinely ordered model of Melchizedek.

7. Finally, it was seen that God's plan is not a hierarchical priesthood which functions above the individual but a priesthood which functions in support of the individual in his priestly function.

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

As the research and writing of this paper progressed it became apparent that certain side issues would warrant further study. Due to the already broad issue of this study it was not possible to do so. They are however, presented in as much as others may wish to further this study into those areas.

1. A study of the relationship between servitude and the universal priesthood of all believers.

2. A study of the empowerment for ministry as given in Acts and the believer-priest.

3. A study of the balance between the laity and the clergy in various churches which have a believer-priesthood tradition.

4. A study of Old Testament scripture which delves deeply into the place of the believer-priest in the various religious and political situations of the Old Testament.

Chapter 7

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

To conclude this paper, the author thought it well to include a section devoted to the matter of practical application and implementation of the doctrine under consideration. This section is included for two reasons. First, and of prime concern is that the reader of this paper find this doctrine relevant to his life and ministry. Second, often when one is immersed in a study with such an intensity as is necessary to complete a project of this magnitude, there is a loss of perspective. Thus, such a closing as is contained in this chapter will serve well to both provide the reader with a general plan of implementation and as well provide the author with an opportunity to regain any perspective which may have been lost.

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

The matter of the practical application and implementation of believer-priesthood of necessity must be in keeping with the situation of the local church. That is to say that the degree to which people actively assume their ministry and to what level those ministries progress will depend to a large degree upon the view the laity takes of the parameters of lay ministry. With such as the case, the following elements are offered to assist in this process of setting the parameters. It is essential that these elements be adapted to the situation of the local church by those who are involved.

The Ministry

The first area which requires consideration is contained in the following question. The question is, "What areas of need within the church and within the world could be as effectively met, or even better met by the increased involvement of the laity in the work of the ministry?" Inherent within this question is a second question, that of professionalism. More specifically, the church needs to decide what degree of professionalism is required for a successful and responsible behavior toward the needs of the world and the church.

What the author has come to observe in this matter of ministry is that because the church has been exposed to a more trained and highly professional approach, the learning layman, or the layman who is not so polished, sometimes has difficulty in gaining the opportunity for the practicing of his skills. The implication is that if the church could be comfortable with a little less professionalism in the ministry (not necessarily on the part of the clergy), there would be a much greater potential for the layman in the public aspects as well as many of the more personal facets of doing the work of the ministry.

There are two elements which seem to be essential to the matter of including the laity in ministry. First, the divinely ordained principle of decency and order must be maintained. Second, those in the ministry, and especially in ministry where others are concerned, must come to an understanding of their own responsibility to be prepared for the work of the ministry. Specifically, it is essential to a proper fulfillment of one's ministry that a process of preparation be initiated and continued throughout that ministry.

Diversity and Uniqueness of Ministry

One of the great dangers in the church is that the various forms of ministry are standardized. That is to say that because there has been a degree of success with an idea or method, it becomes institutionalized to the degree that everyone must do it. The simple truth is that the believer must come to a place of creatively seeking to give expression to his ministry. Often the thought is that to enter the ministry is to radically change one's life style. Such is not necessarily the case, in fact one might do well to consider that he may be in a certain segment of life to bring Jesus to that area of living.

As an example, people with various denominational affiliation might share in ministry at their place of employment, or people might share in ministry in conjunction with special interests (public service, hobbies, clubs, etc.). Other possibilities might include neighborhood ministries, school district functions, and community needs. Whatever, the involvement, the minister must primarily see himself as a servant of God, and as such a servant of people, be they lost or redeemed.

One thing that the author has found to be very effective in his own life, is that he has purposed to take on personal projects without the notice and approval of others. For instance he has purposed to share meaningfully with one person every day. Ministry in this manner may take any form. It may be that he shares a load that seems impossible to another person, or shares Jesus with that person. What is involved is that in his world, he is a minister.

The Perspective of Need

The third area that is essential to a proper implementation of

this doctrine is a true perspective of the need of those not only in the world but also of those in the church. Properly, this perspective is not a view according to what one may individually suppose but a need as measured by the standard established by the person (felt need) and the Word of God. Coupled with this sensitivity to needs, is an understanding of how the Bible answers those same needs. In practice, instead of expecting the pastor or staff to respond to the need that a layman might be sensing as he views the church and the world, the layman might assume that since he is touched by need he is being called to work toward a resolution of that need.

The Preparation

Preparation for the work of the ministry is another of the key elements in the priesthood of the believer. This activity is not a cursory preparation but every bit as intense and comprehensive as a Bible college or seminary might offer. For too long the myth has been put forward that study on this level is beyond the ability of the laity. Such is certainly not the case especially in an age when technology and learning are essential to the most elementary functions of life.

Servitude

Another element that is essential to the proper functioning of believer-priesthood is a practical observance of servitude. The element of servitude, which is characteristic of every activity of the church universal, is born out of the accurate appraisal of just who the believer-priest is and just what is involved in the practice of divine love. As love is to be vertical as well as horizontal, so is servitude.

So it is that the members of the church are called upon to serve,

to expend all that is their's for the cause of Christ. They are called upon to love by serving the "least of these," something which perhaps is increasingly difficult to do.

Kingdom Consciousness

The final matter which is essential to a maximum functioning of the universal priesthood of all believers is the place and importance of the kingdom of God. It is of prime importance that the kingdom of God be seen as transcending denominational and theological barriers. By this statement the writer is in no way suggesting that denominational lines are wrong or that theological distinctions are wrong. At the same time however, it must be pointed out that the offering and receiving of ministry in the day to day activities of life must not be limited by denominational boundries and theological distinctions.

While these suggestions apply to the church in general and to the local church, it is important that they be instituted in a practical and gradual manner. Therefore, the following plan for implementation is offered.

A STEP BY STEP PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to establish any doctrine or activity in the local church, it must be established in the life and activities of the individual members. It also must be remembered that a lasting result will only come as a proper preparation and foundation is established. That is to say that next Sunday's sermon probably will not succeed in convincing the whole church to action unless certain preparations have been previously made.

Step One--Planning and Prayer

The first element which is essential to a successful planting of

this doctrine is prayerful planning. Care must be taken that this not be a cursory planning but a planning with every bit as much detail and in as much depth as one might put forth for an evangelistic campaign. Included in this planning should be some practical understanding of just what is involved. The pastor must decide to what degree he is willing to release various of the pastoral responsibilities to the laity, what creative ministries in which one might be involved, and how the laity might be encouraged to share ideas for ministry so as to challenge others to deeper involvement. The pastor must realize that the Holy Spirit builds the church and thus be willing to release his leadership of the church to Jesus. In addition the pastor must realize that his role and responsibility might change and thus he has to be innovative in finding other ministries that heretofore have been neglected. After the pastor has planned and prayed his way through these matters he then should move on to step number two.

Step Two--Sowing the Thought

Step two involves the preparing of the people to receive the idea of the further involvement of the laity in the work of the ministry. For a period of time, possibly six months or a year, the pastor might include one line references to the need which can only be filled by the laity. These could be included in the sermon, bulletin, weekly mailer, bulletin board, or the reader board.

The important point that the pastor may also need to emphasize is that ministry is a part of one's daily living. It is entirely possible that no more time, in an already busy schedule, need be expended, no more expense, in an already tight budget, need be put out, but that one's sense of ministry simply become the focus of one's life. That, the individual

take the opportunities offered in his daily life to do the work of the ministry. The following three examples might serve such a purpose.

"Remember, the Good Samaritan was a Layman."

"When the Sunday Service is over the Church goes out into the world to serve."

"Would it not be wonderful if we had one-hundred, two-hundred, or five-hundred ministers to go out into our city to serve Jesus? (We Do!!!!!!)

Sensing a positive acceptance the pastor would then move on to step three.

If he failed to achieve such a response he might put out feelers to be sure that he has accurately discerned the reaction of the people and if so, he may then return to step one for more planning and prayer.

Step Three--Sowing the Seed

Step three involves a further preparing of the people to receive the idea but also the sensing of the people as to their acceptance of the idea. In this stage the pastor in his social contact with the members, would make indirect comments and references to a greater responsibility for ministry among the laity on the part of the laity. These statements would serve to aid the pastor in sensing just where the people are on the matter and as well sow seed in the thinking of the people. Failing to sense a positive reaction he would return to either step one or two for more prayerful planning and thought sowing. If there is a positive acceptance, he would then proceed to point four.

Step Four--Fertilizing the Seed

Step four is for the purpose of allowing the seed to root. It is at this point that the pastor might bring a sermon on the place of the laity in the ministry. If reaction is for the most part positive, he

might expand the sermon to a series. He would have three purposes at this point. First, he would seek to instruct and thus give foundation to the idea as well as clear up any misunderstandings. Second, the pastor would seek to convince the people of the need for the layman in the work of the ministry. Third, the pastor may at this point re-emphasize the fact that ministry may not require a change in lifestyle. That in fact, people may actively serve in the ministry in the course of their day to day activities. Of course this is in concert with the work of the Holy Spirit. If there is a good reaction he would then proceed to step five. Failing at this point he might want to give some time for the people to become used to the idea of believer-priesthood.

Step Five--Identifying the Seed

At the conclusion of the series of sermons on the place of the laity in ministry, the pastor might start a series of sermons designed to show the laity that ministry is the result of not only the sensing of needs but as well the equipping of the individual to serve that need. This equipping is the work of the pastor. Included would be a strong emphasis upon the person and work of the Holy Spirit, Spiritual Gifts, and the correct functioning of the office gifts in support of the believer. In this step the pastor might employ a questionnaire to determine what the people of the congregation see as their ministries, their Spiritual Gifts, and their needs for further equipping. At the conclusion of this step, the pastor would either put the believers into the work of the ministry or provide them with further equipping. It must be noted however, that some people stop at this point and move no further. Care must therefore be exercised in this step to keep that from happening.

Step Six--Planting the Seed

In this step, which may begin for some people before step five is complete, the pastor would start to involve some of the laity in the work of the ministry. Involvement here may well be in two areas. First, people would be encouraged to respond to areas in which they see need. This response on the part of the people might be in conjunction with the church or it may be that they would have to function on their own. Second, people would be included in areas which have traditionally been seen as pastoral. These might include hospital visitation, visitor calls, jail calls, and crisis intervention. It is at this point that the pastor would be required to move from being just a doer of the ministry to being a facilitator and equipper of the ministers.

Step Seven--Lay Support for the Laity

As the lay ministry continues, the pastor may move a step further and establish leadership for the laity from among the laity. This leader may be selected in terms of geographical area, interest area, or a combination of both. The obvious advantage of this approach is that the ministry would be moved closer to the need and the support for the one conducting the ministry would as well be closer to the need than the pastor in his study, or if he is out at all, a pastor who is trying to cover the myriad responsibilities of a church family. The important thing that would have to be understood by all concerned is that this is an organization with the purpose of ministry that is based upon a healthy concept and application of servitude and not on authoritarian leadership. It is at this point that some people will readily seek to change their lifestyle in order to be involved in the work of the ministry. Others

may well be called to ministry on a different level which does not necessitate a change in lifestyle. Still others may require instruction which would allow for a change in lifestyle and thus a deeper involvement on their part in the work of the ministry.

Step Eight--Ongoing Ministry

In order to keep new life flowing into the church and in order to avoid the dominance of a standing order, a periodic return to step six is necessary. Included in this return is the involvement of new people who are sensing needs in new areas. In addition, it is important that the various lay ministries of the church be seen as alive and valuable for only as long as they are serving the needs of the church or the world. At no point should they be allowed to become institutionalized so that they serve no purpose but self-perpetuation.

Finally, it must be noted that these eight steps in themselves serve no other purpose than to act as a guide. They must be adapted and adjusted to fit the specific situation. Some churches that the writer is acquainted with will need to give consideration to all eight steps, others will start later in the list. In any case, great care must be observed in presenting this as it is doomed to failure without an enthusiastic acceptance on the part of at least a portion of the local congregation.

A CONCLUDING STORY

The pastor of the somewhat progressive growing church entered the board meeting with a plan. This plan was new to the board members and although they were interested in the progress of their church, this idea may have been a little radical to them because they rejected it

totally. The plan that they rejected was that each man in addition to his responsibilities for the physical plant, accept responsibility for the spiritual ministry of the church. "No" they responded, "that is why we have you pastor!" Well, this was totally unexpected by the pastor, but not totally unprepared for. It was at this point that the pastor informed the men of the board that his heart was in pastoring, he loved every detail of it and had no other design than that of the pastorate. They however, needed to understand that if he did the ministry and all of the ministry at that, when it came time for him to leave, the ministry would then leave!!!

In a day when pastoral staff longevity is something between two and three years the concept of the universal priesthood of the believer must be revived and reinstated. To fail in this is to have the ministry leave every two or three years.

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