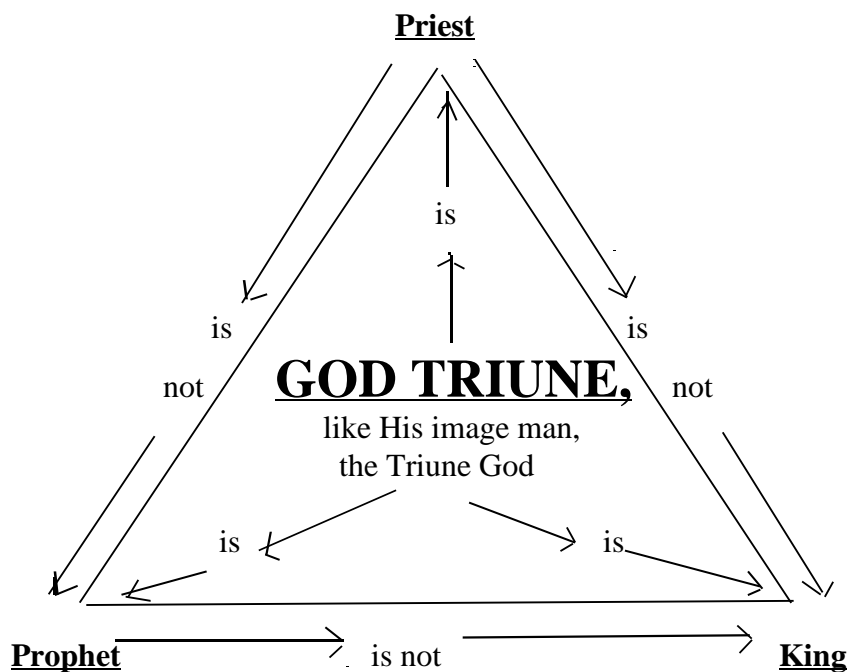


BIBLICAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT



by

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"'Moses wrote this Law and delivered it to the Priests...and...the Elders.' Deuteronomy 31:9. The addition of 'the Elders' is not superfluous. For although the office of teaching was not committed to them, yet were they given as coadjutors to the Levites, in order that they might uphold the doctrine of the Law and not suffer it to be scorned." -- J. Calvin: *Harmony II:230f.*

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This writing originated from much study of the Reformed Religion. The very first article *What is Church Office?*, was submitted to the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly Committee to Study Church Office. The second article *Overture to the Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America*, was submitted to the General Assembly of that body in 1977. So too were the next four articles.

The thereafter remaining articles, were written at various subsequent times. Then, all the articles were later expanded for the Brisbane Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Australia -- and finalized in 2009. Rev. Dr. F.N. Lee

1. WHAT IS CHURCH OFFICE?

The concept of "office" is difficult to define. The concept is indeed Scriptural. But the word as such is not clearly found in Scripture. Nor is its theological usage at all precise.

However, the idea does indeed seem to relate to man's various appointments and functions in the service of God (the Father and Son and Spirit). The Triune God created Adam as His image (King and Prophet and Priest), and appointed him to mirror His Own divine activities by Adam functioning in his own creaturely way as a human being. Genesis 1:1-3,26-68 and Ecclesiastes 7:29.

The Second Adam, Jesus Christ, reflected that same image in His Own humanity. First Corinthians 15:22,44-45 and Second Corinthians 4:6.

Christ-ians, as they become increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, are restored to what man was before the fall (Genesis 1 to 2 and Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2:5-8) -- and redeemed from what man became by the fall (Genesis 6:5 & 8:21 and Ephesians 4:24-28). They are also renewed to what man should become, in spite of the fall (Romans 8:29 and Colossians 3:10 and Second Corinthians 3:18).

This is why Jesus Christ, our great Prophet and Priest and King, proclaimed something very significant at the very beginning of His official Ministry right after His Own Baptism. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted..., and recovering of sight to the blind. To preach deliverance to the captives..., (and) to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord!" Luke 4:18-19, *cf.* especially Zechariah 6:9-15.

Jesus was anointed "to preach" (as our great Prophet); "to heal" (as our great Priest); and "to set at liberty" (as our great King). See *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Questions 42-45. His anointment to this many-sided Ministry took place at His Baptism (Luke 3:21f & 4:1,18f). And it was to endure for the rest of His human life -- both then while here on earth, and for ever thereafter throughout all eternity.

Christ-ians are installed in Prophethood, Priesthood and Kingship -- in the triune general ministry of all Christians (First Peter 2:2,9 and Revelation 1:5-6). They are anointed and appointed to this many-sided ministry at the time of their unction with the Holy Spirit of Christ, as symbolized by their Baptism in the name of the Triune God (First John 2:20,27 and Matthew 28:19). And they are to serve Him as Christ-ians, in all that they do throughout the rest of their lives here on earth and for ever thereafter (First Corinthians 10:31 and Revelation 5:9-10).

But God also appointed a special ministry to encourage all Christians to witness and to heal and to rule to the glory of God. Special prophetic Preachers help Christians to witness. Special priestly Deacons help them to take care of others. And special kingly Elders help them to rule. They do all this in such a way that all Christians are enabled themselves to witness and to heal and to rule effectively. For this special ministry does not dominate or discourage the Christians. Nor (in this present life) can the Christians function very effectively without the support of all of this special ministry.

The crux of the problem, then, is not how many kinds of different special ministries there are. For also the Elders and the Preachers are both *Presbuterous* and *Diakonous*. No, the crux of the problem is how our great Prophet and Priest and King the Lord Jesus Christ is best exalted; and how His work is best executed by His Church.

Accordingly, we may distinguish the general ministry of all Christians from the special ministries in the Church. And among the latter, we may again distinguish the prophetic Ministry of the Word, the priestly Ministry of Mercy, and the kingly Ministry of Government.

I. The General Ministry of all Christians

Now all Christians are to be accurate prophets of nature as they carefully call the various creatures God made, by their correct names (Genesis 2:19). They are to be compassionate priests of nature, as they take care of creation ecologically (Hebrews 2:7-9f). And they are to be dominant kings of nature, as they rule over the creation to the glory of God (Psalm 8).

In the Church-related part of their lives, as prophets they are to testify about the great work of Christ-according-to-the-Scriptures. As priests, they are to heal the broken-hearted for His sake. And as kings, they are to dominate their own evil tendencies by ruling over sin (Genesis 4:7 and Romans 6:14f) and by subduing the entire universe to the glory of Jehovah (Genesis 1:28 and First Corinthians 22:28).

II. The Special Ministry of Preachers and Elders and Deacons

To assist all Christians to execute their general church ministry, Jesus Christ our great Prophet-Priest-King has also given His Church several special ministries. Here we may distinguish the Ministry of the Word (with its prophetic Preachers who declare God's revelation to His people and equip them for their various tasks); the Ministry of Mercy (with its priestly Deacons who demonstrate compassion to people by rendering them material aid); and also the Ministry of Government (with its kingly Elders who lovingly guide and protect God's people from the attacks of Satan).

III. Triune Baptism commissions us to Ministry

All of these tasks ultimately root in our anointment with the Holy Spirit and appointment to serve the Lord -- as symbolized in our having been baptized in the name of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19). And just as the various tasks of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct from one another (in spite of much overlap), so too are the prophetic and the priestly and the kingly tasks of every triunely-baptized Believer altogether distinct -- despite overlap.

So too are especially the different functions of the Preachers and the Elders and the Deacons distinct from one another -- in spite of overlap. And so too are the functions of all Christians distinct from the functions of all the various kinds of Special Ministers -- in spite of overlap.

Accordingly, neither a onefold nor a twofold nor a threefold view of the Special Ministries does full justice to these Ministries. A triune view of church office is needed. For only by giving equal stress to all of the various Special Ministries, and only by simultaneously

emphasizing both the essential oneness and the essential manyness of Christian Ministry, are saved men fully seen to be the man-sided image of the Triune God. First Corinthians 12:1-29....

We would affirm that all members of the Church Visible are ordained to the General Ministry of the Prophethood and the Priesthood and the Kingship of all Believers, by the laying on of hands in triune Christian Baptism. Leviticus 4:13 & 8:12 and Numbers 8:6-12 *cf.* First Samuel 10:1*f* and First Kings 19:16 and Matthew 28:19 and Acts 8:12,17*f*. The function of the General Ministry of all Believers is to give prophetic witness and to extend priestly help to others and to exercise kingly rule over one's own sins in the name of Jesus Christ. Genesis 1:28 & 4:7 and Romans 6:14*f*.

The ordination to the Special Ministry of priestly Deacon or of kingly Elder or of prophetic Preacher should also take place preferably with the laying on of hands. But this ordination is a distinct post-baptismal appointment to special office, received only by particularly qualified and congregationally called persons. Acts 1:23 & 6:1-7 & 9:17 & 13:1-3*f* & 14:23 & 20:17,28 and First Timothy 2:7 & 4:14 *cf.* Second Timothy 1:6,11 and Titus 1:5 and Hebrews 5:1-4.

The function of Deacon includes caring for church employees and their families, and for all truly needy Christian widows and orphans and strangers and visitors and underprivileged Believers. Acts 6:1-7 and First Corinthians 9:1-14 & 15:22-28 and First Timothy 3:8-13 & 5:9*f*.

The function of Elder includes those which are listed in Scripture. Among which one finds: exhortation (Titus 1:5-9 *cf.* Romans 12:7-8); convincing gainsayers (Titus 1:9); keeping out heresy (Titus 1:9-11 and Acts 20:29-31); feeding the flock (Acts 20:28 and First Peter 5:2); visiting in the homes (Acts 20:20,27 and Titus 1:7-13); speaking the Word of God (Hebrews 13:7); accounting to God for the congregation (Hebrews 13:17); and praying for the sick (James 5:14).

The functions of Preacher include all those of the Elder as above. But they also include the additional functions of the public preaching of the Word (Acts 26:16-18 and Romans 10:14 & 15:16 and First Corinthians 4:1 and First Timothy 5:17-18) -- and the public administering of the Sacraments (Luke 12:42 and John 1:33 and First Corinthians 4:1*f* & 11:23).

To better equip His people in their general ministry for Him, in Holy Scripture the general prophethood and priesthood and kingship of all believers is the fundamental ministry in the Visible Church of God. Under the New Testament, our Lord at first collected His people out of different nations, and united them to the Household of Faith by the service of Extraordinary Ministers who received extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and who were agents by whom God completed His revelation to His Church. Such extraordinary Ministries and gifts, relating to new revelation, have no successors since God complete His revelation at the conclusion of the Apostolic Age.

The permanent Triune Ministry of the Church consists of (prophetic) doctrine, (kingly) discipline, and (priestly) distribution. God has appointed Special Ministers to better equip triunely-baptized Christians to function in the Triune General Ministry while still on Earth. The ordinary and perpetual Special Ministries in the Church are Preachers alias Ministers of the Word and Sacraments; Elders or Governors alias Senators whose Office is to have the spiritual

oversight of the Church; and Deacons or Administrators alias Distributors whose Office is to receive and administer the offerings of the people.

2. OVERTURE TO THE FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE P.C.A.

Now whereas at the very birth of the Presbyterian Church in America, her First General Assembly [1973] sent an Address or "Message to all Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the World" (*Minutes*, p. 29); and

Whereas that Address declared to all Christians everywhere that "we wish to develop the idea that the Congregation of Christians, as visibly organized, is the very society or corporation which is divinely called to do the work of the Lord"; and

Whereas that Address then explained that "it is our purpose to rely upon the regular organs of our government" to make the Church an agent, for "we are not ashamed to confess that we are intensely Presbyterian," believing that "our own scheme of government" is "according to the pattern shown on the Mount [Hebrews 8:5]"; and

Whereas the Presbyterian Church in America has repeatedly stated its desire to be a "grass roots denomination," which goal can only be achieved and maintained and promoted by an earnest study of the much neglected office of all Christians signified and sealed with the laying on of hands in the Sacrament of Baptism (*Westminster Larger Catechism* QQ. & AA. 42-35, 58, 165 & 167 and *Westminster Shorter Catechism* QQ. & AA. 23, 29, 31, 39 & 94); and

Whereas -- though there are many excellent suggestions in the only-recently-distributed *Reports of Church Office* (in the *Commissioners' Handbook for the Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America*, pp. 1601-50) -- drastic changes are now being recommended in our Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* (*cf.* the *Handbook* pp. 41-64, 501-2 and 1602-3); and

Whereas any proposed changes to the *Book of Church Order* should be made only after a most careful study of the matters concerned; yet it would seem that certain salient facts (hereinafter stated by the undersigned) have not yet adequately been considered by the *Ad Interim Committee to Study the Question of the Number of Offices in the Church* to the Fifth General Assembly; and

Whereas it would further appear "that the office and work of the Christian Deacon serves to enhance the ministry of mercy in the public and private ministries and activities of the visible Church of Christ"; but that "our denominational office of Deacon is, for the most part, in a low ebb of fruitfulness for our Lord" (*cf.* the *Sixth Overture*, in *Handbook* p. 14); and

Whereas the undersigned is currently preparing one of the papers to be read at the 1977 *Conference on Office in the Church* as planned by the Committee of the multi-denominational *North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council*, of which our Presbyterian Church in America is a Founder Member; and

Whereas the "no office view" of Plymouth-Brethrenistic Dispensationalism is an obstruction to our correct understanding and enjoyment of the full benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ's Own triune office of Prophet and Priest and King; and

Whereas exegetically there is far more to be said for the existence of the separate permanent office of Preacher than in respect of the separate and permanent office of Deacon; and

Whereas the "one-office view" of the Quasi-Reformed "Preacher's Church" or of the oligarchical "Elders' Church" or of the Priestly-Romish "Deacon's Church" is ultimately destructive of the character of the Church as the body of Christ with all of its essentially co-equal members; and

Whereas the so-called "two-office view" itself constricts the general office of all Christians and is admittedly "not what is consistently spelled out in our current *Book of Church Order*, nor in common practice throughout our churches today" (*Minutes of the Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* p. 205); and

Whereas the so-called "two-and-a-half-office view" is clearly illogical and patently a recent innovation at variance with historical Presbyterianism in the United States of America and indeed throughout the World; and

Whereas the so-called "three-office view" is easily and widely construed as being fragmentative of the unity of church office, and if not also of the unity of the Trinity; and

Whereas all of the above views ultimately tend to elevate only one of the special offices at the expense of the others in a man-centered way, and/or to downgrade the fundamental office of all Christians rooted in the official work of the Lord Jesus; and

Whereas "**the triune office view**" is hereby claimed to be the view of church office of the Triune God (the kingly Father and the prophetic Son and the priestly Holy Spirit), of the unfallen Adam, of Old Testament Israel, of the Lord Jesus Christ our great Prophet and Priest and King, of the Apostolic Church of the New Testament, of the infallible Scriptures, of historic Primitive Presbyterianism, of the Early Church Fathers, of John Calvin, of the original *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government of the Westminster Assembly*, of most of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches throughout the World, of the most eminent Calvinistic Theologians of all ages, and of the original and present *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America (*cf.* the *Minutes* of the Fourth General Assembly p. 210);

Therefore, be it resolved: that due consideration be given by our denomination to the historic Presbyterian "triune office view" set out here below; that the proposed revision(s) of our *Book of Church Order* be suspended for this Fifth General Assembly, and that the *Ad Interim Committee* be authorized to give detailed study to the following considerations before making final recommendations on possible revisions of the *Book of Church Order* to the Sixth General Assembly.

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3. THE TRIUNE GOD AND THE TRIUNE OFFICE

"The Old Testament knew three primary offices; no more, no less -- Prophets, Priests, and Kings. They were representatives of Christ to come. For this same reason, the New Testament period has three primary offices no more, no less -- Ministers, Elders, and Deacons." They represent "Christ respectively as Prophet, Priest and King of His Church." -- Van Dellen and Monsma: *The Revised Church Order Commentary*, 1970, p. 24.

"We have proved that the churches of the New Testament knew nothing of any permanent officers but Preachers, Presbyters, and Deacons.... God has appointed in His Church three species of functions -- that of the Preacher accredited to public ambassador for God, that of the Inspector, and that of Deacon." -- Dabney: *Theories of the Eldership*, in *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, Banner of Truth, London, 1967 rep., II:143,154.

The word "office" -- like the word "Trinity" -- is not explicitly used in the Scriptures as originally written.¹ Yet the concepts behind both words, are clearly Biblical.² These concepts are always functional, and never merely titular. For also the word "office" is not a vainglorious title, but involves hard work for the Lord.³

An "officer" who will not do his required work and fulfill his vocational task, is a contradiction in terms. "Preachers" who do not really preach, "ruling elders" that do not really guide, and "deacons" that do not really help -- are the henbane of the Church.

If, after loving correction, they cannot or will not function in those various official rôles -- they should be removed from their ministry⁴ in that special office, and instead rather be encouraged to function in the general office of all Christians.⁵ And if a person will not function in the general office of all Christians -- after loving correction proves to be fruitless, he should be cut off from the local congregation of the faithful.⁶

However, encouragement rather than amputation should be the first concern of the congregation. Accordingly, the faithful occupants of the general office of all Christians⁵ need to be encouraged to become even better Christians.⁶ Similarly, all occupants of the special office should be encouraged -- and are worthy of honor.⁷ Indeed, those special officers who function praiseworthily -- such as those "elders who rule well" -- need to be counted worthy of double respect or honor.⁷ For a faithful officer is one who works -- and who works well.

Now the Triune God is the only One Who works without ceasing, and Who works well without any imperfection. For He alone occupies the one triune "office" of Prophet-Priest-King.

There are three aspects of this one triune office of Jehovah Elohim. The kingly aspect of this triune office is recognized especially in God the Father (or the King of the ages).⁸ The prophetic aspect of this same office, is recognized especially in God the Son (or the Word of

God).⁹ And the priestly aspect of this same office, is recognized especially in God the Spirit (or the Holy Ghost).¹⁰

Because there are three distinct Persons within the Godhead, Each divine Person's work (or tasks or duty or office)¹¹ is different to that of the other two Persons.¹² Each Person works sovereignly in His Own sphere – as it were, in "sphere-sovereignty." For as the 1561 *Belgic Confession* of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches states, each of the "three Persons" of the Triune God operates through "particular offices"¹² distinguished from one another by their individual personal properties -- through the several official functions of Prophet and Priest and King.

Yet all of these several offices or personages¹² of the one true Triune God overlap each other, and thus ultimately constitute but one office. For each Person of the Trinity also represents the other two Persons, at the same time as He discloses Himself. For They, like all the works of the Triune God, are indivisible.¹³

In addition, each Person also works universally in all three spheres -- as it were in "sphere-universality." After all, there is only one God (and not three); and each Person of the Trinity is fully God.¹⁴ Indeed, there is an interpenetration (or *perichoreesis*)¹⁵ of the work of each Person also in the dissimilar works of the other two Persons -- so that all three offices¹¹ are really but three different "aspects" of God's one basic triune work and office.

Consequently, no one Person or office of the Trinity is more important than the Others. Each works sovereignly in His Own sphere, but all work universally in all of the spheres. Though functionally distinct from Each Other, they are All also axiologically co-equal.¹⁶

In the work of creation, the one true Triune God made the universe like a gigantic mirror in which He reflects Himself.¹⁷ Accordingly, all creatures bear the signature of the Trinity.¹⁸ Time is triune -- one time, yet three aspects or tenses (past, present and future).¹⁹ Space is triune -- one space, yet three dimensions (length, breadth and height).²⁰ The universe is triune -- one creation, yet two heavens and one earth.²¹ And so is God's first earthly creature -- one white light, with three primary color components (red, yellow and blue).²² Indeed, as the *Belgic Confession* points out, the Triune God clearly gave "unto every creature its being, shape, form and several offices to serve its Creator."²³

However, of all of the many creatures in the universe, it is particularly man that most gloriously reflects the triune office of the Triune God. For man alone is the image of God. And man bears that image, as he occupies office and executes all of his various duties in working to the glory of Jehovah.²⁴

The three Persons of the Triune God took counsel with Each Another, and created man in Their image.²⁵ They gave man a hand to rule with, as a king in perfect righteousness. They gave man a tongue to speak with, as a prophet in perfect knowledge. And They gave man a heart to serve with, as a priest in perfect holiness.²⁶

These tasks overlapped one another. Yet they were and are severally distinguishable. For within the one official covenant of works,²⁷ there were three distinguishable tasks -- to subdue

the earth (as a king);²⁸ to name the animals (as a prophet);²⁹ and to care for the garden (as a priest).³⁰ And this triune task of prophet and priest and king is still God's requirement of every descendant of Adam -- even now after the fall.³¹

But after the advent of sin, unbelievers started to misuse (and continue to misuse) their God-given office -- to the glory of Satan. Rather than to work to the glory of the Triune God.

Even faithful man's ability to fulfill this triune office, was greatly weakened after the fall -- in spite of God's enabling common grace and special grace.³² For faithful man's prophetic work is now performed in the sweat of his face -- compare the difficult work of writing books!³³ Man's kingly work of subduing the earth is now resisted -- by thorns and thistles!³⁴ And his priestly work of caring for creation -- is now burdened by his own unholy inertia!³⁵

Furthermore, the scope of this official work of man for God was now expanded -- into the prophetic correction of lies (*e.g.* by the testimony of truthful witnesses); into priestly concern for human suffering (*e.g.* by caring for the sick in hospitals); and into kingly rule against sin and crime (*e.g.* by police work in dealing with thugs).³⁶ And this thus-increased and still-increasing volume of official works which needs to be done -- as well as the incessant corrupting influence of sin -- necessitated and still necessitates the division of the one triune office into the distinguishable (though overlapping) several offices of Prophet and Priest and King.

Yet because after the fall all centralized human power corrupts, and absolute human power corrupts absolutely -- there needed to be a division and separation of powers into a constitutional system with built-in checks and balances. Hence, while still preserving the universal overlap from one official sphere to the others -- especially the Mosaic covenant developed the three sphere-sovereign³⁷ offices of Prophet and Priest and King.

For in spite of sphere-sovereign overlap, sphere-sovereign rulers such as Elders and Judges and Monarchs were not to do sphere-sovereign priestly work.³⁸ Nor either were sphere-sovereign Prophets to hold sphere-sovereign political office.³⁹ Nor were Priests to rule -- as the Priests Anna and Caiaphas so unconstitutionally did in the *Sanhedrin*. But all three offices⁴⁰ were channelized to work together harmoniously in the service of Jehovah, together with the actions of Elohim Himself.

All three offices, like those in the Trinity,¹¹ were co-ordinate and not sub-ordinate.¹⁶ All three offices were to stand in the service of the people of God, as a nation of Prophets and Priests and Kings.⁴¹ All three offices typified the later official work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and looked forward to His restoration of the Adamitic office of all Christians at the time of the Savior's incarnation.⁴² And even in Mosaic times, the Triune God and the pre-incarnate divine Christ was the fundamental Prophet and Priest and King of the Old Testament administration of the one and only covenant of God's good grace.⁴³

At the end of the period of the Old Testament administration of the covenant of special grace, the Triune God restored Adam's original threefold office.⁴⁴ This occurred when the Son of God as the divine Mediator between the Trinity and man, Himself became Jesus Christ the Second Adam.⁴⁵

Promised as the Seed right after the fall, and again in the person of the mysterious Melchizedek (the Prophet-Priest-King of Salem)⁴⁶ -- the Second Adam Himself fulfilled also the Mosaic Prophethood, Priesthood and Kingship.⁴⁷ And in so doing, He thereby re-established and advanced the Adamitic triune Prophethood and Priesthood and Kingship of all Christians.⁴⁸

Anointed to office as our great Prophet-Priest-King at the time of His Own Baptism,⁴⁹ our Savior anoints all of His New Testament children in the triune office of Prophet-Priest-King⁵⁰ -- with the laying on of hands at the time of their Baptism in the name of the (kingly) Father, the (prophetic) Son and the (priestly) Holy Spirit.⁵¹ Thus, Christians are restored⁴⁴ to Adam's threefold office (which Christ unfolded and which Spirit-anointed Christians are to develop even further). To reject the continuing link between Adam and Christ the Second Adam and Christians in all ages, is not orthodox covenantal Presbyterianism at all -- but heterodox Anabaptistic Dispensationalism!

Henceforth, through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, all baptized Christians partake of Christ's Own anointment -- as Prophets and Priests and Kings.⁵² For "each and all who believe, being members of Christ, are together partakers of Him and of all His riches and gifts." He is "called '**Christ**' -- that is, 'anointed'" -- because "He has been **anointed** with the Holy Ghost to be our chief Prophet...and to be our only High Priest...and also to be our eternal King."

Every child of God is "called a Christ-ian." Why? Only because he is "a member of Christ by faith," and is thus a "partaker of His anointing" in order that he "may confess His name" (prophetically) and present himself (priestly) as "a living thankoffering to Him" and (in a kingly way) "fight against sin and Satan in this life and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures."

This means "that every one must know it to be his duty (or official work and task)¹¹ readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts for the advantage and salvation of the other members"⁵³ -- to the glory of God. For, commanded Jesus, all Christians should love the Triune God with all their (priestly) hearts, with all their (prophetic) minds; and with all their (kingly) powers.⁵⁴

Now this triune (baptismally-sealed) office of all Christians, being as it is the restoration⁴⁴ and further unfolding or advancement⁴⁴ of the original Adamitic office of Prophet-Priest-King, is the fundamental office in the Church of the Lord Jesus. A correct understanding of this, sounds the death knell of all professionalistic tyranny in the congregation -- be it the tyranny of hyperprophetic Preachercraft (*e.g.* clericalistic "Reverend"-ism), hyperkingly Eldercraft (*e.g.* oligarchical "Sessionism"), or hyperholy Priestcraft (*e.g.* pontifical Romanism).

Neither the Preachers nor the Elders nor the Deacons may act tyrannically. For they are not masters. They are all servants, and none of them should ever be allowed to lord it over the members of Christ's Own flock which He Himself purchased as His Own peculiar property with His most precious blood.⁵⁵ Jesus is the Prophet-Priest-King.⁵⁶ And His Church must determine to be and to remain a "grass roots" Church of Prophets and Priests and Kings -- under Him alone.⁵⁶

Accordingly, all Christians are to be Prophets and Priests and Kings for the Lord Jesus Christ. And that, in spite of many (personality-caused) different nuances of emphasis in one of

these three official functions more than in the others -- which are encountered in each Christian in a different way.⁵⁶

There are indeed these differences in ability and personality. But it should never be forgotten that all of the faithful have been baptized into the office of all Christians, and thereby anointed to work for the Lord in full-time Christian service in all that they do -- be it in church, state, family, business, or elsewhere.⁵⁷

So. Let no dictatorial Preachers, juntas of Elders, nor boards of Deacons get the erroneous idea that it is chiefly they alone who occupy church office -- thus usurping for themselves the crown rights of King Jesus and depriving the so-called "layman" of his own blood-bought official rights and duties!⁵⁸

Yet, despite the fuller measure of Spirit-unction under the New Testament economy than was apparent during Old Testament times, and despite the restoration of the Adamic and Melchizedekic Prophethood-Priesthood-Kingship in the place of the typical and now-fulfilled Mosaic Prophethood and Priesthood and Kingship -- even Christians are only finite creatures⁵⁹ (and are now living in an increasingly complex society). Moreover, Christians are still sinners.⁶⁰ Hence the continual need for the triune special office(s) in the New Testament Church -- in addition to and as an extension of the far more important general office of all Christians.

It is true that churches have at times existed, while consisting only of those occupying the office of all Christians and without having any Preachers or Elders or Deacons at all -- undesirable though such a state of affairs undoubtedly is. It is further true that the special offices all root in the general office of all Christians, and that they presuppose the latter's even more basic necessity⁶² -- inadequately though the office of all Christians functions, when not constantly promoted and encouraged by the special offices. And it is also true that all Christians will continue to occupy the fundamental office of all Christians for all eternity -- very long after the so-called "permanent special offices" have the very last one of them ceased to exist after Christ's second coming.⁶³

But it is not true that we should dispense with those special offices before that time. For Christ Himself has instituted these special offices in (and for the duration of) the Church Militant. And this He did, not so that the special officers should ever lord it over the rest of the flock but so as to help promote the development of the general office of all Christians.

For Christ "gave some as Apostles; and some as Prophets; and some as Evangelists; and some as Pastors-and-Teachers -- for the perfecting of the saints..., for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come...to the measure of the fullness of Christ."⁶⁴

Christ, claims the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, occupies the (singular yet triune) office of Prophet and Priest and King.⁶⁵ The Savior, claim the *Belgic Confession* and the *Heidelberg* and the *Westminster Larger Catechisms* -- instructs all Christians as to their several official duties.⁶⁶ And the Lord Jesus, imply the *Belgic Confession* and the *Form of Government* of the Westminster Assembly, enables the Christians to execute their duties by encouraging them to do so through the instrumentality of the special officers -- who exhort the faithful to perform their various works for God alone, in their capacity as members of the office of all Christians.⁶⁷

Our great Prophet-Priest-King Jesus Christ Himself not only appoints each of His elect to the office of all Christians. But, with their approbation, He also appoints the special officers to lead and to serve and to help and to encourage them to work for Him.⁶⁸

It was He Himself Who selected and ordained the twelve Apostles from out of His many Disciples, in order that the twelve should assist the elect to find and to follow Him and His commands.⁶⁹ And those (temporary) Apostles -- themselves initially combining the triune functions of Prophet and Priest and King⁷⁰ -- were to lay the groundwork for the later development of the permanent special offices which would themselves then collectively execute the thus-fulfilled triune apostolic office.

For the Apostles functioned as Prophets and Priests and Kings; and Christ is Himself the great Apostle (and Prophet and Priest and King). And His Church of Prophets and Priests and Kings is "built upon the foundations of the Apostles and Prophets -- Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone."⁷⁰

God Himself raised up (temporary) "Prophets"⁷¹ -- and the temporary Apostles trained the (temporary) "Evangelists" to undertake the prophetic work of preaching and organizing new churches.⁷² God Himself raises up (permanent) guides, and the Apostles ordained a plurality⁷³ of them as kingly Elders to oversee or "to bishop" each congregation.⁷⁴ Too, the Spirit of God Himself raised up (permanent) helpers⁷⁵ -- and the Apostles ordained them as Deacons to assist the Elders to administer material assistance for the needs of the Lord's people.⁷⁶

We cannot be certain about the chronological order in which the Apostles started transferring their own Christ-given functions of Prophet and Priest and King to the various permanent special offices.⁷⁷ But it is certain that those special offices grew out of the apostolic office, like branches from a root. For the kingly-apostolic rulership now lives on in the Elders,⁷⁸ the priestly-apostolic administratorship lives on in the Deacons,⁷⁹ and the prophetic-apostolic preacherhood now lives on in the Ministers of the Word.⁸⁰

Possibly the permanent Preachers now combined the previous temporary offices of Prophet and Evangelist too.⁸¹ And probably the Apostles first appointed Elders in each congregation, and only later appointed Preachers and Deacons.⁷⁷

It is certain only when Preachers, Elders and Deacons were all established in each congregation -- that all the riches of the official Prophethood-Priesthood-Kingship of the Triune God, and all of the riches of the "Preacher-Bishop-Deacon" office of the God-man Jesus Christ, was (and is) adequately displayed.⁸² And only then were (and are) God's "grassroots people" best served and encouraged to develop their own full potential in their office of all Christians.⁶⁷

It is true that the Elders of the local Session -- which includes the local Preacher and/or Preachers -- are the God-appointed Pastors or guides (rather than the "reigning" rulers) of each congregation.⁸³ It is true that the Deacons and the congregational Christians and even the Elders themselves (including the Preachers) should all submit to that sessional guidance.⁸⁴ But it is also true that the Session as a whole and each constituent Elder thereof, need to remember that they have been appointed to help others by being their servants -- and not to hinder them by trying to act like lords over their fellow Christians in the congregation.⁸⁵

It is true that the husband alone is the head of the household⁸⁶ -- though only under God. This does not give him prime importance there⁸⁷ -- for God alone is of prime importance even there and especially there. Nor would the husband be wise in attempting to rule, without consulting his wife and children.⁸⁸

Similarly, all Elders need to get the advice of all of the people of God they serve -- as even the Apostles did.⁸⁹ The idea that either the preaching office or the ruling office "is the first in the Church both for dignity and usefulness"⁹⁰ -- urgently needs some revision. For it is not the language of Holy Scripture.⁹¹

The Bible teaches not sub- but co-ordination of offices. For, as the sixteenth-century *Second Helvetic Confession* of the original Swiss Reformed Churches rightly maintains, "Christ (is) the only Pastor of the Church" -- and under Christ, there is "no primacy in the Church."⁹²

Yet although there is no sub-ordination -- there must be ordination, order and co-ordination in the Church. Even as there always has been and always will be in the Church's Triune God.⁹³ So normally, only Elders (which includes Preachers) should sit on the Session as a council of guardian Rulers.⁷³

Normally, only Preachers (which excludes non-preaching ruling Elders)⁹⁵ should preach the audible Word -- and administer the sacramental visible Word.⁹⁶ And normally, only Deacons should officially minister to the material needs of all concerned.⁹⁷ For the sphere-sovereignty of each of the three special offices, normally requires that these necessary distinctions faithfully be observed.

Yet there is also the opposite and complementary principle of sphere-universality. And this principle of overlap requires: that all Preachers preach rulingly and priestly, as well as prophetically;⁹⁸ that all Elders rule prophetically and priestly, as well as kingly;⁹⁹ and that all Deacons help prophetically and guidingly, as well as priestly.¹⁰⁰

For this reason, in abnormal conditions -- such as where Deacons are unobtainable -- the Elders may appoint some of their own number to do so¹⁰¹ (at which time those thus-appointed Elders would then be functioning at least temporarily as Deacons rather than as Elders). Again, a Preacher-Evangelist sometimes needs to function without Elders (or rather himself becomes the sole Elder) in mission churches -- until regular Elders are appointed.

So too -- even according to the seventeenth-century Westminster Assembly's *Form of Church-Government* -- the Elders of a congregation shipwrecked on a deserted island would need to appoint one or more of their number to labor especially in the Word and in doctrine. He or they would thereby function at least temporarily not in the Eldership but as a Preacher or Minister of the Word of God.¹⁰² Indeed, the universality of the triune office inherent in each of the three special offices requires this kind of flexibility in states of emergency.

Accordingly, not only should no Preacher ever lord it over any other Preacher, nor any Elder ever lord it over any other Elder(s), or Deacon lord it over any other Deacon(s).¹⁰³ But no Elder should ever lord it over any Preacher (as if the latter were merely the paid employee of the Session).¹⁰⁴ And no Preacher should ever lord it over the Deacons (as if they were to occupy only

an inferior and simply administrative office, not being members of the Session).¹⁰⁵ For Christ alone is Lord.

Indeed, because Christ alone is Lord, we need to understand that His official work -- from which our whole concept of church office must be developed -- involves both sphere-universality and sphere-sovereignty. For within His one "office of a Mediator" mentioned in the *Westminster Confession* -- or His one "office of Prophet, Priest and King" of the *Westminster Larger Catechism* -- we can distinguish the three "offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King" of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* -- and the "three offices" of Christ in the *Catechism for Young Children*.¹⁰⁶

Special office, then, is three-in-one or triune. It is a perfect system of built-in checks and balances given by the Triune God himself to promote constitutional government in the Church of the Lord Jesus.

This is why the largest confederation of Presbyterian Churches within the *Reformed Ecumenical Synod* has declared: "Apart from the general office of Believer, there are three special offices to which Christ has entrusted the work of the Church -- that of Minister of the Word, that of Elder, and that of Deacon. These three offices are of equal importance, but are distinguished in task and work. In exercising his vocation, no officer may lord it over other officers. For Christ is the only Head and King and Master of His Church."¹⁰⁷

One can indeed compare the quality of work rendered within an office, to less acceptable service rendered within the same office -- or (with difficulty) even to that rendered within other offices. Hence one could justly claim that the quality of work done by ruling "Elders that rule well" -- is superior to the quality of work done by Preachers "who labor in Word and in doctrine" but who do not do so "well."¹⁰⁸

But one can hardly claim that the work of a Preacher is more important than the work of a Deacon, so that all young people should be encouraged to become Preachers rather than to become Deacons! For if that were true, all Christian young ladies too should either be encouraged to become Preachers -- a manifestly unscriptural position! -- or else relegated to second-class citizenship doing less than "my utmost for His highest" in the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁹

In the last analysis, all Christians have been elected by God the Father and appointed co-equal Prophet-Priest-Kings by God the Son and anointed to that triune office by God the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰ For all of the faithful, of whatever age, received the laying on of hands when they were installed in the office of all Christians by Baptism in the name of the Triune God.¹¹¹ And the Lord Jesus Christ, their great Second Adam, is their only Prophet and Priest and King.

He alone is the great Prophet like unto Moses.¹¹² He alone is our great High Priest.¹¹³ And He alone is the only King of His Church.¹¹⁴ For this reason, there is no place in Christ's Church for Preacher-craft, Elder-craft, or Priest-craft.

For all such -craft, breeds grasping graft! Only Christ is fundamental, central, and terminal. And under Him, the Source of the only permanent office in the Church -- is that of all Christians.

Thus Christ established a Prophethood of all Christians, a Priesthood of all Christians, and a Kingship of all Christians. That is what the Reformation is all about. Such universal Prophethood-Priesthood-Kingship was not at all the nature of the pre-reformational De-formed Church. But happily, such was indeed the nature of the post-reformational Re-formed Church -- the Church that form-ed itself afresh, upon the basis of the Old and New Testament Scriptures alone.

Let us too, then, be reformingly-Reformed and Reformedly-reforming! Let us jettison the remnants of Romanism, and remind all Preachers and Elders and Deacons that all of them are in special office only to serve and to promote the office of all Christians, as the only permanent office! And let us remind all Christians too, that even they only hold that great office at all -- in order to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever!¹¹⁵

To enjoy Him forever! For on the new-earth-yet-to-come, all of the special offices will have fallen away. There, all Christians will be a nation of Prophets and Priests and Kings.¹¹⁶ There, all Christians -- previously baptized in the name of the kingly Father and the prophetic Son and the priestly Spirit¹¹⁷ -- will bear Christ's name on their foreheads, as they look on His face.¹¹⁸ And there, Christ our only Prophet and Priest and King will be all things in all people.¹¹⁹

"Thy Kingdom come!" Even in the government of Christ's Church and her offices. "Here on earth, as it is in heaven!"¹²⁰

There are some twenty consistent implications of the above "triune office" view. What are they?

1. There is only one triune office in Christ's Church. The general *diakonia* of Prophet-Priest-King.¹²¹
2. All Christians occupy that general office. By virtue of their baptismal anointing, accompanied with the laying on of hands.¹²²
3. What can be done better to promote the function of the above general triune office? Specially gifted Christians, congregationally elected, should be ordained to the special offices.¹²³
4. These special offices root in the general office of all Christians. They have no justification at all even for their very existence, except insofar as they strengthen that general office of all Christians.¹²⁴
5. What are the special offices? They are those of (prophetic) Preacher, (priestly) Deacon, and (kingly) Elder.¹²⁵
6. The special offices are hierarchically subordinate only to the Lord Jesus Christ. For that reason, being harmoniously co-ordinate to one another, they are co-equal in importance.¹²⁶
7. All Elders are Shepherds; should be called "Pastors"; and are co-equal "Co-Pastors" of their Preacher. The term "Pastor" implies kingly Eldership, and should never be restricted to the Preacher alone (thus Professors Thornwell and Reed).¹²⁷

8. The description of most Session members in Church Minutes merely as "Mr." instead of as "Elder," should be discontinued. Too, terms like "Right Reverend" and "The Most Reverend" and especially "The Very Reverend" -- can only be justified by a gross misapplication of First Timothy 5:17. If such descriptions are used at all, they should be applied equally to all of the Elders, calling all those who rule "Reverend" and calling only those who rule well "Most Reverend." But this too might breed "kingly clericalism" in the hearts of the Elders (as it sometimes does in the hearts of Preachers), over against those Christians not holding official membership in the Session. Even such terms as "clergy" and "laity," just like the terms "Father" and "Rabbi," should rather be dropped altogether in consistently-Protestant denominations.¹²⁸

9. All Preachers are "Co-Preachers" (or associated Preachers) of all the other Preachers, and especially of those in the same congregation. The hierarchical subordination of the so-called "Associate Minister" or (second) Preacher to the "Minister" or (first) Preacher, is an un-Protestant remnant of Romish hierarchy.¹²⁹

10. There can be no such office as "Assistant Minister." For the person incorrectly thus addressed, is either a co-equal "Co-Preacher" or a co-important "assistant to the Preacher" (who merely assists and who has not been ordained to any special office). The staggered hierarchy ("Minister"- "Associate Minister"- "Assistant Minister"- "Minister of Music"- "Youth Minister" *etc.*), is reminiscent of faculty rank at an academic institution -- rather than the Scriptural offices in the Church of the Lord Jesus.¹³⁰

11. It is dangerous to restrict the term "Minister" only to Preachers. There are other ministries too, and all Christians -- even that vast majority of them not ordained to the Ministry of the Word -- are indeed "Ministers" of Christ, and labour in "the ministry" of the Church.¹³¹

12. All so-called "Teaching Elders" should rather be called "Preaching Elders" or "Preachers." For "Ruling Elders" too may possibly also "teach" -- but should not normally preach, nor administer the Sacraments.¹³²

13. Preachers are also "(ruling) Elders." So there may be merit in calling (non-preaching) so-called ruling Elders, "Senators" (thus Zwingli) or even "Governors" (thus Calvin).¹³³

14. Because the Presbytery and the General Assembly are **not** really "higher courts" but only "larger courts" than is the Session, and because Preachers are not "higher" officers than are Elders or Deacons -- all three kinds of officers could validly be ordained by the same court.¹³⁴ Ordination of Preachers by the Presbytery and of Elders by the Session does rightly re-inforce the idea that Preachers and Elders are two different kinds or classes of (co-equal) officers -- though with two different kinds of functions.

15. All three kinds of special officers should have their membership in the local congregation, just like all of the members of the more basic office of all Christians. If, as seems logical, all three special offices should then primarily be responsible to the Session rather than to the Presbytery, it is obvious this applies to the Preacher too -- although all three kinds of special officer (and all those in the general office of all Christians) may of course appeal decisions of the Session to the Presbytery and thereafter to the General Assembly.¹³⁵

16. Any Elder could moderate meetings of the General Assembly, of the Presbytery, or of the Session. But when the local Preacher is present, his own regular moderatorship of the Session does seem to be implied by Scripture -- and is the "most expedient" procedure (according to the Westminster Assembly). It does perhaps prevent the dissatisfaction which non-preaching Elders may otherwise feel in regularly submitting to the sessional moderatorship of one of their own number. Yet the Preacher's non-moderatorship would also free him from the cautious rôle all moderators must play -- so that, as a fellow Elder, the Preacher could then advocate positions at Session meetings more forcefully than he is currently able to do.¹³⁶

17. Only Preachers should normally be authorized to preach. So when Elders moderate at Presbytery and General Assembly meetings, their Moderatorial Addresses should bear the character of an Exhortative Testimony -- and not that of an expository sermon (which only Preachers should normally deliver).¹³⁷

18. The Diaconate should be encouraged to meet officially with the Session at least quarterly, as a "Joint Session" or local Church Council. And just as the Preacher has a right to attend every meeting of the Diaconate as an advisory member, so too should the Session nominate also an Elder to do the same. So too should the Diaconate nominate a Deacon to attend meetings of the Session in an advisory capacity, and report back to the Diaconate. Thus the offices would then all become much better coordinated.¹³⁸

19. The various local Diaconates should perhaps be organized also into regional and national meetings of delegated Deacons, which would then normally meet by themselves (though with at least one Preacher and one Elder nominated by his larger court to be in advisory attendance). Sometimes these regional and national Diaconates could also meet in Joint Session with the Presbyteries and the General Assemblies. And they too should be encouraged to send their advisors to the meetings of the Elders' larger courts.¹³⁹

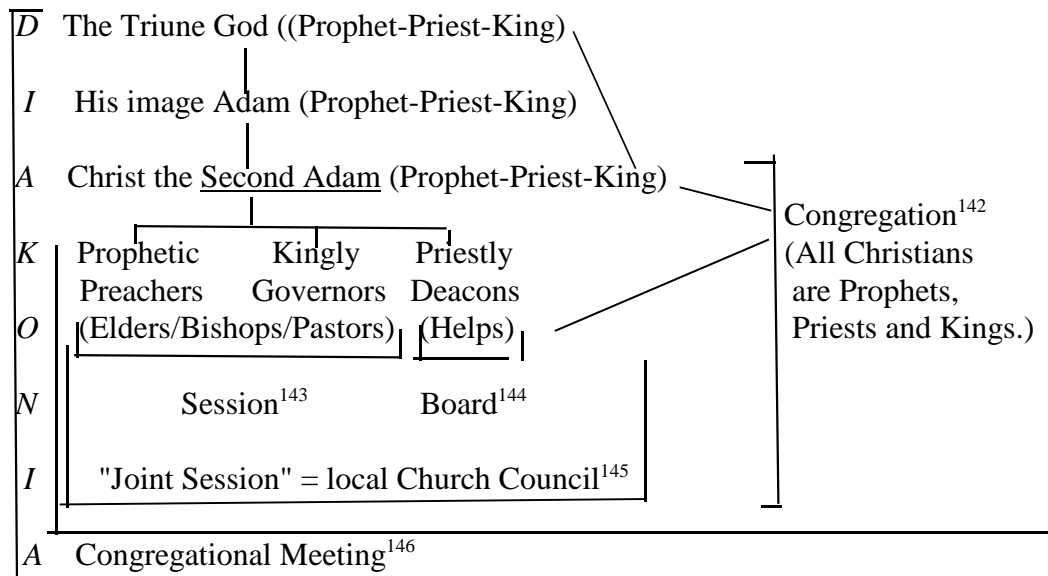
20. Inasmuch as the word (as opposed to the concept of) "Session" is not to be found in the Bible, and inasmuch as the Biblical word "Presbytery" means a Council of Elders (whether of a local or regional or national nature) -- there may be merit in returning to the more accurate terminology of the Westminster Assembly's original *Form of Presbyterian Church-Government*. This would involve: renaming our Sessions "Congregational Assemblies" or "Local Presbyteries"; renaming our existing intermediate Presbyteries "Classical Presbyteries" or "Regional Presbyteries"; renaming our General Assemblies "Synodical Presbyteries"; and renaming our broadest countrywide Court our "National Presbytery."¹⁴⁰

In all the above, we hold fast to the co-equality of the special offices to one another. We hold fast also to their obligation to promote the basic office of all Christians, as well as to their absolute subordination only to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Prophet and Priest and King!

For, as the *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America declares: "Jesus the Mediator -- the sole Priest, Prophet, King" -- "contained in Himself...all the offices in His Church.... Christ as King has given to His Church officers...and the benefits of all His offices...for the edification of the visible Church which is His body.... The members of this visible Church catholic are all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and promise submission to His Laws....

"All baptized persons are entitled to the (priestly) watchful care, (prophetic) instruction and (kingly) government of the Church.... The polity of the Church consists of (prophetic) doctrine, (kingly) government and (priestly) distribution. The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church are Teaching Elders or Ministers of the Word who are commissioned to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments; Ruling Elders whose office is to have the government and spiritual oversight of the church; and Deacons whose office is to receive and administer the offerings of the people.... No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein -- or receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence except such as are employed in the Scriptures."¹⁴¹

Scriptural structure of congregational offices



Concluded the original Presbyterian Church of Scotland's 1560 *First Book of Discipline* and 1578 *Second Book of Discipline*:¹⁴⁷ "The whole policy of the Kirk consisteth in three things -- in doctrine, discipline and distribution. With doctrine is annexed the administration of Sacraments.... According to the parts of this division, ariseth a sort of threefold officers in the Kirk -- to wit, of Ministers or Preachers, Elders or Governors, and Deacons or distributors.... All these may be called by a general word, Ministers of the Kirk."¹⁴⁸

* * * * *

ENDNOTES

1) Scripture does, of course, use the words *episkopee* ("bishopric"), *kleeros* ("lot"), *douleia* ("service"), *ergon* ("work"), and *timee* ("honor"); but none of them is exactly equivalent to "office." Cf. J.C.G. Kotzé, J.C.G.: *The Divine Charge to the Christian Church: An Historico-Dogmatic Study in the Reformed Conception of the Universal Priesthood of Believers with special reference to Evangelism*, Citadel Press, Cape Town, 1951, p. 201f.

- 2) In the Old Testament, the nearest concept is that of *'abodaah* ("work"), which is translated "service" in the *KJV* of Ex. 12:25f -- and *p^equddaah* ("inspection"), translated "office" in the *KJV* of Num. 4:16 *etc.* Cf. Van der Merwe, J.D.G.: *Women in Ecclesiastical Office – Yes or No?*, in *D.R.C. Theological Journal*, D.R.C. pub., Cape Town, 1977, p. 247). In the New Testament, *diakonia* ("service") and *praxis* ("deed") are translated "office" in the *KJV*. Cf. Sproul: *What is an Ecclesiastical Office?*, in *P.C.A. Handbook*, 1977, p. 1621.
- 3) Cf. the uses of *'abodaah* and *ergon* in any Concordance. Note the Eldership in I Tim. 3:1 is called a "function" or a "task" or a "work" in the original Greek (*ergon*), and not an "office." Cf. too the "work of the ministry" in Eph. 4:12 (*ergon*).
- 4) Cf. Acts 1:16-26, & esp. vv. 17,20,22,26. Cf. too Heb. 5:4 with Lev. 10:1-12.
- 5) Ex. 19:3-8; Num. 11:29; Joel 2:16,28f; Matt. 5:16; John 12:26 & 14:12; Acts 2:4-21; Rom. 12:1f; I Cor. 12:13-20,36; Eph. 2:18-22 & 4:4f,12f,16; I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6 & 5:10 & 20:4-6 & 22:3-5.
- 6) Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:1-13; II Cor. 2:2-5 & 7:8-10; II Th. 3:14f; I Tim. 5:1,19,22; II Tim. 2:25f & 4:2; Tit. 3:10f.
- 7) Acts 6:3 & 21:8; Phil. 1:1; I Th. 5:12f; I Tim. 3:1,7f,13 & 5:17; Heb. 13:7,17,24.
- 8) I Tim. 1:17. 9) John 1:1-14. 10) Acts 5:3-5.
- 11) Cf. the Greek for 'Person' (*Prosoopon*, "appearance," from *pros* "toward" plus *oops* "an eye" -- whence "countenance" or "appearance" or "outlook"). Cf. too the beginning of the 2nd section of our text above, and n. 12 below. Also see the words "office" and "duty" in the *West. Conf.* 4.8:3-4 & 16:4-5, and the word "work" in n. 2 above. Cf. too Luther's *Beruf* ("vocation"); and the 1561 original French of the *Belg. Conf.*'s art. 28 *le devoir* ("duty"), which was rendered *schuldige plicht* ("duty owed") in the 1562 Dutch version but *officie* ("office") in the later 1583 Dutch version.
- 12) I John 5:6-8; Matt. 3:16f & 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:5-8; John 1:14.18 & 15:26; Gal. 4:6. Cf. the *Belg. Conf.* 9 and the *West. Conf.* 2:1-4 and the *West. Larg. Cat.* 9-10's "Personal properties" -- which distinguish the Father and the Son and the Spirit from One Another -- with n. 11 above and n. 66 below.
- 13) Cf. the classic Calvinistic maxim: *Omnia opera Dei (sive Trinitatis) indivisa sunt.*
- 14) Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:6; Jas. 2:19; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:8f; I Cor. 2:10f.
- 15) Isa. 9:6 and Eph. 1:4f and n. 10 above. Cf. Abbing: *Diaconia -- A Study concerning the Concept of 'Ministry' in Systematic and Practical Theology*, Book Center, Hague, 1950, pp. 200f & 264f.
- 16) Cf. Luke 22:66 and n. 12 above. 17) Ps. 19:1f.

- 18) Rom. 1:20 *cf.* 11:36 and Abbing: *op. cit.*, pp. 215f.
- 19) Rev. 4:8; *cf.* Wood: *The Secret of the Universe*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1955.
- 20) Eph. 3:15-19; *cf.* Döderlein: *God's Trinity Proved in Power, Space and Time*, Germany, 1889; *cf.* n. 18 above.
- 21) Gen. 1:1's *shamaayim* ("two heavens" dual), plus *'aarets* ("one earth" singular), equals three entities (*cf.* n. 18f above) in God's one universe (*ha-kol*).
- 22) Rev. 4:2-5 & 5:6; *cf.* Christlieb: *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1874; *cf.* nn. 18f above.
- 23) *Belg. Conf.*, art. 12.
- 24) Gen. 1:1,3,26; Eph. 4; *West. Conf.* 7; Schilder's *Christ and Culture*, Wever, Franeker, 1952; and Veldkamp, H.: *The Office of Believer*, Wever Franeker, n.d.; *cf.* n. 62 below.
- 25) Gen. 1:26 & 5:1-5f and Jas. 3:9.
- 26) Eccl. 7:29 and Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10f; *cf.* too *Heid. Cat.* Q. 6: "God created man good, and after His Own image -- that is, in true righteousness and holiness. So that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him." *Cf.* n. 115.
- 27) Hos. 6:7, margin, *KJV*: "but they [the Ephraimites], like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." *Cf.* the *West. Conf.* 4:2 & 7:1-2, and the *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 17-20.
- 28) Gen. 1:28. 29) Gen. 2:20-21. 30) Gen. 2:15.
- 31) Gen. 9:1-7; Ps. 8:1-8; I Cor. 15:21-22,45-47,56; Heb. 2 & 4; Rev. 14:13.
- 32) Gen. 4:3-4,20-22; and *cf.* Calvin's *Comm.* thereon.
- 33) Gen. 3:19 *cf.* Eccl. 12:12. 34) Gen. 3:18 *cf.* Heb. 6:7-8.
- 35) Gen. 3:18; Prov. 6:6-11 & 10:4 & 15:19 & 18:9 & 19:24 & 22:5 & 24:30-34 & 24:30 and Eccl. 10:18.
- 36) Rom. 13:4 and I Cor. 7:15-24, esp. the words "call" and "calling" in vv. 15,17-24. *Cf.* too F.N. Lee's *op. cit.*, pp. 9-33 & 43-67.

See too Abbing's *op. cit.*, p. 542f: "Now that we have discussed the work of the church's special officers, we proceed to ask whether a man's civic vocation is connected to (ordained or unordained) service in the name of Christ.... Civil vocation should in any case be approached from the office of all believers....

"Christian service has been seen to be threefold: (prophetic) witness, (kingly) admonition, and (priestly) assistance, so that civic vocation too should reveal these characteristics. And certainly the grocer, the shoemaker and the engineer *etc.* -- for example -- are engaged in assisting and fighting against the suffering of mankind in their 'priestly' service (without which service, men would have to suffer or even to die).

"So too -- the teacher, the policeman, the judge *etc.* are engaged in admonition -- in their 'kingly' service of fighting against the sins of man by restricting them. And so too the artist, the scientist *etc.* in their 'prophetic' service -- are engaged in witnessing and fighting against falsehood. All cultural work is involved with these three services.

"The question now arises as to whether there is a clearly principial breach between direct ecclesiastical service and indirect civic service. We believe that there is no such breach, and that the transition from ecclesiastical work in society is a fluid one....

"After all, everybody -- even the Preacher -- is also earning his daily bread by means of his 'full-time' work. And nobody (not even the factory worker) should do his work only to earn his bread -- without also regarding that work as his religious service."

Cf. too John Calvin's *Institutes* IV:19:33 & 20:4: "Agriculture, architecture, shoemaking and shaving are lawful ordinances of God." Magistrates too have "a commission from God..., (and) are invested with divine authority" -- so that "no man can doubt that civil authority is in the sight of God not only sacred and lawful, but the most sacred and by far the most honorable of all stations of mortal life."

The genius of Geneva wrote elsewhere: "All human labour is of equal value. After all, all are in the Lord's service and contribute towards the maintenance of human society.... All craftsmen of whatever kind who serve the needs of men, are ministers of God." Even "agriculture is commanded by God." *Opera omnia*, XXXVIII,14 & XXXVI,83 & XXIII,83. *Cf.* too our nn. 11 above & 57 below, and also F.N. Lee's *The Origin and Destiny of Man*, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., Philadelphia, 1974, pp. 37-40 & 74-119. See too B. Duvenage: *Career Work in the Light of Reformed Ethics*, PUCHE, Potchefstroom, n.d.

37) *Cf.* our argument at nn. 12-16 above, and at n. 147 below. That prophets and priests and kings are distinct from one another, is obvious from Gen. 20:7 and Ex. 7:1 and Lev. 4:3,22.

38) II Chr. 26.

39) I Kgs. 13, *etc.* The prophets advised or warned the rulers to be godly, but did not try to supplant them.

40) Ex. 3:14-16 & 7:1-2 and Deut. 18:15-18 and *cf.* Jer. 2:8 (*q.v.*). See too P.C.A. *Handbook*, 1977, p. 1609.

41) Ex. 19:3-6 *cf.* Lev. 4:13,15,17.

- 42) Num. 11:29f *etc.*, *cf.* Heb. 2:5-15 and nn. 44 & 148 below.
- 43) Ps. 32:1 *cf.* Rom. 4:3-6; Jer. 31:33-34; I Cor. 5:7 & 10:1-4,9; Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1f & 11:26; I Pet. 1:11f; Rev. 13:8 & 19:10; *West. Conf.* 7:5 & 19:3; and *West. Larg. Cat.* Q. 34. *Cf.* too n. 40, above.
- 44) I Tim., 1:9f. *Cf.* too *Heid. Cat.*, QQ. 12 & 17: "Is there any way by which we may escape that punishment, and again be received into favor?... Why must He (the Mediator)...be God? So that He might, by the power of His Godhead, sustain in His human nature the burden of God's wrath and might obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life." *Cf.* also *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 39 & 54: "It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, so that He might advance our nature.... Christ is exalted in His sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man He is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father." See too n. 45 below.
- 45) Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:21f,45-47; Heb. 2:5-15.
- 46) Gen. 3:15. *Cf.* too Gen. 14 and Ps. 110 and Heb. 5 to 7.
- 47) Col. 2:8-14 and Heb. 8 to 10. 48) *Idem.*
- 49) Gen. 49:10; Deut. 18:18; Ps. 2:6-9 & 45:7 & 110:1-4; Isa. 9:6f & 55:4-15; Dan. 9:24f; Matt. 3:13-17 & 11:27 & 21:3-9 & 28:18; Luke 1:33 & 3:21f & 4:1,18f; John 1:18,32-34 & 3:34 & 6:14 & 10:28 & 15:15; Acts 3:21f & 5:31 & 10:38 & 15:14f; Rom. 8:34; I Cor. 15:25; Heb. 1:9 & 2:17 & 4:14f & 5:4-7 & 7:21,25 & 9:14,28 & 10:5-14. *Cf.* too our argument at nn. 54-56 below.
- 50) John 14:16; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4,38f; and *cf.* our argument at nn. 51-55 below.
- 51) See nn. 8-10 above. *Cf.* too Col. 2:9-14 with Acts 8:12,14-18 & 19:5f with Eph. 1:13f & 4:4f, 30. Also *cf.* Jer. 14:9; Matt. 28:19; Acts 11:26; Rom. 6:4-11; I Cor. 12:13; II Cor. 1:22 & 5:5; Gal. 3:26f; Eph. 4:4f,30; Tit. 3:5-8; I Pet. 1:23 & 2:2,9 & 3:15-21; Rev. 1:5f & 5:10 & 20:4 & 22:4. *Cf.* too *West. Conf.* 12:1: "All those that are justified..., have His name put upon them -- receive the Spirit of adoption." *Cf.* too *Heid. Cat.*, Q. 49: "We have (Christ as) our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge.... He sends us His Spirit as an earnest [or guarantee], by Whose power we 'seek the things which are above.'"

See too the *West. Larg. Cat.*, Q. 165: "Baptism is...a sign and seal of...regeneration by His Spirit..., whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's."

Also *cf.* the *West. Larg. Cat.* Q. 167: "The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long...to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ -- and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body." See too nn. 52-53 below.

52) Acts 9:31; I Pet. 1:2 & 4:14; I John 2:20,27; *Heid. Cat.*, Q. 53: "The Holy Ghost is also given unto me, to make me by true faith a partaker of Christ and all His benefits." Cf. too n. 51 above, and nn. 53-55 below.

53) Thus the *Heid. Cat.*, QQ. 55 & 31 & 32. Cf. too nn. 44 & 51 above and 54 below.

54) Matt. 22:37 cf. the *Heid. Cat.* QQ. 7 & 90 & 91, and the *West. Conf.* 19:1-7 and the *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 92-97. See too Abbing's *op. cit.*, p. 197f.

55) Matt. 20:26f; Luke 12:42-44 & 17:10; Acts 20:28-30; I Cor. 7:21f; Eph. 1:7 & 6:9; Phil. 2:3-7; I Pet. 5:1-5. Cf. too *Belg. Conf.* art. 28 (as quoted in n. 62 below). Cf. also Abbing's *op. cit.*, pp. 522f: "By holy baptism a person is publically and visibly installed in the office of all believers.... All are office-bearers in the congregation, for all occupy the office of all believers by virtue of having been baptized.... All have the authority and the vocation to execute all of the ministries. All have received the unction of the Spirit. One is not elevated above the others. Nobody may have himself called 'Rabbi.' And nobody needs to be instructed or ruled by any other (Jer. 31:31-34 and Heb. 8:8-13)....

"That is not to say that all members of the body of the Lord are always equal to one another in every respect.... There are differences of gifts.... One is especially gifted in the ministry of the Word; the other in the ministry of mercy -- and each is called to minister particularly in accordance with his own special gift...against the background of the fact that each has been equally endowed with the gift of the Spirit Who empowers and calls unto each (kind of) ministry." Cf. too n. 62 below.

56) Cf. nn. 49-53 above, and Feenstra, J.G.: *Doctrine and Life*, South African Calvinistic Pub. Co., Bloemfontein, 1961, pp. 179f: "We need to struggle against imbalances, but at the same time to reckon with different nuances in connection with the office of all believers. There is a great variety of gifts. We have not been manufactured in a factory according to the same pattern. God works organically and creates a rich differentiation, which in Christ is bound together into a unit.

"There are children of God who have received especially the gift of understanding and wisdom. For them it is a great joy to display old and new treasures from Scripture and to meditate about the history of divine revelation. They have received the gift of teaching others and transmitting what they themselves have studied. As a consequence of their knowledge, the discussion of a subject reaches a higher level. They execute especially the prophetic office.

"However, there are also children of God who especially possess the gift of cordial love. Through their loving labors, they win others to Christ; and by their cordial witness in all simplicity and sincerity, they are a rich blessing to many.

"By means of an encouraging word, they oppose destructive criticism with their own constructive criticism. Their value too may not be underestimated. Through their faithfulness and love and their priestly labors, they form the cement whereby the building bricks are attached to one another tightly and securely.

"Then there are also those who are always prepared whenever anything needs to be done in the affairs of God's Kingdom. One can always depend on them, and they never let you down. They like to give of their time and energy in the service of the Lord. They undergird enterprises, and they are people of action.

"They constantly astonish with their good results. They vitalize matters, even though they sometimes need to be cautioned a little in their zeal. We need to take these different nuances into account. So that we may perceive the rich variety of gifts in Jesus Christ."

Moreover, these very differences in personal gifts and inclinations form the basis of the particularization of the general office of all believers -- *via* ordination into the various special offices. Cf. Smitt, P.A.E.S.: *Office and Personality*, Kok, Kampen, 1917. See too Acts 2:38-46 & 11:29f; Rom. 1:11f & 12:4-13; I Cor. 12:4-7,10f,28-30; II Cor. 8 to 9; Gal. 6:10; Phil. 1:1 *cf.* 2:3-7; I Th. 5:11,14; I John 3:16-18; Eph. 4:8-16 (& esp. v. 8's "gifts" with Ps. 68:18, where the "gifts" are seen to be God-endowed officers whom Christ "gives" to His Church). Thus Dunkerley, D.: *Ministers of the Word, PCA Handbook*, Montgomery, 1977, p. 1617.

57) I Cor. 10:31 *cf.* I Pet. 2:9 with 2:13f & 3:1-7,15 & 4:10f. Note that the *West. Conf.* 23:2 correctly speaks of being "called" to "execute the office of a magistrate." So too the *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 125f (on the Fifth Commandment) speaks of inferiors honoring and obeying and performing "their duties to their superiors" (*cf.* n. 11 above), and the *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 138 (on the Seventh Commandment) speaks of the "duties" of the non-continent to enter into "marriage" and to perform "diligent labour in our callings." Note too that the *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 141f (on the Eighth Commandment) not only condemns theft, but requires that all men be employed and follow "a lawful calling and diligence in it."

Also see F.N. Lee's *The Westminster Confession and Modern Society*, Scottish Reformed Fellowship, Edinburgh, 1970. Note too, in the words of the *West. Conf.* 26:1-2, that "all saints...have communion in each other's gifts and graces and are obliged to the performances of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good both in the inward and outward man...as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities and necessities." *Cf.* too n. 36 above.

58) III John 1,9-11 *cf.* nn. 5 & 44 & 51-57 above.

59) Job 36:26 & chs. 38 to 42; Eccl. chs. 5 & 44; John 3:34.

60) Phil. 3:12f; Jas. 3:1f.

61) Acts 13:43 to 14:23. *Cf.* too P.C.A. *Book of Church Order* 4-1,5: "A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their children, associated together for divine worship and godly living.... Churches without Teaching Elders (or Preachers), ought not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.... Christians whose lot is cast in destitute regions, ought to meet regularly for the worship of God."

62) Cf. nn. 5 & 44 & 51-57 above. See too the *Belg. Conf.*, arts. 27f: "We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is an holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting all their salvation in Jesus Christ alone -- being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost.... This holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved.... All men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it.... As mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren according to the talents God has given them..., it is the duty (or office cf. n. 11 above) of all believers according to the Word of God to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church and to join themselves to this congregation."

Cf. too A. Kuyper Sr.'s *E Voto Dordraceno*, Wormser, Amsterdam, 1892, I:336: "The office of Preacher, Elder or Deacon is incidental and superadded and often only temporary. But this office of all believers (on the other hand) roots in one's childship of God, inheres in belonging to the one and only Vine, and is of everlasting duration."

Also see J.C.G. Kotzé's *op. cit.*, pp. 163-65: "The universal priesthood remains the primary element in the Church invisible and visible. The truth of this statement can certainly be claimed for the Primitive Church. In the words of Luke, 'And when it was day He called unto Him His Disciples; and of them He chose Twelve, whom also He named Apostles.'

And Hort, commenting on this significant act of our Lord, says: 'Not only was Discipleship the foundation of Apostleship, but the Twelve who were Apostles were precisely the men who were most completely Disciples'....

"We can say with H. Bavinck (*Reformed Dogmatics* IV:331) that even where is no (special) office in existence, the Church nevertheless will be visibly manifested -- because every believer reveals his or her faith by confession and conduct.... The Church in other words is not an institution, but has an institution. It is visible when it proceeds to erect the institution (A. Kuyper Sr.'s *E Voto* II:146f)" -- before which it is and after which it still remains an organism.

Cf. Veldkamp's *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15: "The 'primacy' of the office of all believers...has already been given in man's creation as the image of God. To be human, means to be an office-bearer.... Therefore the office of all believers -- to use the old terminology -- belongs to the essence of the Church, while the special offices of Ministers of the Word and Elders and Deacons only belong to the welfare of the visible Church.... Where there is no office of all believers, there is no Church -- which cannot be said of the special offices." See too n. 116 below.

See too Abbing's *op. cit.*, pp. 526 & 530: "We have therefore now discovered the special offices. The manner in which we have discovered them, indicates as we have just said that service and not office is primary. Service makes the office, and not the other way round.... Now that we have arrived at this extreme limit of evaluating the special offices, it is good to note immediately and once again that this ordination is only to be viewed against the background of ordination to the general office of all believers -- namely Holy Baptism. Holy Baptism is, among other things, an installation in the office of all believers.

"We have earlier already pointed to the fact that Holy Baptism on the one hand presupposes that the Holy Spirit is present in the baptizee..., and on the other hand presupposes that the Holy Spirit is given...to the baptizee with a view to his official service. This installation in the office of all believers effected in Holy Baptism, remains fundamental for every later special installation in a special office for a special ministry -- with the promise and donation of a special grace of the Holy Spirit."

63) Rev. 1:5f & 5:10 & 21:24 to 22:5 (& esp. vv. 3 & 5!). Cf. Veldkamp's *op. cit.*, pp. 14f: "The office of all believers also reaches out further ahead (than do the special offices). For it is permanent. In heaven there are no office-less citizens.... Office-bearing does not cease, but the office of all believers rather operates there in a completely perfect manner. When that which is perfect has come, the imperfect will have been abolished.... Then I will know perfectly, even as I am known (I Cor. 13). And the content of the new song in heaven is: 'You appointed us as kings and priests for our God, and we shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:10)!' These glorious things cannot be said of the special offices.... In heaven there will no longer be any need for Preachers, Elders and Deacons -- but only for Prophets, Priests, and Kings!"

64) Eph. 4:11f cf. nn. 5 & 44 & 50-57. 65) *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 42-45.

66) I Cor. 7:25 and Eph. 4. Cf. too n. 11 above with *Heid. Cat.*, Q. 124: "'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' That is, grant that we and all men may...perform the duties of his [man's] station and calling." See too *West. Larg. Cat.* Q. 91, and *West. Short. Cat.* Q. 39: "The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to His revealed will."

67) Cf. nn. 11 & 62 above, with *Belg. Conf.* arts. 30f: "We believe that this true Church must be governed by the spiritual policy which our Lord hath taught us in His Word; namely, that there must be Ministers or Pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. Also Elders and Deacons who, together with the Pastors (or Ministers of the Word), form the Council of the Church -- so that by these means, the true religion may be preserved and the true doctrine everywhere propagated.... By these means, everything will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency.... We believe that the Ministers of God's Word, and the Elders and Deacons, ought to be chosen to their respective offices by a lawful election by the Church."

Cf. too the Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Form of Government*, section 3: "The officers which Christ hath appointed for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of the saints -- are some extraordinary (as Apostles, Evangelists and Prophets) which are ceased. Others ordinary and perpetual (as Pastors, Teachers and other Church Governors and Deacons)."

Cf. too Coppes, L.: *Who Will Lead Us? -- A Study in the Development of Biblical Offices*, Pilgrim Pub. Co., Philipsburg N.J., p. 11: "Concerning office. It is the purpose of these offices in the Old Testament (*i.e.* Prophet, Priest, and King) to see that the mission is accomplished. Those who hold these offices, are Gods specially-appointed Delegates to oversee the mission which God has set forth for all of His people."

- 68) *Cf.* Acts 6:1-8. 69) Luke 9:1*f* & 10:1; *cf.* Kotzé, as quoted in n. 62 above.
- 70) Eph. 2:20 *cf.* Heb. 3:1 & n. 65 above -- and Rev. 4:10*f* & 7:4-11 & 21:2*f*,10*f*.
- 71) I Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11 *cf.* Acts 11:27*f* & 13:1 & 15:32 & 21:10*f*.
- 72) Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:8 *cf.* 8:5-40; I Tim. 1:3 & 4:14; II Tim. 1:6 & 4:5; Tit. 1:1-5.
- 73) Ex. 3 & 18; Deut. 21:20; Prov. 11:14 & 24:6 & 31:23; Acts 11:30 & 14:23 & 21:18; I Th. 1:1 *cf.* 5:12*f*; II Th. 1:1,4; Acts 15:2,6 & 19:1,9 *cf.* 20:17,20,28 & 21:18; Tit. 1:5,7; Jas. 5:4.
- 74) Acts 20:17,28; I Tim. 3:1*f*; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5-7.
- 75) Acts 6:1-8 *cf.* Rom. 12:13; I Cor. 12:28 "helps"; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8*f*.
- 76) Acts 6:1-8 *cf.* I Tim. 3:8*f*.
- 77) Dijk, K.: *The Ministry of the Church*, Kok, Kampen, 1952, points out that only the plastic word *diaconia* ("service" or "ministry") but not the word *Diaconos* ("Deacon") is used in Acts 6:1-8, so that it cannot be established that those appointees there were "Deacons." They could, he argues, have been Elders, *cf.* Acts 11:30 & 14:23 & 21:18. Personally, we ourselves presume they were indeed "Deacons" -- in light of their job description there (*cf.* n. 76 above).

However, even if they were Elders, it would only prove that the first-appointed Elders in the Primitive Church did not preach but, in addition to ruling subject to the direction of the Apostles, also performed diaconal work too for a while and then subsequently entrusted it to the only later-appointed Deacons. Similarly, the mere fact that no Preachers (apart from the Apostles) were mentioned in the Church before Acts 6, does not mean that none had been appointed till then -- inasmuch as the earlier John the Baptist was a Preacher (who also administered the Sacrament of Baptism).

Moreover, this may be implied in I Cor. 12:28's statement that "God has set...in the Church -- first, Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers; after that, miracles (or signs); then, gifts of healings, helps, governments" *etc.* The order mentioned here is possibly logical, and probably chronological. In either case, it would mean that God appointed the (temporary) Apostles first, and the (temporary) Prophets second, before He thirdly appointed (permanent) Teachers or Preachers. And that He appointed the Teachers before He appointed the subsequently-mentioned offices (including those of "helps" or Deacons and "governments" or Elders).

In any case, this list is hardly describing the offices in an order of importance. For if it was, Deacons would then be more important than Elders -- inasmuch as (diaconal) "helps" precede (presbyterial) "governments" in that verse. Moreover, the "best gifts" in v. 31 do indeed seem to be referring to those such as the subsequently-described gifts of I Cor. 13:13 -- rather than instead to the just previously-mentioned church offices.

From the preferred reading *meizona* (instead of the less-likely DG variant *kreittona* or "the better" in v. 31), it would seem that *meizona* in 12:31 and *meizoon* in 13:13 really imply "larger" rather than "better." The ideas of 'importance' and 'more importance' (or 'most importance'), then, are foreign to this passage. Cf. too nn. 108 & 110 below. If it were true that Preachers and/or Elders are the most important officers in the Church today, all Christian women in Bible-believing churches (as Non-Preachers and Non-Elders) would of necessity be engaged in 'second-class work' for the Lord. And then the Calvinistic doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers and the equal importance of all vocations would be meaningless, cf. n. 36 above). Cf. too n. 96 below, and Rom. 16:1-2 and Phil. 4:3.

Cf. too Dabney's *Theories of the Eldership*, pp. 133 & 139: "The statement needs correction, that preaching is the distinctive and most important function in the Church.... This enumeration (of I Cor. 12:28 above), contains all the church offices, temporary and permanent.... Of the latter class are the Teachers or Preachers, the Deacons (or 'helps'), and the Rulers (or 'governments').... Nor is there any doubt as to the ruling office (being an office), other than that of Teacher. For he says, 'after that (the office of Teacher).... helps, governments'" etc.

78) I Pet. 1:1 cf. 5:1f. 79) Acts 6:1-8 cf. I Tim. 3:8f. 79) Acts 6:1-8 cf. I Tim. 3:8f.

80) Acts 6:2,4 cf. I Tim. 5:17 & Luke 1:2 cf. I Cor. 9:1,7-14 and Rev. 2:1f. Cf. too n. 42 above.

81) I Tim. 4:14 and II Tim. 1:6 cf. 4:1-5, cf. I Cor. 12:10,28 & 13:2,9-11.

82) See nn. 8-11 & 49 & 65 above; and Phil. 1:1. Cf. too Abbing's *op. cit.*, pp. 67 & 263f & 531: "The doctrine of the triune office is so melodious from the point of view of the Bible, so worthy of respect from the point of view of the history of doctrine, and so handy and usable from the practical point of view -- that it deserves our full attention.... It indeed involves the one realization of God's love of sinners -- a love which bears a priestly, kingly and prophetic character....

"We have thus in a strictly-theological manner discovered a threefold division of the work of the Church, and therefore of every member of the congregation.... In so doing, we have spontaneously arrived at the offices of Preacher, Elder and Deacon -- which are so well-known among Calvinists....

"The usual manner of trying to determine the office only by consulting a few texts from the New Testament alone, is unsatisfactory.... Only an ecclesiastical theology determined by the Holy Scriptures in their entirety, can reach responsible conclusions as to the main points about office and ministry.... The work of Christ and His offices indeed compels us to connect His triune office and the three ministries and offices of His Church....

"One can indeed claim that the prophetic office corresponds with the office of Preacher, the kingly office with the gubernatorial office of Pastor (or Elder), and the priestly office with the administrative office of Deacon. However, we hasten to add immediately, that there is...an interpenetration of offices, so that every ministry -- whether one of preaching, of governing, or of helping -- is simultaneously prophetic and kingly and priestly....

"How many and what kinds of special offices are desirable?... The services needed are: preaching, ruling, and helping.... One could quite simply say: Let there be one special office to execute all these official ministries! That is possible.

"But...most ministries presuppose gifts, and one man does not have all the gifts.... It may more correctly be claimed -- Let each ministry have its own office-bearers!"

83) Jer. 2:8 *cf.* n/ 73 and I Th. 5:12*f.*; I Tim. 3:1*f.* & 5:17; Heb. 13:7,17,24; I Pet. 5:1-5.

84) I Tim. 3 *cf.* Acts 21:18-26. 85) I Pet. 5:1-5 *cf.* Phil. 1:1 & 2:3-5.

86) Eph. 5:22*f.* and I Pet. 3:1*f.* 87) I Cor. 11:11*f.*; Col. 3:19; I Pet. 3:7*f.*

88) Eph. 5:23*f.*; Col. 3:19*f.*; Prov. 31. 89) Acts 6:5 & 21:18*f.*

90) Thus the P.C.A.'s present *Book of Church Order*, 8-1. Significantly, this language is foreign to the Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Form of Church-Government*.

91) *Cf.* nn. 44 & 50-55 & 77 above. The P.C.A.'s present *Book of Church Order* 8-1 seems to have been derived from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.'s *Constitution* (as amended 1805-1901) ch. IV, which offers only Rom. 11:13 as a proof-text for the proposition that the Preacher's "pastoral office -- is the first in the Church both for dignity and usefulness." Not only does this relegate the ruling Elder (ch. V) to a second-rate office, and not only does it confuse the apostolic office (Rom. 11:13) with the office of Preacher -- but it even wrongly transposes Paul's 'magnification' of his apostolic office into that of "making it pre-eminent" (which Paul could not have done inasmuch as the temporary apostolic office was pre-eminent all along). Eph. 2:20.

92) *Second Helvetic Conf.*, ch. 17.

93) That the "order" in the Trinity (of the Father and the Son and the Spirit) in Matt. 28:19 does not imply sub-ordination, is obvious from II Cor. 13:14 (which has a different order) and from Phil 2:6 and I Cor. 2:10. *Cf.* too the *West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 9*f.*, which teaches the order and (co-)ordination and co-equality of the three Persons. *Cf.* too n. 141 below.

94) Acts 20 and I Tim. 5:17. Abnormally, Deacons and general members of the congregation perhaps did the same (Acts 15:4,22*f.* and Phil. 1:1).

95) There is a great distinction between "preaching" and "teaching." Certainly, all (ruling) Elders should be "teachable" (*didaktikos*, I Tim. 3:2 *cf.* n. 148 below). However, only preaching Elders or Preachers were also required to have teaching ability -- or to be what Classic Greek calls *didaskalikos*. I Tim. 1:3,7 & 4:13-16 & 5:17 & 6:13,17*f.* and II Tim. 1:6,11 & 2:2,15,24*f.* & 4:2-5,17 *etc.* For only Prophets (and not kingly Rulers) were to preach or to prophesy.

Thus *didaskain* and *propheeteuein* (= "to teach" and "to prophesy") and *keerussein* and *keerux* ("to herald" and to be "a herald"), are quite distinct from being *didaktikos* or

"having a teachable spirit." The former words never applied to the kingly office, and are always limited to the prophetic office alone. Cf. the preaching of the Prophets Noah (I Pet. 3:19 cf. II Pet. 2:5), Abraham (Gen. 20:7 cf. 17:23 & 18:19 & 24:2,7), Jonah (Jnh. 3:2 cf. Mt. 12:41), Ezra (Ez. 9 to 10 and Neh. 8:1-8), John the Baptizer (Matt. 3:1f & Mark 1:4f), Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18f), the Apostles (I Tim. 2:7 and II Tim. 1:11 and I Cor. 9:14f cf. I Tim. 5:17f), apostolically-appointed Evangelists like Philip and Timothy (Acts 8:4f and II Tim. 4:1-5), and church-appointed Preachers (Rom. 10:14f; Rev. 2:1f,8f etc.; Matt. 24:14 & 28:19 and I Tim. 5:17). Cf. Lloyd-Jones, D.M.: *Preaching and Preachers*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1971 (as cited by D. Dunkerley's *op. cit.*, in P.C.A.'s *Handbook*, 1977, pp. 1611-20, & esp. at its 7 on p. 1619).

Cf. too *West. Larg. Cat.*, QQ. 156-59: "All are not permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation.... The Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.... They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word, are to preach sound doctrine." Cf. esp. n. 148 below.

- 96) Clearly, only those in the prophetic office such as Abraham and John the Baptizer and the Apostles and the Evangelists and those that labour in Word and in doctrine, were to administer the Sacrament in the Church of the Scriptures (Gen. 20:7 cf. 17:23; Matt. 3:1f & 28:17-19 and Mark 1:4f; Acts 2:38-41 and I Cor. 1:14-17; Acts 8:37-40 & 21:8 cf. II Tim. 1:6 & 4:5; Luke 1:2 & 10:1-7 cf. I Tim. 5:17f and I Cor. 9:7-14).

Note that John the Baptizer "preached the baptism of repentance" (Luke 3:3 cf. Acts 13:24); that the Apostle Paul described both himself and the Preacher Apollos and the Evangelist Sosthenes as "the Ministers of Christ and Stewards (*Oikonomos*) of the Mysteries (or Sacraments) of God" (I Cor. 1:1 & 3:5 & 4:1 cf. Acts 18:24-28) -- and that Jesus Himself appoints the Steward (*Oikonomos*) over His House (the Congregation) to give the Members of His Household "their portion of meat in due season" (Luke 12:42 cf. Gal. 6:10). Baptism performed by Non-Preachers such as ruling Elders and even by (male or female) Laymen, are abnormal and highly irregular -- yet not invalid if performed on behalf and by authorization of the Congregation concerned (Ex. 4:24-26 cf. Col. 2:11-13). So that all re-baptizing of validly yet irregularly-baptized persons, is sinful -- and a Donatistic heresy, Heb. 6:1f and Rom. 6:1-4.

Cf. A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Locus de Sacramentis*, Kok, Kampen, p. 114: "The Sacrament of Baptism is connected to the Ministry of the Word. Our fathers said: 'The Sacrament puts the seal on the Word.' Therefore, he who ministers the Word, should minister the Sacraments too. Because Baptism does not belong to the local but to the Universal Church, it should be administered by an Officer recognized by the Church Universal. A local Elder may not do so. But there can also be abnormal circumstances, such as those in out-of-the-way places where there are no Ministers of the Word. In such a case, the Session may authorize one of its Elders to perform the Baptism."

See too Abbing's *op. cit.*, p. 528: "In emergencies, any Christian may administer Holy Baptism or the Holy Supper. But normally, Baptism and the Supper are administered by the congregational representative who occupies the relevant Special Office."

Subject to this obvious qualification, we too are in agreement with the historic Presbyterian doctrine of the Sacraments as expressed in our Standards. *Cf.* in the *West. Conf.* 27:4 & 28:3,5,7: "There be only two Sacraments ordained by Christ..., neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a Minister of the Word lawfully ordained... Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.... It be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance.... Baptism is but once to be administered to any person." *Cf.* too the *West. Larg. Cat.*, Q. 169: "Christ hath appointed the Ministers of His Word in the administration of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper."

97) Acts 6:1-8 and II Tim. 3:8-13. Abnormally, Elders too may do this. *Cf.* n. 77 above and n. 101 below.

98) *Cf.* Luke 3:3,7-14 and II Tim. 2:24f & 4:2,5. 99) I Tim. 3:2,5 and Acts 11:30.

100) I Tim. 3:8,12 *cf.* Acts 6:1-10.

101) Acts 6:1-8 & 11:30, *cf.* P.C.A. *Book of Church Order* 10-2: "In the discharge of their duties, the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure Deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling Elders."

102) *Cf.* Luke 1:2 and I Tim. 5:17 and Tit. 1:5-9 *cf.* Acts 14:23. Note the Westminster Assembly's *Form of Church-Government* (concerning the Doctrinal part of Ordination of Ministers 11): "In extraordinary cases, something extraordinary may be done, until a settled order may be had, yet keeping as near as possibly may be to the rule (II Chr. 29:34-36 & 30:2-5)."

Cf. too *idem* 13:1-4: "In these present exigencies (1645 A.D.), while we cannot have any Presbyteries formed up to their whole power and work..., many Ministers are to be ordained for the service of the armies and navy and to many congregations where there is no Minister at all.... It is requisite that Ministers be ordained for them by some who being set apart themselves for the work of the Ministry have power to join in the setting apart [of] others who are found fit and worthy. In those cases, until by God's blessing the aforesaid difficulties may be in some good measure removed, let some godly Ministers...be designed by publick authority who...may ordain Ministers..., keeping as near to the ordinary rules forementioned as possibly they may....

"Let them do the like when any man shall duly and lawfully be recommended to them for the Ministry of any congregation, who cannot enjoy liberty to have a trial of his parts and abilities.... Desire the help of such Ministers so associated, for the better furnishing of them with such a person as by them shall be judged fit for the service of that church and people!" *Cf.* too the quotation from Kuyper in n. 96.

103) I Pet. 5:1-5. *Cf.* too *Belg. Conf.*, art. 31: "As for the Ministers of God's Word, they have equally the same power and authority wheresoever they are -- as they are all Ministers of Christ, the only universal Bishop." *Cf.* too the *Second Helv. Conf.*, ch. 18: "Now the one

and an equal power or function is given to all Ministers in the Church. Certainly, in the beginning, the Bishops or Presbyters governed the Church in common. No man lifted up himself above another; none usurped greater power or authority over his Fellow-Bishops."

- 104) Cf. P.C.A. *Report of the Ad-Interim Committee to Study the Question of the Number of Offices in the Church to the Fifth General Assembly*, in *Handbook*, 1977, p. 1603, A 5. See too Dunkerley's *op. cit.*, in *ibid.*, p. 1618 para. 7; and n. 42 above.
- 105) Cf. III John 9-11 with nn. 103 & 77 & 101 above.
- 106) *West. Conf.* 8:3f and *West. Larg. Cat.* Q. 42, cf. the *West. Short. Cat.* Q. 23 (*West. Larg. Cat.* QQ. 43-45) and *Cat. for Young Children* QQ. 64f (and Westminster Assembly's 1645 original *Form of Church-Government*, section 3f).
- 107) Cf. South African Dutch Reformed Church's *Rules and Regulations*, art. 3.
- 108) Cf. I Tim. 5:17. 109) Cf. n. 77 above. 110) Cf. nn. 5 & 44 above.
- 111) Cf. nn. 51-55 above.
- 112) Deut. 18:15-18 & 24:10f with John 6:14 and Acts 3:20-23 and I Pet. 1:11f.
- 113) Heb. chs. 5 to 10. 114) Ps. 2 and Acts 2:36 & 5:31 and Phil. 2:9-11.
- 115) Cf. the *West. Short. Cat.*, Q. 1. 116) Cf. n. 63 above. 117) Cf. nn. 8-11,51-55.
- 118) I John 3:12 and Rev. 22:4. 119) I Cor. 15:28 cf. Col. 3:11.
- 120) Matt. 6:10 cf. Luke 11:2. 121) Cf. nn. 8-10, 43-38, & 112-14.
- 122) Cf. nn. 50-55. 123) Cf. nn. 72-82. 124) Cf. nn. 44 & 50-68.
- 125) Cf. nn. 65-82. 126) Cf. nn. 83-109.
- 127) Cf. Jer. 2:8 & 3:15 cf. Acts ch. 20 and I Pet. 5:1-5 cf. P.C.A.'s *Handbook*, 1977, pp. 1609 & 1646-48. Cf. J.H. Thornwell's *Collecting Writings*, Banner of Truth, 1975 rep., IV:110f: "Pastor or Shepherd...may refer either to the instructions of a Teacher or the directions or government of a Ruler. Perhaps in the Old Testament it is more commonly descriptive of government than of the office(!) of teaching.... When we come to the New Testament, the idea of rule seems to be intimately associated with the word Shepherd or Pastor." Cf. Reed, R.C.: Article in *Union Seminary Review* XXI:3, 1920: "They (the Elders) are all called Bishops, Presbyters, Pastors."
- 128) Matt. 23:8-23. Cf. Kotzé's *op. cit.*, pp. 168 & 173-75: "Calvin was largely followed in this emphasis on the Ministry, by the Reformed Churches and Confessions.... Says he: 'I could wish indeed that some other more appropriate name (than "clergy") had been given them (the Church's Officebearers). For this appellation originated in error, or at least in some

improper views. For Peter calls the whole Church the "clergy" -- that is, the inheritance of the Lord." See Calvin's *Institutes* IV:4:9; cf. also IV:12:1 and I Pet. 5:3.

"Even though the body of believers may delegate certain corporate functions to the Officebearers -- they do not by such committal part with any power proper to them or become the servants of those to whom they make such delegation. This must be very definitely stated and maintained against that evil tendency in the Church, both among officers and private members, to ascribe sometimes quite unconsciously to those in Office greater spirituality than to private believers....

"It is evident that this Reformed principle entirely contradicts the Roman Catholic distinction of 'clergy' and 'laity'.... There cannot be any rank or class in the Church of Christ.... The nature of the Special Office in the Church, is not that of a special rank with inherent powers and rights belonging only to the few exclusive of the rest. But it is true of all believers that they are the *kleeros tou Theou* (or God's 'clergy') and the *laos tou Theou* (or God's 'laity')."

Cf. Dabney's *Theories of the Eldership*, pp. 126f: "Ruling...Elders...as well as the Deacons, are in as proper a sense 'clergy' as Preachers are.... If we understand by clergy what the Primitive Church meant by the word, Christ's portion or *kleeros*, a class of servants set apart by divine command by laying on of hands..., then Elders are as much clergy as (are) Preachers.... In every enumeration of clergy we ever saw in early history, the three species are Bishops (and) Presbyters and Deacons."

This statement of Dabney is true enough in light of the use of the word *kleeros*. However, from its further use in I Pet. 5:3 too -- he should have gone on and concluded with Kotzé that those in the General Office of all Believers are just as much "clergy" as are those in the Special Offices.

129) *Cf.* n. 103 above, and A. Kuyper Sr's *Treatise and Locus de Ecclesia* (Kok, Kampen).

130) *Cf.* Matt. 23:8-11 and I Pet. 5:1-5.

131) Rom. 12:1-6; Eph. 4:12; I Cor. 12:5 marg.; I Pet. 4:10f; *cf.* nn. 25-31,36, & 44 above.

132) *Cf.* nn. 95f above.

133) I Cor. 12:28 "government" (*kuberneseis*); *cf.* Calvin's *Institutes* IV:3:8 and P.C.A.'s *Handbook*, 1977, p. 1649, para. 3.

134) I Tim. 4:14 only states that Timothy was ordained by a *Presbuteerion* or a Council of Elders.

It is begging the question to assume that a regional or classical Presbytery is here intended, although that would certainly have been appropriate in view of Timothy's ordained work as a traveling Evangelist. A local Session, however, is also a Presbytery. And it is perhaps a more suitable body than is the classis to ordain resident Preachers and Elders and Deacons. *Cf.* n. 140 below.

Cf. Dabney's *Theories of Eldership*, pp. 126 & 147: "Ruling as well as Preaching Elders...are properly to be ordained presbyterially, by the parochial Presbytery." Perhaps it could be "proved that, in the days of Paul and John, the same parochial Presbytery which ordained the Ruling Elder -- also ordained the Preacher (which was probably the case)."

135) Rev. chs. 1 to 3 *cf.* Acts ch. 15 & 16:1-4. *Cf.* too Acts 21:18*f.*

136) *Cf.* however Acts 15:6,13-22 & 21:18*f* and I Pet. 5:1-5. The Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Form of Church-Government* section 9 teaches that "Officers in a single Congregation...are to meet together at convenient and set times.... It is expedient that, in these meetings, one whose Office is to labour in the Word and doctrine do moderate in their proceedings." *Cf.* too nn. 42 & 95 above.

137) *Cf.* n. 96 above; and P.C.A.'s *Handbook*, 1977, p. 1603 D.

138) P.C.A.'s *Book of Church Order*, 10-4; *cf.* nn. 121 & 125-26 above.

139) As a legitimate extension of the P.C.A.'s *Book of Church Order* 10-4 (also to 10-5 & 10-6) from the local level into the larger (not the 'higher!') Courts. *Cf.* too Acts 15:4,22*f* and Phil. 1:1.

140) *Cf.* the Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Form of Church-Government* sections 9-15. "Higher" courts were then unknown -- *cf.* the word *meizoon* in n. 77 above! For the Scriptural concept of Elders seated as a Session, *cf.* Num. 11:24*f*; Deut. 33:21; Ruth 4:2,11; Ps. 107:32; Prov. 31:23; Ezek. 8:1.

141) P.C.A.'s *Book of Church Order*, Preface I & II & paras. 1-3; 6-3; 7-2; 7-3.

142) Matt. 16:18 & 18:17; I Cor. 1:2 & 14:19-35; Heb. 2:12-23.

143) Acts 21:18*f cf.* 4:6,15 & 5:21*f.*

144) Acts 6:1-8 *cf.* Phil. 1:1.

145) Luke 22:66 and Phil. 1:1, *cf.* P.C.A.'s *Book of Church Order* 10-4: "It is desirable that the Session and the Board of Deacons meet in joint session once a quarter to confer on matters of common interest."

146) Deut. 31:30; Ezra 2:64 *cf.* 10:1; Acts 6:2,5 & 15:4,22,23.

147) *Cf.* Didier's *Hang on to your Heritage! Has Satan entered the Presbyterian Church?*, Covenant, Orange Ca., 1977, pp. 103*f.*: "Knox's ideas for Scotland were reflections of his experiences in Calvin's Geneva. He had read the words of Calvin's *Ordinances Ecclesiastiques*, with three offices as the New Testament pattern. And all three -- Pastors, Rulers, and Deacons -- were to be elected, not appointed." In very short compass, Didier here says it all!

148) Cf. Macpherson's *Presbyterianism*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1949, p. 35. Philadelphia's Westminster Seminary's former President Clowney (on the 1977 P.C.A. *Commissioner's Handbook*, p. 1634, n. 13), states: "It is not certain that *didaktikos* (I Tim. 3:2 and II Tim. 2:24) means 'apt to teach' -- *i.e.*, possessing the teaching gift. The form could mean 'teachable' -- a meaning that fits well with the meekness required of a good ruler in the Church. Karl H. Rengstorf in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2 (Eerdmans Eng. Trans. p. 165), gives as the meaning 'able to learn.'" For a fuller discussion, cf. n. 518 on pp. 143-45 below.

If (at I Tim. 3:2) Paul had wanted to emphasize that even a Non-Preaching or ordinary Ruling Elder must himself be a good Teacher before the approval even of his candidacy for the Ruling Office, Paul could (and we believe would) have said that the candidate must be *didaskoon* or *didaskalikos*. And if Paul had meant that the candidate should first have become "learned," Paul could and probably would have said that the candidate should become *didachtheis* or *didaktos*.

But Paul did not. He merely says that the candidate -- as indeed aspiring to the Eldership (whether desiring to become a Preacher or a Ruling Elder) -- should be "teachable" or *didaktikos* (I Tim. 3:2 cf. II Tim. 2:24). For *didaktos* (*e.g.* at John 6:45 and I Cor. 2:13a & 2:13b and I Th. 4:9) clearly means "taught" or "instructed." And *didaskoon* clearly means "having the ability to teach others" (*e.g.* II Tim. 2:2 & 4:3-5 and Tit. 2:3f *etc.*).

Accordingly, if Clowney and Kittel-Rengstorf are correct -- and we believe they are -- then the idea that even the ordinary Ruling Elder needs to be able to teach in any sense of the word at all (either before or after his election to the Ruling Office), becomes manifestly untenable. Kittel-Rengstorf (II:165) reads: "*Didaktikos*. Outside the New Testament, this (word) is found only in Philo (*Congr.* 35; *Praem. Poen.* 27; *Mut. Nom.* 83 & 88).... He always uses it to describe the *aretee* (or virtue) of Abraham, as 'consisting or expressing itself in learning'" or in the ability to learn or to be teachable. Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6 & 4:22-30 and esp. Heb. 11:8,17-19 and Jas. 2:21-23 cf. Gen. 12:1-4 & 15:1-6,9f & 17:23 & 21:4,12-14 & 22:1-3,16-18.

On the meaning of *didaktikos* in I Tim. 3:2 & II Tim. 2:25, then, we feel Clowney and Kittel-Rengstorf are right. Yet it seems to us Clowney is wrong where he feels I Tim. 3 may be describing only Preaching Elders (alias Ministers of the Word) -- and not all Elders indiscriminately.

For I Tim. 3:1 is speaking of all Elders, and not just of Preachers. Furthermore, I Tim. 3:2's *didaktikos* is not *didaskalikos* or *didaktoon* -- so that (Ruling) Elders are not as such Preachers or Ministers of the Word (as in I Tim. 1:3,7 & 4:13-16 & 5:17 & 6:13,17f and II Tim. 1:6,11 & 2:2,15,24f & 4:2-5,17). For the extra qualification of teaching-*didaskoon* needed by the Preacher -- over and above that of the Eldership as such -- are to be found in the latter texts, rather than in I Tim. 3:1-2f.

Note too that the *KJV* mistranslates Acts 8:4's Greek (*euangelizomenoi*) with the wrong word 'preached' in respect of the actions of Christians-in-general who had fled from Jerusalem and who had 'evangelized' or "told the good news" wherever they had come.

Philip alone, however, 'preached' (*ekeerussen* in Acts 8:5). And also according to Calvin, Philip it would seem had already been ordained as a "Preaching Evangelist" -- cf. Acts 8:5,12,25,35,38,40 & 21:8 with I Tim. 3:13's *bathmon* & 5:17's "especially." Cf. F.N. Lee's *The Diaconate*, Appendix III, "Did 'Deacons' Stephen and Philip Ever 'Preach' or Baptize?" (In *Commissioner's Handbook for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 1978, pp. 2121-22).

Cf. too Dabney's *The Public Preaching of Women*, p. 102: "Now Presbyterians, at least, believe that the Church Order of the Old Testament Church was imported into the New.... The primeval presbyterial order continued unchanged. The christianized Synagogue became the Christian Congregation with its Eldership, Teachers, and Deacons."

Cf. also Dabney's *Theories of Eldership*, pp. 125-29: "Christ is sovereign.... He gave to His Church a set of institutions by Moses. At the New Dispensation, He (fulfilled and) abrogated a large part of these by Himself and His Apostles. What He did not abrogate, is still of force.... Maimonides, Lightfoot, Prideaux and many others (consider that) one of these Elders ('of the Synagogue') was selected as a permanent President and Director of public worship, under the name of 'Angel of the Congregation' (cf. Rev. 2:1f)"; and "the *Parnasim*" corresponded to "the Deacons or Waiting-Men."

Moreover (*op. cit.* pp. 143-45) "the churches of the New Testament knew nothing of any permanent Officers but Preachers, Presbyters and Deacons.... Now, these 'governments' are not Preachers, surely.... The Ruling Elder should be 'apt to teach' -- though he is never to mount the pulpit."

"Again, it is objected that the Scriptures indicate no such distinction of work and title as we make between the preaching Presbyter and the ruling Presbyter.... This we positively deny. In Rom. 12:8 and I Cor. 12:28, we found the 'governing' mentioned as a gift, a charism [or charismatic gift] bestowed on others than those who had the gifts of preaching. In I Tim. 5:17, a clear distinction is implied between those who rule and those who also 'labor in Word and doctrine'

"In Revelation, the closing book of the canon where we would naturally expect to see the apostolic institutions in their matured form, we hear each church representatively addressed by its 'Angel'..., in imitation of the well-known order and title...in the Synagogue (of) the Preaching Presbyter who presided over his brethren the Presbyters and was the public mouthpiece or Messenger of the Church to God and of God to the Church. So, do we assert, the distinction between the titles and tasks of the Preaching and Ruling Presbyters -- while yet both are proper Presbyters -- is as plain in the New Testament as could be expected."

Cf. too Thornwell's *Collecting Writings*, IV:114): "The Ruling Elder is truly and properly a Presbyter.... It does not follow, however, that because he is a Scriptural Pastor and Bishop, he is therefore a Minister of the Word and a Steward of the Mysteries of God (alias the Sacraments). Preaching is a very different part of labor from ruling.... We are very far from affirming that all Presbyters, lawfully called and ordained, are Ministers of the Word." For Ruling Elders are "only to rule."

But more importantly yet. Why should a *didaktikos* (or "teachable") Christian -- if amply gifted with the I Cor. 12:28g *charisma* of "governing" (and other Eldership gifts) -- be excluded from candidacy for the Ruling Eldership -- simply because he is not and perhaps never will be *didaskalikos* or capable to teaching others" (let alone capable of "preaching" to them)?

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4. THE GENERAL OFFICE OF ALL CHRISTIANS

It seems obvious from three key passages of Holy Scripture -- Matthew 28:16-20 and First Corinthians 12:3-13 and First Peter 4:10-11 -- that the General Office of all Christians is the most basic office and the foundation for all three of the Special Offices of Preacher, Elder and Deacon. We now briefly look at these three passages.

Matthew 28:16-20 declares: "The eleven Disciples went away.... Jesus had appointed them.... They worshipped Him.... Jesus came and spoke to them, saying... "Keep on going...and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you!"

First Corinthians 12:3-13 states: "Nobody can say 'Jesus is Lord!', but by the Holy Spirit.... There are diversities of gifts.... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone, to profit with it. For to one is given by the Spirit...wisdom; to another, gifts of healing...; to another, prophecy.... By one Spirit we have all been baptized."

Too, First Peter 4:10-11 commands "As each has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God! If anyone speaks -- let him speak the oracles of God! If any man ministers -- let him do it from the ability which God gives! So that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ."

Some sixteen truths follow from all of this. Briefly, we now list these sixteen truths here below.

1. "It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, so that He might advance our nature...; so that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.... Our Mediator was called Christ, because He was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure -- and so set apart and fully furnished with all authority and ability to execute the Office of Prophet, Priest, and King." *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, 1648.¹

2. "There are three Persons in only one Divine Essence.... We must observe the particular Offices and operations of these three Persons towards us.... The Father is called our Creator, by His (kingly) power; the Son is our Saviour (and prophetic Word)...; the Holy Ghost is our (priestly) Sanctifier..., giving unto every creature its being, shape, form and several offices to serve its Creator.... This holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved.... All men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it...and as mutual members of the same body serve...to the edification of the brethren according to the talents God has given them.... It is the duty (or office) of all Believers, according to the Word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to this church, and to join themselves to this congregation." *The Belgic Confession*, 1561.²

3. In the Triune God Himself, General Office and Special Office -- though distinguishable -- are inseparable. And both kinds of Office are equally important. The Father occupies the Special Office of King; the Son occupies the Special Office of Prophet; and the Holy Spirit occupies the Special Office of Priest. But all three Persons simultaneously occupy the General Office of Prophet-Priest-King.³

4. The position of the first human family, created as the image of the Triune God, was no different. Adam was prophet and priest and king; Eve was prophetess and priestess and queen; and Abel too was prophet and priest and king.⁴ Yet Adam was also the priest of his family; Abel was also a loyal prophetic witness to all mankind; and Cain was called upon to rule over his kin.⁵ Had humanity not fallen, all men would have occupied the General Office of prophet-priest-king -- even though (in addition): only some men would also have occupied the Special Office of Prophet; other men would have occupied the Special Office of Priest; and yet others would have occupied the Special Office of King.⁶

5. We need to see that man was installed in an Office at his very creation -- in the Office of all Believers! It is true that Adam was more than an Officer -- for he was the very image and child of God!⁸ But he was also an Officer -- one created and appointed to function here on earth in the place of Jehovah and for His sake!⁹ Only the intervention of sin has separated manhood from officership.¹⁰ Christ the Second Adam's cancellation of Adam's sin, itself re-instates every believer right back into the General Office of all Believers -- and powerfully unfolds it further, toward its eschatological consummation.¹¹

6. This is why the administration of the initiating sign and seal of belief -- Circumcision in Old Testament times and Baptism in New Testament times -- re-engrafts the Believers and their covenant children right back into the Office of all Believers and powerfully persuades and encourages them to execute that Office with fruitfulness!¹² For they are all ordained to full-time Christian service (in every aspect of their lives) by the laying on of hands at their Circumcision or their Baptism.¹³ At that very time, they are all anointed and set aside as prophets and priests and kings to minister to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His people in everything they do -- for the rest of their lives here on earth, and for ever thereafter!¹⁴

7. This is why our first parents were "clothed" with the righteousness of Jesus Christ and appointed in His service right after the fall.¹⁵ This is why as many as have been baptized, have put on Christ.¹⁶ This is why anointment in Baptism and its promise of appointment as full-time Christian servants in the General Ministry of all Believers is for us and for our children and for

all them that are far off -- unto as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him.¹⁷ And this General Office of all Believers has a twofold nature -- for it is exercised not only inside but also outside of the church.¹⁸

8. Outside of the church, all baptized people are to eat and to drink and to do all things solely to the glory of God.¹⁹ They are to subdue the earth and the sea and the sky and all their contents in the service of the King of kings.²⁰ As kings themselves, they are to rule over creation; as priests, they are to care for its creatures; and as prophets, they are to catalogue its contents.²¹ They are to live the way baptized children of God should live -- in loving fellowship with God; in harmony with nature; in diligent promotion of culture; and in working toward the expansion of a Christian society in family, in business, in politics, in education, and in every thing else.²²

9. Especially in the area of education is the Office of all Believers to function prominently.²³ For the "holy seed" of the covenant people are to develop God-honoring schools for their baptized children where the latter can be trained to become mature bearers of the Office of all Believers in everything they think or do.²⁴ This requires Christian-Biblical instruction at such schools -- in mathematics, history, geography, science, biology, English, foreign languages, Bible, and everything else.²⁵ For the Christian family (and the Christian school as its agent) is to train the baptized little Officers from infancy through maturity!²⁶ And the Christian church is to train them ecclesiastically to develop their responsible execution of the General Office of all Believers -- progressively and commensurate with the growth rate of each individual Christian.²⁷

10. Inside of the church as an institute, it is precisely those in the General Office of all Believers who need to constitute congregations and to elect Special Officers from their midst (such as prophetic male witnesses as Preachers and experienced mature men as Elders and responsible younger men as Deacons) to help lead and to help serve the whole congregation.²⁸ When this has been done, there should and will be the most glorious interaction between the General and the Special Officers in every harmonious and well-functioning congregation.²⁹ All will then serve and love one another, if all but serve and love the Lord Jesus Christ.³⁰ In such a case, the overall attitude of the General Officers will usually be that of tacit approval of the actions of the Special Officers.³¹ First Corinthians twelve and thirteen and Ephesians three and four, then blend together.

11. However, where the General or the Special Officers degenerate, friction is unavoidable.³² If the General Officers or the Believers as a whole become lazy or backslidden, it is the duty of the Special Officers to correct them.³³ And if the Special Officers do not fulfill their high and holy calling properly, the General Officers must correct them, too.³⁴

12. The following are among the specifically-ecclesiastical duties of those in the General Ministry of all Believers -- especially where the Special Officers (be they Preachers or Elders or Deacons) are malfunctioning.³⁵ First, they should approve or disapprove of the arrival of new prospective members and the departure of old members.³⁶ Second, the General Officers should fully participate in the election and re-election and deposition of the Special Officers.³⁷ Third, they should allow the deliberations of their Diaconate, their Session, and their Ministerium -- and give each of these bodies all the advice and encouragement and correction it needs.³⁸ Fourth, they should, after constitutional notice, withhold their funds from the Diaconate -- until they gain their just relief.³⁹ Fifth, they should privately rebuke all unworthy Special Officers in the Name of the

Lord.⁴⁰ Sixth, should their loving and private admonition of the Special Officers not succeed, they should take two or three Special Officers along with them and jointly admonish the offending parties.⁴¹ Seventh, should this too fail, and, thereafter, should the Session itself as a body fail to act correctly, they should petition first the Congregation and then the Presbytery and finally the General Assembly for relief.⁴² And last, should even the General Assembly refuse to act properly, they should secede from the denomination concerned and regroup locally and re-affiliate regionally and nationally to the exclusion of the erring parties until such time as the latter publicly repent.⁴³

13. In addition to these General Officers who all have their several duties both in the church and in daily life in their homes and their professions *etc.*, and in addition to the Special Officers (in the Ministerium and in the Session and in the Diaconate) -- there will also be yet another class of special appointees.⁴⁴ These special appointees are those that do specific church jobs of a different nature.⁴⁵ Those jobs would include the work done by precentors, organists, sextons, choir directors, youth workers, and directors of church education *etc.*⁴⁶ Such persons function in an unusual way. They are General Officers, and not in any sense Special Officers (or Preachers or Elders or Deacons). But their special appointments to do the above-mentioned works (of precenting through educating) in the church, are over and above their duties in the General Office of all Believers.⁴⁷

14. There is no reason why those in the Office of all Believers should not co-operate outside of the church with Christians of other denominations in running Christian hospitals, Christian day-schools, Christian political parties, *etc.*⁴⁸ However, should such endeavors ever promote views or actions inimical to the Reformed Faith, the Special Officers of the Church have the right and the duty to call upon the General Officers concerned to use their influence to remove those objectionable features -- or otherwise to withdraw from such endeavors and to start over again on a more Biblical basis.⁴⁹ Even in such projects, the General Officers should certainly want to work very closely with their own Deacons in particular -- rather than to work loosely with other Christians of a different denominational and doctrinal outlook and discipline.⁵⁰

15. And when those in the General Office of all Believers die and go to glory, they will thereafter continue to bear the Name of the Triune God and the baptismal mark of the Lord Jesus on their foreheads unto all eternity.⁵¹ For on the new-earth-to-come, they will serve Him as prophets and priests and kings in all that they do as His full-time general ministers -- when temple and sanctuary have disappeared forever, and when the whole earth has been filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.⁵²

16. "But you Christians are all a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (or an elect race of kings and priests)..., so that ye should shew forth (as prophets) the praises of Him Who has called you."⁵³ "Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful Witness (or Prophet)...and the Prince of the kings..., loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood (as our Priest) -- and has made **us** kings and priests (and Prophets) to God."⁵⁴ "You...have redeemed us to God by Your blood..., and have made **us** to our God kings and priests (and prophets) -- and we shall reign on the earth!"⁵⁵ "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it (the city of God or the Christian Church [both militant and triumphant]), and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.... There shall be no more curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants (or ministers or believing 'slaves') shall serve Him (as prophets and as priests). And

they shall see His face; and His Name shall be on their foreheads (as first signified at their previous baptism). And...they shall reign (as kings) -- for ever and ever."⁵⁶

ENDNOTES

- 1) Q. 39 & 42.
- 2) Arts. 9,11,28. Note that the 1561 original French version of the Belgic Confession's art. 28 (*le devoir* ["duty"]), was rendered *schuldige plicht* ("duty owed") in the 1562 Dutch version, but *officie* ("office") in the later 1583 Dutch edition.
- 3) Cf. Lee: *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, nn. 8-16.
- 4) Gen. 2:15-20; 3:20; 4:2-4 cf. Matt. 23:34-35 and Rom 5:12f and Heb. 11.4f.
- 5) Gen. 4:3,7,17.
- 6) Cf. Lee: *op. cit.*, and *The Ministry of the Word and The Diaconate and The Ruling Eldership*.
- 7) Hos. 6:7 marg., *Westminster Confession of Faith* IV:2 & VII: 1-2 -- and *Westminster Larger Catechism* QQ. 17-20.
- 8) Gen. 1:26f & Luke 3:38 & Acts 17:28. 9) Ps. 8 & 24:1f cf. I Cor. 10:31.
- 10) Eccl. 7:29 & 9:10 & 3:10-22 cf. Gen. 1:28 & Eph 4:23-28.
- 11) Rom. 5:12 and I Cor. 15:22-28,45-47,58 and Col. 1:13-20 & 2:6-9 & 3:1-11f.
- 12) Gen. 1:28 cf. 17:2,6,9-12 and Deut. 30:6 and Acts 2:38-39 and Rom. 6:4,14.
- 13) Acts 8:12-17f & 9:17-20 and Col. 2:8-14.
- 14) Lev. 21:10-12; I Sam. 10:1; I Kgs. 19:16; Luke 3:21-22 & 4:18-21 & 3:27-29 cf. I Cor. 10:1-4 & 12:13-27 & 15:58 and Rev. 22:3-5.
- 15) Gen. 3:15f,20,21 & 4:1-4. 16) Gal. 3:27f.
- 17) Acts 2:38-39 cf. P.C.A. *Book of Church Order* 1-3 & 2-1 & 6-1 through 6-4.
- 18) Gal. 3:27 & 6:10 & Eph. 4:4-6, 25-29.
- 19) I Cor. 10:31; *West. Short. Cat.* Q. 1.
- 20) Gen. 1:26-28 cf. Ps. 8 and Heb. 2:6-14 & 6:7 and Jas. 3:3-7.

- 21) *Cf.* nn 4 above & 53-56 below with Matt. 6:10f.
- 22) Rom. 13 and Eph. 4 to 6 and Col. 3 to 4. 23) Deut. 6:7-9 *cf.* II Tim. 3:14-17.
- 24) *Idem, cf.* I Cor. 10:3 and II Cor. 10:5 and Eph. 3:17-19.
- 25) Gen. 15:5; Ps. 78; Deut. 32:8; Job 38f; I Cor. 15:39f; Acts 21:40f; I Cor. 10:31; 14:10,18,21; II Tim. 3:15f.
- 26) *Cf.* n. 23 & Acts 19:9 and I Cor. 14:20 and Eph. 4:13-14.
- 27) John 21:15-17 and I John 2:12-14 and Tit. 1:9-13 & 2:1-6.
- 28) Acts 1:15-26 & 6:1-6 & 14:21-23; *cf.* P.C.A. *Book of Church Order* 5-1 & 5-2 & chs. 7 to 10.
- 29) I Cor. 12 & Jas. 5:14-16. 30) Matt. 22:37-39 *cf.* I John 3:10-17.
- 31) I Th. 5:12f and Heb. 13:7,17,24.
- 32) Acts 4 to 5; II Tim. 4:3f,10; II Pet. 2:1-2f; and III John 9-10. 33) II Tim. 2:24-26.
- 34) II Kgs. 11:5-12 and I Tim. 5:19-20. 35) I Tim. 3:2,6 & 5:17,22.
- 36) Rom. 1:7 *cf.* 16:1f and I Cor. 1:2 *cf.* 16:3. 37) Acts 6:3 and II Th. 3:14.
- 38) Acts 6 and I Tim. 3 and Heb. 13.
- 39) Tit. 3:10 and I Tim. 5:17-24 & 6:2-10,21; *cf.* P.C.A. *Book of Church Order* 26-2.
- 40) Matt. 18:15f. 41) I Tim. 5:19-20.
- 42) Tit. 3:10f; I Tim. 4:14f; Acts 15 *cf.* PCA *Book of Church Order* chs. 25-6 & 28 to 47.
- 43) I Kgs. 12f and Acts 5:27-29f & 15:14-17 & 19:8-9 & 24:14 & 26:5-22; and John 17:9, 17-22 *cf.* I Cor. 5:1 to 6:5 with II Cor. 2:1-10 & 7:8-13.
- 44) I Chr. 15 and Neh. 7:73. 45) Rom. 16:1f and I Tim. 5:9-16.
- 46) I. Cor. 12:28f & 14:26-27. 47) I Pet. 2:9 *per contra* Tit. 2:3f and Phil. 4:2-3.
- 48) I Cor. 6:1-5; I Tim. 5:10; II Tim. 3:14f and I Pet. 2:13-17.
- 49) Gen. 4 to 9 and Acts 2 to 6. 50) I Cor. 12 and Eph.4.4-5f.
- 51) Matt. 28:19 *cf.* Rev. 22.3-5.

52) *Idem*, and cf. Isa. 11:1-9 and Heb. 2:14 and Zech. 9:9-10 & 14:9-16 and Rev. 15:4.

53) I Pet. 2:9. 54) Rev. 1:5-6. 55) Rev. 5:9-10. 56) Rev. 21:24-26 & 22:3-4f.

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