Digital Commons @ George Fox University

1-1-2018

A Portrait of a Successful Pastor: Reanimating the Pastor as Shepherd in a Success Oriented Culture

Steve Bontrager

sbontrager15@georgefox.edu

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

A PORTRAIT OF A SUCCESSFUL PASTOR:

REANIMATING THE PASTOR AS SHEPHERD IN A SUCCESS ORIENTED

CULTURE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

STEVE BONTRAGER

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2018

Portland Seminary
George Fox University
Portland, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

_____

DMin Dissertation

_____

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Steve Bontrager

has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on February 13, 2018
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation.

Dissertation Committee:

      Primary Advisor: Deborah Loyd, DMin

      Secondary Advisor: Aaron Friesen, PhD

      Lead Mentor: MaryKate Morse, PhD

I dedicate this to my wife, Leona Bontrager. You and I and everyone else in our lives know that I would not have reached this milestone without your support. In fact, I only dared to begin this venture because of your encouragement to do so. You thought of me in a doctoral program long before I did, and your unwavering confidence in me has been my greatest inspiration. No one knows more than me what it means to have someone completely believe in them. Thank you with all my heart.

I dedicate this to the thousands of pastors in unsung places giving your lives to follow the Great Shepherd and to care for His sheep. Few will ever know your name, but the Lord sees every tear, hears every prayer, and says of you that He is well pleased.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Attempting to acknowledge everyone who has been a part of this journey is prone to failure. It would be impossible to thank every person who has made some contribution, even if "just" an affirming word along the way. If I missed you, please accept my apologies. I would like to acknowledge:

- Trenton Corvino for working so hard to get my credits lined up and accepted by George Fox.

- North Creek Foursquare Church for allowing me the freedom to pursue the dream.

- Heather Rainey who processed logistics to make everything possible.

- Dr. Loren Kerns and Dr. Cliff Berger who were a constant encouragement and inspiration and providers of critical "real-time" help.

- Dr. Morse for her inspirational teaching and vision for this program.

- The members of my cohort for their friendship and camaraderie.

- My girls for allowing Dad to take such a crazy journey so late in life.

- Tessa for being patient with a Papa who has been absent far too long.

- Jana Bontrager, Marti Eubanks, Lynda Zachary, and Tracey Lane for editing.

- Dr. Deborah Loyd, my advisor, for walking with me on every step of this journey.

- My wife, Leona, for undying love and support

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to define a set of metrics by which pastors can measure their "success" as pastors. It is important to note that this is not an effort to define a successful church, which would be a different study altogether. Studies show that a great majority of pastors are struggling in life and ministry and it seems reasonable to ask if this could be a result of ambiguity about the role pastors are supposed to fill and what constitutes successfully doing so. It is my contention that many pastors function without a clear sense of metrics for it means to be a successful pastor but instead, operate with a vague sense about "growing and running" a big church. It is probable that most pastors, by the very nature of their gifting and call, are not equipped or "wired" for that task and are set up for failure from the very outset of their ministry.

Chapters will include a survey of how different eras in church history have affected the modern view of pastoral ministry. Chapter one looks at the New Testament and Primitive Church. Chapter two will examine the effects of the Roman Catholic Church up to the Reformation, and chapter three will consider the Reformation. Chapter four will look at the American experience, and chapter five will look at the Biblical foundations of Pastoral ministry. Chapter six is a literature review to consider what other voices are saying and chapter seven will analyze the material and state a summary.

Effort has been made to discover recurring qualities throughout the historic church to see what might remain consistent in the measurement of pastors. Changes that began to take place in the pastoral assignment beginning with the advent of the Church Growth Movement in the mid 1950s are especially of interest.

Introduction

The Problem

Our Story

My wife and I stared at each other in stunned amazement. We were at the dinner table discussing our upcoming retirement from the church we had pastored for thirty-one years when we were simultaneously struck with the somewhat startling thought that this had been a wonderful church! In thirty-one years, we had walked through a lot of life with a lot of people; we had celebrated the happiest of times and mourned the deepest tragedies. We had seen people come to faith and grow in the Lord, and we had seen people turn their back and walk away. In thirty-one years of pastoring there was not much we had not seen.

Sadly, for the biggest part of those years I mostly felt a sense of failure and shame because the church never felt "successful." Our highest sustained average attendance at any one time was one-hundred and thirty, and that was some time ago. We have had hundreds of youth attend our youth services, but somehow, that did not seem to count. It was as my wife and I reminisced about first this person then that, as we remembered times of special outpourings of God's grace, and recounted times of ministry, that it hit us: this has been a wonderful church with wonderful ministry. I remember thinking, "We have ministered to a lot of people – just never very many at the same time!"

It really has been a good church with wonderful ministry, but tragically, for most of those years we had missed it. We could never celebrate what God was doing because we were so focused on what we were not doing. The greatest tragedy is that by our misdirected focus, we did not capitalize on our strengths and gifts. Undoubtedly, many

1

other great opportunities for ministry were missed simply because we were trying to measure up to the wrong set of metrics.

Citing studies by Schaeffer and Barna, Richard Krejcir's report shows that my wife and I were not alone. Seventy-five percent of pastors feel unqualified and/or poorly trained for ministry; seventy-one percent report being burned-out and battling depression.[1] Perhaps not all, but undoubtedly many, are laboring under the same false assumptions that I had. Many pastors feel like they are failing in their job, but the question begs to be asked, "In what job do they think they are failing?" Few, if any of us, have ever had a clearly prescribed set of metrics that define what it means to be a successful pastor. There are certain expectations regarding church growth, but even those are not clearly defined. It is difficult to say at what point a pastor can look at his or her church and say, "Ah, now I am a success." I once heard of an interview in which a billionaire was asked how much money was enough. His answer was "A little bit more."[2] If a pastor is driven by numbers, he or she will never feel a sense of holy satisfaction.

Recently, my wife and I visited the church of some dear pastor friends. The church is only a few years old, it has less than a hundred people, the pastor still works full-time as a concrete contractor, and right now, the church does not have a "worship team." The church was amazing. The pastor's sons do a remarkable job lining up recorded songs to "lead" the worship and it flows beautifully. The people seemed oblivious to their "disadvantage" and worshiped with all their hearts. Everyone was

---

[1] Richard Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors: What is Going on with Pastors in America?" Into Thy Word, 2007, accessed December 2, 2015, http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562.

[2] Attributed to John D. Rockefeller; quoted in Ted Allrich, "How Much Money is Enough?" Nasdaq, accessed December 4, 2017, http://www.nasdaq.com/article/how-much-money-is-enough-cm34225.

welcoming and friendly and completely engaged in every aspect of the church. Reports were given about five people who had come to Christ that week through the testimony of members in the church.

My wife and I had lunch together with the pastors after service and it became clear that the pastor had some sense of disappointment. He felt like after having been there for five years, the church should be further along than it is. We had a completely different perspective. We thoroughly enjoyed the service, we could see the life and vitality in the people, which clearly emanated from the leadership of this pastor couple, and the experience had been a great blessing for us. Our friend's experience, as well as our own, illustrate the purpose of this project, which is to help pastors see the good that God is doing in and through them and to be rescued from the futility of trying to measure up to a set of imagined metrics that is not applicable to them.

The Pastoral Conundrum

Studies show a discouraging picture for the condition of many pastors. These are some of what they report:

- 100% of pastors had a close friend in ministry who had left because of burnout, conflict in the church, or moral failure
- 90% of pastors feel fatigued on a weekly or daily basis
- 77% of pastors do not feel they have a good marriage
- 75% feel unqualified and/or poorly trained for the ministry
- 72% of pastors only study the Bible when preparing to preach
- 71% report being burned out and battling depression
- 38% are divorced or currently in process of getting divorced
- 30% have had affairs or one time sexual encounters with a parishioner
- 26% have regular personal devotions and feel adequately spiritually fed
- 23% are happy and content in Christ, with church, and with family.[3]

---

[3] Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors."

These statistics clearly indicate that most pastors are struggling in ministry and with life. Other studies reveal results that are just as dismal. Some suggest that as many as 1500 pastors leave the ministry every month. One study shows that 50% of pastors would leave the ministry if they knew another way to make a living, and 70% battle depression constantly.[4]

The question needs to be asked why so many pastors feel like they are failing and whether they are possibly measuring the wrong things. An analysis should be made to determine if it could be possible for pastors to look back over a lifetime of ministry and be able to find measurements along the way that constitute successful ministry and are sources of joy.

<center>*What Model?*</center>

Willimon asserts that contemporary ministry is influenced by images of leadership borrowed from its culture. This ranges from powerful pulpit ministers, to great revivalists such as Charles Finney, charismatic pioneers such as Aimee Semple McPherson, intellectual giants such as Richard Niebuhr, and more. From this, Willimon assesses that there are several models of ministry that are affecting how pastors view the ministry and themselves and he labels its effect as victimhood.[5]

One of the models that Willimon lists is the media mogul. He acknowledges that much good has been done by exploiting the resources of mass media to proclaim the Gospel and asserts that figures such as Pat Robertson, Billy Graham, and Robert Schuler

---

[4] Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors."

[5] William Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 56.

have touched more people with the Gospel than any pastor in history. He also discusses some of the shortcomings of this model, one of which is that it has presented an image of the pastor that is not indicative of most pastors. Further, *Willimon* contends that a failure of the media ministries is an inadequate ecclesiology.[6]

It seems undeniable that the advent of media ministries has affected both the concept of what constitutes church and the pastor's image of him or herself. Speaking of an era nearly forty years ago, in a time that churches with 25,000 or 50,000 members was unheard of, Criswell said that one of the sources of pastoral discouragement is "professional competition."[7] If pastors felt the burden of competition in that earlier era, it is no wonder that in this day of media stars and mega churches that 75% of America's pastors feel unqualified for their job,[8] but one wonders if they feel unqualified as a Biblical pastor or as a media mogul.

Willimon mentions numerous other models, past and present, that affect the modern pastor's view of him or herself. These are the political negotiator, therapist, manager, resident activist, preacher, and servant. He acknowledges the good in these but recognizes inherent weaknesses of each one, stating that even the servant model, which seems so Christ-like, can be used as a manipulative tool.[9]

In the modern culture, some would contend that the church has become too corporate. Willimon acknowledges the benefits of a pastor as manager, if it is a means by which he or she effectively empowers the fulfillment of mundane tasks to others in order

---

[6] Willimon, *Pastor*, 57.

[7] A.W. Criswell, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1980), 330.

[8] Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors."

[9] Willimon, *Pastor*, 68.

to free greater amounts of time and energy to get on with the more important aspects of pastoral work. He also asserts that the task of managing can become so appealing that the vibrancy of the ministry is diminished and replaced by efficiency and organization.[10] Eugene Peterson laments hearing a respected mentor and pastor describing his job as "running the church," and surmises that this has become the apt description of pastoral work in the 20th century.[11]

Without a doubt, pastoral ministry includes some level of managerial and leadership skills. Is this, however, what pastors were called to? Criswell comments that many pastors feel overwhelmed with the administrative pressures and feel like they are kept from their life call of study, prayer, preaching, teaching, and soul-winning.[12] The question that continues running through this commentary is what job is the pastor called to do? Is it to administrate, or is it even primarily to lead? Perhaps there is a purpose for pastoral ministry that transcends these and all other images of the pastor that are being discussed.

In a conversation with the author, Loren Kerns, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Portland Seminary, shared an account that seems to summarize many of these thoughts. He related being in a meeting in which Emma Percy, author of *What Pastors Do: Especially When It Looks Like Nothing,* was speaking to a group of church leaders as a part of the Leadership and Global Perspectives Doctor of Ministry program of Portland Seminary. It was on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, at Christ Church College,

---

[10] Willimon, *Pastor*, 63.

[11] Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), Kindle Loc 493.

[12] Criswell, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*, 330.

Oxford. Kerns reports that before she was done with her talk, many of the pastors in the room were in tears with relief and a sense of freedom to simply be who they are, which is "pastors," in the full sense of what that word means.[13]

The Problem Statement

Many, if not most, pastors are discouraged and feel like they are failing in ministry. For many of them, this is a direct result of being unaware of the metrics that define a successful pastor and that they are measuring themselves by wrong metrics. The problem is that no objective measurement exists that clearly and simply defines what it means to be a successful pastor.

Research Question

Why do so many pastors feel discouraged and incompetent, or like they are failing in their assignments as pastors?

Can it be true that 75% of pastors are unqualified for the task of pastoring? Stated differently, is it possible that of all the men and women in this country who are called into ministry, only 25% are capable and able to fulfill that call? Perhaps the job they are trying to fulfill is something other than what God called them to. Percy relates the story of young boy answering the question about what his father, a pastor, did. The lad answered, "Oh, he is very busy being kind to sad old ladies."[14] While the boy might have over-simplified a bit, might it be true that pastoral ministry is much more about

---

[13] Loren Kerns, interview by author, George Fox Leadership and Spiritual Formation Face to Face, Cannon Beach, OR, week of October 26-31, 2016.

[14] Emma Percy, *What Pastors Do: Especially When It Looks Like Nothing* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2014), 1.

comforting sad old ladies than running pristine organizations? In the face of many decades of pastors growing ever wearier and more discouraged, these are questions that seem to deserve attention.

Thesis

The goal of this project is to consider this research question and those related to it. It will seek to develop a set of metrics that defines, or redefines, what it means to be a successful pastor. *The thesis of this project is that re-discovering a Biblical pastoral model and presenting a portrait of what determines successful pastoral ministry will result in many more pastors feeling a sense of fulfillment, gratitude and joy in their lives as a pastor.*

It needs to be noted that these comments are directed to the pastors of local congregations of people. These usually meet weekly in a building, are typically led by one senior pastor, and function with any variety of church government structures. It is directed to pastors of small-to-medium size churches which can range from two to nine hundred and ninety-nine people in attendance, but is typically between seventy-five to two hundred. That notwithstanding, most of what is shared regarding the pastor is applicable to pastors of all sizes and types.

Approach

To redefine metrics that provide a portrait of successful pastoral ministry, this study will examine pastoral ministry in the Bible, in ancient church history, and in America to attempt to discover principles that can help define a working set of metrics for what it means to be a successful pastor.

Chapter 1

Pastoral Ministry in the Primitive Church

Introduction

The intent of this chapter is to examine the structure of the ministry in the primitive church, to seek to ascertain if it reveals a clearly distinguishable "Biblical model" of ministry, and to determine what effect this has had, or might have on how pastoral ministry is viewed today. There are varying interpretations as to what defines the primitive church. It seems to be commonly considered to officially end with the Nicene Council of 325 A.D. as affirmed by Pavao,[1] while there are some who consider it to have ended sooner.[2] A study of the primitive church will be done by looking at both the biblical record as well as literature from or about that era.

The Biblical Record

Office-Bearers

Knox states that there are no documents that clearly set forth the constitution of the primitive church, which he describes as being in the first century into the first half of the second century. He observes that the Greek word translated into ministry or minister in the New Testament is *diakonos*, which meant waiter, and summarizes that the origin of

---

[1] Paul Pavao, "Early Christianity: A Brief Overview of the Ante-Nicene Era," Christian History for Everyman, 2014, accessed June 7, 2017, http://www.christian-history.org/early-christianity-2.html.

[2] Hans Conzelman, *History of Early Christianity,* trans. John Steely (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973), 19.

Christian ministry is best discovered in the "exigencies of the common meal…. deacons were the waiters, and the bishop was the head waiter."[3] [4]

Knox states that the apostles were the clear leaders of the biblical church. Yet, he notes that in the later apostolic writings the apostles honored the integrity of the local churches by giving exhortations more than commands.[5] In the earliest days of the church, the apostles in the Jerusalem church announced it was not proper for them to "serve tables," but that their time should be given to "prayer and the ministry of the Word." In this environment, they directed the selection of the second group of recognized ministers in the church, which was the deacons. These were men, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, that were appointed over the business of caring for the needs of the widows in the church.[6]

Frend contends that the Jerusalem church showed early signs of a monarchical episcopacy, and perhaps of apostolic succession in the person of James, the brother of Jesus. He likens James to the Jewish high priest, and "the Twelve," along with the elders to a Christian Sanhedrin. He acknowledges, however, that the Church was much looser in the Dispersion, where he surmises that the apostles, prophets, and teachers were the primary offices until the second century.[7]

---

[3] John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, ed. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 2.

[4] It should be noted that several older sources have been purposely used in this paper. My intent was to cite authors that predated any influence by the Church Growth Movement.

[5] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 4, 7.

[6] Acts 6:1-7.

[7] W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 39.

The Pastoral Epistles list bishops, deacons, and elders as ministers and leaders of the early church.[8] Coenen contends that the ministries of the bishops and the elders overlapped, and that the two titles "may have been different terms for essentially the same office."[9] His point is illustrated in the account of Paul's farewell to the Ephesian leaders. In Acts 20:17, Paul sent for the elders (*presbyteros*) of the Ephesian church. In verse 28 of the same chapter, he addresses the same group of leaders, and warns them to "take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (*episkopos*). The same interchangeability occurs in Titus, when Paul reminds Titus that he left him in Crete for the purpose of appointing elders (presbyteros), and then comments about the qualification for these same persons, calling them bishops (episkopos).[10]

The bishops seemed to be a college of bishops as opposed to a monarchical single bishop. Paul addressed his letter to the Philippians to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."[11] The Philippian greeting is clearly to a plurality of bishops. This agrees with Coenen's assessment that there is little support in Timothy or Titus for the idea of a monarchical episcopacy with a single bishop presiding or ruling over the other officers and leaders of the church.[12]

---

[8] 1 Timothy 3:1,8; 5:17.

[9] Lotar Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 1:188.

[10] Titus 1:5,7.

[11] Philippians 1:1.

[12] Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," 192.

The place of elders has a long history in the life of Judaism. Coenen notes that the elders, which consisted of the heads of families, were an established part of the Jewish patriarchal and tribal system. He states that in the case of the Exodus, they were the real leaders of Israel in the story of the Exodus, despite being overshadowed in history by the dominant character of Moses.[13] Even in the monarchy, the elders controlled local communities and were vital to the king himself to be able to rule. Coenen cites 1 Samuel 15:30, when Saul pleaded with Samuel to honor him before the elders, as an example of their influence and power. He describes the eldership of the Jerusalem church as based on the pattern of the Jewish synagogue and contends that by the time of the writing of Acts, all of the Pauline churches of Asia Minor also used the "presbyterian" system in church leadership and ministry.[14]

In the Old and New Testaments, elder came to denote someone that was uniquely and divinely commissioned. In the Christian church, it was a title given to honor those who cared for the life of the church and ministered to its members. In 1 Peter 2:25, Jesus is cited as being the Shepherd (poiman) and bishop (episkopos) of the souls of those addressed. Coenen notes the connection of Shepherd with bishop and surmises that the leadership of bishops and/or elders was most accurately understood in the context of care-giving as modeled by Christ's own selfless service.[15]

Knox also indicates that the elders were a primary component of the early church ministry and leadership. He notes that elders sometimes seem equivalent to bishops and

---

[13] Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," 194.

[14] Ibid., 199.

[15] Ibid., 191.

that they absorbed the more primitive ministries of the church. He also observes that

elders comprised the essential government body of the early Jerusalem church.[16] The

council which convened to deal with the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles is described

as being comprised of "apostles and elders,"[17] indicating both a spiritual and

governmental function.

Knox contends that all ministry in the primitive church was charismatic, rather

than institutional. Yet, he says order and functionality were evident, denoting that

institutional apparatus was in place through the elders' ministry. He contests the notion

that there was a distinction between charismatic and institutional ministry. He contends

that ministry was not a matter of formal offices in the primitive church but were functions

for which persons were spiritually gifted. He notes that in his instructions to the church in

1 Corinthians 12, Paul considered administrators and helpers equally as gifted as he did

healers and prophets.[18]

These observations are echoed by Willimon, who notes that the New Testament

church recognized a wide array of leadership gifts and contends that the church of today,

both Catholic and Protestant, is "more rigid, formalized, and uniform than ministry in the

New Testament."[19] Willimon also observes that ministry was not institutionalized in the

New Testament church, but was widespread throughout the community of believers. The

---

[16] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 21-22.

[17] Acts 15:6.

[18] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 10.

[19] Willimon, *Pastor*, 29.

historian Faivre observed that, "The most significant change in church order in the first centuries of the church was not the creation of leaders, but the creation of the laity."[20]

Paul identifies several key ministry leaders, which includes apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.[21] These ministry gifts are said to be for the purpose of equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry so they can edify the body of Christ. The result of this ministry is that the members become mature in Christ, and the effectual efforts of all the various body members cause the church to grow and to be built up in love. Nothing is mentioned here of bishops or even of elders. It seems the idea of ministry in the New testament was very diverse and inclusive, and much broader than might be envisioned in modern thought.

Coenen maintains that the pastoral oversight of the primitive church was initially a responsibility of all the church members. He cites Hebrews 10:25 in which the saints are instructed to exhort one another.[22] This agrees with the essence of Romans 15:14, in which Paul expresses his confidence that his readers are "full of goodness and filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another." Coenen further states that Paul had no notion of the church in an institutionalized sense or with precisely differentiated offices. He contends the church was a charismatic community and suggests that the various gifts listed in Romans 12:8 are activities more than offices.[23]

---

[20] Alexandre Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*, trans. David Smith (New York: Paulist, 1990), n.p., quoted in Willimon, *Pastor*, 47.

[21] Ephesians 4:11-16.

[22] Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," 191.

[23] Ibid., 197.

This picture is also presented elsewhere in the New Testament. The apostle prays in Colossians for the people to be "filled with the knowledge of God's will and … to be fruitful in every good work."[24] In Colossians 3:16, he tells these believers to allow the word of Christ to "dwell in you richly," and he instructs them to teach and admonish one another. In Colossians 4:2, he calls on them to "continue earnestly in prayer." It is interesting to note that no variation of the words elder or bishop is used in the entire book of Colossians. This is not necessarily to conclude that these persons did not exist, but it does indicate the ministry of the church was solidly in the hands of its members. Whatever might have been true of ministry leaders, or of "pastors" if they existed, it is clear that they did not perform the ministry singlehandedly, as often seems to be the case in the modern church.

Lindsay observes that in the books of Romans and Corinthians, that neither bishops, presbyters, or deacons are mentioned. He deduces that the ministries of baptism, communion, public worship, and church discipline were all possibly conducted without office-bearers to perform them. He contends that ministry was first a matter of duties and functions, and that the idea of ministry offices came later.[25] He says there is no resemblance in those early years of ministry to any modern ecclesiastical organization, but does assess that "the roots of all, whether congregational, presbyterian, or episcopal" were present.[26]

---

[24] Colossians 1:9-10.

[25] Thomas Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Christian Centuries: The Eighteenth Series of the Lectures of Cunningham* (New York: George Doran, 1903), 136.

[26] Ibid., 155.

Women shared in the gifts and labors of the primitive church. There is the example of the prophetesses at Caesarea in Acts 21:9 and Phoebe, a diakinos, (deacon) of the church in Romans 16:1.[27] Others not mentioned by Knox, are Priscilla, a minister partner of Paul,[28] Junia the apostle,[29] and other co-laborers with Paul, Euodia and Syntyche.[30]

It is a mistake to assume that there was no need for administrative work in the primitive church. 1 Corinthians 12:28 speaks of the gift of administration. Paul's greetings in Romans 16 are to a church with some degree of organization, as is the apostle John in his third epistle. Knox opines that there was no less administrative work in a primitive church than to ones of comparable size in the modern era. He notes that the ministry of the bishops and deacons was identified as connected with the ministry of helpers and administrators.[31]

Lindsay states plainly that images of the primitive church are more readily found on the mission field than in the organized life of the European church.[32] Granted, he made his comments in 1903, but it does not seem likely that he would see an evolution toward a more biblical or primitive model in the current culture. He reminds us that the meetings of the Christians mostly took place in private homes. He contends that these

---

[27] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, 16.

[28] Acts 18:18, Romans 16:3.

[29] Romans 16:7.

[30] Philippians 4:2-3.

[31] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 10, 12.

[32] Thomas Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, 2nd ed. (N.p. Kindle edition, n.d.), Kindle Loc 35.

house meetings continued until the end of the second century, and even longer, except in the larger cities.[33]

These observations regarding the ministry in the biblical record give important insight to the focus of this research. It seems that much of what is now done by "pastors," was carried out by a broader base of people in the primitive church. In reality, the position of "pastor" as it is understood in modern society seems conspicuously absent from the Bible account. Perhaps the combined ministry of the elders and/or bishops give insight that could affect the definition of metrics of success for modern pastors if these are to mirror those of New Testament ministry.

<div align="center">Prophetic Ministry</div>

Lindsay comments that Paul's concept of the church is a Christian community that is a "body of which the Spirit of Christ is the soul." He expounds that the individual members were not only filled with the Spirit but they were gifted and empowered with supernatural powers to do the ministry of Christ, and that each person was given the capacity to provide some special service to the society in which he or she lived.[34]

The equality of Spirit fullness, notwithstanding, Lindsay asserts that there were those especially gifted with spiritual utterance to be able to speak the Word "of the Spirit." These were those of the prophetic ministry and they took a prominent place of special honor.[35] Lindsay identifies a three-fold division of the prophetic ministry,

---

[33] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, 2nd ed., Kindle Loc 35.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

including apostles, prophets, and teachers. He contends that this three-fold prophetic ministry extended at least until the end of the second century. He notes that the gifts were always listed in pairs, not only in Scripture, but in later documents, as well.[36] Each of the three gifts was uniquely gifted to speak the Word of God, but Lindsay surmises that the prophets and teachers utilized the gift mostly within the Christian community and that the sphere of the apostles was mostly outside among those who were not yet in the Church. Apostles were by no means confined to the eleven.[37]

The apostles had one distinguishing characteristic of having given themselves to a life of being missionary preachers of the Gospel. They were wandering missionaries whose special duties were to preach to the heathen and unconverted. Not only in Scripture, but also in later writings, they were to be highly honored. Lindsay notes that as the earlier decades passed, the number of those called to be apostles diminished.[38] *The Didache*, by giving instructions on how to conduct church in the event that no prophets were present, seems to indicate that there was a decrease, not only of the apostles, but of the other charismatically gifted ministries. This decrease might be a contributing factor to the ascendancy of office-bearers.

<div align="center">Testimony of Other Documents</div>

There are other early documents in addition to the New Testament that describe the ministry in the primitive church. McGuckin cites Clement's *Letter to the Corinthians and* the letters written by Ignatius as critical documents that began to present a strong

---

[36] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, 2nd ed., Kindle Loc 35.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

case for a single bishop or pastor, called the monepiscopacy.[39] *Church History* by Eusebius is another source, which is described by Lindsay as "the Josephus of the ecclesiastical world," and the *Pastor of Hermas*.[40]

It should be noted that there is some contention as to the authenticity of the *Epistles of Ignatius*. Some contend that all of them are forgeries.[41] Lindsay cites the scholarly work of Lightfoot and Dr. Zahn of Germany in asserting that "the Seven Epistles in the shorter recension are genuine documents."[42] McGuckin also asserts the authenticity of the first seven of his letters.[43] Ignatius was the head of the Christian community in Antioch of Syria. He was arrested during an outburst of persecution in that city and was transported across Asia Minor to Rome, where he was martyred. It was on this trip, cr. 110 A.D., that he wrote his epistles.

Clement

Clement lived between 30-100 A.D. He is thought to have possibly been the Clement who was with Paul in Philippi and was honored by the apostle as one who labored with and for him, along with some women and others.[44] He was a co-presbyter

---

[39] John McGuckin, *The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 56-60.

[40] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 35.

[41] "Ignatius, St," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., ed. E.A. Livingstone, 817-818 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 818.

[42] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 3369.

[43] McGuckin, *The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years*, 58.

[44] Ibid., 56.

with Linus and Cletus and succeeded them in the leadership of the Roman church after the persecutions of Nero, in which the former two are supposed to have perished.[45]

The epistle of Clement to the Corinthians was written from Rome and was addressing issues of sedition in that church. He reminds the Corinthians that the apostles had gone out preaching the Gospel across the region. He notes that they had appointed from the first fruits of their ministry those who would be bishops (overseers) and deacons (servants) of the ones who later came to believe. These bishops and deacons are then referred to as elders (presbyters). He identified those presbyters as being appointed by the apostles or other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church.[46]

<p style="text-align:center">The Didache</p>

The Didache was a short Christian manual that provided instruction for Christian life, the prophetic ministry, conduct of Lord's Day services, selection of office-bearers, and a warning about the last days.[47] There are no traces of an elaborate ecclesiastical system in *The Didache*. Matters rested largely with the community of believers and its instructions were directed to the community as a whole. The community tested the ministry of the prophets, and even the instructions about baptism, fasting, and prayers were given to the community, not to office-bearers.[48]

---

[45] A. Cleveland Coxe, "Introductory Notes to the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," in *Ante Nicene Fathers,* vol 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus,* ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 1.

[46] Clement, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," in *Ante Nicene Fathers,* vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus,* eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 16, 17.

[47] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle, Loc 3220.

[48] Ibid., Kindle Loc 3233.

The Didache seems to give priority to the ministry of the prophets, stating that "Every true prophet who wishes to settle among you is worthy of his food."[49] Instructions are given regarding taking of the first fruits of one's baking, produce, livestock, drink, and clothing to give to the resident prophets. In the event that no prophets were present, these things were to be given to the poor. It is interesting to note that there are no instructions given regarding monetary support of the local office bearers.

The Didache gives further instruction to elect "overseers and servants worthy of the Lord." These were to be gentle men who were honest and not lovers of money. They were considered to be ones that rendered the same service as the prophets and teachers, and they were to be honored along with them.[50] This system of office-bearers of the local church was two-fold, which consisted of a college or group of presbyter-elders with deacons as their assistants.[51] If a prophet was present in a congregational meeting, he (or she?) was to preside at the Lord's Table, but if none were present, then the office-bearers were to do so. They were also to act as judges between church members who had conflict. Lindsay notes that The Didache does not indicate a division of labor between the bishop-elders and the deacons and requires that the same character qualities are expected of both.[52]

---

[49] Eberhard Arnold, ed., "The Didache," in *The Early Christians in Their Own Words* (Farmington, PA: Plough, 1997), 203.

[50] Arnold, "The Didache," 203.

[51] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 3261.

[52] Ibid., Kindle Loc 3261.

Epistles of Ignatius

Ignatius, written cr. A.D. 110, speaks of a three-fold ministry consisting of bishop, elders, and deacons. [53] This form of church was not yet consistent throughout the empire, but Lindsay asserts that the vision of Ignatius was for every church to have "at its head a bishop, a presbyterium or group of elders, and a body of deacons." Ignatius regarded these three elements together as a whole. Lindsay reports that he mentions the three together twelve times in his epistles, and that in ten of the twelve times, they constitute "an inseparable unity."[54]

Although Ignatius promotes the monepiscopacy, he does not present the bishop as an autocrat. He was to be part of a council of bishops, of which the bishop himself was to be included. The people were to see all three as equally authoritative. The bishops, elders, and deacons convened together, with the bishop surrounded by his council of elders, the one "helpless without the other."[55] Lindsay asserts that Ignatius makes no case for apostolic succession, a diocese, nor of sacerdotalism. He contends, rather, that the form of church government presented by Ignatius more resembled that of the Presbyterian model that would surface hundreds of years later in the Reformation.[56]

The Dynamics and Appeal of the Primitive Church

Sittser reports that at the beginning of the second century the church was comprised of about fifty thousand people, a small minority of the over sixty million in the

---

[53] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, 170-171.

[54] Ibid., Kindle Loc 3472.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., Kindle Loc 3485.

Roman Empire. Notwithstanding their seeming insignificance, he notes that pagan leaders were concerned about the effect they were having on society. He cites a letter written by Pliny the Younger, a provincial governor of Bithynia and Pontus, in modern Turkey, to Trajan, the Roman emperor. He expressed concern about how the Christians were upsetting the social equilibrium by "caring for the sick, organizing social events, providing hospitality, burying the dead, supporting widows and orphans, and raising money for the destitute."[57]

Sittser lists a number of ways in which the church was affecting society and reasons for its appeal to the masses. Primary among these, is that it created a sense of belonging, fulfilling Paul's analysis to the Ephesians that animosities between male and female, Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, slave and free had been destroyed in Christ. Sittser says the Christian community welcomed people of any background. As an example, he cites the way the church treated women, who achieved a higher status in the church than they had in pagan society. He notes that fertility rates were higher and female mortality rates were lower, all directly related to the better treatment the women received in the church. Women were free to minister, to use their spiritual gifts, to prophesy and to pray, and even to hold church offices.[58]

A second characteristic of the primitive church cited by Sittser is that it provided social stability in an unstable world. Cities of the era were crowded, and though they provided Roman citizens with many opportunities, they often bordered on chaos. People of many ethnicities were flocking to the cities and there was often intense rivalry among

---

[57] Gerald Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 50.

[58] Ibid., 57-58.

the groups. Natural disasters and sickness were also a troubling reality for the growing populations. The church, with its radical sense of community, "became like family to aliens and outsiders who flocked to the cities."[59]

The third thing about the primitive church that made it so attractive to the citizens of the day is that it cared for people during times of crisis. One example given is the plagues in 165 and 250 A.D. Sittser reports that historians estimate that these resulted in the death of up to a quarter of the population. The Christian faith made some theological sense of the plagues to the people and it also made a practical difference in their lives. They believed that God's love for all people compelled them to love them, which they did by caring for the sick, often at the expense of their own lives.[60]

Webber makes many of the same observations as Sittser. He notes that Christians won the hearts of the Roman populace by living out the Gospel message during times of turmoil. Paganism was ill equipped to deal with the devastating plagues of the second and third centuries, while Christians "remained in the cities, offered water, food and medical assistance to the dying, often lying next to and dying with them."[61]

Webber contends that the success of Christianity in the early centuries was because the Christians narrated the world differently than the pagans. He notes several factors that allowed them to do so. One was the focus on the One True God and the possibility of a relationship with Him, which gave hope and meaning to a world filled with the confusion and hopelessness of paganism. A second factor was the dignity

---

[59] Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 60-61.

[60] Ibid., 63-64.

[61] Robert Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for the Christian Story In an Age of Rivals* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), Kindle Loc 580.

Christianity gave women. The sexual convictions of the church provided stability to the society, and Christian families became a testimony. A third, as previously mentioned, was the church's care for society in plague or other crises.[62]

It seems somewhat incredible that neither Sittser or Webber have much to say about Christian leadership as a part of their observations regarding the dynamic appeal of the primitive church. The character of the church was well established, and its active ministry was on full display by its members. It is quite imaginable that leaders were serving alongside the people, but it is clear that Primitive Church ministry was not dependent upon dominating personalities and leaders. One could wonder if perhaps leaders of the primitive church were more focused on the kind of leadership expressed by Paul in Ephesians 4. Sittser comments that the primitive church did not rely on high profile evangelists, organized rallies, or debate among the elites, but that they "won converts through … quiet witness in their homes and places of work."[63]

<p align="center">*Shift to Greater Centralization*</p>

The Didache recognized there would be times in which no teachers and/or prophets would be available in a given local church. For such occasions, it gave instructions to appoint bishops and deacons to carry out the ministry of prophets and teachers. This included the administration of the Eucharist, as well as the functionary ministries of both gifts. It also possibly included administrative duties. Knox notes that these bishops and deacons were appointed as officials, rather than as gifted, functionary

---

[62] Webber, *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for the Christian Story In an Age of Rivals,* Kindle Loc 580.

[63] Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 56.

leaders. He contends that this development of officials in leadership of the church "signaled the end of the strictly primitive phase of the church's ministry."[64]

A further shift in church leadership was the development of the monepiscopacy. This did not begin until early in the second century but was prevalent "virtually everywhere" by the end of the century.[65] Knox suggests that one person in each church gradually took on functions of ministry and leadership formally performed by a number of persons. This included teaching, prophecy, administration, and pastoral care until the full emergence of the single ministry leader in first some of the churches and eventually in most of them.

It appears that some of the impetus behind the emergence of the monepiscopacy was the need, or at least desire, for a guardian of truth in the local churches. This was especially an issue with the rise of Gnosticism in the house churches, and it was an effort to bring them under the head of a single leader who guarded the life and doctrine of the church.

The development of the monepiscopacy seems especially pertinent to the discussion of this dissertation. The place of the senior pastor, who is often the only pastor in the case of smaller churches, is a fact of life in the modern church. It seems that some correlation might exist between a pastor being alone and not feeling capable of fulfilling all that is expected of him or her. This is a dramatic difference from the earliest primitive structure in which there was a multiplicity of men and women working together with different giftings to carry on the ministry of the church.

---

[64] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 19.

[65] Ibid., 23-24.

Even in the churches with single pastor leaders during the era of the Primitive Church, the pastors did not minister alone. Churches were led by a three-fold tier of ministry, which consisted of a body of elders and a corps of deacons, who served under the guidance of the local pastor, or as he was called in those days, the bishop. This structure was prevalent, although not universal, as indicated by correspondence from the era.[66]

Some Conclusions About Primitive Church Pastors

Sittser says there was no counterpart in the pagan world for Christian pastors. Pagan priests and cult leaders presided over various rituals and taught esoteric mysteries of their religions. Christian pastors, however, attended to practical concerns and sought to "create a seamless unity between creed and conduct, religion and life." Sittser adds that pastors taught the scriptures, cared for the sick and destitute, worked to maintain church unity, administered the sacraments, and disciplined church members.[67]

Sittser asserts that by the middle of the second century, pastors were following an established liturgy, calling members to worship, reading from the apostles' "memoirs," preaching, and leading songs. They trained new believers and provided moral instruction. They sought to protect the people from the influences of the pagan culture by issuing warnings about jobs and forms of entertainment that were considered dangerous to their well-being.[68] Lindsay gives a thorough description of the role of the primitive pastor as

---

[66] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 23.

[67] Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 65.

[68] Ibid., 67.

given in the Apostolic Canons, but he notes that this document calls for all of this to be done with the aid of the elders.[69]

In conclusion, ministry in the Primitive church was fully charismatic, not institutional; it included a variety of gifts and functions, and it was gender neutral. While the apostles seemed to exercise a degree of authority over the churches, Knox suggests that they showed the integrity of the local churches in that they more offered exhortations than commands.[70]

<div align="center">No Common Picture</div>

Like Lindsay, Knox suggests that both Paul and *The Didache* gave the greatest importance to prophets and teachers, but he contends that the prophets and teachers were functions, not offices.[71] The prophets spoke ecstatically, communicating visions, revelations in the Spirit, and provided "initiation into divine secrets," while teachers gave instruction in a "more ordinary sense."[72] Knox agrees that the prophets were given the early responsibility of administering the Lord's Supper.

Frend reminds us that early Christianity was an active sect among their fellow Jews and that church structure was influenced by the Jewish synagogue, but he notes that there is no coherent pattern or picture of the early church. He cites Ignatius who presented the structure of bishop, priest and deacon as the normal church structure but notes that "The Diadache" treats the bishop on a lower level than the prophets and

---

[69] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, 179.

[70] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 7.

[71] Ibid., 13.

[72] Ibid., 14.

teachers. I Clement speaks of the preeminence of the bishop but does not distinguish if this is a singular person or a college of bishops.[73]

The differing definitions of ministry and the roles involved might suggest the evolving nature of the ministry, and perhaps the fact that it was not consistent throughout the Roman world. As stated above, elders and bishops were interchangeable terms early in the primitive church. The witness of these three documents seems to indicate the process of change that was occurring, and there was a gradual ascension of the single bishop or pastor. It is noteworthy, however, that The Didache, the Apostolic Canons, and Ignatius all agree on the multiplicity of ministry. Although Ignatius mentions and promotes the concept of the monepiscopacy, there is no hint of a single bishop or pastor assuming all the responsibilities of a local ministry. All of the documents include some variation of a multi-fold ministry, including apostles, prophets, teachers, bishops or pastors, and teachers.

Conzelman seeks a more finely tuned timeline by attempting to distinguish the apostolic age from the post-apostolic age. He notes that history is not often clearly divided and makes the surprising observation that there is no real consensus that there actually was an apostolic age.[74] He goes so far as to challenge the idea of "The Twelve" as a coherent leadership group in the primitive church.[75] While acknowledging the dominance and probability of an apostolic age, he sees a much broader base of apostolic and other charismatic leadership than might be deduced from the hierarchical picture presented by the Jerusalem church.

---

[73] Frend, *The Early Church*, 38.

[74] Conzelman, *History of Early Christianity*, 17-8.

[75] Ibid., 36.

Conclusion

The primitive church presents a portrait that is similar in some ways and very different in others of modern pastoral ministry. It seems that the earliest ministers of the church, while tasked with some administrative duties, were first and foremost ministers of the Word of God, care-givers, and shepherds of God's flock. This will be noted again as a summary is presented at the conclusion of the paper.

CHAPTER 2

The Influence of Early Roman Catholicism On Pastoral Ministry

Introduction

This chapter will describe the evolution of the early Roman Catholic Church. This is not a broad-ranging critical analysis of the Catholic Church or of Catholic theology. It is narrower in scope, with its focus being specifically to discover how the development of the Catholic Church has affected the modern concept of pastoral ministry. Of particular interest will be the development of pastoral ministry as a priesthood. It will also explore the detailed definition given to pastoral ministry by such leaders as Gregory the Great, John Chrysostom, and others. It will examine some of the aspects of the Frankish structure of church. It is understood by the author that the Catholic community believes it has always been "the" church, but this will be written with the Protestant understanding that it evolved over a course of time.

During the Ante-Nicene period, the transition from Primitive Church to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church saw the transitions from a charismatic ministry to a professional clergy, which resulted in a growing divide between the clergy and laity. Other developments were noteworthy: the church became a business, great cathedrals were constructed, the church became politically powerful, and monasticism became a way for the church to recapture a sense of lost spirituality. An effort will be made to examine each of these in some detail and to seek to determine their effect on the modern view of pastoral ministry.

The Rise of the Catholic Church

Notwithstanding the Catholic claim to apostolic succession beginning with Peter, it is difficult to distinguish the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church from the Primitive, apostolic church. Ironically, scholars contend that it is not possible to distinguish Catholicism as a distinct Christian tradition until there was a differentiation between it and other traditions such as Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism.[1] There were, however, some notable markers on the way to the concept of an organized universal church. As has been noted above, significant changes such as the monepiscopacy had begun to occur as early as A.D. 100. Knox asserts that the change was gradual but notes that by the middle of the second, or perhaps the third century, every church had its own singular bishop.[2] This one person gradually took on a multitude of functions, including pastoral duties, administration, and teaching.[3]

There were many councils and synods throughout the first two centuries, but the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. is considered to be the first ecumenical, post-apostolic council that recognized a universal creed. It is generally considered by many to be the end of the primitive church age.[4] Other councils followed, including the Constantinople Council in 381, resulting in the Nicene Creed. Pope Leo I, pope from 440-461, is

---

[1] Nicola R. Pilz, "Roman Catholicism," web page designed for "Soc 257: New Religious Movements," Fall Term, 2000, University of Virginia, last modified December 28, 2001, accessed June 9, 2017, http://web.archive.org/web/20060828130911/http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/roman_catholicism.html.

[2] "Bishop" as used in the church at this time refers to a single leader of one local church. The term began to have a broader use later in the Patristic Period until it came to mean how it is today of a person that oversees other ministers and churches.

[3] Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," 25.

[4] Pavao, "Early Christianity."

considered by many to be the first to claim universal authority over the worldwide

church, which was a major milestone in development of the Catholic Papacy. The

Chalcedon Council of 451 resulted in what some see as the first institutional division of

the church. [5] Each of these were milestones that marked change in the church universal,

but they also had implications for the local church, and even more importantly to this

research, for the role of those involved in local church ministry.

<div align="center">Opposing View</div>

Norwich opens his book by stating that two thousand years of the Catholic papacy

constitutes the longest running absolute monarchy in human history. He then states,

"What cannot be denied is that the Roman Catholic Church is as old as Christianity itself;

all other Christian religions … are offshoots of it."[6] He acknowledges that for the first

two centuries, the church of Rome had a difficult time establishing itself as the head of

the church, that Antioch and Alexandria were the major centers of the church, that much

of the church spoke Greek, not Latin, that early in church history, all senior members of

the church were called pope (papas).[7] These thoughts, notwithstanding, he remains

adamant that the Roman Catholic Church is the undisputed church from the beginning.

O'Malley calls the papacy the oldest living institution in the Western world,

claiming that it began with Peter and continues until the present. He states that there are

two hundred and sixty-five individuals who claim to be successors of Peter and that those

---

[5] "Roman Catholicism," Religion Library, Patheos, 2017, accessed June 9, 2017, http://www.patheos.com/Library/Roman-Catholicism.

[6] John Norwich, *Absolute Monarchs* (New York: Random House, 2011), 3.

[7] Ibid., 11-12.

claims are "today generally considered as legitimate."[8] While both Norwich and O'Malley focus specifically upon the papacy, the idea that there is a Pope presumes the concept that there has always been only one church and that that church is the Roman Catholic Church.

Conclusions About the Rise of the Catholic Church

As stated in the introduction, this is not a critique of the Catholic Church or of Catholic Theology. Rather, to understand the role of the modern pastor, it is important to understand the transitions that occurred in the view of the ministry from the Primitive Church to those of the Catholic Church. This can help understand where pastors today might be laboring under false expectations, and as will be seen, might also highlight some important practices, especially of the early Catholic Church that could be meaningful and fulfilling in ministry in the modern setting.

Ante-Nicene Church

The Nicene Council convened in 325 A.D. to discuss the nature of Christ and to specifically deal with the issue of Arianism, which asserted that Jesus was created by God, Who in turn, created everything else.[9] Besides the important theological summations, this council, with the influence of the sympathetic Emperor Constantine, marked an important shift in the life and history of the church. The premise of this section is that by considering the period leading up to the Nicene Council, changes in

---

[8] John O'Malley, *A History of the Popes: From Peter to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 1.

[9] Bruce Shelley, "325 The First Council of Nicaea," *Christianity Today*, 1990, accessed June 4, 2017, http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/325-first-council-of-nicea.html.

thought and practice after the synod might be more evident, as well as the effects of those

on modern pastoral ministry. McGuckin concludes that the second century was an

especially fertile time that can tell us much about the development of post-New

Testament Christianity.[10]

By the time of the Nicaean Council of 325, bishops ministered as the chief pastor

in his own local church but turned over some of the functions of ministry in outlying

towns and villages to some of the presbyters.[11] In time, these outlying elders had come to

function as the priests in his own local church. Only one presbyter could preside at the

Eucharist, but the preaching was shared by several of the elders, even in the bishop's

central church. An establishment of a ministry hierarchy developed during this era, with

the bishops and the presbytery, or elders, constituting the clergy. Williams asserts that the

clergy became an ecclesial career more than a calling and the only surviving remnant of

charismatic, Spirit-given ministry was in the exorcists and some free teachers.[12]

Osborne, a Franciscan theologian,[13] says that up to 110 A.D., there were no set

names for Christian ministers, no common pattern to ministry, and no specific functions

of various ministers that is historically verifiable.[14] He notes by 210 A.D. there was a

---

[10] McGuckin, *The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years*, 3.

[11] The terms "presbyter" and "elder" are used interchangeably throughout the era of the Primitive Church and the early Catholic Church.

[12] George Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, eds. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 28-9.

[13] YouTube profile, https://youtu.be/8WoqmIidp7o, posted June 29, 2009, accessed July 15, 2017.

[14] Kenan Osborne, *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 40.

universal acknowledgment of the primacy of the episkopos, or bishops, in the local

church and chooses to mark the end of the primitive church at that time.[15]

A primary development during the Ante-Nicene period was a distinction between

clergy and laity. Ministry hierarchy expanded with a proliferation of lower orders[16] of

ministers. Positions of teacher, lector, protobishop and deacon were all at work in Rome

by 150 A.D. Williams contends that this resulted in an increasing professionalism of the

clergy and a continual decrease of face-to-face ministry between the people and the

bishop.[17]

Preaching in the Ante-Nicene era was shared by several of the elders, not just the

bishop, but preaching considered as revelatory was limited to the prophets. The preaching

of the elders was directed to the catechumens and the believers gathered for their

assemblies.[18] Pavao states the rapid growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire was due

to the influence of the lives of the Christians, not by famous apostles or evangelists

proclaiming the Gospel. Justin Martyr says that people were coming to faith in Christ in

the second century because of the "consistency they witnessed in their neighbors' lives,

the forbearance they saw in their fellow travelers when defrauded, and the honesty of

those with whom they conducted business."[19]

---

[15] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 130.

[16] A religious order, as used here, has to do with specific roles of ministry assignments within the church rather than an order as is thought of today such as the Franciscans, etc.

[17] Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," 29.

[18] Ibid., 55.

[19] Pavao, "Early Christianity."

Cyprian argued for the unity of the church, and in so doing, he seemed to clearly refer to something more than the loose spiritual unity. In his first treatise, he contends that there is but one church but does so in a way that disallows any idea of a spiritual union binding various entities of the church together in one spiritual "body." His concept was clearly of one church organization. He asserted that the episcopate was one and that it held the church together and that each combined episcopate was held together by the sum parts of each bishop.[20] He equates membership in "the church" with one's salvation, stating that anyone separated from "the church" is "joined to an adulteress and separated from the promises of the Church."[21] This idea of the one organizational church was a major building block in the formation, not only of the Catholic Church, but as will be seen in more of Cyprian's writings, in the consequent idea of the priesthood of the church's ministers.

<div align="center">Christian Ministry Becomes a Christian Priesthood</div>

One of the great distinctions of Catholic ministry from Protestant is the idea of the minister as priest. While the primary focus of the Protestant Reformation was theological, this necessarily included thoughts about the ministry. The reformers rejected the idea of the Catholic priesthood, contending that it compromised the sufficiency of Christ's work and that it involved the priest performing good works for salvation.[22] Yet, it seems critical to this discussion of the pastoral ministry to examine both the history and essence of the idea of Christian priesthood. It seems vital to determine what, if any, effect it has

---

[20] St. Cyprian of Carthage, *The Treatises of St. Cyprian* (N.p.: Waxkeeper, 2015), Kindle Loc 69.

[21] Ibid., Kindle Loc 80.

[22] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 246.

had and still might be having on how modern pastors view their roles and ultimately how it affects their view of themselves as being successful in their calling.

In the Council of Trent, which was the Catholic Church's response to the Reformation, the Catholic Church said that the "power of remitting and retaining sins was given to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood."[23] The essence of the development of the Christian minister as a priest was the understanding that the pastor, or more commonly called in that era, the bishop, stood in the place of God for the congregants and was the only one who was able to pardon sin. The Church was no longer viewed as being a company of saints but as an institution in which God had placed the means of achieving holiness – and the bishops were those means. They imparted holiness.[24]

Willimon identifies Biblical ministry as the three-fold function of bishops, elders, and deacons, but states plainly that nowhere is the term priest used in the New Testament to designate a Christian leader.[25] Osborne also asserts that there is no justification to identify the ministries of the primitive church as that of a priesthood.[26] He presents an exhaustive list of every name used for ministers in the New Testament and priest is not one of them.[27]

Williams describes three types of New Testament ministry. The first of these included the inspired role of the apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers. It is

---

[23] Ibid., 253.

[24] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 5041.

[25] Willimon, *Pastor*, 57.

[26] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 53.

[27] Ibid., 42-43.

interesting that he does not include pastors in this list. Second, he lists a group of three, including the presidents or "proto-bishops,"[28] deacons, and widows. Third, he identifies the presbytery, or elders, from whose ranks he states that the bishops, or pastors as they would be identified today, arose. Like Willimon, he asserts that in all the diversity of the New Testament ministry, there was no priesthood.[29]

Osborne notes that in *The Didache*, prophets celebrated the Eucharist, that Clement emphasized the preaching ministry and that the presidency[30] of the primitive church was a matter of providing stability for the community of believers.[31] He makes the definitive assessment that it was not that priests were ordained to administer the Eucharistic that empowered them to preside over the community, but rather it was the responsibility of presiding over the community that enabled the minister to administer the Eucharist.[32]

The period of 210-600 A.D., however, was a time of the theological development of the sacraments along with the idea that the ministers' hands literally touched the body of Jesus. During this time, the idea of the Christian priest began to become dominant and ministry had begun to derive from the Eucharist itself. Ministry became predominantly a matter of administering the Eucharist and was focused almost exclusively within the

---

[28] As one elder became dominant he was called the "president," and in time came to be called the "bishop."

[29] Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," 27.

[30] "Presidency" was an early term to denote the primary elder within the local church.

[31] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 92, 95.

[32] Ibid., 96.

church; the roles of leader and preacher became secondary. By the time this transition had become complete, the priest was first and foremost a liturgist.[33]

Although the transition of the Christian ministry to a priesthood within the Catholic Church was essentially complete by the beginning of the fourth century, it occurred gradually over an extended period of time. Conzelman notes that essential features of Catholicism began to appear in the church as early as the second century. He comments that by then, the "organization of the church [was] no longer free."[34]

It is interesting to recall Sittser's comparison of the primitive church leaders with the pagan priests of the same era. As mentioned earlier, "Pagan priests and cult leaders presided over various rituals and taught esoteric mysteries of their religions." It seems that the evolution of the Christian priesthood looked very much like the pagan priesthood. They too, presided over rituals and with the advent of the doctrine transubstantiation, they were also presiding over and teaching esoteric mysteries.

Williams determines that the progression to a priesthood was partly a result of one of the presbyters becoming being a chief officiant at the Lord's Supper. This person became so closely associated with Christ as to be looked at as comparable to the Old Testament priest. This priestly figure ascended to become the bishop, or chief pastor, of the local church and, in time, came to "represent the fullness of the ministry. He was the prophet, teacher, chief celebrant of the liturgy, and the chairman over the overseers in the Christian synagogue." As the bishop of the local congregation, he led ministry, along

---

Osborne, *Priesthood*, 131, 138.

[34] Conzelman, *History of Early Christianity*, 20.

with the elders, and the deacons.[35] Williams exclaims that within four centuries the Old

Testament priesthood had been replaced by the priesthood of Christendom.[36]

The evolution of the ministry to a priesthood seems to have first been rooted in an

effort to maintain doctrinal purity. As the church wrestled with heretics, or at least those

considered to be heretics, a more universal creed began to be developed. In time, the

bishops of the churches were considered the guardians of doctrinal purity, and it was

deemed necessary to go to the bishops to know with certainty the truths of the Christian

faith. Being keepers of Gospel truth progressed to become "guardians of that peace which

comes from pardon of sin." The bishop became the sole administrator of the Eucharist

and the only one who could pardon sin.[37]

Osborne theorizes that to understand how the ministry developed into a

priesthood is dependent upon how one interprets two opposing ideas about when the

Church began. One view claims the church began after the resurrection, and the other

view is that it began with Jesus and the Twelve. In the post-resurrection view, leadership

is the dominant ministry activity, not Eucharistic presidency. The view that the church

began with The Twelve, however, sees them as the framework of the Church and the

Eucharist in the central position of the Church. Osborne asserts that in the latter view it is

inevitable that the Eucharist will become central to an interpretation of the ministry. It is

---

[35] Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," 28.

[36] George Williams, "The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, eds. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 75.

[37] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 5041.

interesting that he, a Franciscan theologian, asserts that the view that the Church starts with the Eucharist is not evident when considering New Testament data by itself.[38]

Increased theologizing in the third and fourth centuries about the ministry focused on the person of the priest, and ministry was seen more and more in terms of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods.[39] The bishop became central to the ministry and the presbyters became second in rank, and their function had become primarily to give pastoral advice to the bishops. The deacons were third in rank. This hierarchy holds true to the present time in much of the church. Osborne asserts that by the year 600, liturgy had become the basis for church leadership.[40]

Cyprian of Carthage and Pastors as Priests

Lindsay points to Cyprian of Carthage as the single most influential person in the process of the pastor being viewed as a priest, which he determines to have been completed by the beginning of the fourth century. He is not kind in his assessment as he cites concepts that he deems pagan concepts that Cyprian has influenced into the church:

1) that of a special priesthood, in the sense that a man (bishop) could, by reason of the power ascribed to him of forgiving sin, and, flowing from that, the right claimed for him of exacting implicit obedience, stand practically in the place of God towards his fellow-men;
2) that a sacrifice of the Eucharist, unique in kind, propitiatory, differing essentially from all other acts of worship that imply a self-surrender to God and from all services of self-denying love, and possessing an efficacy independent of the faith and piety of the worshippers.[41]

---

[38] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 79, 81.

[39] Ibid., 146.

[40] Ibid., 128-129.

[41] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 6385.

Cyprian was the bishop of the Carthage Church when severe persecution broke out under the Roman emperor, Decius, in 250 A.D. Lindsay notes that three distinct questions of ecclesiastical authority arose and were settled during this persecution. These conclusions were that priests were deemed to be specially possessed by the Holy Spirit to handle matters of discipline in the local church, that the pastor, commonly called the bishop, was the one supreme authority in the local church, and that the collection of all bishops was an expression of the unity of the universal church.[42]

Many believers recanted their faith during the Decian persecution but later repented and sought forgiveness and re-admission to the community of faith. Because this persecution was carefully coordinated and spread across the entire empire, apostasy and subsequent repentance was a problem that had to be dealt with by churches everywhere. Cyprian asserted that the bishop alone could extend pardon to the penitent, although he did make allowances for those who lay dying with no chance of the bishop to arrive. He insisted that the bishop superseded the elders, abandoning the old theory that the bishop was no different than the elders, except to have a special seat of honor. According to Cyprian, the bishop was "the overseer of the brotherhood, the provost of the people, the pastor of the flock and the governor of the church. He was the supreme ruler and the representative of Christ and the priest of God."[43]

As the priest of God, the bishop was thought to bring the people into communion with God through administration of the Eucharist, to bring them into the church through baptism, and to bestow the Holy Spirit upon them through laying on of hands. In the

---

[42] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 5016.

[43] Ibid., Kindle Loc 5345.

primitive church, all the people were considered to be priests before God and their prayers and worship were their private sacrifices. Cyprian disallowed this and asserted that the bishop was the priest, and that the people were not. Rather, they were ushered into the presence of God by the priest. This, according to Lindsay, began the change of the whole conception of Christian thought.[44]

Cyprian advocated the concept of penitence and used it to solidify the power of the bishop. To him, bishop and priest were synonymous and the good works of penitence that he exacted were done as the representative of the Lord. Lindsay summarizes that "the earlier idea of a Christian ministry was changed into the conception of a mediating priesthood."[45]

Lindsay notes that not only Cyprian, but of many of the leaders who built up the western church, were trained Roman lawyers. In this list he includes Tertullian, Augustine, and many other distinguished bishops. He asserts that concepts about Roman law influenced and supported their ideas about church organization and even of doctrine. They felt that the primary duty of leaders was to enforce obedience to authority which greatly affected the conceptions of the authority of the clergy. It also supported the concept of apostolic succession and the role of clergy as the defenders of the faith.[46]

Some Conclusions About Pastors and Priesthood

It is probably impossible to determine the total effect of the idea of the minister as a priest on the modern concept of pastoral ministry. There is a vast difference in the idea of elders, bishops, and deacons who were from among the people and served as one of

---

[44] Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry*, Kindle Loc 5397.

[45] Ibid., Kindle Loc 5423.

[46] Ibid., Kindle Loc 5083.

the people from the idea of a priest who stood in the place of God. There is also a great distinction between the concept of the priest from ministry lived out in the spirit of the Ephesians 4 model of serving and equipping the saints so they can do the work of the ministry.

The concept of the Christian priesthood of all believers that pervaded much of Primitive Church history, and was recaptured to some degree by Reformation theology, does not seem to be a vibrant reality in the life and practice of many Protestant ministers. This is a broad statement, of course, but it does seem that many small-to-medium sized church pastors feel that they are responsible for the majority of the ministry that occurs within their churches, while in larger churches, professional staff pastors carry out much of the ministry.

These realities, both of small churches and large, suggest the possibility of one of two scenarios. One, it is possible that pastors and ministers discount the true value of the members of their churches. With the mindset that the pastor is somehow special in quality, rather than simply as a matter of gifting and calling, it is likely that he or she will be unable to view the members of his or her church as partners in ministry.

People can be made to feel that their only value to the church is advancing the pastor's agenda, rather than making significant contributions of their own to the Kingdom of God. They can feel manipulated, exploited, and resentful, which in turn, can create resistance against the pastor or often simply results in people leaving the church. Pastors can feel hurt and rejected, but unfortunately, they often label the disgruntled parishioners as rebellious or unsubmissive and push even harder to further "their vision." Conflict, disappointment, and disillusionment is the common experience of far too many pastors,

but it is quite possibly because of their own failure to recognize and appreciate the equality of all believers as priests and ministers to God. Ultimately, each pastor is responsible to discern these truths, but this can be difficult when the prevailing church culture tells them something different.

A second scenario is that the pastors could have the feeling of never adequately fulfilling all they think that they should be doing or never living up to the sense of being who or what they think they should be. Given the data from the Krejcir study cited in chapter one of this paper, it is certain that this is true for many pastors. The study suggests that over 70% of pastors feel like they are inadequate for their jobs or failing in their performance thereof.[47] While this is undoubtedly a result of multiple factors, it seems plausible to ask if the idea of pastor as priest might be partly to blame. It is vastly different to understand one's role as standing before God as an intercessor, than to literally stand in the place of God for his or her congregants. If pastors do not understand the ministry partnership of all the saints in the church body, it is very likely that he or she will feel overwhelmed by, and underqualified for, the task. Sadly, data suggests that many pastors do not feel the sense of God's affirming voice of "well done" but instead, feel disappointed in themselves and their ministries.

---

[47] Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors."

The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period

The Patristic Period is considered to be up to the 8th century,[48] although some would conclude it as early as 450 A.D.[49] Williams notes that the period was marked by a growing gap between the bishops and the people, and an expanding hierarchy of church leadership. He lists seven theses degrees of church clerics that developed in this time which included the "1) gravedigger; 2) doorkeeper; 3) lector; 4) sub-deacon; 5) deacon; 6) presbyter; and 7) bishop.[50] Williams adds that the deacons were close to the people, which caused jealousy among the presbyters, highlighting the problems of the growing divide between clergy and the people.

Neil and Schmandt state that church government had taken a definite shape by the end of the fourth century, and that it was largely modeled after the Roman civil administration. They note the parallels with the increasing levels of the church officials with those within the Roman governing structures.[51] It was also during the fourth century that the clergy began to wear distinctive clothing. Their distinctive insignia, garments, and accoutrements corresponded to officials in secular ranks of society.[52] It seems that the developments of hierarchy and externality raise valid questions regarding the health and vitality of the church of that era and its modern counterpart. Specifically, as related to

---

[48] John N. D. Kelly, "Patristic Literature," Encyclopedia Britannica, April 12, 2017, accessed June 7, 2017, https://www.britannica.com/topic/patristic-literature.

[49] "Introduction to Historical Theology – The Patristic Period (c. 100-450 A.D.)," A Puritan's Mind, 2017, accessed June 7, 2017, http://www.apuritansmind.com/historical-theology/introduction-to-historical-theology-the-patristic-period-c-100-450/.

[50] George Williams, "The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," 61, 65.

[51] Thomas P. Neill and Raymond H. Schmandt, *History of the Catholic Church* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1957), 67.

[52] Williams, "The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," 66.

this research project, it seems possible that the struggle pastors have with lacking a sense of fulfillment and success could be connected to this secularized, hierarchical nature of the ministry.

Influence of Gregory the Great

Gregory the Great was the Catholic pope between 590-604 A.D. and is considered by many to be the first bishop with full papal authority.[53] He is especially known for his extensive book on the function of pastoral ministry in the local churches, a work that has been called "the handbook for pastors for a thousand years."[54] Bainton called it a "monumental book [which] became a textbook for the medieval ages."[55] There are also many recorded epistles from Gregory to church leaders that provide extensive insight into the views about pastoral ministry in that day. Osborne says Gregory filled a unique place in the development of Christian ministry, both summarizing what preceded him, while at the same time opening new approaches to the theology of ministry.[56] His was a pivotal moment, and he created a pivotal document in church history regarding the subject of pastoral ministry. Gregory's work is especially pertinent to this project because of the full development he provided to the idea of what a pastor is and what a pastor does. His thoughts, although written many centuries ago, still have significant influence on how modern pastors regard their identity and roles.

---

[53] "What is the Origin of the Roman Catholic Church," Got Questions Ministries, 2017, accessed June 8, 2017, https://www.gotquestions.org/origin-Catholic-church.html.

[54] Loren Kerns, conversation with author, Cannon Beach, OR, October 2016.

[55] Roland Bainton, "The Ministry in the Middle Ages," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives,* eds. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams (New York: Harper, 1956), 98.

[56] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 130.

Gregory On the Nature of Pastoral Ministry

Gregory's instructions to pastors are fascinating in their detail regarding pastoral ministry to people, as opposed to the "running a church" concept that is so often the mindset of today.[57] One example of this is Part III of his book, in which he gives detailed description of how pastors should minister to over thirty different kinds of people and personalities. These are wide, varied, and detailed. Examples of the chapters include, "How the kindly-disposed and the envious are to be admonished" (Admonition 11),[58] "How the married and single are to be admonished" (Admonition 28),[59] and "How the whole and the sick are to be admonished" (Admonition 13).[60] These are only three samples of thirty-six such admonitions and are accompanied by many other detailed instructions regarding pastoral ministry.

The detail Gregory gives to these pastoral instructions can be seen in chapter XXXIII, where he writes "How those are to be admonished who sin from sudden impulses and those who sin deliberately." First, he instructs the pastor to exhort the one overcome by sudden passions to recognize that he or she is in the midst of daily warfare of this present life. The pastor is to admonish such a one to "cease caring too much for earthly things; since while they entangle their attention immoderately in transitory things, they are not aware of the darts of sin that pierce them." He then writes several paragraphs

---

[57] Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, Kindle Loc 493.

[58] Gregory the Great, *The Book of Pastoral Rule and Selected Epistles of Pope St. Gregory I (The Great),* trans. James Barmby (N.p.: Veritatis Splendor, 2012), 49-51.

[59] Ibid., 86-90.

[60] Ibid., 53-56.

about the dangers of "the soul that sleeps" and thus does not foresee the dangers of sin ahead or even feel the effects of the troubles of sin.[61]

He continues with other metaphors in his instruction for caring for those who are suddenly overcome by sin. One is the soul as a steersman of a ship, and the importance of keeping watch at the helm. He warns of "a steersman that is lulled to rest, having let go the rudder (Prov. xxxiii:35). For he sleeps in the midst of the sea, placed among the temptations of this world, neglects to look out for the motions of vices that rush in upon him like impending heaps of waves." He then changes to discuss the person as a swordsman with sword upon thigh, as a man dealing with the fears of the night and ready for battle.[62] This is but a small glimpse of the insight into the human nature and the detail with which he instructs the pastors.

Clebsch and Jaekle identify Gregory's work as being about pastoral care, rather than other aspects of the ministry, such as leadership of groups, conducting worship, administration, preaching, or teaching. They contend that in all the literature ever written on the subject of pastoral care, none are as important as Gregory's book.[63] He elevates pastoral ministry beyond merely caring for souls and contends for the ministry of "the cure of souls."[64] Peterson sounds a call for modern pastors to return to this ancient idea of

---

Gregory the Great, *The Book of Pastoral Rule and Selected Epistles of Pope St. Gregory I (The Great),* 99.

[62] Ibid., 99-100.

[63] William Clebsch & Charles Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective: An Essay with Exhibits* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 3.

[64] During the Patristic era and on into the Reformation period, instructions for pastors did not limit the discussion to caring for souls but used the language of curing souls.

"the cure of souls,"[65] while Willimon defines it more fully with the four components of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling.[66]

<p style="text-align:center">Gregory on the Character of Pastors</p>

Gregory also gave a great deal of attention to the personal life of the pastoral leader. He uses ancient instructions to Moses and Aaron prohibiting priestly service to those with various birth and physical defects to instruct the character of priests. These included anyone who is,

"blind or lame, who has a marred face or any limb too long, a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, or is a hunchback or dwarf, or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or a scab, or is a eunuch."[67] He does not apply this to exclude people who actually have these physical traits from priestly service but uses them as analogies to emphasize aspects of the pastor's personal life.

Gregory goes to great lengths to correlate these maladies to specific pastoral traits. He equates the blind as those unfamiliar with the light of supernatural revelation and are consequently uncertain of their steps in life. The lame, on the other hand, can see where to go, but are unable to do so. A small nose, he warns, indicates weakness in discernment, and consequently, in serving effectively as a guard and intercessor. The hunchback is weighted down with earthly cares. He gives a lengthy exposition for each of these and references numerous scriptures that give credence to his ideas. For example, of

---

[65] Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, Kindle Loc 476.

[66] Willimon, *Pastor*, 171.

[67] Leviticus 21:17-20.

the hunchback, he cites the example of the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8 and the thorny ground that choked out the seed.[68]

Gregory states that the conduct of the pastor must exceed that of those in the congregation, contending that the merit of the pastor's life gives his ministry credibility. This is probably not unlike modern expectations of pastoral conduct, yet it does seem there is a greater demand and detail to Gregory's exhortations that might go beyond the common training experienced by most pastors today. Gregory states that the pastor must be the chief-in-action. In the modern pastoral culture, this reference to action would likely be considered to concern itself some outward-focused ministry or church growth initiative. For Gregory, however, this meant that the pastor should show the greatest initiative in spirituality.[69]

<center>Modern Pastors in Light of Gregory and the Patristic Pastors</center>

The detail of Gregory's instructions and the breadth of the human experience they address are of particular interest to this project. His focus is almost completely upon how pastors relate to and care for people and seems to have little concern for the details of managing church, running church, or other aspects of church business. It is doubtful that modern pastors receive such a broad or detailed education regarding pastoral care. To cite Peterson again, it seems that the modern pastor is more concerned about running and promoting his or her church and is not as keenly attuned to the aspect of caring for the souls entrusted to his or her care. "Curing souls" does not seem to be a widely known concept to most contemporary pastors.

---

[68] Gregory the Great, *Book of Pastoral Rule*, 11.

[69] Ibid., 10.

While one could question the possibility of any one person being able to adequately provide the kind of care that he describes to the wide range of needs he identifies, the idea is at least admirable. In several decades of attending denominational church conferences, the author has never been to one in which providing pastoral care was the main focus. It has always been some facet of running, and more likely, "growing" the church. The same can be said for multitudes of workshops and seminars. This is not to say such events do not exist.

Much about the Patristic Church is displeasing to Protestants, but the emphasis upon caring for the people's needs should not be one of them. Perhaps the failure to emulate the "cure" of souls has led to confusion in modern pastors about their role and worth in the lives of their congregants and the Kingdom of God. Most pastors innately know the worth and responsibility of such ministry, and perhaps, a part of the sense of failure they feel is a result of not providing it for the people of their congregations. It brings Jeremiah's lament to mind, "They have healed the hurt of My people slightly."[70]

There is, of course, a down side to this discussion, which Willimon addresses in his comments about therapist being one of the modern images of the pastor. While acknowledging the importance of pastors being people-helpers, he warns that pastors can become a "quivering mass of availability" and will become "the victims of a culture of insatiable need." He concludes that in a society whose only purpose is meeting ones needs, the "pastor as therapist" runs the risk of practicing "promiscuous ministry." He

---

[70] Jeremiah 6:14.

expresses special concern that this model often functions without a strong sense of human sinfulness and puts not only the pastor, but the parishioners in peril. [71]

Willimon offers a strong critique about the difference in modern pastoral care with that of previous eras of the church. He contends that the "Protestant Reformation, with its emphasis on the centrality of the Word, its concern with education, inner authority, and individualism, created a crisis in the care of souls."[72] He observes that modern pastoral care differs from that of previous ages in that "care that utilized mostly corporate, priestly liturgical actions, to care that has increasingly limited itself to individualistic, psychologically oriented techniques heavily influenced by prevailing secular therapies."[73] Gregory's detailed instructions certainly provide a stark contrast to such a model and validate Willimon's concerns.

Lyle Schaller was a church consultant to thousands of churches, who, Anderson says, might have consulted more pastors and churches than anyone in history.[74] Schaller contended that modern pastors should learn to think of their churches as a congregation of congregations, and should consider themselves ranchers, or bishops,[75] rather than shepherds. He posits that the pastor's role should be one of delegating responsibilities and tasks to others and ensuring that "everything gets done," rather than doing them him or

---

[71] Willimon, *Pastor*, 59, 61.

[72] Ibid., 173.

[73] Ibid., 175.

[74] Leith Anderson, "Lyle Schaller, Preeminent Church Consultant, Dies at 91," *Christianity Today,* March 18, 2015, accessed July 27, 2017, www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015.

[75] "Bishop" is used here in the modern sense of an overseer.

herself.[76] Schaller and Gregory the Great are diametrical opposites. Schaller consulted ways to help pastors gather more people into their churches, while Gregory wrote to pastors about how to provide adequate care for those in their churches.

Bainton says that the primary role of the Medieval priests was sacramental in nature. They were to "stand before the altar and bring down, not fire, but the Holy Spirit."[77] They were mediators between the people and God. Modern Protestantism, and especially Evangelicalism, recoils, at least in theory, from this level of mediation on the part of the minister. The Protestant position of the priesthood of all believers is certainly worthy, but perhaps the emphasis away from priesthood of pastors could have been so overstated as to have left pastors with a diminished sense of the importance of their intercessory role. Metrics that gauge the level of intercessory prayer or spiritual mediation of the modern pastor are non-existent. One might wonder if there are many pastors who are adept and diligent in providing such ministry, but due to the current culture, feel little worth or value because of it.

As noted before, Peterson advocates a rediscovery of the pastoral work of curing souls, contending that while the idea is antique, it is not obsolete. He observes that the very oddity of how the phrase, "the cure of souls" sounds is an indication of how out-of-touch modern pastoral ministry has become. He expresses hope for a resurgence of pastors who understand this ancient concept and comments it might be, "the single most significant and creative thing happening in pastoral ministry today."[78]

---

[76] Lyle Schaller, *Growing Plans: Strategies to Increase Your Church's Membership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1983), 93.

[77] Bainton, "Ministry in the Middle Ages," 82.

[78] Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, Kindle Loc 484.

Medieval priests were expected to visit the people of their churches. Bainton observes that they were to be able to mingle with people of all walks of life and that if the priest "does not make a round of visits every day, unspeakable offense will ensue."[79] In the modern church, pastors are encouraged to be "ranchers," delegating the personal visitation and care of the people to members of the church.[80]

Influence of the Frankish Structuring of the Church, AD 600-1000

Osborne lists three major influences from between 600-1000 AD that have profoundly affected the church and the priesthood, continuing into the modern era. The first of these three was the separation of the Eastern and Western churches, second was the Frankish structuring of the church, and third was the increased involvement of the papacy in the local church.[81] The Frankish structuring of the church is especially of interest as it regards this project. Several factors of this era have affected not only the Catholic Church but continue to influence the mindset of the church in general.

Whereas, in the Roman Church until this time, rural churches were considered extensions of urban "baptismal" churches, this was not the case in the Frankish Churches. The local churches had rights of ownership, their own judicial structures, and their own system for appointing presbytery leadership. Churches were centered on the local scene with little ties to the urban, episcopal church, and the local priest was more beholden to

---

[79] Bainton, "Ministry in the Middle Ages," 83.

[80] Schaller, *Growing Plans*, 93.

[81] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 161.

the secular lord than to the bishops. The Roman papacy had almost no control of the Frankish churches. This structure was known as the "proprietary church." [82]

A proprietary church was a product of property law. Church buildings, their equipment, the properties, including even the cemeteries, all belonged to the landlord. The priest, while ordained by the bishop,[83] was no longer appointed by the bishop but by the proprietor, a lay person, which often resulted in the loyalties of the priest being given to the secular proprietor more than to the bishop. This distance, both spatially and ecclesiastically, between the priest and bishop resulted in the priest becoming the major spiritual leader of the community.[84] The parish priest and local church became the center of society.

Property management became a part of the responsibilities of the local parish priest. In summarizing the duties of the priests of that time, Jungmann includes caring for the integrity of the parish property, the condition of the buildings, the cleanliness of the church, and the neatness and care of the vestments and vessels.[85] Local priests were as much about running the affairs of the church and its organization as they were about Christian ministry.

---

[82] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 170.

[83] By the time of the Later Patristic Period, the term "bishop" had come to be used as an overseer.

[84] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 172.

[85] J. Jungmann, "Constitution of the Church, Worship, Pastoral Care, and Piety: 700 to 1050," in *History of the Church History*, eds. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan, vol. 3, *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, by Friedrich Kempf, Hans-Georg Beck, Eugen Ewig, and Josef Andreas Jungman, trans. Anselm Biggs, 258-319 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 309, quoted in Kenan Osborne, *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 173.

Application of the Proprietary Church to Modern Pastors

It appears that Peterson's concern, mentioned before, that pastoring has become a matter of running churches, predates the modern era by many centuries. It seems probable that there is a connection to the malaise of twenty-first century pastors and property concepts first introduced in the Frankish proprietary churches. The author once heard it said, "If you want to do ministry, then do not become a pastor." The implication of the statement was that being a pastor was more about taking care of the business of church than about doing the ministry of the Gospel. Criswell notes that the burdens of church administration are a major source of pastoral fatigue and discouragement.[86]

As noted above, Osborne asserts that the influence of the Frankish church was felt for many centuries, and one might contend that it is still being felt today. It is not the intent of this study to analyze the worthiness of the "proprietary" church model but to examine its effect on the sense of success, or lack thereof, of the local pastor. A CEO and successful businessman stated that the ministry is much like other professions, in that the skilled practitioner often fails because he or she is not adept at running a business.[87] A skilled and gifted pastor can easily find him or herself as a "failure" in today's church world because of the inability, whether from lack of training, skill, or desire to run the business of his or her "proprietary" church.

---

[86] Criswell, *Guidebook*, 330.

[87] Wade Bontrager, conversation with author, Keller, TX, August 28, 2017.

Influence of the Scholastic Period, AD 1000-1400

Theology of the Priesthood

Osborne asserts that the period of 1000-1400 AD saw theological development that shaped the Western church for many centuries. One note of particular importance to this project was the attention given during this period to the issue of ministry orders. Ministry roles were enumerated and specified: these included the porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, sub-deacon, deacon, and priest. This further defining of ministry orders created an ever-widening gap between clergy and laity and continued to define ministry as specifically the domain of the clergy.[88]

Monastic and palace schools emerged, followed by cathedral schools, which in turn, gave way to universities. These gained great prominence and importance, and Osborne contends that not only Western theology, but Western intellectual life as a whole was greatly affected by these school systems.[89] The scholastics of the day dealt extensively with the priesthood and determined that the role of the priest focused on, and arose from the Eucharist and consequently, that the priesthood was power. Scholars determined that the priests were partners with Christ to bring holiness through the sacraments to sinful men and women.[90]

An interesting development of the era was the conclusion that the bishopric was a role of administration, while the priests were seen as the administrators of the sacraments. The instance of Jesus sending out the twelve apostles on a ministry field trip was

---

[88] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 201.

[89] Ibid., 200-201.

[90] Ibid., 208-209.

compared to the occasion in which He sent out the seventy. The bishops were seen as having taken the place of the twelve apostles, while the priests were seen as the seventy.[91] It is difficult to follow the scholarship that arrived at this conclusion, but the fruit of it can still be seen in the modern church where denominational officials are often seen as administrative and corporate in nature.

Cathedrals

Another influence on modern pastoral ministry by the Catholic Church, especially during the Medieval period, is the great Gothic cathedrals that began to appear in Europe in the twelfth century. By the fourteenth century, there were several thousand of them. Sittser says that the cathedrals were meant to represent an image of heaven in earthly form, "a kind of earthly incarnation of the heavenly city, a window of heaven that opened up into another world." He explains that this was accomplished with a combination of geometric design that mirrored what theologians called harmonious proportion, and the use of light. The use of architectural innovations allowed builders to create large open spaces that both reflected the symmetry of creation and allowed the large spaces to be filled with light. He summarizes that if the "harmonious proportion manifested the perfect order of heaven, the luminosity reflected the light of God shining into the dark world of fallen humanity.[92]

Sittser cites the architect Suger as the first great visionary of the Gothic churches and says he attempted to combine theology and architecture into a combined whole. One

---

[91] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 203.

[92] Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 140, 142.

renowned historian of Gothic architecture says of Suger that he was "an architect who built theology." Rather than simply creating a space to display items of Divine reality, he utilized physical laws that order heaven and earth in the building process itself.[93]

<div align="center">Conclusions About Modern Pastors and Architecture</div>

It is doubtful that many modern Protestant pastors share the same theological passion as the Gothic builders for the architecture and construction of the church buildings they occupy. It is clearly true, however, that church buildings are a major part of the ministry experience for many pastors. It could be argued that issues such as the size of their buildings, how modern they appear, how they are fitted with modern technologies, their location, how new they are, and any other number of factors all play a part in the pastor's sense of success, worth, and adequacy. The financial strain of constructing and maintaining buildings is also often a major part of the minister's role. It seems that to fully explore factors that are leading to the desperate situation of the modern pastorate and to seek ways that will help pastors feel more joy and success in what they do, the place that buildings play in their lives must be considered.

When driving into almost any Texas town, one is almost always immediately struck by the sight of two things: the ornate courthouse and the towering First Baptist and/or Methodist Church. It can hardly be overstated that for many people, the church building defines the church, and the church with the biggest, nicest building is seen as the most influential and successful. It is also overwhelmingly true that one of the great challenges for many pastors and congregations is to push ministry outside the walls of the

---

[93] Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 141.

church building. This is a long way from the life of the Primitive Church, which did not usually have church buildings.

<p style="text-align:center;">*The Influence of Monasticism on Modern Pastoral Ministry*</p>

In considering the influence of the Catholic Church on how modern pastors view their ministries, the influence of monasticism must be considered. The first issue to be considered is the idea of a life rhythm, which Sittser says is at the heart of Biblical faith. Creation was rhythmic, with day following day in an orderly pattern. The Hebrew calendar of Sabbaths and festivals provided an annual rhythm and was one that the early church continued for some time. In time, the early church developed its own rhythm, with prayers and fellowship. They attended the temple daily and met in homes for private meals. Sittser notes that their entire lives had been re-ordered around the risen Christ.[94]

The growth and material advantages that the Church experienced with Constantine's favor resulted in an unhappiness for many Christians regarding the state of the Church. They sought to re-establish what they saw as a missing rhythm of prayer and work.[95] There were also those that believed that breaking away from the environments of secular life was the only way to achieve holiness. Chrysostom, one of the renown spiritual leaders of the fourth century, lived the monastic life for "six happy years in theological study and sacred mediation and prayer. He adulated the monastic life, and contended that it was "almost impossible to cultivate a higher spiritual life in the cities."[96]

---

[94] Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well*, 99-100.

[95] Ibid., 101.

[96] Phillip Schaff, *The Complete Works of St John Chrysostom* (n.p., 1886), Kindle Loc 651.

Criswell notes that the business of the mundane tasks of pastoral life, as well as the demands of the pastor's family, often leave him or her "taken away from the main assignment of studying, preaching, teaching, and soul-winning…(and) visiting the lost."[97] Undoubtedly, most pastors felt a genuine call from God into ministry, and they aspire to live lives of deep spirituality as they follow that call. It seems quite possible that many feel they cannot achieve that spirituality in the busyness of their lives and demands of their ministry responsibilities, and thus feel a sense of failure or at least of disappointment.

Concluding Thoughts About Early Catholicism on the Modern Pastor

Early Catholicism has clearly had substantial effect on how the modern pastor is viewed. The distinction of clergy from laity, the pastor as priest, the place of buildings, the loss of women in ministry, and the hierarchizing of the ministry are all components that, standing alone, have major implications for modern pastors. The Reformation attempted to undo some of Catholicism's more egregious theology and practices, but professional clergy, primacy of buildings and land, and a somewhat biblically uneducated laity persist to this day.

---

[97] Criswell, *Guidebook*, 330.

CHAPTER 3

The Influence of The Protestant Reformation On Modern Pastoral Ministry

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is not to explore the theological ramifications of the

Protestant Reformation, but rather to look for ways that it affected the modern view of

pastoral ministry. That, notwithstanding, it will be necessary to give some consideration

to its theology, insofar as Reformation theology had significant bearing on its pastoral

practice. Janz declares that the reformers first and foremost considered themselves

theologians.[1] Osborne states plainly that the Reformation was first about theology, and

then enumerates "grace and good works, justification, the place of the Word in theology

and practice, and the authority of the pope" as the theological areas addressed. He then

notes, however, that the study of ministry is profoundly affected by these.[2]

The History of Late Medieval Theology and Piety

Introduction

Janz asserts that it is impossible to understand the Reformation without

understanding the theological and church environment against which the reformers were

protesting.[3] The theological and church environment of the late Middle Ages was not

monolithic in nature, nor is there always consensus among historians about it. That

notwithstanding, Berndt states flatly that "the tensions of the late Middle Ages transmute

---

[1] Denis Janz, ed., *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 1.

[2] Osborne, *Priesthood*, 219.

[3] Janz, *Reformation Reader*, 1.

themselves into the context of the Reformation."[4] A number of factors in the late middle ages gave birth to the Reformation, and it will also become clear that many of these, and the resulting changes of the Reformation, have direct bearing on the practice of pastoral ministry today. It is also probable that these developments have had an effect on the sense of worth and success felt by modern pastors.

Janz admonishes that the more one can understand about the late Middle Ages, the more one can understand the Reformation. He portrays it as an era of great contrast, ranging from the "exalted spirituality" of the mystics to what he describes as the crude practices of piety of the peasants. He acknowledges it as a time of much corruption in the Church, from "the papacy to the parish," but contends it was also a time of many sincere and caring pastors who gave of themselves sacrificially to care for their people.[5]

<center>Spiritual Hopelessness</center>

The immediate flashpoint that compelled Martin Luther to pen his 95 theses that is considered the beginning of the Reformation was the practice of indulgences. He reacted as a pastor who saw the indulgence campaign as something that kept the Gospel from the masses of common people.[6] There is a history, however, that led to the prevalence of that practice.

Berndt describes the spiritual climate of the late Middle Ages as one fraught with a sense of spiritual inadequacy. People of the 15th and 16th centuries longed for guaranteed methods of obtaining grace and salvation, but they were filled instead with

---

[4] Haman Berndt, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety,* ed. Robert Bass (Lieden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2004), 87.

[5] Janz, *Reformation Reader*, 1.

[6] David Cornick, "The Reformation Crisis in Pastoral Care," in *A History of Pastoral Care,* ed. Gillian Evans (New York: Cassell, 2000), 228.

dread of impending wrath and judgment. There was a general sense of Satan and his agents being the root of their crisis of salvation, and they sought an assurance of preservation from these dark powers at the moment of death. Death itself was a prevailing theme, and the driving goal for many people was finding means to abate Purgatorial punishments.[7]

The focus of the era's spirituality seemed to be on an emotional level. Sorrow of soul was the greatest attribute that sinners strived for in order to reach a place of spiritual devotion. In the 1400s Thomas Kempis wrote that no one is worthy of heavenly comfort unless he or she has "diligently exercised themselves in holy contrition." He added that the more spiritual a person wants to become, "the more bitter does this present life grow to him."[8] Gregory Nazianzan stressed that the essential element of forgiveness for sins was for the sinner to be truly sad for them. He said, "sadness was expressed in their tearfulness day-after-day and night-after-night at the thought of their offences." He concluded that the pain of their sadness and the "water of their tears" would wash their sins away, just as the waters of baptism had done initially.[9]

This perspective was complicated, however, with the belief that very few could ever truly be sorry for their sins. Berndt reports that there was a prevailing belief that not only could few attain true repentance, but that few could even be sorry for not feeling repentant. Theologians believed that most people could not love God or even feel genuine

---

[7] Berndt, *Reformation of Faith*, 4-5.

[8] Thomas Kempis, "The Imitation of Christ," in *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions,* 2nd ed., ed. Denis Janz, 4-13 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 6, 8.

[9] Thomas O'Loughlin, "Penitentials and Pastoral Care," in *A History of Pastoral Care,* ed. Gillian Evans (London: Cassell, 2000), 96-97.

"pangs of regret" for their sins. They believed, however, that God wanted these wretched sinners to be saved and struggled with the dilemma of how to help them.[10]

This theological dilemma led to extreme measures, including the position that only "desiring to desire" the work of grace was sufficient. This eventually led to an emphasis that was entirely on the external acts of religion and the sacraments became the means by which grace was bestowed and received. There was little connection to internal love for God, or even to pure intentions. The tragedy of this attempt by spiritual leaders to make a way for the "helpless" sinners to gain salvation was, that in reality, they denied them the possibility of genuinely knowing or experiencing God. In fact, they believed that they could not.[11]

Since it had been determined that the hearts of most men could never truly love God, external works became the means by which salvation was obtained. It was through acts of devotion that sinners were to appropriate the effects of the cross. It was deemed that one could prepare oneself to receive grace.[12] This led to an ongoing swing towards the concept of penitence as a means by which one secured salvation. This became something of a science, with particular lists of sins being assigned specific works of penance.[13]

It was believed that penitence restored the errant sinner to his or her state of baptism. It was called "a laborious baptism, a second chance, the plank after a shipwreck." Like baptism, however, penitence could only be obtained once, which

---

[10] Berndt, *Reformation of Faith*, 90, 105.

[11] Ibid., 105, 129.

[12] Ibid., 92.

[13] O'Loughlin, "Penitentials and Pastoral Care," 93.

O'Loughlin exclaims was pastorally disastrous.[14] This led directly to the practice of indulgences.[15]

Purgatory and Indulgences

Wretched sinners had the possibility of satisfying the demand of righteousness by "fasting, prayer, giving alms, and endowments, or in the case of not achieving such a place of grace, release from purgatory could be obtaining by the purchase of indulgences.[16] Sixtus IV wrote unashamedly of the value of indulgences stating that "Our aim is that the salvation of souls may be secured above all at that time when they most need the intercession of others."[17] His treatise clearly identifies this troubled time as purgatory, and the means of intercession as buying indulgences. He specified that for a period of ten years a fixed amount of money was to be given for the repair of the church and to thereby "for the said souls in purgatory, to win them relief from their punishments."[18]

---

[14] O'Loughlin, "Penitentials and Pastoral Care," 95.

[15] Ibid., 106.

[16] Berndt, *Reformation of Faith*, 141.

[17] Sixtus IV, "Salvator Noster, 1476," in *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions,* 2nd ed., ed. Denis Janz, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 52, 53.

[18] Ibid.

Reformation Theology and Pastoral Practice

Monasticism, Luther, and Reformation

A prevalent solution to the spiritual malaise of the Late Medieval period was to turn to the monasteries and the monastic lifestyle. Berndt reports that the quest for true repentance found its culmination in monastic reform, and that monks and nuns achieved true piety at the highest level.[19] Hundreds fled to the monastic life, seeking refuge from coming judgement and driven by a need for an emotional experience and relief.[20]

The great dilemma that they faced was though they believed that Jesus welcomed sinners, they could not reconcile the problem that sinners continued to sin. This led to penitentials and to monasticism as a means of achieving piety. The influence of monasticism was not restrained to the monastery but was felt in the lives of ordinary Christians. In Ireland and in the Celtic tradition, much of the pastoral care was provided by the monasteries, and their outlook and values began to be felt and reflected by the churches and the people.[21]

Luther was a product of the times. Like many others, he was troubled by an insatiable sense of inadequacy and sought refuge in a monastery. He had great struggle of spirit and was frequently depressed, which was largely caused by not knowing how a person could be sure of salvation.[22] Boehmer assesses that the monastic experience was counter-productive for Luther. Rather than his soul finding assurance and his doubts

---

[19] Berndt, *Reformation of Faith*, 15,16.

[20] Heinrich Boehmer, *Road to Reformation,* trans. John Dobertson and Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946), 87.

[21] O'Loughlin, "Penitentials and Pastoral Care," 98-99.

[22] George Mosse, *The Reformation,* 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), 24.

being quieted, the disciplines of the monastery "merely increased his inner distress and anxiety."[23] While the practice of indulgences became the flash point for Luther's revolt, it was his own inner spiritual turmoil that provided its foundation.

One cannot identify a single "Reformation Theology" as there were differences between the major personalities involved. Luther, for example, while believing in justification by faith, did not believe that it essentially changed the sinner's nature. Zwingli believed that not only was the sinner justified but that salvation gained by faith changed the person's nature and freed him or her from the necessity of sinning.[24] Calvin rejected Zwingli's idea of humanity's power of will and inherent goodness. He asserted that the original sin had so marred the human nature, that humans were not only fallen creatures but were perpetual sinners.[25]

Notwithstanding the differences, there is nonetheless an overriding commonality to the theology of the Reformation. Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics would agree with the Protestant reformers with the principles of *Sola Gloria Deo* (all glory to God alone) and *Sola Gratia* (by grace alone). The distinguishing factors of the Reformation, and ones that were shared by all the reformers, are *Sola Scriptura*, positing the scriptures as the only authority for the church, and *Sola Fide*, which espoused justification by faith alone, as well as the concept of the priesthood of all believers.[26]

---

[23] Boehmer, *Road to Reformation,* 87.

[24] Mosse, *Reformation*, 48.

[25] Ibid., 60.

[26] "Protestant Beliefs," The Prayer Foundation, 2007, accessed June 4, 2017, http://www.prayerfoundation.org/protestant_beliefs.htm.

The Reformers also had many common points of their rejection of Catholic doctrine. These included, the authority of the pope, the merit of good works, indulgences, the mediation of Mary and the saints, the Immaculate Conception (of Mary), transubstantiation, the mass as sacrifice, purgatory, prayers for the dead, confessions to a priest, required celibacy for priests, and limiting the Eucharist to one host.[27]

It should be noted that there was some division among the reformers regarding communion. Luther rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and believed that the elements of communion maintained their ordinary forms. He did, however, believe that Christ's real body and blood were present. Zwingli disagreed with him, and contended that Jesus' words were figurative and that He was spiritually present but not physically. Their disagreement became very sharp, and Wabuda asserts that it was so severe that it "divided the reform movement forever."[28]

Calvin and Luther believed in justification by faith, but both doubted the efficacy of salvation to change or transform the redeemed. For Luther, salvation was strictly a matter of confidence in God's loving kindness expressed solely for the sake of Christ. He struggled with the concept of loving God, and thought that it placed one's experience in the realm of human emotions and it "seemed to speak of a person's affective qualities securing salvation."[29] Part of Luther's struggle was undoubtedly reactionary, since love, not faith, had been the decisive component for salvation in the late Medieval period.[30]

---

[27] Ibid.

[28] Susan Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10.

[29] Berndt, *Reformation of Faith*, 149.

[30] Ibid., 151.

Mystical experience was also temporary and unfulfilling for Luther. It seems his position

of faith alone included, at least to some degree, faith with little or no accompanying

feelings. He did believe that Christians should enjoy their temporal lives and "spent many

hours over a glass of beer or a game of cards."[31]

Calvin believed that the original sin had completely depraved humans of any

good; thus, he had to find a way that a Holy God could even communicate with His fallen

creatures. The essence of Calvin's dilemma was that salvation comes by faith alone, but

faith comes through the Scriptures, and he believed fallen humanity cannot truly hear the

Word, making it impossible to have faith, and thus, impossible to come to God. Calvin

solved his dilemma by stating that the Sovereign God imputed faith to those He chose,

and they became the redeemed.[32]

Calvin asserted that there are no outward signs to distinguish between the elect

and the non-elect, which he labeled the reprobates. This, he said, was written on the

conscious of the individual. He also maintained that faith partly manifests itself in good

works, declaring that "the Christian must carry his cross in this world, while

contemplating the life to come." Calvinistic living involved a perpetual lifestyle of

"asceticism, rejection of worldly concerns, frugal life and continued struggle against

evil."[33]

In some regards, Zwingli seems to embody more of what is common in modern

evangelicalism than Luther and Calvin. He demanded not only salvation based on faith,

---

[31] Mosse, *Reformation*, 31.

[32] Ibid., 60-61.

[33] Ibid., 61-62.

but intellectual certainty, as well. He proposed the Memorial view of communion, and as noted before, believed that salvation transformed the nature of the redeemed person. Zwingli stressed redemption more than the human sinful nature. He allowed laymen to conduct services and to preach and trained them to do so. He also believed that the church is comprised only of those who have found faith. He believed that faith and truth could be found through education,[34] which seems particularly similar to modern evangelicalism.

Which Theology Matters

Although this is not an effort to analyze Reformation theology, it is important to recognize how the reformers' theology has affected one's own and one's pastoral practice. As stated above, notwithstanding a large area of agreement, there were some major differences in the reformers' theologies. These variances make a difference in one's pastoral practice, and quite probably in one's sense of fulfillment and success as a pastor. If a pastor agrees with Luther that the nature of man is basically unchanged, his or her pastoral practice will obviously be affected by that. If, however, Zwingli's idea that salvation not only forgives sin but changes the heart, a different criterion will exist for pastoral ministry and success.

Calvin was known for a lifetime of "political struggles" which Janz contends was almost entirely due to a relentless effort to enforce his own conception of Godly living on the populace.[35] If one's theology lines up with Calvin's, it is likely that he or she will

---

[34] Mosse, *Reformation*, 48-49.

[35] Janz, *Reformation Reader*, 203.

also find oneself working diligently to enforce a certain conduct among the elect. The point of this is that theology, whether articulated or not, will affect how one approaches pastoral ministry and will have consequences on how satisfied one will feel about his or her performance as a pastor.

Calvin was so intent upon church discipline that he assigned the task of administering it to an elder consistory. Foremost among the responsibilities of the elders was that of discipline. An elder consistory provided many pastoral and educational functions, but it was also a primary vehicle for administering church discipline, both in private admonition and public censure. Calvin contended that though Christ is the soul of the church, discipline is the sinews that holds it together.[36] History indicates a harshness of Calvin regarding discipline, and it seems evident that this flowed out of his theological positions. Attention has been given over the years to disciplinary excesses, and even "absurdities" carried out by the reformers under his leadership. It should be noted, however, that there are those who contend these reports might not be entirely accurate, or at least, not fully indicative of him.[37]

Reformation Pastoral Practice

Luther

The reformers first and foremost considered themselves theologians,[38] yet each of them showed themselves to be pastors at heart. Staupitz, Luther's mentor in the

---

[36] David Cornick, "The Reformation Crisis in Pastoral Care," in *A History of Pastoral Care,* ed. Gillian Evans, 223-251 (New York: Cassell, 2000), 243.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Janz, *Reformation Reader*, 1.

monastery who had a great influence on Luther's formation, responded to the spiritual

disillusionment of the late Middle Ages as an attentive pastor. Luther saw the crisis of the

day as pastoral, in that it pertained to the very essence of faith and the ability of people to

experience salvation. He reacted against the indulgence campaign as a pastor, with

concern that it obscured the Gospel from simple people. Of Luther, Cornick exclaims,

"Luther was no free-floating theologian. His feet were firmly on pastoral ground."[39]

Luther continued to maintain the need for confession, not as a means to salvation,

but as a "part of the minister's armory" in caring for the souls of the people. He

contended, however, that the greatest task was to educate the people on the true nature of

contrition and of faith. A later development of Lutheranism was an opening up of the

possibility of the care of souls by the laity. This occurred under Spener and was a direct

result of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.[40]

Calvin

Calvin especially considered himself to be a theologian, but Benoit states, "Calvin

was a pastor, more than a theologian; more precisely, he was a theologian only to serve

better as a pastor and to give his ministry greater efficacy."[41] De Jong adds that it was

Calvin's pastoral concerns that motivated him to write his commentaries. Cornick sounds

---

[39] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 224, 229.

[40] Ibid., 233.

[41] Jean-Daniel Benoit, *Calvin, Directeur d'Ames: Contribution a l'Histoire de la Pieté Reformée* (Strasbourg, France: Oberlin, 1947), 11, quoted in Peter Y. De Yong, "Calvin and the Dutchess of Ferrara (an inquiry into Calvin's pastoral ministry)," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 33.

the same note when he opines that "Calvin was a theologian only insofar as his theology supported and grew out of his pastoral work."[42]

Cornick notes that Calvin had a deep understanding of human difficulties and believed that empathetic pastors were needed. He greatly respected the Catholic concept of the minister as a spiritual director. He did not view himself as anyone's permanent spiritual guide but as a "physician for souls in crisis." He believed that spiritual counsel flowed out of the Scriptures and would recommend congregants to meditate in them. He did not believe the Catholic doctrine of confession was required for salvation, but he saw its benefit in providing pastoral care.[43]

Calvin successfully created a fourfold office of ministry consisting of pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons. The office of doctors was a distinct order of teachers whose work consisted solely of scriptural interpretation and keeping the doctrine of the church pure, and the deacons cared for the poor. Pastors were expected to be involved in personal ministry and visitation.[44] Cornick opines that the most "innovative and determinative (development) within the Reformed tradition was the lay office of elder." Calvin's understanding of the office and ministry of the elders was derived from his study of 1 Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:6-8, and 1 Timothy 5:17. The elders comprised an elder consistory in each church that provided education, counseling services, and pastoral care. The pastoral care was "remarkably intrusive," but it offered genuine loving care. As noted earlier, the consistory also administered discipline. It functioned in many other

---

[42] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 240.

[43] Ibid., 241.

[44] Ibid.

ways, as well, from providing preaching services throughout Geneva to resolving family disputes.[45]

Richard Baxter

Richard Baxter wrote *The Reformed Pastor* in 1655 which Purves assesses as long-winded and poorly edited yet declares that it "bears witness to the nature and power of pastoral ministry more convincingly than any other book in the history of pastoral literature."[46] Speaking of himself and an assistant, Baxter reports that they would "spend every Monday and Tuesday, from morning almost to night, in the work, taking about fifteen or sixteen families in a week, that we may go through the parish, in which there are upwards of eight hundred families in a year." He added that "I find more outward signs of success with most (of them) than from all my public preaching to them."[47] Of this work he said, "how small a matter it is to speak to a man only once a year…yet, we are in hope of some fruit."[48] Calvin also contended that preaching was only the first step and that the real work was meeting with members privately to help them apply scriptural doctrine personally.[49]

Baxter felt that the care of the "flock" to be such a serious charge that it was important that a pastor's flock not be more than he (or she) could care for. Though he

---

[45] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 244.

[46] Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2001), 95.

[47] Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, ed. William Brown (1829; repr., n.p., n.d.), Kindle Loc 152.

[48] Purves, *Pastoral Theology*, 112.

[49] Randall Zachman, *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 65.

served a parish of some four thousand people, he insisted that the pastor should know every person that belonged to his charge. Not only did he want the pastors to know the people but to be "acquainted with the state of all the people, with their inclinations and lifestyles, and to be aware of the sins to which they might be susceptible, or the duties in which they might likely fail." He asserted that pastors could not take care of people they did not know and stated, "If we know not their temperament or disease, we are not likely to prove successful physicians."[50] Here again is the idea of a pastor as a physician, as a "curer of souls" that is mostly unknown in the modern church.

Baxter contended that every shepherd looks after every individual sheep; a good schoolmaster looks after each student; a good physician takes care of each patient; and a good commander looks after every soldier. Why then, he questioned, "should not the shepherds, the teachers, the physicians, the guides of the churches of Christ, take heed to every individual member in their charge?" He cited the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15 for scriptural support.[51]

Baxter's ideas are his own and there are those who would dispute them. Schaller argued for pastors to think of themselves as ranchers rather than shepherds,[52] but this was ostensibly for the purpose of increasing the level and scope of pastoral care. He was not arguing against the importance of shepherds, but rather was encouraging pastors of churches to empower others in their churches to shepherd the people, to free them to lead the bigger vision of the church. Baxter was a "mega church pastor" who was able to lead

---

[50] Baxter, *Reformed Pastor*, 23.

[51] Ibid., 24.

[52] Schaller, *Growing Plans*, 93.

a large ministry, while maintaining a personal shepherd's touch. This is probably not true for the majority of pastors.

Martin Bucer

Martin Bucer's *Concerning the True Care of Souls* was the primary text on Reformation pastoral theology. It is rooted directly in Biblical and Reformation faith.[53] The title could give the impression that it is about pastoral care-giving. It is that, but it is much more, providing a comprehensive guide to pastoral ministry. The table of contents gives a glimpse into the breadth of the book. Some topics addressed are the nature of the Church, Christ's role in the Church, how the Lord carries out His pastoral office in His Church through the ordained ministry, seeking out the wandering sheep, helping and healing wounded sheep, and strengthening the sheep. Simply reading the title of chapter six is revealing: "What the principal work and activities of carers of souls and ministers are to be for the flock of Christ in general and individual members in particular."[54]

Bucer divided the care of souls from the care of bodily needs. He contended the latter was the responsibility of deacons and argued for a re-introduction of the office into the church. He believed the care of souls was accomplished through the proclamation of the Word, which he taught consisted of teaching, exhorting, warning, discipling, pardoning, and reconciling. He contended that this extensive ministry required a plurality of ministers, and was "not a conglomerate task for one minister." His study of Acts,

---

[53] Purves, *Pastoral Theology*, 76.

[54] Martin Bucer, *Concerning the Care of Souls*, trans. Peter Beale (Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 34-35.

Corinthians, Ephesians, Timothy and Titus led him to believe that every congregation should have as many elders as required by the needs of that church.[55]

Bucer developed a five-fold work for carers of souls. These were:

1. Lead to Christ and the Church those who were still estranged from Him

2. Restore those who have fallen away through affairs of the flesh and false doctrine

3. Seek amendment of life for sinners within the Christian community

4. Strengthen faint-hearted Christians

5. Protect and encourage those who are whole and strong in their Christian journey.

Cornick opines that Bucer's work marked a true recovery of the early church discipline of pastoral theology, but that its implementation was difficult.[56]

It is certain that Reformation era churches had to deal with administrative issues, yet the textbooks and other literature gave little attention to those areas. As will be seen in the next section, a great deal of emphasis was placed on preaching, but the rest of the instruction regarded the nature and implementation of pastoral ministry. No attention is given to instructing pastors how to "grow" their churches. Rather, it has to do with growing the saints through preaching the Word and pastoral care, including pastoral discipline. Jack Hayford, pastor of one of the earlier mega churches from the 1970s and 80s, has often remarked that his goal was never to build a big church but was to build big

---

[55] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 237-238.

[56] Ibid., 239.

saints.[57] The Reformation practice of growing the saints is still a valid approach to ministry, and in his case, it did not preclude growing of a big church.

Preaching in the Reformation

Culture that Spawned the Emphasis on the Preached Word

Clowney asserts there was a virtual loss of preaching in the Medieval Catholic Church, stating that "elaboration of the liturgy of the Mass" had crowded preaching out of the typical worship service. It is difficult for modern pastors to imagine, but preaching only occurred in Continental churches on fast days and special occasions.[58] It was much the same in England. All parishes were required to have four sermons a year in English addressing vital topics of faith, life, and the church. An analysis of the three hundred parishes in the year 1538 revealed that only ninety-five of them had the required four sermons. Forty-two parishes had none. It is estimated that these numbers would have been worse if it had not been for the help of visiting friars to fill some of the pulpits. One reason for the failure to provide the sermons was that many of the clergy were sick or had died. Even more telling, however, is that only thirty-seven of the parishes had priests who were trained to deliver sermons.[59]

Typical services in English churches were conducted by priests behind a "rood screen," which was a thin wooden wall with a partial opening between the minister and

---

[57] Jack W. Hayford, "How I Think About People," (Lecture, School of Pastoral Nurture, Van Nuys, CA, April 22-28, 2002). This is but one occasion, as it is an expression the author has heard Pastor Hayford repeat numerous times at various conferences and workshops.

[58] Edmund Clowney, "The Purpose of Preaching," in *Leadership Handbook of Preaching and Worship: Practical Insight From a Cross Section of Ministry Leaders*, ed. James Berkley, 3-15 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 7.

[59] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 35-40.

the congregation. The recitation of the mass was muffled and barely audible and celebration of the Eucharist was only partially visible. It was believed that God had intentionally made the Scriptures obscure, and beyond the comprehension of "common" people. The sacredness of Scripture was kept from public access, which was counted as being for their own good. It was actually forbidden by law to read the Bible in the vernacular of the people.[60]

Some revival of preaching had been occurring in the Catholic Church before the Reformation began, but much if it occurred in the monastic orders. The Crusades occasioned a rise in preaching ministry, but it was largely a means to solicit indulgences for funding their military campaigns. Most important in the pre-Reformation renewal of preaching was the rise of Medieval scholasticism, and a consequent interest of preaching in the universities. University preaching, however, was in Latin and with elaborate detail and guidance from handbooks. The Gospel was largely missing from late Medieval preaching. It could be argued, however, that this resurgence of preaching ministry helped pave the way for the emphasis on preaching in the Reformation.[61]

Thayer contends that the Catholic Church had been encouraging an increased frequency and greater quality of sermons in the Late Medieval period. Evidence exists of increasing local demand for sermons, along with a rise of revivalist preaching and preaching for special occasions.[62] While Thayer acknowledges that the frequency of and attention to preaching about penitence "eclipsed all other preaching," she suggests that it

---

[60] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 8, 29.

[61] Clowney, "The Purpose of Preaching," 7-8.

[62] Anne Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 6.

might be more accurate to view the emergence of the Reformation as a continuation of reforms already begun in the Church.[63] She has demonstrated that the desire for preaching was prevalent in the populace, and the Medieval church had recognized as much.

Considerable effort was also expended by the pre-Reformation English church to revive the practice of preaching as a part of the ministry of the priests. An appeal was made for priests to emulate the example of preaching ministry of the apostles and early church fathers. Desiderius Erasmus, the Catholic theologian and scholar, had considerable influence in these efforts, not only in England, but on the continent. He was critical of the abuses of the Catholic Church and called for reform, but he always remained loyal to the pope.[64] Foremost among his work was to produce the Scriptures in current and accurate rendition, and he was also a champion of the preached Word. He contended that the preacher was the agent through which God's Spirit would be manifest and present. He also called for the preacher to be the first to experience the transformation of the Scriptures.[65]

<center>The Preeminence of Preaching in the Reformation</center>

While there was clearly a genuine pastoral concern among the reformers, the Reformation was first and foremost about preaching the Gospel. The sheer testimony of the amount of time given to preaching gives witness to this. Luther commonly preached

---

[63] Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation*, 47.

[64] "Who Was Desiderius Erasmus?" Got Questions Ministries, accessed September 16, 2017, https://www.gotquestions.org/Desiderius-Erasmus.html.

[65] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 69.

three to four times on Sundays and is reported to have preached until three days before his death.[66] His Sunday preaching schedule consisted of a five to six AM message on the Epistle of the day, followed by an eight to nine o'clock message on the Gospel of the day, and an afternoon vesper service on the Old Testament. Catechism was taught on Monday and Tuesday. Each Wednesday was a message from Matthew, on Thursday and Friday the Epistles were expounded and there was a Saturday afternoon vesper service on the book of John.[67] Similarly, Calvin preached every morning,[68] and reportedly preached about one hundred and seventy sermons a year.[69]

Pauck states emphatically that nothing characterized Continental Protestantism more than the importance it attached to preaching. He assesses that "the very reality of the Church was grounded in preaching." The definition the reformers gave church "where the Word is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered"[70] witnesses to the importance of preaching. Collinson expresses the same sentiments opining that the ministry was restricted to the one function of preaching. He reports that in England the clergy who could not preach were denounced as "non-preaching hirelings" and notes that by the 1570s the clergy there referred to themselves as "preachers of the Word."[71]

---

[66] Edward Clowney. "The Purpose of Preaching," 8.

[67] William Pauck, "Ministry in Time of the Continental Reformation," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives,* eds. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 131-2.

[68] Clowney, "The Purpose of Preaching," 8.

[69] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 241.

[70] Pauck, "Ministry in Time of the Continental Reformation," 110.

[71] Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft* (New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 47-48.

One factor affecting the importance of the minister as preacher could well have been the rate of illiteracy in mid 1500s England. Some classes of people were highly literate, while others were extremely illiterate. Greaves references a study of more than five thousand ecclesiastical court depositions of the era to provide these literacy data:100% of clergy and professional classes, 98% of nobility and gentry, 88-94% of merchants and shopkeepers, 65% of yeoman, and 56% of tradesmen were literate. The numbers continue dropping, with only 21% of peasants, 15% for laborers, 12% for common artisans and craftsmen, and 11% of women being reported as literate.[72] It is sad to realize that for centuries the Scriptures had been legally kept from the people's language, and even when it was becoming available, a great many people depended solely upon the preached Word.

Only two things mattered to Luther, which were the Word and faith. Nothing was as important to him as proclaiming the message of the Bible and making it accessible to the people. This emphasis resulted in what could be construed as some discrepancy in doctrine and practice. Although he advocated the concept of the priesthood of all believers,[73] which was commonly held by all the reformers, and the division between clergy and laity was theoretically abolished, they maintained that only the pastors could preach the Word. Although asserting that any man of faith has all the spiritual powers which Roman Catholicism ascribed to the clergy alone, yet they only allowed the

---

[72] Richard Greaves, *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 334.

[73] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 232.

preacher/leader of the congregation to preach. Pauck contends that the ministers of the

Word dominated and determined the life of the church.[74]

Even much of the effort that was made to encourage pastoral care functions of the

clergy included the ministry of preaching. Collinson mentions a substantive book entitled

The Faithful Shepherd but notes that other than a few preliminary comments the entire

book is devoted to the ministry of preaching. One exception cited by Collinson is George

Herbert's *Priest to the Temple: The Country Parson.* This work was largely about

pastoral care, but even it declares that "The country parson preacheth constantly, the

pulpit is his joy and throne." Even pastoral visits were instructed to be for those who had

missed the sermons.[75]

Wabuda, speaking specifically of the English Reformation, asserts that it was

"about the religious culture… centered around preaching."[76] Willimon concludes that the

sweeping reforms of the Reformation made the clergy primarily preachers. He notes that

Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli all stressed preaching as the chief pastoral act.[77] Ironically,

he contends that the Reformation created a crisis in the care of souls. He observes that

due to the shift of authority to the Scriptures and the identity as the pastor chiefly as a

preacher of the Word, the "sacraments in particular and public worship in general lost

their place as chief loci of pastoral care in the churches that emerged from the

---

[74] Pauck, "Ministry in Time of the Continental Reformation," 114.

[75] Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft*, 54-56.

[76] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 5.

[77] Willimon, *Pastor*, 141.

Reformation." He laments that "Pastoral care gradually became relegated to one-on-one dealings between the pastor and individual members of the flock."[78]

Application to living was one of the reformers' chief concern, and they believed that the preacher must do more than bring the meaning of Scripture which Calvin felt was "in large part clear to all." The preacher was also responsible to bring the Scriptures to bear on every part of the hearers' lives exposing the inmost thoughts and affections. Calvin is noted for having a four-fold goal for his preaching:

1. Exposition of the Scripture's meaning

2. Exposition sought to get at the intention

3. Strive for retention

4. Strive for application and practice.

Above all, he was concerned to "expound Scripture so clearly, thoroughly, and forcefully that it might be practiced."[79]

It could hardly be argued that modern preachers are any less concerned about the application and practice of the message they preach. The modern approach is quite different, however, than it was during the Reformation. Many churches no longer have a Sunday School and many only have a Sunday morning service, which is often only an hour in length, or perhaps an hour and a half. In either case, the sermon is typically twenty to thirty minutes long. Barna reports that one half of Americans "read, listen or pray with" the Bible, but this is figured on a minimum of three to four times in a year. One third never engage the Bible in any way. Ironically, a majority of Americans believe

---

[78] Willimon, *Pastor*, 173-174.

[79] Zachman, *John Calvin*, 164-171.

the Bible is important for one's faith journey.[80] These figures, combined with the reduced Bible time at many churches, easily point to a probable source of frustration and disappointment for pastors.

<div align="center">Importance of Theology for the Preaching Priority</div>

Theology is largely responsible for the failure of the "revival of preaching" in the Catholic Church. This begins with the idea of "minister as priest" who stood in God's place and imparted salvation. This was done through the sacraments and was not a matter of responding to messages from Scripture. The chief obligation of late Medieval Christians was understood to be Easter communion and to receive God's salvation through the penance. As previously stated, even when preaching occurred, penitence was its chief subject. No matter how fervent the call for renewed emphasis on preaching, Catholic theology simply failed to infuse the effort with any sense of urgency.

Reformation theology provided direct impetus for the primacy of preaching ministry. Salvation was not believed to be through devotion to Mass or indulgences, but was received through regeneration of faith, and the instrument for that faith to be imparted was when the Gospel was preached.[81] Rejection of the doctrine of penitence was a major part of the Reformation. All the reformers detested it with their overriding concern being its lack of certainty regarding forgiveness. They believed that forgiveness only came as a matter of faith, and faith could only be received by the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. The very foundation of the Reformation preaching was its

---

[80] Barna Research, "State of the Bible 2017: Top Findings," Barna Group, accessed April 4, 2017, accessed September 27, 2017, https://www.barna.com/research/state-bible-2017-top-findings/.

[81] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 13.

theology of salvation by faith alone.[82] For the reformers, preaching became the "sacred meeting place between an imperfect humanity and the Spirit of God."[83]

<p style="text-align:center">The Reformation and Education</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Education of the Common People</p>

Calvin's *Institutes for the Christian Religion* was originally written for common church members. He considered his congregants to be "fellow scholars of God in the school of Christ." He acknowledged that most of them were unlearned but believed that under the guidance of the pastor skilled in exposition and by "praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit" all people could learn the meaning of the Scriptures. This was not mere rhetoric, as he is reported to have given great care to restore "proper and fruitful" Scripture reading to every Christian, no matter how unlearned a person might be. He contended that all who had a responsibility to care for the church shared this responsibility to restore Scripture reading to the church members. Notwithstanding his conviction, he also believed the people needed guidance to understand the Scriptures which occasioned the publishing of the *Institutes*.[84]

<p style="text-align:center">Educating Pastors</p>

It was not long, however, that the need to educate pastors became abundantly clear. Many of the early pastors in the Reformation came from the ranks of former priests who were often unschooled in Scripture. The story is told of Melanchthon, the friend of

---

[82] Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation*, 5.

[83] Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation*, 13.

[84] Zachman, *John Calvin*, 57-58.

Luther and theologian of Lutheranism,[85] asking one of these converted ministers if he had taught his congregants the Ten Commandments. The reply was, "That book I have not been able to get."[86] Since pastors were first and foremost preachers of the Word, there was great need early in the Reformation to train pastors in the Scriptures.

Calvin redesigned the *Institutes for the Christian Religion* for the purpose of training pastors and wrote *Instruction in the Faith* for "ordinary" Christians. The office of doctor, mentioned earlier, was an office of teachers and it was distinct from that of the pastor. The primary task of the doctors was to teach and train the pastors.[87] He insisted that teachers and pastors alike needed to develop a life-long discipline of not only reading the Scriptures, but of receiving ongoing instructions in them. He asked the pastors to meet together regularly for the express purpose of reading and discussing the Scriptures.[88]

The reformers were critical of scholasticism, but it was the content more than the concept. Their position is seen in reformer Chandieu's assessment that the medieval scholastics were occupied in "idle and curious questions, which had no significance for building up the congregation."[89] Notwithstanding their disdain for medieval scholasticism, the reformers championed the education of pastors. In addition to the

---

[85] Clyde L. Manschreck, "Philipp Melanchthon," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed September 20, 2017, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Philipp-Melanchthon.

[86] Cornick, "Reformation Crisis," 232.

[87] Ibid., 58-60.

[88] Ibid., 66-67.

[89] Willem J. van Esselt, and Eef Dekker, eds., *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 91.

Institutes, Calvin wrote commentaries to be used for their instruction, and he began the

Geneva Academy specifically for the purpose of ministry training. Melanchthon founded

three universities in Germany and reformed eight others.[90]

Reformation Theology and Modern Pastors

Pastoral Care

Vanhoozer and Strachan contend that modern pastors, churches, and seminaries

have lost sight of the pastor as theologian. They state that churches find no excitement in

a pastor-theologian who can open the Scriptures to help them understand God,

themselves and the world. They further claim that many pastors, and they seem to assert

that this means most pastors, have "exchanged their vocational birthright for a bowl of

lentil stew." The dish of which they speak consists of "management skills, strategic plans,

'leadership courses,' therapeutic techniques, and so forth."[91]

As has been shown, Reformation theology informed Reformation pastoral

practice, while much of modern pastoral practice is driven by the demands of running and

growing the church, and to a large degree does not derive from deep ponderings in

pastoral theology. This is not to say that pastors do not strive to care for their congregants

or to preach good sermons, but for many pastors even the most "pastoral" of functions are

forced into a secondary role.

Understanding the place of theology in pastoral ministry is important to this study

in that it might address one of the primary factors causing pastors to feel dissatisfied with

their own performance or that they are failing in their jobs. Even if one disagrees with

---

[90] Manschreck, "Philipp Melanchthon."

[91] Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015), Kindle Loc 155.

some of the reformers' theology, it must be acknowledged that pastoral practice

emanating from one's understanding of God will be imminently more fulfilling and

meaningful than one shaped and molded by modern secular ideas of leadership,

organization, and management. Not only do these pursuits lack meaning and satisfaction,

many pastors are not gifted or skilled in them and are doomed to "fail" in their practice,

which contributes even more to their sense of inadequacy, failure, and disappointment.

Sadly, many churches and denominations seem to "double down" with a determination to

"help" them become good at everything other than what they are really called to be and

do.

Much like the works of Gregory the Great in the Catholic tradition, a greater

depth is given to pastoral care by the reformers than is common for modern pastors.

While emphasis has been given in the modern era to "pastoral care," Willimon contends

that it is largely limited to individualistic, psychologically oriented techniques heavily

influenced by prevailing secular therapies.[92] Inner healing and deliverance are two

streams of ministry that might resemble the ancient concept of "curing souls," but these

are also often ridiculed and even impugned as non-biblical. Ministries such as Cleansing

Streams[93] that seek to help people achieve deep levels of freedom and wholeness, or

authors such as Neil Anderson[94] with the same focus, often seem to be relegated to the

fringes of the Church and are not widely accepted.

---

[92] Willimon, *Pastor*, 175.

[93] Cleansing Streams is an 8- to 12-week discipleship training that culminates with a retreat to break bondages and bring wholeness to the participants, https://www.cleansingstream.org.

[94] Neil Anderson has authored such books as *Bondage Breaker* and *Discipleship Counseling: The Complete Guide to Helping Others Walk in Freedom and Grow in Christ,* and others.

No one could question that there are many caring pastors who minister with deep love and compassion and in many different ways to their congregations. If Willimon is correct, it is just as likely that there is some deficiency in the level of spirituality of at least some of the pastoral help being offered. Ministries such as the aforementioned Cleansing Streams or others such as Stephen Ministries,[95] while good in their own right, could be evidence by the very fact that they exist that pastors feel like systematic, comprehensive pastoral care is deficient in their congregations.

The pastoral care offered in most small churches is often largely limited to what the pastor and his or her spouse can provide. An old saint in the church might also be available to help in many ways. Some large churches have pastoral staff especially designated to minister to various pastoral needs and even to provide counseling, but the adequacy could be questioned. A senior staff member of a prominent mega church of my own denomination stated that the pastoral needs of their otherwise successful church simply were not being met.[96]

In churches, large or small, it is difficult to provide adequate pastoral care. In either setting, though the reasons are different, it seems possible that church members are not receiving the pastoral care they need. More will be noted concerning this in the final chapter, but perhaps Calvin's concept of the elder consistory and Bucer's belief that ministry must be a combined effort of many elders, are ideas worth pursuing.

---

[95] Stephen Ministries is an organization that trains lay members of churches to provide pastoral care for fellow church members, https://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/917?mnbsm=1.

[96] Interview by author, circa 2001. Name of pastor and church withheld for confidentiality reasons.

Systematic, comprehensive pastoral ministry is not easily implemented or maintained. It was no different for the reformers than it is for modern pastors, as was acknowledged by Cornick about Bucer's five-point pastoral plan. Yet, there was a plan. Undoubtedly, there are some churches and denominations with thorough plans and procedures to meet the pastoral needs of their congregations, yet it seems that many churches are missing a standard approach that is commonly understood and practiced by a majority of pastors. A major reason for this deficiency is likely the lack of a strong foundation of pastoral theology consistently and widely taught to pastors or emphasized to them as paramount in their pastoral ministry.

Preaching

Willimon observes that the Reformation produced a new conception of the pastoral ministry and that the pastor is now primarily a preacher. He states that "through preaching, the Word keeps growing, multiplying, leaping over all boundaries," and adds "to encounter preaching is to encounter God."[97] These poignant comments are made of modern pastors, not continental reformers.

The modern position of pastor is inextricably linked to the task of preaching. The idea that an entire parish could not muster even four sermons a year is beyond the comprehension of modern pastoral sensibilities. It is probable that most pastors understand the connection between faith and preaching, yet it is not so certain that the impetus for their preaching is theologically driven. Preaching for many pastors might simply be a cultural reality; it is the expected norm. Preaching might not be the greatest strength for a pastor, yet he or she is expected to preach regularly, nonetheless. In either

---

[97] Willimon, *Pastor*, 142.

case, a pastor not especially gifted to preach, or in the case of preaching having become disconnected from the pastor's theological foundation, it seems quite possible that the preaching task could lend to a pastor's sense of failure, disappointment, or dissatisfaction.

As shall be seen in the next chapter, many modern church services have become something of a weekly production with the sermon as a key component. Pastors are taught to make their sermons relevant and short. Catchy titles, self-help series, and contemporary concepts are usually common components of modern sermons. It is not certain, however, that they are carefully and deeply based on or informed by theology. Many see the sermon as more effective than ever, and that it is the age-old Gospel simply re-packaged to better appeal to and communicate with the current culture. That could be partially true, yet it is also possible that many pastors are laboring under the challenge of producing high tech, socially relevant, energizing messages. Some pastors have that capability but many do not and this is partially responsible for many pastors feeling like they are failing in their calling. It would be much better if they would simply proclaim and teach the sound truths of Scripture.

Education

It could not be argued that there is a lack of educational opportunities for modern pastors. Besides denominational colleges and seminaries, a plethora of other schools are available all across America. Beyond traditional schools, the emergence of online education has made it possible for ministers at any stage of life to gain a degree, advance their degrees to a higher level, or to complete education once begun but abandoned for any number of reasons. Yet, according to the Krejcir study over seventy percent of pastors feel underqualified for their job. One has to wonder why this is so. Are schools

not teaching the things needed by pastors? Could it be that the training is not targeted to the pastors' strengths and/or gifts? The answer will not be forthcoming in this paper, but it seems that is a topic that warrants further research.

More than the education of the pastors, the plan and diligence to provide Biblical education to the congregants of the churches during the Reformation is a great example for modern pastors to follow. Sunday School, small groups, and discipleship programs are all important and offer great resources. The truth is, however, that pastors need to own the responsibility of providing solid Biblical doctrine and training for their congregants, and many of them likely feel that they are failing to do so.

Most pastors are deluged with promotional materials about the latest in small group curriculum, web-based resources, discipleship programs, and more. Many of these are certainly worthy, but it seems they might also be an indication that the modern pastor is struggling for answers in educating and training his or her congregation. In venues as varied as personal conversations and denominational workshops, one thing is often quite clear: many pastors feel uncertain and incapable of providing substantive and systematic discipleship teaching for their churches. It seems that the Reformation was well ahead of where the church is today in this regard, and it certainly could be a factor in the sense of failure and inadequacy that pastors are experiencing.

Concluding Thoughts About the Effects of the Reformation on Modern Pastors

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to cite every influence of the Reformation on how modern pastors view themselves and their task. The preeminence of preaching would be paramount, which would include the need for his or her own theological and Biblical training. It could be that an unintended loss, as stated earlier, in the shift from

priest to preacher is that pastors might undervalue their importance as intercessors for the people of their churches as well as for their nations. As mentioned in the previous section, the education of the people of the churches in the Scriptures is another important influence felt by modern pastors, but it is one that some contend no longer has enough emphasis.

The revived role of elders is another important influence of the Reformation, although it also seems to have lost much of its importance. Many pastors carry the bulk of the load of their churches and would do well to reconsider the role of the Reformation eldership.

CHAPTER 4

The Church in America and Its Influence on Pastoral Ministry

Introduction

This section will endeavor to assess the effect of the church in America on the role of the pastor and how pastors view their sense of worth and success. The approach will be to consider the beginning of the American church until the twentieth century, and then special focus will be given to the Church Growth Movement that began in the 1950s and peaked toward the end of the century. This will include a discussion of the mega church movement. In addition, some detail will be given to other streams of ministry that have emerged, most notably the missional church movement. As has been stated in previous aspects of this study, the pursuit is not to critique all the theological or ecclesiastical nuances of the American church, but to specifically inquire regarding the effects that these, as well as other American sociological factors, have had on the nature and functions of the pastoral office.

Church in Early America

Puritans and "The City on the Hill"

A discussion of Christianity in America must begin with the Puritans. As a part of the Church of England, they sought to bring reform to it and to rid it of all Catholic trappings. When King James I showed little inclination towards reform, many of the Puritans became separatists and favored a complete split with the Anglican Church. Plymouth Colony Puritans were separatists, believed in the autonomy of individual

churches, and embraced a model of authority of the clergy in the local churches.[1] This is

an important development in the role of the pastor and continues to play a major part of

American pastoral ministry and pastoral perceptions. Not every church group adheres to

the policy of local autonomy, yet it remains true that much of church life is affected by a

sense of the independence and power of the local church and the local church pastor.

Puritans believed that the church could be a "shining light on the hill" and that

fervently committed Christians would be able to build a godly society that was ruled by

God's commandments. Their vision was not of a passive church but of one in which their

faith was lived out in society to make it a better place for everyone. Civic and religious

authority were ostensibly kept separate, and clergy were forbidden to hold public office,[2]

but in reality, the church was heavily influential in all matters of government in the

Massachusetts colony. Evans contends that this worldview is critical to understand "how

many American churches would orient much of their mission toward American social

and political institutions."[3]

Hunter points to this as a continuing American church worldview, stating that the

church has believed that changing our culture for the better will only come by more and

more individuals, both having the right worldview and living it out in society.[4] Chuck

Colson asserts that our culture can only be transformed by "ordinary believers practicing

---

[1] Christopher Evans, *Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 32-33.

[2] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity,* 33.

[3] Ibid, 26-27.

[4] James Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 8.

apologetics over the backyard fence or around the barbeque grill."[5] Hunter asserts that for many Christians, "politics is the tactic of choice …as they think about changing the world."[6] This was true of left-leaning social gospel proponents of the early twentieth century, who sought to "fuse religion and progressive political action" and advocated for government solutions to social problems.[7]

The increasingly politically polarized society of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has created a serious dilemma for many pastors. From the country's founding, the Puritan ideal, at least for evangelicals, of affecting holiness in the culture has been a guiding value, yet society continues moving away from their moral ideals. Hunter notes that the greatest gains of "visibility, legitimacy, and legal rights of gay rights movements were made during the twelve conservative years of the Reagan and Bush presidencies."[8] This would no longer stand true, as the right to gay marriage occurred during the Obama presidency, but the point remains that political activism by the conservative church, and therefore by the pastors leading them, is often not producing their desired results.

The goal here is not to assess the worthiness of either the conservative or liberal agendas but to raise the question if perhaps misguided energies on either side occasion a sense of disillusionment and even despair among pastors. Undoubtedly, pastors, as well as all believers, should live out their convictions in the public arena, but to place their

---

[5] Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 32.

[6] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 12.

[7] Christopher Evans, *The Social Gospel in America: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2017) 11, 13.

[8] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 20.

hopes to accomplish Christian ideals on politics seems to be a sure recipe for

disappointment. This is true for several reasons: one, it is not their call as pastors. There

is no record of the primitive church being involved in political activism. The second

reason has to do with the complexity of the problem. Answers for the crises of the day are

complex, and pastors run the risk of becoming shortsighted and/or wrongly directed.

Third, political efforts simply seem to fail to produce the desired results, as was noted by

Hunter.

One must wonder if perhaps pastors and the church have lost sight of their valid

role as intercessors and "salt" to their particular nation. Exodus 28 gives a beautiful and

detailed description of the garment of the high priest of Israel. In two locations, on the

shoulders and on the breastplate, it contained stones bearing the names of all the tribes of

the nation. The purpose for these stones was clearly stated as "bear(ing) their names

before the Lord," and that he would "bear the names of the sons of Israel in the

breastplate of decision over his heart when he goes into the holy place."[9]

The role of the priest was to intercede and stand before God on behalf of the

entire nation. It seems possible that two powerful forces are at work against this kind of

intercessory model being fulfilled by modern pastors of the churches they lead. The first

force is a shift that has occurred to placing inordinate levels of hope in political activism

in place of their role of intercession. The other is the compelling drive and burden to have

successful churches. It might not be possible to accurately answer, but the question needs

to be asked: "Do pastors spend as much time standing before God in prayer on behalf of

the nation, or leading their congregations to do so, as they do in praying for the success of

their churches?" Whether this contributes directly to pastors feeling a sense of failure is

---

[9] Exodus 28:12, 29, NET.

also uncertain, but it seems that when we are not fulfilling God's call, there would be an inner sense of "something missing" that would contribute to such a feeling.

Puritanism, Calvinism, and Questions About Who is Converted

The Puritans were heavily influenced by Calvin's doctrine, but they differed on the nature of the Church. Calvin believed it was a mix of sinners and saints, but the Puritans saw it as an assembly of only the saints. The Puritans expected everyone to attend church, and in fact, it was mandated by law in early Massachusetts, but membership was only for those who could attest to a conversion experience. This, however, posed a dilemma that had been a "plague" for Calvin and continued to be for them. There was no sure way in their doctrine of predestination to know who the truly converted were.[10]

One way this dilemma was problematic was that the uncertainty about how to determine who the truly converted were eventuated in increasing emphasis upon good works and activism. Outward works were considered the only evidence that attested to salvation. Calvin's followers, at least partially in response to the teachings of Arminius, had begun to teach that "one's salvation was revealed by righteous activities." For seventeenth century Calvinism, "conversion was not a singular experience, but an ongoing commitment to a lifestyle…measured by a passion to serve God and the world." [11] This emphasis gave rise to counter movements within the Puritan church and from those outside it.

---

[10] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 33-35.

[11] Ibid.*,* 28.

Dissent Within Puritanism

In the 1630s, Anne Hutchinson, along with her mentor John Cotton began promoting a message that celebrated salvation by grace while accusing their Puritan brethren of preaching salvation by works. She also claimed to receive divine revelation straight from the Holy Spirit, which seemed to challenge the Puritan and Reformation belief in the authority of the Scriptures. It is not clear if she simply purported to hear the Holy Spirit or if she indeed asserted that what she heard supplanted Scripture. She gathered a significant following, in itself problematic for the 1600 Puritans, since she was a woman. She was put on trial and banished from the colony.[12]

The case of Anne Hutchinson had many implications for the emerging American culture. First, she by-passed the traditional church authority, which is something that has continued to be a part of the American ecclesiastical heritage. Second, her claim of directly hearing from the Holy Spirit has also continued to be a major factor in the American church. Third, she began a long history of women in American Christian ministry.[13]

Calvin, as well as Luther, emphasized the invisible church as the church of the elect but also believed in a magisterial church-state. For them, a true reformation would include a Christian state or a kind of Christian theocracy. The Anabaptists, who went further than the reformers in their attempt to regain a pure, primitive church, rejected the

---

[12] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 35-6.

[13] History.com Staff, "Anne Hutchinson," A&E Television Networks, 2009, accessed December 14, 2017, http://www.history.com/topics/anne-hutchinson.

idea of the invisible church and were proponents of a sharp distinction between the church and state.[14] Roger Williams, another dissenting Puritan, helped bring this philosophy to the forefront of American life.

Williams believed the teachings of the church were too tied to things of the state and resisted any government involvement in the church. One of his major efforts was to resist government establishment of churches, because he felt the influence of the government would corrupt them. Williams helped craft a distinctive model of religious liberty that would be embraced by the United States constitution.[15] It is quite ironic that one of the great struggles for the late twentieth and early twenty-first century church is secular society's clamor about the separation of church and state in order to rid itself of the church's influence, when the concept was actually designed to rid the church of governmental influence. It might not be the dominating factor in the malaise felt by many pastors, but it seems impossible that pastors are not affected to some degree by this great societal tension.

Roger Williams established the colony of Rhode Island and extended a great deal of liberty to religious expressions other than Puritanism. Like Hutchinson, he promoted a message of grace in contrast to the works-oriented message of his fellow Puritans. He embraced the message of the Anabaptists and allowed members of the Quakers to settle in his colony. The first Baptist church was established there in 1638. Williams turned "the North American landscape into a sea of religious diversity."[16]

---

[14] James F Stitzinger, "Pastoral Ministry in History," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 167.

[15] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 38, 40.

[16] Ibid., 41.

Rising Evangelicalism

Revivalism, as seen in the Great Awakenings of the 1740s and 1750s, challenged church leaders of all denominations and paved the way for the rise of early nineteenth century evangelicalism. Evans surmises that this new form of church rewrote the "rules for religious engagement" and crafted forms of popular theology and revivalism. The tone for this new movement was set by the "meteoric growth" of Methodism.[17] Methodism did not seek a utopian society or a "city on a hill" like the Puritans but saw themselves as perpetual sojourners in the wilderness.[18]

Methodism challenged Calvin's notions of predestination and election. It emphasized three themes:

1. God's free grace

2. Liberty of people to accept or reject that grace

3. Validity of popular religious expression[19]

The Methodists fervently preached that God's grace was available to all penitent sinners. The idea of a sinner coming to God by faith and being able to have assurance of their salvation was readily received by the American people. The Methodist preachers were not professional clergy, nor were they highly educated, but they were completely devoted to God. Full-time circuit riders traveled tirelessly preaching the Gospel with the one mission to "spend and be spent for God."

---

[17] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 111, 112.

[18] Ibid., 112.

[19] Ibid., 114.

Securing personal conversions was the driving force of the evangelical revivals. John Wesley is cited as saying, "You have nothing to do but win souls." With conversions of souls being the greatest goal, the work of a minister became increasingly judged by success in this one area.[20] This mentality has continued to be a major factor in the evangelical church, and certainly, a desire to save souls is worthy. As will be seen in a later section, however, this emphasis has resulted in the predominant focus of pastors being on the numerical growth of their churches. This focus on numbers has been a contributing cause for the struggle of modern pastors.

Mead reports that a staggering 90% of Americans were unchurched in 1790,[21] yet according to Evans, by the 1850s, one-third of the American population belonged to the Methodist church.[22] Both of these figures are astonishing in their own right, but are especially so when considered in contrast. The turn-around in church attendance in a mere sixty-year period could have been influenced by a variety of factors, but it seems clear that the revivalist approach and the theological shift regarding salvation were among them, if not preeminent. Souls being saved certainly resulted in church growth.

Much of the methodology used by the Methodists in preaching the Gospel, winning souls, making disciples, and building the church has continued to be utilized by the church. The theological factor of an assurance of salvation to new converts has continued to be a dominant force in evangelicalism. A simple "altar call" and a sinner's prayer suffices in most settings today to assure someone that they have been "born

---

[20] Sidney Mead, "Rise of the Evangelical Conception of the Ministry in America (1607-1850)," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, eds. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams, 219-230 (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 229.

[21] Ibid., 247.

[22] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 120.

again." This is a drastic difference from the early Calvinists and Puritans who struggled with how to know if someone was converted.

Beyond the theological influences, ministry approaches of the Methodists were also critical to their success. Their ministers were sacrificially committed to the work and lay people were also a vital part. They also made great use of music in their camp meetings and revivals, which was often done by using popular tunes with Christian lyrics.[23] They focused on the growing frontier regions rather than the established cultural centers of the East. Emotionalism was a part of their appeal, and revivalism was seen as an assault on false and indifferent forms of Christianity.[24]

Also, to be addressed at length in the next section is how the emphasis upon "winning souls," while rightly applauded by evangelicals, might have created a ministry climate that is toxic for many modern pastors. The emphasis upon "souls" seems to have devolved to the less honorable emphasis of numbers and attendance rather than truly being about conversions. It could be contended that church growth and church attendance are the preeminent measures of success for today's American pastors. As will be examined in the next section, it is possible that this has created a false, or at least incomplete, measurement for pastors and possibly even for churches. Some have also argued that it has resulted in compromise and a dilution of discipleship and Christian values.

---

[23] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 117.

[24] Ibid., 116.

Discipleship, anchored by small group classes, was also a major focus of nineteenth century Methodism. This ministry relied almost exclusively on lay leaders of both men and women,[25] but it stands to reason that someone had to disciple and train at least some of those lay leaders. Herein is another point in which modern concepts of ministry might be setting many pastors up for a sense of failure. Someone with a pastoral gift can gain a great sense of satisfaction and fulfillment from thoroughly training and discipling a small number of individuals. In our modern church culture, with its emphasis upon numbers, pastors often fail to capitalize on the value and power of meeting with a small group of eager disciples. They can actually feel a sense of guilt, as if their time would be better spent in something more productive.

<div align="center">Evangelicalism and Competition</div>

Mead reports that by the mid 1800's, all of the religious groups of Europe could be found in America but contends that the new religious freedom gave the church a distinctive American quality. It turned the churches into "voluntary associations" and ministers were shorn of power, except for their persuasive or political powers.[26] Ecclesiastical competition became an immediate reality in the fertile ground of American religious liberty. Mead calls it the "propagandization of the Gospel."[27]

The Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans were the primary religious groups in much of America, and they prospered primarily by securing government protectorates. In Massachusetts, the Puritans did the same. As religious freedoms

---

[25] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 119.

[26] Mead, "Rise of the Evangelical Conception of the Ministry in America (1607-1850)," 215.

[27] Ibid., 208.

escalated, these religious establishments began to lose their power, and the political and social elites were no longer able to control the religious movements.[28]

Lay committees soon gained effective control of the material resources of the churches and often of the spiritual aspects, too. This came through their power to hire and set the salaries of the clergymen. Strong forces of congregationalism and localism became dominant forces, and each pastor was compelled to stand upon his own merits without the support of the larger church. This left many pastors in a political relationship of dependence upon their congregations and pressured them to become overly sensitive to the narrowness of their wishes and desires. A pastor was often confronted with the over-riding concern of "securing food and clothing for his family."[29] The implications are obvious and continue today: pastors face the temptation to temper or modify their ministries to secure their place of employment.

In some distinct ways pastoring became much like running a business. This harkens back to the Frankish model of the Catholic Church in the Medieval period where the priests were beholden to the landowners more than to their bishops. In America, pastors found themselves in the unique position of having to please their "customers," in this case, their parishioners. It could be argued that this is actually a good thing that causes pastors to stay sharp and might encourage them to provide a higher quality of ministry. The pros and cons are not the point of this discussion but simply to identify it as a reality in the American church.

---

[28] Evans, *Histories of American Christianity*, 111, 115.

[29] Mead, "Rise of the Evangelical Conception of the Ministry in America (1607-1850)," 218.

The Rise of the Social Gospel

The Refining of the Methodist Church

As early as the 1820s, leaders in the Methodist Church began assertively seeking to make it more genteel and socially acceptable and downplayed the emotionalism often connected to the great camp meetings. The first edition of the *Methodist Magazine* of 1818 began with an editorial promising to disappoint readers hungry for "curious tales, wonderful narratives, or miraculous phenomenon." Editors Thomas Mason and Joshua Soule asserted that the focus of the publication was "reason not superstition." Williams assesses that the Methodists and their "competitors, the Baptists," were simply latecomers in the American church's "race toward refinement."[30] The story of the Methodist Church's movement toward theological liberalism and the social gospel, after being born in the fervor of revival, winning converts by the tens of thousands and effectively "churching" America, captures much of the essence of the American church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This, of necessity, must be a rather condensed account, but the "race to refinement" had serious consequences for the theology of the American church, as well as its practice. What began as a quest for "gentility" and "intellectual respectability" devolved to the place that personal salvation was largely a forgotten dynamic. Williams cites Peter Cartwright's lament, a mid-nineteenth century Methodist great, that the refinement of Methodism had cost it divine power and effectiveness. In contrast, Methodist historian, Abel Stevens, while acknowledging that salvation by Methodists

---

[30] Jeffrey Williams, *Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism: Taking the Kingdom by Force* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 137-139.

was "experimentally known by direct testimony of the Holy Spirit…" decried what he saw as emotional excesses that accompanied it.[31] The final results of these sentiments and changes can be seen in a mid-twentieth century Methodist pastor's account about the confusion and angst of parents in his church resulting from their teenagers having been "born again" at a church camp.[32]

<div align="center">The Social Gospel</div>

Evans defines the social gospel as "an offshoot of theological liberalism that strove to apply a progressive theological vision to engage American social, political, and economic structures." He adds that the primary goal for religion came to be seen as advocating for social changes.[33] The social gospel was not born in a bubble but was largely due to post civil-war issues confronting pastors. These included "immigration, industrialization, urbanization, and new manifestations of institutional racism." Many Christian leaders began to question the inherent goodness of laissez-faire capitalism, and they embraced the idea that the moral and ethical fabric of the nation depended upon its Protestant religious institutions.[34]

Evans states that the social gospel had its roots in evangelicalism. Evangelical optimism believed that lives changed by personal conversion would be affective in society's behavior, and its belief in the millennium fueled efforts to make the world a better place for the Lord's return. Theological concepts about the Kingdom of God were motivational for many Christian social efforts, as well, although these were not uniformly

---

[31] Williams, *Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism*, 141, 143.

[32] Methodist pastor, interview by author, name withheld for confidentiality, Fort Worth, TX, 1981.

[33] Evans, *The Social Gospel in America*, 2-3.

[34] Ibid., 3.

defined. A growing presence of various apocalyptic theologies were surfacing at the time, and some social gospel leaders of evangelicalism sought to mitigate this. Christianizing the social order, while still maintaining evangelical views of sin and depravity, was their goal. They believed that salvation was not about "escaping the sins of the world, but was saving the world."[35]

Notwithstanding a presence of evangelical roots, the social gospel is most associated with liberal theology, which proposed a positive view of humanity and rejected orthodox views of original sin and depravity. It embraced the "higher criticism" emerging in the nineteenth century and sought to harmonize religious beliefs with the intellectual currents of the Enlightenment. Its proponents were fixated on the Hebrew prophets and the "historical" Jesus and postulated that "religion's chief goal was to change people such that the chief goal of a person was to serve the common good."[36]

Many of the goals of the social gospel are praise-worthy but they were met with a great deal of criticism, not the least of which was their failure to address personal salvation. It was also accused of being naïve and hopelessly idealistic, and its optimism was certainly challenged by two world wars in the twentieth century. These factors notwithstanding, Evans notes that by the end of World War II the social gospel ideology was not only "anchored in churches and religious institutions but was expressed in a range of religious and secular movements." He contends that the social gospel was

---

[35] Evans, *The Social Gospel in America*, 6-7.

[36] Ibid., 8.

instrumental in affecting the social movements of the 1950's, 1960's, and beyond.[37] This

aspect of the social gospel naturally progressed to its connection with the political left.

Pastors in much of the twentieth century were caught in an either/or conundrum

between the social gospel and evangelical faith. I cannot explore this topic fully in this

paper, but it seems almost certain that at least some pastors faced personal dilemmas of

mission and worth, with some evangelicals wishing they could do more to address the ills

of society and some social "gospelers" desiring to lead people to truly know Christ. Some

movement has occurred in the late twentieth to early twenty-first centuries to bridge this

divide and will be discussed in a later section of the paper.

The Effect of the Church Growth Movement

Early 1900's: Influence of Liberalism and the "Social Gospel"

The previous discussion about the social gospel is critical to understand the

emergence of the Church Growth Movement. Donald MacGavran was a missionary to

India where he witnessed the failure of social-gospel oriented missions to have any

significant success in winning converts or making Christian disciples. He notes that of

the few converts that had been made, most were either dependent upon the mission for

support or worked for it. His concern about this led him to reconsider the methods of the

church and led directly to his discoveries that became the Church Growth Movement.

MacGavran went to the mission field of India in 1923 heavily influenced by the

teachings of Richard Niebuhr who espoused the view that mission is everything that the

church does outside its four walls, including "philanthropy, education, social work,

---

[37] Evans, *The Social Gospel in America*, 9.

evangelism, and world friendship."[38] As supervisor of eighty missionaries, five hospitals,

numerous high schools and primary schools, a leprosy home, as well as evangelistic

efforts, he became concerned that even though the mission had been in place for several

decades, it only had thirty small churches that were not experiencing growth. From this

experience, he began to revert to a classical view that mission work must first and

foremost be about making disciples.[39]

The direct effect of MacGavran's experience in India upon the creation of what

would be become the Church Growth Movement, was his curiosity about why some

churches in India were growing and others were not. Often, these churches were only a

few miles apart. This led to the development of four major questions that continued to

drive the Church Growth Movement:

1. What are the causes of church growth?
2. What are the barriers of church growth?
3. What are the factors that can make the Christian faith a movement among some populations?
4. What principles of church growth are reproducible?[40]

MacGavran was not against meeting social needs. While acknowledging the value

of providing social services, he contended that they could not replace finding the lost and

leading them to salvation. He posited that principles of "life, death, and resurrection"

outweighs the need for "Christianizing the social order" and that eternal salvation is more

---

[38] Donald MacGavran, "My Pilgrimage in Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10, no.2 (April 1986): 54.

[39] Gary MacIntosh, "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored," in *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views,* eds. Paul Engle and Gary McIntosh (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004),11-12.

[40] George Hunter III, "The Legacy of Donald A. MacGavran," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no. 4 (October 1992): 158.

important than temporal well-being. He argued that the most effective way to improve

society is through the growth of disciples.[41]

In mission, as in churches, many tasks have to be fulfilled, but MacGavran argued

that these must contribute to and not crowd out the ultimate task of "reconciliation of

men and women to God in the Church of Jesus Christ."[42] He called for the church to get

beyond endless seeking and to develop a theology of harvest.[43]

<div align="center">Importance and Effects of the Church Growth Movement</div>

Elmer Towns opines that the Church Growth Movement has contributed so much

to American Christianity that it is difficult to "imagine how we did ministry before the

movement was introduced."[44] McIntosh asserts that the principles of the Movement have

been grafted into the thinking of most American Protestant denominations and churches.

He alleges that many modern church movements are actually rooted in the Church

Growth Movement, including Christian Schwartz's Natural Church Development, which

purports to advocate church health antithetically to church growth. He contends that

Schwartz's findings are merely affirmations of Church Growth principles from the

1970's and 1980's.[45]

---

[41] Donald MacGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 22-23.

[42] Ibid., 32.

[43] Ibid., 24.

[44] Elmer Towns, "Effective Evangelism View," in *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views,* eds. Paul Engle and Gary McIntosh (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 32.

[45] Gary MacIntosh, "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored," 22.

MacGavran contended that the most important concern to God is the finding of lost souls and maintained, therefore, that it should be the most important quest of the church. Having determined that finding lost souls is the ultimate mission of the church, he then concluded that "the chief and irreplaceable purpose of mission is church growth."[46] Church Growth became theology; God "required it."[47] The mission of winning souls became equated to the mission of growing church.

Towns asserts that the most important contribution of the Church Growth Movement has been "its awakening of church leaders to ask 'Why?' and 'What?' in search of workable biblical principles for ministry."[48] MacGavran was clearly concerned with why churches do or do not grow. He notes that the Southern Baptist Convention had two million members in 1900 but grew to thirteen million by 1980, and he laments that no books were written or studies done to examine the factors that led to this growth. MacGavran believed that there are definitive factors that lead to growth, as well as to a lack of it, and contended that until those factors "form part of the knowledge of all those engaged in the work of the church, the reconciling of people to God-in-Christ will limp when it should run."[49]

> Towns asserts this list defines the essence of the Church Growth Movement:
> 1. The importance of numerical growth.
> 2. Necessity of focusing evangelism on receptive groups.
> 3. Importance of people movements and the homogeneous principle.
> 4. Use of science as a valid tool to determine strategy and principles.
> 5. Right method guarantees a large response.[50]

---

[46] MacGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 22.

[47] Ibid., 8.

[48] Towns, "Effective Evangelism View," 39.

[49] MacGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 56.

[50] Towns, "Effective Evangelism View," 40.

MacGavran resigned from his mission society to be able to promote the Church

Growth discoveries in the United States. He founded the Church Growth Institute in 1961

at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. His first class had one student. He

began teaching seminars in various locations, and he first began to publish the *Church

Growth Bulletin* in 1964. In 1965, MacGavran was invited to open a third graduate

school, The School of World Mission, at Fuller Theological Seminary. This proved to be

an important development and the principles of church growth expanded as more

influential colleagues joined MacGavran.[51]

One of MacGavran's students, Win Arn, resigned his position as an executive

with the Evangelical Covenant Church to found the Institute for American Church

Growth, now Church Growth, Inc., in 1972. The Charles E. Fuller Institute for

Evangelism and Church Growth became a major component in the wide dissemination of

Church Growth principles across America. Fuller Seminary began offering a Doctor of

Ministry in Church Growth. By 1985, over 1500 American clergy had been trained in the

Fuller Doctor of Ministry program, including such notable personalities as John Maxwell,

Rick Warren, Leith Anderson and others.[52]

After what some called a "third awakening" and a brief revival of religion in the

1950's, the church went into serious decline in the 1960's.[53] McIntosh assesses that this

---

[51] McIntosh, "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored," 14-15.

[52] Ibid., 17-18.

[53] Grant Tobin, "The Great Decline: 60 Years of Religion in One Graph," Religion News Service, January 27, 2014, accessed October 16, 2017, http://religionnews.com/2014/01/27/great-decline-religion-united-states-one-graph/.

decline was a factor that sparked interest in the Church Growth Movement, as pastors and leaders sought to turn struggling churches around.

By the 1980s, many pastors were schooled and convinced of the if/then promises of the Church Growth Movement. Seminar after seminar presented the mechanics of church growth, and many pastors and churches did experience significant growth. As MacGavran knew, however, answering "why a church grows is complex,"[54] which was a truth that many pastors began to discover. Although Towns asserts that "numerical growth of the church is observable, measurable, and repeatable,"[55] growing a church is not a formula to simply be plugged in to obtain automatic results.

The Church Growth Movement and the Mega-Church[56] Trend

Towns asserts that with the introduction of the Church Growth Movement "came an explosion of mega churches."[57] For good or bad, he asserts that the Church Growth Movement is directly connected to the advent of the mega church boom. Mega churches are not new. Churches with thousands in attendance met during the ministry of John Calvin and other reformers. The Quaker Meeting House in Nantucket, Massachusetts sometimes drew crowds of over two thousand in the 1700s, as did a church that met in the United States Capitol Building in 1857. Numerous churches had attendance in the

---

[54] MacGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 92.

[55] Towns, "Effective Evangelism View," 38-39.

[56] "The term megachurch generally refers to any Protestant … Christian congregation with a sustained average weekly attendance of 2000 persons or more in its worship services, counting all adults and children at all its worship locations." See "Megachurch Definition," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2015, accessed December 10, 2017, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/definition.html.

[57] Towns, "Effective Evangelism View," 32.

thousands throughout the early twentieth century, but this was the exception not the rule and it was often not sustained. In 1983 there were fewer than one hundred mega churches in the United States.[58] Thumma and Bird reported there were 1611 mega churches in 2011.[59]

It is undeniable that there are many admirable qualities to be found in mega churches. Thumma and Bird report that they often experience a sense of being spiritually alive and vital and are high in clarity and purpose, although the latter decreased from 65% in 2005 to 51% in 2015. They also have a strong emphasis upon personal evangelism, racial diversity, high rate of participation in small groups, and significant involvement in world missions, along with other noteworthy features.[60] Oliver Libaw wrote that most mega churches are theologically conservative "with a Bible-centered approach to Christianity."[61] They have the capability to offer paid internships for young ministers and provide high level of ministry to singles, people who have been divorced, and other niche needs. They also can become resource churches for other churches.

Mega churches also receive considerable criticism, the greatest of which is that they are growing by taking members from other churches. This is actually true, per a 2009 study, which shows that 44% of mega church attenders came directly from another

---

[58] Warren Bird, "World's First Megachurch?" Leadership Network, May 4, 2012, accessed October 16, 2017, http://leadnet.org/worlds_first_megachurch/.

[59] Warren Bird and Scott Thumma, "A New Decade of Megachurches: 2011 Profile of Large Attendance Churches in the United States," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2015, accessed October 25, 2017, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurch-2011-summary-report.htm.

[60] Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, "Recent Shifts in America's Largest Churches: Megachurch 2015 Report," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, accessed October 16, 2017, http://hartfordinstitute.org/megachurch/2015_megachurches_report.pdf.

[61] Oliver Libaw, "More Americans Flock to Mega-churches," ABC News, June 13, 2001, accessed October 16, 2017, http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=93111&page=1.

local congregation. The study shows little difference between mega churches and other

churches regarding other factors of where attenders come from. It should be noted that

the general category "Attended Another Church Before," includes people who have

moved from other locations.[62]

Attended another church before	Mega churches	72%	All other churches	66%
Did not attend for years	Mega churches	16%	All other churches	18%
Never attended church	Mega churches	6%	All other churches	5%
Here all my life	Mega churches	4%	All other churches	13%

The preceding chart illustrates several key factors. First, it is obvious that there is

no widespread growth of any churches as a result of evangelization, if that is understood

as meaning bringing in those who have not previously been converted or were not already

attending church somewhere. A second, and surprising, finding is that "other churches"

are bringing in a higher percentage of people who "did not attend church for years."

Third, while it is true that mega churches "only" brought in six percent more in the

category of coming straight from another church, it is critical to think of those percentage

points in terms of numbers. Given the sheer size being considered with mega churches,

six percent equates to a lot of numbers, or more precisely to a lot of people.

---

[62] Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, "Not Who You Think They Are: The Real Story of the People Who Attend America's Megachurches," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2015, accessed October 17, 2017, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurch_attender_report.htm.

Some Conclusions About the Mega Church Effect on Pastors

I have been critical of what I have seen as the devastating effect of mega churches on smaller, community churches, so the figures in the above chart came as a surprise. This surprise notwithstanding, problems with the mega church are still a reality for many local church pastors. As mentioned above, even a six percent higher rate of transfer growth into mega churches represents a lot of people leaving someone's church.

Some of the greater challenges that smaller church pastors face regarding mega churches might be psychological. Most books that pastors read are written by mega church pastors, most speakers at the conferences they attend are mega church pastors, and most pastors that receive adulations and honor are mega church pastors. The signal is clear; successful pastors are mega church pastors. Symbiotic to this is the realization that the average-to-smaller sized church simply cannot provide all that the neighboring mega church has to offer, which can result in pastors feeling intimidated and insecure. Several years ago, word reached me that an area mega church was opening a satellite location about a mile from the church I pastored. I literally felt sick with overwhelming dread. I do not believe this is uncommon but also do not believe it is necessary, if pastors can understand the metrics that define success for who and what they are.

Some Conclusions About the Church Growth Movement

It seems clear that MacGavran and other Church Growth Movement founders were on a quest to help the church become more effective in evangelism. Stetzer assesses that the founders indeed had a missiological focus but the "American consumer-driven

culture, as well as an unhealthy obsession with success, has resulted in a formula-based approach to God's mission."[63] He opines that the formulas over promised and under delivered, but contends the greatest problem was that many who implemented the formulas did not have the same evangelistic zeal as the founders.[64] It seems that implementing formulas and achieving growth might have become the ultimate goals, rather than evangelism.

MacGavran argued that "the chief and irreplaceable goal of mission is church growth."[65] I find it extremely problematic to name church growth as the ultimate goal of mission. MacAfee and Raper assess that MacGavran's "noble desire to foster church growth in ministry has led to an overly pragmatic/methodological view of ministry." They contend that the numerical growth of the church became the "ultimate and over-riding goal."[66] If the "chief and irreplaceable goal" is church growth, then two things are true: 1) a church that grows, no matter what it might be leaving undone is a success, and 2) a church that does not grow is a failure, no matter what good it might be doing. This is the ultimate logical conclusion to church growth theology, and I contend that it has dis-spirited countless numbers of pastors.

While a few pastors might not want their churches to grow, this is certainly not true for most. Pastors want their churches to grow and they intuitively know that this

---

[63] Ed Stetzer, "What's the Deal with the Church Growth Movement, pt. 3," Vision Room, n.d., accessed December 17, 2015, http://visionroom.com/whats-the-deal-with-the-church-growth-movement-part-3/.

[64] Ibid.

[65] MacGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 22.

[66] Matthew MacAfee and Barry Raper, "Donald MacGavran and the Church Growth Movement," Helwys Society Forum*,* February 3, 2015, accessed October 17, 2017, http://www.helwyssocietyforum.com/?p=4621.

should be connected to winning souls. Of itself, the Church Growth Movement and its principles are not bad, and in fact, many are good. Even the most pragmatic ones, such as making sure the church has adequate parking, is logical and sound. The problem has been that many pastors have adopted Church Growth Principles for the purpose of growing their churches. If that is the end result and driving motivation, it is not only inadequate, it is simply wrong. Although, it is likely that most pastors who adopt church growth principles would contend that their goal is to win souls, the ultimate emphasis upon numbers seems likely to replace the mandate of winning souls and making disciples with something human that has no eternal value.

It is also problematic that many pastors are simply not gifted or skilled at implementing the Church Growth principles and in their efforts to do so, three things occur. One, they fail at the effort and are often deeply discouraged with ministry overall. Second, they expend themselves in their efforts to implement the principles and leave undone many pastoral ministries and functions at which they would normally excel. Third, no matter what other good they might accomplish in ministry and life is often overshadowed by their feelings of failure.

It is critical for a new metric to be established by which pastors measure themselves other than the numerical metric. Numbers matter, but they are not the metric of whether or not a pastor has been a success. I would argue that it is not even the metric of success for a church. A pastor and church might have big numbers and be successful in ministry, but they also might not be. Another pastor and church might have few numbers at any given time and be failing in ministry, or they might not be. The numbers alone simply cannot tell the whole story.

CHAPTER 5

Biblical Foundations for Pastoral Ministry

The Shepherd Model

This section will explore what the Biblical foundations for pastoral ministry. Stitzinger assesses that it is impossible to approach the subject of pastoral theology free of influence from one's tradition, and that it is "imperative [to] begin, continue, and end with a study of the Scriptures in a study of true pastoral ministry."[1] We have followed the trail of human history and seen its effect on how pastors are viewed and the functions expected of them. Much of what has been seen is good, but much of it is not. Some allowance must be made for changes in culture and societies, but nonetheless, it is necessary to discover a Biblical foundation in order to determine a set of metrics that enables pastors to minister with joy and fulfillment in their call.

There are seven Old Testament references in the King James translation using the word "pastors," all of which are in Jeremiah. The Hebrew word is *ra-ah* and literally means to "tend a flock" or to "pasture it."[2] The New King James and the New International Versions translate those words as shepherds. The only New Testament reference using the word "pastors" is Ephesians 4:11. That Greek word is *poimen* and literally means shepherd.[3] It stands to reason, therefore, that any study of the Biblical

---

[1] Stitzinger, "Pastoral Ministry in History," 147.

[2] *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 804, Strong's no. 7462; see also הער, "to protect as shepherd," "shepherd" in Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumbarten, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Study Edition, eds. Walter Baumgarten and Johann Jakob Stamm, trans. M.E.J. Richardson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 2:1258-1262.

[3] *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 804; see also ποιμήν, ποιμένος, ὁ, "one who herds sheep, *shepherd, sheep-herder*; one who serves as guardian or leader, *shepherd*," in Frederick

nature and function of pastors in the Church of Jesus Christ must include the concept of the shepherd.

God the Shepherd

Stitzinger asserts that the phrase, "The Lord is my Shepherd" in Psalm 23:1, expresses the pastoral role of God with His people. He assesses that the Shepherd displays "Fatherly care, love, mercy, discipline, compassion, and delight toward His people" and adds that the image of the shepherds in the Old Testament also exemplifies "God's authority and faithfulness."[4] God the shepherd provides all our needs and guides into places of rest and abundance. The still waters paint a beautiful picture of the Shepherd's provision and rich refreshing. He restores our souls to wholeness and leads us to walk in paths of righteousness. Even when we are faced with the reality of death, He comforts and protects us. He provides abundant blessings in the presence of enemies, and ultimately, grants us an eternal place in His house.[5]

The "God as shepherd" motif is present throughout the Old Testament but especially in the Psalms. The idea of God guiding His people as a shepherd is seen in Psalm 77:20, 78:52 and 80:1. God the Shepherd searches for and gathers His flock in Jeremiah 31:10, Ezekiel 34:11, and Isaiah 40:11. He feeds the flock and gathers the lambs into His bosom in Isaiah 40:11. The Psalmist declares "we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture."[6]

William Danker, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 843.

[4] Stitzinger, "Pastoral Ministry in History," 147.

[5] Psalm 23.

[6] Psalm 100:3.

The Chief Shepherd

When God spoke through Peter to give instructions to the leaders of the church, he exhorted them to care for God's people in view of the impending return of the "Chief Shepherd," obviously speaking of Jesus. [7] In John 10:11, Jesus identified Himself as the Good Shepherd who "gives His life for the sheep." This was juxtaposed to the hireling who would flee at approaching danger because he does not care for the sheep. [8] Jesus said that He knows His sheep and they know Him and will hear His voice. [9] Hebrews 13:20 identifies Jesus as "that great shepherd of the sheep," and 1 Peter 2:25 calls Him the "Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Jesus, the Eternal Word of God made flesh, is the Good Shepherd who knows His people by name, cares for them, gives His life for them, provides abundant life to them, and guides them.

Under-Shepherds

Tidball asserts that Psalm 23:1 is the "underlining paradigm of ministry," pointing out that it contains "references to the authority, tender care, specific tasks, courage and sacrifice required of the pastor."[10] Hoppin observes that "the pastor is eminently an earthly representative of Christ, who is the Great Shepherd of souls."[11] Psalm 77:20 relates that God led His people "by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Peter instructs the

---

[7] 1 Peter 5:2, 4.

[8] John 10:12.

[9] John 10:14-16.

[10] Derek Tidball, *Skillful Shepherds: An Introduction to Pastoral Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 54.

[11] James Hoppin, *Pastoral Theology* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885), 387.

elders to "shepherd the flock of God … being examples to the flock." Jesus told Peter to "feed My sheep." [12]

Oden rhetorically asks if the shepherd image is fitting for contemporary society and answers his own question from John 10:1-8, which is a passage in which Jesus describes His own character as the good shepherd. He notes that the shepherd is intimately acquainted with his flock, calling each one by name and holding them in his arms. He leads them out to a protected area into pasture, brings them home safely again, looks out for danger, and even lays down his life for them. The sheep know the shepherd's voice and willingly follow but are wary of a stranger's voice. The sheep are united by listening together to the shepherd's voice. Oden surmises that, indeed, the shepherd is a fitting image for the contemporary pastor.[13]

The Christian shepherd exercises authority, but Oden contends that it is a special sort of authority. It is "based on competence grounded in mutuality [and] requires empathy to be empowered." He continues by noting that it is "not primarily coercive," such as that exercised by policemen or judges and asserts that pastoral authority that exerts coercive power has lost its "Christological base." [14]

---

[12] 1 Peter 5:2-3.

[13] Thomas Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 51-52.

[14] Ibid., 53-54.

Bishops, Elders, and House Church Leaders

Giles assesses that Jesus did not institute a singular pattern for leadership in Christian communities,[15] so it is necessary to engage the New Testament with some level of deduction to determine the functions of the pastor. It could quite reasonably be argued that there was no ministry office in the New Testament that exactly corresponds to the position that is known in modern society as a "pastor." That being said, three offices will be considered: the presbyteros (elders), episkopos (bishops or overseers), and leaders of house churches which give an image of pastoral ministry.

Bishops or Overseers

Coenen defines the episkopos group of words to denote "the activity of looking at or paying attention to a person or thing … to observe, review, watch over, superintend, or scrutinize."[16] He notes that though bishop came to be such an important word, it is only found five times in the New Testament, four of which refer to leaders of the community and one to Jesus as the guardian of souls. The word indicates oversight which means "loving care and concern, a responsibility willingly shouldered … Its meaning is to be seen in Christ's selfless service which was moved by concern for the salvation of men."[17]

When Peter gave instructions to the elders to "shepherd" the flock of God, he said they were to "serve as overseers" who were examples to the flock. The Greek word episkopos is often translated bishop, but it literally means to oversee, to take oversight, to

---

[15] Kevin Giles, *Patterns of Ministry among the First Christians* (North Blackburn, Victoria, AU: Collins Dove, 1989), 7.

[16] Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," 188.

[17] Ibid., 191.

beware and look diligently.[18] Although oversee might connote leadership, it is in the framework of protecting those in one's care. This is not to argue against the possibility that "pastors" are required to lead or "run" churches, but it is to say that that is not what is meant by "to oversee" in this Biblical reference. A pastor takes upon him or herself the responsibility of spiritual protection and care for a "flock" of people.

Acts 20:28 records Paul admonishing the Ephesian elders to guard themselves and the flock, "among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." The responsibility to oversee or bishop the flock of God is directly attributed to an impartation of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to note that in this instance, presbyteros (elders) and episkopos (overseers) are used of the same people. In 1 Timothy 3:4-5, the bishop is to be a person who runs his own house well; if he does not, the question is raised how shall he "take care of the church of God."

It is quite fascinating that the ability to rule his own house does not equate to ruling the church, but rather of taking care of it. Overseers are instructed to serve, "not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, nor as lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."[19] Biblical bishops have no similarity to the position as it is thought of in the modern church with its trappings of authority and regality. Instead, it is to follow the example of Jesus, the "Bishop of our souls" in looking out for, caring for, and providing for those given by the Holy Spirit as charges into one's care.

---

[18] *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Strong's no. 1985: ἐπίσκοπος. ἐπίσκοπος, ἐπισκόπου, ὁ, which is a noun, is based on the verb ἐπισκοπέω, which provides for such actions as "to look at, take care, see to it; to accept responsibility for the care of someone, *oversee, care for.*" See Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 378.

[19] 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Elders

The first reference to church elders is of the elders in the Jerusalem church in Acts 11:30; there are several other references to this group of elders, including Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 21:18; and 22:5. Acts 14:23 records that Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders in every church" which they had established. Paul met with the elders of the Ephesian church in Acts 20:17 and directed Titus to ordain elders in every city, presumably in Crete where he was assigned to ministry. He exhorts Timothy to "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."[20] In James 5:14, the sick are instructed to call for the elders for prayer, who are to do so by anointing with oil and praying "the prayer of faith" for the purpose of bringing about healing.

These references to the elders in the church give some definition to Biblical Christian ministry. It can be seen that they had some degree of leadership authority, at least some of them ministered the Word and taught doctrine, they were care givers and prayer givers for the people, they were appointed, and they were present in most, if not all the churches. It seems clear that there were multiple elders in each church, even if what is meant by the term "church" is not clearly defined.

---

[20] 1 Timothy 5:17.

Historical Context of Elders

To better understand the role of elders in the New Testament, and thus of pastors, it will be helpful to look at elders in the Old Testament and during the time of Jesus. Coenen describes the ancient elders as "an established part of the patriarchal clan and tribal system, where an authority which was scarcely challenged, though variously qualified, belonged to the heads of families. He reports that when these elders were gathered in Exodus 12 to receive instructions about the Passover, they were called the "elders of Israel," which he surmises suggests the possibility that the individual families were already seen as "constituent parts of the whole."[21]

In Exodus 24, Moses chose seventy elders from among the whole body of elders to accompany him to the ratification of the Sinai Covenant. Coenen relates that in Judaism, as well as in later Christian thought, this indicated a shift to a "representative body of the representative body" that had taken on a new function of divine commission. The role of elders changed again after the people of Israel had settled in Palestine. The lives of the people were more controlled by the communities around them and the elders seem to have become men who controlled their local communities. They were responsible for judicial, political, and military decisions.[22]

Coenen asserts that after the destruction of Jerusalem, the term "elder" came to be used as an expression of honor for outstanding theologians. It was also used for the presidents, or rulers, of individual synagogues. By the time of Jesus, the term elder had lost its "functional significance" in the Jewish community and was used primarily as a

---

[21] Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," 194.

[22] Ibid., 195.

title of honor for patrician families.[23] It seems that the New Testament church revived

elder to an earlier era with at least some Old Testament applications in its functioning.

Some Conclusions Regarding Elders

Notwithstanding the seeming titular and relatively functionless role of elders in

Judaism by the advent of the New Testament, elders seemed to have defined roles and

purpose in the Biblical church. It seems that Biblical elders, and thus it could be stated,

Biblical pastors, ministered to some extent in the pattern of Old Testament elders. They

were called upon to make judicial decisions, as in the case of the Gentile question in Acts

15. They seem to have had some degree of authority and leadership and, as mentioned in

1 Timothy 3:4, they were responsible to "take care of the church of God." Like the elders

in Exodus 24, they seemed to have responsibility for a small part of the church, but with

each part being seen as constituents of the whole.

Peter addresses the elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4, identifying himself as a "fellow elder."

His instructions to the elders is to "shepherd the flock of God," indicating that the elders

were shepherds of the church; as has been noted, shepherd and pastor are the same thing

in the Scriptures. It seems safe to deduce, therefore, that elders, were pastor figures in the

New Testament church.

House Church Leaders

Several instances of church being held in a person's house are found in Scripture.

Romans 16:5 and I Corinthians 15:19 mention the church in the house of Prisca and

Aquila, Colossians 4:15 addresses the church in the house of Nymphas, and the letter to

Philemon speaks of the church in his house. In Acts 10:24, Peter preached to relatives

---

[23] Coenen, "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder," 196.

and friends gathered in the house of Cornelius. The newly birthed church "broke bread from house to house,"[24] and gathered daily in the temple and in homes to preach and teach Jesus Christ.[25] Acts 20:20 records that Paul taught publicly and from house to house.

Giles asserts that the instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 to honor "those who labor among you" refers to house church leaders. Not only did these leaders labor among them, they also presided over and admonished the people. The apostle urged the church to recognize and honor these leaders "very highly in love for their work's sake," seeming to indicate the value of the work they did, not an office they held.[26] Giles points to the passage in 1 Thessalonians 5, and a similar passage in 1 Corinthians 16:15-18, and assesses that these presuppose that Christians met in houses under the "quasi-patronage of the 'head' of the home."[27]

Part of the Team

Pastors, although only mentioned once in the New Testament, were a part of a ministry consortium not lone agents in church ministry. Ephesians 4:11 lists the pastor along with a group of four other ministry titles, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers. Little definition is given in the New Testament to any of these gifts or how they function, although some instruction is given to the "gift of prophecy" in 1 Corinthians 14. Some of the apostles were instrumental in spreading the Gospel outside

---

[24] Acts 2:46.

[25] Acts 5:42.

[26] Giles, *Patterns of Ministry among the First Christians*, 32.

[27] Ibid, 32-33.

the confines of Israel, but others seemed to be headquartered in Jerusalem. Scoggins

notes this distinction and identifies it as two models of apostleship that he calls "pauline,"

which he identifies as apostleship to the unreached, and "petrine," as apostolic ministry to

the people of God.[28]

Like the word "pastor," the word "evangelist" has little presence in the New

Testament. Philip is identified as an evangelist, evangelists are included in the Ephesians

4:11 listing, and Timothy is instructed to "do the work of an evangelist."[29] Teacher is a

more often cited gift, but these passages include references to those who were teachers,

wanted to be teachers, as well as warnings about false teachers, but once again, little

definition is given to the gift. Mentioning the other gifts is important, in that it can be

seen that a certain degree of deduction is necessary to understand any of the ministry

gifts, including that of the pastor. This thought will be kept in mind as some conclusions

are drawn here for the Biblical foundations of ministry, but even more particularly as

metrics for the meaning of being a successful pastor are developed at the conclusion.

Some Concluding Thoughts About the Biblical Foundations for Pastoral Ministry

One striking reality gleaned from this quick survey of Scripture is that there is no

set prescription regarding pastoral ministry in the Christian church. In fact, the premise

could easily be supported that there is nothing in the New Testament that resembles the

role of the "senior pastor" as it is known in modern culture. This hearkens back to

Peterson's assertion that much of modern pastoring has devolved to being more about

---

[28] Dick Scoggins, "Nurturing a Generation of 'Pauline' and 'Petrine' Apostles," *Mission Frontiers* (July-August 2006): 12, accessed December 12, 2017, https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/28-4-scoggins.pdf, quoted in Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 120.

[29] 2 Timothy 4:5.

running churches than being pastors. One might also reasonably argue, however, that God left church structure and ministerial roles adequately ambiguous to be adaptable to any culture.

<div style="text-align:center">Some Conclusions About the Pastor as Shepherd</div>

Psalm 23 reveals the nature of God as our shepherd and since the "pastor" is a human counterpart of God, it seems valid to question if it is possible to determine substantive and fulfilling Biblical metrics for pastoral ministry apart from the shepherd model. The pastor is responsible to "feed" God's people with His Word, provide them with a literal, if invisible, covering of protective prayer, guide them into places of being able to feast on the riches of God for themselves, lead them to experience restoration, teach them to be at peace even in the face of death, be victorious in the presence of adversity, to live in God's blessings, and to dwell in His presence forever. Oden poignantly asks, "How can a person be a pastor without doing what pastors do?"[30] And, what has been clearly evidenced is that pastors shepherd people.

<div style="text-align:center">Some Conclusions About Pastors as Elders, Bishops, and House Church Leaders</div>

It seems safe to conclude that elders, bishops, and house church leaders all would correspond in some capacity to modern pastors. These people were leaders of the church, albeit to what degree and capacity they led, is not clearly defined. At least some of them were teachers, they prayed, they shepherded, and they served. They had a level of responsibility for the well-being of God's people, and of the churches. They did not work alone but in a network with others and they were accountable, at least to some degree, to

---

[30] Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, xi.

apostles and perhaps other elders or bishops. Loyd comments that of all the instructions given to the church leaders in the Pastoral Epistles, it is noteworthy that it was almost entirely instructions about their character.[31] Biblical leaders that equate to pastors are first and foremost to be people of Godly character.

Conclusions About Pastors as Part of the Team

Perhaps, the most paradigm-busting aspect of looking at "Biblical pastors" is that they were only a part of the ministry team in the New Testament. The failure to recognize this truth might result in pastors attempting to fulfill the role expected of a different part of the team and contribute to their feelings of failure and discouragement.

---

[31] Deborah Loyd, Phone interview by author, September 27, 2017.

CHAPTER 6

Literature Review: What Others Are Saying

This literature review addresses several different "voices" that are speaking to the plight of the pastor. First, is the "Pastor as Attractor," which takes a look at the "seeker-sensitive" movement. Second is a discussion of "Pastor as Theologian" and then the "Pastor as Pastor," or "Spiritual Director." Last to be considered is the "Pastor in an Emerging Culture." These are by no means all the voices affecting pastors today but represent the most influential and have a broad audience.

Pastor as Attractor

Warren: *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission*

A google search just this evening, November 8, 2017, of the words "church growth" resulted in 4,860,000 hits in .47 seconds. All of those are not books, of course, but many are. Although this is a church growth book written in 1995, it is still probably one of the all-time classics on the subject and thoroughly encapsulates seeker-sensitive ideals and principles.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church, credits the beginning of his ideas about church growth to an article he read in 1974 about Donald McGavran, the father of the Church Growth Movement. He relates that the day he read the article, he felt God directing him to "invest the rest of [his] life discovering the principles – biblical, cultural, and leadership principles – that produce healthy, growing churches."[1] He

---

[1] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 31.

developed a list of eight questions that helped guide the development of his philosophy of

ministry. These were:

1. How much of what churches do is really biblical?
2. How much of what we do is just cultural?
3. Why do some churches grow and others die on the vine?
4. What causes a growing church to stop growing, plateau, and then decline?
5. Are there common factors found in every growing church?
6. Are there principles that will work in every culture?
7. What are the barriers to growth?
8. What are the conventional myths about growing churches that aren't true anymore (or never were)?[2]

One of Warren's maxims is that the right question to be asked is "What is keeping a

church from growing?", not "What will make a church grow?" This idea is essential

McGavran philosophy.

In the early years as pastor of Saddleback, Warren led his congregation through a

biblical study to discover the purpose of the church, resulting in his now famous five

purposes:

1. Magnify: We celebrate God's presence in worship
2. Mission: We communicate God's Word though evangelism
3. Membership: We incorporate God's family into our family
4. Maturity: We educate God's people through discipleship
5. Ministry: We demonstrate God's love through service.[3]

These purposes became the essence of the mission statement of the church. Warren

asserts that the first and most important task of any church is to determine its purpose.

The second task that Warren insists a church must accomplish is to determine its

evangelistic target. He gives the example of a radio station playing music ranging from

classical to country to heavy metal, and surmises it would have no audience at all. He

contends it is the same for a church. He determined that the Sunday morning service at

---

[2] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 30.

[3] Ibid., 107.

Saddleback would target the unbeliever, or seeker, and Wednesday evening would be to disciple believers. This was his brand of the now familiar concept of the "seeker-sensitive" approach to doing church. Warren goes into great detail in the book to describe how to design a seeker-sensitive service.

Warren posits that the "key issue for the twenty-first century is church health, not church growth."[4] He no doubt believes that, but the tone of the book is decidedly about church growth. He gives great attention to reaching the unchurched using the analogy of fishing, surmising that understanding the culture is much like a fisherman understanding how the "fish think." He appraises that the church should begin with the felt needs of the unchurched and let the target audience determine the approach. At a time that Saddleback had five thousand adults in attendance, Warren reports that four thousand were new converts.[5] The latest statistics show that Saddleback's attendance is now 26,479 that meet in eighteen locations.[6] How many of the current attenders are new converts or transfers is unknown or unreported.

It is safe to say that Warren's work and ministry have significantly impacted a majority of American pastors in some way. This especially includes his Five Purposes and ideas about creating a "seeker-sensitive" church. Warren reported that at the time of this publication many thousands of pastors had already been to Saddleback for training, and it is certain that multiplied thousands more since then have read the book and/or attended his training.

---

[4] Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 17.

[5] Ibid., 50.

[6] "The Outreach 100 Largest Participating Churches 2017: The *Outreach* Magazine and Lifeway Research Annual Report," Outreach Magazine, 2017, accessed December 12, 2017, http://www.outreachmagazine.com/outreach-100-largest-churches-2017.html.

Some pastors share the right skill sets and temperament to lead church after the Saddleback model, and undoubtedly many are doing great work for the kingdom of God in that capacity. I personally know pastors that are leading Saddleback style churches that are not only growing and large, but they also seem to be healthy. Sadly, many other pastors, excited about the possibility of winning souls for Christ and growing bigger churches, have tried to implement a seeker-sensitivity model into their churches, only to be met with great disappointment at best, and total shipwreck at worst. It could be argued that most pastors are neither called or gifted to lead attractional churches nor to grow mega churches.

Notwithstanding the rhetoric about healthy church and reaching the unchurched, much of what the seeker model does is create an "attractional" model of church that largely attracts many who are already Christians. It is reasonable to understand the mega church phenomenon as a direct result of the Church Growth Movement, and as cited earlier in this paper, there is no statistical evidence that suggests this model is winning a higher percentage of unchurched or "unsaved" people to Christ than any other model. In spite of great intentions, Warren's Purpose Driven, seeker-sensitive model is good for some as a model of doing church, but it is not an answer to the malaise in which many pastors find themselves. In fact, it could actually be one of the root causes of why many pastors are struggling today.

Pastor as Theologian

Vanhoozer and Strachan: The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision

Vanhoozer and Strachan assess that not only society's view of the pastor has become increasingly secular, but that the church's view has as well. Tragically, many pastors embrace current trends and have exchanged "their vocational birthright for a bowl of lentil stew." The lentil stew of which the authors speak is "management skills, strategic plans, 'leadership courses,' therapeutic techniques, and so forth." They contend that theology has been relegated to the academy and is in exile from the local church, and that consequently, "God is in ecclesial eclipse."[7]

Vanhoozer and Strachan report that until the nineteenth century most theologians were pastors or churchmen but that this changed with the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher. He developed a fourfold curriculum still in use today that divided theological studies into biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology. This led to a division of theology into the classical and professional, with only practical theology as a part of the latter. This became even more pronounced when a further divide occurred between theology and biblical studies.

The "academic" disciplines of theology were viewed as abstract and irrelevant to practical ministry. Vanhoozer and Strachan assess that most theology is written "by academics for academics" and that it is perceived to have little application to the real life and ministry of the pastorate.[8] One wondered, for example, how the doctrine of the

---

[7] Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), Kindle Loc 155.

[8] Vanhoozer and Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian*, Kindle Loc 240.

Trinity mattered when visiting someone newly diagnosed with cancer or who is laid off from their job; for that matter, it was asked, "What bearing does the doctrine of the Trinity have on the life of the church at all?" The authors lament that this thought process "is as unfortunate as it is false."[9]

The authors assert that the separation of the church and academy has had debilitating consequences, including an understanding about who and what pastors are. They suggest that widespread confusion exists among pastors and parishioners alike regarding "what pastors are and what they are supposed to do…What do pastors have to say and do that no one else can?"[10] Their assessment that "It is hard to apply standards of excellence to what pastors do unless we first determine what it is they are (or should) be doing"[11] is poignantly applicable to the study of determining a set of metrics to measure a pastor's "success."

Vanhoozer and Strachan have made a significant contribution to the conversation regarding the role of pastors by linking the pastor-as-theologian to the task of the spiritual formation of the people in their congregations. They surmise that to be a pastor-theologian is to be able to speak of God, not only to their churches, but to society. They quote Alexander Solzhenitsyn's assessment that an intellectual is someone who is able to "speak meaningfully and truthfully about broad topics of ultimate social concern"[12] as apropos to the role of the pastor. He or she does not have the luxury to be a specialist, but

---

[9] Vanhoozer and Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian*, Kindle Loc 252.

[10] Ibid., Kindle Loc 292.

[11] Ibid., Kindle Loc 318.

[12] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," (Commencement address at Harvard University, June 8, 1978), quoted in Vanhoozer and Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015), Kindle Loc 582.

must be a generalist able to address the broad and difficult questions of life. These constitute the real stuff of what it means to be a pastor, and for which, many are poorly equipped.

Theology is not monolithic, and in this regard, Vanhoozer and Strachan fall short. Many in the emerging generation are suspicious of theology, arguing that much of the deep division in the Body of Christ is directly attributable to it. Examples do give weight to their concerns: Calvinists, Armenians, Anabaptists, Pentecostal/Charismatic, pretribulation, post-tribulation, and the list could go on, are all theological stances that have contributed to an "us vs them" mentality in the Church of Jesus Christ. The authors did not adequately deal with how the pastor-as-theologian is to overcome this theological divisiveness.

Timothy Keller: Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City

It is difficult to know where to place this book. It is certainly about theology, challenging the pastor to develop a "theological vision." It is also very much about the pastor in an emerging generation and gives a profound and comprehensive description of the "missional church." It also discusses the pastoral functions of care-giving. All things considered, placing it in "Pastor as Theologian" seems best because everything flows out of the initial discussion of theology, and Keller himself asserts that it is an entire book devoted to "theological vision."

"Theological vision" is a term that Keller uses to describe the process of wrestling with the implications of one's doctrinal foundations in juxtaposition to ministry to his or her culture. He defines it as a "faithful restatement of the gospel with rich implications

for life, ministry, and mission in a type of culture at a moment in history."[13] Theological

vision is the pastor determining what he or she will do with his or her doctrinal beliefs

and how they relate to the world. Quoting Lints, professor of theology at Gordon-

Conwell Theological Seminary, Keller contends that we do not just "stand against the

mainstream impulses of the culture but take the initiative both to understand and speak to

that culture from the framework of Scripture."[14]

      To some degree, the book is an effort by Keller to outline the process he has

followed in developing the ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.

He begins with some analysis of the seeker-sensitive mega church movement, and while

not critical of the churches nor their leaders, he posits that much of that success is built on

satisfying spiritual consumers responding to a particular and appealing type of

presentation. In contrast, he critiques responders who would say that success does not

matter and that a pastor is measured solely on the basis of faithfulness. He concludes that

neither "success" or faithfulness are the correct measurement, but that fruitfulness is the

biblical answer that determines success. He defines fruitfulness as conversion of

unbelievers to Christ, Godly character being developed in those in the pastor's care, and a

manifestation of good deeds to the world.[15]

---

[13] Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 19.

[14] Richard Lints, *The False Fabric: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 316-317, quoted in Keller, *Center Church*, 18.

[15] Keller, *Center Church*, 13-14.

The theological vision that Keller encourages is one that he calls "Centered." He

describes the philosophy of the Centered Church with four centering statements:

1. The Gospel is at its center
2. The center is the place of balance
3. The theological vision is shaped by and for the urban and cultural centers
4. The theological vision is the center of the ministry.[16]

Keller emphasizes the Gospel as the center of theological vision, but warns the church to

be aware of the possibility of subscribing to Gospel doctrines without being shaped by

them.

The balance of the book explores how the Gospel is contextualized to produce

maximum effect. Keller emphasizes that contextualization is not a matter of giving

culture value over Scripture, but of understanding culture thoroughly enough to be

proficient at ministering the Gospel to it. Citing Lints again, he contends that "The

modern theological vision must seek to bring the entire counsel of God into the world of

its time in order that its time might be transformed."[17] He addresses the tension found in

the city, as well as how Christians and the church should engage culture. He attempts to

find a balance to the answer of whether the church is to conform or confront.

Keller gives an entire chapter to equipping individual Christians for missional

living, asserting that our current culture demands it. He references his parents and his

wife's parents living in the early 1900s to illustrate the challenges Christians face today.

His parents were committed evangelical Christians and his wife's parents were not, but

he notes that if questions regarding same-sex marriage, sex outside marriage, abortion,

patriotism, or going into debt were asked of them, they would give basically the same

---

[16] Keller, *Center Church*, 21.

[17] Lints, *The False Fabric*, 316-317, quoted in Keller, *Center Church*, 18.

answers. He states that "in Christendom, you could afford to train people solely in prayer, Bible study, and evangelism – skills for their private lives – because they were not facing radically non-Christian values in their public lives."[18] Of course, how a pastor trains his or her congregation will depend upon one's theological vision, but the case seems clear that the pastor must provide the training.

Keller's definition and description of missional churches will be helpful for any pastor to consider. His analysis of the missional church is lengthy, but worth including. He assesses that:

1. To have a missionary encounter with western culture, [it] will need to confront society's idols. Foremost among these, he identifies consumerism, greed, and materialism;

2. To reach people in a post-Christian culture, [it] must recognize that most of more recently formulated programs and gospel presentations will fall on deaf ears;

3. The missional church will affirm that all Christians are people in mission in every area of their lives;

4. The missional church must understand itself as a servant community – a counterculture for the common good;

5. The missional church must be, in a sense, porous (expecting seekers, non-believers, and doubters to be involved)

6. The missional church should practice Christian unity on a local level as much as possible.[19]

Keller's *Center Church* is a treasure. It helps the pastor understand the value of his or her doctrinal foundations, but to also recognize the need for something more practical. It balances doctrine with the realization that technique and programs are ok, but also that something much more theological is needed than a set of "how-to" steps. The book is big and dense, so it might be possible that some pastors would be intimidated by

---

[18] Keller, *Center Church*, 259.

[19] Ibid., 271-274.

it. It also unapologetically addresses itself to the church in urban and cultural centers, in

that it contends that culture is shaped by the city and major cultural centers such as New

York. He also notes the large migration of much of the world to cities. Density and city

focus notwithstanding, any pastor could grow and understand who he or she is, and what

he or she should be doing by studying this book.

Pastor as Shepherd (Or Spiritual Director)

Peterson: *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*

Peterson's opening words are, "If I, even for a moment, accept my culture's

definition of me, I am rendered harmless."[20] The essence of this book is its challenge to

think about what it means to *be* a pastor. He does, in fact, enumerate some specific doing

components, but ultimately, he is challenging us to think about the being. He suggests

three adjectives, unbusy, subversive, and apocalyptic[21] to define pastors. He then lists

three activities that they can do, which are pray, preach, and listen.[22]

Regarding being unbusy, Peterson observes, "How can I lead people beside the

still waters if I am in perpetual motion?"[23] Peterson determines that being busy is a result

of being vain and lazy. It is vain because it makes the pastor appear important. He opines

that our society equates busy, crowded schedules with importance, so pastors develop

busy, crowded schedules. It is lazy, because it is allowing others to dictate what one will

---

[20] Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, Kindle Loc 134.

[21] Ibid., Kindle Loc 140.

[22] Ibid., Kindle Loc 171-181.

[23] Ibid., Kindle Loc 162.

do rather than resolutely deciding oneself. These are serious indictments in a world that often views the pastor as a type of CEO.

Subversive is Peterson's reaction to being viewed as nice but insignificant. The subversiveness in which pastors deal is subverting the kingdoms of self and realigning people's world view with the realities of the Kingdom of God. He complains that pastors, though often treated with respect, are not considered important in any real sense of affecting life. It is too easy for many pastors to accept society's definition and slip into simply being a chaplain to the culture. Peterson calls for pastors who will reject this and become subversive to the culture.

Peterson describes John, in writing *The Revelation,* as living "on the boundary of the invisible world of the Holy Spirit and the visible world of Roman times,"[24] and notes that he lived on that boundary in prayer. Noting the unhurried urgency of *The Revelation,* Peterson says that apocalyptic pastoring "develops communities that are passionately patient, courageously committed to witness and work in the kingdom of God no matter how long it takes, or how much it costs."[25]

The most profound aspect of Peterson's book is a juxtaposition about what the job of pastors is not and what it is. First, he laments that pastoring has become almost completely secularized, except for Sundays, and has devolved to being a matter "running a church." In contrast, he identifies the real work of pastoring as being a "physician for souls" and calls for pastors to recapture the ancient practice of "curing souls." This, he explains, is not analogous to being a hospital chaplain or counselor, nor is it narrowing

---

[24] Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, Kindle Loc 376.

[25] Ibid., Kindle Loc 429.

pastoral work to the devotional life. It includes the latter, but it is more. It is a way of

living that uses real situations of life for "teaching prayer, developing faith, and preparing

for a good death."[26]

Curing of souls involves spiritual direction and is to be more interested in what

people are becoming in Christ than what they know or what they are doing. Peterson

contends that a century ago, what pastors did during the week was much the same as

what they did on Sunday. Though the context changed to meeting with one, or a small

group, "the work was the same: discovering the meaning of Scripture, developing a life

of prayer, guiding into maturity."[27]

"*The Contemplative Pastor*" is a delightful book. It does explore what pastors do,

but ultimately, it is about what pastors are. Its greatest treasure is that it causes one to

think about what it means to *be* a pastor. Perhaps it falls short in the area of practical

application, but that is not what it seems Peterson was trying to accomplish. He gives the

grand view of doing as result of being and invites the pastor to become a guide for, and

curer of, souls.

Percy: *What Clergy Do: Especially When It Looks Like Nothing*

Percy writes from the perspective of a priest in the Church of England and takes

the unique approach of comparing the work of the clergy to that of motherhood. She

observes that like motherhood, the role of the parish priest does not fit well into "modern

ideas of work professionalism." Her premise echoes my own concerns when she states,

"the skill set of clergy is not clearly defined in the way it is with lawyers, doctors or

---

[26] Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, Kindle Loc 501.

[27] Ibid., Kindle Loc 484.

teachers." She laments that there is an ongoing problem defining the particular skills needed for the work of those in the clergy.[28]

Her stated goal is to discuss "the attitudes and ways of thinking and acting which characterize good parish ministry."[29] She likens the feelings of the priest to the frustrated mother that comes to the end of her day with the feeling of having "done nothing," yet in reality, has been actively caring for her baby all day. Priesthood, like motherhood, cannot be done by formula and does not have easy targets or measurable outcomes. Percy hopes that her book will help priests "champion the less remarkable aspects of the day-to-day life of building up communities of faith, where God is worshiped and people are both cherished and encouraged to grow."[30]

A high point of the book is the discussion about dependence, independence, and interdependence. The role of a mother is to help a newborn child grow from complete dependency to independence, in the sense of being able to look after his or herself. This involves aspects of basic self-care, such as bathing and dressing, to the more complex activities such as decision making. She disagrees, however, with the Freudian concept that a child's maturity is marked by leaving the maternal world and moving into the more autonomous world of the father. She suggests that it is better to understand the mother and child as having been two separate individuals from the beginning who have to "learn how to be together."[31]

---

[28] Percy, *What Pastors Do*, 7.

[29] Ibid., 1.

[30] Ibid., 5.

[31] Ibid., 67.

Percy assesses that this is much like the role of the priest. First, it is central to the Christian faith that we are always dependent upon God, a fact that draws criticism of religion as being for the weak. She asserts that this naturally means that people are always, to some degree, dependent upon the parish priest. The priest, like the mother, celebrates steps of independence and "self-care" of the believers, but Percy insists that there is never a time in either relationship of complete emotional or spiritual autonomy. She analyzes that the goal of the priest is to develop a collaboration and interdependence, not only between the priest and parishioner, but also among parishioners. The goal of bringing the people of the congregation to true maturity is not isolated independence, but interdependent community life.[32]

Percy presents a paradigm that provokes thoughts about ministry that might not otherwise be considered, and she succeeds regarding her stated goal of prompting her readers to think differently about the ministry. She summarizes that at the end of the day, in motherhood and "priesthood," a great deal might have been accomplished, but might be difficult to measure. This study is seeking to help pastors discover and identify some real measurements of "success" will that help them feel a greater joy and satisfaction in ministry.

Pastor in An Emerging Paradigm

Hirsch and Catchim: The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church

As the title suggests, this book is largely dedicated to, and focused upon, the place and role of the apostolic in the life and ministry of the church. The authors specifically

---

[32] Percy, *What Pastors Do*, 69-70.

state that the book is seeking to recover the ministry of the APE, that is the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, in the church. Notwithstanding this admitted bias, they give considerable effort to define and describe the ministry of the pastor, which they acknowledge is vital to the health of the church.

Hirsch and Catchim write from a decidedly anti-traditional church paradigm and call the church to think, organize, and minister with a missional motivation. In the foreword to the book, Guder defines the missional church as one "that defines itself, and organizes its life around its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world."[33] Frankly, it is difficult to see much difference in what they call for in terms of missionality than what the church has always sought to accomplish. The church has always spoken about principles such as living lives in mission and getting outside the four walls. The difference is the level of commitment to these ideals and the belief that leadership structure must be adapted to accommodate them.

Issues of leadership are the focus of the book, with well more than half of the book being dedicated to the recovery of the apostolic. It is their thoughts about the pastor, however, that are of concern here. The authors suggest that arriving at a Biblical understanding of the pastor will first require considerable deconstruction. In something of a contradiction, they assert that there has been a rise in pastoral theology since the 1970s and that the role of the pastor is thus more understood than the other members of the five-fold gifts. The former assessment regarding the need for deconstruction seems more accurate than the latter. It might be true that there has been some resurgence in pastoral

---

[33] Darrell L. Guder, "Foreword," in *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church,* by Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), xv-xvi.

theology, but this has been largely overshadowed by "church growth theology," and it seems possible that most pastors are unaware of it.

The authors define pastor as being "tasked with creating a healthy community, with nurturing people in the faith, and caring for the welfare of the people." They add that the work of the pastor can be summed up as the "formation in the way of Christ, lived out locally and communally."[34] They assess that to accomplish these goals, a pastor's ministry is limited to between one hundred and twenty to one hundred fifty people. It is somewhat fascinating that they voice the same thought as Baxter from the seventeenth century when that assert that "to be a good shepherd in any sense of the word, pastors have to know all the names and stories of the people in their care."[35]

Hirsch and Catchim are not trying to simply define the role of a pastor, but they are attempting to do so in the context of a fully functioning five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. They worry that pastors who exclude the other gifts will do so at the expense of undermining their own capacities and gifts in the process. They determine that the shepherd's role is in relation to the flock and is to ensure its health, but that they can and should participate in the extension ministries of the apostle and evangelist. They assess that trying to do all the ministry on one's own, however, will likely lead to failure in the very task to which the shepherd is called.[36]

Hirsch and Catchim have provided a great resource, not only to pastors, but to the whole body of Christ. They have challenged the pastor to think of church beyond the

---

[34] Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 43.

[35] Ibid., 43.

[36] Ibid., 44.

paradigm of church leadership that consists only of shepherds and teachers and how it might look for apostles, prophets, and evangelists to function in their places as well. They have also given good definition to the ministry of the pastor, especially as a contrast to the church growth model that dominates so much of American thinking.

Their writing gets too complex at times and might lack practical application in the world of the local church as it currently exists. To experience success in moving the church into a new way of thinking and serving will require working with the current reality that a vast majority of churches in America operate with a shepherd only model. While some might favor "blowing up" church as we know it and beginning all over, that does not seem wise or loving. Help is needed to identify how apostles, prophets, and evangelists begin to take their place in the local assembly of believers, which many pastors would undoubtedly embrace if it was understood and wisely implemented.

Gibbs and Bolger: Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures

Some explanations and caveats are necessary before critiquing Gibbs and Bolger. First, some definition is needed for the term "emerging church." McKnight, who states that this work by Gibbs and Bolger is one of the best on the topic, defines the emerging church "as a loose association of those who want to explore the Christian faith and the Christian mission and the Christian praxis in this world of ours – and they want to explore it with freedom and impunity when it comes to doctrine."[37]

---

[37] Scot McKnight, "What is the Emerging Church?" (Lecture, Fall Contemporary Issues Conference, Westminster Theological Seminary, October 26-27, 2006).

Gibbs and Bolger assert that the church in the west has faced several major shifts since the 1950s, one of which is the transition from Christendom to post-Christendom, and another is the transition from modernity to post-modernity. They also cite a shift from westernization to globalization and the communication revolution as important dynamics that are affecting the ministry of the church. They contend that it is important to understand these changes to be able to pastor and lead effectively.[38]

This book is a sweeping critique of culture and how the church relates to it. It is not specifically about the pastor, but because it deals so extensively with the church applications to the pastor are abundant. Some of the cultural analyses that the authors cite are that the majority of current church practices are cultural accommodations to a society that no longer exists, a new culture requires new organization, and the boomers are the last generation that is happy with modern churches. One of the most critical trends they note, is that Gen X'ers are spiritually hungry but they are looking outside the church to satisfy that hunger.

In the Emerging Church movement's attempt to respond to the current culture, Gibbs and Bolger identify these nine major qualities that they say embody its efforts:

1. Identify with the life of Jesus

2. Transform the secular realm

3. Live highly communal lives

   (They contend that the first three result in the next six)

4. Welcome the stranger

---

[38] Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 48.

5. Serve with generosity

6. Participate as producers

7. Create as created beings

8. Lead as a body

9. Take part in spiritual activities[39]

In the Emerging Church paradigm, the Sunday service is either optional or secondary, which of course, affects the idea and function of pastors in the prevailing church model. Gibbs and Bolger posit that "the practice of community formation itself is more central than the church meeting … [and that it] seeks kingdom in all realms as it serves a way of life…"[40] They cite examples of emerging communities that meet in small groups weekly, in a large gathering of combined groups monthly, and do community service ministry once a month. Another "church" is composed of numerous groups, some with web sites and meeting times, and others with no formally established meeting time. Their life together is their church.

The Emerging Church purports to reject theology, yet it is clearly very theologically driven; the theology is simply a form of "un-theology." Unlike the seeker sensitive movement, or other efforts to redefine church to more effectively communicate with the culture, the form of church is not the focus in the Emerging Church. They contend all other forms are too embedded in the current "come to us"

---

[39] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 45.

[40] Ibid., 44.

church culture, while they seek to "take shape inside the new culture as a prophetic influence."[41]

The key theological definition of Emerging Church is its focus on the living Jesus and the Kingdom of God, as opposed to an emphasis on forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Jesus. They contend that much of what Jesus did while living on the Earth is missed or disregarded by evangelicalism, and that consequently, we are missing much of what it means to live out the Gospel in the midst of humanity. Gibbs and Bolger name N.T. Wright, John Howard Yoder, and Leslie Newbigin as primary shapers of their theological orientation. The primary goal of this view is seeking to determine "What the life of Jesus means in this time and place."[42]

Gibbs and Bolger assess that the Emerging Church movement is dissatisfied with "using the Bible in a modern way."[43] This is never explained fully. They contend that Scripture must be viewed without presuppositions, which seems to be good hermeneutical practice for everyone. They cite the Reformers' suspicions of art and architecture and contend for a more inclusive use of the arts and media, but it is unclear if this is as means to more effectively communicate or if they are demanding that the place of the written Word should be diminished. Theological murkiness is a major criticism of the Emerging Church.

Another important nuance of the Emerging Church is a seeming aversion to evangelism. They see it as a way of life, not an event, which is another concept that does

---

[41] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 51.

[42] Ibid., 49.

[43] Ibid., 69.

not seem especially new or radical. Understanding what they mean, however, is difficult. They want to transform secular space and have a conversation with the culture, but they are hesitant when asked about their willingness to lead someone to Christ. It does seem clear that they do believe in a relationship with Christ, but it is equally unclear how they believe that happens.

Much can be learned from the Emerging Church conversation, but much uncertainty clouds the discussion. A recurring problem for Gibbs and Bolger, and by implication for the Emerging Church, is that they cite several high-sounding ideas that do not really mean anything. One example is this comment: "[the] Institutional way of being must give way to relational ways of being."[44] This sounds great, but what does it mean? The same question could be asked about their contention that "church is the people of God on mission together." They need to give more definition to their ideas.

The role of the pastor is largely undefined in the Emerging Church. Leadership, in general, is called upon to function as facilitators and to abandon old models of power based leadership. They are urged to help people overcome the secular/sacred divide and to focus on helping them recognize their skills and experiences as gifts from God to be used in His kingdom, and by implication, this refers more to life in the "world" than in the church. They are to facilitate full participation of all members, rather than simply speaking about the priesthood of the believer while continuing to be the only one in the pulpit. Above all, they are urged to give up control and provide creative space for people to flourish in their contributions. They quote Mike Breen, one of the movement's

---

[44] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 97.

significant leaders, as insisting that his role is "zero control, high accountability, and low maintenance."[45]

Regarding the pastor specifically, Gibbs and Bolger assess that Emerging Church requires the pastor to move from the CEO mentality to being a spiritual director. The pastor should not be thought of as the person in hierarchical control. Rather than the person who brings the vision, he or she is part of the group that discovers vision together. Some, or perhaps even most, Emerging Church pastors are not paid, although there is discussion that they could be. In reality, other than a few notable exceptions, most Emerging Churches are intentionally small, with "membership" of about thirty.[46]

Banks: *The Church Comes Home*

Robert and Julia Banks wrote this book in 1998 after over twenty-five years of what they term "church renewal and reform,"[47] which for them primarily seems to mean facilitating "home churches." The house church movement has experienced considerable growth and it is important to consider it in this research. McKnight quotes Barna's 2012 statistics that the primary spiritual experience for twenty million American Christians is not in the local, traditional church. For many of these Christians, that experience is in a house church.[48]

---

[45] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 208-211.

[46] Ibid., 32.

[47] Robert J. Banks and Julia Banks, *The Church Comes Home* (Peabody, MA: Hendricks, 1998), vii.

[48] George Barna, quoted by McKnight.

The Banks define the home church as an "extended church family that involves singles, marrieds, and their children. It meets regularly to develop communally a shared Christian life, to relate each member's faith to everyday life, and to deepen each member's relationship with God."[49] They distinguish home churches from traditional small groups in churches, yet some of their comments are directed to home churches as a part of a larger church body. The focus of the book, however, seems to be on home churches as separate entities from local, traditional churches. The Banks do not advocate for an either/or scenario but contend that Christians need large group gatherings as well as the smaller setting of home churches.

The Banks assert that the home church is rooted in Scriptural precedence, and especially cite the Apostle Paul's approach to church, which they identify has a four-fold emphasis. These emphases are:

1. A home like ethos, with a family level of commitment to one another
2. Holistic appeal, concerned equally with worshiping God and fellowshipping with one another
3. Participatory style
4. Outgoing nature.[50]

These components are all accounted for in their description of the life and ministry of home churches.

Home churches and small groups have been an ongoing part of church life after the New Testament era. The Banks relate that before the Reformation, there were several renewal movements, including the Waldensians in France and the Lollards in England, and that these movements included the use of house meetings. John Calvin and Martin Luther, as well as other reformers saw great value in house meetings, but were not able to

---

[49] Banks and Banks, *The Church Comes Home*, vii.

[50] Ibid., 31.

successfully implement their ministry. The Anabaptists, however, had vibrant house church meetings. The Banks cite an account given by an Anabaptist under interrogation that showcases much of what is hoped for in any small group ministry. Part of what he said was, "They teach each other the divine Word and one asks the other: how do you understand this saying? There is among them a diligent living according to the Word."[51]

The Pietist movement advocated a fuller expression of the priesthood of the believer and initiated small group gatherings in homes as a part of Lutheran ministry in Germany. Count Zinzendorf led the Moravians in the development of *ecclesiodae* – little churches, also within the broader context of the Lutheran tradition. John Wesley was profoundly affected by the Moravians and the small class meetings he developed were at the heart of the Methodist movement.[52]

The Banks go into some detail about beginning and operating a home church. They discuss such things as how to make the decision to begin one, gathering the initial participants, components of a meeting, and how to arrange the furniture. Sadly, they give very little detail about how pastoral leadership functions in home churches. Ironically, they give a great deal of attention to the role of the pastor of a traditional church sponsoring home churches, but not much to the concept of a pastor within the home church. They send completely mixed signals, first asserting that they have no leaders in the group, then that everyone is a leader, yet reverting again to say that even though

---

[51] Ambrosius Spitalmeier, in W. Klassen, *Anabaptism in Outline* (Zurich: n.p., 1626), quoted in Banks and Banks, *The Church Comes Home*, 55.

[52] Banks and Banks, *The Church Comes Home*, 52-58.

everyone is a leader; certain ones have more importance in that role than others. They seek to identify several individuals who "would be the most missed," and that group is designated as a "pastoral core."[53]

The Church Comes Home is informative and provides practical guidance for anyone that wants to lead a home church or network with a cluster of home churches. It is not very helpful in terms of identifying what a pastor's role is in home churches, or indeed, if there is actually anyone that fits the mold of pastoral ministry in the groups.

Conclusion

Whether one understands the pastor to be a church growth specialist or an almost non-existent part of a loosely defined association or a theologian engaging the culture, God's people desire to be gathered together in life-giving community, touching one another and the world. The pastor, however his or her role is defined, is an ever-present and important part of that picture.

The pastor as theologian captures the imagination as a needed quality in the milieu of modern, are post-modern culture. Pastors need to be conversant and able to engage, and when necessary encounter society. One concern is the possibility that being a theologian would not translate into being fluent in the language and issues of the day.

Although, it is easy to be critical of the Church Growth Movement, Warren's list of questions is provocative for any practitioner and could help a pastor think through their own lists of questions to help them formulate ministry philosophy.

The Emerging Church asks many great questions with which pastors of any persuasion or style need to grapple. They leave a lot unanswered, as well, which might be

---

[53] Banks and Banks, *The Church Comes Home*, 178.

intentional, but it seems that the people of the world need some answers and not more uncertainty.

The pastor as pastor or spiritual director seems not only to be the most striking, but one that fits all categories. Whether in a church growth greenhouse or a mega church or an association at the neighborhood coffee shop, the shepherd is a warm and welcome image that speaks of Christ's care and of one who nurtures a growing life of faith.

CHAPTER 7

Analysis and Conclusions

The Shepherd Motif

After thousands of words and hundreds of books, it seems that the final analysis of metrics that determine a successful pastor comes down to this: she or he has *been* a shepherd. This can be seen in the presbyteros of the primitive church, to the pastor as priest of the Catholic Church, to the soul care of the Reformation. Frankly, it seems until the advent of the Church Growth movement and the emergence of mega-church America, that the shepherd has always been the primary motif that portrays a successful pastor.

A lot of "doing" goes into being a good shepherd, and some of those activities will be discussed momentarily, but ultimately a good shepherd just is. Hansen shares a moving story about the power of simply being. A couple from his church had entered the hospital to deliver a still-born baby, and Hansen marvels that "They wanted me in the room." The mere fact of being wanted in such a moment, he says, is the reward for being a pastor. In the bustle of medical activity, his job was to simply be there. He did not try to speak on God's behalf, but God was present through Him. He relates "God was there. We all felt God, we all knew He was there, and we all worshiped… with all of our possibilities at an end, our hope was used up, when for all practical purposes God had forsaken us and abandoned us … God was there."[1] That is what it means to *be* a pastor. How do you measure that?

---

[1] David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry without All the Answers*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 192.

In Phillip Keller's commentary on Psalm 23, he explains that when a flock of sheep is troubled there are actions that help them settle down, but nothing is as comforting to the sheep as just seeing the shepherd in the field with them. It is true that Psalm 23 is about the Lord as the Shepherd, and likewise, John 10 identifies Jesus as the Good Shepherd, but it is also true that the elders of the church were instructed to "shepherd the flock of God."[2] I contend that the shepherd motif is the single most fitting image of what it means to be a pastor.

Belonging and Commitment

"The Lord is my Shepherd." Keller comments that the wonder of this phrase for the psalmist is that God is his, He is committed to him. He comments "To think that God in Christ is deeply concerned about me as a particular person immediately gives great purpose and enormous meaning to my short sojourn upon this planet."[3] This, of course, could never be matched by a human, but a group of lives is deeply touched by simply knowing that the pastor, their pastor, is committed to them. The size of the flock is irrelevant, its social standing is of no consequence, its financial means do not matter. The shepherd is their shepherd, and they know it. He or she does things for them, which they sometimes appreciate and sometimes do not, but they always know that this person is "my shepherd."

Portrait: A pastor is a success if he or she has been considered the shepherd of a group of people, has been committed and connected to that flock, has loved them and has been loved by them.

---

[2] 1 Peter 5:2.

[3] Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide, 1970), 17.

Lying Down in Green Pastures

Keller explains that for the sheep to lie down, four factors must be in place.

1. The sheep have to feel free from all fear of danger

2. They have to feel free from friction with the rest of the flock

3. They have to be free from tormenting insects and other bugs

4. They have to feel like they have had all they need to eat.[4]

To "make" sheep lie down means the shepherd has satisfied these needs and the single greatest factor to do this is his presence in the field with them. A good pastor wants to teach his or her people to connect with God "on their own," but also realizes, as Hansen's story reveals, that sometimes this only happens through his or her presence.

Portrait: A pastor is a success if he or she has "been there" for his or her people, and his or her presence has brought them comfort and strength.

Leadership

Much is written today about the subject of leadership and it is an important topic that was neglected for many years in pastoral training. The shepherd, however, leads with a different paradigm than secular leadership. His or her agenda for leading is to find green pastures for the sheep, to lead them beside still waters and in paths of righteousness. Sadly, much of leadership discussion today seems focused on pastors leading the charge of people to help them accomplish their goals and their "vision. A shepherd is most interested in discovering those "places" in which the sheep can lie down to rest safely, where they can drink and be fed, and be made whole.

---

[4] Keller, *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23*, 35-36.

Spiritual parallels abound in the metaphors of Psalm 23, but a summary suffices here. Jesus told Peter to feed the sheep. No wonder then, that when Peter addressed his fellow elders in 1 Peter 5:2, he exhorted them to shepherd the flock. The King James rendering of that verse is "Feed the flock of God." A faithful shepherd has led the people of his or her flock to "places" where they can feed on the Word of God. Teaching the Scripture will not have been replaced with Sunday performances that crowd the Word into a fifteen minute "talk," nor will they be tempted to give great oratorical performances. Like the Reformers of old, shepherds will give great attention to expounding the Scriptures so that people can understand them. That is feeding the sheep.

Shepherds also desire for the people of his or her congregation to develop rich devotional lives in which they are feeding on the Word of God themselves. Attention is given, not just to teaching the Word, but teaching how to study, meditate, and live in the Word. Like John Calvin, shepherds consider the people to be fellow students in the school of Christ and do everything possible to help them learn and grow.

Shepherds lead the people where they can drink in the waters of the Holy Spirit. When the Samaritans had received the Gospel with great joy and had come to faith in Christ, the Jerusalem Church sent Peter and John to them "that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet He had fallen upon none of them."[5] Passing through Ephesus, Paul queried with concern, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?".[6] Jesus cried out to those who thirst to come to Him and that "out of his heart will flow rivers of living

---

[5] Acts 8:15-16.

[6] Acts 19:2.

water [which] He spoke concerning the Spirit."[7] Shepherds want the people of their flock to know, to be filled with, to be guided and empowered by, and to fellowship with the Holy Spirit. They want to lead them beside the still waters.

Portrait: A pastor is successful if he or she has led those they serve to live life filled with and shaped by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

<div align="center">Restored Souls and Paths of Righteousness</div>

The Reformation gave us the wonderful doctrine of *Sola Fide,* salvation by faith alone. Unfortunately, far too many people come to a "moment" of decision in which they come to faith in Christ as their Lord, yet live much of their lives in brokenness and emptiness. There are those who would object that this statement suggests that the work of the cross is insufficient to meet the needs of broken humanity. That is not at all what it is suggesting.

It is, however, recognizing the need for a shepherd to lead "sheep" to fully experience the work of the cross. Keller shares about sheep that are "cast," which means they have fallen onto their backs and cannot get up. They will die unless the shepherd sets them upright and helps them get steady on their feet.[8] Jesus, the Good Shepherd, said of Himself, that He had come to heal the brokenhearted, to set the captives free, and to bind up the bruised.[9] In this day when numbers, big numbers, are the measurement that seem to matter most in the church, shepherds stand out because they are more concerned about restoring the souls of sheep.

---

[7] John 7:37-39.

[8] Keller, *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23*, 60.

[9] Luke 4:18.

Portrait: A pastor is a success if he or she has walked with broken souls and nurtured them to wholeness and set their feet on paths of righteousness, or at least, has tried.

Comfort in the Darkness

Valleys of the shadow of death and genuine enemies, sadly are inevitable parts of life. The reference to the rod and staff[10] indicates that the shepherd protects the sheep in the valley of the shadow of death, but that does not always mean that death does not come. It comes in many ways; the death of a marriage, the death of a dream, the death of a loved one. Pastors are men and women of faith and they are able to intercede, health is often revived and life is extended. The truth remains, however, that if a pastor has never stood with a sheep in the valley of the shadow of death, he or she is simply not a pastor.

The Lord, of course, is the ultimate source of comfort. He is the protector; His Presence feeds us in the dark days of loss and trouble. Never would we want to revert to the theology of Catholicism that purports the pastor to stand in place of God, or for the pastor alone to administer the grace of God in the sacraments. In fact, we want just the opposite. The shepherd carefully guides the sheep to look to the Lord in such times; in humility, he or she knows that his or her work is to become unimportant as the hurting soul is embraced in the Presence of the Lord. Yet, the pastor knows full well that this will likely not happen without his or her presence. What the shepherd brings to the valley of the shadow of death or to the reality of enemies is a lack of fear, the comfort of God's presence, a rich feeding on His Word, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

---

[10] Psalm 23:4.

Portrait: A pastor is a success if he or she has had experiences of miraculously securing deliverance or healing for beloved sheep, and at other times has brought a lack of fear, comfort, and the richness of God's presence in spite of seeming loss.

Lost Sheep

Keller tells the graphic story of scanning the horizon for circling buzzards which is a tell-tale sign of a struggling, wayward sheep. When he spotted them, he would trek to the lost sheep's rescue.[11] This reflects Jesus' story about the shepherd who left ninety-nine safe sheep to search for one that was lost.[12]

Portrait: A pastor is a success if he or she remembered that being a shepherd is as much about looking for the lost sheep as caring for the saved ones.

A Legacy

Keller gives an interesting perspective on the phrase "surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life."[13] Typically, and probably rightly, this is considered in the sense that because of the good shepherd the sheep live blessed lives. Keller acknowledges this, but adds another aspect. He iterates that poorly managed sheep can be very destructive to the environment and can leave pasture land completely devastated and unusable. Well managed sheep, however, not only provide great resources to people but also are beneficial to the environment. Their manure, for example, he says is the most completely balanced fertilizer.[14]

---

[11] Keller, *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23*, 62.

[12] Matthew 18:12.

[13] Psalm 23:6.

[14] Keller, *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23*, 131.

Keller's applies this to a congregation that has been under the care of a good shepherd. Not only are their lives blessed, but in turn, they leave a blessing behind.[15] Goodness and mercy follow them. Examples could abound: employers rejoice because they have diligent employees, employees are happy because they have caring and fair employers; the environment is blessed because Christians understand their responsibility to care for the environment; a spouse is treated with sacrificial love; God's power is released in prayer and ministry. The list could go on and on.

Portrait: A pastor is a success if goodness and mercy follow the people that he or she has led.

Some Other Images That Define a Successful Pastor

The Shepherd motif might seem too ambiguous for some, so a list of what might be considered more concrete images of pastoral ministry is listed here. It should be remembered that the goal for this paper is to determine what constitutes success for a pastor and not for churches and that this is gleaned from the Biblical record and the different eras of church history.

A pastor is a success if he or she:

1. Has understood oneself to be but part of a team of ministers, including having recognized and been accountable to apostolic authority in whatever form that takes place in his or her environment, having honored and given place to the helping gifts within the local assembly, having shared ministry life fully with a team of elders in the local congregation in whatever capacity that best fits

---

[15] Keller, *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23*, 130-132.

his or her church tradition, and having made room for itinerant gifts that bring extra surges of life and refreshing to the church;

2. Has done more than give lip service to the priesthood of the believer, but has genuinely sought to help the church members discover their gifting and passion, and has trained, empowered, and released them to do real and meaningful ministry, whether in or outside the church;

3. Has valued and gleaned important principles from various leadership theories, but has ultimately understood leadership in the Biblical, Christian sense of serving the people rather than lording it over them as the "Gentiles;"[16]

4. Has understood and valued the benefit of buildings, land, and budgets but has maintained a balanced approach to how ministry relates to them;

5. Has developed a Rhythm of Life[17] by which he or she has kept him or herself spiritually, relationally, emotionally, and even physically healthy;

6. Has understood that the Biblical instructions to church leaders in the Pastoral Epistles were primarily about issues of character, and has maintained a life of the highest character and integrity;

7. Has been theologically and Scripturally grounded in life and ministry; that is Scripturally grounded in how personal life is lived, and doing ministry with fidelity to one's understanding of Scripture, and in Who and What one understands God to be;

---

[16] Matthew 20:25.

[17] Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

8. Has diligently committed to teaching and modeling the Scriptures and life in the Spirit to the congregation, and to equip the people to live lives "on their own" in deep communion with God in the Word and by continuously being filled with the Holy Spirit;

9. Has nurtured Christ-centered, Spirit-filled community within the Church family;

10. Has always kept the heart of Jesus which is to "seek and save the lost," doing the work of an evangelist and leading his or her congregation to do the same by preaching Christ and serving the brokenness of the city and the world.

<div align="center">

What I Have Learned

</div>

This has been a fascinating journey. I have learned to appreciate aspects of almost every era of church history. Even times like the late medieval period when priests "stood in the place of God," even though many or most knew little about the Scriptures, one can see men at work who genuinely wanted to intercede for the lost souls of humanity. Humans often get it wrong, but there have always been those who love God and want to help others know Him and be saved by Him. I had a jaded view of the ministry in by-gone eras, and though much of my misgiving was validated, I learned that they were not completely true.

One of my greatest take-aways has been the realization that a measurement of success actually does exist for what it means to be a pastor. I began this project wondering if such metrics existed or could be identified. Pastors do a great many things and each of them is important and measurable. What I discovered, however, is that one shepherds because one is a shepherd, and the greatest metric involves the matter of being.

I have learned to realize that the success of a pastor cannot be measured by numbers. Numbers matter, and they can be an indication of whether good pastoring is occurring, but they also might not. It is probably a tragic truth, as I discovered about myself, that many pastors are indeed "failing" at their call and gifting as pastors because they are striving after a set of metrics that simply does not apply to them.

I learned that the American church has always been a competitive church; it is ingrained in the American way of capitalism, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state. I do not know that this is automatically bad or good, but it is important to understand.

I learned enough to know that I would pastor far differently now than for the past forty years. (Forty includes years as a youth pastor and campus pastor in addition to thirty-one years as a senior pastor). A major difference would be a much greater partnership with the elders of my church family. Second, and most importantly, I would recognize myself as a shepherd serving the Great Shepherd, and I would refuse to fret about those metrics of ministry that have nothing to do with who and what I am.

A Few Surprises

I am Arminian, at least as it pertains to the subject of free will and am adamantly opposed to the concept of predestination. The idea of God arbitrating people to hell on nothing more than a divine whim is, to me, the most denigrating thing that could be said of His character. Because of the strength of my feelings, I have never read anything by, or even much about, John Calvin. Though I still denounce the idea of a limited atonement, I found myself becoming quite a fan of his. I loved his desire to get the Word

into the hearts and minds of the people and was thrilled at his view that the church

members were his "fellow students in the school of Christ."

It was shocking to read that in 1538, less than one-third of English parishes could

produce four sermons in the entire year in the English language, and that in forty-two of

the parishes none were forthcoming. This also concerns me in light of the trend to ever

shorter and shallower sermons in America's pulpits today, and I wonder if we could fall

to such lows again.

Perhaps the greatest surprise was a fresh appreciation, or at least less antagonism,

for the megachurch. My research revealed much more positive about the megachurch

phenomenon than I had imagined.

Further Study

Numerous questions came to mind while doing this study. One has to do with

how pastors in local churches could connect in real and meaningful ways with a network

of ministry. This includes an apostolic network to which they could go for real-time help

and which could provide real-time supervision and encouragement. I realize that most

denominations probably feel like they are doing this from a denominational level, but

their confidence is highly suspect. It also includes helping pastors discover how to

minister as a part of an elder team within the local congregation.

Second, in studying the concepts of the "curing of the soul," I had great questions

about how to return pastors to that paradigm and how they could be trained accordingly.

Peterson hoped for a shift in that direction, but he wrote that hope in 1989. It seems more

study and work needs to be done in this area.

Third, I would like to see more study regarding the role of the pastor in the Emerging Church missional church discussion. It would be especially helpful to see this discussed as it regards the pastors of traditional churches, since they still lead the majority of churches in America. I believe that many pastors would welcome those discussions.

Fourth, I would like to see some research trying to assess the effect of the church growth model on the psyche and well-being of pastor/shepherds, with the goal of helping reorient them if the studies showed evidence of negative implications.

Fifth, I would like to see further study of Timothy Keller's concept of Theological Vision[18] and how that can be worked out in the local, traditional church with the local, traditional pastor.

---

[18] As cited in the Literature Review, "Theological Vision" is Timothy Keller's term to describe wrestling with one's doctrinal foundations in terms of how they relate that to the culture.

Bibliography

Allrich, Ted. "How Much Money is Enough?" Nasdaq. Accessed December 4, 2017. http://www.nasdaq.com/article/how-much-money-is-enough-cm34225.

Anderson, Leith. "Lyle Schaller, Preeminent Church Consultant, Dies at 91." *Christianity Today,* March 18, 2015. Accessed July 27, 2017, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015.

Arnold, Eberhard, ed. *The Early Christians in Their Own Words.* Farmington, PA: Plough, 1997.

Bainton, Roland. "The Ministry in the Middle Ages," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, edited by Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams, 82-109. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Banks, Robert J. and Julia Banks. *The Church Comes Home.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.

Barna Research. "State of the Bible 2017: Top Findings." Barna Group, April 4, 2017. Accessed September 27, 2017. https://www.barna.com/research/state-bible-2017-top-findings/.

Baxter, Richard. *The Reformed Pastor.* Edited by William Brown. 1829. Reprint, n.p., n.d. Kindle edition.

Benoit, Jean-Daniel, *Directeur d'Ames: Contribution a l'Histoire de la Pieté Reformée*. Strasbourg, France: Oberlin, 1947, 11. Quoted in Peter De Jong, "Calvin and the Duchess of Ferrara." *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 1, no. 1 (1985): 32-86.

Berndt, Haman. *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety.* Edited by Robert Bast. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2004.

Bird, Warren. "World's First Megachurch?" *Leadership Network,* May 4, 2012. Accessed October 16, 2017. http://leadnet.org/worlds_first_megachurch/.

Bird, Warren and Scott Thumma. "A New Decade of Megachurches: 2011 Profile of Large Attendance Churches in the United States." Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2015. Accessed October 25, 2017. http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurch-2011-summary-report.htm.

Blackaby, Henry and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People Onto God's Agenda.* Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2001.

Blair, Leonardo. "Megachurches in America Spend Half Their Budget in Salaries." The Christian Post. October 6, 2016. Accessed August 25, 2017. http://www.christianpost.com/news/megachurches-the-us-spend-half-their-budget-salaries-kept-mostly-secret-study-says-170549/.

Boehmer, Heinrich. *Road to Reformation*. Translated by John Dobertson and Theodore Tappert. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946.

Brown, Colin, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

Bucer, Martin. *Concerning the True Care of Souls*. Translated by Peter Beale. Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016.

Clebsch, William and Charles Jaekle. *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective: An Essay With Exhibits*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

Clement. "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians." In *Ante Nicene Fathers*. Vol 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus,* edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 5-21. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

Clowney, Edmund. "The Purpose of Preaching." In *Leadership Handbook of Preaching and Worship: Practical Insight From a Cross Section of Ministry Leaders*, edited by James Berkley, 3-15. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992.

Coenen, Lotar. "Bishop, Presbyter, Elder." In *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Vol, 1, edited by Colin Brown, 190-2. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

Collinson, Patrick. *From Cranmer to Sancroft*. New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006.

Colson, Chuck and Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999.

Conzelman, Hans. *History of Early Christianity*. Translated by John Steely. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973.

Cornick, David. "The Reformation Crisis in Pastoral Care." In *A History of Pastoral Care,* edited by Gillian Evans, 223-251. New York: Cassell, 2000.

Coxe, A Cleveland. "Introductory Notes to the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," in *Ante Nicene Fathers,* vol 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus,* edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

Criswell, A.W. *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1980.

Engle, Paul and Gary McIntosh, eds. *Evaluating Church Growth: 5 Views.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Evans, Christopher. *Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013.

_____. *The Social Gospel in America: A History.* New York: New York University Press, 2017.

Evans, Gillian, ed. *A History of Pastoral Care.* New York: Cassell, 2000.

Faivre, Alexandre. *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church.* Translated by David Smith, New York: Paulist Press, 1990. Quoted in William Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002.

Frend, W.H.C. *The Early Church.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

Gibbs, Eddie and Ryan Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005.

Giles, Kevin. *Patterns of Ministry among the First Christians.* North Blackburn, Victoria: Collins Dove, 1989.

Grant, Tobin. "The Great Decline: 60 Years of Religion in One Graph." *Religion News Service,* January 27, 2014. Accessed October 16, 2017. http://religionnews.com/2014/01/27/great-decline-religion-united-states-one-graph/

Greaves, Richard. *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1981.

Gregory the Great. *The Book of Pastoral Rule and Selected Epistles of Pope St. Gregory I (The Great).* Translated by James Barmby. N.p.: Veritatis Splendor, 2012.

Guder, Darrell. "Foreward." In *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church,* by Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

Hansen, David. *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry without All the Answers.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

Hardin, John. "The Doctrine of Purgatory." *CatholicCulture.org,* 2001. Accessed August 15, 2017. https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=4677.

Harnack, Adolf. *Sources of the Apostolic Canons with a Treatise on the Origins of the Readership and Other Lower Orders.* London: Norgate, 1895.

Hirsch, Alan and Tim Catchim. *Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

History.com Staff. "Anne Hutchinson," A&E Television Networks, 2009. Accessed December 14, 2017. http://www.history.com/topics/anne-hutchinson.

Hoppin, James. *Pastoral Theology.* New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885.

Hunter, George III. "The Legacy of Donald A. MacGavran." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no. 4 (October 1992): 158-162.

Hunter, James. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

"Ignatius, St." In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 3rd ed. Edited by E.A. Livingstone, 817-818. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Janz, Denis, ed. *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

Keller, Timothy. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Keller, Phillip. *A Shepherd Takes a Look at Psalm 23*. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publishers, 1970.

Kempis Thomas. "The Imitation of Christ." In *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts With Introductions*, edited by Denis Janz, 4-12. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999.

Knox, John. "The Ministry in the Primitive Church." In *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*. Edited by Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams, 1-26. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Krejcir, Richard. "Statistics on Pastors: What Is Going on with Pastors In America?" IntoThyWord, 2007. Accessed April 24, 2017. http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562.

Libaw, Oliver. "More Americans Flock to Mega-churches." ABC News, June 13, 2001. Accessed October 16, 2017 http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=93111&page=1.

Lindsay, Thomas. *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries: The Eighteenth Series of the Lectures of Cunningham.* New York: George Doran, 1903.

Lindsay, Thomas. *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*. 2nd ed. N.p.: n.d. Kindle.

Lints, Richard. *The False Fabric: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993.

MacAfee, Matthew and Barry Raper. "Donald MacGavran and the Church Growth Movement." Helwys Society Forum, February 3, 2015. Accessed October 17, 2017. http://www.helwyssocietyforum.com/?p=4621.

McCullough, Diarmaid. *The Reformation.* New York: Viking, 2000.

MacGavran, Donald. *Understanding Church Growth,* 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990.

_____. "My Pilgrimage in Mission." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10, no. 2 (April 1986): 53-58.

McGuckin, John. *The Path of Christianity: The First Thousand Years.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017.

McIntosh, Gary. "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored." In *Evaluating Church Growth: 5 Views,* edited by Paul Engle and Gary McIntosh, 7-28. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

McKnight, Scot. "What is the Emerging Church?" Lecture, Fall Contemporary Issues Conference, Westminster Theological Seminary, October 26-27, 2006.

McNeill, John. *A History of the Cure of Souls.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951.

Manschreck, Clyde L. "Philipp Melanchthon." Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017. Accessed September 20, 2017. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Philipp-Melanchthon.

Mead, Sydney. "The Rise of the Evangelical Conception of Ministry in America (1607-1850)." In *the Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, edited by Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams, 207-49. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Mosse, George. *The Reformation*. 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963.

Neil, Thomas and Raymond Schmandt. *History of the Catholic Church.* Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1957.

Niebuhr, Richard and Daniel Williams, eds. *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives.* New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Norwich, John. *Absolute Monarchs.* New York: Random House, 2011.

Oden, Thomas. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials in Ministry.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982.

O'Loughlin, Thomas. "Penitentials and Pastoral Care." In *A History of Pastoral Care,* edited by Gillian Evans, 93-111. New York: Cassell, 2000.

O'Malley, John. *A History of the Popes: From Peter to Present.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefiled, 2010.

Osborne, Kenan. *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church.* New York: Paulist Press, 1988.

"The Outreach 100 Largest Participating Churches 2017: The *Outreach* Magazine and Lifeway Research Annual Report," Outreach Magazine, 2017. Accessed December 12, 2017. http://www.outreachmagazine.com/outreach-100-largest-churches-2017.html.

Pauck, William. "Ministry in Time of the Continental Reformation." In *the Ministry in Historical Perspectives,* edited by Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams, 110-148. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Pavao, Paul. "Early Christianity: A Brief Overview of the Ante-Nicene Period." Christian History for Everyman, 2014. Accessed June 7, 2017. http://www.christian-history.org/early-christianity-2.html.

Percy, Emma. *What Pastors Do: Especially When It Looks Like Nothing.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2014.

Peterson, Eugene. *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989.

"Protestant Beliefs." The Prayer Foundation, 2007. Accessed June 4, 2017. http://www.prayerfoundation.org/protestant_beliefs.htm.

Purves, Andrew. *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Saint Cyprian. *The Treatises of St. Cyprian.* N.p.: Waxkeeper, 2015. Kindle.

Schaff, Phillip. *The Complete Works of St. John Chrysostom.* N.p., 1886. Kindle.

Schaller, Lyle. *Growing Plans: Strategies to Increase Your Church's Membership.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983.

Scoggins, Dick. "Nurturing a New Generation of 'Pauline' and 'Petrine' Apostles." *Mission Frontiers* (July-August): 11-12. Accessed December 12, 2017. https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/28-4-scoggins.pdf. Quoted in *Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

Shelley, Bruce. "325 The First Council of Nicaea." Christianity Today, 1990. Accessed June 4, 2017. http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/325-first-council-of-nicea.html.

Shigematsu, Ken. *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

Sittser, Gerald. *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Sixtus IV. "Salvator Noster, 1476." In *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions.* Edited by Denis Janz, 47. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999.

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. "A World Split Apart." (Commencement address at Harvard University, 1978). Quoted in Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan. *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015. Kindle.

Spitalmeier, Ambrosius. *Anabaptism in Outline.* Edited by W. Klassen. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981.

Stetzer, Ed. "What's the Deal with the Church Growth Movement, pt. 3" *Vision Room*, n.d. Accessed December 17, 2015. http://visionroom.com/whats-the-deal-with-the-church-growth-movement-part-3/.

Stitzinger, James F. "Pastoral Ministry in History." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 143-180.

Tanner, Norman. "Pastoral Care: The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215," in *A History of Pastoral Care*, edited by Gillian Evans, 112-125. New York: Cassell, 2004.

Thayer, Anne. *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002.

Thumma, Scott and Warren Bird. "Recent Shifts in America's Largest Churches: 2015 Report." Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Accessed October 17, 2017. http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurch-2015-summary-report.html.

_____. "Not Who You Think They Are: The Real Story of the People Who Attend America's Megachurches." Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Accessed October 17, 2017. http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurch_attender_report.htm.

Tidball, Derek. *Skillful Shepherds: An Introduction to Pastoral Theology.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

Tobin, Grant. "The Great Decline: 60 Years of Religion in One Graph." Religion News Service, January 27, 2014. Accessed October 16, 2017. http://religionnews.com/2014/01/27/great-decline-religion-united-states-one-graph/.

Towns, Elmer. "Effective Evangelism View." In *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views,* edited by Paul Engle and Gary McIntosh, 29-72. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Van Esselt, Willen and Eef Dekker, eds. *Reformation and Scholasticism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Vanhoozer, Kevin and Owen Strachan. *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015.

Wabuda, Susan. *Preaching during the English Reformation.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Webber, Robert. *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for the Christian Story in an Age of Rivals.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Williams, George. "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church." In *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, edited by Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

_____. "The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period." In *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, edited by Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Williams. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Williams, Jeffrey. *Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism: Taking the Kingdom by Force.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Willimon, William. *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002.

Zachman, Randall. *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian.* Grand Rapids, TN: Baker Academic, 2006.