

Pastoral Dynamics for Pastors and the People: Book Two

Part One

INTRODUCTION: A REVIEW OF THE SCOPE AND PURPOSES OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

In **Book One** we covered the birth and growth of the early Church and the forms and configurations that it took and the purposes of its being. We need to have that clearly in our minds as we proceed with these present Studies, namely the structure of the Church¹ as the Body of which Christ is the Head, the Flock of which Christ is the Great Shepherd or Chief Pastor. In this book we will not deal with him as the Prophet, Priest and King, but leave that for a later consideration.

As our series of books is named, we are interested in what we call ‘Pastoral Dynamics’, by which we mean the powers which are operative in the flock, and the actions which are constantly happening in its life.

As we saw, the Church was built by Christ (Matt. 16:18) and came into its birth by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Christ indicated it—the *ecclesia*—would be a powerful entity against which the gates of hell could not prevail. It is also clear from the commission Christ gave to his disciples, that theirs—the Spirit-born company of believers—was a universal mission of proclamation, that is, *kerugma*. We saw that the revelatory coming of the Spirit caused the new community to give their attention to the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. This community had been baptised into Christ, and had received both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. All of this was wrought in the love of God. That love was of the Father—the very love He had for His only Son—as also the love of the Son for his Father. That love had always aimed sovereignly at redeeming, sanctifying and perfecting sinners who are the elect of God. That same love was poured into the hearts of Christ’s close followers on the Day of Pentecost, and then, further, into the hearts of the 3 000 who repented and believed, as also the thousands more who were joined to the Community of Christ—the Church—as the days proceeded. The love of God and the responsive love of His people in the Holy Spirit account for what we call ‘pastoral dynamics’, for such happen in the context of relationships.

The teaching of the apostles encompassed the gospel, which rightly understood was—and is—‘the whole counsel of God’, that is, the whole Story of God from **creation, and stretching to the climax of creation—the *telos* or goal.** The filling in of this Story was virtually what we saw as *didache*, that is, teaching. The word *paraclesis* or ‘exhortation’ was part of *didache*, but was rather more immediately pastoral.

All of the teaching—kerugmatik, didactic and paracletic—was in the context of *koinonia*, that is, fellowship. Fellowship was this unique community the Church and the *koinonia* was—and is—the richest, strongest form of human relationships as a community.

This brief review must lead us on to the purpose for the creation of the Church by God as Father, Son and Spirit.² God’s first purpose was to bring men and women into the Church;

¹ We use the word ‘Church’ for the whole Church in time and space, and the word ‘church’ for the local church. In doing this we do meet some difficulties, but we have to bear with those.

² We do not here open up the various works of the Three Persons of the Godhead, but they are given in the New Testament. The Church is the community of love, is the Family—and so on—all springing from the Godhead and relating to the Persons.

for its members to live together as the Flock, the Family, and the Bride of Christ; for the Church to continually preach the gospel and be a witness to Christ so that the nations would be gathered into the Holy City.

Let us then remind ourselves that the Church came into being by proclamation, and churches everywhere, down through history as well as today, can only come into true configuration by that proclamation and witness as it is given by the power and revelation of the Holy Spirit. The proclamation is a saving one, and includes the forgiveness of sins, the justification of sinners by grace, the sanctifications of saved sinners by the gospel as set forth by the Holy Spirit, and the glorification of sinners by the same gospel and Spirit. Therefore proclamation (*kerugma*) must always be set forth in the churches. With it must be teaching (*didache*) and exhortation (*paraclesis*). What we are about to examine-the life and structure of the Church-is the way the Church is essentially, because Christ is its Head, its Great Shepherd, its Bridegroom and, as the Son, is Elder Brother in the Family of God.

THE LIFE AND STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

A Preliminary Evaluation of the Old and the New in Church Life and Practice

In Book One we warned ourselves against reading present ecclesiastical structures and configurations back into the early Church, so that we would then read those patterns into the structure of the Church as we know it today. We need to be apt readers of the New Testament-if not also of the Old-to grasp the nature and practice of the Church in the first century.

We also warned ourselves against taking the patterns and configurations of churches today as an advance on the early churches, brought about by developing knowledge and experience. No less did we warn ourselves against the idea that what is modern supersedes what is ancient, and vice-versa. Keen students of Church history also have to be keen students of the cultures in which churches came into being and, no less, the prevailing philosophies of the various times in which the churches have lived.

We face the fact that cultures and changes in local and universal ways of thinking have in many cases determined changes-as well as have set traditional views and practices regarding our ecclesiastical modes and mores, our rituals, our theological understanding and even our world views. The variations in the understandings and practice of the Church-that is, the Church's ministry and its sacraments. We need a detailed study of Church history-along with other world history-in order to trace these and evaluate them. Such evaluation would need to be given to us by the Holy Spirit, in the light of the birth and practice of the early Church.

Another element we should warn ourselves against is the confusion of churches today as to their identity and the purpose God has for them in His Story. Doubtless we need to know the movements of the Enlightenment, Modernity and Post-Modernity so that we can understand contemporary ways of thinking and practice of life. What we need to be alerted to is the present materialism and humanism within society, which encourages the idea of success and acceptance so that churches advert to marketing principles, applaud numbers growth as a spiritual principle, and seek to erase every form of offence which can be occasioned by doctrine and church practices such as were common to the early Church. Dangers lie in shaping the *content* of our communication so that we can effect success, when such shaping of doctrine and practice may be the erasing of the offence of the Cross and all that pertains to it.

The Apostolic Life and Structure of the Church

The study of the Church's structure, in which are included its life and practice, must be seen not to be planned by some ecclesiastical mind which is human, some architectural mind

which is human, but only by God. If it were a society planned humanly then today it would be sensible to call in the best minds to shape and equip it as a social entity which would meet the needs of its members on all social, psychological, emotional and spiritual grounds, such as are attempted by service clubs and similar organisations. It might even be envisaged that the evangelical gospel could be preached in such a society. However, what we have seen is God's purpose for the Church, which primarily is to be God's witnessing Community to Christ its Head, the proclaimer of the gospel, the home of the redeemed, the Flock of the Shepherd, the eschatological community which has as its goal the new heavens and the new earth-this community must be one which is more than humanly planned. It must be that Community of the Triune God which can only fulfil the purposes and intentions of God by its divine origins, and its dependence on God.

There is, therefore, a form of life and order which has as its head Jesus Christ who is the Son of the Father. It has no human head such as a pope, an archbishop, a bishop, a moderator or an apostolic delegate. No person is identified in the New Testament as being a priest (*hiereus*) except in the sense that the whole Church is a corporate priesthood (*hierateuma*: I Pet. 2:9-10; cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10). In Christ the true and only High Priest, the Levitical priesthood and all its apparatus has been left behind.³ So far as we can trace the facts, the head of the church in Jerusalem was James the Elder who was not an apostle.⁴ In Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas go up to Jerusalem in regard to the matter of circumcision and whether it was mandatory or not for Gentiles who believed in Christ to be circumcised. James the Elder refers to Peter's teaching in regard to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the new people of God-the Church-and not his own, and makes a pronouncement regarding the matter. Acts 15:22 shows that his judgment is followed by a decision of the whole assembly, elders and apostles and others, to act in a certain way; 'Then it seemed good *to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church*, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas'. Acts 15:25 underlines this, 'it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord [or, 'in assembly'], to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul'.⁵ We conclude that there was no person as head of the Church, but that in apostolic days the opinion of the apostles counted along with the opinion of the elders and the rest of the congregation. In the letter written to the Gentile churches, 'it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church' (Acts 15:22), somewhat parallels Acts 15:28, 'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us', and this gives us the key to the whole decision which they had made. In Acts 13:1-5 the church is commanded by the Holy Spirit, and in the principle of 'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us'.

Wherever churches were founded by Paul it seems it was customary for his apostolic band, 'with prayer and fasting', to have appointed elders in all the churches and then left those churches under that corporate leadership. **In Titus 1:5, Titus had been instructed by Paul to 'amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town.**

From various references it seems there were only two 'orders' of ministry as we might understand 'ministry' today, namely 'elders and deacons' as in I Timothy 3: 1 -10 (cf. Phil. 1: 1). 'Older women' are mentioned in the same context (I Tim. 3:11; cf. **Titus 2:3-5**) and are possibly 'elders for women' or deaconesses (cf. Rom. 16:1-2).

³ That a radical change took place in the shift from the Jewish *qahal* (congregation) to the Christian *ecclesia* (church) can be authenticated from Hebrews 7:12, a most significant statement: 'For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well'. It can well be argued that there was an hierarchy in the Church, an hierarchy of love, a model of which can be detected in I Corinthians 11:3, but (i) it was a relational hierarchy, and (ii) it was a functional hierarchy, and in it was no authoritarian configuration.

⁴ it may be thought that James was an apostle from Galatians 1:19, but he was not one of the twelve, and only in a secondary sense could be called an apostle. Even so, Paul's statement can mean, 'I saw only one of the apostles, Peter, and I also saw James at that time'.

⁵ In Acts 21:17-26 there is the incident where Paul and his team are called in to James and 'all the elders were present'. Paul's report caused great delight, but they have zealous Christian Jews in mind, so that they say to Paul, 'Do therefore what we tell you'. There is no single statement by James. Nor is even the church at Jerusalem regarded as their authority in doctrine and practice, since the apostolic truth has come to each.

The conclusion we may draw at this juncture is that the apostles authorised by Christ had what we call 'apostolic authority' and this was exercised in the proclamation of the *kerugma*, as also in helping the churches who sprang from it to come to true order and practice of faith. We need to expand that matter of authority, but it is certain that the apostles recognised the appointed elders as the leaders of the churches, as also the elders recognised the functions of the apostles.⁶ If deacons were also an order in the church then there were qualifications they must fulfil in order to hold such a ministry (I Tim. 3:8-10).

Part Two

SERVICE, MINISTRY AND GIFTS

We now have to attempt to understand the matter of orders and gifts in the ministry of the Church. Ephesians 4:7-16 should be studied thoroughly to see Paul's view of ministry. We will select some points:

- (a) **Christ gives gifts to the Church** out of his ministry of redemption, that is, as the fruits of both his descent and his ascent. Verse 11 states, 'And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers'. We should note that these gifts are not given to all, for all, and also that the word for gifts is *domata* (plural).
- (b) All members of the churches were to benefit by these gifts for they were 'to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ [etc.]'. The principle then is established that all the saints have ministry, that is, they serve God in the Church for the Church.
- (c) The gifts—in this case *domata*—are given in order to mature the saints, assist them in growing into the fullness of Christ the Head, so that the whole Body (the Church) will be built up into its fullness by what each member imparts or contributes.

We should see, then, that there are those who are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. In passing it may be noted that it is quite probable that 'pastors and teachers' are the one gift, but the gifts here in Ephesians 4:11 are the persons who have this ministry. As such, these gifted people are given to the Church for its proper action. In I Corinthians 12:28 Paul has another list of gifts, 'And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues'. Paul is possibly making a random choice. He has previously said in verses 4-11:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

⁶ There seem to be two orders of apostles in the NT. one being those Christ called to be apostles, and a second order who were 'sent ones', that is, those who did not possess the authority in matters of the truth, but who did tell the apostolic truth as set out by Christ's apostles.

This quote tells us that there are *three elements of life and action* in the Church—that is, gifts, services (ministries) and workings—and that there were differences of these three elements, namely differences of gifts (*diairesis charismaton*), differences of ministries (*diairesis diakonion*) and (*diairesis energematon*). It seems that all members of the Church are occupied in one or another of these, and perhaps in some cases two or more elements. As a body all are occupied in these three elements. The heart of pastoral dynamics lies in these three things. In this Corinthians passage it is only in regard to gifts that Paul expands his exposition. He says the use of gifts are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and this must be closely considered. It is surely mandatory to believe the 'services' and 'workings' are also of the Spirit, and indeed that it is the Spirit working all these three elements in the one life of the Church. This could be part of the meaning of Ephesians 4:3 where Paul enjoins maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

At this point it would be good to see another description of gifts. In I Peter 4: 10-11, 'As each has received a gift [*charisma*], employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ'. We see here, again, that all the members of the Church had gifts as the Spirit determined their allotment (I Cor. 12:8-11), and that the life and movement of the Church was linked with such.

Linking all we have said about gifts (*domata*) and gifts distributed by the Spirit (*charismata*)—as also services (ministries) and workings (*energising*s)—we now have the following elements in the life and practice of the Church, namely (i) *the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers* who teach and minister as the gifts to the Church (*domata*); (ii) *the elders and deacons* who minister and who are 'apt to teach'; and (iii) *the use of those gifts through members of the Church*, that is, the gifts known as *charismata* in which all participate. **From I Corinthians 12:28-31** we see that it is not easy to nominate some gifts in the category of Christ's apostolic gifts (*domata*) to the church (cf. Eph. 4:11) and others as *charismata* (cf. I Cor. 12:8-10). All of these, we presume, work concurrently, and it was probable that those who were 'apostles, prophets, **evangelists, pastors and teachers**' and whose gifts were called *domata*, along with those who were 'elders and deacons', also participated in the *charismata*, as in 'the services', 'the workings and the gifts'. Seeing this array of dynamic gifts (*domata* and *charismata*), the leadership ministries, as also those of general ministry and general workings, can be bewildering and we cannot easily rationalise it all as though it were an ordered and functional system. That all is, in fact, orderly can be shown by **Paul's injunctions, 'Let all things be done** for edification ... for God is not a God of confusion but of peace ... all things should be done decently and in order'.⁷

The only way we will comprehend this whole array of powerful life and ministry in the Church is to understand each element of the whole—that is, elders, ministry gifts and *charismata*—as far as possible. The first elements to be considered are the gifts of ministry such as exercised in apostolic times by apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. We then seek to determine whether they are extant today, and do they appear to be unnecessary since they may have completed their work during the apostolic age? Certainly, when Judas was eliminated his office was fulfilled by another choice, but when the apostles were killed or died they were not replaced. Even so, it seems that a second level of apostles carried on, though these never saw themselves as doing the work Christ's appointed apostles had done, namely that of pioneering proclamation and setting the authentic teaching which can rightly be called 'apostolic' and not even 'after the order of the apostles'. It is true that the secondary order of apostles did give teaching 'after the order of the apostles'. In regard to the gift of a prophet, there were prophets throughout the apostolic age, and there are some indications that they may have operated beyond that age. Prophets were certainly occupied with ministry

⁷ See I Corinthians 14:23, 33, 40. Whilst Paul's injunctions here relate to order in worship, yet the principle obtains to all God's works in the Church as well as in creation.

within the churches, rather than to folk outside the Church. Evangelists seem ever to have been in the Church as the gospel spread to many lands and churches were born through that ministry. As for pastors and teachers, it would seem this order-or orders-has ever been around.⁸

Apostolic Ministries

We said that the first element to be considered was the matter of the ministries of Ephesians 4:11. Now we have scarcely done this, for all we have done is name them. As each is considered for its own work and contribution, these gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher suddenly come to significant meaning and of immense power and value. A book such as this ought to devote a large amount of space to each. The power of the early Church came by the Spirit through these ministers. There would be virtually nothing for the new churches without 'apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher'. Without apostolic doctrine and apostolic practice the churches would be without purposeful drive and power. None of us can estimate the dynamics which arise under this ministry. Note that it is either fourfold or fivefold, and that each ministry is different but all are empowered by the Holy Spirit.⁹ Briefly we say that the apostle, being a witness to Christ and commissioned by him, had an enormous impact, bringing as he did the whole of the apostolic truth and practice to entirely virgin situations. The *prophet* was the one who uttered God's **word, God speaking** through him at the moment of utterance, so that the Church would **know the mind of God**. How powerful and how confronting! ¹⁰ The *evangelist* was not as many often visualise him today. His utterance of the gospel was not stereotyped, as is often the case today, but laid bare the heart of the sinner and of the God who loves, and the sinner is captured, convicted and redeemed. The *pastor* is the one whose gifts and powers we will yet describe, but in any case he was the shepherd of the flock and was even as a bridegroom to the local bride-the local church. He was the teacher who met his flock in their everyday life and ministered to them in their needs by *didache* and *paraclisis*.¹¹

Put together all these gifts (*domata*)—for they are all in tandem-and you have a powerful team, one structured to change dales, village, cities, towns and nations! The gifts (*charismata*) are for the richness of the life of love within the Church, strengthening it for its ministry outwards to the world. Gifts operated without love are nothing, as is seen by reading I Corinthians 13:1-13.¹²

Various Ministries in the Worship and Work of the Church

What we are seeking to do is to show the elements we have named above, such as domatic ministries, varied charismatic ministries, the varied ministries (services), varied workings

⁸ The argument as to whether the apostolic *domata* are, or are not, still operating is a constant one, and often heatedly debated. It is curious that the gifts of evangelist, pastor and teacher are accepted as being extant and the other gifts are relegated to the apostolic age. The old 'Princeton Principle' that the gifts are not for post-apostolic times is based largely on I Corinthians 13:8-13. It is possibly better to see *domata* and *charismata* as being strongly operative when the gospel faces action in new territory.

⁹ The subject of all ministries is a vast one, and should be dealt with in an appendix, but it is best to refer to some reliable work on gifts and ministries. Books of mine are *The Day of the Spirit* (NCPI, 1985), in which the Index should be consulted under 'gift(s)', and there is a section in *God and Man in Signs and Wonders* (NCPI, 1988, pp. 92-110).

¹⁰ For a study of the prophet and prophecy see my monogram *Is Prophecy For Today?* (NCPI, 1982).

¹¹ Various commentators differ in their explanations of 'pastor and teacher', some seeing these as two orders of the *domata* and some seeing them as the one. For an expansion of the two see my *Shepherds of the Flock: Eldership in the Scriptures* (NCPI, 1985).

¹² I have argued cursorily that the ministerial gifts of Ephesians 4:11 (*domata*) differ from the gifts distributed by the Spirit in I Corinthians chapter 12 and other places (*charismata*). These are necessarily different, but I Corinthians 12:27-30 does not seem to bear out such a clear distinction and the whole matter requires finer tuning. For example, the word *dorea* for gift seems to bear a meaning which differs from *doma* and *charisma*.

(energising) and the ministries of elders and deacons. When we talk about 'pastoral dynamics' we have to remember that the outward ministry of the Church in proclamation and the internal ministry which we have discussed in some detail, had in some way to do with eldership and the diaconate.¹³

We do not propose to cover the vast subject of pastors and elders, which is exhaustively dealt with in my monograph *Shepherds of the Flock: Eldership in the Scriptures* (NCPI, 1985), but I do propose sketching the picture of the early Church, using the materials we have gathered together above. One thing we must deal with briefly is the place of pastors and elders. I might as well say at this point that I believe that pastors and elders are the one ministry. We might also say, 'the one office'. The pastor is the teacher, the teacher the pastor, although all ministries involve teaching in one way or another. We shall look at an excerpt from the book just named. It is regarding fellowship and will give us enough of the subject to be able to go ahead with our theme.

Something About Eldership, and the Diaconate, Especially in the Epistles

The following is quoted from *Shepherds of the Flock* (pp. 23-25):

This is quite a study in itself, since there are significant terms which are either synonymous or interchangeable with the term 'elder'. They are 'overseer', 'leader', 'ruler' or are 'those who are over you'. We will have reason to look at these. In I Timothy 3:1-7, we have descriptions of a bishop (*episkopos*). In I Timothy 5:17-19, we read of elders (*presbyterois*). In I Timothy 4:14, we read of the practice of elders laying on hands, and perhaps a cross reference to this is I Timothy 5:22. It seems that II Timothy 1:6 may well refer back to I Timothy 4:14, although Paul speaks only of his (single) laying hands on Timothy.

In Titus 1:5-16 are instructions regarding *elders* and *bishops*. Verse 5 speaks of elders, and verse 7 of a bishop. The conjunction 'for' must mean that here elders and bishops are the same. It is **often claimed that** there is one bishop ('overseer', *episkopos*), but that there can be many elders, the bishop being one of these, but having oversight over all elders and (so) over all the church. However, in Philippians 1: 1, Paul greets 'the bishops and deacons' which seems to mean there was more than one bishop.

If we pursue this matter we find that in I Timothy 3: If., Paul is speaking of bishops. In the same epistle (5:1,17) the elders are in honour, and must *rule* the church well. In Titus 1:5 and 7, the elder and the bishop are the same. Again in Acts 20:17, Paul calls for the elders of the Ephesian church, and when they come he tells them that God has made them guardians (R.S.V.) or overseers (N.A.S.B.) which are the same, although it may well be that from the elders a bishop was appointed who would be *primus inter pares*, i.e. 'one amongst equals', so that the eldership had a definite leadership.

Again in I Peter 5:1-5, we have a picture of the elders. They are to tend the flock, but not dominate it. They are to rule, but not arrogantly. This accords with I Thessalonians 5:12-13 where the church is exhorted to 'respect those who labour among you, and *are over* you in the Lord, and . . . esteem them very highly in love because of their work'. This also accords with Hebrews 13:7, 'Remember your leaders, **those who spoke to you the word of God; consider** the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith'. In 13-17 it **exhorts, 'Obey your leaders and submit** to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you'. We have already seen in I Timothy 5:17 that elders 'rule', so that we may conclude that the leaders of I Thessalonians chapter 5 and Hebrews chapter 13 are elders. This does not disagree with I Peter 5:1-5. Whilst in this passage the leaders are not to dominate, yet they are to rule. In James 5:14ff., we see that elders, as a body, are to be called where required by a sick person, and the elders are to anoint and pray for the one who is ill, that he may be healed.

We have one more detail to note before we leave the subject of elder-bishop-ruler categories. It is that of the diaconate. In I Timothy 3: 1-10, we read of another order. The term 'deacon' means 'servant'. In Acts chapter 6, the seven who take over the care of the widows are those who *serve* at tables. They are not actually called deacons. Nor should we think that they merely serve food. They serve the widows, and this must include a ministry of solace and care. Hence we must not read back into the New Testament the present-day order of deacons any more than we should read back any present order of elders. They may or may not prove to be congruent. The deacons had tasks which the elders did not do. Nevertheless their calling was a high one.

We can conclude from Philippians 1: 1, as also I Timothy chapter 3, that bishops (elders) and deacons are two orders which exist at the same time. It may even be that together they constitute the rulers of

¹³ The term 'diaconate' primarily refers to the deacons as they are mentioned in I Timothy 3:8-13.

I Thessalonians chapter 5 and Hebrews chapter 13. It does not matter. Having distinguished between elders and deacons, we are in a position to study the nature of the eldership, having reasonably established the fact of its existence.

What we now wish to see is the link of eldership and the diaconate with the various kinds of gifts. We have established from Ephesians 4:11-12 that the gifts are given 'to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ'. We saw that all the saints, that is, the whole body of members, constitute a corporate diaconate, even though within that corporate diaconate is the group of persons called 'deacons' to which we have referred immediately above.

We must first establish that the Church is not constituted as a democracy. We have seen that the church of Jerusalem had an eldership and James appears as chief elder. James was not over Peter, and Peter claims that he was 'a fellow elder' (I Pet. 5:1), and indeed Christ's injunction 'feed my sheep', 'feed my lambs' gave him a wider eldership than the local church at Jerusalem. The apostles claimed their appointments to be from Christ himself. So apostles seemed to have held the most responsible position, and in that line followed prophets, evangelists, pastors (elders?) and teachers. From the quote immediately above we see that the terms, 'overseers', 'leaders', 'rulers', 'bishops', and 'elders' are all linked with pastoral oversight and teaching.

It is interesting that in I Corinthians 14, which speaks in a detailed fashion of the manner and content of worship, elders are not named as those who were to see that all things would be done 'decently and in order'. Indeed it seems that the congregation was expected to obey apostolic injunctions. It is clear, then, that we must not think of a regimented church, and of a hierarchy of discipline, as such. This brings us to the very heart of what we call 'pastoral dynamics' which, after all, is the life of the whole Church.

Part Three

A LIVING PICTURE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH AND ITS PASTORAL DYNAMICS

Again, we must remind ourselves that we are not looking at an ideal church. The thought of such was not in the minds of its members. What was in their minds was the life of the koinonia, the teaching and practice of the Community of Christ. One of the weaknesses of our Studies up to this point has been the recording element of the text of this material. That is, we are simply describing things as they were. In order properly to understand 'things as they were' we need to live in them. If we identify the Holy Spirit in the Acts, Epistles and Revelation with the kerugma, the continuous, powerful proclamation of the word of salvation; with didache as filling out 'the whole counsel of God'; with paraclesis as the hortatory teaching mutual in the Community of Christ; and all in the life, environment and unity of the koinonia, then we can comprehend the pastoral dynamics of the early Church and see how vital was pastoral life and ministry and how it can be so in similar way today.

Christ as Head and Shepherd of the Church

We must keep in mind that the Church was one with the Kingdom of God, that it proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom, that it thus had had its own sense of being the eschatological community, and that it was thus living in faith, hope and love in anticipation of the eschatological climax or telos-the goal of all things in the unification of all things by Christ, his filling all things, and his reconciling all things. Daily the Church lived in this expectation and was involved in the forward movement of making disciples of all nations.

Again, the Church was wholly and continuously aware that Christ was its own Lord,

whilst at the same time knowing Christ to be ruling at the right hand of God over all principalities and powers. John depicts Christ in Revelation chapter I as being the one who walked amongst the golden candlesticks and was therefore head of the churches, had them in his hands, and determined their destinies and the judgments which had to be meted out to them. To have the churches in his hands meant that he was Lord and Head of the Church, and was present to all local churches. He also had the angels of the churches in his hand. Whilst it is difficult to determine the meaning of 'the angels of the churches', we know they played a significant part in the life of each church.

Then there were the elders of whom we have spoken little, but who we believe were pastors and teachers. We know that they had the rule over the churches, and that they were a group of men who exercised corporate oversight and were set as guardians of the flock in being the under-shepherds of the Chief or Great Shepherd, Christ himself.

This awareness of leadership by Christ and the elders, as well as the aid of deacons where it was needed, must have made for a sense of security in the local churches. The knowledge that all evil powers were under the control and judgment of Christ must have increased this sense of wellbeing and encouraged appropriate living within the assembly.

The Apostolic Self- Consciousness: Worship and Work

The term 'Apostolic Self-Consciousness' simply means that the Church was aware of its calling, and the manner and modes of its living. Above we have noted quite a number of things of which the members of the Church were aware. Especially were they aware of God as Father, Christ as the Son of God's Fatherhood, and the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. They were aware of themselves as the Family of the Father, the Flock and Bride of Christ, and the Community of the Holy Spirit. If we would understand the vital living of the apostolic Church then we must have the equivalent awareness.

The Church expressed its heart and life in the worship of God. Worship is a theme which will require a treatment of its own-so vast is the matter. It can be shown that the offering up of worship to the Father was through the Son who is always the only Mediator between God and Man. Hebrews 13:15-16 and I Peter 2:5 show that spiritual sacrifices are offered through him. At the same time we also cannot escape the fact that all worship was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (John 4:20f.; Phil. 3:3) and that it was charismatic in its modes. This can be seen clearly in I Corinthians 14.

It is here that we see what we might call the daily life lived in the environment, context and ministry of all gifts, Romans 12 is one chapter which portrays this, whilst Ephesians 4:11-15; 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Hebrews 12:28; 13:15-16, plus the worship passages in the Revelation, all show us how alive was worship. **From I Corinthians chapter 14 it appears that all participated** in worship, and all contributed to it. As we have mentioned, the use of the gifts gave both life and substance to worship. Whilst it is not said that the elders led the worship or kept it in order, undoubtedly the matter of order would have been in the hands of the elders-the leaders, they who had the rule of the Church.

Of course the use of the gifts was not limited to *worship* for it permeated the work also and that work was all the ministry the Church had to the community outside of it. The use was also within the Church for worship, and for ministry of members one to another. If we could visualise the nature of daily living it would have to be in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. All things that Christ had predicted would come with the advent of the Holy Spirit, such as comprehending all he had said and done. The Spirit would be constantly teaching the whole Church, and would be leading them into the truth. As we have said, time and again, *kerugma*, *didache* and *paraclesis* would be the hourly and daily life of the Church. The living fellowship (*koinonia*) would be the source of sharing all things.

We do not think of the domatic and charismatic gifts as being present to stimulate and even enthuse members, but the action of these had to be the action of Christ himself, through the Spirit. The life of the Spirit was known by all members, and what we might call 'the

pneumatic (Spirit) consciousness' was continually present and quite powerful. The working gifts we called domata would be daily active (cf. Acts 6:8; 8:6-7; 10:32-42; 13:1-3; 14:3, etc.) and would be seen as necessary in the role the Church had to play in human history. The charismata were what we might call supernatural accompaniments to daily living. The constant 'supply of the Spirit' and the supply of all physical, spiritual and emotional needs,¹⁴ and the impact of the gospel were matters seen and shared daily.

In other words the community was alive under the constant ministry of prayer, of worship, of proclamation, of giving witness and receiving persecution. There was no lack of action, and the stimulation of love—agape—meant the members of the Church did not withdraw back into themselves. Many of our modern ecclesiastical ills were absent because of the constant proclamatory action, and the mutual concern within the Body of Christ.

CONCLUSION: COMPARING THE APOSTOLIC AND PRESENT-DAY CHURCHES

At the very beginning of our Studies in 'Pastoral Dynamics' we warned ourselves against studying what we might call 'the pattern of the early Church' and, taking it as our paradigm, seeking to structure the churches afresh today, The Church is not a human organisation which we can take as something plastic and fashion it as we think it ought to be. Our examination of the apostolic Church is sure to be faulty and we can easily make the mistake of thinking we know what was then because we have what we consider to be modern parallels of the primal Church.

My contention is that the gifts called 'domatic' for the most part come to life when the gospel is proclaimed in primitive and virginal situations. Signs, **wonders and miracles often** appear, and also the gifts called 'charismatic'. Note that the early Church did not create or devise such situations. Christ's promise, 'Behold! I am with you always, even to the close of the age', spurred them on, but being Spirit-filled persons, the pastoral dynamics looked after themselves, so to speak. Many movements in churches today purport to be apostolic in nature, but this may be called into question until it is undeniably evident that this is the case. Often gifts called 'charismatic' have proved to be from sources other than the Holy Spirit. Whilst many situations have been called 'dynamic', often they can be traced to human energising and the stimulation of what is called 'hype' and the histrionic abilities of teachers and leaders. When the Spirit moves truly, then the rich dynamics of pastoral ministry and living will be present.

In a Study such as we are here undertaking we need to guard against imitation of the old and the introduction of new ideas regarding group dynamics, the use of entertainment, certain therapies and marketing techniques, and the so-called use of the gifts. A certain mind looks for what it believes was apostolic truth and apostolic action, and sets aside the spiritual riches which have been accumulated over many centuries. The claim made for new doctrines—as though they had been obscured and are only now being freshly revealed—should certainly be called into question and studied closely. This also goes for novel practices which are accorded to the working of God. So many are these new doctrines and practices that we cannot deal with them here.

Whilst the last paragraph may be called 'negative thinking', we should not be deceived that this is the case. Wrong and deceptive teaching and practice should receive the utmost attention in light of the fact that we are wrestling against evil powers in these days, and are called to

¹⁴ By this we do not mean that these so-called 'needs' figured largely in the thinking of the early Church. The daily distribution at Jerusalem was certainly a significant help to the poor, the widows and orphans, but the amazing matter of Messiah's incarnation, the teaching and events of his life, death and resurrection were what figured largely. The Community came into being through these and lived daily in them. To talk about needs is to have a modern view of the Church as a therapeutic and aid community, something which would have been very far from apostolic thinking.

resist such creatures and their attempts to prevent the climax God has planned for His creation. The problems we face are many, and they have to do with the loss of true doctrine, true practice, understanding the nature of the Church, the gospel, the *kerugma*, *didache*, *paraclesis* and *koinonia*, and nature of the gifts and the structure of the Church in the ministerial gifts and in its forms of leadership. All these problems can be explained by our loss of the nature and power of the Word of God. Attempts to introduce practices such as we believe were present in the early Church, may prove to be pointless and even cause great harm.

There are also problems with cultures which may hold churches in their grip. The cultural traditions which have likewise been built up may well stand in the way of pure, apostolic faith and practice. These are not slight problems, easily rectified. In fact they may present stubborn impediments to the life of the Church. Drastic reformation may seem to be the solution, but it may simply prolong and enlarge division. We are not attempting here to give advice in the renewal and proper reformation of the Church and/or the churches. We will speak on this score in later Studies.

We may well consider revival will alter things, and this may well be true, but for the present we can only say, in the good spirit of *paraclesis*, exhorting one another, 'See to the things which are wrong and are not of the truth. Hold fast to Christ the Head, be open to the Holy Spirit. Pray to the Father as His children. Look to the end of all things. Proclaim the Word in all purity and pray for God's true Israel.'

NCTM Monday Pastors' Study Group, 3rd April, 2000. Pastoral Dynamics Series. G. Bingham

The Pastor and His People—I

1. INTRODUCTION: THE MATTER OF PERSONAL PASTORAL DYNAMICS

In our pursuit of the nature of pastoral dynamics the word 'pastoral' is important. Stemming from *ra'ah* which is the Hebrew verb 'to feed', it is used eight times in Jeremiah as 'pastor' and everywhere else is translated as 'shepherd'. In the RSV it is only translated as 'shepherd'. The only use of 'pastor' in the New Testament is Ephesians 4:11, but again the word 'pastor' (*poimen*) is the same Greek word as used for 'shepherd'. The term 'shepherd' is used innumerable times, both in the Old and New Testaments. The primitive meaning was 'to feed', for the shepherd had to seek out places of water and grass—not always easy in Middle East lands—and elements such as leading into the best areas, guarding against predators (animal as well as human), as also disciplining aggressive sheep in the flock, and attending to wounded animals.

J. Jeremias tells us that historically in the Ancient Orient kings such as those of Babylonia and Assyria were named shepherds' because they had sovereignty over their people, and the verb *re'u*—'to pasture'—was used as the verb 'to rule'.¹⁵ This royal emphasis is used only in Genesis 48:15, Psalm 23: 1, and 80: 1, although the term 'shepherd' is so often used for God, particularly regarding His pastoral care of His flock, Israel. The Shepherd goes before His flock (Ps. 68:7), guides it (Ps. 23:3), leads it to pastures (Jer. 50:19, etc.), to watered places where it can rest (Ps. 23:2; 80: 1; Isa. 40:11; 49: 10). Other actions of the Shepherd of Israel (Yahweh) is that He whistles to His sheep, gathers them, picks up the lambs to his bosom and leads the mother sheep.

Also in the Old Testament political and military leaders are often referred to as 'shepherds'. It is worth keeping in mind that the shepherds are given such responsibility as to render them quickly culpable for failure to be true shepherds and God will quickly judge such false and lazy shepherds (Jer. 2:8; 3:15; 10:2 1; 12: 10; 17:16; 22:22; 23:1, 2; Ezek. 34: 1-10), and in fact will not trust such shepherds anymore; but Yahweh who is the true Shepherd will raise up His Davidic Shepherd. In Ezekiel 34:21-27 we see the future time of blessing to the flock:

Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will save my flock, they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. 'I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.'

Two of the judgmental references are Zechariah 10:2-3, and 11:4-17, which all modern pastors ought to read so that they do not become lazy, smug and careless of the ministry committed to them. Another mysterious reference is Zechariah 13:7-9 which relates to 12: 10. Of these two references, J. Jeremias says: 'Thus at the end of the OT shepherd sayings there stands an intimation of the **shepherd who suffers death according to God's will and who**

¹⁵ J. Jeremias, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 6, eds. G. Kittel & G. Friedrich, Eerdmans. Grand Rapids, 1968, pp. 485-502.

thereby brings about the decisive turn'.¹⁶ Certainly Yahweh as Shepherd and the appointment by Him of the Davidic Shepherd opens the way for Christ the Good Shepherd, and his suffering for the sheep, the true flock of God.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'PASTOR', THAT IS, 'SHEPHERD' IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

On Pastoral Dynamics Day we saw that in the Book of Acts there are elders in the Church at Jerusalem, James the brother of the Lord being the leading elder, since he made pronouncements (15:4, 6, 13, 22). We are not told how this eldership came into being. In I Peter 5:1-5 Peter addresses elders and calls himself an elder. In I John 1, and III John 1, John calls himself an elder. In the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim. 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5) Paul speaks of elders. A difficulty arises when we read Acts 20:17 where it is said that Paul called the elders of the church of Ephesus to Miletus. He gives them a charge to fulfil (vv. 17-34). They are elders but in verse 28 Paul calls them 'guardians' or 'overseers' (*episkopoi*), and his use of the verb 'to shepherd' (*poimainen*) the church (*ecclesia*) makes them pastors though that word is not used. We now have 'elders' and 'overseers' which seem to be synonymous. In Philippians 1: 1 Paul writes to 'bishops' (*episcopoi*) and deacons (*diakonois*). Note that there is a number of bishops-the word used in Acts 20:28. In I Timothy 3:1-7 Paul speaks about a person desiring to be a bishop. The RSV text is 'The saying is sure: If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task'. The NRSV text is 'The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task'. The NIV text is, 'Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task'. The NASB text is, 'It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do'. The words 'to the office of' are not in the text. Perhaps this does not matter, but to our modern ears the term 'office' has certain connotations not here in the text. *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* says in regard to 'the office of a bishop':

But 'pastor' originally meant only 'bishop' in its English ecclesiastical sense. it is clear that the originals of our *episcopate*, *diaconate* and *apostolate* were at first interchangeable as general terms; Acts 1. 17, 'this diaconate,' 20 'his episcopate,' 25 'this diaconate and apostolate,' are all used of the office from which Judas fell: *diaconate* expresses the service done for Christ, and *apostolate* the mission from Him; *episcopate* the oversight and care of those among whom the service is done and to whom the mission is.¹⁷

Again, Donald Guthrie in his Tyndale Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles has the following statement:

It is important to notice that the modern word *bishop* does not represent the Greek word *episkopos*, which properly means 'overseer'. In its original usage, at least until the time of Ignatius, it was restricted to those who exercised oversight in the local church. In the proverbial saying in this verse, the office referred to is quite general and might encompass any position, secular or ecclesiastical, where 'oversight' was necessary. Nor is there any hint here or elsewhere in the Pastorals of the monarchical episcopacy so much lauded by Ignatius.¹⁸

Henry Alford in his *Alford's Greek Testament* says: 'The identity of the [*episcopos*] and [*presbuteros*] in apostolic times is evident from Tit. 1:5-7'.¹⁹ That passage is as follows:

This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint *elders* in every town as I directed you, if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not

¹⁶ J. Jeremias, op. cit., p. 488

¹⁷ The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, ed. A. E. Humphreys, Cambridge University Press, London, 1907, p. 101.

¹⁸ The Pastoral Epistles: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary, Tyndale Press, Leicester, 1964, p. 79.

¹⁹ Alford's Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary. vol. 3, Guardian Press, Grand Rapids, 1976, p. 321.

open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate. For a *bishop*, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain [emphasis mine].

When to this we add Paul's calling of the **elders** in Acts 20:17, and telling them in 20:28 that the Holy Spirit has appointed them as overseers (*episkopous*), surely we see the leaders (*hegeomai*) of Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24 (that is, 'those having hegemony-the rule-over you') are identical with the elders of I Peter 5:1-5, who are the same as pastors because they are to 'tend the flock of God'. Again, in I Thessalonians 5:12 Paul says, 'But we beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you', must surely be of the one order which is leader-elder-bishop-overseer-pastor. It seems impossible to come to any other conclusion, although some attempt to deny this. Surely the key to the New Testament order of elders in the *ecclesia* is that it is 'the flock of God', so eldership is corporate pastoral ministry. If ministry (*diakonia*) is used specifically for deacons (*diakonoi*), it is also used generally for all members of the congregation (Eph. 4:12; cf. I Cor. 12:5). It seems to me to be best to call eldership a specific pastoral *ministry* rather than use the word *office* which can be so misunderstood, and so magnified that the idea of 'serving' can be replaced by 'ruling'. The term 'leader' is more appropriate, provided that the function of discipline and bringing into line of the flock—such as shepherds exercise—is not diminished. The genuine shepherd who leads or puts out his sheep before him is a leader who loves the flock and does not dominate it in a sinful, authoritarian way. Of course shepherds differ from person to person, but those who are Christian elders must exercise the good qualities of oversight. Also, we see that each flock has a corporate eldership. In order to understand this we need to go back into the history of elders.

ELDERSHIP IN HUMAN HISTORY

We might ask whether or not eldership is ontological—a point to which we will come later but whether it is or not, we do know that it is functional, so functional as to be indispensable. The term 'elder' refers to older people of the family, or clan, or nation who have wisdom and can help to lead and rule for the benefit of the unit. The eldership may be of a council, or a ruling body such as a parliament, but every such body is highly functional. It seems almost universal that the elders will be men, and has been called a patriarchal form of governing,²⁰ but the women are certainly elders to their gender in ways which men cannot be. Elders go by many names, such as aldermen, rulers, leaders, councillors, and the like, and sometimes young men are selected who show ability in the realm of ruling. A monarch generally has his council of elders which advises on request and to whose members is often distributed areas of government. Eldership, then, has always been in use.

So far as nations mentioned in the Scripture are concerned, we see that Egypt, Moab and Midian speak of eldership, and in more minor form the peoples of Gibeon; Succoth and Shechem. So far as Israel is concerned it had eldership in Egypt, and the elders were to go to Pharaoh and bargain for Israel's release. During the flight from Egypt and wandering in the wilderness there was eldership (Exod. 3:16), and the account of the formation of the 70 elders to help Moses, and their being anointed **with the Holy Spirit, speak of them who were also called 'shepherds of the sheep'**. The passages speaking against the shepherds show how culpable elders can be when they are not true to their calling. With the division of the land in Canaan, eldership seems to have been within tribes. When a monarch was introduced and Israel flourished then national eldership seems to have grown again. This eldership continued through to the New Testament where the nation's elders are called 'the Sanhedrin'. There are

²⁰ It is not our task to explain or defend patriarchy but it is assumed by many that such a system has been unfair to women and is by the nature of the case to be totally rejected. This may not necessarily be so, and fuller research is required. Likewise the idea of hierarchy is rejected as being dominating to the 'lower' members of the hierarchy. For discussion on these points see my book *All Things Are Yours* (NCPI, 1996).

also elders of synagogues and like groups. When the Church came into being at Pentecost it seems that eldership was a natural order within each church. So the ideas always associated with eldership and its pastoral role would also be present.

PARADIGMATIC ELDERSHIP: THE TWENTY-FOUR HEAVENLY ELDERS

If we take the heavenly Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of His Son to be archetypes from which the earthly fatherhood and sonship take their ectypes, then we can probably speak of other celestial archetypes from which earthly ectypes are produced. There is a celestial eldership as we will see, and we can at least reckon on the fact that this is essential eldership by which the churchly eldership can be understood and even fashioned: that is, if the Holy Spirit reproduces the elements of celestial eldership in earthly persons.²¹

Celestial eldership can be studied in the Book of the Revelation, but is there a celestial eldership found in the Old Testament? In Isaiah 24:23 it is said, 'Then the moon will be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his elders he will manifest his glory'. The Jewish Targum said that 'his elders' being at Jerusalem are the elders of Israel, and this fits with a parallel passage in substance, namely Isaiah 4:2-6. Jeremiah 23:18 and 22 speak of 'the council of the Lord', an idea found in Job 15:8. All this may be figurative or it may simply mean that God informs His mind to the prophets as in Amos 3:7—'Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets', which would make sense of the Jeremiah verses, that is, all prophets should listen to God. Even so in Daniel 7:9ff. there is a vision of heaven and of many thrones, the main being occupied by 'The Ancient of Days'.

The elders in Revelation could be men chosen by God or those creatures who are celestial by creation. It would appear they are celestial creatures of great majesty, since all are crowned, are seated on thrones, and their white garments and golden crowns may fit with the idea of priestly kings. What, then, is the nature of celestial eldership and could it be and is it the archetype of the earthly ectype of eldership? We see the following things in celestial eldership:

- (a) They have authority; they wear crowns of gold. (b) They are pure; they wear white robes.
- (c) They are closest to the throne of God of all creatures except the four living creatures. They are even nearer than are the angels (7:11).
- (d) They have great knowledge of God, hence they sing the song of God the Creator, and the *new* song of the Lamb the Redeemer.
- (e) They are adept at worship. In their worship they humble their own authority before that of God Himself, i.e. they cast down their crowns before Him, Hence they are submissive.
- (f) They are able in some sense to bring the prayers of the saints before God (5:8).
- (g) From time to time they come forward to say something (5:5, 7:13). **This indicates they know the** intimate things of heaven, as also of the counsels of God.

Generally, then, we can conclude that in heaven the place of eldership is one of great authority, great knowledge, great service, worship and obedience. The elders have intimacy with God, although not without deep reverence and awe. So high is their authority, that the **144,000 and the harpers** sing **before the elders**, who themselves are situated next to the living creatures and God. That is, the elders are included in this high celestial office. An examination of their praise songs is one which in itself demands close study. These can be seen in 4:11, 5:9-10, 11:17-18. Doubtless the elders are also involved in the songs of 19:1-4 and 19:6-8. These songs deal with God and creation, Christ and redemption, God and the vindication of His righteousness, and the ultimate defeat of all evil. In Revelation 7:13-17, the statement of the elder concerning the redeemed and their place in heaven is uttered in rich poetical terms and may even be a song in itself. As we have said, the truth and theology contained in these utterances is not only beautiful and transcendent praise, but is also deep theology.

²¹ This matter is discussed on pp. 5-9 of *The Shepherds of the Flock: Eldership in the Scriptures* (NCPI, 1985), which should be read with these brief notes.

What, then, of eldership on earth? Is it like this? Is it intended to be of the same order, i.e. to have authority, purity, wisdom and understanding? Surely this is of the nature of eldership within the church.²²

Our question was not whether or not there is an eldership in the Church, for it is evident that there is, but whether this is an order appointed by God for the Church, an order derived from the celestial archetypal order, and we believe this is the case. In the Anglican service 'For the Ordering of Priests' (Presbyters) the following words are used, and these are asked by the ordaining bishop:

You have heard, my brothers, in your private examination, in the sermon, and in the readings from holy scripture, how great is the dignity and importance of this office to which you are called. And now again I exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you remember the dignity of the high office and charge to which you are called: that is to say, to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and forewarn, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep who are scattered abroad, and for his children who are surrounded by temptation in this world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

Have always therefore printed in your mind how great a treasure is committed to your care. For they are the sheep of Christ, whom he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The church and congregation whom you must serve is his bride and his body. And if it should come about that the church, or any of its members, is hurt or hindered as a result of your negligence, you know the greatness of the fault and the judgment that will follow. Accordingly, consider within yourselves the purpose of your ministry to the children of God; and see that you never cease your labour, your care, and diligence, until you have done **all that lies in you**, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or will be committed to your care, to that understanding in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that maturity in Christ, which leaves no place among you for error in religion or viciousness in life.

Since your office is of such excellence and such difficulty, you can see how much care and study you need, to show yourselves **dutiful and thankful to the Lord, who has placed** you in so great a dignity with so **great a responsibility**. Take care therefore that neither you yourselves offend, nor be the cause of others' offending. You cannot have such a mind and will by yourselves; for that will and ability is given by God alone. Therefore you ought to pray earnestly for his Holy Spirit. And because you **cannot perform the** difficult task of leading men to salvation without the doctrine and guidance of the holy scriptures, you should read and study them well, and shape your life and the lives of those for whom you are responsible, according to their teaching. And for the same reason you should put away, as much as possible, all worldly preoccupations and pursuits.

We have good reason to believe that you have carefully considered these things already; and that you have decided, by God's grace, to give yourselves wholly to this office to which God has been pleased to call you: so that to the best of your ability you will devote yourselves completely to this.

You will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our Saviour Jesus Christ, for the assistance of the Holy Spirit; so that, by daily reading and meditating on the scriptures, you may grow in your ministry; and that you may so strive to sanctify the lives of you and yours and to shape them according to the teaching of Christ, that you may be godly patterns for the people to follow.

And now, in order that this present congregation of Christ's people may also be assured of your intentions in these things, and in order that your public profession may strengthen your resolve to do your duties, you shall plainly answer these questions which I, in the name of God, and of his Church, now put to you:

[Here follow certain questions asked by the Bishop]²³

When we read these words we are surely struck by the solemn bidding they contain. In my own case, I have found myself going time and again to them, reminding myself of what it is to be an elder. The quality of the charge is superb, for the creators of it have been deeply ingrained in the meaning of eldership. Whilst I would, perhaps, like to avoid the term 'office', yet it is only because it could seem to set apart members of the Church and divide them into that obnoxious division conveyed by the words 'clergy' and 'laity'. As we have seen, the

²² See *The Shepherds of the Flock*, pp. 8-9

²³ The version of the Ordering of Priests quoted here is from *An Australian Prayer Book 1978* published by The Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia, Sydney, pp. 609ff. I would have liked to have used the 1662 Prayer Book Service, for its language is very stately and most beautiful. This present version is stately enough, even though modernised.

word *laos* in Greek means the whole of the people, as Acts 10:42 has it, 'He commanded us to preach to the people [*laos*}'. The word 'priest' (*hiereus*) is never used of elders, bishops, pastors, or indeed of any member of the Church. Likewise the word 'temple' (*hieron*) is never used of any building linked with Christian worship. The whole of the Church is called 'a royal priesthood' (I Pet. 2:9; *basileion hierateuma*), and the Church is itself 'a shrine of God' (I Cor. 3:16; *naos theou*), that is, 'a holy temple in the Lord' (Eph. 2:21; *naon hagion*). In this sense eldership has no direct priestly ministry, but shares the priestly ministry of the whole Church, which is a corporate priesthood. Thus Paul says, 'there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'. We are simply pointing out that the elder or eldership is not sacerdotal.^{24 25}

THE MINISTRY OF THE PASTOR-ELDER OR ELDERSHIP AS SHEPHERDING

I work on the assumption that the elder is the pastor,²⁶ and that in the apostolic church any church would have more than one elder.²⁷ In the Anglican Ordination Charge, given above, we have statements that define eldership in terms of 'messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord' who are to 'teach and forewarn, to provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep who are scattered abroad, and for his children who are surrounded by temptation in this world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever'. Another pastoral bidding is 'Have always therefore printed in your mind how great a treasure is committed to your care. For they are the sheep of Christ, whom he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The church and congregation whom you must serve is his bride and his body.'

Thus the terms 'Christ's sheep', 'the Lord's family', and 'his bride and his body' bring us to the heart of what is pastoral care. We are talking much about 'pastoral dynamics' and have seen that these take place in the context of *kerugma*, *koinonia*, *didache* and *paraclesis*. For our own approach we will first work on the basis of the elder being a pastor or shepherd. Already we have been told that pastoral ministry cannot be carried out apart from a continuous and living study of God's holy Scriptures. It is these very Scriptures which open up, as do no other writings, the character and meaning of a true shepherd.

To truly understand the nature of a shepherd it is essential we see a shepherd and his flock in the Middle East and in other continents, and not just on sheep farms and stations where they

²⁴ It may seem that we are carping on what an elder is not, especially not a priest, and not as a Levitical priest working in a sanctuary which is a sacred sanctuary as was the Tabernacle and Temple in Israel. The emphasis given is to combat the sacerdotal developments of ministry. Thus the saying concerning the reformation that 'new presbyter is old priest writ large' (I think it comes from Hooker). These are by no means confined to our present elders who are pastors. There is the growth of counselling ministry which in many cases develops into a mediatorial operation.

²⁵ The idea of a sole pastor who is often a monarchical pastor seems absent from the New Testament. Today we have pastoral teams, and still the idea is of an elevated group of persons who constitute an hierarchy who, as it were, are over the people (*laos*). This is not the New Testament idea. Whilst doing this Study I have picked up *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* by Gordon D. Fee (Hendrikson, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1994), and chapter 8 'Laos and Leadership under the New Covenant' is excellent. One illustration places a small circle over a large circle, the small circle being the clergy and the large the people. Fee then places the small circle within the larger circle so that (he leadership is with the people, being of them and not over them. The whole book is really on this subject.

²⁶ I am aware of some of the arguments concerning eldership. Because bishop and elder are equated in Titus 2:5ff. (cf. Acts 20:17, 28) it has been said that a bishop is the leading elder. If so then he is *primus inter pares*, i.e. 'the first among equals'. I am also aware that some see the bishop as a level above elders. As we noted before, monarchical bishops were not known until Ignatius. Sadly enough, we read back into apostolic times the *de facto* situations of today, with gradations of clergy from a pope and other hierarchical clergy down to altar acolytes. I have seen so much bondage, and so much prelacy with the damage it brings, and the confusion of 'there is neither' (Gal. 3:28), that the fellowship of the saints is virtually lost.

²⁷ It is said that when Archbishop Wand made a translation of the New Testament and he came to Philippians 1:1, he changed 'bishops and deacons' into 'bishop and deacons'. I only have this on hearsay from T. C. Hammond and he is now deceased.

are dealt with as multitudes of animals. This will illuminate the biblical view of a shepherd and shepherding. We will proceed by firstly seeing God as the True Shepherd.

God the Father is Shepherd

In Genesis 49:24 Jacob prophesies of Joseph, 'yet his bow remained unmoved, his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel)'. Psalm 23 is by no means a sentimental view of a tender Shepherd, but that of an indispensable, practical and caring Shepherd. It is also a psalm which does not use the human shepherd as an analogy for one that is divine, but tells us that this is the very nature of God, as ontological as is His being the Bridegroom of Israel. Thus, we will see, the Son is one with Him in this ontology of shepherding. Jeremias says that, whereas the term 'shepherds' was a common term for political and military leaders, it is surprising that there is no single instance in the Old Testament of 'shepherd' being used in Israel as a title for the ruling king.²⁸ We saw in Jeremiah 2 and Ezekiel 34 that God is scandalised by the evil of His shepherds in Israel, and will punish them for their reprehensible conduct, and will Himself resume the order once delegated to them. The indictments on the shepherd includes the fact that the flock of Israel has been divided by them. In Ezekiel 34:23-24 God says:

And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

This idea is filled out in Ezekiel 37:15-23 where Israel shall again become one people, and in verse 24, 'My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes.' To these wonderful prophecies we must add the beautiful descriptions of God as Shepherd, such as Jeremiah 23:3-4 and Isaiah 40:9-11:

Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, says the LORD.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!' Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

We must surely think of God as seeing His created people as one flock, for His Messiah will bring His people, some of whom are not of the fold of Israel but are of the elect flock of God. Psalm 23 is perhaps the most universally loved and quoted Scripture, so beautiful is its presentation of God as the loving Shepherd. As we shall see, the psalm is also applicable to the Son and, that being the case, we have the real meaning of earthly pastors, no less than of heavenly Elders.

Jesus Is the Messianic Shepherd

We have seen the Scriptures which refer to the Davidic shepherd,²⁹ and how he will have concern and love for the flock and make them to be one, secure flock. It is true that sometimes

²⁸ J, Jeremias, pp. 487-8.

²⁹ See Jeremiah 2:8, 23:3; 31:10; Ezekiel 34:1-22~ Micah 5:4.

it is difficult to be quite sure of whom the prophecies speak, whether of Yahweh or the Messianic Son of David, but Jesus certainly refers to the Father as the Shepherd. This is so in the case of the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15, where the Shepherd seeks the sheep so that 'there will be more joy in heaven over one lost sinner that repents than over the ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance'. 'Joy in heaven' is certainly the joy of the Father-Shepherd. When Jesus sees the people 'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd' (Matt. 9:36), it is because they are so far from their Father-Shepherd, and so they can be called 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt 10:6; 15:24). Even so, he makes it clear that he is the true Shepherd, spoken of by God in the Old Testament. This is brought out when he has dealings with Zacchaeus, and says, 'Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19:9-10).

Seeing the people 'as sheep without a shepherd' means his heart is the same as the Father-Shepherd's. It is clear that he has come to seek and save those who are the lost of the tribes of Israel. Moreover he has come to gather them together, back into the security of the one flock. In fact we see that flock comprised not only of the saved of Israel but also of those who were once not of that flock, namely the Samaritans and Gentiles. In Matthew 25:31-33 he is seen with that flock, 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.' This flock will be the evidence of the true shepherding of the true Shepherd.

It is in John 10 that we see all the elements of the Good Shepherd. 'Good' here means the archetypal Shepherd. Verses 1-18 tell us that this Shepherd is legitimately present to the flock, that they recognise him, and his relationship with them is such that they follow him. For these he will give his life when the wolf comes to destroy them, and it seems in this case that the wolf is Satan. Yes, the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The Father out of His own Shepherd heart loves the Son for being Shepherd to the sheep of the flock of Israel, and so He has given authority to the Son both to lay down his life and take it again-in the interests of the flock. Yet the saving work of the Shepherd is not limited to those in Israel's fold, for other sheep not of this fold will be gathered in, for they have eternal life and will never perish.

There are somewhat curious passages of Zechariah, the first being that of 11:4-17-against the worthless shepherds-and the second being 13:1-9, and especially verse 7 of the Shepherd who is being wounded grievously, his flock being scattered. It is this passage which Jesus quotes as he enters into Gethsemane (Matt. 26:31). The mystery of this Shepherd being smitten, as also voluntarily laying down his whole life, is the mystery of judgment and love,

After his resurrection, his passion for shepherding is seen in John 21. Here he wishes Peter to have his heart and mind on the flock-both lambs and grown sheep. He wishes his own Shepherd-being to flow through Peter, who had been quick to flee when the Shepherd was smitten.

The Elder-Pastors-the True Shepherds of the Sheep

From before time the Father and the Son have been the Shepherds, so that those chosen to be shepherds must live at the heart of them both by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why Peter exhorts them by the Chief Shepherd (*archipoimenos*) whom the writer of Hebrews describes as 'our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep [*ton poimena ton probaton ton megan*]''. Only the pastors who see themselves as being under the Chief and Great Shepherd will see their flock as the Anglican Ordinal charge bids pastors to love and care for, feed and tend their flocks. The biblical shepherds lived with their flocks, and in all weathers, but rarely-if ever-would any pastor give his life for his sheep, loving them deeply though he may have done.

Only then seeing the Shepherd at the Cross can we realise the Pastor-love at the heart of the Father and the Son. That flock will be present on the Day of Judgment, redeemed and purified, and at the same time there will be the goats-the nations who have rejected the Saviour and for whom there is no entrance into the Holy City, the Paradise of God. Thus it is that we have surely to be crucified with Christ, the closest the Holy Spirit can bring us to understanding the Shepherd whom we love. We realise that he was first a member of God's flock-the *qahal* of God-for he was first a Lamb, and then he was the Pastor, the Shepherd of the flock, and 'Great' and 'Chief' Shepherd, because only in him can a man be a true pastor. Every man, being pastor, is also a sheep of His pasture, and every man a member of His beloved flock.

Therefore are they before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night within his temple;
and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence.
They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;
the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.
For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water;
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes
(Rev. 7:15-17).