

**A CURRICULUM OR PROCESS FOR THE EQUIPPING
OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY IN
THEIR DAILY LIFE IN THE WORLD**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

MISSION AND RENEWAL

**MCMASTER UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, CANADA**

**BY
ROBERT C. SPENCER**

APRIL 1999

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
1999**

**McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario**

TITLE: **A Curriculum or Process for the Equipping of the Saints for the
Work of Ministry in their Daily Life in the World**

AUTHOR: **Robert C. Spencer, B.A. (McMaster), Dip. (Knox),
B.D. (Waterloo Lutheran/Knox)**

SUPERVISOR: **Dr. William H. Brackney**

NUMBER OF PAGES: **314**



McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

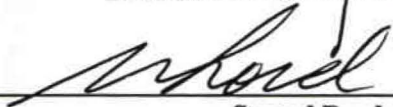
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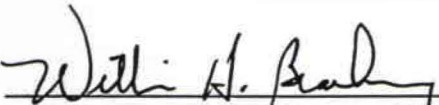
is hereby accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry


First Reader and Advisor


Second Reader


External Reader


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Date: April 29, 1999

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to investigate the issues of ministry by the laity of the Church in their daily life in the world and the equipping processes that have accompanied or need to accompany it. This project seeks this information through a correlational study of several variables. The inquiry takes place in five Presbyterian Churches, but it seeks to be aware of these issues as they are similar in the wider Christian Church. The project arises out of the professional experiences of the author, as related to the issues in his twenty-four years as director of a Laity Centre for Christian adult education and spiritual development. Experiences with ecumenical networks like the World Council of Churches during that time also inform this thesis.

The background research explores Holy Scriptures, (Hebrew and Christian), Theological studies, and the historical perspective in regard to lay *diakonia* service and equipping for this ministry in daily life. This literature research also explores the questions about the *what* and the *to whom* of this ministry. Other areas that were searched for background to this topic included: Adult Faith Development, Adult Education and Adult Learning research. These disciplines also contributed some important issues regarding motivational theory. A model for adult learning within the church was developed out of this part of the research, which is called the "Lay Ministry and Adult Learning Window".

The quantitative research that made up this project involved a questionnaire on "Ministry in Daily Life". This questionnaire was distributed to five different congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in Guelph and Fergus, Ontario, as well as eleven pairs of persons outside the study area who had expressed interest in this topic. Of the 172 questionnaires distributed, 106 were completed and returned for a 61.6% rate of return. The

79 variables of these 106 cases were recorded and analyzed in a survey research computer program. Reports were generated from the resultant data on the frequency of the responses individually and in relation to the other variables. The results were then used to develop a understanding of these Presbyterian laity and their attitude to Christian vocation, ministry in daily life, equipping or educational support to that ministry and other matters related to the topic.

Conclusions and recommendations for adult education or equipping for lay ministry in daily life were developed and expressed in the thesis, not only for the Presbyterian Church but also for other denominations as well. These include the “Learning Window” and a “Life Transitions Model” for building a mutual learning community for adult learning and faith development. Both of these strategies are included in a four part plan for equipping the laity of the Church for ministry in daily life and work in the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Project Thesis has been the result of many minds and hearts together. Out of the countless who deserve thanks, I wish to highlight a few. The many participants in programs at Crieff Hills Community throughout the years, who started me into this dialogue and search, have my appreciation, if only in an anonymous way. The leadership and membership of the five Presbyterian churches: Knox, Kortright, St. Andrew's and Westminster-St. Paul's in Guelph, and St. Andrew's in Fergus, who distributed and responded to the questionnaire deserve special thanks. Their diligence and interest over the very busy Christmas and New Year season was particularly helpful, and enabled this study to be accomplished. A similar expression of appreciation is extended to those past program participants and their friends who responded by correspondence.

This thesis and the studies underlying it, owe much to the guidance, support, and encouragement of many mentors in the academic community. My supervisor, Dr. William Brackney, the other readers: the Rev. Dr. William Lord and Dr. Robert E. Reber, who all advised me at various points through the work in progress. It was a pleasure to study with the several professors that were part of this program, but I wish to sum up my thanks to all by expressing appreciation to Dr. Andrew Irvine, the D. Min. program director at McMaster. In Chapter 8, I note the permission given to use parts of a questionnaire on "Ministry in Daily Life" developed by Donald P. Smith for the then United Presbyterian Church in the USA. I very much appreciate his concession to use and alter portions of his questionnaire. I hope that this work will be a worthy continuation in the line of tradition that describes the ministry of the laity in daily life.

My deepest gratitude is reserved for my wife Maureen. She has been a fully engaged part of this whole project. She has typed, double-checked, and interacted with each page. Without her support and inspiration, I could not have completed this document. She has been a continued partner in my entire ministry, just as she is in our new endeavour: *Laós Ministries*. I wish also to thank my children: Mark, Paul, Barbara, and David, for their encouragement in this study, and their faith in me. My hope and prayer is that the Church will be strengthened and equipped for them, and with them.

MEMORIAL

In memory of

My Mother whose dream challenged me,

My Mother-in-law whose prayers inspired me,

My Father whose faith at work led the way.

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“A Curriculum or Process for the Equipping of the Saints for the Work of Ministry in their Daily Life in the World”

INTRODUCTION

This thesis describes a journey of personal adventure in ministry that has engaged me for more than thirty years. Throughout that time I have been convinced of the great opportunities that the lay members of the church have for service of God in their daily lives. It has also been evident that there is a great need for the healing, helping, hope-filled service that the laity can bring to people who are hurting, lost, depressed and confused. So many opportunities are lost because laity are afraid to speak or uncertain what to do. Countless lives could have been reclaimed from error and defeat, if loving, caring Christian service was offered at the right time. I have also observed that many Christians want to do the right thing, but for various reasons, withhold themselves. Twenty-four years of experience as director of an institution for lay education have been revealing. Seminars and retreats for congregational leadership or personal, spiritual growth have been relatively well attended. Programs for social engagement or service beyond the church fellowship have not been popular. I am convinced that the Christian Church exists

for the purpose of bringing the Good News of Christ to the world and that can be best done in the midst of the situations of need and frustrations of life. These are the times when people are open to receive the Gospel. These are also the times when faithful Christian co-workers, neighbours etc. can be fully present and engaged in ministry in God's name. It can be a daunting task, but I believe that the Church can equip its members to do it.

My plan for the development of this thesis is to start from my experience with lay ministry in daily life and in providing education related to it. I will move through various disciplines that have relevance to this thesis, and then describe the research project and the results followed by conclusions and recommendations.

In the first chapter I have set out some of the background investigations into the issue of the project thesis and the statements or discussions, (verbal or written) that informed these personal experiences. Here the project thesis is described and the words and issues defined. I have tried to trace what I found from other people who were interested in, and of a similar mind with these ideas and my experiences of ministry. In the resulting dialogues I had some of my assumptions clarified and confirmed. These are listed in Chapter One within section 2.3. Various issues that arise in this chapter are dealt with more fully in subsequent chapters. Other matters like outcome and implications round out this opening chapter.

The next three chapters outline the pertinent information that is found in three disciplines, that should inform and under-gird every thesis that relates to the Church and the Christian Faith: Biblical, Theological and Historical. I have taken a position that Scripture forms the foundation and defines the content of this project thesis. Theology informs it and history illumines us with how others have engaged in faithfulness to the call of God. The main focus in each of these

chapters is on the ministry of the laity in daily life and on equipping for that ministry. Because these are the two main issues in this thesis, there are also other disciplines that can provide input. We are dealing with adults here, so adult Christian Education, Faith Development and Learning theories and studies are important. These are found in chapters six and seven. Because there is still an outstanding issue that is particularly pertinent for today's world and ministry within it which must be addressed before we move into adult education and learning, chapter five forms an important bridge. In it I look at the people and institutions to whom the ministry of the laity is expressed. This is a critical issue when considering the ministry of daily life and work. It is the context in which the ministry takes place.

The final chapter on research addresses the process of the questionnaire and the data obtained. It presents what is learned from this project, the conclusions, and some suggestions for churches in their task of equipping their laity for a ministry in daily life and work. While the quantitative research engaged only Presbyterians, the literature and personal qualitative investigations give an indication that some of the findings may be relevant to other churches.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this thesis. There has been very little attempt to address psychological or sociological research in this project because I have had no formal background in these disciplines. The wealth of information and insight found and possible in the academic disciplines that I did choose, could each have been a study on their own. A pastoral concern is only implicit in this thesis, but hopefully can be experienced underlying everything.

When carrying out a survey of congregational members, one has to start at the point of understanding that they have of the subject. There is very little common understanding of what constitutes the laity's ministry in the world, and some see ministry as only happening within the church. Careful definition and awareness building will need to be a part of this project.

Because of the current ad hoc nature of much of the "equipping of the saints", it may be difficult to categorize and identify it. With work and consultation this should be overcome.

The varied and variable local opportunities for "equipping" will also create an element of uncertainty.

The research project itself was limited because of time and energy restraints. The research instrument was only distributed to Presbyterian congregations in a limited geographic area. It did not reach members of small rural churches or many people from inner-city churches in larger urban areas (i.e. Toronto). The people that it reached through the contact person in each church were likely the ones most engaged in church work. Christians who were on the fringes of church activity and perhaps even most engaged in ministry in daily life, may not have been reached. Also youth and young adult responses were low. Each congregation was given freedom of choice, as was each respondent. The hope is that the results have some relevance for many churches, both Presbyterian and other denominations. A problem of control of the size of this study is also critical. Sufficient people need to be questioned in order to get useful results, but too many would make the project difficult to bring to a conclusion. There is also the problem of "gate keepers", those who control the distribution to the laity of their congregation. The perceived busy-ness and personal energy level of potential participants may have limited the numbers who were willing to participate.

The form of the instrument itself, with its fixed choices, creates a limitation on responses but I judged this necessary for measurement purposes. No attempt was made to get responses from the ordained “clergy” leadership of the congregations. This should be part of future dialogue and/or research. The responses from any one congregation were not large enough to give a definitive description on a congregational basis. The various congregations were used to control some hidden variables that might be present in only one.

Note: Every attempt has been made to use inclusive language in the body of this paper. Many of the documents quoted predate this sensitivity. To maintain the integrity of the quotations, I have not changed their wordings. The broader understanding of the words is implied. This is particularly the case in quotations from Scripture and use of the pronouns for God. I have followed the decisions of the translators and editors in these cases. The *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) has been used in most instances, which is the most inclusive.

Chap.1 BACKGROUND ISSUES LEADING TO THIS STUDY

1. Nature of Issue on which the Project Focuses

There is a considerable amount of study, teaching and preaching going on in Presbyterian and other churches to recruit and equip lay leaders for ministry, which is usually considered as work within the congregation (teachers, youth leaders, committee executives etc.). There does not appear to be much work being done to identify, facilitate, educate and honour those church members who are carrying out a ministry as part of their daily work or personal activities in the community or wider world.

1.1 *The Topic:*

In this project thesis I will attempt to determine the educational needs and personal development priorities of Christian laity that would enable them to better carry out their responsibilities as Christians in their daily life and work in the world today. While “laity” can refer to the whole people (of God), for the purposes of this study I will focus on the members of the church who are not ordained ministers in full time service to the church. More definitions will follow.

1.2 *The Purpose & Problem:*

The Purpose of this Project Thesis is to determine what type of educational and spiritual programs or resources are needed by Christian adult lay men and lay women today in order to

carry out their ministry in their daily life, work and leisure. Currently the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) has agreed in principle to the following priorities for ministry as a focus for its national agencies:

“EDUCATION for Clergy and Laity,
MISSION inclusive of international, national and justice,
EVANGELISM, SPIRITUALITY,
*EMPOWERING LAITY and children, and
TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY.”¹

Education for the “laity” and empowering/enabling “laity” were two high priorities but there has been little work carried out to determine how they are to be done, let alone to develop a curriculum. The idea of lay education has been a topic of discussion in our church for decades, but very little co-ordinated fruitful investigation and planning has been carried out or any results made available nationally.

This project thesis will attempt to contribute some suggestions for a curriculum or process for such educational activities at the local church and church conference centre or regional levels. These suggestions will be sought from the laity themselves.

¹ Acts and Proceedings of the 123rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, (A&P) 1997;204. The upper case words are just as they are in the printed recommendations and relate to the priorities identified by the presbyteries and congregations responding to an earlier report. *EMPOWERING was later changed to ENABLING.

2. Act of Ministry Envisioned in the Project

2.1 *The Role of my Ministry in the Project*

As a pastoral minister working in the field of lay leadership development and lay spiritual formation, I will be seeking to determine content and priorities for our churches' program to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" and how it might best be carried out.

Part of my responsibility as Teacher/Facilitator of *Laos Ministries* is to determine programs of interest to the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches and perhaps interdenominationally. It is part of my task, in setting up this new church related ministry, to make available more pertinent courses or programs for lay ministry formation, and encourage more laymen and laywomen to take part. My desire in ministry is to enable the 99.5% "non-ordained" portion of the Church's membership to be engaged in the ministry to which we are all called by Jesus Christ.

2.2 *Definitions*

To approach this subject we need first to define some of the terms. The world outside the Church considers a **vocation** to be the same as a career or an occupation. Within the churches it is seen as a call from God to Christians to a certain work. For some, the term is limited to church work as done by a professional minister or full-time church staff. But to others, it refers to whatever we do with our lives in response to God's call. The latter is the meaning of vocation that we will follow in this paper.

John Calvin used **calling** (Lt. *vacatio*) for the choosing of the elect by God. Most particularly he used it in relation to God's appointment of men and women to certain occupations or family

positions. He writes in the *Institutes* “The Lord bids each one of us in all life’s actions to look to his calling he has appointed duties for every man in his particular way of life. And that no one may thoughtlessly transgress his limits, he has named these various kinds of living ‘calling’”². An early catechism of the Kirk of Scotland, called *New Catechism* in 1644 explains the use of “our br(ead)” in the Lord’s Prayer by explaining that it is “ours by faithful labouring in our calling”³. Calling and vocation can be taken as equivalent, and both come to us from God and their meaning is centred in God. When call is used in Scripture it is primarily directed toward all God’s people. This is particularly true in the New Testament where Jesus calls all to discipleship. The twelve and then the seventy were sent out as an advance party of the whole of the disciples in ministry and witness. There is a threefold call of God and thus a threefold Christian vocation of all God’s people, which involve everyone together:

- Belonging — transforming us to children of God
- Being — a holy people who together praise God in all our lives
- Doing — utilizing our gifts in service of God wherever we live and work.

Ministry and **minister** are words that have different meanings to various people. In government circles ministry is a department of the state that is headed by a cabinet minister (Health, Education, etc.). In the church “minister” can refer to several things. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has traditionally called its ordained and inducted (and paid) congregational leaders, ministers. In other church traditions they are called pastors, parsons or priests, and in

² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Trans. H. Beveridge, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 3.10.6.

³ *New Catechism* Q134.

our own formal structures of governance they are called the Teaching Elder. More recently there is a trend in some congregations, to call all the members of the congregation ministers, who are then considered to be engaged in ministry in their life. This is confusing to many and threatening to some. More clarity of definition is needed, particularly in Presbyterian churches.

“Ministry” (Gk. *leitourgia*), is basically service and particularly service of God that takes place inside the church, or carried out by the church out into the world. Within the church it largely refers to the work of the ordained minister of Word and Sacrament, both to those who are a part of the congregation and to those outside its bounds. This latter point is where the problem rests, because the non-ordained, non-clergy or the laity have a ministry in this world outside as well. This is where they live, work, shop and play. It is here that they are to live according to the model of Jesus Christ. This model was one of service and ministry to the whole of humanity, whatever their condition and need. *The Living Faith* (Statement of Christian Belief of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984) expresses the position of our church on “Ministry” in the following terms:

7:2.1 The Lord continues his ministry
 in and through the church.
*All Christians are called
to participate in the ministry of Christ.*
As his body on earth
*we all have gifts to use
in the church and in the world*
to the glory of Christ, our King and Head.⁴ (*Italics added for emphasis*)

⁴ The Living Faith: *Statement of Christian Belief of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Winfield, B.C.; Woodlake Books, 1984).

In section 8:1.2, it states “Life in Christ is formed in a believing community, and expressed in daily living. We are to bring Christ’s healing presence, ... his peace to its pain and anguish.” It is this kind of ministry or work that is the concern here. We call it ministry in daily life and work, which is the work of all the people of the church, both laity and clergy equally. The ministry of Word and Sacrament is essentially that of the clergy. The only way to be clear on which ministry is meant is to add the modifying words when using this word.

In reference to **work**, in the phrase “ministry in daily life and work”, there is need for some definition. The word “work” refers to the activity that engages the major part of our adult life. The world of work encompasses the vast majority of all human interactions. The world can be said to revolve on work. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes “work” as the expenditure of energy or the application of effort to some purpose. Work involves a person in labour at a specific activity. Work has been defined as “all human activity that sustains and improves the world”⁵; or as “the expenditure of energy (manual or mental or both) in the service of others, which brings fulfillment to the worker, benefit to the community and glory to God.”⁶; or “work is a divine vocation, a calling from God and carried out in our lives”⁷. In the Scriptures, work is regarded as a Divine command from which no one is exempt — “six days you shall labour and do all your work” (Genesis 20:9). As Christians we could view work as a means of loving God by serving human needs. Every aspect of our activity can be seen as work by these definitions: what we do as chores around the house, what we do for a living, what we do as

⁵ Gregory F.A. Pierce, *Of Human Hands* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1991), 16.

⁶ Stoll, quoted in Banks, Robert J. and Paul Stevens, *The Complete Book of Every Day Christianity* (Downers Grove; Intervarsity Press, 1997), 1124.

⁷ Paul Stevens, *Disciplines of the Hungry Heart* (Vancouver; Regent Bookstore, 1993), 22.

friendly neighbours or as caring parents and so on. Work can include what we do for pay in order to “make a living”, which is known as our employment or occupation; and what we do to make our world a more welcome place, but not necessarily for remuneration. In this paper, my interest is in both kinds of work.

By **curriculum** and **process** I mean to focus on the possible content and methods for an educational and developmental program for laity so that they may be better equipped to carry out their ministry. The words “equipping of the saints” are meant to relate to a key biblical text, Ephesians 4:12.

Most of the time this thesis will use the word “**laity**” to refer to those persons who are non-ordained and usually not gainfully employed in the church. “Laity” in this common use is not the completely correct use of the term or totally equivalent to the Greek word “*laos*”. The latter term was used in the New Testament for the whole community of people (*laos theou* - the people of God), and related to the use of *laos* in the Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures for the whole people of God or Israel. In the very early church, it usually referred to all the chosen and redeemed people as a unit: the Church of Christ. It was only in later centuries of the Christian Church that the division of clergy and lay developed, which necessitated the use of a negative definition of laity. In more recent times the World Council of Churches Department of the Laity used the term in a specific way, designating either those who have not received a special ordination and/or theological training, or more often those members of the church, both men and women, who earn their livelihood in a secular job and who, therefore, spend most of their waking hours in a “worldly” occupation. But even this definition has its problems since it is adult and work related, and timeline or lifestyle sensitive. The laity

of the church should not be considered uneducated in a learned profession like “the Ministry”, for they are called to a ministry and should receive education toward this ministry that they are called to perform. Various theologians or authors use different definitions but these are usually related across a limited spectrum. This thesis will use “laity” when referring to the non-ordained ministers of the church and “*laos*” when referring to the whole people of God, within the Church or Body of Jesus Christ.

Common practice separates or even contrasts “laity” and **clergy**. Many scholars and others cannot accept that. “Clergy” has its roots in the Greek word “*kleros*”, which meant a lot or inheritance that would be assigned to someone. A derivative of the word meant “heir”. In the New Testament this is used in reference to all Christians, e.g. “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs (*kleronomoi*) according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). Paul Stevens at Regent College has said in his lectures on lay ministry and equipping (1998),⁸ “the church has no “lay people” in the usual sense of that word and is full of “clergy” in the true sense of that word.” This demonstrates another example of lack of precise definition in words that have become culturally and ecclesiastically loaded or have changed in meaning over time. Because of this latter fact, it becomes necessary to use “clergy” for ordained pastors and preachers, but realize that it would not be a true meaning in the first two and a half centuries.

2.3 Much Writing, Few Results

This has contributed in part, to a larger problem. The problem is seen in the question; when so much was written on and discussed about the ministry of the laity in daily life and work, in the

⁸ Paul Stevens on Equipping for Ministry at Regent College, Vancouver, Lecture Notes, 1998.

1950's and '60's — why has so little understanding or results been evident in the interim?

Hendrik Kraemer of the University of Leiden and late Director of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, wrote in 1961, “Never in church history, since its initial period, has the role and responsibility of the laity in Church and world been a matter of so basic, systematic, comprehensive and intensive discussion in the total *oikoumene* as today”⁹. Congar and Kraemer’s books on the Theology of the Laity came out in 1957 and 1958. Many articles were written at that time. More books were published on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1980’s,¹⁰ but there were no significant results at the congregational level.

The laity were recognized for their important work on behalf of the faith in the world from the very beginning of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Equipping was often an issue. At the First Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, a committee on “The Significance of the Laity in the Church” was appointed in order to meet the “widespread need expressed in the churches in many parts of the world for a consideration of the urgent question of the right use and training of the laity in the service of the Church”¹¹. The Second Assembly at Evanston in 1954 chose six major issues for discussion, and the rediscovery of the laity was one of them. It set up the “Department on the Laity”. The Evanston report on the Laity achieved or suggested two things: it helped “Christians living in an industrial society to rediscover their work as a Christian vocation” and it made an attempt “to define the ministry of the laity and to see its implications for the renewal of the life and structures of the Church”¹². Over the years it was this latter

⁹ Steven, Neill and Hans-Rudi Weber, *The Layman in Christian History* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 377.

¹⁰ Crabtree, Diehl, Dozier, Gregorios, Weber etc.

¹¹ Quoted in Neill and Weber 1963, 378.

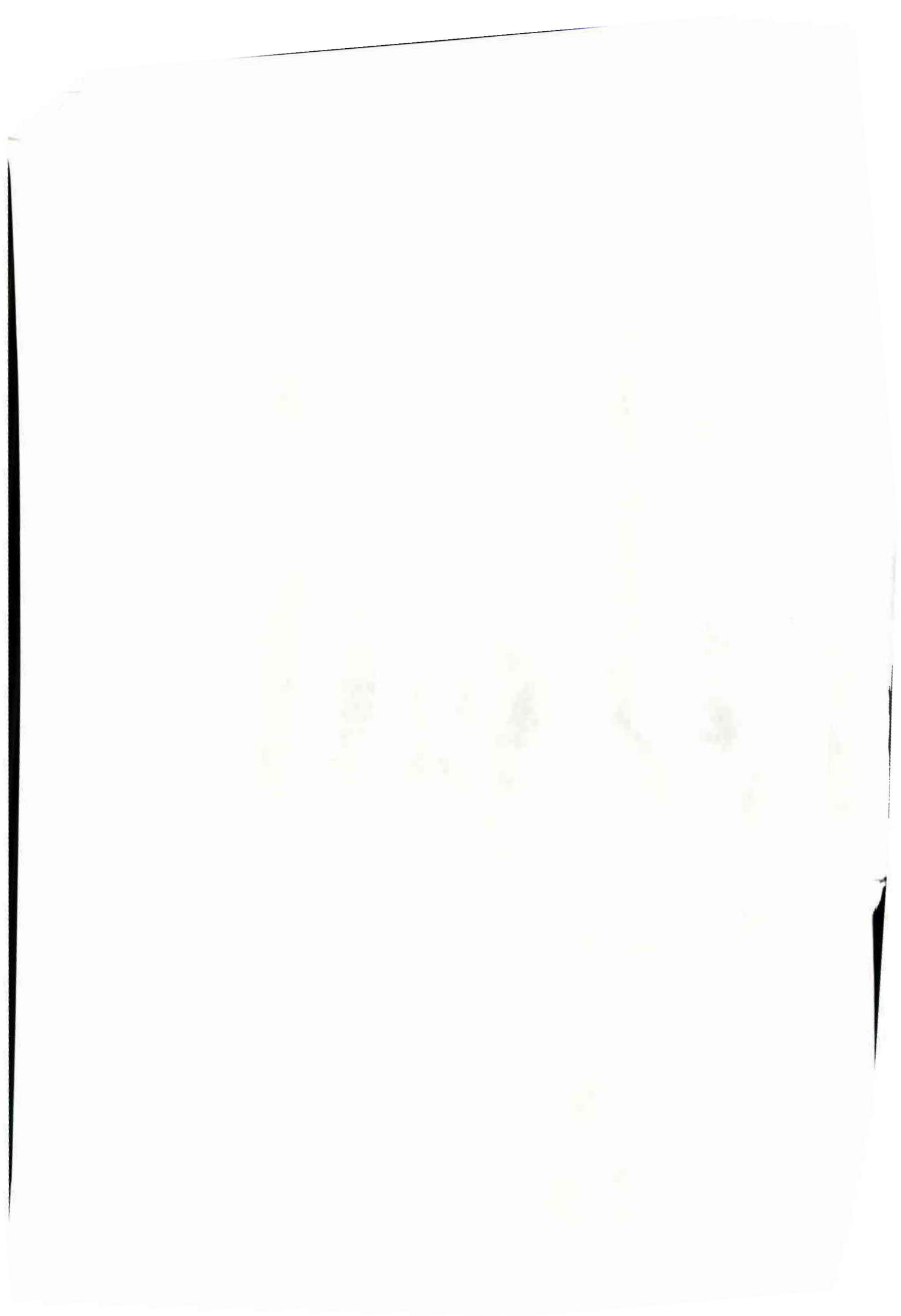
¹² *Ibid.*, 380.

emphasis that grew. The Assembly in New Delhi stressed the importance of all Christians serving God and their neighbours in their daily work. At the same time it stressed training. Lay training did start up in various places throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America after that time. By 1984-91 when I became a member of the committee of the WCC that had oversight of the "Laity Desk", it had been subsumed under the Sub-unit on Renewal and Congregational Life. Many member churches appeared to be very jealous of their right to train the laity, but few were engaged in specific equipping for daily life and work. I will approach this matter further in Chapter three.

At a recent meeting of the "Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life" in Chicago (Nov. 98), the group, (made up of people engaged in education for and promotion of this field), studied the question: "Why has there been so little apparent expansion or growth in the concept of ministry in daily life as evident in the actions of Christians, in spite of fifty years of books and pronouncements on this matter?"¹³ The previous meeting in Baltimore, November '97, had carried out a force field analysis on this ministry. Some of the forces that hinder were identified as — "the gap between church and workplace", "fear of change", "expectation that this ministry in daily life costs too much and takes too much time", "passivity of laity", "lack of teaching on baptism and priesthood of believers", "the process of becoming members", "clergy ignorance of what is needed to support laity in daily life ministry", plus many more.¹⁴ Kenneth Haugk, in 1985, quantified the barriers to equipping, into thirteen statements, which included much of what this group found in 1998. Some of his list included the inertia of tradition,

¹³ "Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life" Annual Meeting in Chicago, Nov. 98.

¹⁴ "Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life" Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Nov. 97.



unequipped equippers, incomplete Biblical interpretations of the practice of the priesthood of all believers, and the specialization trap. In this latter barrier the church professionals withhold, for one reason or another, any type of education that would enable the laity to be effective ministers. "The programs in most churches emphasize the *whats* rather than the *hows*. The church is great when it comes to theory, but much less adequate when it comes to practice"¹⁵. This barrier along with others like apathy, lack of faith and divergent priorities for scarce congregational resources of time, money and people, were also part of the Coalition's discussions.

As a result of these and other discussions, the 1998 meeting looked at some hypotheses that needed to be tested: to assess what has happened in the lives of Christians and in the churches in the USA over the past 50 years as a result of the pronouncements of many denominations and church-related organizations about the universal priesthood of all the baptized and the plethora of books supporting this principle. Hypotheses listed were:

- A. Lay Christians prefer a duality of life with worship and study on Sunday that does not connect with their lives in family, community, or work the rest of the week.
- B. The typical congregation understands "lay ministry" to involve assisting their pastors and lay leaders with work in the congregation.
- C. Congregational maintenance and survival take precedence over forms of outward ministry of individuals.
- D. Some congregations have been successful in teaching the concept of ministry in daily life but it has not been a transforming force in the lives of the members.
- E. The laity must be the agents of their own formation.
- F. Seminaries have nothing to gain by changing their traditional ways.
- G. Ministry in Daily Life is a low program priority in judicatory and national denominational offices.

¹⁵ K.C. Haugk, "Lay Ministry; The Unfinished Reformation", *The Christian Ministry*, 16, No.6, (Nov.1985), 7.

- H. Survival needs among denominations always has first priority.
- I. Ministry in Daily Life is healthier in independent church-related organizations than in denominational structures.¹⁶

This Coalition has set itself a task to carry out some research into this matter of concern. They plan to survey and interview “Christian laity”, congregational clergy, denominational leaders, seminary faculty etc. across the United States.

2.4 My Assumptions

Most of the nine hypotheses above, parallel the assumptions that I bring to this study of lay ministry and its equipping. One exception may be “I” for I think that seminaries have much to gain in changing, and indeed have much to lose if they do not change to focus on this equipping of the laity along with the education and development of the equippers. The future of the effective working of the church in the current cultural climate of marginalization and ignorance of the church’s ministry in the world, demands the development of a new and prophetic leadership paradigm. Such leaders are required to both guide and escort the committed and equipped laity into the world as agents of the Kingdom of God. This topic is important but unfortunately beyond the scope of this project thesis.

I have other assumptions that are not on this list. The most important is, that although the church may act otherwise, God honours and supports this ministry in daily life. Indeed God calls the Church to it, throughout Scripture and through the Holy Spirit. The entire *laos* of God are called by the Triune God, to live, demonstrate and proclaim, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in every circumstance and at every opportunity. Thus the laity are not meant to be

¹⁶ “Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life”, Annual Meeting in Chicago, Nov. 98.

passive bystanders or consumers of the ministry, but they are meant to be bearers of the ministry into the community.

My experience has identified another assumption: the people of the church are seeking for meaning to their Christian life and their daily work, and they are open to some kind of equipping. The latter is particularly true if the timing is right and what is offered is judged to be worth their time and relevant to their life at that moment. Related to this is the assumption that there are times in everyone's life that could be considered teachable moments when they would be more open to an appropriate learning experience. I assume that there are specific topics that will be most pertinent to these experiences.

One other assumption should not be missed. It is that the assumptions in the nine hypotheses above are not as absolute or negative as they are stated. The Ministry of Christ is going on this very day and there is more of it taking place than we can formally recognize.

2.5 Ministry in Daily Life

What is ministry in daily life? William Diehl the founding and current President of the Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life, developed a model for recognizing it. He proposed that each Christian think about daily ministry as a five-pronged ministry of:

Competency - using God's gifts to do our work well;

Presence - being attentive to the hurts and needs of our neighbours;

Ethics - seeking the high road of ethical conduct;

Change - seeking as a change agent to improve our common life;

Lifestyle - embodying and promoting the values of the Kingdom of God.¹⁷

Richard Broholm of Hay Associates, wrote in *Laitly in Ministry* of ministry in the workplace and gave a typology centred on the threefold office of Christ's ministry:

As Priest

- Modelling - of the life of Christ and using one's gifts to the fullest.
- Caring - for the needy.
- Celebrating - God's presence in daily life.

As Prophet

- Teaching - sharing knowledge in order to empower others.
- Critiquing - challenging the existing order.
- Envisioning - seeing the real truth beyond the present reality.

As "King" (or Administrative Ministry)

- Making and Distributing - activities in the corporate order of life.
- Managing - the gifts of God as a steward.
- Building - community for God in the world's organizations.¹⁸

Implied in these, but deserving of specific mention are:

Service - living out the caring servanthood of Christ for others

Witness - showing the love and forgiveness of Christ in all aspects of our life

Earth-keeping and Co-creativity with God - maintaining the goodness of God's creation

¹⁷ William Diehl, *The Monday Connection* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 3ff, is a former executive of Bethlehem Steel, consultant to industry and churches, and a Lutheran lay person.

¹⁸ Richard Broholm, "Toward Claiming and Identifying our Ministry in the Workplace", *The Laitly in Ministry*, George Peck and John S. Hoffman (ed.), (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1984), 151-160.

Ministry in daily life is a call to be fully human as expressed in the life of Jesus Christ. We are called to continue the work that God gave for the people of God to do, which was in the first covenant with Adam and Eve. This is summarized as a commission to communion, community and co-creativity. Stevens expresses this as four types of human work:

Spiritual - live in communion with God, in thankfulness and love.

Relational - enriching our co-humanity by our life and work.

Corporate - engaging in community building in family, church and society.

Regency - giving leadership to the created order under the rule of God.¹⁹

It is all of these various attributes that make up the ministry in daily life for which we are seeking. It is not a discretionary time, nor is it a volunteer ministry. It is mandated by the call and command of God.

2. 6 Equipping

Equipping for a ministry in daily life is the prime focus of this project thesis. This too is an issue that has had, and still has much confusion connected with it. The problem is not only how it is done, but also there is a question **if** it is being done. From the discussion of the Coalition it appears that even where equipping or education is going on, it is not very effective. There were very few significant results, from across the continent, that showed up in a personal poll taken of the participants at the meeting last November.

What are the problems? Some claims for equipping the laity fall into the class of “pop

¹⁹ Stevens, *Lecture Notes*, 1998.

theology". It is basically the revision or simplification of the professional theologians' studies to be digested by non-scholarly lay people. This is not helpful. In other cases it is a specifically marketed program that is applied to individually chosen or identified members so that they become leaders in the church or engage in a certain ministry in their spare time. In most cases it is training to do jobs or minister-like activities around the church. These are necessary to keep the institution and the Christian Education system operating, but they do little to equip for ministry in daily life.

It has been said that the church is stuck in the past. It is very true in this instance. When we try to involve more members in programs or to convince them to become trained in leadership; when our concern is focused on how to motivate and nurture more volunteers, we are stuck in an outdated paradigm. Even the emphasis on identifying and mobilizing gifts has had limited results. So many of the past programs of equipping the laity in the Presbyterian Church in Canada have died out. (e.g. "Presbyterian Men", "Evangelism Explosion") Many of the current programs have only a limited draw. (e.g. "Stephen Ministries", "Bethel Bible Series", "Cursillo" and "Alpha" programs) Several reasons have been given for this. The focus on training individuals, even when done in a small group, overlooks the fact that a whole social unit (the congregation) needs to learn and change if learning is going to be effective and lasting. The church is becoming dysfunctional in the minds of even its own members. It is perceived as having nothing relevant to say on the real and confusing issues of daily living. Every attempt to promote lay ministry is confronted with an attitude from many; that the church members and seekers deserve and expect only professional, highly educated ministry. Lay leadership and lay witness is assessed to be second rate and unsatisfactory, originally by the society but now by church members. Many programs call for the professional minister to be the equipper. Some

ministers resist this role, and some members doubt their ability to do it. The perception that they have a lack of contact with the real world diminishes the status of such programs. Some see it as the church and professional ministers getting into places where they have no business being. But Jesus showed that there is no place or person for whom Christ did not come. New questions need to be asked and new answers found in order to enter the new century.

A recent statement by The Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, enumerated the “Seven Deadly Sins that Impede Ministry”²⁰. The focus of the document is on ministry in daily life. The fifth “sin” is “to ask a person with discerned gifts to enter a ministry without detailing the expectations, providing training or the resources needed to accomplish the ministry. To offer an opportunity to minister, to support, and then not to carry through”.

Equipping in this congregation involves building community with God and each other, discerning gifts, clarifying and agreeing on expectations, providing education and resources for a ministry in daily life of “all the baptized” and to support them in it. Equipping in all congregations’ needs to be more than teaching and preaching. It must include life-style changes and new directions in vision and goals.

2.7 On the Road to Some Answers

Recently at a course on the theology and spirituality of everyday life, the instructor, Paul Stevens, gave the class, (of which I was a part), a group research assignment. The very international group of more than 50 laity and clergy were divided into small groups to focus on

²⁰ The Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, “Seven Deadly Sins that Impede Ministry”, See Appendix 4.

the question: "What can we do in order to implement a ministry of daily life in our churches or church organizations?" There were about a dozen groups of five to six persons in each. I was provided with the written reports of most of the groups because of my project thesis plans. There were many pages of suggestions that might work, and many that were actually being followed in some congregations. The following is a summary of these statements that focused most on equipping. Several groups expressed the importance of the sharing of stories of the laity regarding their work and ministry. People should be encouraged to "tell their story of God woven in the fabric of life". These were to be done at corporate worship, pulpit interviews, in small groups and through personal interviews. Mentoring, where mature Christians share their vocational experience with others, was encouraged. A deliberate program of educating first a small group and then the whole congregation on ministry in daily life was advocated. It was to be done through teaching, preaching, groups, study programs, visits in the work place, commissioning services, etc. It was noted that in order to bring about change in the whole organizational culture, one needs to start with a smaller group of people who are already committed to such a ministry. The whole attitude and understanding and vision of the congregation need to be changed. Such change is hard to accomplish and only comes about slowly; a radical minority of 5% of an organization can bring about change in a culture. "We need to share, discuss and pray about it with family and close friends, so that we ourselves become 'Role Models'. This will allow us to raise it with other members of the congregation including the leaders." This was an approach used by one member of the class from Korea in his church of 10,000. He went on to say that "the introduction must come from a strong foundation, and must be accompanied by prayer and patience." It was affirmed that churches need to establish and cast a broad vision for ministry in daily life. The ordained/professional

ministers need to operate in the role of a listener as the laity respond to the question: “what can we do to support you in your ministry?” Some said that, there needs to be teaching on the broader examples of spiritual gifts and assisting people in knowing and using their gifts. A way of doing this could be building a stronger sense of family within the congregation and groups, so that people can share their stories in a safe and caring environment. It was noted that it was important to make the Monday connection in worship and “integrate the Sabbath into our entire lives”. One group brought forward a five-point model introducing and carrying out the strategies for learning about ministry in daily life:

- i) Communication - “What does it mean?” “How do I do this?”
- ii) Illustration - modelling examples
- iii) Dedication - Habits, plan/programme, commitment
- iv) Affirmation - “You’re doing well!” expressed in worship, newsletters, pastoral visits
- v) Celebration - corporate worship and praise, incorporating the ordinary in life.²¹

This is a good summary, but it leaves out a specific mention of visioning for the whole congregation, and specific mention of equipping activities or learning in small groups. A different group expresses another aspect of the issue in their précis introduction to their report: “In order for us to live out our faith in an everyday manner as a people of God, we **first** need to prayerfully create an appropriate environment that recognizes and validates the struggles and vulnerability each of us face in our everyday life: in work, leisure and family”. Equipping for such a ministry is obviously greater than some current educational programs offer.

²¹ Presentation by Group 9 at Paul Stevens course on “Towards a Theology & Spirituality of Everyday Life at Regent College”, Vancouver, July, 1998.

Although some things are repeated and other points have been left out, we cannot cover all the results of these focus groups. One group's report though, is interesting enough to be added here, almost in full. It is important enough, primarily because it does not give just theoretical speculation, but many of the statements document activities actually done in one minister's Baptist Church in England and are now being carried out in other places in England.

"The pastor/teaching elder is to teach to the main body of the church the biblical basis for 'work/vocation', i.e. - everybody is a full time Christian worker

- everybody is a missionary — at home or abroad
- everybody is 'called'
- everyone has a 'ministry'
- teach Ephesians 4:11 ff.

" - This is to be worked out in questions set for small group times the week following the pastor's teaching.

" - Different people are to be interviewed each week, regarding their job, its difficulties and how the church can help.

" - The teaching pastor is to have a policy for 'equipping the saints' — via Christian doctrine and living — ethics, time and money management, home making etc.

" - Have non-staff members preach/teach occasionally with their own perspective from industry or home etc.

" - Have a whole or half day seminar or conference (e.g. Saturday), on 'work and vocation' at local churches.

" - On a regular basis, to pray on Sunday for business men and women travelling for work away from home (abroad).

" - Get each member to share at small groups each week about work or home problems and to pray for them.

" - Elders, pastors, home group leaders are to visit members at their work (or at home) to encourage and pray for them.

" - Staff workers of the church and church members if possible, are to visit or 'work' with people at their work for a day.

" - The church is to encourage mentoring in the church.

" - The church is to encourage 'prayer-triplets', especially regarding work.

3. Dominant Theological Issues in the Project

3.1 Statement of Theological & Situational Context

In the Presbyterian Church in Canada's *Living Faith* document it states:

7.2.2 Through the Church God orders this ministry
by calling some to special tasks
in the equipping of the saints
for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ.²³ (*Italics added for emphasis*)

It then goes on to highlight the ministers of Word and Sacrament who preach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments and exercise pastoral care²⁴. One can hear a clear echo of Ephesians 4:11-13, especially verse 12, "for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,".

The next subsection tells how the office of ruling elder shares with the minister in the leadership, pastoral care and oversight of the congregation²⁵. Following this comes the list of specialized ministries like church educators, professors, missionaries etc. The section concludes with:

Through such ministries
the Word is proclaimed.
God's people are nourished and nurtured.
supported and guided.

²³ Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Living Faith*, 7.2.2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.2-3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.2.4.

In the oneness of Christ

we seek to serve God.²⁶ (*Italics added for emphasis*)

Although the “special” task of “equipping of the saints for the work of ministry” is clearly expressed, who is to do it and how is it to be done is not expressed. The typical activities of professional ministry hold the centre stage and the laity education issue seems to be expected to happen in and around it.

What is expressed in the *Living Faith* document is a mirror of what happens in church practice. The laity are expected to be equipped in the normal course of the congregation’s life and work. Most training of laity is focused on producing leaders and teachers within and to the congregation rather than for people living the life of Christian witness, service and ministry in the world. The *Living Faith* states in “Our Mission”: “As God sent Christ to us, so Christ sends us into the world. We are here to proclaim Christ in word and deed”.²⁷ Without adequate equipping this mission is hindered greatly. The whole Christian fellowship needs to be involved.

This concern for “equipping of the saints” issue is not just found in the Presbyterian Church: It is an issue in the global church. The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Nairobi in 1975 stated the following points in their report on “Confessing Christ Today”.

“43. “Confessing Christ” or “Christian Witness” describes, above all, that continuous act by which a Christian or Christian community proclaims God’s acts in history and seeks to manifest Christ as “the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Our confessing Christ today would deny God’s incarnation if it would be limited to only some areas of life. It concerns the wholeness of human life; our words and acts; our personal and

²⁶ Ibid., 7.2.6.

²⁷ Ibid., 9.1.1.

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²⁶ Ibid., 7.2.6.

²⁷ Ibid., 9.1.1.

communal existence; our worship and responsible service; our particular and ecumenical context.”

Such a task of confessing Christ today, involves the whole Church.

61. Evangelism cannot be delegated to either gifted individuals or specialized agencies. It is entrusted to the “whole Church”, the body of Christ, in which the particular gifts and functions of all members are but expressions of the life of the whole body....

65. ...We are commissioned to carry the gospel to the whole world and to allow it to permeate all realms of human life.

The enormity of the task leads us to think about methodology.

66. ...When is the appropriate time to confess and how should we do it? This leads to the question of education for mission. Programmes of lay training ought to be encouraged in order to equip lay workers for communicating the gospel at their particular place in everyday life.

The recommendations that came out of this report included the following points related to the equipping of the laity:

73.4 That regional or local clusters of churches engage in reflections based on Bible study and common experience, on the common content of their faith, in order to produce educational materials related to their particular situation;

73.12 That the churches examine the relationship between Christian and national identity in their particular contexts so that members may gain the courage to give priority to their Christian identity;

73.14 That the churches encourage all Christians to witness to Christ by a holy life and by their daily participation and struggle along with others for a just order in Church and society as means of broadening the scope of the Church’s ministry with all people;

73.18 That the churches provide means of exchange and mutual feedback between church leaders and congregational members (i.e. hearings or consultations on crucial issues for the laity) to enrich the common confession of Christ.²⁸

In spite of these recommendations on the laity, the Council and the member churches, for the most part, went on to focus around other things. It was not until the Seventh Assembly, in

²⁸ Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Nairobi, “Confessing Christ Today”, 1975.

Canberra in 1991, that some of us from the World Collaboration of Christian Lay Centres were able to influence the delegates to reopen the emphasis on laity development. Further work is currently going on through a working group on “Lay Participation Towards Inclusive Community”. It remains to be seen if this present focus will result in any more equipping of the *laos* for ministry in daily life and work.

The Confession of 1967 of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA speaks of the members of the church, “both gathered in corporate life and dispersed in society for the sake of mission in the world”. Under the latter it states that they, “serve God wherever its members are, at work or play, in private or in the life of society Their *witness* is the church’s evangelism. Their *daily action* in the world is the church in mission to the world. The *quality of their relation* with other persons is the measure of the church’s fidelity.”²⁹ (*Italics added*). Similar expressions could be found in other statements by other denominations.

Various theological and theoretical statements agree that the ordinary church member has a Christian task to carry out in the midst of their daily life and work, that is part of the ministry and mission of Christ’s Church. With such a high and important calling, the laity surely need to be equipped in a more deliberate and specific manner. The issue, to be addressed by this project thesis, is what kind of education is needed and how should this equipping take place in order that lay Christians can carry out this ministry in daily life? This leads us into the defining question.

²⁹ United Presbyterian Church in the USA, *Confession*, 1967.

3.2 Defining Questions of the Project

What are the educational needs of the Laity or baptized members of the church who are currently engaged in ministry in daily life in the world, or seeking to be engaged in such a ministry; in their place of work or living? How can these needs be better met by congregations, supporting church agencies (like *Laos Ministries*), and by Christian Retreat and Conference Centres?

A subsidiary Question is, what are the various educational experiences specifically required for the different kinds of ministry or service in which Laity are engaged?

4. Intended Outcomes of the Project

4.1 Governing Hypothesis & Implications

My hypothesis is that laity engaged in ministry in daily life will avail themselves of educational/equipping opportunities when such programs answer their needs, but these needs may be very narrowly specific. Being engaged in a ministry in daily life facilitates the engaging in such courses. A positive contributing factor will likely be found in the recognition and honouring of these ministries where they are already taking place. Dialogue and the sharing of experiences should also play a major part.

There is probably a wide array of courses/educational experiences being sought but a few key ones may have priority. For time and energy reasons (personal and ecological) much of this equipping will need to go on locally. The implications of all these will likely mean that the equipping for the ministry will have to be done by a lot more leaders (and not all being

ordained); just as the ministry itself must be done by more than the 1-10% of the Church membership currently consciously engaged in ministry in daily life. Laity education centres will likely need to be engaged more particularly in equipping the equippers in ways not currently carried out in academic centres for the preparation of pastoral ministers or professional church leaders.

4.2 Contribution to the Knowledge of Ministry

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a leading clergyman in the “Confessing Church” in Germany during W.W. II, has made us aware in *“Life Together”* that “a community which allows unemployed members to exist within it will perish because of them. It will be well, therefore, if every member receives a definite task to perform for the community, that he may know in hours of doubt that he too, is not useless and unusable”³⁰. It should be the aim of every church leader to enable every member to be employed in some way in the work of God’s kingdom according to his/her call. Every Christian should be engaged in ministry in daily life. The world needs it and Christ commands it.

In the parable of the Marriage Feast, Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus makes it clear that those who are invited by God to the feast (the “called”), are definitely also expected by God to prepare themselves for the occasion, (wearing a wedding garment). Likewise the 12 disciples were called by Christ and their gifts were evoked, but they were also equipped or educated by Christ in order that they would be fit for the ministry.

³⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (London: SCM, 1949), 84.

The pattern should be that once a person has experienced God's call they should be prepared or equipped by the appropriate education/training in order to carry out the task or service that comes out of that call. This project should create a stronger base for this type of equipping to take place and an expansion of those actively engaged in the ministry in daily life for the "building up the body of Christ".

This concludes most of my personal journey with this issue. Now we move into source research. Before engaging in the project, there are several sources of information and guidance that must be investigated. Three basic disciplines in this search are Scripture, Theology and Historical experience. The Word of God as found in Holy Scripture, is the primary discipline and is indeed foundational to this quest.

Chap. 2 THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MINISTRY IN DAILY LIFE AND EQUIPPING

1. Ministry of the Laity in the Hebrew Scriptures

N.B. All Scripture references are in NRSV unless otherwise noted.

Our primal parents were the first to be engaged in a ministry and it was a royal one. They were given dominion over the rest of creation and this involved complete control under God. They were commanded to “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over every living creature and life form” (Gen. 1:28ff). This was both a ministry of stewardship or earth-keeping on God’s behalf, and one of co-creativity with God. The second creation story in chapter two gives a further description of this ministry in the naming of the animals, which would involve becoming fully aware of the needs of all these other creatures. This went along with tending of the garden. It implies that there might be a priestly function of bringing these needs to God with thanksgiving and intercession, when Yahweh walked in the garden and communed with the man and the woman. Another aspect of their ministry was people-making or community building.

The failure of Cain could be considered as starting from a neglect of ministry. The content of the two offerings, though different, would have been acceptable if later sacramental laws are any indication of the desires of God. What was probably lacking was the gratitude or joyful service that should have been presented from the heart of one of the two lay priests: Cain. He

then received discipline and instruction in the matter from God, but failed to heed it. Cain went on to destroy his brother and thus a part of that community that he was commanded to build.

Noah was called to a ministry that pre-figured the ultimate ministry that was yet to come into the world. He was called to be a saviour of his family and of all created life. God sent Noah on a specific task of building and filling an ark. His work brought the grace of God to bear upon those lives that were saved. After the flood he made a sacramental offering of thanksgiving on behalf of all those who had been delivered. This was surely a priestly ministry before the formal time of priests.

At first glance, the Old Covenant appears to be a time when only the Aaronic priests and Levites carried out ministry. The work of ministry seemed to be confined to the Tent of Meeting or the Temple. Any attempts to carry out a priestly ministry by non-priests were subject to severe punishment. One dramatic example was the fate of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and others -- Levites and Reubenites, who argued against Moses and the sole priesthood of Aaron (and his descendants). They proclaimed that the entire congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Therefore they asked, "So why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" (Numbers 16:3). They were swallowed up by a cataclysmic earth tremor. When the "whole congregation of the Israelites" protested this action and accused Moses and Aaron of causing their death, every one of them would have been killed, had it not been for Moses' intervention. We can not know the actual events but the obvious result was that no one was to question the authoritative ministry of the priests. The narrative of Numbers 16 is considered by some, using critical analysis, to be an interlacing of the J-E document and the Priestly Code. Although the violent end of the protesters is placed in the J-E document, the

complaint against Moses and the priesthood (v.3) is considered to be part of P.³¹ Similar dire results came from laity trying to usurp clerical powers with Aaron's sons (Leviticus 10, part of P Code) and with sacrifices performed by King Saul and King Uzziah, (I Samuel 13 and II Chronicles 26). The priests ruled. There are large parts of the Hebrew Scriptures that give evidence of priestly redaction. Using this theory, each of these latter texts appear to be P in origin, or the work of a disciple of P.³²

There are other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures that show another side to this image of the priests and laity. At Mount Sinai, God commanded Moses to say to the "house of Jacob/Israelites", "if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all the people; for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6 RSV, a J-E document). This pronouncement came at the beginning of the events at the mountain so it should have set the character for all that followed. It did not. The reason could be the work of the priestly redactor.

The image above, raises itself again when Isaiah proclaims that in the (Messianic) future "you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God" (61:6). John Calvin states that the meaning of the prophet is: "up to now the Lord has chosen you for his own; but in the future he will honour you with much more splendid gifts, for he will elevate you all to priestly honour".³³ It is part of a glorious future that the people will finally become what they were meant to be. Calvin notes that "this did not become manifest until the reign of

³¹ Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1948), 171 & 189.

³² *Ibid.*, 359 & 785.

³³ John Calvin, *Commentaries*, Library of Christian Classics, Vol. 23, (London: SCM Press, 1958), 373.

Christ". Indeed it was only completely achieved in Christ, and the Church in turn has this priestly ministry through Christ alone. It is a ministry of offering human lives as sacrifices to God through the bringing of them to full obedience. After setting aside the sacerdotal ministry of the cultic priesthood, most of what can be called ministry happened in the normal interactions of life. Jacob in later life relationships with his brother Esau, his wives and children, showed a lot of caring (Genesis 33f). Similarly with Hosea and his marriage with Gomer (Hosea 1-3). Ordinary people performed extraordinary ministry for God in their work, like Joseph in prison and the Pharaoh's court (Gen. 40 & 41), young David in King Saul's service (I Sam. 16:21), Esther in a foreign king's harem and household (Esther 2), Nehemiah a pagan king's cupbearer (Neh. 1:1-2:9), Daniel's service in the court and government of Babylon (Dan. 1 & 2). It's interesting that the only person in the Hebrew Scripture, of whom it was said that the Lord God had "filled him with divine spirit", was a master craftsman and artist, Bezalel, a highly skilled worker (Ex. 31:1-5).

It is also enlightening that the two words normally used for service and ministry in the Hebrew Scripture are not religious words but worker words. "*Sharat*" is used of personal service to a ruler and later to the ministry of worship to God. "*Abad*" combines the meaning of "to work" or "to make" and "to worship"; i.e. it is service directed toward things, people or God. Based on this, Stevens proposes a definition of service or ministry: It is any activity for which God is able to say "it is good" (Genesis 1:31) and which potentially involves a two-directional priestly service: touching people and places for God, and touching God for people and places.³⁴ From Adam and Eve, and throughout Scripture, indeed even to today, men and women have worked

³⁴ Paul Stevens, *Equipping in Ministry*, Unpublished lecture notes, Regent College, Vancouver, 1998, 32.

at things and succeeded in making achievements to which God has probably been able to pronounce the encouraging word of the Creator: "that's good". In Hebrew Scripture it was common workers who carried out such a priestly ministry: artisans, builders, musicians, parents with their children, heads of families, gifted lay leaders. Prophetic or kingly individuals also attested to this ministry for God in their daily lives. One could say that a viewpoint on ministry, vastly different from that of the priestly editors of the Tanakh, was hidden in plain sight throughout the whole of that testament.

2. Ministry of the Laity in the New Testament

The purpose of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was clearly stated in Luke's report of the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19). The position of this incident in the gospel indicates the importance of it to Luke. It expresses a similar ministry as does the "Beatitudes" which occupies a similar leading position in the gospel of Matthew. Jesus' teaching indicated that this ministry was to be carried on by his followers - "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you ... Give to everyone who begs from you ... Do to others as you would have them do to you ... love your enemies, do good and lend expecting nothing in return. Do not judge ... do not condemn ... Forgive ... Give. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good," (Luke 6:27-45).

The other followers of Christ and writers of Scripture continue this image of ministry. Paul wrote it to the saints in Rome:

... to present your bodies as a living sacrifice ... which is your spiritual worship ... be transformed ... think of yourself with sober judgement ... members of one another ... having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us ... prophecy ... ministry ... teacher ... exhorter ... giver ... leader ... Let love be genuine ... outdo one another in showing honour ... Contribute to needs of saints ... hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you ... Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony ... associate with the lowly ... live peaceable with all ... feed your enemies ... overcome evil with good. (Rom.12:1-21).

He also wrote to all the saints in Philippi : “Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God ... but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (2:5-7 RSV). To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ at Colossae he wrote :

put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly, fornication, impurity, passion, evil, desire and greed (which is idolatry) ... you must get rid of all such things — anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another ... As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other just as the Lord has forgiven you. Wives, be subject to your husband ... Husbands love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, obey your parents ... Fathers, do not provoke your children ... Slaves obey your earthly masters ... Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters. You are serving the Lord Christ (Col 3:5-24).

James wrote: “But be doers of the word and not merely hearers only ... Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:22&27). Peter similarly explains to the chosen and sanctified exiles that they are to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God that include good conduct among the Gentiles, submissive as servants, reverence as wives, considerate as husbands, repaying evil or abuse with a blessing. The writer to the Hebrews continues in the same line:

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill treated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honour ... Keep life free from love of money, and be content ... Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God (Heb.13:2-16).

New Testament scriptures give a consistent call to ministry that bears upon every member of the church and it expresses itself in their lifestyle. Throughout, this ministry of the church is expressed as a continuation and expansion of the earthly ministry of Jesus. It, like the Hebrew Scriptures, is a ministry that involves service of others in one's daily life. In the New Covenant the ministry extends to foreigners, strangers and enemies as well as those of the community of faith. It involves all the disciples as a unity in order to express the life of Christ in all their relationships.

Jesus called his apostles and disciples to be fishers of humanity and witness to his good news of salvation. The call continues in the letters. Paul expressed the call to the church of the Thessalonians: "that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus be glorified in you, and you in him..." (II Thes. 1:11f RSV). He repeats the call to most of the other churches, for example to the churches of Galatia he says — "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal 5:13 RSV). It is a call to servanthood, serving others with the same dedication as Christ. "Therefore brothers, ... holy partners in a heavenly *calling*, consider that Jesus ... was *faithful* to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house"(Heb. 3:1). The call is for God's people within the Church to proclaim the redemption that has been achieved in Christ. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, *that you may declare* the wonderful deeds of [God] who called you out of darkness into

... light" (I Peter 2:9ff RSV). The important action that goes with this is to live a life that is worthy of God's call. This involves humility, gentleness, patience, love, unity and the bond of peace (Eph 4:1-4), and purity, upright and blameless (I Th. 2:11f).

The vocation is for all believers. Thomas Gillespie, the President of Princeton Seminary, uses the image of God's dwelling place: "a people set in and sent unto the world". "Because of God's call the believer's life-situation becomes the place where responsibility for this (calling) is fulfilled. For God's call transforms our life work. No longer is it simply the way in which we earn a living. Now it is the place in the world in which we give expression to the Christian life ... God's (dwelling) upon earth is a people rather than a building, a holy people "set apart" for God rather than from the world, a people mandated to mission rather than coddled in seclusion, a people called by God to the living of salvation in the matrix of everyday life rather than delivered from life's care and responsibilities, a people who live "before God" at all times and in all places rather than lead double lives in segregated, sacred and secular compartments".³⁵ The epistles are remarkably consistent in being addressed to the churches as a whole and not to the local church leadership (except in Philippians 1:1, 4:3, and those addressed to individuals). Paul and the other writers do not expect that the leaders of these churches will be responsible for seeing that any of their directives are carried out, nor will those leaders carry them out themselves. Gordon Fee, a professor of New Testament at Regent College, Vancouver, writes, "in every case, the writers address the community as a whole, and the expectation of the letter is that there will be a community response to the directives... One receives the distinct impression that people and leaders alike are under the sovereign direction

³⁵ Thomas W. Gillespie, "The Laity in Biblical Perspective", *Theology Today*, Vol.36, No. 3, 322.

of the Holy Spirit".³⁶ These facts stand over against the opinion of some Church members that the Scriptures are addressed to other people rather than themselves. The Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit are the key to the understanding of ministry in the new covenant people of God. Both Spirit and gifts are available to all and gifting occurs in diverse ways, not just to separated priests or specially called prophets or kings. Everyone — male/female, Jew/Gentile, master/slave — are called to be prophets, priests or kings in fulfilling Christ's ministry. Gordon Fee writes, "ministry lies not in individuals with inherited offices, nor even in individuals with newly created offices. Ministry lies with the gifting of the Spirit. God through his Spirit has placed ministries in the church; ... The Spirit is unconscious of race, sex, or rank. He gifts whom He wills for the common good (I Cor. 12:11,7)".³⁷

The New Testament understanding of ministry is that the whole *laos* is to put itself at the disposal of God for God's purposes in the church and in the world. It is the fulfilling of the three-fold office of the Old Testament which now belongs to the whole people of God. Each part of the whole receives some gift(s) so that together the church may be a royal, priestly and prophetic people bearing God's Word and Christ's Ministry into the world. As prophet, the *laos* reveal and communicate the word as well as discerning the needs of humans, to whom the proclamation is made. As priests, they carry out mediation, intercession and bridge building; being a faith-filled blessing within their communities. The kingly function is lived out in their nurturing care of others and the leadership they provide in oversight of situations of need. These and many other aspects of ministry are summed up under these three heads.

³⁶ Gordon D. Fee, "Laos and Leadership Under the New Covenant", *Crux*, Vol. XXV, No. 4, (December, 1989), 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

It is important to realize that this entire ministry is corporately expressed. Ministry of the laity is not an individualistic endeavour although it may involve individual actions. The *laos* carry out the ministry, to which Christ called the Church, to uphold His example and name. This ministry is related to and is a component of, the mission that Christ came to carry out. It was simply to live and proclaim the Good News that the Kingdom of God has come near. Each gospel writer affirms that Jesus made this the central focus and platform of his ministry. Mark places this announcement at the very beginning of his ministry after only the wilderness temptation and the arrest of John: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe ..." (Mk. 1:14-15). Matthew starts the ministry with the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes. In those nine blessings the Kingdom is promised explicitly twice, implicitly three times and underlies the remaining four. As noted earlier Luke reports the formal ministry beginning with our Lord's sermon in his home-town synagogue. In it he read Isaiah's prophecy on the Kingdom's character and he concluded with, "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21). John expresses it differently but there is still the sense that Jesus sees himself as one sent by God to do God's work. Near the end of his earthly ministry he declares to Pilate, "my kingdom is not from this world ... my kingdom is not from here" (Jn. 18:36). Jesus in John, speaks about belief and that is defined by whether or not one like Nicodemus can see or enter the Kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3,5). There was consensus in the four Gospels that Jesus came to proclaim the presence and availability of the Kingdom or Reign of God.

In many ways it is made clear that this mission is passed on to Christ's disciples. The twelve were sent out first of all to "proclaim the good news, 'the kingdom of heaven has come near'" (Mat. 10:7). Physical expressions of that message were to be seen in healings, raising of the

dead, cleansings and exorcisms. This proclamation was to continue for all time, “and this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come” (Mat. 24:14). Paul and the other New Testament writers continue to refer to the presence and the promise of this Reign/Kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17, I Cor. 4:20, Heb. 12:28, II Pet. 1:11, Rev. 12:10). This reign is seen in the Hebrew Scriptures as the coming of a day of *shalom*. “It envisions a world characterized by peace, justice, and celebration. *Shalom*, the overarching vision of the future, means “peace”, but not merely peace as the cessation of hostilities. Instead, *shalom* envisions the full prosperity of a people of God living under the covenant of God’s demanding care and compassionate rule”.³⁸ Paul explains the character of this reign of God, “for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). The ministry of the Church in all its aspects is to proclaim to the world the availability of and the opportunities to enter the Reign or Realm of God.

2.1 The matter of Call in John 17

A significant expression of the meaning of this call to ministry is found in John’s account of the prayer by Jesus prior to his arrest. As the last words of Christ before that fateful event, this whole farewell discourse holds an important position in the ministry of Christ and its transmission to his disciples. It is a bridge in John’s order between the earlier teachings and signs of Christ, and the following passion. The prayer in chapter 17 is key to it all because it sums up what went before in the discourse. C.H. Dodd of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, states that the prayer gathers up much of what was said in the Book of Signs, (Chap. 2-12) and

³⁸ Darrell Guder, (ed.), *Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 90-91.

the Farewell Discourses (Chaps. 13-16), and presupposes everywhere the total picture of Christ and his work with which the readers are now acquainted.³⁹ The discourse and the prayer are in the literary genre of a farewell speech, and it is not unusual for such a speech to end with a prayer for those left behind, e.g. Moses in Deut. 32 & 33.⁴⁰ Jesus would have been well acquainted with this. Raymond E. Brown, S.S. in the Anchor Bible, also notes the similarity between this prayer and the eucharistic prayer in Didache 9 and 10.⁴¹ The latter may have been based on this prayer. C.H. Dodd notes its similarity to the Hermetica esoteric writings of this time period.⁴² Brown recalls a Jewish prayer for New Years, cited by Westcott that shows an interesting parallel to verse 17 — “Purify our hearts to serve you in truth. You, O God, are truth and your word is truth and stands forever.”⁴³ John appears to have chosen a pattern of writing that would have been highly recognizable to his readers, in order to draw attention to these teachings of Jesus.

Within this prayer of consecration of Christ, of his disciples and of those who believe through the disciples’ word, there are several linguistic forms that give emphasis to various parts. We find a repetition of words like “glorify”, “word”, “truth”, “sanctify”, “one”, which give a strong cadence to the prayer. There are parallels within sentences like verse 17, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth”. Some phrases have close parallels with other parts of John’s gospel like the Father sanctified Christ and sent him into the world (10:36), and now Jesus prays that the Father will sanctify the disciples and send them into the world (17:18). There is a double

³⁹ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 417.

⁴⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Doubleday 1970), 744.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 746.

⁴² Dodd, 420.

⁴³ Westcott cited by Brown, 245.

meaning to sanctify (*hagiazō*), (vv. 17 & 19), where Christ sanctified or consecrated his sinless life “as an effective sacrifice on behalf of his disciples so that they may in turn be sanctified by Christ and dedicated to the service of God”.⁴⁴ These patterns add emphasis to this prayer and are evidences of its importance. But the most effective emphasis comes in verses 21 and 22-23. Brown comments that this is a “remarkable grammatical parallelism”.⁴⁵ Leon Morris of Ridley College, Melbourne notes that “the effect of this structure is to add solemnity and emphasis”.⁴⁶

Brown lays it out clearly:

21a	[<i>hina</i>]	that they all may be one
21b	[<i>kathos</i>]	just as you, Father, in me and I in you
21c	[<i>hina</i>]	that they also may be one in us
21d	[<i>hina</i>]	Thus the world may believe that you sent me
22b	[<i>hina</i>]	that they may be one
22c-23	[<i>kathos</i>]	just as we are one, I in them and you in me
23b	[<i>hina</i>]	that they may be brought to completion as one
23c	[<i>hina</i>]	Thus the world may come to know that you sent me

“Each of these blocks of four lines consists of three *hina* clauses with a *kathos* clause separating the first and the second. The first and second *hina* clause in each involves the oneness of the believers, while the third involves the effect on the world. The second *hina* clause does not merely repeat the first but develops the notion of unity. The *kathos* clause in each block holds up for the believers the model of the unity of Jesus and the Father.” He goes on to note that “*Kathos* has both a comparative and causative force here: heavenly unity is both the model and source of the unity of believers.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Edwyn Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 504.

⁴⁵ Brown, 1970, 769.

⁴⁶ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971), 733.

⁴⁷ Brown, 1970, 769.

All this brings emphasis to a truth that bears upon the ministry of the *laos* of the Church. "The Church is to be the embodiment of the revelation and the redemption of Christ before the world, so that the world may not only *hear* that Jesus is the Christ, who has achieved redemption for all, but they may *see* that the redemptive revelation of the Christ has power to transform fallen men and women into the likeness of God, to bring about the kind of community that the world needs".⁴⁸ The *laos* become the revelation in the world of their time period, as Jesus was during his time on earth. Followers of Christ deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow him (Lk. 9:23). John records that Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (6:29). And later he says, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another (13:14-15). In Johannine theology, Jesus is both the Word (1:1) and the truth (14:6) "so that consecration in a truth that is the word of God is simply an aspect of belonging to Jesus. The disciples have accepted and kept the word that Jesus brought them from God (17: 6,14); this word has cleansed them (15: 3); now it sets them aside for a mission of conveying it to others (17: 20)".⁴⁹ The consecration of Christ becomes the means by which "the disciples are filled to carry on Christ's work". There is a continuous chain started here with the gift of glory through Christ; "the consecration to service of the inner circle (v19), suggests the larger circle which will be the fruit of that missionary service" (v20).⁵⁰ This service or ministry then

⁴⁸ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, (Waco: Word, 1987), 303.

⁴⁹ Brown, 1970, 765.

⁵⁰ G.H. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928), 321.

goes on generation by generation in everwidening circles as the church bears Christ as the emissary of the Triune God, into the world. The message must be spread through dedicated lives. Jesus gives evidence in his words that he expects it to be successful and grow. In verse 17:23, the complete oneness of the believers given to them in the Godhead is for the purpose “that the world may know that you have sent me”. Similar words were spoken by the angel of the Lord to Zechariah regarding his own mission to bear God’s glory to the nations that plundered Israel: “Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me” (Zech. 2:9). After that witness to the glory of God had been made in the midst of God’s people, “many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you ...” (Zech. 2:11). This is a clear proclamation of the message of the reign of God coming into the world.

The *laos* carry out this ministry of Christ not singly or as individuals. It is carried out as they demonstrate that they are part of the Body of Christ. Jesus prayed that the disciples “may be one, as we are one” (John 17:11), and that the future disciples “may all be one”. This oneness is an expression of their dwelling in the unity of the Triune God (v. 21). Dwelling in this unity is a most intimate and empowering reality. It is given to believers through the boundless love of God in Jesus Christ. This love enables them to live in a personal relationship with Christ and therefore in a similar relation with the living God. Christ’s sacrifice in love opens both the door that leads to God and the door that sends us out to our neighbour. “It is by becoming first the objects of this love, then in turn, the subjects of the same love, directed towards Christ and toward one another, that we become one by mutual indwelling both with Father and Son and with one another in Him; but all this, at every stage, in terms of living action — doing the

works of God, bearing fruit to His glory”.⁵¹ It is precisely this unity that creates and enables the ministry of the *laos*. In it “Christian believers will offer to the world the same type of challenge that Jesus offered - a challenge to recognize God in Jesus”.⁵² In his commentary, Brown asks the question how could Christian unity present such a challenge, and John’s answer to it is found in continuing Christ’s ministry. “Jesus presented a challenge because he claimed to be one with the Father; now the Christians are part of this unity and so present the same challenge. Jesus presented a challenge because he claimed to be the revelation of God’s glory; now Jesus has given this glory to the Christians, so the challenge comes through them”.⁵³ As Jesus lived out this unity in word and deed so too must Christians in their daily life and work.

The emphasis of John on unity is also found in the letter to the Ephesians and most particularly in chapter 4:1-16. Some commentators (Brown affirms Kasemann) point to a geographic and temporal connection between these two books. It is to Ephesians the study now turns for a continued look at the ministry of the *laos*, particularly regarding the matter of equipping.

2.2- The Matter of Ministry in Ephesians 4: 1-16

2.2a- Introduction

Over the years there has been considerable debate about the “work of ministry” that is expressed in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, with a major amount of the discussion centring around verse 12. Who carries out the ministry, and in what aspect of it do the various members

⁵¹ Dodd, 1953, 197.

⁵² Brown, 1970, 778.

⁵³ Ibid., 778.

(lay & ordained / professional) engage? What implications does the interpretation of this passage have for the life and work of the Church today? Particularly what does it say for lay ministry, education, equipping and leadership development?

This passage comes at the beginning of a portion of the letter that is on ethical teachings. There seems to be good evidence that the letter was originally written to a wide non-specific audience rather than to a single church like Ephesus. Some commentators place its writing in the last decade of the first century, at a time when the first generation of leaders had passed away; when various sects and false teachings were imposing themselves into the Church.

The emphasis of the passage is on unity, “the unity of the faith”(v.13), and what must be done to “maintain the unity in the bond of peace”(v.3). This is the only place where unity is used in the New Testament. The Christian is called to this unity in the Church, the “body”, just as there is unity in God, the “one Spirit”, “one Lord” and “one God and Father of us all” (v.4-5). This unity expresses itself in members leading “a life worthy of the calling” (v.1). It expresses itself in them living a life of love and peace, shown through lowliness, meekness, patience, and forbearance toward each other. In order to accomplish this, Christians are given gifts of grace by Christ. These gifts are expressed in this passage in the form of various offices or officers in the Church who have specific tasks or functions. The portion of the passage that describes this (Eph. 4: 11-16), appears to be one flowing continuous sentence.

2.2b- Explanations by Rhetorical & Epistolary Analysis

This passage (4:1-16) comes at a significant position in the letter to the Ephesians. Using rhetorical analysis we have here the beginning of the *exhortatio* section when the appeal is made to follow the specific action based on all that went before in the *exordium* and *narratio*.

In the extended Thanksgiving (1:3 - 3:21) the importance and the privileges of their call have been stressed. Now we reach the start of the exhortation where the way of life that is consistent with this calling is urged upon the readers/hearers. The limits of the passage are defined by the use of an *inclusio* with the word “walk” or “live” (*peripatein*) in verse one and verse seventeen. Paul appeals to the use of *pathos* in commencing this passage with “a prisoner for the Lord”, as he does in 3:1. The writer is challenging the hearers of the letter (as it is being read) to respond in specific ethical and social ways of life. The importance of the passage is heightened by the use of a chiasmus on the word “calling”:

v.1 ... “beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,”

v.4 ... “just as you were called to one hope that belongs to your call,” (RSV)

(*kleseos hes eklethete ... , eklethete ... tes kleseos*).

The effect of the chiasm is to draw attention to “call” and possibly to highlight or emphasize two terms or concepts found in the midst of the chiasm: love (*agape*) and unity (*henoteta*)/oneness (*hen*). The importance of being called (or “chosen”) and “destined in love” (1:5), and being “united” in Christ (1:10) are set out in the opening *exordium* of the letter where the central issues are defined. The idea of oneness in 4:4 is picked up in verses 5-7 where the emphasis is made with a doxological word chain on the word “one” (one: body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God). The writer could be using portions of a credal formula known to his audience to emphasize his point. This word “*heni*” is used to tie into the notion of giving gifts to each one of the saints addressed in this letter and the letter writer himself. This leads into a midrash on Psalm 78:18 in which gifts are given (*dokein*) rather than received, as they were in the original Hebrew psalm. The gifts form the central aspect of the rest of the passage; where

the ministry or service of the church and unity are the focus. The “unity of the faith” (v. 13) which finds its fulfilment in Christ “the head of the body” (v. 15-16), is prefigured in the opening doxology and thanksgiving in chapter one. Ernest Best at the University of Glasgow notes the clear purpose of these connections: “It is only on the basis of the readers’ Christian position, outlined and justified in chs. 1-3, that any appeal can be made for Christian conduct, and it is only as they are enthused in worship that they can be expected to respond”.⁵⁴ Particularly in this passage the gifts for the building up and unity of the church are set out in front of us as the logical expression of all that went before.

The various elements in the build-up of the rhetoric to this point — the exordium, the narratio, the digressio, and the transitus, which is a renewed exordium — all perform their own function in reminding the readers of who they are as the Church in Christ, but they also prepare most effectively for the exhortatio which now follows. They secure the audience’s goodwill, inspire them, convince them of the rightness of the writer’s perspective on their situation, and dispose them to carry out the specific injunctions of this exhortatio.⁵⁵

The rhetoric can be seen to be inspiring and exhorting the hearers to take up the challenge, to engage in the ministry.

Using epistolary analysis we find this passage is similarly strategically placed at the beginning of the *paraenesis*. It begins with a characteristic *parakalo* — (beseech) clause which is found frequently in Paul’s letters, and with the word *oun* (therefore) that usually “marks the transition to a new section of the letter; which sets out a matter of some concern to the apostle ...”.⁵⁶

Commencing with the formula phrase (*parakalo*), it exhorts or pleads with the hearers/readers

⁵⁴ Ernest Best, *Ephesians* (Sheffield: JOST Press, 1993), 45.

⁵⁵ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 224.

⁵⁶ Bjerkelund, as quoted by Lincoln 1990, 226.

("the saints who are faithful" 1:1) to follow a course of unity. This exhortation is likewise based upon all that went before, in what is equivalent to the body of the letter or the extended thanksgiving; focused around words like peace, hope, body, head, chose, unity, hope etc. The writer adds the words "prisoner in (the) Lord" perhaps to call upon apostolic authority to this exhortation, and his right to address the Call of God among the Ephesians. This is a formula found in Greek non-literary letters, especially of an official or diplomatic style. Here a writer of moral superiority writes to a recipient recommending actions or habits of behaviour "that conform to a certain model of character and attempts to turn the recipient away from contrasting negative models of character".⁵⁷

Andrew T. Lincoln of Wycliffe College notes that 4:1-16 stands in a significant relationship with the rest of *paraenesis*, providing an introductory framework. Major concepts in these verses are taken up again in later exhortation passages: to walk according to one's calling, the love practised by all, the head and body imagery for Christ and Church, and the truth.

All this analysis indicates the important keystone character of this pericope. The teaching within it is very crucial to the life and witness of the church. Its internal structure builds up to a very long, extended sentence from verse 11 to verse 16. The drama and emphasis of the sentence is heightened by the repetition of the pronoun, *tous* (some), and by the repetition with variation of the prepositional phrases (*eis* and *pros*). Michael White, in the *Restoration Quarterly*, also expresses the opinion that the list of gifted ministers does not refer to specific "offices in the strict sense These authority structures serve a primarily paraenetic force in

⁵⁷ Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 96.

building up the body of Christ in unity and in agape”⁵⁸. Repetition and parallelism, long sentences of strong images, the use of synonyms and amplification in the phrases, all elevate the effect. The repetitions reinforce the main focus of the passage: the unity of the body of Christ that is accomplished by living according to our calling in love and faith in Christ. To accomplish this the “saints who are also faithful “ (1:1) are each and everyone gifted by Christ’s grace (4:7), so that “when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love” (4:16). Specific gifted offices of ministry help this all to happen (4:11), but the work of ministry/service is carried out by every “saint” addressed by this letter. Looking at the letter as a whole there is no support for restricting of the ministry to the verbally “gifted” office bearers.

2.2c- Contextualization: A Lesson from Psalm 68

This pericope contains within it an example of what could be contextualization. Scholars have differed on their views of verse 8, which seems at first sight to be a major mistranslation of Psalm 68:18 as it is found in LXX 67:19 or MT 68:19. In the original Masoretic text, God or his champion ascended the mountain leading the captives and was to receive gifts from people, even the rebellious ones. In Eph. 4: 8 Christ does the ascending and he gives gifts to people. This interpretation is possibly related to that of the Aramaic paraphrase of the Targum:

Thou hast ascended to heaven, that is Moses, the prophet;
thou hast taken captivity captive, thou hast learnt the words of the Torah;
thou hast given it as gifts to men,
and also with the rebellious, if they turn in repentance,

⁵⁸ Michael White, “Social Authority in the House Church Setting and Ephesians 4:1-16”, *Restoration Quarterly*, 29, 1987, 224.

the Shekina of the glory of the Lord God dwells.⁵⁹

This in turn was likely based on the rabbinic tradition contemporary with the writing of Ephesians. In this tradition the Psalm was used at the Jewish Pentecost which not only was a celebration of the harvest, but also began to commemorate the giving of the law at Sinai. From the second century BCE this may have been a Jewish contextualization of the Psalm in order to fit it to the new role for Pentecost.

Some of the Biblical commentators have stated that Paul or the Pauline writer would well have known this interpretation, but as a Christ-centred teacher he could not accept the Moses and Torah image. He then substituted Christ as the one greater than Moses and the gifts of the Spirit for the Torah. Thus the Psalm would be interpreted and used for the Christian Pentecost. Paul did a similar re-interpretation in I Corinthians 10:4 of a Jewish midrash about the rock that followed Israel in the dessert. The rabbis interpreted the rock as the Torah. Paul thought that the rock was Christ. The most important point of this use of Psalm 68, for the writer to the Ephesians, was the fact that it makes clear that the ascended Christ returns at Pentecost to give gifted individuals to his Church. The writer's concern focused on the continuance of the faith and the unity of the Church and the building up of the body of Christ. The psalm or the rabbinic version of it was contextualized to the current concern. Using the offices of the primitive apostolic church and the early house church, he presents a challenge to the Church to continue the ministry of illumination and enlightenment that was begun by the apostles. Every member was gifted and equipped to carry out this service.

⁵⁹ Cited in George B.Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, (New York: Oxford, 1976), 74.

The nature of the church, its structure and its needs have varied greatly over the centuries. The same truth remains in this passage: unity must be maintained, maturity of faith must be attained and the body must be enabled to grow in stature and strength. At some points in the history of the church, it is the clerical portion of the equation that must be quickened and inspired. At other times it is all the saints, the *laos* of God, that must be encouraged to be engaged in ministry and in the living out of their call. At times like these in a post-modern, post-enlightenment, post-Christendom age, both the lay and the ordained need to be inspired to the work of the ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. The fullness of the Gospel and the presence of that truth in this passage can allow for this contextualization:

Just as there is a unity of the Spirit,

just as there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

just as there is one God and Father of us all,

there is also one ministry to which all God's people are called,

and to which they should be equipped.

2.3- The Matter of Equipping in Ephesians 4: 11ff

This portion of the passage begins with a list of the gifts that Christ has given to his Church. The gifts, in this case, are offices or more likely groups of persons carrying out specific tasks within the early Church. These people appear to be the recognized leadership of the churches at that time, and they have a responsibility for equipping the saints. The key part of this long phrase on the act of equipping continues on from verse 12. Rudolf Schnackenburg, a Roman Catholic priest and Professor Emeritus at Wurzburg, notes that vv. 11-16 are "a single Complex

Sentence — which is extended by Prepositional additions, Subordinate Clauses and Participial constructions — and single-mindedly pursues one idea”.⁶⁰ To my mind this pursuit follows a sequence: the calling, the unity, and the grace of God, all of which lead to the gifts being given. These lead to the equipping, then to ministry/service, which in turn accomplishes the edifying, and the unity of the saints in Christ. From this comes the growth in the Body of Christ. We will now look at the portion that deals most specifically with equipping.

The Nestle Greek Text (1954) for Verse 12 and 13 is as follows:

“¹² *pros ton katartismon ton hagion eis ergon diakonias, eis oikodomen tou somatos tou Christou,* ¹³ *mechri katantesomen hoi pantes eis ten henoteta tes pisteos kai tes epignoseos tou huiou you Theou, eis andra teleion, eis metron helikias tou pleromatos tou Christou,* ¹⁴ *hina meketi omen nepioi kludonizomenoi kai peripheromenoi panti anemo ...* ¹⁵ *alethenontes de en agape auxesomen eis auton ... Christos,* ¹⁶ *ex hou pan to soma synarmologoumenon kai symbibazomenon dia pases hapes tes epichoregias kat energeian en metro henoshekaston merous ten auxesin tou somatos poieitai eis oikodomen eautou en agape.*”

A few of the meanings for the key words as used in the New Testament can be found in Kittel and Friedrich (1985), also in Rienecker (1976). Although this summary does not exhaust the descriptions of the uses of these words, it is meant to give an idea of their wider meaning.

¹² *Katartismon* — means equipping. This word was a medical, technical term for the setting of a bone. Here it is used for equipping for service. In II Cor. 13:9, this word is used for the

⁶⁰ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, Trans. H. Herron (Edinburgh: Clark, 1991), 171. Schnackenburg was a member of the Pontifical Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

improvement or restoration of the organic relationship of the community. The word implies a restoring to wholeness and wellness.

Hagion — expresses that which is holy and is used of God and the Spirit. It is also used of the Church to designate a holy people or saints set apart for and by God, and sanctified by Christ.

Ergon — means work and is used of God's original creation and God's continued acts of salvation. It is also used of human, daily labour or works, as a Divinely given task.

Diakonias — refers primarily to personal service like waiting on tables. It has a wider meaning in the New Testament of discharging a loving service and a service rendered to the Lord God.

Oikodomen — meaning building a house, (Luke 6:48), building up a community, (I Cor. 3:10ff) or edifying of the church. This word has an expression of development.

Somatos — has a basic reference to a human body, even a dead one. Paul uses the word in relation to resurrection of the body in I Cor. 15. He also uses it with reference to the body of Christ, literally or figuratively, as the Christian community.

¹³ *Katantesomen* — aorist, active, subjunctive of *katantoo* meaning to come to, to arrive at, to reach, to attain, to come down to the goal. The subjunctive is used in a temporal clause with a purpose idea. In this case the purpose is *henotata* (unity).

Epignoseos — can mean knowledge directed toward a particular object, which in this case, is Jesus Christ.

Teleion — is that which has reached the set goal, or is complete or mature.

Helikias — maturity, ripeness of full age, or the development of stature

Pleromatos — fullness, full measure formerly used of fully laden ships.

¹⁴ *nepioi* — baby, immature and this forms an opposite to the completeness of a mature person.

Kludonizomenoi — present passive participle meaning being driven about by the waves.

Peripheromenoi — present passive participle indicates being carried around, borne to and fro.

¹⁵ *alethenontes* — present active participle of to be truthful. This form of the word expresses carrying out the actions, i.e. speaking the truth.

Auxesomen — aorist active subjunctive of *auxano*, to grow or increase

¹⁶ *Synarmologoumenon* — present passive, participle of *synarmologeō* - to join or fit together, used also in 2:21 of Christ joining the household of God together.

Symbibazomenon — present passive participle of *symbibazo* — to bring together, thus this means being held or joined together like a body with ligaments, tendons, sinews or joints.

Auxesin — is in the form where it refers to a body promoting its own growth.

One can see from the words used that there is a considerable symbolism of the human body to take place in this equipping. It involves a change from childhood to adulthood and maturity, from ignorance to knowledge, from confusion and separation to enlightenment and unity, from division to being joined together like a fit and growing human, engaged in exercise and body-building.

2.3a- Translations

English translations over the years have been fairly settled for verse 11, but there have been more variations in verse 12 with both the translation and disagreements about the punctuation used along with the effect of the change in prepositions “*pros*”, “*eis*” and “*eis*”. Several commentators refer to the “fatal comma” after “saints”, and much of the debate over the understanding of who does the ministry, hinges around that.

The Latin Vulgate translates the Greek as follows: (11) “*Et ipse dedit quosdam quidem prophetas, quosdam quidem apostolos, alios [vero] evangelistas alios autem pastores et doctores, (12) Ad consummationem sanctorum, in opus ministerii, in oedification corporis Christi*,”. The punctuation in verse 12 into three phrases⁶¹ is picked up in all the early English translations up to the 1946 RSV and 1954 Barclay, except for the 1924 translation by Montgomery which joins the first two phrases into one. This is the phraseology followed by Nestle (above) and all the translations since 1958, until Lincoln in 1990 again advocated the three phrases. This had an effect on the emphasis placed on the words and teaching.

2.3b- Commentaries

It would be illuminating to this study, to summarize what some of the commentaries have said about “lay” ministry and equipping. Over the centuries various biblical commentators have approached Ephesians 4:1-16, and particularly the verses 11 through 16 from different perspectives. John Calvin in his commentary on Ephesians focuses on the unity of the Church and the fact that it is ruled by the Word. Those who preach the Gospel are appointed to offices

⁶¹ The three phrases are 1.- for the equipment/perfecting of the saints, 2.-unto the work of ministry, and 3.-unto the building up of the body of Christ. Reference to these phrases will come up frequently in the following commentaries.

by which God wishes to govern the Church. The work of ministry is accomplished by persons engaged in “the external ministry of the Word: (Calvin Com.). In his sermons Calvin sees this passage (especially Sermon 26 on Ephesians 4:11-14) as focusing on God’s Word being preached in the Church. “God’s ordaining of this rule in his church, that the Word should be preached, is in order that as long as we are in this earthly pilgrimage, we should resort continually to the school where God teaches us”.⁶² Calvin’s main concern here seems to be with the ordained, preaching ministry.

Martin Luther’s comments on verses from Ephesians are found in the midst of sermons and commentaries on other passages, particularly in Psalms and Galatians. Ephesians 4:11, 12, are related to Psalm 110:3 “in holy majesty” (in Luther’s version), in order to present the fact that the “holy adornment” of true priests (who are all Christians) is the various gift of the Holy Spirit given to all. They are given in order to “advance the knowledge and the praise of GodWhatever we do, our teaching and our life ought to shine like a beacon of light to the greater knowledge, honour, and praise of God”.⁶³ In the next verse where the psalmist states “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:4), Luther again comments on Eph. 4:12. He explains that “saints” mean “those who already are Christians and baptized priests”.⁶⁴ After the members of the Church have become priests by Baptism through the work of the Holy Priest Jesus Christ, they obtain the “right and power of teaching and confessing before others” this Word. Luther proclaims, “every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbour with the Word of God at every

⁶² John Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistles to the Ephesians*, Trans. A. Golding (1577). (Edinburgh:Banner of Truth, 1973), 378.

⁶³ Martin Luther, *Selected Psalms II*, Luther’s Works Vol. 13, ed. J. Pellikan, (St. Lewis:Concordia, 1956), 295.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 332.

opportunity and whenever necessary”.⁶⁵ Luther’s remarks certainly have something to say regarding ministry of the laity in daily life today.

Centuries later Charles F.D. Moule of Cambridge, comments that the sentence in Ephesians: 4:11-14 expresses Paul’s desire to have the saints equipped for the work of ministry. “The Divine gift of a Christian Ministry is to have its effect above all things in the fitting of “saints” (true believers in general) for active “service” for the common Lord”.⁶⁶ In the International Critical Commentary, T.K. Abbot of Trinity College, Dublin, sees Ephesians 4 as an exhortation to unity. He holds that verses 4-11 deals with the essential unity of the Church and the diversity of gifts, and 12-16 states that the object of it all is the perfection of the saints. He seems to favour the view of Chrysostom of three co-ordinate clauses in verse 12. He concludes “in a connexion like this, where offices in the Church are in question, “*diakonia*” can only mean official service; and this does not belong to the saints in general”.⁶⁷ One wonders why he made such a claim when the word is so strongly connected with simple service. G.C. Martin in the Century Bible Commentary disagrees with Abbot’s view of “ministering” being in an “official” sense. Although he maintains the three phrases in verse 12, he states that, “the idea would then be that these specially gifted men should stir up the saints to further service, and so the circle of blessing widens”.⁶⁸

W.R. Nicoll in the Expositor’s Greek Testament, summarizes the different interpretations of various scholars up to his day and favours the one held by Erasmus, Luther, Weiss et al. which

⁶⁵ Ibid., 333.

⁶⁶ Charles Moule, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Cambridge: University Press, 1886), 110.

⁶⁷ T.K. Abbot, *Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T.T. Clark, 1897), 119.

⁶⁸ G.C. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians* (Edinburgh: Jack, 1902), 107.

“understands the three clauses as successive, the first looking to the second, the second to the third, the third forming the climax and expressing the ultimate object of the giving on the part of the ascended Christ..”.⁶⁹ He concludes each member gets a gift of grace and does his (or her) part for the upbuilding of the Church, “and these Apostles, prophets, etc., are the means provided by Christ whereby all the members shall be made capable of performing their several parts in order that at last the whole Church may be built up in its completeness as the body of Christ”.⁷⁰ Walter Lock of Oxford, uses parallels in Romans 15:25, Philemon 15, II Timothy 3:17 and Hebrews 10:5 to present an interpretation, “as God had prepared a body for His Christ to do His Will, so the Christian Ministry has to prepare a new body to carry on Christ’s work of service to the world.”⁷¹

E.F. Scott of Union Seminary, N.Y., in the Moffat New Testament Commentary on Ephesians notes, “Men were not formally appointed to given offices, but exercised them as a matter of course in virtue of the special endowments which they had received from the Spirit”.⁷² In verse 12 the emphasis is “making an harmonious body out of many separate individuals, so that each member should perform his business or special task the better because all worked together”.⁷³ Edgar J. Goodspeed of the University of Chicago summarizes the passage by stating that believers “must realize in their lives this new unity (vv. 3-6), attended, of course, with diversity

⁶⁹ W.R. Nicoll, *Ephesians* The Expositors Greek Testament Vol. III, (London: 1910), 331.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 331.

⁷¹ Walter Lock, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Methuen, 1929), 49.

⁷² E.F.Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930), 210.

⁷³ Ibid., 211.

of gifts (vv. 7-10) and of function (vv. 11-13) - over against the sects (vs. 14) and under the headship of Christ (vv. 15,16)".⁷⁴

William O. Carver, a Southern Baptist, in his study *The Glory of God in the Christian Calling*, expresses the continuity of this process of ministry.

"In his incarnation ministry Jesus captured disciples who came fully to own his Lordship and to turn over to him the title rights to their personality and service. They were now his men and women. That process goes on continuously. He is continuously capturing sinners by his grace and converting them into glad servants of his kingdom. Paul was himself just such a captive of the ascended Christ. It is these who constitute his gifts to men."⁷⁵

I will be saying more about this aspect of a continuous process in the next section. Carver relates the process to Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 about those that the "Father had put in his hand" and are now to be sent out on the same mission as he was on. Carver sees this as an aspect of the effective incarnation of the Christ.

"And he (emphatic insertion of the pronoun *avros*) gave his men for the functions which would promote the end for which he had come down into the earth and ascended on high with a view to the perfecting of the saints unto (such maturity and equipment and devotion that they would all be engaged properly in) work of service ..."⁷⁶

Francis W. Beare of Trinity in Toronto, in the *Interpreters Bible* takes the viewpoint that the purpose of the ministries "bears exclusively upon the internal economy of the church" not "the mission to the world outside". He holds that the three phrases in verse 12 are not parallel. "It seems best to take the first two phrases together — in order to fit his people for the work of service (as per Goodspeed). The third phrase — for building up the body of Christ — is then to

⁷⁴ Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 53.

⁷⁵ William O. Carver, *The Glory of God in the Christian Calling* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), 147.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

be taken as the ultimate end for which the gifts of Christ are bestowed; to this end “the preparation of the saints for a work of service” is the appointed means”.⁷⁷ When John A. MacKay, President of Princeton, approaches this passage his concern is that fullness of ministry be expressed. His basis is some contemporary translations and Paul’s general tone of thought at the use of the two different prepositions (*pros* = “with a view to” and *eis* = “to the end that”). “The meaning appears clearly to be that the supreme objective of the gifted men must be to equip the “saints” that they, in their turn, may engage in ministering, that they too may be servants, and that resulting from their service the Body of Christ may be built up”.⁷⁸ E.K. Simpson of Oxford University and F.F. Bruce of Manchester University, in the 1957 New International Commentary, kept the comma in, but translate the second and third preposition as “unto” with some sense of their subordination to the “perfecting” or “co-ordination” of the saints.

At least three studies of the Letter to the Ephesians were published in 1959. Markus Barth of Chicago and Basel, in his study, sees this passage referring to service and worship of the saints but also explicitly to evangelism, in contrast to Beare. He feels that the insertion of a comma creates the problem of setting the clerics and laity apart. Then “only the special ministers, not all the saints, are called to do the ‘work of ministry’ and to cooperate in the ‘building of the body’.” But in reference to other passages like I Corinthians 12:18, 28 and Ephesians 4:7, 13, 16, he contends that “the Spirit of ministering and the commission to minister is given to “all” the saints and to “each” saint, not to a select clergy only”.⁷⁹ John Allan, professor at Knox

⁷⁷ Francis W. Beare, *Ephesians* The Interpreters Bible Vol.10, (New York: Abingdon, 1953), 691-2.

⁷⁸ John A. MacKay, *God’s Order: The Ephesian Letter and This Present Time* (New York: MacMillan, 1953), 150.

⁷⁹ Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall; Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Chicago: Judson Press, 1959), 175.

College, Dunedin, New Zealand, focuses on the ministers specifically named in verse 11, working “for the unity of the church by a service which aims at bringing believers to mature Christian faith and life ...”.⁸⁰ Here the emphasis is on preaching and teaching and the ministers who do it. Also in that year Archibald M. Hunter of Aberdeen, in the Layman’s Bible Commentary vol. 22, states this passage is focusing on promoting unity. He also argues, “that Christ gave these gifts in order to equip his people for the work of service. And this equipment of his saints for service has for its great end, the building up of Christ’s Body”.⁸¹

F.F. Bruce in his exposition continues to leave the comma in the reference to verse 12 but leaves it out in his comments, basing his rendering upon the change of prepositions. The gifts in verse 11 function “to help and direct the Church, that all the members may perform their several ministries for the good of the whole”.⁸² He also quotes E.K. Simpson of Oxford to make the point, “In the theocracy of grace there is in fact no laity”. Francis Foulkes, principal of the Vining Christian Leadership Centre, Nigeria, also favours the unity theme, and the dependency of the second two prepositions on the first. It is an edifying that is ‘done for the saints, and by the saints’. “The Church is increased and built up, and its members edified, as each member uses his particular gifts as the Lord of the Church ordains, and thus gives spiritual service to his fellow-members and to the Head”.⁸³ D. Guthrie of London Bible College seems to return the comma and focuses equally on various specific purposes that are accomplished by the gifts. Leonard T. Wolcott of Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville does not

⁸⁰ John Allan, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: SCM, 1959), 107.

⁸¹ Archibald M. Hunter, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1959), 66.

⁸² F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Old Tappan: Revell, 1961), 86.

⁸³ Francis Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 121.

get into the issue of various interpretations but makes a good point none the less: “We are gifted , each in some way, not to profit ourselves but to enrich each other. Our tasks within God’s church fit together in mutual service so that we can be a whole church with a wholesome message for the world”.⁸⁴

J.L. Houlden of the University of London, in his commentary, notes the variation in prepositions but seems to favour leaving the comma in. “We could omit the comma after saints, thus reducing the role of the leaders and extending that of believers in general. Or we could omit the comma after teachers, seeing the equipping of the saints as the task of the pastors and teachers, and their wider ministry, of service and edification, as the work of all the groups mentioned. This latter interpretation is not a very natural one.”⁸⁵ Ralph P. Martin, of Fuller, in the Broadman Commentary, looks at the various ways of interpreting this verse and its issues with reference to its consequence “by this interplay of a regular ministry, ordained and appointed by the Head of the church, and the rank and file of the church, Christ’s body may be built up”.⁸⁶ He follows through the two possibilities where the apostles etc. do the equipping of Christians so they in turn may build up the body, or where the apostles etc. prepare God’s people and in so doing, edify the body. He refers to C. Masson’s comment that the saints do not edify the church, but are themselves edified. In a study of *Patterns of Ministry*, Martin goes beyond the point that the offices (v 11) are given to prepare all God’s people for Christian service, by asking how they do it. He states that it is more than simply elevating the laity as a group to ministry. An important consideration for him is the operation of the joints or

⁸⁴ Leonard Wolcott, *Meditations on Ephesians* (New York: Abingdon, 1965), 91.

⁸⁵ J.L. Houlden, *Paul’s Letters from Prison* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 314.

⁸⁶ Ralph .P. Martin, *Ephesians* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), 156.

ligaments (v 16) and their connection with Christ. “The heavenly Lord works to control, to unify, to use the various parts of his body through his gifts of ministers. It is they who act as Christ’s messengers to direct the body, and so prepare all God’s people to engage in his service”.⁸⁷ The joints play a vital role in the analogy of Christ’s body being built up and working properly. Martin in his later commentary, in the Interpretation Series, seems to favour the dependence of the 2nd and 3rd phrases on the first (v 12). He notes that the view that the work of ministry belongs to those special, gifted ministers, could be pushed to an extreme in which the apostolic ministry is made a necessary part of the church’s ongoing life. He sees the passage expressing an integrated whole. “There is then an interplay of a regular ministry, ordained and appointed by the head of the church, and the rank and file of members, which leads to the desired goal. That is, the end in view is the building up of the body”.⁸⁸

Markus Barth again approached the subject in the Anchor Bible Commentary, where he notes that although the word church is not used, the “whole passage deals with its life, order, and purpose”.⁸⁹ He quotes Calvin who sums up this passage as “the rule which Christ established in order to build his church”. Barth notes that the emphasis in Ephesians is on oneness of the body and this is a missiological fact. It calls the Church and its *laos* proclaim this unity in Christ to others. Barth notes that the saints are being equipped or prepared for a specific task by the leaders chosen and gifted by God (v 11). He characterizes the two interpretations of v 12 as (1) the “aristocratic-clerical” and the “triumphalistic-ecclesiastical” and (2) the “church without laymen and priests”. The first interpretation (with the comma) has two implications:

⁸⁷ Ralph .P.Martin, *The Family and Fellowship: N. T. Images of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 71.

⁸⁸ Ralph P. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 52.

⁸⁹ Markus Barth, *Ephesians* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 457.

the laity are only beneficiaries of the ministries and, the benefits of the clergy's work remain inside the church. For various reasons, based on other passages and not just the comma and the prepositions, he favours the latter choice. For him the message is; "the dignity and usefulness of the special ministries given to the church are as great or as small as their effectiveness in making every church member, including the smallest and most despised, an evangelist in his own home and environment".⁹⁰ I feel that Barth's comments have much to say towards the building up of a ministry of the laity in daily life and work.

G.B. Caird, principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, used the diversity and unity theme for this passage. He favours the omitting of the comma, with the interpretation being; "the ministry is Christ's own program of service to the world, which he entrusts to the whole membership of the people of God, not to a group of clergy within the church. The building up of the body of Christ is not achieved by pastoral concentration on the interior life of the church, but by training every member for his part in the church's mission to the world".⁹¹ A. S. Wood, in his *Expositor's Commentary*, also favours a similar view of the equipping "of all God's people for service." "Such preparation is in order to the work (*ergon*, sing.) of service (*diakonia*). This is what unites all the members of Christ's body from the apostles to the most apparently insignificant disciple" (I Cor. 12:22). Christ himself set the example. (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27). It is by this means that the body of Christ will be consolidated. (Eph. 2:21).⁹² John R.W. Stott of All Souls Church, London and Chaplain to Queen Elizabeth II, agrees, but he

⁹⁰ Ibid., 1974, 479-80.

⁹¹ George B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison* (New York: Oxford Press, 1976), 76.

⁹² A.S. Wood, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 76.

identifies that

Armitage Robinson was the first commentator to insist that this was a mistake. 'The second of these clauses', he wrote, 'must be taken as dependent on the first, and not ... as co-ordinate with it.' In other words, the first comma ('the fatal comma') — which is 'without linguistic authority but with undoubted ecclesiological bias' — must be erased. If it is allowed to stand, we are faced with 'a saddening result', for 'the verse then means that only the special ministers, not all the saints, are called to do "the work of ministry" and to cooperate in the "building of the body". This interpretation 'has an aristocratic, that is, a clerical and ecclesiastical flavour, it distinguishes the (mass of the) "saints" from the (superior class of the) officers of the church'.⁹³

Likewise in the helps for translators of Ephesians published in the United Bible Societies for the translation work throughout the world, R.G. Bratcher and E.A. Nida favour the comma-less version. They remark, "It is not likely (as FJ, JB say in footnote) that "the saints" are here only the particular ministers listed in verse 11."⁹⁴ They favour a translation that expresses that Christ did this in order that all God's people would be ready or able to do the work of Christian service. A similar view is espoused by Hans-Ruedi Weber, of the WCC, in his study on the laity in ministry, for he holds that "all the members of the church have received grace and are therefore called to service or ... to ministry"⁹⁵.

Clinton E. Arnold from Biola University in his study of Ephesians, is focused on the topics of power and magic in the historic setting of the letter. The passage then expresses the victory of Christ over his enemies: the powers of evil. He agrees with these recent commentators, but his

⁹³ quoted in John Stott's, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1979), 166.

⁹⁴ R. G.Bratcher and E.A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians* (London: United Bible Societies, 1982), 102.

⁹⁵ Hans Ruedi Weber, *Living in the Image of Christ* (Geneva: WCC, 1986), 72.

interest is different. The responsibilities of the five categories of ministers are interpreted as:

- 1) They are “ministers of the word” in the sense that they provide the church with the true teaching of Christ for the edification of the body (4:12) and for the avoidance of heretical teaching (4:14).
- 2) They perform an edificatory ministry of facilitating and admonishing all of the members of the body to involve themselves in service with the aim of stimulating the intensive growth of the body in love and unity.
- 3) Finally, they facilitate the extensive growth of the body through maintaining the vitality of the mission of the church in the proclamation of the gospel to all men. (4:12, 15)⁹⁶

Andrew Lincoln in the Word Commentary vol.42 does not accept the translation of many of these later interpreters who favoured the two prepositional phrases and no comma. He feels that the change in prepositions and the reference to all receiving the grace for service (v 7) and all building up the body do not support this argument. He also feels that the context points to the translation of *katartismos* is to complete, restore or to prepare; hence “for bringing the saints to completion”. He comments “All believers are to be brought to a state of completion, and it is the ministers Christ has given who are the means to this end as they exercise their ministries of proclamation, teaching and leadership”⁹⁷. His contention is that the role of these officers is to carry out a work of service - *diakonia* - in a more general sense. This fact should not lead to a hierarchical sense. He goes on to say that this is “the goal for which the ministers of the word were given to the Church. Although this building up is also the task of all the members of the body (v 16), the ministers have a distinctive and particularly significant role to

⁹⁶ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989), 159-60.

⁹⁷ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 254.

play in it. Their transmission and interpretation of the apostolic gospel and tradition are what will prove especially constructive for the rest of the body”⁹⁸

Rudolf Schnackenburg lays out the two interpretations of v. 12, but favours the one in which the three prepositional phrases each say something about the purpose of the commissioned and Christ-gifted ministries. He does so because he does not feel that the “order and change of Prepositions do not allow us to draw the definite conclusion that the second and third phrase are dependent on the first. In verse 13 where the prepositions are the same, he states that the three expressions are again similar. In his exegesis he states “that Christ entrusted the people mentioned in v. 11 (apostles, prophets, etc.) with a work of ministry, had in fact ‘given’ them to his church for the very purpose of building-up his Body with their help and in the combined activity of all the faithful. No exceptional position is thereby given to the ‘office-bearers’”.⁹⁹

Thus the debate has gone on through the centuries. The “fatal comma” and the relationship of the phrases has offered a challenge to interpreters. But as the years of the discussion progressed, the points of view appeared to have come closer together. The importance of both special ordained ministries and lay ministries in the church came to be held side by side. Even Lincoln, who in his commentary returns to the earlier viewpoint, still allows that all the members of the body have a part in the task of interpretation of building up the body of Christ. This balance was best summed up by Ronald Y.K. Fung in his 1982 article on “The Nature of the Ministry According to Paul”. When remarking on the three prepositional phrases in verse 12 he summarizes the various positions as follows:

- a) the phrases are co-ordinated and thus the “ministries” do them

⁹⁸ Ibid., 255.

⁹⁹ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary* Trans. H. Heron (Edinburgh: Clark, 1991), 183.

- b) the first phrase (equipment of the saints) is the ultimate purpose (T.K. Abbot)
- c) the 2nd is subordinate to the 1st and the 3rd is co-ordinate to the 1st (C.M. Dibelius)
- d) the phrases are co-ordinated but the last two are not parallel (S. Hanson)
- e) the first phrase gives the reason for the ministry and the other two express the purpose for which the saints are perfected. (A.T. Hanson)

The first positions make the building up of the Body of Christ the responsibility of the specially “gifted” ministry alone. The last makes it exclusive to the individual believer. Fung states that the passage supports a “mediating position”. “This takes the first *eis* as subordinate to *pros* and the second *eis* as dependent on the previous phrases together.(as in the NEB)...On this view, the ministers are instituted by Christ to equip individual believers to exercise their gifts (v.7; cf. v.16) in Christian service, to the end that (by means of both the ‘special ministry’ of apostles, etc., and the ‘common service’ of the believers) the Body of Christ may be built up”¹⁰⁰. He notes that F. Foulkes summed up this view in his commentary: “What is done for the saints, and by the saints, is for the edifying of the body of Christ”.¹⁰¹ Fung sees this position doing justice to the three prepositions, the importance of the appointed ministry (v 11), and to the part that each member plays in bodily growth (v 16).

Alan Roxburgh a Baptist pastor in West Vancouver, focused more particularly on the gifted ministries that equip the people to minister. “These ministries of leadership are given to enable the church to carry out its fundamentally missiological purpose in the world: to announce and demonstrate the new creation in Jesus Christ”¹⁰². He sees the oneness of the church operating

¹⁰⁰ Ronald Y. K. Fung, “The Nature of the Ministry According to Paul” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 54, (1982), 141.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1963, 120.

¹⁰² Alan J. Roxburgh, “Missional Leadership: Equipping God’s People for Mission” in *Missional Church* D.L. Guder (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 185.

in this active way; “is a living demonstration of the ethics of God’s reign”. He centres more on the leadership itself rather than on how they liberate the ministry of all God’s people, which he also affirms. “Paul directs his underlying argument primarily at how leaders form and equip missional communities to be demonstrations of the radical new reality of Christ’s reign in the midst of the world”.¹⁰³ Again, Roxburgh does not concern his interpretations with a division or hierarchy of leadership. “The corporate Spirit-empowered leadership described in Ephesians transcends clergy-laity difference. In the missional community all are ordained to ministry in their baptism; all receive the same vocation to mission; and all are gifted in various ways for that mission as they participate in the twofold journey of the reign of God that is both inward and outward”.¹⁰⁴ His concern is for missional leadership of the whole *laos* or church rather than for professional, clergy-shaped models.

But this harmonious position was strongly opposed by two other writers: Henry Hamann, president of Luther Seminary, N. Adelaide, Australia, and David Gordon. For various reasons they want to roll back the clock on the interpretation of this passage. Hamann in his article “The Translation of Ephesians 4:12 - A Necessary Revision” 1988, uses various lexica to oppose the “popular translation”. He has some problems with Barth’s treatment of the passage and criticizes the image of the Church in the first century by Barth and others. Hamann’s picture of an idealized church, doing good works that in themselves attract unbelievers to the faith, has its own shortcomings. While it is a powerful image, he leaves out the teaching aspect of the ministry that is needed in order to develop the saints who in turn, will teach and help to

¹⁰³ Ibid., 185.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 200.

develop those who have been attracted into the church. The attracting must be completed with equipping.

T.D. Gordon of Gordon-Conwell Theological School, in his article, "Equipping Ministry in Ephesians 4?" is concerned about the reduction of the function of the ordained ministry. He makes careful investigation of the syntax and the translations of the key words. His view that this puts more stock in the Vulgate and King James Version because they are "older translations", is a curious position that denies modern scholarship. It is not necessary or helpful to take the view that the ministry of equipping of the laity would reduce anyone's appreciation or honour of the ordained ministry much less "dishonouring the ascended Christ". Gordon's viewpoint actually takes us to another extreme. He states "it would be pure question-begging to assume that the service performed by the "saints" is the same as the service performed by the "gifted ones", for instance, unless some passage somewhere teaches us that their service was the same".¹⁰⁵ In his view only the ordained ministers seem to be "gifted" while the saints appear to be left ungifted. This is a bereft view of God, the church and Scripture from one who sees himself among the "practising Bible-believers in the evangelical world". Are those who hold a different view from his therefore not Bible-believers nor evangelical?

The weight of the opinion in the commentaries seems to rest on the side of the church leaders or office holders (v.11) carrying out a ministry of equipping of the saints so that the whole people of Christ's Body can be enabled for a ministry in daily life. This position supports my thesis. Such education or transmission of the faith from generation to generation has been going on for

¹⁰⁵ T. D. Gordon, "Equipping: Ministry in Ephesians 4?" *JETS*, 37/11, (1994), 75.

centuries no matter what position the Church has taken on the “fatal comma” or the three prepositions and phrases. In the Jewish Rabbinic praxis of the early years of the Christian era there was a concept of a “chain of tradition” that might have had an influence upon Paul and the early churches in this matter.

2.3c- Contemporary Rabbinic Thought of the Time

It is likely that around the time of the writing of Ephesians some of the statements and discussions of the Jewish Mishnah were being expressed by little known authorities of the post-Temple period. This work, the oral Torah, continued to be produced until about 200 CE. Approximately 50 years later the work began on tractate Abot. The Abot (“the Fathers”), as well as being a collection of sayings that presented to faithful Jews the rules for the good life, was the “Mishnah’s first apologia”. It sought to establish a continuous link back to Moses:

(It) undertakes a subtle proof that the Mishnah’s teachings derive from a process of oral tradition, beginning at Sinai. A list of authorities is given, commencing with God’s revelation to Moses at Sinai and ending with authorities who take prominent roles in the Mishnah itself. In that way, a **chain of tradition** is established leading from Sinai into the very rules and principles of the Mishnah. The links of the chain are not sayings but sages, the chain is one formed of a process of tradition, from master to disciple. Then the condition of discipleship defines the continuity of the tradition, and it is a tradition made up of flesh and blood living men.¹⁰⁶

This “chain of tradition” is expressed in the opening verse of the Tractate Abot (“The Sayings of the Fathers”):

1:1 Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to elders, and elders to prophets, And prophets handed it on to the men of the great assembly. They said three things: Be prudent in judgement. **Raise up many disciples.** Make a fence for the Torah. (Emphasis added)¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Jacob Neusner, *The Classics of Judaism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 72.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 72.

The verbs “receive” and “hand on” in Hebrew yield the words *qabbalah* (tradition) and *mosoret* (also tradition). The Torah is a matter of tradition, and this tradition was still in active development at the time of Paul and the early Christian church, “so the tradition is not something written down, it is something that lives.”

The essence of the tradition is not what is said, e.g., citing a verse of Scripture and expanding on it, but who does the saying: a master to a disciple, forward through all time, backward to Sinai ...God’s revelation extends through time. But that does not mean people later on make things up as they go along. To the contrary, they attain their qualifications through a labor of discipleship, taking a place in a chain of tradition, of receiving (“qabbalah”) and handing on (“mosoret”).¹⁰⁸

Leon Morris of Cambridge, commented on the way in which Jewish Rabbis carried out their instruction of scholars, and it was by committing the teachings to memory. Although there is some difference of opinion on this matter, it is likely that it describes what generally took place. “The regular process of instruction, consisted in the teacher selecting certain items to be committed to memory and the student memorising them. There was a regular system of instruction among the Rabbis and an accepted body of oral teaching. This oral teaching was not the kind of thing that was expected to be altered in transmission”.¹⁰⁹ So it was that the tradition was maintained and kept relatively pure.

This tradition goes from master to disciple, Moses to Joshua, from Joshua to the Elders, from the Elders to the Prophets, from them to the “Men of the Great Assembly”, from them to Simeon the Righteous, from him to Antigonus of Sokho, from him to the five sets of pairs of the Mishnah sages themselves (the last pair being Hillel and Shammai) and ultimately to

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., *The Gospel According to John* 1971, 45.

Gamaliel, then to Simeon his son. These latter sages were contemporary with the founding of the Christian Church. Gamaliel II was ruler of the Jewish community after the destruction of the Temple in 70. Paul was “educated according to the strict manner of the fathers”, “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22: 3). This Gamaliel was either the one mentioned above or in the same lineage. So Paul was educated in, and participated in the same chain of tradition of the “handing on” of the Torah. He could be said to be the one who sets the Torah tradition on a new course, a direction informed by and centred in Jesus Christ. Much of Paul’s work in preaching, teaching, and developing disciples can be seen to be within this tradition of the sages.

Lots of the Torah, lots of life; lots of discipleship, lots of wisdom; lots of counsel, lots of understanding; lots of righteousness, lots of peace. [If] one has gotten a good name, he has gotten it for himself. [If] he has gotten teachings of the Torah, he has gotten himself life eternal.¹¹⁰

The “Great Commission” of the resurrected Christ provided a similar mandate for Paul and the early church: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you ...” (Mat. 28:18-19).

Jesus said, “As my father sent me so I send you” (John 20:21). The tradition goes on: Jesus to Paul, Paul to his fellow workers, “pastors and teachers”, and from them to all the saints. Paul and the tractate Abot agree - “raise up many disciples”.

In Paul and Christianity it was not the Torah that was passed on to give “life eternal”; it was Jesus Christ himself: “that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:15). “Now this is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3). “And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his

¹¹⁰ *Tractate Abot 2:7.*

good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Ephesians 1:9-10 NIV). “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’ (Romans 1:17). It, thus, can be seen that the work of the “apostles ... prophets ... evangelists and ... pastors and teachers ...” (Eph. 4:11) in equipping or perfecting the saints unto the work of ministry (and) unto the building up of the body of Christ, should be seen in this same, although renewed, line of Torah tradition. This “mature manhood” could be conceived as related to, or encompassing of the being “prudent in judgement”. And the purpose of the teaching in this new Christian lineage was to develop a protective “fence-like” body of knowledge and faith around the saints, so that they would “no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). W. D. Davies of United College, Bradford, Yorkshire, in *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* concludes - “But, if our thesis be correct, this is exactly what we do find in Paul, the application to the Person of Jesus of those concepts which Judaism had reserved for its greatest treasure, the Torah, so that we felt justified in describing the Pauline Christ as a New Torah”.¹¹¹ He goes on to say, “the source of Pauline Christianity lies in the fact of Christ, but in wrestling to interpret the full meaning and implications of that fact Paul constantly drew upon concepts derived from Rabbinic Judaism; it

¹¹¹ W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1948), 232.

was these that formed the warp and woof if not the material of his thought”.¹¹² Therefore what Paul sought to do was to raise up and equip more disciples (his co-workers), who in turn were to do the same thing over and over. “For we are fellow workmen for God ... like a skilled master builder I laid the foundation and another man is building on it” (I Cor. 3: 9 ff). E.E. Ellis in an article on “Paul and his Co-workers” in *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, notes about a hundred of these individuals are listed in Acts and the letters. “They are participants in his preaching and teaching and in his writing, and they define the apostle’s work as a ‘collaborative ministry’”.¹¹³ There were many descriptive names for the ministries and activities in which they engaged, or even the offices they may have held: co-worker, minister, apostle, partner, fellow soldier, prisoner or slave, toiler and brother. They were his associates in preaching and teaching in local situations or travelling with him, and associates in his writing. They included both men and women. The writer of Ephesians was seeking to express the same truth in a shorter summary list of ministers engaged in “equipping the saints unto the work of the ministry ...”. The doing of the ministry and the equipping of others to continue the doing and the further equipping, has to go on simultaneously and continuously in each generation. This chain of witnessing and equipping is part of what we are advocating in the ministry in daily life.

Having looked at some of the Scriptural foundations and directions for laity, including their ministry and equipping, we now move to some theological perspectives. Our focus will revolve

¹¹² Ibid., 232.

¹¹³ Harrington quoted by E. E. Ellis in “Paul and His Co-workers” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (eds). Gerald F. Hawthorn et.al. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 183.

around the theologies of the laity by two great theologians, Congar, (a RC) and Kraemer (a Prot.), both of whom express an ecumenical vision.

Chap. 3 A THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY, MINISTRY IN DAILY LIFE, AND EQUIPPING

1. Introduction

In this chapter we will look at some of the theological approaches from the past regarding these issues, then we will consider current and possible future theological perspectives. For one from a Presbyterian background, a good place to begin is with the primary “lay” office of our churches: the eldership. A term used historically for an ordained or pastoral minister in the Presbyterian church is “Teaching Elder”. This is a term set in balance with the Ruling Elders, who are the elders called by the members of a congregation through election and subsequent ordination, in order to rule the affairs of the congregation along with the pastoral minister on the (Kirk) Session. The *Book of Forms* of the Presbyterian Church in Canada states:

Christ Jesus our Lord, as the head of His Church, has appointed its constitution, laws, ordinances and offices; that its government and discipline are to be administered according to His will as revealed in Holy Scripture, by officers chosen for their fitness, and duly set apart to their office; that these officers meet for deliberation and united action in Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, and in such order that the organic unity of the Church is maintained in a hierarchy or courts (in contradistinction to a hierarchy of men); the authority of which courts is ministerial and declarative, announcing what Christ has revealed, and applying His law according to His direction.¹¹⁴

The roots of this position are found in the Scottish Reformation: “To take away all occasion of tyranny,” our Lord wills that office-bearers in His Church “should rule with mutual consent of brethren, and equality of power, every one according to his function”.¹¹⁵ “It is a fundamental

¹¹⁴ Presbyterian Church in Canada, *The Book of Forms*, Chap. 1, 3, 2.

¹¹⁵ 2nd Book of Discipline II, 4, 1579.

principle of Presbyterian polity that every member of a court has a right to take part in, and is responsible for, the whole business of the court".¹¹⁶

In order to be an active participant in the life of a congregation, elders and members need to be knowledgeable of some ecclesiology and church practices as well as being equipped to serve. Usually congregations do a fairly good job in educating members and leaders for this kind of internal work or ministry. This is likely true for most other denominations no matter what their polity. The concern of this approach to a theology of the laity is a wider service/ministry immersed in the world. Equipping must be knowledgeable, not only of the faith, but also of the world. The task is great.

One key to the strength of any Church of Jesus Christ and the effectiveness of its ministry in the world, is found in an educated and active laity. They make up 99.5% of the church membership. They are immersed in the daily activities and the struggles or issues of their society. Where their church and faith stand with respect to their daily life is a concern to them. This equipping takes place through programs and activities in:

- 1) personal spiritual enrichment for the whole people of God
- 2) lay leadership formation especially for work within the congregation
- 3) lay ministry development primarily for work outside the congregation
- 4) lay theological education which forms a foundation for the above

¹¹⁶ *The Book of Forms*, Chap. II, 4 (a), 3.

2. Current Image of the Laity

External observations sometimes do not differentiate between the image of the people of the world outside the church and the laity within the church, in a particular society or culture.

Herein lies a major problem for a modern theology of the laity. In our North American society, particularly among its affluent and majority people, the image is one of independence and individualism. Like the people around them, church laity tend to be self-fulfilled, self-defined, and inclined toward being self-centred. They are suspicious of others outside their own circle (family, church, group) which is also self-defined. Inside that circle, love, care and concern are offered. The focus of most people is on the basic needs of food, shelter, safety, security and comfort, before everything else. For many adult laity there is a sense that the educational and developmental part of their Christian life has long past (with childhood Sunday School). They see their Christian involvement as limited to the worship of God in Jesus Christ, particularly “in church” on Sunday, or perhaps in private or small groups. Participation in the Christian fellowship group is espoused, but varies in degree. They are concerned that their children or grandchildren get educated in and initiated into this fellowship. The Church is most important to them as a dispenser of rites of passage — baptism or dedication at birth, wedding ceremonies at marriage, and funeral services at death. The underlying search for fulfilment and meaning is only barely experienced in such lives.

This somewhat cynical picture does not apply to all of the laity. Some are more committed to growing in Christ, sharing their faith and serving in their community with a concern for the less fortunate. They are hopeful and joyful as they seek to serve others. Usually they are not afraid to approach their faith with searching questions and open dialogue with others. In spite of the

fact that some of these laity are getting more involved in the worship, education, governance, service and mission of their church, they are not always accepted fully by some of the ordained pastoral ministers. Unfortunately the position of the laity has not improved greatly from an anecdote related by Yves Congar from the beginning of this century: a priest had indicated that “the layman has two positions, he kneels before the altar ... and he sits below the pulpit”. To which a Roman Catholic cardinal added that the priest had forgotten a third position: “The layman also puts his hand in his purse”.¹¹⁷ While the story may have exaggerated the situation somewhat, there is still truth to it even in Protestant churches. The lay people are those to whom the preachers preach and dispense the sacraments. They are instructed, counselled and guided. Most definitely their stewardship is encouraged and even solicited. Thirty to forty years after the great calls for renewal and empowering of the laity in order to re-energize the church, the position and power of most laymen and laywomen has not changed significantly. In fact some of the great lay leaders of international renown, founders of movements and missions, are no longer as evident.

The position and activities of the laity are very practical concerns in the church today. Evidence of this can be seen in the many “how-to” and teaching books that have been produced in the last decade. While these books bring the current and popular styled theological approaches to the issue, the deeper and broader approach came out of the 1950s and 1960s. It is these latter theological studies that I wish to approach in order to see what they have to teach us today. Before looking at a theology of equipping for ministry in daily life, I will review and compare the theology of the laity and “lay” ministry from a Roman Catholic viewpoint as

¹¹⁷ Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1957), xxvii.

represented by Yves M.J. Congar, OP, and from a Protestant view as seen primarily by Hendrick Kraemer, long time participant in the work of the WCC. Both these theologians wrote in the 1950s on this subject. This was a time of great interest in laity studies.

3. A Theology of the Laity: In Perspective

“Theology” is a term that has various meanings. One older definition is: the rational account given to the Christian faith as furnished by a series of sub-disciplines such as biblical studies, church history, systematics, philosophy, sociology, psychology and ethics. “*Theologia*”, in the Eastern Church from the time of Origen has been seen as the gift of insight into the divine being. “*Theologia*” in the West from Abailard on has been a methodical investigation of Christian teaching. These were the positions on theology when I began to study it in the ‘60’s.

Hans W. Frei, who came out of the Yale theological tradition of H. Richard Niebuhr, expressed that “theology is the grammar of the religion, understood as a faith and as an ordered community life”.¹¹⁸ This can be taken to mean that theology is the science of the distinctions of religion and is enunciated variously in systems of expressions of belief. Frei’s typology of five types of theology describes the wide range of doing and expressing theology from a philosophical enterprise, based on a set of general criteria to a Christian self-description, with completely internal authority. This project will take an approach to theology that is close to Frei’s type 4. It holds that “Christianity has its own distinctive language”.¹¹⁹ This theology is one in which “critical Christian self-reflection or self-description ... has priority over theology

¹¹⁸ Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 20.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

as an academic discipline”.¹²⁰ Such a theology arises out of, and is defined by, the Church in response to God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. Barth, Torrance, Congar and Henry would be examples of this type of theologian. This theology is meant to express how God deals with humanity and does so with an attitude of gratitude and a life of obedience. In other words it is much more than a rational account.

Systematic theology is the form of specialism, which seeks to give an orderly account of the context of Christian beliefs. In a time of increased specialization and complexity of the vast body of knowledge, it is almost impossible to develop a systematic theology that gathers all this faith and experience together; so it is that study that is carried out on one or other aspect of this interrelationship. The theology of the Laity is one such aspect. One studies the laity in relation to the Triune God, the Church, Scripture and/or the creation of the world. One could also study the laity from an historical perspective but that is beyond the limits of such a paper as this, except by cursory reference.

3.1 Y. Congar’s Approach to a Theology of the Laity & Their Ministry

Congar has noted that a “complete theology of laity will be a total ecclesiology: it will also be an anthropology, and even a theology of the creation in its relation to Christology”.¹²¹ In order to develop a complete and valid theology of the laity one needs to present a complete ecclesiology in order that the fullness of the laity may be understood. Congar makes the point that the “Church is not only the community of the faithful but the pre-existing institution”.¹²²

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., *Lay People in the Church* 1957, xxxiii.

¹²² Ibid., 1957, 27.

As an institution the Church was given the “the elements in the threefold deposit of faith, sacraments and powers of the apostolical ministry, which are begetters of the faithful and their community, exist *in the Church*. They are entrusted to the Church, they give rise to the Church’s activities.”¹²³

This priority is part of the basis for Congar and the Roman Catholic Church to establish the prior authority of the clerical hierarchy over the laity. The argument goes something like this: The church in Paul’s time was made up of communities of people, all of whom received gifts of ministry which were to be exercised for the common good.¹²⁴ There were also some of these gifted persons who were specifically called and appointed by God in Jesus Christ to have a leadership role with the function to equip the others to exercise their own ministries, (Eph. 4:11-16). These leaders later became known as clergy and were formally ordained and institutionalized in the hierarchy of the church. The remainder became known as the laity and became subject to the hierarchy.

Congar even uses or perhaps misuses scripture to establish this division earlier in history. He refers to Acts 15 as the first Synod in Jerusalem where the “decision rested solely with ‘the brethren who are apostles and priests’, while ‘the whole multitude held their peace’”¹²⁵. By implying the word ‘priest’ rather than ‘elder’, translates the Greek word ‘*presbuteros*’, he transports the developments of the much later councils to the first council in 51 AD. Also by

¹²³ Ibid., 1957, 25.

¹²⁴ The gifts include utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, speaking and/or interpretation of tongues, (1 Cor. 12:7-10) plus service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, showing compassion, and others, (Rom. 12:4-8).

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1957, 235.

joining part of verse 6 together with verse 12 with a simple “while” he gives the impression that the common members of the assembly listened to it all in silence and not just to Barnabus’ and Paul’s specific recounting of the events. Indeed verse 7 indicates that the apostles and elders had much debate. It was doubtful that anyone in the assembly kept silent at that point. Surely a theology must be more honest with using scripture than this. Congar also makes the point that the seven (“deacons”) were chosen by the congregation, but appointed by the apostles. These scriptures back up his claim that it is “abundantly clear that the lay people’s part has never been looked on as giving the Church her structure as Church, as constituting the hierarchy by instituting the bishop in the powers of his office”.¹²⁶

Using the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church about the priority of the hierarchical Church, Congar then lays out an impressive and broad theology of the laity, particularly considering the highly conservative French Catholic context in which he wrote. The key to it is in the relating of the God given work of Jesus Christ who came to the world as “king, priest and prophet”, to the ministry of the Church to continue that “kingly, priestly and prophetic” activity in order to win more of the world to Christ, during the “space-between” resurrection and the second coming. Congar places the laity within those three functions with varying degrees of hierarchical control or limitation.

His theology gives a full and rich position to the laity — “the community of the faithful”,¹²⁷ who are the people who make the church.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1957, 234.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1957, 52.

Lay people, each one according to the conditions of his life and his state in the Mystical Body, truly bring something to God's Temple and help to build it up. It is in and through the life of the faithful (and of the clergy as members of the faithful) that Christ's saving powers are made manifest within the dimensions of history and of the world, so as to bring back to God all the richness of his creation, of which Christ is the first-born and the king.¹²⁸

In a later book on *Laity, Church and World*, Congar states "that lay people stand, as it were, on the frontier where Church meets world, and that their own particular mission is to bring Christian influence to bear on secular life".¹²⁹ Congar further concludes that:

The Gospel therefore ordains that every disciple, every follower of Christ, should in one way or another, fulfil the service of transmitting the faith, of being, with and through Christ, one sent to proclaim the salvation that he brings and to bear witness to his love. This is the greatest of all services that can be rendered to others, and it is essential to the building up and growth of Christ's Church.¹³⁰

Laity education can benefit from such strong and positive statements as these.

Although there are many positive and inspiring points made by Congar the "but" of hierarchical limitation comes in, whenever it appears that he is getting too close to the situation that existed in the "Church of antiquity". That was the time when, by his own admission, "the distinction between clergy and laity was much less marked than it became later, and lay people took active part in the sacred duties of a Church whose attention was wholly directed towards the Kingdom of Heaven."¹³¹ (In passing it should be noted that this concept is closely related to the position of this thesis.) In 313 "things changed" when the Church and the Roman Empire came together. At first the Church and the Empire were one, with the Church governing "birth and death, work and leisure, arts and sciences, and these last were cultivated ... simply in service of

¹²⁸ Ibid., 1957, 109.

¹²⁹ Yves J. Congar, *Laity, Church, and World* (London: Geoffrey & Chapman, 1960), 42.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 1960, 63.

¹³¹ Ibid., 1960, 50.

salvation and for God's glory ... society was like a kind of vast monastery"¹³². Since church and empire were one, whatever one worked at could be seen as a sacred occupation. It was during this time that the clergy ascended in power and authority as those who were called and ordained to handle the holy things of the church. During that time they accepted some help from certain laity who were the kings and noblemen. By the time that modern age entered, between the 12th-16th centuries, there was now a secular world alongside the sacred one. Then it became evident that: "the laity alone who can carry out this essential (though second) part of the Church's mission, because it is only they who are citizens both of the City that is above and of the earthly city, in whose temporal affairs they are engaged. Accordingly, it is they who have to fulfil the Church's mission in so far as that mission is to influence the temporal order towards God and in the ways of God. In the doing of this, the laity are the Church".¹³³

The laity's part in the Church's priestly function seems to be quite substantial in Congar. It is, however summarized in the sentence: "the baptized really participate in Christ's priesthood, which makes them priests in an improper or inexact sense (for they have not full power to celebrate the worship of Christ sacramentally), but a sense that is not purely metaphorical".¹³⁴ It seems that sacramental priesthood and power of the hierarchical priests is very secure and not to be shared with other "believers". The [kingly] or royal function for the laity seems to be limited to certain time sensitive executive functions when the need arises. Congar makes it clear that there is no "law-from-below" and no democracy in a hierarchical church. The Roman Catholic law is clear. "Canonically speaking, a parish is not a totality or society of faithful; it is

¹³² Ibid., 1960, 51.

¹³³ Ibid., 1960, 49.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 1957, 180.

not a moral person capable of rights; it is a certain territory over which the bishop has set a priest with care of souls as his assistant; the parish priest depends on his bishop, not on his parishioners".¹³⁵ The laity are presented as "active and really co-operating" in the Church's [kingly] function, but "without having any powers properly speaking, or very few".¹³⁶ The laity are compared to a young person old enough to know what they are doing, but not old enough to have their independence. There should be no place for such disparaging remarks in a hopeful theology of the laity.

The laity's participation in the churches' prophetic function has likewise, been limited. Certain teaching activities are allowed but without authority, especially not apostolic authority. Individual and personal witness is allowed and even encouraged. "In virtue of his consecration at baptism and confirmation, and of the gifts of faith and grace that are his, every lay person can and ought to bear that personal witness to which he has been dedicated".¹³⁷ The limitation of too much freedom in preaching and teaching is considered by Congar to have been the result of the excesses of the Protestant Reformation. It 'apparently' was also responsible for the prohibitions on laity possessing and studying the Bible which were issued at various times (in the years 1229 (Toulouse), 1246, 1369, 1546 (Trent) etc.). In his recounting of the Roman Catholic view of and reaction to the Reformation with respect to the translation of scripture into "vulgar tongues", one can see why there is a need to have a strong Christian education program among adult laity. Congar presents the accepted counter-Reformation position, but implies that he might wish it was different (and occasionally paints it in a more accepting light). The basic

¹³⁵ Ibid., 1957, 247.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 1957, 251.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 1957, 289.

underlying truth is found by Congar in tradition, not scripture. He quotes Malachi 2:7 that “the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is an angel of the Lord of hosts”. This was in order to proof text his statement that “priests are men of God in a sense that lay people are not, even though sometimes lay persons are spiritually more fervent and intellectually better endowed. The science of the things of God is, in itself, a priestly activity”.¹³⁸ He fails to continue the quote in Malachi, in which the prophet is condemning corrupt priests.

But you have departed from the way;
you have caused many to stumble at the law.
says the Lord of hosts.
“Therefore” I also have made you contemptible and base
before all the people.
Because you have not kept My ways
But have shown “partiality in the law”.¹³⁹

The importance of being honest and careful in our use of scripture, whether for lay or for clergy, is evidenced here.

Truly Congar’s teachings set up a shadow theology that has much more to say to laity today than does his expressed theology of the laity. The importance of an educated, equipped, enlightened, empowered and active laity is called forth, often by what Congar criticizes or negates. He also, inadvertently, gives the message that the fears of the hierarchy for the consuming power of a free and expressive laity are fruitless and perhaps groundless. There should be no hierarchy of gifts where laity receive only “gifts of life” while priests receive “gifts of ministry”. Gifts of God are given to all God’s people for the service of each other in

¹³⁸ Ibid., 1957, 307.

¹³⁹ Malachi 2:8-9 NKJV.

God's name. One cannot promote the "communal life" in the Church which talks about doing things "from the bottom up" or the top down. Those who feel disenfranchised and vulnerable and "at the bottom" are not inspired by such words.

The words of St. John Chrysostom of Antioch (347-407), should form the basic and central advice for the laity in fulfilling its apostolic function:

So be very careful, all you simple faithful, and do not forget that together we form one single body and that we differ from one another only as member differs from member. Therefore you must not leave concern for the Church to the clergy alone ... (In ii Cor., hom. 18; PG., lxi, 527.)

If you only would, you can do much more for people than we can. You have more opportunities for meeting one another, you know each other's condition better, you know each other's faults, you have more freedom, charity and ease among yourselves ... You can reprove and encourage one another better than we can ... In this way you lighten our task, you help us, you rally round us, sharing our labours as comrades, together working out one another's salvation and each one striving for his own. (In Hebr., hom. 30, n. 2-3; PG., lxxiii, 211-212).¹⁴⁰

Congar also quotes a Father Lacordaire: "The lay man has a mission to fulfil; he has to supply whatever may be lacking to the diocesan clergy and the religious orders, for their resources and for many means of action. Men of faith must join their efforts to defend truth against the ceaseless influence of evil teaching; their charity must work in common to repair the breaches in the Church and the social order".¹⁴¹

Such comments and references are encouraging and helpful for the laity, but there is still the underlying fear in the clergy, which is not limited to the Roman Catholic church. The ordained professional ministry repeatedly shows fear lest the actions of the gifted laity turn into power that usurps their authority: "the Christian is qualified for general Christian life pure and simple

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 1957, 342.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 1957, 344.

by baptism, and for certain activities of the Church by other sacraments, which constitute him in offices or ministries: by confirmation for the Church's militant life, by holy order for the hierarchical ministry of sacred things".¹⁴² This fear comes closer to the surface, for some clergy, as laity approach closer to leadership in certain aspects of worship especially the sacraments. Congar expresses this concern around liturgical prayer in worship services. The underlying issue is power, the "cooperation" of the laity apparently needs to "be expressly ratified and directed, provided for and organized, by the apostolic hierarchy".¹⁴³ If it is not so ratified, then the assumption is that it is not part of the Church's apostolic Mission. He feels that such a mission (Catholic Action) is to be "carried out in a certain association, recognized and approved by the Church, with the mission of the Apostles, with that charge considered as instituted by the Lord — but without receiving the powers of the ministry".¹⁴⁴ It is so important for my point in this thesis that any contemporary theology of the laity and the lay (and clergy) education equipping that goes with it, is not so bound up in power struggles. There is no concern for the usurping of power when all the power is seen as residing in Christ and flowing out to everyone from Him. "Christianly speaking, the world is given the fullness of all it can receive from Christ only through the efforts of all those people whom the Lord has put in it and endowed with diverse gifts and callings for the doing of his work therein".¹⁴⁵

A theology of the laity for today needs to give a firm foundation to the ordained clergy, so that their sense of vocation is solid and clear. Congar states: "the priest's vocation is to make his

¹⁴² Ibid., 1957, 351.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 1957, 355.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1957, 355.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 1957, 357.

way to God, guiding others with him by the use of spiritual means".¹⁴⁶ "The clergy have increasingly to be educators of adult consciences, enabling them to bring forth Christian activity from their own convictions".¹⁴⁷ He also mentions such clergy activities as to advise, spiritually quicken and form, counsel, encourage and serve. Education, facilitating and resourcing could also have been mentioned. When the pastoral and teaching ministers carry out their vocation the laity are better equipped for theirs. "But the lay person has to live for God without being dispensed from doing the work of the world; his particular Christian calling is to bring glory to God and the reign of Christ in and through that work: to be the Church ...present...active, there where the clergy are not, in ways the clergy cannot be, namely, in temporal affairs and daily events, doing the work of the world and of history".¹⁴⁸

Congar has worked diligently at this "study for a theology of the laity", but in many ways its language, tone, perspective, use of Latin and German phrases (untranslated) show it to be a work aimed at a clerical audience. It is a theology governed by Roman Catholic Christian self-description. The Christian identity is most important as the theology seeks to engage the world. Unfortunately, from my perspective, this Christian self-description is rooted so firmly in the historical traditions of popes and the Roman Catholic hierarchy, scripture sometimes comes out second best. The restrictions of that historical tradition have compromised many of the possible strengths of this theology. The anticipated renewal in the Church through lay empowerment has not been facilitated by this theology. The sense of despair, isolation, and powerlessness of Roman Catholic laity has not been served by many aspects of this teaching. Instead of a

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 1957, 374.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 1957, 378.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 1957, 374.

journey upward to hope and renewal, the laity are given a circle tour map of hierarchical history.

Congar notes that “Catholic Action”, especially between 1925-35, did much to open up the eyes and lives of the laity to an understanding of ministry in the whole of daily life, every day of the week. Through lectures, writings, retreats etc., the Catholic laity, in Congar’s experience, began to get “the idea that daily life, working, civic, domestic, is simply an aspect and a part of one single Christian life in which the faithful have to sanctify themselves and give glory to God”.¹⁴⁹ The living of a life of holiness, which involves a total relationship with God, is a basis for lay service within the church and Apostleship (service/witness beyond the church) out in the world, according to Congar. He sees that his current age could only be won over by a servant laity that expresses an all embracing charity and goodness”.¹⁵⁰ The call of God sets the Christian apart from the world and “does not withdraw him from the world but leaves him to work therein”.¹⁵¹ He goes on to describe a chain of Christian living in the world that expresses the Christians’ work in the world as an expression of God’s command: first comes “the holy and hallowing will of God”,¹⁵² which leads to the sense or experience of vocation. Out of this comes the service of the laity and its demands on everyday life, which in turn, is expressed in engagement and responsibility. The whole action or ministry takes place under the sign of the Cross. Everything done as a ministry or Christian service of the laity, finds its primary and supreme source in God and God’s abiding love. It is not only the service of the monk or priest

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 1957, 394.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1957, 396.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 1957, 401.

¹⁵² Ibid., 1957, 403.

that is done under the sign of the Cross, but everyday life of Christians in social (marriage, family etc.), business and other interactions. It is not only religious men and women who are called to work toward perfection, but all Christians. One evidence of this happening among the laity was, for Congar, Moral Rearmament with expression of absolute love; absolute disinterestedness; absolute purity and absolute loyalty. The impact of this movement was great on many people. Just as the Cross meant the supreme sacrifice for Jesus, the Cross means sacrifice for ministry in daily life. Such a ministry requires one to put our whole heart into it.

3.2 An Approach to a Theology of the Laity by H. Kraemer Others

In *A Theology of the Laity* Hendrik Kraemer, of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, expresses a view from a Protestant and World Council of Churches perspective. He notes that the Church through its laity is fully immersed in the various spheres of the world (factories, stores, agencies, etc.), “where the real battles of faith are being fought”. Lay people become absorbed by that world and live in it with a separate set of ethics than from the Sunday Church world. He asserts that “the laity ... feels itself spiritually powerless and illiterate as to its witness in that sector, which is the very place where most of its life is spent”.¹⁵³ He notes that a study of the laity in history indicates that in spite of their crucial significance to the Church, “they have never become really theologically relevant in the Church’s thinking about itself”.¹⁵⁴ Almost forty years later, my experiences in lay leadership development, and with the World Council of Churches make me come to the same conclusion. The ministers became dominant in

¹⁵³ Hendrik Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), 37.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 48.

Protestantism, even after the Reformers sought to emphasize the priesthood of all believers, because of the prominence given to the centrality of preaching and the importance of a well-educated clergy. There will be more on this in the next chapter. The similar pre-eminence of the pulpit in the forty years since Kraemer's writing have meant that the situation for the laity has changed very little. The amount of energy, time and funds invested on lay education is insignificant compared to clergy education.

Congar had said that a theology of the laity would be nothing less than a whole ecclesiology. I feel that Kraemer is closer to the truth when he says that a theology of the laity demands a total rethinking of all the existing doctrines of the Church. To do otherwise would be to make that theology a mere appendix to a clerical ecclesiology and theology. Congar sought to avoid that kind of add-on, but because he could not reform the hierarchical system, the theology he devised was just that. Renewal of the Church and a new meaningful theology of the laity go hand in hand. When the Church is responsive to the call of God and acts in the power of the Holy Spirit to continue Christ's ministry in the world, the whole church, lay and clergy, would be transformed as well. In the Reformed tradition that activity of constantly being Reformed should always be going on. But sometimes only the drapes are changed. The life style, direction and witness remain the same.

Kraemer refers to Karl Barth to overcome another stumbling block in the way of renewal and a theology of the laity. The distorted common view of the church divides it into active and inactive, real and nominal members. Barth affirmed the Gospel teaching — that all Christians, no matter what category that the world or the church may put them in, are called by God to serve God's purpose.

The whole community and therefore all its members are specifically called to this service and are therefore responsible. All are mere “laity” in relation to their Lord, ... yet all are “clergy” in the same relation ... the service is inwardly ordered so that there are within it different callings, gifts and commissions. Nevertheless, the community is not divided by this ordering into an active part and a passive, a teaching Church and a listening, Christians who have office and those who have not.¹⁵⁵ Strictly, no one has an office; all can and should and may serve; none is ever ‘off duty’.

P.T. Forsyth, principal of Hachney College, Hampstead, was perhaps referring to the similar truth when he wrote that Jesus Christ “was a priest before all else, and ... has for His chief object with the world the ordination of all men in a Church as priests in Him”.¹⁵⁶ He states that Christianity is a priestly religion not a lay religion. “It is a religion of the common man who lives on the sacrifice of Christ”.¹⁵⁷ Forsyth goes on to say that a lay religion can not save us from the perils of priestly rule and cannot unite us to our Great High Priest in the priesthood of Christ’s Church. Kraemer nonetheless warns us against making the priesthood of believers the starting point for a theology of the laity. The reason being that it has become confused with an individualistic concept of Christianity. Both theologians would probably agree that it is the whole church, which is, in fact, priesthood.

Kraemer states that “the total activity of the Church in its worship, its preaching, its teaching, its pastoral care, should have the purpose of helping the “ordinary membership of the Church” to become what they are in Christ”.¹⁵⁸ He implies that a theology of and for the laity should likewise help the membership become what they are in Christ. We are warned that such a theology needs to be for all the laity — every single person — and they need to think, act and feel in complete harmony with the faith they profess. The laity need to see their Confession of

¹⁵⁵ K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Doctrine of Creation Vol.III Part 4. (Edinburgh: T.&T.Clark, 1951), 489-490. The latter portion of this quote expresses the contrary position to some of Congar’s theology.

¹⁵⁶ P.T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (Warwick Square: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), 20.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, *A Theology of the Laity* 1958, 100.

Faith is an oath of allegiance to the Church and its Lord. Every time they pray the Lord's Prayer they should be reminded that they are part of a single family of God founded by Jesus Christ and existing in the totality of the Church. The lives of the laity must continually point to the redemption of the whole world, accomplished in Christ. Their lives should be lived in joyful obedience and gratitude, for only thus can the Church accomplish its task of evangelism to the whole world. Such a faith and the active life built on it, demands a new and challenging form of adult Christianity where the whole church membership is immersed in scripture and learning of Christ and his love for us and through us.

There are several key elements in Kraemer's theology of the laity:

- The Church is mission and all members are involved as missionaries
- The Church is ministry and all members are involved in service (*diakonia*)
- Christ the Lord is also servant so we must be servants.
- The functions of the Church and hence the Laity are not just to be prophet, priest and king but also suffering servant and shepherd
- Every baptized member is "stamped with this "diaconal" seal and should acknowledge it with heart and mind".¹⁵⁹

Kraemer's outline of the theology of the laity puts the laity on a whole new elevated level. It is not a level of power or status or rights. It is a level of honour bestowed on them because of their obedience and service. They are honoured by their worship and obedience to the Heavenly Lord and honoured by the covenant that God made and continues to keep with them — a covenant in which they are beloved people no matter what they do on their part of the covenant. The Church is made up of the expectant, hope-filled people of God who all should

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 153.

be engaged in the mission and *diakonia* ministry to the people among whom they live.

Kraemer's brief synopsis of a theology of the laity, and the Church which it expects, is much more focused and helpful for the understanding and participation of the laity. It is also an expression of the Christian community self defining its theology in the midst of a modern, secular world. In this case the self-description is more scripturally based and far less baggage to limit its expression. This was a book written with the lay reader somewhat more in mind (foreign phrases are translated, but ecclesiastical catchwords are still used). Though written only two years later than Congar's *Lay People in the Church*, it is more inclusive with a specific reference to women and men being included in the word, laity. Kraemer's *A Theology of the Laity* was a clear call to the Church and to the laity for renewal and new ministry.

4. A Perspective Forty Years Later

As alluded to above, there has been little change in the status of the laity in Church practice. The ecumenical renewal envisioned has been spotty and local, especially when measured in the West and in northern nations. There have been bright lights (especially in frontier type situations) in both Roman Catholic and World Council related churches but Congar's and Kraemer's aspirations for the laity have still to be attained in practice.

A contemporary Roman Catholic theologian approached Congar's concerns with a less hierarchical perspective, ten years later. Hans Kung in *The Church* asked the question "what does it mean for the Church today when it sees itself as a new people of God?" He presented four points in answer.

- (a) All the faithful belong to the people of God; there must be no clericalization of the Church.

- (b) Everyone belongs to the people of God through God's call: there must be no attempt to make the Church private and exclusive.
- (c) We all belong to the people of God through our human decision: there must be no hypostatization of the Church.
- (d) The people of God is an historical people: there must be no idealization of the Church.¹⁶⁰

Kung views the priesthood of all believers in a way that goes beyond Kraemer, Congar and especially the Roman Catholic Church of his day. He notes that the term has remained a negative slogan even in Protestant theology. It is a rejection of the clerical priestly stance and practice. He calls for a positive view of the priesthood of all believers. The whole people of God, he states, have direct access to God; offer spiritual sacrifices of worship, service and life; preach the word of God; and administer baptism, the Lord's Supper and the forgiveness of sins. The entire Church, he goes on, was given the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) with the challenge to make disciples, and the power and responsibility to baptize and teach the Gospel to the world. Here is a tremendous advance in a theology of the laity in ten years but neither the Roman Catholic Church nor the Protestant and Anglican Churches have reached that plateau in lay practice or clerical acceptance. The call for a new ecclesiology goes on.

The laity and laity work in the church and the world was a central theme in the World Council of Churches in the 1950s and early '60s. It had an active Department on the Laity, a periodical publication, and co-operated closely with related Roman Catholic organizations. By the time of the Uppsala Assembly (1968), the emphasis began to change to the world-wide hope for justice, peace and development. By 1971 the Department was absorbed into the sub-unit on Renewal and Congregational Life. Later the desk was primarily focused on lay and study centres, then to

¹⁶⁰ Hans Kung, *The Church* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967), 125-31.

these concerns were added several other renewal issues like worship, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, the accessibility of the differently abled, and related issues plus others. Now the desk with its multiple responsibilities has been moved to Faith and Order. In 1982 the *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* document had a brief set of statements on the “Calling of the Whole People of God”. It was about one tenth of what was said about the ordained ministry and apostolic tradition. When the responses from over 115 denominations came in over the next ten years, very little of substance was said about this portion of the document. The Presbyterian Church in Canada criticized its lack of “in-depth consideration”, the United Church of Can. was dismayed that “little of consequence” follows the affirmation.¹⁶¹ The BEM follow-up report from Faith and Order in 1990 saw these as affirmation and welcome of the statement. Some of those present, particularly the international Lay Centre Directors, saw both it and the lack of activity in Geneva, as apathy. At the Canberra, Australia Assembly (1990), a concerted effort was made by the World Collaboration Committee of Academies, Lay Centres and Movements of Social Concern to lobby the delegates to bring the laity issue to the fore again. This had a limited amount of success, but financial restraints have left the laity and laity centres without a separate secretariat or desk. Except in the areas of participation of women and youth, the laity issue in WCC circles is far behind where it was 40 years ago.

5. Future Issues for a Theology of the Ministry of the Laity

In order to develop a theology of the laity and ministry in daily life, some of the points above

¹⁶¹ World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* (Geneva: WCC, 1982), 90. *Churches Respond to BEM* Vol. II: The Presbyterian Church in Canada criticised its lack of “in-depth consideration”, the United Church of Can. was dismayed that “little of consequence” follows the affirmation.

need to be emphasized, and other specific areas have to be addressed beyond Congar and Kraemer et al. First, we need to incorporate the insights found through experience of the ministry of the laity. In 1954 the WCC made a statement that the laity as baptized and gifted people each should be engaged in ministry:

therefore in daily living and work the laity are not mere fragments of the church who are scattered about in the world and who came together again for worship, instruction and specifically Christian fellowship on Sundays. They are the church's representatives, no matter where they are. It is the laity who draw together work and worship. It is they who manifest in word and action the lordship of Christ over the world, which claims so much of their time and energy and labour. This, and not some new order or organization, is the ministry of the laity.¹⁶²

This ministry has been going on for years, often without the support or even knowledge of the official Church. Such *diakonia* service needs to be formally recognized. Hans-Ruedi Weber concludes his study of Ephesians 4:1-16 with the statement: "The church's presence in the world is not envisaged as a crusade but as a *diakonia*, a service".¹⁶³ The laity are the only efficient and effective way of doing this, because this is the way in which God in Christ has chosen to act. Christ, indeed, calls the people of God to such a ministry, one of service and witness to God and God's action in history and the world. Barth concludes in the call to vocation of all Christians, that Christ "calls Christians to Himself, to His side, to His discipleship, to His service, and uses them as His heralds ... the Christian is called to be the accompanying and confirming sign of the living Word of God. It thus follows that he must indicate and attest this Word in the act of his whole existence".¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² WCC Evanston 1954 as quoted in Neill and Weber, 1963.

¹⁶³ Weber, *Living in the Image of Christ*, 75.

¹⁶⁴ Barth, Church Dogmatics IV, 3.2, 1962, 608-609

Secondly, the people of the church need to hold a clear doctrine of God's love for the world.

The impression given by some is that Christ lived, died and rose again for the salvation of the Church. Lay leaders are being recruited and equipped to serve the Church in its various internal organizations and groupings. If the laity are called to continue Christ's ministry, that ministry is definitely to people outside the Church. Related to this we require "a new understanding of the world from which the people are called, and to which they are sent, and in which their transforming and redeeming work is to be manifested".¹⁶⁵ Alden D. Kelley, writing for Seabury Press, goes on to state: "any re-evaluation of the laity would in the end demand a parallel effort toward a revision of the theology of the church. So we need also a deepened or new theology of the world, a rethinking of the doctrine of Creation".¹⁶⁶

Thirdly, there is a need to express the active and vibrant life of the church, not only in its gathered form, but in its dispersed form. The flock of Jesus Christ spends more time scattered throughout the community than they do gathered in worship and classes. The redeemed people of God should be seen, and see themselves as people on a journey. A journey that sends them out to serve and work, but calls them back regularly to worship, praise and be equipped. Then out again to fill "the whole universe with divine glory".¹⁶⁷

Fourthly, a new theology of the laity needs to be cognizant of new expressions of lay community besides the traditional congregation; like cell groups, base communities, *Kononia* fellowship etc. A theology of the laity needs to give an understanding of and provide guidance

¹⁶⁵ Alden D. Kelley, *The People of God: A Study in the Doctrine of the Laity* (Greenwich: Seabury, 1962), 45.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁶⁷ Weber, *Living in the Image of Christ*, 75, 37.

for these kinds of communities. Such groups are often engaged in dialogue and co-operation with non-Christians. Their joys and their struggles need to be acknowledged. These scattered communities require linkages with the whole Community of Christ's Body. One useful outcome from the BEM debate is the "Perspectives on Ecclesiology" that came in the 1990 Report on Process and Responses. It advocated an "ecumenically oriented ecclesiology of *koinonia*". It envisions that "each local Christian community is related in *koinonia* with all other local Christian communities with whom it shares the same faith".¹⁶⁸

Such a theology needs to understand and appreciate the realities of today's secular, humanistic, post-modern culture. It is a world in which the eternal and religious or spiritual values have been replaced with the temporal and so-called practical, concrete or worldly values; where the Divine has been replaced, in many peoples minds, by human potential and me-first-ism. (N.B. 'Me-TV' Channels). Many people look at today's cultural and intellectual situation as a whole other reality from that of the modern world that was said to begin with the Enlightenment. The representatives of the younger generations ('Generation X' and other labels), claim that the old institutions, ways of thinking and doing "business", do not work any longer. The basic foundations of society have changed. "The seemingly rational objective and managed world of modernity has undergone and deep and significant shifts". The post-modern world includes such things as endless choices in every aspect of life, transient relationships, plurality, random violence, feelings of anger or resentment "because somebody's left us with a mess".¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ WCC, BEM, 1982-1990, 150.

¹⁶⁹ Guder, *Missional Church* 37.

The laity are aware of the frustrations and challenges of today's work and family situations, but they need the help of the church working together to understand these realities. The churches and especially the "clergy", need to get a better grasp of the changing paradigms. This dialogue should help the laity and the whole Church respond to the shifting themes of an historic culture. A message of hope in the Gospel needs to be brought to the people of God who live in the midst of a society who do not know God or the Good News. Alden Kelley expresses this well when he stated that what is required is "a new sense of understanding of the world *from* which the People are called, *to* which they are sent, and *in* which their transforming and redeeming work is to be manifested".¹⁷⁰

Kelley expresses an issue close to this one when he says, we "need to rethink radically the distinctive quality of Christian life and institutions ... its first objective should be the creation of a style of life for Christians".¹⁷¹ A new style of life is called for from Christians living in the midst of the world. Too often Christian laity live a style of life that is imposed upon them by the environment, culture, status and times in which they live. Their lifestyle is often not very much different from non-Christians of the same social class, national and ethnic background and location. The laity need to reflect theologically and spiritually on their lifestyle and make choices that resonate with the presence of God, the Cross of Christ and the moving of the Holy Spirit.

A sixth area of focus is noted by a gifted Episcopalian lay theologian, Verna Dozier, a teacher from the Washington D.C. She expresses her ideas about the institutional church and the

¹⁷⁰ Kelley, *The People of God*, 45.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 44-45.

church as the people of God. “It seems to me essential to understand the differences between the Church as an institution and the Church as the People of God, if the ministry of the laity is ever to be let loose in the world with New Testament power”.¹⁷² Dozier reminds us that the promise and challenge of the Great Commission were given by Christ to a people not an institution. The institutional Church sees its own life and continuity as most important. It focuses on what happens on Sunday more than what happens in the week of the work world in which the People of God are immersed.

This theology of the laity and ministry in daily life should be a theology for the laity, understandable by all the people and edifying to them. It must be “user friendly”, easily understood and readily transmitted. Such a theology needs to be continually open to growth and renewal as it journeys with the laity, and is in continuous dialogue with their ministry according to God’s Will.

All of these concerns oblige us to formulate a theology that clarifies and delineates the role and function of the ordained, professional ministry. As the role and involvement of the laity expands to their fullness, the clergy have gotten fearful, defensive or resistant to change. An active role for the pastors in teaching, equipping and encouraging the laity in their ministry and mission is critical to the acceptance of this theology. Everyone’s gifts must be used to the utmost.

Christ is the head and foundation of such a theology. His Good News is proclaimed by it and God’s dominion is disclosed. With such a theology the whole people of God will “grow up in

¹⁷² Verna J. Dozier, *The Calling of the Laity* (Washington: Alban Institute, 1988), 115.

every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love” (Ephesians 4:15-16).

6. A Theology of Equipping

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians indicates that it is God who is the ultimate equipper for ministry, both within and outside the church. God provides the gifts in the form of gifted people who carry out the task. Nonetheless, it is God who does the equipping of the saints. J.I. Packer of Regent College has stated, “Equipping is an ongoing divine operation whereby God through the ministry of his word and the power of his Spirit, fits his people for the living of servant-lives that commend the gospel and bear fruit for his promise”.¹⁷³

God is interested in carrying out this equipping for several reasons. First, the Lord is seeking the unity of all of the people of God. This unity is an image of the Triune unity of God. It is aimed at encompassing all God’s people, Jew, Gentile, tribal and technically sophisticated, every race and culture. God means to bring all the chosen children together in peace, “and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:14). God’s equipping activity produces more equippers, not just students. Yahweh seeks to equip more agents of reconciliation. The goal is for all the nations to be made disciples and to be made one in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God is intent on this equipping because it involves developing the believers to maturity. Their

¹⁷³ Quoted by Stevens in lecture notes on Equipping, Regent College, Vancouver, 1998.

character and lifestyle become that of Christ — “maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). Jehovah wants all the chosen people to be fully human and filled with love for God and neighbour. Though we are God’s children, Yahweh does not want us to live childishly. Our faith, hope and love need to be mature and Christ-like. We should not live hard-hearted, callous lives based in ignorance.

God is predisposed to this equipping because it continues the act of creation and transformation of the world, and indeed of the whole of the universe. God the Father has raised Christ not only from the dead, but to be above all things “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And he has put all things under his feet” (Eph. 1:21-2). God engages in this equipping of the saints so that the whole world may know that this transfiguration has taken place in everything. All of God’s “creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God ... creation ...will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:19, 21). Creation is on its tip-toes with expectation for this revelation, which must come through the people of God who are the “first fruits of the Spirit”. This glorious redemption is already accomplished. Christ who has reconciled all things “in his body of flesh by his death” (Col. 2:22). This gospel must continue to be “preached to every creature under heaven” (v23). Still too many of the people of God are not living in this marvellous truth, and the *laos* needs to be equipped to continue this chain of revelation.

God is committed to this equipping in order to build up the Church: The Body of Christ (Eph.4:12). The *laos* of the Church is the only living way in this current world that this message of reconciliation, unity and love of God can be brought to full view of everyone. What

Paul expressed to the “church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia”, is true for all the Christian *laos* today. “You show that you are a letter of Christ ... written with the Spirit of the living God ... on tablets of human hearts” (II Cor 3:3). It is only through loving service, both in deeds and words, that this letter from Christ will be noticed by the world. In order to be effective agents of reconciliation, the saints must be equipped for the work of this ministry. History has shown that the church has repeatedly failed to show the message of God’s love and Christ’s redemption. The failure of this ministry is inconceivable. God is there intent that the equipping continue in every age and every place, to all the chosen people.

God carries out this equipping in the church by the giving of Jesus Christ the Son as a sign of God’s love for us, and by the giving of gifts in the form of gifted leaders to engage in this equipping. God also does this equipping in the midst of daily life, by transforming everyday life experiences to extra-ordinary spiritual encounters with the things of God. Alexander Schmemmann, an Eastern Orthodox professor connected with St. Vladimir’s Seminary, maintains that every person is a priest and everything is spiritual. It is through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, that the material, profane and earthy is revealed as Spirit filled, God blessed and holy. When we offer our food, our lives and the world at the table to Christ, he gives it back to us transformed, and as it always was meant to be: real, spiritual life giving, and joy filled. Schmemmann presents to us a vision of how “*leitourgia*” acts in various ways to redeem our lives, our time, our relationships, our life and death into what God means them to be. For example the Sabbath (as the first day of the week), overturns the experience of the week from being a succession of “profane” days with rest on the “sacred” day at their end. Each day now becomes a step in the movement from the Ascension, into the world, and then from this world

into the world to come. Each day becomes a “time of ultimate meaning”. In liturgy Christians are called “to live in the world seeing *everything* in it as a revelation of God, a sign of His presence, the joy of His coming, the call to communion with Him, the hope for fulfilment in Him”.¹⁷⁴ Paul Stevens at Regent College, in his book: *Disciplines of the Hungry Heart: Christian Living Seven Days a Week*, takes us on a journey through our everyday lives to find new evidences of the Spirit of God going with us. Stevens makes clear his conviction that theological education must be for the whole people of God and ministry must be carried out by these people in the midst of their daily life and work. We are called to give the fullness of our being to all we do, rest our being in the Holy Spirit and give the glory to God. God’s equipping enables the *laos* to be competent witnesses to all this Good News in every aspect of our lives.

The goal of God’s equipping is first, to develop a fully equipped Church which proclaims the fullness of Christ in everything it does. Such a Church becomes a living model for a renewed creation and expresses the unity of God in all things. The “equipped” Church can truly be the living Body of Christ in the world today, fully knowledgeable of the Son of God. Such a Church must be filled with fully equipped Christians, *laos* who are mature in the faith and fortified against the wiles of the world. Such people are to endure any trials that confront them and withstand the temptations that arise out of their desires. Such equipped and faithful persons “receive the crown of life” (James 1:12). They are aware that “every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).

Equipped Christians strive toward wholeness in Christ. They are “doers of the word and not hearers only” (James 1:22). Such people of God point the way for the ultimate salvation of all

¹⁷⁴ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (St. Vladimire’s Seminary Press, 1973), 112.

creation — when all creatures “here below” on earth praise God along with the “heavenly hosts”.

This theological perspective naturally had some historical aspects to it as the changing theological views on laity, lay ministry in life and the equipping for it, have been studied across a broad time frame. But such a thesis study as this needs to have a specifically historical investigation as well. In the next chapter the topic is explored historically by looking at a few periods in time and through the eyes of some outstanding individuals in the development of our modern view of the laity.

Chap. 4 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LAY MINISTRY & EQUIPPING

1. In the Beginning

Many historians refer to the very early church as a period when there was no distinction between clergy and laity. The word “laity” (*laikos*) is not found in the New Testament. Every Christian was set apart as a priest under Christ, the great high priest. There was no distinction between members of the early churches, spiritually, organizationally or hierarchically. All believers were one within the “chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, God’s own people” (I Pet. 2:9). The gifts of God to which all Christians were heirs, were to be shared in equally by all. Each believer was gifted from the one Lord and empowered by the one Spirit to use their particular gifts for the good of the whole Body of Christ. The work of ministry or service was carried out by all, as “stewards of God’s varied grace” (I Pet. 4:10).

There are many functions of ministry or leadership of the church mentioned in the New Testament: apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors, elders, presbyters, and bishops; to name only a few. But these appear to be less an office or a title, than they are a description of a function or work being performed. Other functions appearing in the New Testament include healing, administration, hospitality etc. Peter charged the “exiles” of the Jerusalem church as a whole with the priestly tasks of offering spiritual sacrifices to God and declare the wonderful deeds of Christ (I Pet. 2:5,9). Ministry in the New Testament consisted not only of the sacramental ministry of certain leaders recognized by the community, but also of the whole

people of God engaged in the world. The stature of the sacramental leadership became more defined as the years went on. Evidence of this is seen in a more highly organized structure in the late Pastoral Epistles as compared to the earlier documents, although there still seemed to be no distinction between clergy and laity. The work done by each and their relationship were still ones of unity and equality and the particular needs of the churches. The differences were in other ways. Alexandre Faivre, a Catholic historian from France, notes “if the idea gradually gained ground that certain members of the community had to be particularly “above reproach” (the *episkopos* in I Tim 3:2) or serious and worthy (deacons in I Tim 3:8), this was not so much because the title implied membership of an elite caste, but rather because the carrying out of “good work” (I Tim 3:1) made certain demands of the person doing it”.¹⁷⁵

The elder or presbyter (*presbyteros*), is a function that does not appear in Paul’s letters to the churches. For Peter they are “shepherds” of the flock of God and he places himself in that category (I Pet. 5:1-3). The elders are called in to pray for the sick and anoint them with oil (James 5:14-15). The elders in the Pastoral Letters are described as persons engaged in ordinary daily life (Tit. 1:5-9), but are considered to be rulers of the church and some were engaged in preaching and teaching, for which they could be paid (I Tim. 5:17-18). In Revelation, it is 24 elders who surround the throne (4:4). This may be an indication of the high esteem and recognition of the leadership of the elders by the first century church. By the late testamental church period, the elders, who are considered a lay office in post-Reformation Presbyterianism, had already become fully engaged in and perhaps gain their livelihood from, the church. Their ministry would have been primarily directed toward the faith community.

¹⁷⁵ Alexandre Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 10.

All this would have been in keeping with Jewish customs, where their communities were governed by councils of elders. John Knox of Union Seminary in New York, states that these, “elders were the only “ordained” officials of Judaism in the New Testament period - the priests and Levites being such by birth and the scribes not having yet attained full recognition as official representatives of the cultus”.¹⁷⁶ It was likely that the Christian church, especially in Palestine, would follow this Jewish pattern. They did not appear to be offices in the early church, only functions. Changes became more evident after the testamental period.

A letter that was written around 96-7 AD, known as I Clement or the Letter of the Romans to the Corinthians, seems to indicate some separation was already starting. In I Clement 40, the Master has commanded “where and by whom” services are to be performed. There is a reference to assigned orders or rules for various levels of the ministry:

For to the high priest the proper services have been given,
and to the priests the proper office has been assigned,
and upon the Levites the proper ministries have been imposed.

The layman [*anthropos laikos*] is bound by the layman’s rules (or code)¹⁷⁷.

The author goes on to command compliance: “Let each of your brothers, in his proper order (or rank)...not overstepping the designated rule of his ministry (or function)”¹⁷⁸. This letter was written to restore peace in Corinth during a particularly difficult conflict over the continuation in office of some presbyters with long and faithful service. The church was divided and Clement wrote to resolve the dispute and probably to establish the authority of his view of the

¹⁷⁶ H. Richard Niebuhr et. al., *The Ministry in Historical Perspective* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 21.

¹⁷⁷ I Clem.. 40:5 J.B.Lightfoot translation in *The Apostolic Fathers*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 73.

¹⁷⁸ I Clem. 41:1.

truth. He used some analogies, of which this, from the Old Testament cultus was one; in order to establish the precedent that each person must remain in their “proper order” or appropriate “rank”. To the three Levitical offices was added the “layman”. The first three had their own specifically assigned or imposed service (*leitourgia*), office or ministry (*diakonia*). The “layman” was bound by lay precepts or rules. It would appear that we have a negative definition of the laity. Faivre, however, notes that what we have here is an artificial “hybrid and a synthetic being”.¹⁷⁹ The “layman” was not a Christian concept, nor was it fully a Jewish one. The Jewish Levitical framework did not have such a defined position or rank for the “lay” members of the people of God. Faivre contends that Clement wrote this in order to include a more Christian understanding of the whole people in the Old Testament cultic functions. Clement does not use the word *laikos* anywhere else in his letter. He mostly uses the descriptive phrase “Christ’s flock” to describe members of the Christian community. He also uses “brothers”, “the elect”, “a holy portion” and other phrases. Faivre notes that *laikos* appearing only these two times, may have been a part of his predisposition to invent adjectives by adding the suffix “*ikos*”. This term likely did not harmonize with the reality of the church at that time. He cites the fact that a second century Latin translator expressed the two words “*laikos*” differently because he could not accept the attaching of the word to a human being. For these and other reasons Faivre concludes, “at the time that Clement was writing, the Christian layman was still no more than a mirage or a literary fiction. For approximately a hundred years, the originality of Christ’s disciples and the unity of the race of Christians took

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 22.

precedence over the diversity of attributes among members of the church”.¹⁸⁰ It took another century before the term “lay” was used in Christian literary records. The ministry of the whole Body of Christ for Clement, involved a personal purity and a mutual support of the membership. “The strong must not neglect the weak, and the weak must respect the strong. Let the rich support the poor; and let the poor give thanks to God because He has given him someone through whom his needs may be met”.¹⁸¹

Around 108 AD, Ignatius (c.35-108), Bishop of Antioch, was being led through the province of Asia to Rome and untimely, to martyrdom. As he went he was painfully aware of the struggle against false teachers within the churches and the need for unity. While in Philadelphia, he likely met with Polycarp and wrote letters on these matters to the five churches along the area of his journey. They are very personal letters and address the churches in the second person most of the time, and do not use the word “laity”. There is no apparent separation of laity-clergy, but submission to the bishop and presbytery are very strongly advocated, indeed it is demanded (e.g. To Ephesians 2:20; to Magnesians 13; to Smyrnaeans 8-9). The language is strong, “the one who does anything without the bishops knowledge serves the devil”.¹⁸² There is also a mutuality in the relationship: “Be subject to the bishop and to one another, as Jesus Christ in the flesh was to the Father, and as the apostles were to Christ and to the Father, that there might be unity, both physical and spiritual”.¹⁸³ Alvyn Pettersen of Exeter College, Oxford, notes that this submission is part of the obedience that the whole church, including the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸¹ I Clem., 38:2.

¹⁸² Smyrn. 9 in Lightfoot and Harmer, trans. 1891 (1992), 191.

¹⁸³ Magn. 13, Ibid., 157.

bishop, owe to God. This obedience involves both education, unity and witness. Pettersen incorrectly refers to “laity” in his paper, but his basic idea is valid. When the people of the church are “under the *episkope* of God; it reveals to the world that complete openness to God is possible and proper, and that such leads to newness of life ... (they become) the matrix within which and the means whereby, autonomous pagans ... can be brought into fullness of life and into harmony and union with God”.¹⁸⁴ Pettersen concludes, “It was God’s servant, and not a bishop’s pawn, that the laity obediently desired to be.”¹⁸⁵

The term for laity or even the concept was not found in the writings of Justin (between 135-165 AD) nor in those of Irenaeus of Lyons (approx. 180). Justin (c.100-165) was a philosopher won over to Christianity who became one of its greatest apologists and was likely close to what, in later centuries, would have been called a lay person. He, nonetheless, probably participated in the sacramental services. His *Apologia* was addressed to the emperor, the Senate and the “whole people of the Romans”. It may have been written on the occasion of the martyrdom of Polycarp in 155 or 156. He called his work an address: “It is described by the rhetorician Menander as a speech of praise to rulers spoken by an individual with special emphasis on such virtues as justice and including humanity to subjects, gentleness of character ... freedom from partiality and from prejudice in giving judicial decisions”.¹⁸⁶ He tended to call the members of the church Christians and the one name fit all. For Justin, all Christians were priests. They were also disciples who were willing to be instructed, believed the teachings and put them into

¹⁸⁴ Alwyn Pettersen, “The Laity-Bishops Pawn? Ignatius of Antioch on the Obedient Christian”, *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 44 (1991), 54.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁸⁶ Robert M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 54.

practice in their lives. “According to Justin, then, Christians are a specific race of people in the world, destined to increase and spread”.¹⁸⁷ The attractiveness of the Christian faith was to be found in their chastity, marriage morals and practical charity. “We who have property care for all in need, and we are always together. In particular, each person who is prosperous gives by free choice what he wishes of his own, and when collected it is deposited with the presiding officer. He cares for orphans and widows, and those who are in want because of disease or some other cause, and those who are in prison, and resident foreigner”.¹⁸⁸

Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-202) preferred to use “true” or “spiritual” disciple for those who claim Christ as their Saviour. Again, all disciples are priests in Christian oblation offering or sacrifice. These disciples have received gifts/charisms from God’s grace and they are to work for the good of others and perhaps even lead them to embrace faith in Christ. What they have received gratuitously, they distribute gratuitously.¹⁸⁹

2. The “Clergy” & the “Laity” Appear

In the times of persecution, apostasy and false teachers, it became most essential for the church to follow the correct interpretation of the teachings of the Scriptures. The “true” bishops and presbyters became the teaching “masters” of the members of the church and from that it was a short step to becoming clergy. The extant writings of Tertullian of Carthage (c197-200) indicate a structure in the church containing two groups: clergy and laity. “He identifies the laity with the *plebs* or ordinary people, who are distinguished from the “priestly” or

¹⁸⁷ *Apologia* I, 61 quoted in Faivre, 35.

¹⁸⁸ *Apologia* I, 67.1 & 6-7 in Grant, 67.

¹⁸⁹ *Adversus haereses* II, 23. 1-2 in Faivre, 36.

“ecclesiastical order” of bishops, presbyters and deacons and, in a very general way, from the clergy, who are regarded as “leaders” [*duces*] and pastors”.¹⁹⁰ The laity were not passive in this. The hierarchy came from the laity, and when the ecclesiastical order was not present they could offer and baptize and be their own priest.

Likewise Clement of Alexandria (c.150-213) used the word “laity” three times, even less than Tertullian. He did not contrast it with clergy but puts laity, presbyter and deacons under the same discipline. The ordinary people of God are encouraged to live everyday lives of simplicity, moderation, responsibility, industry, chastity and Christian devotion. This was to be done as part of their responsibility to share the Logos of God with all humanity. The successor to Clement as head of the catechetical school of Alexandria was Origen (c.185-254). He had put the people of the church into degrees with the laity superior only to strangers and pagans. They were faithful and followed the right doctrine. “The main task or ministry that lay people had therefore at the time of Origen was to free the “priests and Levites” from any material concern that might prevent them from giving themselves totally to the service of God.”¹⁹¹

As time went on, the concept of laity spread and the separation increased. Lay people in some eyes became children over whom the bishop had to watch. Their ministry was to provide the resources that would ensure that the hierarchical ministers could maintain the altar and sacraments. The laity could attain a status of being part of the true church by being arrested and becoming a confessor and ultimately a martyr. Then elevation would take place. Certain occupations were forbidden to be baptized, these included actors, gladiators or magistrates of a

¹⁹⁰ *Tertullian On Monogamy to Chastity, On Baptism*, etc. Cit. Faivre, 1990, 46.

¹⁹¹ Homilies on Joshua 17:3, cit. Ibid., 1990, 62.

city. Some of these practices were based on the evil of the times, but it did indicate that not all occupations were acceptable as lay vocations. When laity are referred to in the third century, it is not on the same terms as in this current age. The accepted laity are only a part of the whole of the non-ordained portion of the church. They were the elite — namely baptized believers of the male sex and husband of only one woman. Women were excluded from this group and were even forbidden to baptize at that time, when the laity could baptize in absence of clergy. It was not until the fourth century that women were referred to as lay people.

By the end of the third century almost the only ministry of the laity in today's terms, identified in the literature, was that of Christian fathers in managing their families and teaching their children a trade that would be useful to religion. They were to carry out fatherhood in the image of the bishop, so obedience was the priority.

Around the year 225 a Christian novelist, identified as "Pseudo-Clement", gives a very passive image of the laity in a metaphor for ministry, based on a galley ship. "Let, therefore, God be your captain and let the pilot be likened to Christ; the look-out man to the bishop; the sailors to the presbyters; the overseers of the rowers to the deacons; the stewards to the catechists; the multitude of the brethren to the passengers ...". The author then went on to warn: "Let therefore the passengers remain quiet, sitting in their own places, lest by disorder they occasion rolling or careening. Let the bishop, as the look-out, wakefully ponder the words of the Pilot alone".¹⁹² This image appeared frequently in literature at this time; thus is likely an accurate representation (with some poetic license), of the state of ministry at the time. George H.

¹⁹² Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* cited in Niebuhr et. al., 1956, 50.

Williams of Harvard Divinity School, notes that by the Council of Nicaea (325), the presbyters had become priests of their own parishes under the bishop of the region and “only a few lay ministries had failed to be clericalized”.¹⁹³ These would have been the lay ministries of administration, finances, charitable work, exorcism etc., mentioned later.

The witness still was carried out by the church and unofficially by the laity in caring for those in need and through relationships. Recent scholarship has shown that there were a disproportionate number of middle and upper class members in the early church. This growth would likely take place through the witness of persons in the same class or circle of professions or crafts. Lay persons would be friends or relatives of the new converts and relate to them directly in the daily course of their activities. Jewish Christians would have continued to witness in Jewish synagogues of the Diaspora just as Paul and the apostles had done, or they would have invited them to their homes and house churches.

In times of crises the strength and faith of the Christians, lay and clergy, would have shone through. There were devastating epidemics in the Roman Empire around the years 165, 180 and 251. The first one lasted for fifteen years and one-quarter to one-third of the empires’ population died in it.¹⁹⁴ Rodney Stark, a professor of sociology from Washington State, notes that an Easter letter by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, indicated that Christian values of love and charity had been “translated into norms of social service and community solidarity”. Christians were better able to cope and thus had “substantially higher rates of survival”.¹⁹⁵ This

¹⁹³ Niebuhr et. al., 1956, 29.

¹⁹⁴ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 73.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 74.

caring witness of Christians, many of whom would have been lay, would have been an inspiration and attraction to the people of the world. Following the example of Christ, these church members would have literally given their lives for the sick and dying. Their faith issued in action and sacrifice — this would not have gone unnoticed. But it was not only in widespread disaster that the Christians' life and faith would have been a witness. The cities of that age were influenced greatly by God's *laos* who provided help and hope to the homeless and impoverished, community to the strangers and immigrants, family love to widows and orphans, Christian love to those caught in ethnic violence and hatred. Stark's thesis is that "Central doctrines of Christianity prompted and sustained attractive, liberating, and effective social relations and organizations".¹⁹⁶ Bishops may have orchestrated these activities and deacons probably organized them, but they would not have been effective and attractive without the engagement of the laity: The effects of winsome Christians must have been felt, since as Stark calculates, the membership in the church had been growing gradually, (3.42% annually) until in the year 300 it numbered 6,299,832 or 10.5% of the empire.¹⁹⁷

3. Decline of Lay Ministry: The Results of Christendom

As Church and Empire became one, the church governance began to take on more characteristics of the hierarchy of the empire. The New Testament understanding of *charisms* as the basis for ministry shifted to that of regarding office holding as the gift. Where bishops once were chosen by the laity, later in the fourth century the clergy took over this function and

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 211.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 7.

other lay functions followed. In education the teachers (*didaskaloi*), doctors and catechists were taken over by clergy. The lay lector was restricted to being only a reader by the beginning of the third century. By mid century his task had been taken over by presbyters. Sub-deacons were once lay and assisted the deacons in their work, but soon this office became a step to ordination: other lay functions to be clericized were the exorcist, stewards of church finances and other administrative officers. A priest became one who presides over the liturgical and sacramental life of the church, and ministry then became equated with the sacramental work of the clergy by the fifth century. Where once the whole Christian community had been involved in witnessing to the gospel, the new missionary efforts now came out of the monasteries. To reach the largely non-literate or preliterate, foreign speaking pagan tribes took a specialized organization, well educated persons with a highly dedicated home base. Where once the laity could at least attain the elevated ranks of the "perfect presbyter" through martyrdom, that avenue was no longer usually available. The super-laity became the monks and members of monastic orders. These were laity separated from the usual aspects of daily life in the world and in effect were clergy. Gregory the Great, (540-604) made a distinction between three categories of Christian: the *conjugali* (married people), the *continentes* (mostly monks and hermits) and the *rectores* (priests and the leadership of the church). Married lay people occupied the lowest position.

By the Middle Ages the laity had been excluded from active participation in worship, unable to understand the language of the liturgy, even when it was audible. They were reduced to an almost completely passive role in many aspects of corporate church life. It was not an entirely negative era for lay ministry. In a time of almost complete coalescence of state and church, almost every secular occupation had its implications for religion and the maintenance of the

church life and structure. This had both positive and negative effects. Among the most positive was the work of stone masons, sculptors and other artists. In the age of construction for the great cathedrals and imposing parish churches across Europe, the skill and faith of these artisans and artists was highly prized and is still evident. The faith of gifted laity was expressed through the eyes and hands of painters, sculptors, musicians and artists of glass. Their names did not come down through history but the witness of their skill and inspiration has.

Another means of spiritual expression for the laity of that time was through the rigorous asceticism of religious hermits or anchorites. They fled from the world, often to the desert or the edges of civilization and focused deeply on scripture and prayer. It was a life outside the community and the functions of the church, thus it was not originally a clerical career. But soon their piety, spiritual stature and religious insight made them candidates for ordination and elevation to the episcopacy. Indeed, today, Coptic Orthodox popes and bishops are expected to have risen through the ranks as monks, priests, hermits and then higher offices. It is now a totally clerical route.

In the Middle Ages a highly inviting, but often less satisfying, route for lay ministry was the Crusades. In such a militaristic, territorial time, the call to liberate the Holy Land from the infidel was a sacred calling that was open to and even urged upon the ordinary lay person, both the peasant and the prince, the poor and the weak. For two centuries, starting in 1092, Christian armies, largely from western Europe, set out to restore Jerusalem and Palestine as being Christian kingdoms. They bore the banner of Christ before them. Often the result was loss of life and family or home. The long term result for Christianity was a wall of suspicion, recrimination and enmity between the West and East of Christendom. Different dogmas

became battle cries for persecution and brutal reprisals against all who were defined heretics by the hierarchy.

One ministerial function that could be and still is carried out by the laity, even in Catholic and Orthodox lands, is that of the lay apostolate. This was carried out by any Christian, individually. The great preacher St. John Chrysostom, (347-407) was insistent on this kind of lay service: "Nothing can make one more Christ-like than to look after the welfare of others"¹⁹⁸ Chrysostom recites the various excuses that laity may have given him like poverty, modest circumstance, ignorance, illness, and he refutes them one by one. "Nothing is more useless than a Christian who does not try to save others ... Anybody can help his neighbour if he is only willing really to do what he can ... Don't say that you can't make any impression on others: if you are a Christian it is impossible not to have some effect ... it is part of the very essence of a Christian ... and it is as contradictory to say that a Christian can do nothing for others as to say that the sun cannot give light".¹⁹⁹

The apostolate, or service to others as one sent by Christ, was carried out in work and market places, home and family, upper-class society, universities, the political sphere etc. Possibly the most important lay apostolate was that of godparents who sponsored a child and were to catechize them. Both women and men were allowed to perform this service: these ministries of the laity as individuals continued after the corporate opportunities for ministry in the church and its governance were cut off. Faivre expresses the judgement: "All these 'occasional' functions performed by the laity formed part of the ministry exercised by the people of God

¹⁹⁸ 1 Cor., hom. 25, n. 3. cited in Congar 1957, 341.

¹⁹⁹ Acta Apost., hom. 20, no. 4; cited in Ibid., 341

with regard to the world. They were there in all weathers, to such an extent that the apostolate can even be seen as the characteristically lay ministry”.²⁰⁰ It is good to see that the laity were not completely reduced to inactivity.

During the thirteenth and into the early sixteenth century, there were several examples of non-ecclesiastical religion, especially in the Germanic states and surrounding area. These were groups that often exhibited a well developed expression of charity and collective lay ministry to their communities. Pious and dedicated Germans, who often had a negative attitude to the established Church, banded together in religious societies and confraternities. Acts of Christian charity were a significant part of their personal and communal life. They founded institutions to care for the poor and sick, orphans and widows, homeless and helpless.

Beguines or lay sisterhoods who developed in almost every town, were an expression of this. The male equivalent were the beghards, or beguins as they were known in southern France. The beguines were originally drawn from noble or patrician families, especially where limited fortunes restricted dowries. They formed small beguine convents in the Germanic states or larger begynhof or parishes in Belgium. In these socio-religious institutions they sought a common life that was halfway between the rules of religious orders and the freedom of the laity. They committed themselves to a discipline but were not bound to the “triple vows” for life. “The beguinage was a retreat ... well adapted to an urban society, where women living in common could pursue chastity without a vow and earn a livelihood by suitable work ... properly termed semi-religious, quasi-religious ... outside the regular clergy ... but not altogether lay

²⁰⁰ Ibid., *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* 1990, 216.

either.”²⁰¹ These sisters of mercy were engaged in acts of charity. Some spread out in the community and some in the convents or houses of mercy. “They cared for the sick, aided the indigent, alleviated the suffering caused by frequent plagues and wars, conducted schools and brought up orphans”.²⁰² By the fifteenth century they were most everywhere in great numbers: Köln (Colgne) had 106 beguine houses, Strassburg over 60, Basel over 30 and the town of Brunswick had 12. The beguines carried out their ministry for the needy, maintained through gifts from the membership (houses and personal wealth) and from begging. Their members mainly continued in their daily work in the world, especially those not engaged in service within the institution and its charitable enterprise. They usually began as a spontaneous gathering of ecstatic women. It was a purely voluntary society. Over time they gained some recognition from the church hierarchy and finally they were encompassed into the parochial structure. The towns where they were located often granted them tax relief because of their service. Scholars differ on the balance between religious and socio-economic inducement and engagement connected with this movement. There can be no doubt, however, regarding their *diakona* ministry in daily life.

The beghards were more often confraternities of devout, hard working people particularly engaged in the crafts that were organized into houses or beguinages. They were primarily a layman’s movement that also included some women and disgruntled clergymen. They engaged in preaching, mendicancy and seeking to lead a common life of work and piety. Many of them lived and worshipped on the edge of or just beyond orthodoxy, and had even stronger socio-

²⁰¹ Ernest W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rudkers U. Press, 1954), 131.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 385.

economic roots than the beguines. Corporate acts of charity form a smaller part of this organization; each was expected to earn a livelihood by the work of their own hands, but when they couldn't, money from the society or convent was provided. They had an interest in producing a body of devotional literature in the vernacular, including translating scripture and writing hymns. This was not appreciated by the inquisitorial process of the fourteenth century.²⁰³ These practices plus that of feigning extraordinary piety with flagellation while running through the streets, shouting for alms, brought the weight of the Church against them. So they, like those beguines, who lived outside the beguinages, were subjected to stern discipline.

Another example of non-ecclesiastical religious life was found in the charitable foundations of the Middle Ages. By the close of the fifteenth century, the custom of charitable bequests being left to the management of the church and the clergy, changed to the hands of lay managers. There were some civic concern shown to possible mismanagement of funds for the poor by the clergy. Gradually people began to place their bequests for the poor directly to the town council or a board of laymen. These in turn set up and administered a program of caring for the poor of the district, which appeared fairly effective. "The laity saw that they were quite able to perform this peculiarly Christian work apart from any clerical direction".²⁰⁴

Further examples of lay piety and charity in this time can be found in the brotherhoods. One example was the confraternities, which went by the names "Kaland" or "Kalandsgilden" in northern Germany and by "Zechen" in Austria. "They were unions for the practice of religion;

²⁰³ Ibid., 369.

²⁰⁴ Thomas M. Lindsay, *History of the Reformation* Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T.T. Clark, 1907), 144.

for mutual aid in times of sickness; for defence in attack; and they also served the purpose of insurance societies and of burial clubs”.²⁰⁵ Some women were admitted. They met for common religious services, which they conducted themselves, but they often met in the chapels of the Franciscans or Augustinian Eremites who presumably were supportive of, or open to their life and community. The focus of the brotherhoods’ service seemed to be mostly inward. Luther is critical of excesses in this area. In his *Sermon upon the venerable Sacrament of the holy true Body of Christ and of the Brotherhoods*, he contrasted the good ones from the evil ones: “A true brotherhood spreads its table for its poorer members, it aids those who are sick or infirm”.²⁰⁶

These and other similar or related lay movements or organizations existed in these pre-Reformation times. They had varying degrees of support or recognition by the Church. Where they followed a course that acknowledged or at least did not antagonize orthodoxy, they were accepted. Some, like the beguine convents, were considered part of the “Third Order”.

“Bernard of Besse, Pope Bonaventura’s secretary, offered his definition in *De Laudibus* (ca. 1280). “The Third Order is that of the Brethren and Sisters of Penitence, which is common to clergy and laity, maidens and widows and married folk, who have resolved to live honestly in their own homes, to devote themselves to pious works, and to flee from the pomp of this world”.²⁰⁷

The Middle Ages has another example of pious association and charitable endeavour. It was

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 146.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 146.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* 1954, 263.

seen in bands of artisans, especially among printers, but also tailors and weavers etc. They lived quiet, modest and pious lives, acted righteously toward their neighbours, believed in all the articles of the Christian faith, but they repudiated the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy. They called themselves the “Brethren”. They appeared in the records of the inquisitors in Germany back at the end of the thirteenth century. There was some influence in their associations from the mediaeval Mystics. They also showed to have had some contact with the “*Unitas Fratrum*” of Bohemia who were later to be known as Moravians. They used educational classroom methods to reach others from their neighbourhoods and were noted as caring for lepers and providing schooling for leper children. The Anabaptists were later successors of these associations.

Peter Waldo (d.1217), is an example of another lay leader who ended up “outside the camp”. He was a rich merchant of Lyons, who in ca.1176 sold his belongings, gave the funds to the poor and dedicated himself to a life of poverty. This lifestyle in itself was not a problem for Rome; but when he, an unauthorized layman, began to preach, this brought the heavy hand of the church upon him. He attracted a group of followers and they called themselves “The Poor in Spirit”. They followed the same practices and continued to preach even after they were forbidden. They were all excommunicated in 1184. Out of this group and others like “The *Humiliati*” of Milan, came the Waldenses. Here is seen the start of one of the fertile fields for the Reformation.

4. Glimmers Of Light: The Reformations

4.1 Martin Luther

Although the leading lights in the Reformation came from the clergy, there were a great many among the laity who supported them physically and intellectually as well as providing spiritual succour. Among the humanists of the 16th Century, the line between laity and clergy was very blurred. Erasmus, for example, was a very unclerical cleric in his life, scholarship and work. Erasmus (1467-1536), maintained his position within the Roman Church, but in many ways he stood alone and apart as the penultimate “Christian Humanist”. He had a firm conviction that Christianity was an eminently practical faith. It had to do with the ordinary life of humanity. It meant love, humility, purity, and reverence — the virtues Christ lived out upon this earth.

Martin Luther (1483-1546), spoke and wrote about the unity of all the members of the church, founded upon baptism and faith in Christ. “There is neither priest nor layman, canon or vicar, rich or poor, Benedictine, Carthusian, Friar Minor, or Augustinian, for it is not a question of this or that status, degree, order”.²⁰⁸ His teachings on the universal priesthood of all believers are foundational to the changes that took place for Christian laity. Two parts of that doctrine have particular relevance to this thesis. First, each Christian as a priest, has an office of sacrifice to dedicate his/her own self to the praise and obedience of God and to bearing the Cross in daily life. Second, each Christian has a duty to hand on the gospel to others. These points relate to Luther’s teaching on vocation, which he saw as one of the situations in which humanity chooses sides in the combat between God and Satan. The Christians through their

²⁰⁸ Luther, *Galatians*, 57, 28.15 cited in Neill & Weber, 1963, 138.

vocations seek the well-being of their neighbours. Vocation takes place on the line between the earthly kingdom and the Kingdom of Heaven. Gustaf Wingren summarizes Luther when he states, “in vocation works are constrained to move toward one’s neighbor, toward the earth; and faith alone, trust, prayer, all without works, ascends heavenward”.²⁰⁹ In his commentary on Galatians (1535), Luther writes about vocation in the three “holy orders and true institutions, established by God: the office of the ministry, marriage, and earthly government”.²¹⁰ Above these three foundations there is Christian love. “Love is the inner willingness to do and bear all that is required by vocation, but does it gladly and without resistance. Indeed it willingly exceeds what is called for”.²¹¹ Above all these is faith, which reaches up to heaven. Vocation means all Christians are to love those closest at hand, their neighbours, family and fellow-workers. This love must be part of our daily activities no matter what they are. The *laos* are called to accept their office to work in faith as from Christ. “Christ carried on his own office and station, but he has not for that reason rejected anyone else’s office ... Everyone must tend his own vocation and work”.²¹² Luther writes in *De votes monasticis*, “It is God’s firm intention that all the saints are to live in the same faith, and be moved and guided by the same Spirit; but in external matters carry out different works”.²¹³ Luther attacked monastic spirituality and advocated a wholesome lay spirituality that touched all of life.

Luther held to a priority of baptism in all Christians before some could be chosen and set apart

²⁰⁹ Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 33.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²¹² *Treatise on Secular Authority*, 1523, cited in *Ibid.*, 173.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 173.

for the ministry of building up the Christian congregation.

“Before anyone becomes a preacher or a bishop, he must first be a Christian, a born priest. No pope or any other man can make him a priest. But having been born a priest through baptism, a man thereupon receives the office; and this is what makes a difference between him and other Christians. Out of the multitude of Christians some must be selected who shall lead the others by virtue of the special gifts and aptitude which God gives them for the office”.²¹⁴

He stated that the “preaching office is no more than a public service”,²¹⁵ conferred on someone by an entire congregation of priests. The work or ministry of these priests is teaching, sacrificing and praying. Teaching is done through instruction and confession of the Gospel before others. Sacrifices are the offering of the Christians’ life as a living sacrifice to God (as in Rom. 12:1). Such sacrifices are costly in ones life, possessions and honour, but they are honouring of God and a good example to others. Prayers accompany such sacrifices, according to Luther, because they are driven to pray in view of their various sufferings and afflictions. These prayers are presented before God and made acceptable in Christ. When a young child prays from Scripture each morning and evening and at meal times, that “child prays as a Christian and a priest, born in Baptism and ordained by Christ”.²¹⁶ But Luther set limits to the work and power of these believer priests: “It is true that all Christians are priests, but not all are pastors ... A burgher or layman may be a learned man; but this does not make him a lecturer and entitle him to teach publicly in the schools or to assume the teaching office, unless he is called to it”.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Ibid., *Luther's Works* Ps 110:4, 1956, 332.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 334.

²¹⁷ Ibid., on Ps. 82:4, 1956, 65.

Luther was not only strongly opposed to the teachings and life of the Roman Catholic hierarchy but also to religious radicals. He appeared to lump them all into one group, but as Harry Loewen, a Mennonite from Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, notes, there were several groups in this movement and they were different from one another. Although the historians have differed on the groupings, Loewen states there were likely three: Spiritualists, Anabaptists and Rationalists.²¹⁸ These would also be divided into sub-groupings but the lines were not fixed nor were some individuals confined to only one group. The Spiritualists could be considered in three groups: the revolutionary Spiritualists inspired mainly by Thomas Muntzer of Zwickau, with emphasis on apocalyptic literature and the cross; the rational Spiritualists who contemplatively philosophized on religion; and the evangelical Spiritualists who advocated a middle-way between Lutheranism and Catholicism. The Rationalists included Antinomians and Antitrinitarians. The Anabaptists will be considered in a following section of this history. For all their diversity these radical reformers had some things in common: opposition to state religion and the desire to live separate lives from the unredeemed. Related to the focus of this paper was their frequent use of uneducated common people as lay preachers who without formal call or support, went off through the country propagating the gospel. At other times when these churches or groups lost their educated preachers through persecution, the lay people stepped in. This was exactly what Luther had urged his followers to do. "In 1523 he had stated that if there were not sufficient ministers to preach the gospel, lay Christians were required to assume this task, for obedience to the word of God was supreme".²¹⁹ Luther said that when

²¹⁸ Harry Loewen, *Luther and The Radicals* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1974), 23.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

God calls the Christian must be willing to leave absolutely everything behind and follow God's leading.²²⁰ But when the radical groups followed his teaching, Luther opposed them on the grounds that people in that post apostolic time were to remain in their particular calling. Loewen stated that this did not mean that Luther negated his earlier position, "He was simply convinced that some men were called by God to the ministry of the church while others, the lay members in the church, were to testify of God's grace in their particular calling without presuming to be preachers and thereby forsaking their station in life".²²¹ This looks to me, like a matter of which side of the fence you are on, just like the position on Christian liberty of conscience.

With these and other statements Luther had a great impact on the theology of the laity and the practice of lay ministry for centuries to come. One of the most effective advocates for programs on ministry in daily life in North America today comes out of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is true that contemporary and subsequent interpreters of Luther pushed some of his teachings to extremes, even into advocating rebellions like the peasants revolt (1525); but the legacy of Luther is strong and positive among the laity in this century.

4.2 John Calvin

John Calvin, (1509-1564) made some significant recoveries in regard to the work and place of the laity in the life of the church and the faith, particularly by more participation of the laity in worship. He had a determined focus on the ministry of Word and Sacrament, but such

²²⁰ Luther Works 45, 277-278

²²¹ Ibid., *Luther and the Radicals* 1974, 70.

ministers were not conferred any special or holy status save that of teaching and preaching etc. The laity is not the focus for Calvin, but the whole church. In the summary of the Christian life in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* he starts from Paul's expression of the duty of believers to present their "bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God", which is their "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Calvin calls for a complete self sacrifice of the believers in serving the needs of their neighbours. This requires a charity that is merciful, humble, modest, diligent and perseverent. He notes that whatever we receive from God is, "granted on the condition of our employing it for the common good of the Church, and that, therefore, the legitimate use of all our gifts is a kind and liberal communication of them with others ... (our) endowments ... are divine deposits intrusted to us for the very purpose of being distributed for the good of our neighbour".²²² Calvin also expresses the importance of the priesthood of all believers: "For we, though in ourselves polluted, in him being priests (Rev. 1:6), offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary, so that the sacrifices of prayer and praise which we present are grateful and of sweet odour before him".²²³ In the commentary on Peter's "a royal priesthood", he states that the whole people are royal priests "because you are each consecrated in Christ to be both the associates of his kingdom and partakers of his priesthood".²²⁴

In his ministry on earth Jesus Christ created a new covenant community in which all its members are called to serve as participants in Christ's ministry. Each believer is given the freedom to minister because they are slaves or servants of Jesus Christ who is both the Servant

²²² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1559 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), III, VII, 5.

²²³ *Ibid.*, II, XV, 6.

²²⁴ 1 Pet. 2:9 in *Calvin Commentaries* trans. by Joseph Haroutunian, (London: SCM Press, 1958).

and the Master, the Priest or Minister and Lord of all. Each member is called to share daily in the diaconal ministry of Christ, but to do so in fellowship with the whole body of the Church. Like Luther, Calvin also had a limitation. There was a specific calling within this ministry. He made it clear that some members were set apart by call, education and ordination to be the preachers/pastors who were charged with facilitating the ministry of the whole people of God in the church. So much of Calvin's focus in this area was on the ordained ministry.

Calvin's Geneva and later Calvinists were state churches, thus the call to people to live in a mutually supportive manner had implications for the whole of society. Church membership and state citizenship became connected, and the results were sometimes unpleasant. This continued to be the case for a century or more, even though there were many ways in which later Calvinists differed from Calvin. Various Calvinist documents regarding the work of the laity are reflective of the time and conditions in which they had been produced. Their usefulness for the modern reality in which a ministry of the laity must operate can only be obtained when their principles are translated into today's conditions. Living the Christian life required, for Calvin, certain disciplines of faith were necessary, or the life and growth in grace would be impossible. Service by the *laos* to others does not stand as an end in itself, but grows out of its devotion to God. It is only natural then that much of the content of *The Institutes* in relation to believers or laity is devoted to the exercise of those practices that strengthen faith; like prayer, devotion, meditating on ones relationship with God, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and so on. These foundational truths are missing from the daily life of many laity today, thus they do not display any evidence of God's presence in the world around them. Calvin's emphasis on the spiritual disciplines of a faithful life has meaning for the church today.

4.3 Scottish Presbyterianism

In Scotland during this time there was also an emphasis upon the general priesthood of all believers. John Knox, (1513-1572) was noted for his strong theological position and emphasis on spiritual discipline, among other things. The laity did benefit and became more active out of the Scottish Reformation. There was a scarcity of qualified, ordained clergy in the Kirk in Scotland in 1560, with only 12 Reformed, ordained ministers. Lay “men” (and only men) were appointed as readers but they were not allowed to administer the sacraments. They could conduct worship services and in certain cases, be licensed as exhorters. Knox and the Scottish Reformers had a strong interest in education for all children in order that they might be prepared for godly living. “Knox and his collaborators in drawing up their *Book of Reformation* planned a system of universal, free education to be financed out of the church lands. They proposed the erection of parish schools and high schools for all.”²²⁵ Another deep concern for Knox was poverty. “Repeatedly he had insisted that the members of the church were responsible for the care of those who were in need.”²²⁶ These two by products of the Scottish Reformation, plus the establishment of the work and the authority of the lay eldership had a great affect on the laity in that church.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1747) and its associated documents (1745-8), which are the principle subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, follow Calvin and Knox’s basic positions and presentations. They speak nowhere of a ministry of the laity but they do require certain behaviour and lifestyle of every Christian. Chapter XXVI on the

²²⁵ W. Stanford Reid, “*Trumpeter of God: A Biography of John Knox* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 199.

²²⁶ Ibid.

Communion of Saints expresses it most succinctly. “All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit and by faith ... and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other’s gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man”.²²⁷ All believers are expected to make responsible use of their God given gifts in order to meet the needs of others. Ministry becomes the living of ones daily life in a way that is supportive of one another. The weakness here is that the statement implies that this is carried out only within the community of faith. Relationships with those outside the church fellowship are covered in Chapter XXXV where the emphasis is on declaring the Gospel and Missions. “All believers are ... under obligation ... to contribute by their prayers, gifts and personal efforts to the extension of the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth”.²²⁸ It is fortunate for Presbyterians and the world, that the emphasis on the gospel disciplines of the faith had more impact on the laity than the regimen of the confessions. The contribution of Presbyterianism to the ministry of the laity is probably more evident in the organizational structure of the elders and in the ministry of the diaconate. The latter has been largely taken over by congregational committees. Another area of *laos* involvement, historically, has been the willingness to participate in civic and political life.

4.4 The Anabaptist and Pietist Traditions

The Anabaptists that Luther encountered and generally spoke against were not all one group

²²⁷ Westminster Confession of Faith, (WCF) XXVI,1.

²²⁸ WCF, XXXV,4.

and definitely not of one mind. Loewen stated there were three groups: the revolutionary Anabaptists who looked to the Old Testament as their standard for ethical life and behaviour and tended to be very confrontational; the contemplative Anabaptists who stressed the importance of the “inner word” over the “outer word” or Bible; and the evangelical Anabaptists for whom the New Testament was the standard of all living and believing. This last type was to become the Swiss Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites.²²⁹

There are various theories of the origin of sixteenth-century Anabaptism. Some see these groups starting with first, adult (believer's) baptism in Zurich in 1525; others see it beginning among the Swiss Brethren and the German radical reformers. Again others see the movement growing out of a multitude of small communities of pious Christians who lived quiet God-fearing, faithful lives outside or on the verge of the mediaeval Church, like the Waldenses. The existence of these small praying communities show up on the Inquisitor's reports at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries.²³⁰ Such Brethren were found throughout Switzerland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Bohemia and other areas early in the sixteenth century.

The Anabaptists like the Brethren were deeply committed to Christian charity. They cared for their own community — the poor, distressed and sick. They had schools and hospitals for lepers. They held a strict separation from the state and some of them espoused pacifism. They would not serve as civil magistrates or soldiers, but this was a theoretical point only. Since

²²⁹ Ibid., *Luther and the Radicals* 1974;23, see also Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church*, (New York: Macmillan, 1968, part 2).

²³⁰ T.M. Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation* 1908, 433.

once their religious position was known in most cities, they would not be eligible for any such positions. As noted, earlier persecution of their leadership and spontaneous calls from God, led many lay persons to engage in an itinerant or local ministry of lay preaching. The piety of their lifestyle, the witness of their lives, were attractive to many and were noted by their detractors and enemies. Franz Agricola, a Roman Catholic, wrote in his *Against the Terrible Errors of the Anabaptists* (1582): “As concerns their outward public life they are irreproachable. No lying, deception, swearing, strife, harsh language, no intemperate eating and drinking, no outward personal display is found or is discernible among them, but only humility, patience, uprightness, meekness, honesty, temperance, and straight-forwardness in such measure that one would suppose that they have the Holy Spirit of God”.²³¹ It was unfortunate that harshness of the times and the doctrinal polarity of the Churches set these groups against one another, especially the Lutherans and the evangelical and contemplative Anabaptists who each had and were to have so many common pietistic and spiritual connections.

Donald F. Durnbaugh of Lombard, Illinois, defines the Believers’ Church using a comment on worship by Martin Luther. Out of this description of those that Luther stated would gather to participate in a “truly evangelical order”, Durnbaugh lays out seven characteristics of this church. Points that most particularly relate to this thesis are: that they “profess the gospel with hand and mouth”, “perform Christian works”, provide “benevolent gifts” for the poor and those in need (particularly within the fellowship).²³² Believers’ churches included varieties of Brethren, separatist Puritans and Free Church Pietists, among others.

²³¹ Loewen, 1974, 92.

²³² Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers’ Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 32.

Pietism as a movement lasted from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century. Johan Arndt (1555-1621), a great advocate of the pietist movement, taught that the action of Christian love should be seen in the service to one's neighbour. The teachings of Arndt and other like-minded leaders "led Pietists to organize associations and institutions to assist in education, children's work, care for foreigners in a given city, orphanages, and training in the trades. Pietists like to feel that such work was done in obedience to Christ and reasoned that it was a testimony to their salvation."²³³ Pietism owed much to the work of Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), a Lutheran pastor from Frankfurt. He instituted twice-weekly meetings of the laity for Bible study and mutual edification. His writings had a great effect on denominations and radical sects in Europe and America. His book, *Pia Desideria* (1675), called for a more intense devotional study of the Bible, and fuller expression of the priesthood of all believers as well as an emphasis on Christian charity. Pietists were both the givers and receivers of considerable Christian hospitality to refugees in those turbulent times of the Counter Reformation. August G. Franke of Halle, a disciple of Spener, founded a home for orphans in 1695 where 3,000 were housed. Like other sects or groups mentioned above and to be presented below in this section, lay preaching was an important act of lay service.

In this post Reformation, the ministry of the laity was found both in great lay leaders from the pietistic tradition like Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760), founder of the Moravian Brethren, and great institutions of charity and social service. Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf of Dresden, came from a pietistic family and Philipp Spener was his godfather. He wanted to become a clergy person but his noble status did not permit this. But his acts of charity,

²³³ William H. Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39.

especially to Bohemian and Moravian refugees as well as his teachings, had a great influence on a pietistic revival in many churches. Other aspects of lay service in the world at that time became most evident in organized ministries to the poor, elderly, children, the sick and dying. The goal for many was reform of education, welfare and moral life in the world towards the Kingdom of God. This new order of lay persons sought to transform society in ethical principals through the state but independent of the church. Richard Rothe (1799-1867), at Wittenberg Theological Seminary and Heidelberg was a key thinker in this. He sought to emancipate Christianity from the church and its institutions. J.H. Wichern (1808-1881), director of *Rauken Haus* in Hamburg worked to form an organized brotherhood to help the underprivileged in Germany. Theodor Fliedner around the same time in Kaiserswerth, did a similar thing in forming a sisterhood who carried out a ministry based on a devotional life, but consciously directed to service in the world. These lay organizations worked as the representatives of the people of God in the world but not under the supervision of the church. It was two Moravian Brethren and disciples of Zinzendorf, as missionaries to America, who had a powerful influence on the faith and teaching of John Wesley. They brought him and his brother Charles face to face with the personal reality of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. They would also have encountered the active diaconal service and work element of the Moravian "settlement congregations". "They were small towns in which church, civic, and economic life were an integrated unit. Handicraft industries, small businesses, and farming not only supplied local needs, but also gave rise to a considerable trade with the outside world, providing support for the Moravian church's far-flung mission, evangelistic, and educational

programs.”²³⁴ It was one of these congregations in Georgia and especially its leaders that made such an impression on John Wesley in the spring of 1738.

5. An Example of Lay Empowerment: John Wesley

In Britain the independent churches demonstrated the power of the laity in their full royal priesthood. They were responsible for all affairs of the religious societies or groups. John and Charles Wesley grew up in a home that was engaged in such a pietist society. John Wesley (1703-1791) developed a movement that began in a highly clerical way. But over time Methodists used more and more laity as lay preachers and others like local preachers, exhorters, class leaders, trustees, stewards and “visitors of the sick”. Wesley’s “discovery” of the laity occurred in 1739 or 1740 when the Wesleyan revival was in its infancy. While Wesley was away, a presiding layperson (a bricklayer) decided he would preach. Wesley came back to London with plans to discipline him, but Wesley’s mother stopped him with the words, “John, take care what you do with respect to the young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are”.²³⁵ In the first half century of ministry he trained 653 lay preachers, plus oversaw the equipping of many of the others listed above. He became convinced of the appropriateness of laity as preachers. “And were not most of those whom it pleased God to employ in promoting the Reformation abroad, laymen also? Could that great work have been promoted at all in many places, if laymen had not preached?”²³⁶ In even stronger language he stated, “Give

²³⁴ F. Ernest Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 131–31.

²³⁵ James Garlow, “The Lay Person as Minister” in *“The Church”* Dieter & Berg eds., (Anderson: Warner, 1984), 434.

²³⁶ Wesley, “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion”, in R.W. Burtner & R.E. Chiles, *A Compendium of Wesley’s Theology* III, 10, 12, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954), 262.

me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth”.²³⁷ These preachers not only had recognized charisms, but they had to qualify themselves through continuous and serious study. They soon became highly clericalized. The activity and engagement of lay preachers grew until it became their major work, and to all intents and purposes, they were fully engaged within the church and responsible to its leadership, rather than simply volunteer lay leaders. They are, non-the-less, a good example of lay recognition, empowerment and equipping.

The class leaders were another formidable lay force in Methodism. The United Society, which began first in London, was divided into smaller groups of twelve persons; “one of whom is styled *the Leader*. It is his business to see each person in his class once a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor”.²³⁸ The good class leaders exhibited knowledge, tact, humility and deep spiritual insight. Such a vast number of well trained and deeply committed laity had its effect on ministry in daily life. James Garlow of Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, notes that, “Wesley viewed laity as (1) A Called People, (2) A Gifted People, (3) A Trained People, and (4) A Sent People”.²³⁹ He expresses the view that these concepts were sufficiently universal to describe all of God’s people. For Wesley the initial call to salvation was also a call to active ministry. After this conversion and call, he

²³⁷ Wesley, “Letters” VI, 276, cited in Garlow 1984, 437.

²³⁸ Wesley Works: The Nature, Design, and General Rules of United Societies, 1-3, in Burtner & Chiles, 1954, 258.

²³⁹ Ibid., 1984, 438.

examined them to determine their gifts to see that they would be appropriate to the word given them.

Training was an indispensable part of Wesley's view of the laity. The class meetings were an initial training ground but the educational endeavour went on in other specific ways. Garlow notes that he avoided the pitfalls that have caused modern lay training to be largely unsuccessful. Wesley saw to it that the training was integrated with daily life. "One could not be a Methodist without understanding the way in which it altered one's function within society".²⁴⁰ This learning program involved more than instruction. It had many opportunities for action and experiential learning in the class meetings and contacts in the world. It was the result of the felt needs of the grassroots. The program was very personalized with close personal examination by Wesley himself. Also small groups were used most effectively to maintain a personal learning experience.

There were several modules or components to Wesley's training methods for lay preachers. They included the annual conferences and the development and issuing of rules. A third and most competent method was the proper combination of demonstration, delegation and supervision. Wesley's own ministry was the model for the lay preachers to experience and then replicate under personal oversight. The development of such lay leaders was a gradual step by step process. They were given leadership responsibilities by their fellow group members as their gifts were identified. They were given meaningful responsibilities and they grew up through successively larger groups until they became general leaders. The fifth training tool

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 1984, 447.

was this cell group process itself where the people became like a family or close knit circle of friends and provided fellowship and avenues for developing shared leadership. The active and articulate laity that was equipped in these small cell units became a force of leaders not only in the church but in the world as well. Some of this practice will be considered later in this thesis and in my recommendations.

The final characteristic of the laity for Wesley was that they were a “people sent of God”. Wesley felt his lay ministers were no different from the disciples sent out by Christ to make known his message. They were not ordained but sent as evangelists. Likewise the lay preachers were not ordained. Their authority to preach was “recognized” by Wesley or his designates. Preaching did not necessarily imply pulpits and pews; it was simply the making known of the Gospel to those who needed to know. They were sent out into the world not into the church.

This vision of Wesley and its methodology has much to teach the contemporary churches regarding lay learning for ministry in daily life. The respect for the persons and the power of the group process are excellent. The opportunities for reflection-action, for experiential learning and for mentored growth are helpful procedures for today. The small cell group of persons who live into each others lives with trust and challenge offers and often copies a model that needs to be expanded and repeated through all congregations. Another important point is that this educational process was for adults and it was continuous. It never had a graduation or completion, it was life long.

6. Laity in Life: Canadian Presbyterian Experiences

The movement of the church and settlement across the ocean brought many changes to the expression of lay ministry. The Methodist circuit riders brought a new dimension and a wider audience to lay preaching (although it developed into ordination for many). In the frontier situation, new methods of ministry and expression of church leadership were called for. To take the experience of the pioneer settlements and their churches in the Canadas of the pioneers, we can look at one such Presbyterian church in Guelph which formed one day after the founding of Guelph itself, in 1827 by John Galt of the Canada Company. In these times of growth and building of the communities of our nation, the people of God in each place wanted to build a church as well - in both the physical and spiritual sense. For this purpose lay leadership was most essential, since almost all Presbyterian ministers were still across the ocean in Scotland and Ireland (or in various nations for other denominations). These lay people were responsible for starting up Sabbath schools and teaching in them, leading prayer services, building church edifices and representing the congregation in the various civic and ecclesiastical courts in order that the congregation could exist and grow. They probably visited the sick and newcomers. In the first twenty years of its life, (1828-47) the congregation in question had only one settled minister for about half of those years; yet it grew to 200 persons and had a church building for 200 worshippers, just months after the first minister arrived. This experience was repeated thousands of times over in various communities, denominations and settlement periods across British North America (and the States to the South). The result was the development of a self assured, independent, individualistic laity that was not always willing to bow to the clergy even when they needed their special gifts, education and leadership. An

unfortunate tendency has been that when there is no clergy available, many churches carry on quite well through the laity working together and sharing their gifts for ministry; but when “The Minister” arrives on the scene, he or she can now do the work. Because the laity in these early pioneer, and often small churches, had to carry out many of the in-church ministerial functions, this may have had an influence on the ongoing attitude to lay ministry. Robert Michaelson of Iowa State University noted in 1956, that “Protestantism in America has been almost from the first, strongly lay-centred and lay controlled”.²⁴¹ The concept was that lay ministry involved internal church work. Even today there is still a significantly strong attitude that lay ministry involves only those activities going on in the congregation or being done as social work by the congregation.

The ministry of pastoral care, worship leadership, Christian education, fellowship and maintenance of the organization are seen as basic necessities for the life of the congregation. When there is an ordained minister in the pulpit, he/she is seen to be responsible for all of it, with the assistance of lay members who volunteer. When the pulpit is vacant the laity have to keep this internal ministry going. The result is that the external or outward-looking diaconal ministry to the world, suffers in both these scenarios. Thus evangelism becomes the only outward looking ministry of the church. With Presbyterian churches this is too often left to other evangelistic associations or para-church organizations. It was in these organizations that the laity found some means of service ministry. The early YMCA and YWCA were examples of this kind of service in the world, when in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Y's still saw themselves as an agent of the gospel and partner with the Church. The Y's

²⁴¹ Michaelson in H. R. Niebuhr et al. *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* 1983, 275.

engaged in social service, and humanitarian work, the training of the laity for such work, and activities designed to appeal to youth. This faith aspect of service is no longer part of their work. Other organizations have come on the scene who allow for such service, such as The Christian Businessman's Association, The Gideons and various inner city or similar missions. The Gideons are a good example of an interdenominational lay organization with an active outreach. It is an international association of Christian business and professional men, in order to share God's message. Some wives belong to the national auxiliary of the Gideons. The association was begun in 1899 by three American travelling salesmen. They were looking for a way in which to provide mutual support, personal evangelism and united service for Christ. The Canadian branch began in 1911. There are now over 139,000 Gideon men and almost 79,000 women in the auxiliary, in 172 countries. They have distributed about 847 million scriptures in hotels, prisons, hospitals and to youth, nurses, police and university students. The organization is led, organized and supported fully by the laity from various denominations.

In the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as with other denominations, lay ministry was largely inward looking through to the middle of this century. The major exception to this was the missionary vision and work of the women of the church in the Women's Missionary Society. The post World War II era and the fifties brought changes in attitude. John Webster Grant of Emmanuel College notes, "Self-conscious laymen of the post-war years were unequivocally churchmen, eager not merely for a greater voice but for greater opportunities to serve. They wanted to fulfil what they liked to call "the ministry of the laity".²⁴² In the Presbyterian Church this enthusiasm was shown in the Presbyterian Men's Organization. They were active across

²⁴² John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Burlington: Welch, 1988), 171.

the nation with study groups, training programs and conferences, starting in the late '50's and early '60's. Part of their goal was "to deepen the spiritual life of the men of the Church".²⁴³ The focus was primarily evangelistic. A sub-committee was formed under the Board of Evangelism and Social Action, and the next year they reported progress and the planning for a national conference that autumn. As background to their request for a full-time director they stated, "The Committee feels that every Presbyterian man has responsibilities as well as privileges. It is his responsibility to witness to the truth of the Gospel. In countless ways, men can give expression to their faith — in the business world, in the community, in their recreation, and wherever they touch the world beyond the confines of the Church. In striving to give leadership, the Committee stresses this vital importance of the evangelistic nature of the Gospel, and the need for personal witnessing by Christian men, not only by word of mouth, but in all daily relationships".²⁴⁴ When a full time "National Director" was appointed the lay "men's" movement became a growing reality in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Among the more outward looking of their aims was "to develop an effective program of Christian Service, including Stewardship and Personal Evangelism ... responsibility for Christian witness ... 'and to live by the Faith which we profess and work out together for the glory of God and the saving of men'".²⁴⁵ As part of their activities in promoting the "knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in our devotion to His Way for us",²⁴⁶ they advocated the "Swedish Method", (developed in Sweden), and trained leaders in that small group Bible study method, which

²⁴³ Acts and Proceedings (A & P) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) 1956, 259.

²⁴⁴ Acts and Proceedings PCC, 1957, 240.

²⁴⁵ Acts and Proceedings PCC, 1958, 257.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 1958, 257.

involved the men in considerable discussion around a common set of questions. They also promoted “Leadership Training in Effective Speaking” in their leaders’ schools held at synod and presbytery levels. In 1959 the national committee reported that 378 leaders had been trained and registered. The list stretched from Cape Breton to Victoria. By 1960 there were 535. Each of the eight synods held a week-end conference for inspiration, fellowship and training. Some presbytery level conferences were held. This organization and pattern of training lay men continued and grew over the next decade. Later in the ‘60’s they moved up to three National Conferences in the east, central and western parts of the country. They also had three training manuals that were graded and to be taken successively. When you consider that each leader was to be working with a group of about six men, there were thousands of men involved in this equipping exercise and being encouraged to live out their faith in their daily lives at home and at work.

During this same decade (the ‘60’s) a social revolution was going on throughout the world, that would work against this growth in lay activity. Canada and Presbyterians in it were also affected. The active participation in churches rapidly eroded. Reginald Bibby, a Lethbridge sociologist, noted that where Protestant participation in weekly worship services had been 50-60 percent before that decade, it dropped by almost two-thirds within twenty years.²⁴⁷ Craig van Gelder of Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids and others note a Canadian viewpoint of the Church.²⁴⁸ “In the throes of this upheaval, many pastors and churches concentrated on maintaining the faith of their active members...a whole generation of youth and young adults

²⁴⁷ Reginald Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin, 1987), 11-23.

²⁴⁸ Craig Van Gelder, et al. “Understanding the Church in North America” in D. L. Guder, *Missional Church*, 59.

was lost to the church". Many Canadians even up to the current studies, show a high level of spiritual and religious acceptance but they perceive it as being outside the Church. The question then is, what is the cause of this rapid decline of church support? Van Gelder et al. notes that, "Canadian churches also tended to focus too heavily on external moral behaviours in helping to shape a church culture. When the shared social norms supporting these behaviors collapsed, the church's relevance imploded".²⁴⁹ Background to this description was found in Grant's *Church in the Canadian Era* (see 184-206). Basically, the churches were misdirecting their ministry in that time. It took the passage of time before that insight was evident. We will return to this issue again in the next chapter.

In the late 1960's the national church (PCC), like many others before it, began to take a critical look at its life and work. Ministry formed an important part of two reports. The "Ross" Management Consultant Report on "A program of research and development for the Presbyterian Church in Canada relating to pastoral and other ministries in the changing context of the Presbyterian Church in Canada" in 1969, focused on pastoral ministry. In the attitudes it discovered of both laity and clergy the ordained minister was the primary person engaged in ministry. It tried to approach the dual meaning of ministry: (1) calling and function, relating to the whole church, and (2) the office relative to the ministry of word and sacrament. It found that almost the only place recognized for lay ministries was as part of a team ministry in a congregation with ordained ministers in charge. The other "acceptable" lay ministry was that of lay minister/preachers in small rural congregations with insufficient finances to afford an ordained one. The report concluded this issue with, "There is evidence that the average

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 60.

communicant and adherent is not yet ready to accept, or does not understand, the concept of personal ministries as a function of the entire church".²⁵⁰

The same year also saw the publication of a second and internal report called "Life and Mission Projects"(L.A.M.P.). It did not approach directly the lay ministry issue in either form. In the section dealing with the relationship between church and society, they mentioned two understandings of the church: an outpost of the Kingdom of God or involved in the world. The latter "outreach" view could take three forms: proclamation, dialogue or "a third option is to think of the church as so deeply involved in the world that even a word like "dialogue" is inappropriate. In this view, the Christian participates fully in the world like yeast in a lump of dough, working for change from within the world itself, and being changed by it".²⁵¹ No recommendations for lay ministry or equipping came out of this report. One positive recommendation of the report for the laity was that the General Assembly should establish a national church conference centre, somewhere in the population centre of the church , for the purpose of "developing the human resources of the church".²⁵² Five years later I was called to be the first director in order to establish that retreat and conference centre (Crieff Hills Community). For more than twenty-four years I worked to build up that ministry both physically and programmatically for the equipping of the laity of the church for leadership, service and spiritual formation.

These reports did not have a significant, immediate effect on lay ministry in daily life or on

²⁵⁰ Ross Management Consultant Report (Toronto, 1969), 98.

²⁵¹ PCC, L.A.M.P. Report (Toronto 1969), 18.

²⁵² Ibid., 63.

Presbyterian Men. They had continued to grow and had two full time staff persons. In 1974 under the new Board of Congregational Life, they continued to operate in a similar fashion with three national conferences, presbytery meetings, literature production, evangelism training events and promoting the annual “Laity Sunday”. There was a revisiting of the 1958 aims but they were considered still valid. The organization was involved in every helpful way in the early years of the conference centre. Reassessment began in 1979 and a new purpose was brought forward to the next General Assembly. It was outward looking and had more implications for ministry in daily life. “To provide opportunities for men of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to become better informed in the faith, and to encourage them to live as responsible members of the Church, bearing witness to their faith in all of life — in home, church, business and community”.²⁵³ The wording of the goals differed from the 1958 aims but advocated most of the same things; personal, spirituality, Christian fellowship, training in leadership and witnessing. In 1981 the report of the national committee of Presbyterian Men was not so positive: “some progress has been accomplished but not to the degree and expediency that was expected”.²⁵⁴ The national committee and its work was going to be absorbed into a new committee on Specialized Ministries with Laity under the Board of Congregational Life. The new goal was; “To provide opportunities primarily for men, but also for women of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, to grow in personal faith and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord, to develop leadership skills for their roles in both church and community, and to be able to bear witness effectively to the Christian faith in their homes and places of

²⁵³ Acts and Proceedings PCC, 1980, 285.

²⁵⁴ Acts and Proceedings PCC, 1981, 316.

work”.²⁵⁵ The objectives of this committee were quite different and included items like church officer training, promoting the Cursillo movement in the PCC and developing a network of laity to challenge others to be involved in the life and mission of the church. Regional conferences would now be for men or men and women. From that year the Presbyterian laymen were without staff support. This new committee had responsibility for “programs and resources which feature learning experiences for personal spiritual growth and leadership development”, but they did not consult with or offer support to Crieff Hills Community, conference centre in its leadership education programs. Any contacts were initiated from the other direction. If the annual report is an indicator, there was less activity in this function of “Lay Ministries” and especially among men in the next year than there was in the previous one under Presbyterian Men. In 1983 a new purpose was recommended: “To equip and encourage men to act together for the strengthening of their ministry in the church and to follow Christ in their vocation and common life”. There was also a new and shorter goal statement: “To provide opportunities for spiritual growth and fellowship, the strengthening of personal and family life, the development of leadership skills, the promotion and support of Christian witness in the work sector and the local community as well as in the church world-wide”.²⁵⁶ These statements under the subtitle “Ministry With Men”, seemed to offer more emphasis on ministry in daily life. The objectives that year involved a lot of research, evaluation, consultation and development of models and resources. The issue was entitled “lay ministries”.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 318.

²⁵⁶ Acts and Proceedings PCC, 1983, 320.

In 1985 it was the last time that either were mentioned for more than a decade in the annual reports to The General Assembly, only a small consultation was held. In 1993 the Board of Congregational Life changed its name to Life and Mission Agency. The closest function or department to the laity was Education for Discipleship. It dealt with youth, young adults, camping, stewardship, evangelism, church growth, worship, education for the faith (Christian Education) and education for mission (churches around the world). There was an obvious lack of earlier emphases. To be fair, the vision for Education for the Faith did include two points among five that were close. "We will promote world peace by living at peace with each other and with our neighbours". The last point was "congregations will be clear about themselves and their purpose, and will develop vision and direction about their specific service to God in their communities".²⁵⁷

The issue of lay ministry and equipping resurfaced in 1997 after an extensive national "Think Tank" consultation of representatives from Presbyterian churches across Canada. This group reported its priorities for ministry to the General Assembly in 1997. That statement was given in Chapter One of this thesis and brings history around into the present time period. What may happen out of that will be history in some future time.

A main feature of the ministry of the laity in theological and historical studies has been related to the "how and whom" of ministry. In many cases this ministry has been assumed or stated to be taking place inside the church organization for the strengthening of and caring for, the existing church. In other cases it had an apostolate direction where the church has operated a social or pastoral service function or agency. In these situations, groups of laity have serviced

²⁵⁷ Acts and Proceedings PCC, 1993, 277.

this ministry in their spare time after completing their days work-for-remuneration. In some cases these institutions of the apostolate have been formed, headed or operated by a church lay person in full time service. In this case the laity often takes on the character and attributes of a full time church worker — even to become clericized eventually. Each of these forms of lay ministry are legitimate and necessary. This thesis however, is concerned about a different kind of ministry by the laity — a ministry in their daily life and work. This is a ministry that has probably only had a priority in the pre-Constantinian church and world, and in the recent time since the 1960's, which bears some similarities to that earlier period. In both eras there has been no Christendom that made church and state almost one. This in turn led to a type of ministry in the early church that may need to be more in evidence today. We now take a look at the foci of this ministry of daily life in today's "post-Christendom", Western world.

CHAP. 5- TO WHOM DO THE LAOS MINISTER IN DAILY LIFE?

1.- The Current Issue

The church and its ministry exist not just to maintain itself or build up its own image or status in the community. Ministry of the *laos* is carried out for the sake of the world, especially for those who have not committed their lives to God in Jesus Christ. In the "Great Commission" Jesus called us to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19) "Every Christian has a vocation *in the world*: it is to bear witness, to serve, to evangelize, and to forward God's purposes *in the world*".²⁵⁸ The ministry that the *laos* carries out in the world helps to delineate those to whom that ministry is focused. Luther explains the functions of priests in "The Freedom of a Christian"; "As priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things. Christ has made it possible for us, provided we believe in him, to be not only his brethren, co-heirs, and fellow-kings, but also his fellow-priests. Therefore we may boldly come into the presence of God in the spirit of faith and cry "Abba, Father!" and pray for one another, and do all things which we see done and foreshadowed in the outer and visible works of priests."²⁵⁹ Considering that such a ministry as priests involves the believers in praying for others' needs and concerns and teaching of divine things, there is an

²⁵⁸ John-Charles, "Top Priority: Equipping the Saints" *Christian Ministry* 14, (July, 1983), 12.

²⁵⁹ Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" *Luther's Works* Vol. 31, 355.

implication that there are specific people to whom they minister. There is a possibility to keep some aspects of prayer on an impersonal and global level, but the priestly prayer that is based in Christ's priesthood is personal and involved. Laity function as priests for those whom they know, and with whom they work and interact on a personal level. The laity need to be involved in the lives of people in order to intercede on their behalf with God. In a similar fashion this priesthood calls the *laos* of God to the proclamation of, and witness to the gospel. The realities of life today and its various diversities of religion, culture, civil rights and freedoms make it difficult and unwise to verbally witness to the gospel in uninvited or imperialistic ways. The total life of the Christian *laos* should be a witness to the gospel at all times and in every place. Then in those special situations when a need is served or a concern answered, and as a result those involved show interest so that questions are asked, every Christian is called to give explicit verbal proclamation of the faith that is within them.

This ministry becomes visible whenever Christian women and men take seriously the countless opportunities for service that are open to them through the various roles they perform as parents, neighbours, professionals, volunteers, employees or employer. It is in the interactions of daily living that the laity meet people to whom they are called to minister. They are often unaware of the growing field for ministry in daily life that surrounds them in their own community each day.

Most mainline church members in Canada today would agree that congregational membership and participation has fallen drastically over the past quarter century or longer. They see it in the attendance at worship, Sunday schools, youth groups and participation in their other programs. But seeking for things of the spirit has not waned. Some church members would be aware of

the interest being expressed in spiritual and religious matters by people outside the church. It is noted by the media and evident in some public places, but the full extent of the issue has been missed by the church. Outsiders seeking rites of passage ceremonies at weddings, births and deaths are a focus of church jokes and management meeting discussions. Very few church members are aware of the fullness of both the problem for churches and society in Canada as seen by Reginald W. Bibby at the University of Lethbridge. He has brought the sociological search light on religion and church life through the "Project Canada" and "Project Teen Canada" surveys over the past twenty years. These studies have revealed much about where the majority of people are emotionally, religiously, and spiritually. The sociological light has also revealed where the church is not, or where it is not working.

The evidence from the surveys consistently shows that the churches are not serving the spiritual, personal and social needs of more and more people. The picture reveals that close to 80% of Canadians still view themselves not only as Christian, but as belonging to some specific denomination;²⁶⁰ while only 23% of Canadians indicated that they attend church almost every week.²⁶¹ In the Presbyterian denomination the weekly attendance at worship services has dropped from 35% in 1957 to 13% in 1990;²⁶² and congregational membership has dropped from 64% to 30% of the affiliates.²⁶³ This high level of religious affiliation along with a downward spiral of commitment and participation has left the churches depleted in the

²⁶⁰ Reginald W. Bibby, *There's God to be More! Connecting Churches and Canadians* (Winfield B.C.: Woodlake Books, 1995), 18.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1995, 16.

²⁶² Reginald W. Bibby & Merlin B. Brinkerhoff, "Circulation of the Saints 1966-1990", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1994, 33 (3)), 273.

²⁶³ Reginald W. Bibby, *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Study of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), 8.

resources needed to minister to the very needs for which the majority of the population have indicated they are searching. "Canadians are ... in the market for the things that religion historically has been about, ("explanation of a supernatural variety", making "their own existence more meaningful", "self esteem and a sense of personal worth" and "good relationships").²⁶⁴

The earlier hopes that the boomer generation would return, new immigrants would become involved and the unchurched would be recruited have not been realized.²⁶⁵ These dashed hopes are particularly true in the mainline churches but also true to a large extent in the evangelical churches. The sources of new members in a study of evangelical congregations in Calgary indicated new members came 72% from the reaffiliation of other evangelicals, 13% from their own offspring and 15% from proselytism from mainline, Roman Catholic or non-church persons.²⁶⁶ Mainline churches, for the most part, are doing a particularly poor job of retaining their own children. This again would seem to indicate that spiritual, personal and relational needs are not being met.

2.- On the Road to An Answer

"In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future.
The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that
no longer exists."²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Bibby, *There's God to be More!*, 1995, 30.

²⁶⁵ Bibby, *Unknown Gods* 1993, 12-58.

²⁶⁶ See Bibby 1993 and Bibby & Brinkerhoff 1994.

²⁶⁷ Erik Hoffer attributed in a management newsletter.

2.1 On a Personal Level

The sociological surveys demonstrate that the problem of connecting Churches and Canadians is, primarily, Church centred; with issues of structure or reorganization, product or the relevance of the message, promotional or awareness, and distribution or inwardness of the congregations.²⁶⁸ These involve the total *laos* of the Church. The implications of the challenge of ministry and lost opportunities have been summarized to:

- think affiliate, or start with those who identify with your denomination
- think concentric, or work out from actives to those with lower levels of involvement
- think relational, or connect through family and friends
- think balance, or emphasize God, self and society in the church's ministry
- think collective, or working together ecumenically.²⁶⁹

What is being advocated is just what likely took place in the early church as noted in previous chapters. The influence of the church into peoples' lives happened first along lines of affiliation and then attachment. Strong friendships form a social network in which caring and mutual support can draw people together so that ministry can take place. This attentiveness and sustenance expressed itself most deeply and effectively during times of crisis and personal loss. In the ancient church these were often due to plagues, epidemics or violent death. Today grief over a sudden and unexpected death, loss of employment or break-up of marriage among other personal trauma, can provide a time for ministry offered in God's love. To put this in a different way, we can recall that "Luther emphasized the structures of daily life, especially

²⁶⁸ Bibby, *Unknown Gods*, 1993, 183-278.

²⁶⁹ Bibby, *There's Got to be More!* (1995) 41-58.

family, as contexts in which Christian witness and instruction are to be carried out.”²⁷⁰ The question asked of Jesus can be rephrased, “and who is my family?” Bibby’s answer to this would be one that is widely encompassing those who are affiliated with our denomination first. In the Presbyterian churches, marginal and inactive affiliates vastly outnumber the actives 5:1²⁷¹; 812,105 census Presbyterians to 164,636 on the denominational lists (PCC & Presbyterian Church of America) in 1981.²⁷² So there is a large family outside our church in Canada and the same is true for others. Connecting with affiliates requires an educated, committed and inspired lay membership. John Savage aimed for 10% of the congregation trained and engaged in just visiting inactives.²⁷³ A greater proportion is needed for other related tasks. The laity needs to be aware of the issues, dedicated to the ministry, committed to God, confident of their own faith, trained in procedures, and engaged in relationships.

James Fowler did a pioneering work on what he calls an evolving theory on faith development.²⁷⁴ His work at deepening our understanding of faith was based on the interviewing of nearly 400 persons ranging in age from 3-1/2 to 90. He proposes that there are six stages of faith from infancy to late adulthood. Some scholars in the field, noted in this investigation, agree that most persons never progress beyond the stage (3) of Synthetic-Conventional faith, which he associates with adolescence. (Note: we will consider more of Fowler’s work in the next chapter.) Even where we are not aware of the denominational

²⁷⁰ Michael Rost, Nelson & Simmel (ed) *On Assignment from God: The Ministry of the Baptized* (Chicago: Division of Ministry-ELCA, 1991), 19.

²⁷¹ Bibby, *There’s Got to be More!*, 1995, 48.

²⁷² Marc Mentzer, “The Validity of Denominational Membership Data in Canada” *Sociological Analysis* 52 (3) (1991) 294.

²⁷³ Larry K. Weeden (ed) *The Magnetic Fellowship: Reaching and Keeping People* (Illinois: Carol Stream, 1988), 178.

²⁷⁴ James Fowler, “Stages of Faith and Adults’ Life Cycles” in Kenneth Stokes (ed) *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, (New York: W.H.Sadlier, 1982), 179-207.

affiliation of these seekers, we can still know that there are many people in our communities who are open, at some time or another, to the ministry that the *laos* are called to provide. To be true to the ministry of Christ, today's Christians need to be aware of and responsive to, the needs and concerns of persons around them. The ministry in daily life is directed to our families first and then to our extended families, neighbours and fellow workers. The people with whom we engage in daily contacts in commerce or recreation, may only know us in passing. These are the people to whom we must minister with friendship, caring and empathy. When particular needs or opportunities arise in their lives, then the ministry of the Gospel can be proclaimed, and sometimes even using words.

It is also important that Christian laity should witness to those who are in leadership or control of the corporate world or divisions within it, and attempt to make disciples of them. The temptation for zealous people in authority is to focus on their own hard work and abilities in giving credit for their accomplishments. John Calvin in his Commentary on Psalm 127:1-2, states that they need to be "reminded that whatever they attempt will quickly come to nothing, unless the grace of God alone sustains it and makes it to prosper."²⁷⁵ Christians working in the corporate world need to be witnesses who challenge the corporate success model. Their work and attitude need to attract the respect of their superiors so that when teachable moments occur, perhaps in times of trial or disillusionment, they are approached with requests to minister and witness. "When men in sacrilegious boldness rush off to found cities and to regulate the state of the whole world, the Holy Spirit rightly exposes such insanity. So let each one of us work as

²⁷⁵ Calvin, *Commentaries* 1958, 341.

he can in the line of his duty, giving to God the praise for every success we have”.²⁷⁶ Calvin condemned the attitude of some (Christians) who give half the credit to God and half to themselves, because of their hard work. Part of the laity’s ministry in the workplace is to give all the honour for their success or accomplishments to God: “We must prize the blessing of God alone and live under its reign”.²⁷⁷ John R.W. Stott of London, England, has stated that Christians should be radically different from non-Christians and as such they must permeate or infiltrate non-Christian society. He is assured that Christian men and women can both positively influence and change the worldly society. Through their witness to the Kingdom of God by being salt and light, they can purify the corruption and illumine the confusion and doubt.²⁷⁸

John Calvin asked the question: “How many today devote themselves to the service of God in the practice of their own proper calling?”²⁷⁹ He then noted the tendency to exalt ourselves and depend on our own abilities. Its no wonder, he stated, that “world affairs are turbulent and confused”, that “the rule of law is overthrown” in cities, that “husbands and wives bring bitter and groundless accusations against each other”, that “parents complain of their children” and everyone berates their lot. This all too current list of woes is given a remedy that relates to the laity’s ministry in daily life. “But if all should humbly submit themselves to God’s providence, the blessing which Solomon celebrates (in Psalm 127) would certainly shine bright in every

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Taken from Comments made in a recent address by Stott in St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Guelph, March 21, 1999.

²⁷⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries* 1958, 341.

aspect of our life, both public and private.”²⁸⁰ There is no question that there are many situations of need and people who require help in the community. Christians should do more than provide assistance. The Christian *laos* must witness to the love of God with their lifestyle, caring and support in these situations. Karl Barth wrote about Christian vocation as witness; “They are made to be witnesses; not idle spectators, ... not for the vain increase of their knowledge ... not inquisitive reporters; but witnesses who can and must declare what they have seen and heard like witnesses in a law-suit”.²⁸¹ It is true that all the people of Christ’s Body are called to be witnesses, but it is through Christian *diakonia* service that they earn the privilege to make that witness to willing and listening ears and hearts. John Stott has stated that Christians can bear an influence for change on society through the use of four “weapons”: prayer, evangelism, personal example and advocacy.²⁸² The evangelism mentioned by Stott needs to be something different from the past campaign type. It should be something that is an expression of the mission of God in the world, to extend the Kingdom, rather than the church’s effort to extend itself. George Hunsberger of Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, along with others, stated that this mission always starts as an internal one, where the church is repeatedly evangelized by the Holy Spirit and Christians are invited to receive the reign of God and enter into it. This then gives a “more welcoming framework for evangelism. Evangelism would move from an act of recruiting or co-opting those outside the church to an invitation of companionship”.²⁸³ This can have a profound effect on the daily life, personal calling and

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 342.

²⁸¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation Vol IV, Part 3, 2nd half* 1962, 576.

²⁸² Address noted above, 1999.

²⁸³ George R. Hunsberger, “Called and Sent to Represent the Reign of God” in *Missional Church*, Darrell L. Guder (ed.) 1998, 97.

discipleship of the laity. "Daily life becomes a discipline of asking how one may move more squarely into the realm of God's reign and how one may welcome and receive it into the fabric of one's life this day more than ever before".²⁸⁴ The Christian laity, having thus responded to the oncoming and present reign of God in the world, would then seek opportunities to invite others to join them as those who have been similarly extended God's welcome into this Realm or Kingdom.

The last of several means of Stott was advocacy. This focused on changing legislation and systems through debate, and consensus seeking. This leads us to a second aspect on the road to an answer to the problem of the marginalization of the church and its witness or ministry.

2.2 On a Corporate Level

The call to witness and minister must be considered beyond persons. The commission in Matthew was to make disciples of all nations. "Today, these 'nations' include secular corporations and social institutions. Here is the call to lay ministry. The impact of this call of God is radical, exciting, and crucial if the church is to participate meaningfully in the shaping of history in God's image"²⁸⁵ The future of our personal lives, our family, church and communities is being shaped by business and industrial multinational organizations; by health, welfare, environmental legislative agencies; by educational institutions, by local, provincial and federal governments; by political parties and by many more parts of the civil establishment. These are centres of power and decision making that need daily Christian ministry and the

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Alan J. Hinand, "The Pastor as Enabler for Lay Ministry" *Pastoral Psychology* 22 (June, 1971) 22. Alan J. Hinand is Research Director of the Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia.

priesthood of all the baptized. Coincidentally, these organizations and agencies usually contain Christians within them.

Peter Drucker, a management consultant, wrote in 1969, "During the last 60 years we have seen the emergence of a society of organizations in which every single social task of importance is entrusted to a large institution."²⁸⁶ In carrying out their ministry the Christian laity involved in these institutions, need to find ways to challenge them to a responsible stewardship of their economic and political influence and especially of their human resources. It is not enough to minister only to individual persons. Social structures also need Christian ministering in daily life. Hinand stated, "The major focus of the church's mission and ministry must quickly become that of enabling the laity to be change agents in and through the major secular organizations of our society."²⁸⁷ It is interesting that after almost 30 years the need is still as acute and the task is still largely incomplete. In a perceptive editorial *The Christian Century* expressed; "The awful truth is that there is no greater operational failure in American Christianity than the failure to make the ministry of the laity a visible reality."²⁸⁸ While this is still true today on the level of ministry to individuals, it is most painfully true on the corporate level. Hinand comments on this: "Not all our talk about the church as mission, nor the new evangelism, nor the new games of Christian education, nor the crash programs on the 'crisis in the nation,' nor our ecumenical spectacles can bring much health to the Body of Christ unless the meaning of Laity as ministry is incarnated in the style and structures of our common life"²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Peter Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity*, (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1969).

²⁸⁷ Hinand, 1971, 22.

²⁸⁸ "The Misplaced Ministry of the Laity", *The Christian Century*, (Feb. 19, 1969), 243.

²⁸⁹ Hinand, 1971, 21.

This obviously challenges the laity's sense of call to a ministry where they work, and in whatever they do and can do to make it a place where God's will is honoured.

God gives the believers the strength and the wisdom to engage in such a task. Karl Barth expressed an insight on this corporate witness when he wrote in the *Church Dogmatics*; "there are in the world men who exist at the side of the God who acts and reveals Himself in Jesus Christ. They do not stand there on their own merits. They do so only in the power of the call of His free grace as it has come to them and been received by them. But they do stand there: in the world yet over against it; like it, yet unlike it; with it, yet in solidarity with God against it. They may be few or many. They may declare and express themselves among the rest either appropriately or inappropriately in their human qualities as Christians".²⁹⁰ It is these declarations and expressions of Christianity in the world that must become more "appropriately", a Christian witness. In order to accomplish this an equipping process is needed and this will involve Christian education and issues in faith development. It is to these topics that we now turn.

²⁹⁰ Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1962, 557.

Chap. 6 ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR ADULT FAITH

DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction: Faith and Development

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb.11:1). As it was with the writer to the Hebrews, faith has been defined in different ways by various authors, and often in diverse ways by the same author. The “*Living Faith*” statement of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, defines it in a fairly traditional way.

6.1.1 “Faith is a gift of God constantly renewed in Word and Sacrament and in the shared life of God’s people. It is trust in God, involves personal repentance of sin, acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour, and commitment to him as Lord. It includes assent to the truth of the Gospel. By faith we receive the very life of God into our lives and joyfully discover that God knows, loves, and pardons us.”

6.1.3 “Faith is a response to God’s presence in the midst of life. It says “yes” to the God who is here.”²⁹¹

James W. Fowler of Candler School of Theology, at Emory University, seeks to bring out the verb-like sense of faith as a way of “knowing or construing by which persons or communities recognize themselves as related to the ultimate conditions of their existence.” Later Fowler refines that “faith is a dynamic, evolving pattern of the ways our souls find and make meaning for our lives”.²⁹² Moran had several problems with Fowler’s definitions of faith, like its possible lack of religious content, its separation from belief and its non-subjective nature. He

²⁹¹ Presbyterian Church in Canada, “*Living Faith*” 1984: 6.1.1 & 3.

²⁹² James W. Fowler, *Faithful Changes* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 21.

makes some good points for the need to have an open mind to the complex nature of a person's faith and to reclaim the historic or biblical richness once found in belief and faith. It appears to me that another problem is the attempts to define faith in terms that are applicable to the whole breadth and plurality of world religions. But Fowler has carried out extensive research on the matter and has much to offer to this thesis, so I will return shortly to him. Thomas Groome, in his contribution to the discussion, states "that Christian faith as a lived reality has three dimensions: 1) a belief conviction, 2) a trusting relationship, 3) a lived life of agape." These dimensions find expression in three activities: "1) faith as believing, 2) faith as trusting, 3) faith as doing".²⁹³ These express the engagement of the mind, heart and will.

In my life experience my "belief conviction" has remained as it was when I made public profession of faith in 1952. The content and understanding of that "believing" has expanded over the intervening years and continues to do so. It has been the faith as "trusting" and "doing" or living a "life of agape" that has gone through stages or developed toward maturity, and hopefully in "favour with God". Such a judgement is made not through developmental stage theory but through comparison to Christ in scripture and through prayer in dialogue with God. Without denying that faith development takes place in other religions, this project will refer more specifically to a Christian point of view for a Christian expression of Education, rather than to universal faith stages in which "one size fits all". I am following a course of investigation and thesis that is in keeping with Frei's Typology, type four, as noted earlier in Chapter 3. In it critical Christian self-reflection has priority. Notwithstanding this, faith stages still apply for Christians.

²⁹³ Thomas Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 57.

Taking the point of view as a Christian, I see faith as complete trust in the Triune God, that involves my whole being and will, which is made possible through the free gift of God in Jesus Christ. It is the believer's personal response to the living God that expresses itself in love and service to God. As a gift of God, faith has an objective constancy to it. But as a human response and action faith has the ability to grow and mature. My experience in personal maturity (both my own and observing others) and in the growing complexity of the world, all confirm in me the need for development and growth in faith.

Regarding development, Moran states that "Everything in it starts at one stage, undergoes a systematic change, and arrives at a more complete stage".²⁹⁴ The universality of this statement is true if one is considering the continual growth taking place in living things (even an old, human body grows new cells as others die off). When one looks at development, in the sense of stages succeeding one another, it is not as certain. Many living entities like plants and animals grow from an embryonic stage and then progress to take on a form, which they maintain till death. It would appear that many people in their psychological, moral, cognitive, consciousness and faith stages, develop through three or four stages and then remain there for the major part of their life. Nonetheless human life appears to be better understood, if only in the ideal sense, by the use of developmental language. As Fowler states "the sequence of stages ... does reflect a developmental process in human beings that makes both ontological and ontogenetic sense ... (Expressing) the structural characteristics of a sequence of developmentally related systems of constitutive knowing by which we construct ... self-others-

²⁹⁴ Gabriel Moran, *Religious Education Development*, (Minneapolis: Winston Press 1983) 17.

world as related to transcendence”.²⁹⁵ In other words, to consider aspects of human life as a sequence of developmental stages helps us to understand others and ourselves better in the midst of God’s creation and providence. In spite of the limitations and the vagueness or lack of agreement in developmental stage theory, it does provide some directions and answers for planning and engaging in life and learning. Therefore this has some relevance to adult education and equipping the laity.

While one recognizes stages in one’s faith development through retrospect, the stages are not that well-defined in clear step fashion. Looking back over my life I can note that there were times when I spoke ... thought ... and reasoned like a child, and that later I “gave up childish ways”. The stages are not always marked by defined steps up, by crisis events or obvious changes in believing and living. The faith journey progression often seems more like a gradual climb in a car up a mountain with many switchbacks. You may not see the progression until you stop at some scenic outlook and view the route behind you from a new perspective. This is a very good reason to have such “viewing points” in our life, especially in our adult life. One must be sufficiently mature or self-integrated and centred, in order to recognize the signs and perspective and not be tempted to place oneself in the highest stage. In a world of “ladder climbing” and “upward mobility” it is a temptation to use such developmental theories and their various stages as just one more peak to scale and summit to conquer. Most people, if given the social awareness scale, would surely claim that they are at or near the top, and are open to and concerned for the “whole of humankind”. Moran states, “To know the end of development is to subvert the notion of development because then the process of developing is merely an

²⁹⁵ James Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 297.

unfinished case of the developed and is therefore not very important”.²⁹⁶ (Incidentally this may be one of the few criticisms Fowler may have accepted from Moran, for he did stop referring to stage 6.) One would have to dig deeper to determine who made up that “whole of humankind”. Jesus had to do the same when he made it clear just who is my neighbour. Perhaps the scribes and Pharisees were at stage two with visions of grandeur toward stage five (or 6 if it exists). I agree with Moran’s position that “development requires the description of a kind of process that is definite but never-ending”.²⁹⁷ This is a paradox, but often, so is life.

Fowler’s stages push forward or upwards into a universalizing disinterested benevolence (originally explicit and now implicit). It is almost akin to the human potential movement. Is that the direction that we want, or in which we should go? For the Christian it would be better that the goal be “for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”. As Paul told the Philippian saints, “let those of us who are mature be thus minded”.

Moran, who criticises Fowler’s theory of faith development for being, among other things, too complicated and complex, presents a three-stage theory that may be too simple and vague.

What he does present though, is a helpful matrix for “religious education development”. He prefers that term to faith development. To my mind the term is not important as long as you don’t expect everyone who encounters it will have the same understanding. So it is that terms need to be defined, especially when Christian terms are being hijacked for other purposes.

A practical description of the nature of mature Christian faith has been provided by the Search Institute. They carried out a series of surveys of several hundred adults from six participating

²⁹⁶ Moran, *Religious Education Development*, (1983), 113.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

congregations in the USA. After their research and literature reviews posited that a person of mature faith integrates eight core dimensions of faith. Four of them have a personal and inner character; beliefs, personal life, spiritual growth and seeking Christian fellowship. The other four are more closely related to the focus of this thesis and its concern for developing mature Christians. They are as follows:

- Integrates faith and life, seeing work, family, social relationships, and political choices as part of one's religious life.
- Holds life-affirming values, including commitments to racial and gender equality, affirmation of cultural and religious diversity, and a personal sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.
- Advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice.
- Serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice.²⁹⁸

2. Adult Education and Faith Development

Adult Christian Education implies that there is a different form or content to Christian Education for adults as compared to children. Malcolm Knowles' assumptions about the adult learner are commonly experienced and documented in other studies by researchers like: B.W. Kreitlow, O. Brundage and J.R. Kidd, among others. The adult is identified as being self-directed, interdependent, broadly and deeply experienced, oriented toward learning where it has immediate application, and is problem centred. Other more recent researchers and theorists have noted flaws in this position and proven that it is not universally true. From my experience adult Christian education needs to pay close attention to the implications of self-directed and

²⁹⁸ The Search Institute, *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Six Protestant Congregations* (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1990).

highly experienced nature of adulthood, as well as to the tendency to be very selective and pragmatically inclined in the learning situation. The stage of cognitive-psychosocial maturity needs also to be addressed when considering educational activities.

“Henri Nowen once commented that Christian nurture necessitates three things: first, someone who is searching; second, someone who is willing to make her or his life a resource for another; and third, conviction that if there is to be any knowledge, it will come from a source beyond both”.²⁹⁹ To my mind and experience this is a true summary of Christian education, but a few codicils need to be added. It is important, first of all, to know the level of maturity and state of mind and heart of the person who is searching; as well as that of your own, if you are the potential “resource”. Where are you both on the journey of faith, as compared to where God challenges you to be? That is the second concern, for there is always a Divine call or challenge that beckons us on to fulfil our ministry. The third concern is that the picture is not just me, you and God, but there is a “whole cloud of witnesses” currently living, and hopefully within such a community where we carry out our “nurture”.

The problem in adult Christian or religious education or learning is to motivate and engage the majority of adult Christians in the learning activities. People with a conventional and status quo kind of faith do not want to be disturbed or confronted with questions. They are very secure in the ideal community and world that they have formed for themselves or have joined, and they do not want to be upset with pragmatic reality or other different ways of thinking, feeling or believing. This attitude runs counter to a ministry of service being carried out by the

²⁹⁹ John H. Westerhoff III, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 116.

church through these people. Marliss Rogers from the Office for Parish Councils, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, wrote that people's service is "connected closely to their spiritual journey". She went on to state, "Spiritual development is basic to becoming 'servant community' rooted in the gospel."³⁰⁰ Christian Education has a place in this development.

Education for faith development within a congregation needs to be cognizant of some basic principles of adult religious education. Three key principles as noted in the literature are: the adult learner is problem-centred rather than subject-centred; is self-directed; and is interested in immediate application of the learning. To serve the adult learner, regular adult Church School curricula may not be the most effective. It tends to be subject-centred, directed by others, and not consistently focused on ones' personal concerns. Congregations need to engage adults in identifying and planning their own learning activities on a regular basis. In the congregation I attend they have a Christian Education committee that does that kind of thing, but with an ongoing committee, many of the new potential adult learners are never engaged. One person that I interviewed, who has attended that church for several years, still finds his growth learning experiences in a small study group made up of friends from his former congregation. Jeff Woods, a Baptist at Indiana Wesleyan University, gives an insightful view of this educational problem when he says that churches should realize that they are now educating "immigrants" rather than training younger members who have had a long family history in the congregation. He states that "immigrant education" involves "mentoring, assimilation and life-long learning".³⁰¹ Mentoring involves the student in an open, respectful and often mutual learning

³⁰⁰ Marliss Rogers, "Organizing and Sustaining Committee Life", *Action Information of Alban Institute* Vol. XV, No 5, Sept./Oct. 1989, 20.

³⁰¹ C. Jeff Woods, *Congregational Megatrends* (Washington: Alban, 1996), 61.

relationship. Assimilation is a “process of involving a new member more deeply in the life of the local church”.³⁰² Life-long learning is useful to address the unique character and faith of new “immigrants” as well as the increasing diversity of most congregations. Life-long learning can assist the learner through various stages of faith development. These methods of education can provide an effective means of equipping laity for various types and situations of ministry in daily life. These issues will appear again at various points in this thesis.

Churches should have several different short-term, adult learning activities going on at any one time and several different opportunities for fellowship to serve the varied needs and interests of the members and adherents/seekers. There should also be the support structure that allows and encourages individuals to identify priority issues in their lives and helps them call for others to gather around to learn together, like an “Open Space” forum. A particular case for such a focus would be around job termination, corporate downsizing and vocational spirituality. Both one person that I interviewed and myself were, at the time, going through that trauma, so we have been in continued dialogue, but the congregational structure was not there to engage others. If it is true that many developmental stage transitions occur as a result of traumatic or painful experiences, then the Christian educational program needs to be aware of and responsive to those times, which come at various intervals in everyone’s life. I happen to feel from my experience (in spite of the current situation), that development transitions are not only crisis related, but in adulthood a significant portion of them could be. If the church was more responsive to these, then more growth could be taking place. I will be dealing with transitions more in the next chapter of this thesis.

³⁰² Ibid., 62.

3. Mature Faith in Action

The central focus of my concern is how to enable adult Christians to live an active mature faith in which they are engaged in living their lives in ministry or service of others in the midst of their daily life and work. Such a life would be attractive to others outside the faith community, as well as instructive and encouraging to those “babes in the faith”, within the fellowship.

These “mature adults” could be described by Erickson’s stage 7 where generativity has won out over self-absorption or stagnation, and produces the virtue or strength of “care”. Or to use Fowler’s terms, he or she would be at stage 5 of conjunctive faith where all the growth experience of earlier life have joined together to form a “wise hearted” individual who is open to others and lives in an interdependent way. Such persons are “constituted for liberating and redeeming presence and witness in the world”.³⁰³ In terms of Kegan’s 4th order of consciousness - “Institutional”, these persons are constituted by or imbedded in a self system which is a complete system of inter-relationships in an awareness of others in their diversity, but one’s own identity is self defined, autonomous and critically conscious.³⁰⁴ This is Maslow’s self-actualized person. Such persons are, in the words of a much earlier pastor of mine, “winsome Christians”. They attract others.

By investigation and interpretation, various researchers have inferred that there are very few adults or church members who are in stage 5 of Fowler, or its equivalent. They indicate that the largest numbers of adults are in stage 3: synthetic-conventional. These are the “Sunday only” or “special event Sunday” Christians. Their membership in church is largely an unexamined

³⁰³ James Fowler, *Stages of Faith and the Public Church* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 179.

³⁰⁴ Robert Kegan, *In Over our Heads* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 191 ff.

sense of belonging to the “right” group. Moran characterizes them as “having a religion” and “having God in one’s possession”.³⁰⁵ The challenge about which I am concerned, is to equip more Christian people with a mature or conjunctive faith position, in order that they, in turn, can help to move more of the family of the church from a faith development stage 3 to at least a stage 4: individuative-reflexive. This would mean that their faith and church affiliation would be based on their own personal choice, rather than merely being the faith of their fathers/mothers or sometimes even of their grandparents. This move would involve the conventional Christians in a journey from dependency to self-dependence, and relativism into a solid and grounded commitment. I believe that solidly committed, interdependent, open, stage 5 Christians, who are confirmed in their integration of their faith and life with the whole world, will be powerful mentors in this task. Such people can then be more effective in their ministry in daily life as ambassadors of the reign of God.

4. Education for Faith Development: A Proposal

The means to accomplish this Faith Development would be adult Christian education, and the laity themselves would be the main teachers and facilitators of the learning. In my own experience, the planning, preparations and presentation actions involved in teaching or leading groups have been the most energizing, enlightening and maturing experiences of my life. For people in the transition phases of some adult stage of faith, this teaching/learning challenge would be a powerful incentive on the faith development journey. Richard Robert Osmer states, “Participation in the teaching office encourages them to acknowledge the limitations of their

³⁰⁵ Moran, *Religious Education Development* (1983) 131.

own perspective and the moral relevance of that of others”.³⁰⁶ This surely implies faith development in both Fowler and Moran, and it does describe my experience.

Fowler refers to this development as “analogous to the *paideia* of *polis* ... the first task ... is *didache*, instruction, teaching catechesis ... the second task ... involves care for the orchestration and faithfulness of the community in providing and involving each member in the dimensions of *kerygma*, *leitourgia*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*”.³⁰⁷ Osmer states that “under the impress of its *paideia*, a community decides the substance and process of its educational activities”.³⁰⁸ Osmer calls for the recovering of the “Teaching Office” in the Church. By this he means the total structure and process of teaching in the Church. The whole education endeavour within the church needs to be examined, enriched and enlivened in order to enable the maturing of active, committed and faithful Christians. I appreciate Osmer’s definition “Education is a community's systematic and intentional effort to transmit and evoke knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that are deemed worthwhile”.³⁰⁹ This gives a well-rounded expression to what is needed to develop mature Christians. “The purpose of Christian religious education is to sponsor people toward maturity in Christian faith as a lived reality”.³¹⁰ By this kind of faith he means faith that engages in at least three activities: “believing, trusting and doing”. Christians engaged in such an education endeavour, would also be actively growing in their faith and developing along the stages. Groome and others use the term

³⁰⁶ Richard R. Osmer, *A Teachable Spirit* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 249.

³⁰⁷ Fowler, *Stages of Faith in the Public Church* (1991), 188.

³⁰⁸ Richard Osmer, *A Teachable Spirit* (1990), 16.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

³¹⁰ Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (1980), 73.

education, but perhaps learning would be a better word. Learning puts the focus more on what takes place in the person of the learner. It implies a formal and informal, in class and in daily living, “religious” and “secular” learning, that is central to faith development as it is to life.

In describing the adult stage of “the religiously Christian” person, Moran states that they *are* religious rather than *have* a religion. They have decided “to set their hearts on something”.³¹¹ That ultimate “something”, from my faith perspective, is the Triune God in Jesus Christ. When Moran applies educational development to these stages, he presents stage 3: “religiously Christian education”, as the period when one re-appropriates the earlier childhood insights and foundations into a new adult form with a “richer context of understanding”.³¹² The first “moment” in this stage is “journeying/inquiry” in which a person stretches their religious learning through experiences with family, job and leisure, as well as formal schooling. It is a time of searching for truth, goodness and compassion. He seems to downplay the need for formal education at this level: conversations with friends, books and magazines or weekly instruction within religious services may suffice for the schooling part of religious education at this age. The problem with this suggestion is that many people engage in all the former activities and never learn or develop their faith because they lack the organized reflective, interactive focus that drives development transitions and learning. Moran does present attractive models for a broad based adult learning that develops a person who shows compassion for every human being recognized as a fellow traveler on earth. His final summation: “religious education development is the inner/outer journey that leads to the center

³¹¹ Moran, (1983), 153.

³¹² Ibid., 190.

where peace and justice reside”³¹³ presents a positive image of those persons thus developed. It is also a picture of mature Christians who can have the most to offer to those in the less mature stages. Osmer identifies those with conjunctive faith as “guardians of that tradition”.³¹⁴ From their focused centre they can help those in Moran’s stage 2 or Fowler’s stage 3 or 4 to learn more about their particular belief system through sharing their faith stories and experiences. They become sources of “our people’s belief” and the traditions of our religious group, but they can do it in a way that does not negate or degrade other people’s belief. “The ‘Religiously Christian’ engaged in education, would find themselves in a strong position to assist the child, adolescent or young adult, who is “acquiring a religion”, to go through the moments of disbelief and myth dismantling without losing faith entirely. It is in this time that “the ethics of care”³¹⁵ noted by Carol Gilligan can be shared in relationships and ongoing attachments between maturity and young adulthood in order to encourage faith development.

Robert Kegan has noted that “there is no order of consciousness that holds less charm for us than the one we have only recently moved beyond”.³¹⁶ This also may be descriptive of faith developmental stages, but the “capacities for generativity” and the attitude of caring for all others, should overcome this possible barrier to mentoring or sponsorship. Sponsorship is “the way a person or community provides affirmation, encouragement, guidance and models for a person’s ongoing growth and development”.³¹⁷ Mature Christians are best equipped to give

³¹³ Ibid., 207.

³¹⁴ Osmer, (1990) 247.

³¹⁵ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 171.

³¹⁶ Kegan, (1994), 292.

³¹⁷ Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (1981), 287.

guidance on the journey, engendering trust, providing support, confronting and challenging the seeker. Where congregations are exhibiting a high degree of mature Christian or religious faith, they can better organize the formal educational program that goes with this personal mentoring. In the intentional teaching contexts that are provided they will “formulate teaching goals and styles that are sensitive to where people are in the developmental process”.³¹⁸ This will involve recognizing signs of readiness for stage transitions, which will require considerable group interaction and interdependent learning by several leaders around the stage development theories. This will also require the planners and presenters of formal teaching and learning activities to prepare or discover material that is organized so its “content is appropriate to the present stage of faith knowing and its form is appropriate to the next stage of development”.³¹⁹ This is no small task.

Research³²⁰ has shown that the two most effective areas, in which input can be made in order to improve an ideal learning project for middle-aged adults, is first through the providing of a resource person or advisor (in fact two persons, a moderator, and a reflector, often works well). The second is the existence of a group for ongoing discussion. The availability of more higher level, mature Christians engaged in interdependent learning from a faith perspective, around issues of immediate concern in life, vocation and global community, can provide for this strengthening of Christian Education toward adult faith/religious development. For me, the ultimate goal in all this is to form and equip Christians with a faith that informs and enables

³¹⁸ Osmer , (1990), 210.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 222.

³²⁰ As noted by R.E.Y. Wickett of the University of Saskatchewan in Religious Education (1980) and in N.T. Foltz of the University of Pennsylvania, *Handbook of Adult Religious Education*, 1986, 83-103.

their active service or ministry for God in the midst of their daily life and work. Our churches need this, our communities need this, our world needs this. This is mature active faith.

Adult education and faith development have enabled me to understand part of the task for equipping the laity for ministry in daily life. An issue of program and leadership has been touched upon in the form of faith maturation and mentoring. The specifics of program are being sought in the research questionnaire. The importance of a mature, open and sharing faith, should be obvious. Mature, well grounded and self-giving Christians have always been a goal in Christian educational planning. The question remains — Why has it not been readily achieved except for a minority in most congregations? Why do so few take part in Church educational opportunities? What motivates adults for learning? What can the Church do in order to engage more members in the equipping process? These are some of the questions that lie behind the next chapter and the subsequent questionnaire. In many ways it is a continuation of the investigations into the background literature and research that were the subject of this chapter. But it seeks the insight that can be found in secular educational studies as well as in the Church.

Chap. 7 Adult Learning and Ministry in the Workplace

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3)

1. Introduction

Many adult Christians find the mountaintop of the church and its Christian Education very far removed from daily life and work in the deep valleys of today's world. It has become a daunting climb or descent between the two. It is not even attempted by very many members or adherents of the churches with which I am acquainted. The Christian experience for many lay members of congregations is very sacred and spiritual, but it pertains to activities in, or related to, the church only, or perhaps in the family home as well. There is a sense of conserving the experiences of the past and the old patterns of religious life. Often these are not well defined, nor have a common agreed-upon standard. Some Christians even have a world denying side or fortress mentality to their church life. But whatever the experiences that come from activities and work within the church, they are meant to stay there (according to these Christians). They have little crossover value in the world of work and day to day living. It is in this outside world, that real-life experiences take place and they are secular, concrete and even profane. The experiences learned in commerce and industry are seen as not fit subjects for church. This may even be confirmed by past negative experiences of trying to link up the two "worlds". The

work-day world is one of survival, and often gives experiences learned at the “school of hard knocks”. But it is forward looking, relevant to today and useful for the daily pattern of life.

2.- Seeking the Linkage

The concern of this chapter is to discover an experiential link between adult learning in the Church and adult ministry in the world. The specific focus is on the portion of the “*laos theou*”, (people of God) or “laity”, who are not formally educated theologically nor ordained to a professional ministry. It is my position in this thesis that these “ordinary” members have a ministry in their daily life and work to which they are called by God; and they should have learning experiences in the Church that equips them for this ministry. Too often the experiences in each area are separated and isolated from each other.

Many church members and those on the margins of church life see ministry as that which is done by professional ministers, pastors, preachers, padres etc. Any ministry carried out by laity usually takes place in the church building, where they operate as Church School teachers, choir or worship team, committee membership or leadership, elders or deacons and perhaps some occasional lay preaching. These are things that have been done in the in-between time, discretionary moments between work and worship. This has come out of a long history as already noted. There is also recognition of lay pastoral care or visiting, but for many persons a visit from the pastoral minister is what really counts. The practice of ministry by the “laity” has been limited by themselves and often by the church officials. There has been a separation between Sunday and the other six days, between the sacred and the secular, between worship and work. To such people the church has nothing to say to the work world. This is the realm of their occupation: what they do for a living. The most ministry they might carry out is to invite a

good prospect or like minded seeker to come to their church. Some feel that the church is dwelling in the past. The work world is a situation that demands learning to keep current. Formal educational activities are often required in the work place and encouraged in educational institutions like colleges and universities. It is secular and business related. This is a real practical problem but it also has theological implications. At a recent conference on "God's Mission in the Workplace World", Loren B. Mead of the Alban Institute and William E. Diehl were in dialogue. Out of this conference came this statement by Diehl about lay people. They "live in a dual ... theology. On Sunday we hear a theology of grace; on Monday we go into a world where a theology of work is practiced ... where you are identified by what you do and you are valued by how well you do it. The issue is how ... lay persons [can] go from that Sunday theology of grace into the world ... of works?"³²¹

Part of the problem is that these lay people view the learning experiences in the church as very confined and perhaps confining. They are limited to pre-adolescence, limited to church related activities only, and limited in relevance and value. Any experiences gained in church activities or church education does not translate into work life. Sunday School education did not prepare them for the harsh realities of life. Their assumption is that adult Christian learning experiences are just the same old Christian Education and would fail for them just as the children's version may have. Their exposure to the teaching of the Church is limited to preaching, special classes (pre-marriage, prior to baptism etc.) and perhaps some short-term classes. They remember it as very sermonic, uni-directional and teacher centred. The adult classes promoted in

³²¹ "God's Mission in the Workplace World" Conference, Columbus, Ohio, December 5, 1998 reported in the Newsletter *Connexion*, of Forum for Faith in the Workplace, Winter, 1999.

congregations are often for the study of scripture and some other books, church doctrine, ethics, missions (primarily overseas) and something called spirituality or spiritual growth. Many see little that relates to their daily living. When someone talks about vocation or God's call to ministry, they relate it to doing more work in and around the church, or for the church. They don't have any spare time left over, from making a living or maintaining a family and a house, in order to allow them to take on a vocation as well. Teenagers might go away on Christian service/work experiences in the inner city or other regions, but that "ministry" is beyond their adult timetable.

Contrasted with this limited vision for, and practice of adult Christian education and adult lay ministry in the world, is the fact of a limitless potential for both of them. This potential could be achieved if we open the doors and windows between both worlds, lower the mountain and raise the valley in order to experience the full possibilities in each. This could hopefully be done through a change in the experiences toward adult Christian education and lay ministry. Although there is a solid footing in the theology and teachings of the church on the priesthood of all believers, there is not an equally strong footing in the experience of the laity to build a bridge between the two.

Among the possibilities for adult Christian education is the activity and methods to make it learner focused, learner driven, planned and evaluated. Various curricula are available that engage in experiential learning, related to life and equipping for ministry and service in daily

life and work.³²² Unfortunately in spite of their long term existence and value they have not been utilized by many church members, to my knowledge.

A review of educational development theories could be summarized metaphorically by saying that Behaviourists see humans as machines, Cognitive Theorists see them as brains, and Humanistic Theorists see them as living organisms. Malcolm Knowles of Boston University, states that these form “a continuum of different types of learning situations” (Behaviourist for Programmed Instruction, Cognitive for Teaching, Humanistic for self-directed learning). Knowles sees human life and its learning activities as orderly, progressive and self-defining.³²³ The Christian experience reveals another reality that radiates through all these theories, which is Revelation. In it humans are created in the image of God and chosen as God’s special creation. Christian education becomes the learning of our relationship with God and of God’s providential love. This love calls us to live with love for the rest of creation. God then defines what our life could be and we choose the boundaries we wish for ourselves. The challenge for this current project is to encourage and enable the laity to expand these boundaries so that church and daily living are in the same circle of experience and learning. In scripture much of learning came through experience along with God’s counsel and teachings. It was observed in the older people:

Wisdom is with the aged,
and understanding in length of days. (This is a question in NRSV)
With God are wisdom and might;

³²² N.B. See Bibliography Everist & Vos, Fryling, Bill Hull, Kallestad & Schey, Leith, Prior, Reber, Stevens & Warren, to name a few.

³²³ Malcolm Knowles, *The Making of an Adult Educator* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989), 47-48.

he has counsel and understanding. (Job 12:12-13 RSV)

After listing the various works of God, Job states:

Look, my eye has seen all this,
my ear has heard and understood it.

What you know, I also know; (Job 13:1-2)

Elihu retorts:

I said 'Let days speak,
and many years teach wisdom.'

But truly it is the spirit in a mortal,
the breath of the Almighty,
that makes for understanding.

It is not the old that are wise,
nor the aged that understand what is right. (Job 32:7-9)

The Psalmist, (perhaps David) states:

I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread. (Ps 37:25)

The writer of Proverbs stated that learning came first of all from a father's instruction; to which we are to be attentive so that we may gain insight. But continued experience seems to be involved in developing this:

The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,
and whatever else you get, get insight. (Prov. 4:7)

There seemed to be some diversity of opinion in Hebrew scripture regarding the relationship between experience, age, and wisdom. In some places wisdom seems to come with old age, but mostly it comes from a dynamic interaction between personal experience and Divine Revelation. One common insight is the fact that wisdom comes to persons who are open to

seeing it and receiving it from the activity of God in the world. Wisdom and a fully engaged life are related.

The New Testament is clear that once a person has experience and the wisdom it brings, they are to use it for others. Christ's message came out of experience grounded in faith. "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony" (John 3:11). After both receiving Christ's teaching and engaging in learning experiences, Jesus sent out the 70 in groups of two, to go ahead of him to engage in the same ministry of teaching and healing. Jesus called his disciples, mentored, or equipped them, and sent them out to share that experience with others. Paul (II Corinthians 1:4) and Peter (II Peter 1:16ff) express the same concept, that it was out of direct experience of Christ that they and the other apostles engaged in their teaching ministry. Scripture makes a strong link between what today is called adult learning and ministry in daily life. The assumption is always that the learning will lead to the service for others.

3. Motivation to Learn: Data from Education Motivational

Theories

Adult Christian Education forms a significant part of religious education and thus a very significant portion of adult learning. Paul Burgess of the University of Missouri noted from the literature and his research, some of its importance. He refers to Malcolm Knowles' statement that "adults participating in religious institution adult education programs [were] the largest numbers of participants in any of the numerous types of institutions which conduct adult education activities." Also the "National Opinion Research Centre study [indicated that] more

adults participate in educational courses sponsored or conducted by churches and synagogues than any other type of adult education institution".³²⁴ Yet religious or spiritual reasons do not figure high in the literature on motivation for adult education. Perhaps this is because the specific question was not asked. If this broad study were to be done today, one wonders if it would produce similar results.

In providing educational programs for the adults of the church in a retreat setting, I have noticed that only a few people take advantage of such opportunities. Some people take part in educational and spiritual development activities regularly. Others do not participate at all. In fact some congregations frequently send people to such events and others never acknowledge that they are taking place. This could be a problem of motivation, communication, finances, time, personal priorities or other concerns. If we can understand the motivation of participants, we might be able to better communicate to the non-participants in a way that could possibly might encouragement.

3.1- Experience and Research

Qualitative observations over 20 years of such programming have suggested that the motivation for continued education among lay women and men in the church:

- is high among those who have already participated in a training course
- is higher among those who have a specific task/responsibility in which they are engaged
- is higher among those who have taken a Cursillo study weekend ³²⁵
- is higher among those who have graduated from university or college.

³²⁴ Paul Burgess, "Reasons for Adult Participation in Group Education Activities", *Adult Education* 22 (1971), 23.

³²⁵ A further consideration of Cursillo is forthcoming in the next chapter.

These indications are consistent with previous research and motivational theory particularly K. Patricia Cross's Chain-of-Response Model for understanding participation in adult learning activities.³²⁶

Patricia Cross of the University of California-at Berkeley, draws upon a synthesis of common elements in previous models to propose "the rough beginning of a conceptual framework designed to identify the relevant variables and hypothesize their interrelationships".³²⁷ The model "assumes that participation in a learning activity, whether in organized classes or self-directed is not a single act but the result of a chain of responses, each based on an evaluation of the position of the individual in his or her environment".³²⁸ Cross's model, while not predicting who will participate, does give a picture of the psychological and environmental factors that influence the participation in learning for a general population. These include factors of: attitudes about education, self-evaluation, personal goals, life transitions etc.

3.2- Faith as a Motivator

It is part of my hypothesis that along with the many variables that encourage participation in adult education, there is an additional one for adult Christian Education, which has a high incidence of motivation on adult learners in the Church. That is the motivation of the 'Call of God'. As part of that call to repentance, Christian discipleship and service, there comes a call to learn about the faith, the church and ones' role in it. In the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, K.L. Schmidt lays out the various aspects of "to call". "If Jesus does the calling in

³²⁶ K. Patricia Cross, *Adults as Learners*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1986), 124.

³²⁷ Ibid., 124.

³²⁸ Ibid., 125.

the Gospels, he does so in fulfilment of a divine function, and the proper response is faith, which carries with it not only discipleship but also the blessings of salvation.”³²⁹ Notably connected with the calling of his disciples is the fact that extensive education followed for the remainder of Jesus’ life on earth and after. In fact the call to “fish for people” in Matthew is followed immediately by the educational cluster of teachings known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), and in Mark it is followed by Jesus teaching in the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1). In Luke the passages follow on teachings about the problem of fasting, about the Sabbath and the collection “on a level place” (Luke 5 & 6). Paul urges the Ephesians (4:1) to “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.” Paul carried out extensive educational endeavours connected with the calling of people to Christ. We also read in Acts (2:42) that the new converts “devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship”. The Greek word *ekklesia* meaning the assembly or church comes from the root *kaleo* - to call. The church or *ekklesia*, particularly of Paul’s letters, is therefore the gathering of the called, which we know included teaching along with the proclamation.

What was true in the first century church should be likewise true today, especially among those who have made a recent commitment to respond to the call of Christ. I feel that this motivation of the call should be significant among the many motivators that promote participation in adult Christian education activities. In Cross’ model it could be part of self-evaluation or life transitions or perhaps even be a specific new factor on the model. One problem is to determine what are the various motivators that impact on adult participants and potential participants in

³²⁹ ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrick, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G.W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 395ff.

Christian education endeavours of various types (Bible studies, teaching retreats, leadership seminars, study groups etc.). A second problem is to concretize and measure the call or Christian vocation as a motivator. As stated earlier our interest focuses on the call to ministry in daily life to lay members of the church. They are called by Christ to be equipped for service and then to present the reign of God in the world.

3.3- Motivators in Other Educational Research

A significant amount of study has been made into the motivation for participation in adult education courses, programs or activities. Early work on motivation was carried out by Abraham Maslow, the humanistic psychologist in 1954, when he developed the hierarchy of needs from which implications for the reasons why adults pursue education can be drawn. By his theory the basic needs of survival, safety and belonging are always met before the needs of status, achievement and self-realization. Cyril Houle of the University of Chicago, identified three motivational types based on in-depth interviews of 21 adults. In *The Inquiring Mind* (1961), he identifies the types who had high rates of participation, as those who were primarily 1) goal-oriented who used learning to gain specific objectives, or 2) activity oriented who participate for the sake of the activity itself, or 3) learning oriented who pursue learning for its own sake. Houle also proposed five factors that led adults to life long learning: strong relationships with parents; positive experiences with teachers and schools; regular use of public libraries; wanting to change occupations; and the stimulation of friends.

To test Houle's typology, Boshier of the University of Auckland and Burgess of the University of British Columbia, Morstain of the University of Delaware and Smart of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and others used factor analysis to determine the underlying structure of the reasons

that adults give for their educational participation. Roger Boshier in 1971 assembled 48 items detailing reasons for participation, called the Educational Participation Scale. From his research with 233 adult education participants he proposed 14 first-order factors or “motivational orientations”, e.g. Social welfare, Social contact, Intellectual recreation, Educational preparedness etc.³³⁰

In the same year Paul Burgess from his study of the research literature, developed the Reasons for Educational Participation Scale. In this he factored the previous research findings into eight groups of reasons, (see Figure 1), and he tested the hypothesis on 1,046 adult learners.³³¹

Burgess found another factor “the desire to reach a religious goal” out of the responses to his questionnaire. “The definition of this factor is apparently a desire to learn in order to meet felt obligations to a church, to some religious faith, or to some religious missionary effort.”³³² But factors numbered 7 and 8 below did not emerge out of the study.

Fig 1 Burgess’ Cluster of Reasons for Participating in Education Activities

1. The desire to know for the sake of knowing.
2. The desire to gain knowledge in order to achieve a personal goal.
3. The desire to gain knowledge in order to achieve a social goal.
4. The desire to take part in a social activity.
5. The desire to escape.
6. The desire to comply with formal requirements.
- (7. The desire to comply with general social pressures exerted by acquaintances, friends, relatives, or society as a whole.)
- (8. The desire to study alone or just to be alone.)
- + The desire to reach a religious goal

³³⁰ Roger Boshier, “Motivational Orientations of Adult Education Participants” *Adult Education* 21, 2 (1971) 10.

³³¹ Paul Burgess, “Reasons for Adult Participation in Group Educational Activities” *Adult Education* 22 (1971) 9-10.

³³² *Ibid.*, 22.

Barry Morstain and John Smart in 1974 carried out factor analysis on the Educational Participation Scale and came up with six factors. A summary of these six motivational factors is as follows:

Fig. 2 Morstain and Smarts' Factors combined with the Educational Participation Scale

Factor I. Social Relationships

To fulfil a need for personal associations and friendships

To make new friends

Factor II. External Expectations

To comply with instructions from someone else

To carry out the expectations of someone with formal authority

Factor III. Social Welfare

To improve my ability to serve mankind

To prepare for service to the community

To improve my ability to participate in community work

Factor IV. Professional Advancement

To give me higher status in my job

To secure professional advancement

Factor V. Escape/Stimulation

To get relief from boredom

To get a break in the routine of home or work

To provide a contrast to the rest of my life

Factor VI. Cognitive Interest

To learn just for the sake of learning

To seek knowledge for its own sake

To satisfy an inquiring mind.³³³

Frederick Herzberg, a Professor of Psychology at Western Reserve University, developed a scheme called the Theory of Motivation-Hygiene³³⁴ specifically for job attitudes, but it has some implications for pursuing adult education. In it some motivators that had a significant impact on the motivation to work would also apply to the motivation for continuing in education: achievement, recognition, the work (or learning) itself, advancement and the

³³³ B. R. Morstain and J. C. Smart, "Reasons for Participation in Adult Education Courses" *Adult Education* 24 (2 '74) 86-88.

³³⁴ F. Herzberg, *Work and the Nature of Man*, (New York: Crowell Publishers, 1966), 71.

possibility of growth.

John W.C. Johnstone and Ramon J.Rivera for the National Opinion Research Center, carried out, prior to 1965, a foundational and monumental study of the educational activities of adults based on a survey of about 12,000 American households and an intensive study through personal interviews on 1,800 randomly selected adults plus 1,000 recent adult education participants. They sought to discover the reactions of adults to continuing education. Among the reasons for taking adult education courses the most frequent were that they hoped: to become a better informed person 37%, to prepare for a new job or occupation 36%, to be helpful on the job they currently held 32%.³³⁵ People endorsed more than one reason. Employment related goals frequently encouraged adults to continue in their education. In *"Volunteers for Learning"* they concluded: "Its quite clear from the results of our study that the major emphasis in adult learning is on the practical rather than the academic; on the applied rather than the theoretical; and on skills rather than on knowledge or information".³³⁶

In Ontario, Allen Tough of O.S.I.E., carried out a study of the reasons for beginning and continuing a learning project ³³⁷ (Tough 1968). He carried out 35 in-depth interviews around the thirteen reasons he developed from his own observations and searching the literature. Among the strongest reasons that motivated were: use for taking action with the learning, find out about something of puzzlement or curiosity, enjoyment from receiving the content, pleasure from the activity of learning. Almost every learner interviewed gave more than one reason for

³³⁵ J.W.C. Johnstone and R.J. Rivera, *Volunteers for Learning* (Hawthorne, N.Y.: Aldine, 1965), 143.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

³³⁷ Allan Tough, *Why Adults Learn* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Adult Education, 1968).

engaging in learning. A great many of these learning experiences were self motivated and self defined, individual learning projects, and pursued as personal , independent studies, like reading personal research or discussion with an expert. Tough also found that adult learners were most frequently motivated by the practical desire to use or apply the knowledge or skill.

Abraham Carp, Richard Peterson and Pamela Roelfs of the University of California at Berkeley, published a study based on survey questionnaires given to 2,974 people nationally across the USA of whom 2,004 responded. (See fig.3) This Commission on Non-traditional Study national survey indicated that “the most important reasons center around knowledge for its sake, with personal fulfillment reasons and job related reasons next in importance”.³³⁸ There were differences between the sexes in response to some factors, and learning for curiosity increased with age. The findings also indicated that the more education a person had the more likely they would be motivated to engage in continued education.

Fig. 3 Reasons for Learning³³⁹

Percent of would-be learners checking	
<u>Reasons</u>	<u>“Very Important”</u>
Knowledge Goals	
Become better informed	56
Satisfy curiosity	35
Personal Goals	
Get new job.....	25
Advance in present job	17
Get certificate or license	27
Attain degree.....	21
Community Goals	
Understand community problems.....	17
Become better citizen	26

³³⁸ A.Carp, R.Peterson and P.Roelfs, “Adult Interests and Experiences”, in *Planning Nontraditional Programs*, K.P. Cross, J.R. Valley et al. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974), 43.

³³⁹ Ibid., 42.

Work for solutions to problems.....	16
Religious Goals	
Serve church	12
Further spiritual well-being	19
Social Goals	
Meet new people.....	19
Feel sense of belonging	20
Escape Goals	
Get away from routine	19
Get away from personal problems.....	11
Obligation fulfillment	
Meet educational standards	13
Satisfy employer	24
Personal Fulfillment	
Be better parent, spouse.....	30
Become happier person	37
Cultural Knowledge	
Study own culture	14
Other Reasons.....	4
No response or other response.....	14

Carol B. Aslanian and Henry M. Brickell, for the College Entrance Examination Board of New York, posited a different approach to motivation in their Transition Hypothesis. They noted the many life transitions like moving, military service, marriage, parenthood etc., involved all of the adults in the USA. This led them to the “idea that adult life transitions might be reasons for adult learning”.³⁴⁰ They formulated a general proposition: “Moving from one status in life to another requires the learning of new knowledge, new skills, and/or new attitudes or values.”³⁴¹ They found that “83% of the learners surveyed described some past, present, future change in their lives as reasons to learn”³⁴² Their second proposition was that: “Some identifiable event

³⁴⁰ C.B.Aslanian and H.M.Brickell, *Americans in Transition*, (New York: College Entrance Examination Board 1980) 34.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid., 49.

triggers an adult's decision to learn at a particular point in time"³⁴³ Triggers include events like having a baby, getting fired, divorce, having a heart attack etc. These triggers convert the need, desire and opportunity for learning into actual active participation in a learning project. Triggers are not necessarily related to the topic of the learning as are the transitions. In their research they classified seven life areas where the transitions and triggers were operative. In their findings they noted that career-related transitions requiring learning, and triggers for learning accounted for the experience of 56% of the learners. The other life area transitions requiring learning were family 16%, leisure 13%, art 5%, health 5%, religion 4%, and citizenship 1%. Triggers for learning came 36% from family, 4% from health, 2% from religion, and 1% from citizenship.³⁴⁴ We have here the concept of a "teachable moment". Just preceding or immediately after a significant trigger occurs, is often the prime time for people to seek learning programs.

4.- Adult Learning Literature

4.1- Learning to Learn

Robert M. Smith formerly of Northern Illinois University, in *Learning How to Learn*, presented today's generally accepted observations about the optimum conditions for adult learning.

Experience is given an important place in learning, especially considering the greater amounts of experience that reside in adults. Smith notes that adult experiences are double sided. The "adult's reservoir of past experience represents at one and the same time, a potentially rich

³⁴³ Ibid., 37.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 54, 57.

resource for learning and an obstacle to learning, since learning constitutes, in part, a process of reaffirming, reorganizing, and reintegrating one's previous experience".³⁴⁵ The book also presents the fact that "unlearning" is often involved in the changes that learning brings. In order to learn some new ideas or new ways of working, adults might have to cast off older experience of what is true or useful. Smith has a well informed view of the ever changing flow of knowledge and experience that fills the adult's life-long-learning through every aspect of their lives. The conditions for learning are fairly obvious and make common sense. But we need to recognize that real life is not so kind to common sense. Many adults throw up resistance and blocks to these "optimum" conditions. Their experience works against them. Learning might go on throughout life, but it is seen by many as a young person's activity. Learning should be personal, but too frequently adults remember only impersonal teaching sessions. Learning does involve change and development, but the status quo is often more comfortable. Learning might pertain to experience and experiencing, but some adults suffer from experiential overload and retreat to their protective castle. Experiences can mean hurt and pain, as well as joy and pleasure. Regarding the intuitive side of learning, some people find this useful but others are suspicious and distrustful of learning that comes out of intuition.

Most of Smith's four critical characteristics of adult learners³⁴⁶ are based on a premise that the past of ones' life is good and enriching, adults should affirm their past and use their experience positively in learning and personal or communal development. This is true for many North American, middle class, higher educated whites from functional families. Most of the research

³⁴⁵ Robert M. Smith, *Learning How to Learn* (Chicago: Follett Publishing, 1982), 36.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 38-42.

has engaged that strata of society. But a different attitude toward the past and its experiences is found in many others. It is one marked with shame, disappointment and distress. It is deliberately avoided as defective for learning and growth. Even the middle class in underdeveloped countries or in places subject to war and civil violence would find it hard to relate to the positive characteristics of experience. Smith does recognize the fact that some adults face learning with ambivalence and anxiety, but for many it is also distressful, and for others it is an agony because of the trauma of their past life.

Among Smith's six optimum conditions for learning is one on experience: "Learning's content and processes bear a perceived and meaningful relationship to past experience and experience is effectively utilized as a resource for learning".³⁴⁷ This would be true where learning progresses on a continuum of good experiences. It also relates well to institutional and business related learning. The same could likely be true for spiritual experiences and religious learning. But when one crosses over between the "two worlds" one finds a discontinuity of experience and some people even set up a wall. The common opinion is that Sunday School learning does not relate to the work world (even when Sunday School was a good experience). Similarly the experiences of corporate competition, complex inter-relationships, and critical communication set amidst time restraints and other pressures do not, (some say), translate into church learning endeavours. With this canyon set between work experience and church learning it is very hard to have an effective learning experience to enable adults to recognize and engage in ministry in daily life and work. No amount of anxiety reducing methodology will bridge the gap, if the

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 47.

potential learners refuse to make the connection or cross the divide.

Smith also points to the condition of one's ability to learn being related to one's developmental stage in life. While this is true for cognitive development, it runs afoul on other types of development that can impact on learning, like social, emotional, and faith. Some people may give evidence of vast differences between the developmental level they have reached cognitively from what they have attained either socially, emotionally or more especially in faith development. One may be at a high, sophisticated level of cognition, but may function at a mythic-literal level of faith development. There may also be an unconscious internal barrier that prevents a person from making the connection between these various parts of their being. There are considerable issues and conditions that must be taken into account by adult Christian educators. Perhaps the first is just to get the two worlds of experience to talk to each other, within each person and between persons in community.

When approaching learning style, Smith presents a picture of adults very diverse in their cognitive and affective characteristics. Their styles of learning are both varied and variable. Educators need to be open, observant, caring and flexible. This factor becomes one of greater diversity when one adds to it church and faith development. When we add in the various temporal and spiritual transitions with their emotional and faith development progressions, we have an even more diverse situation. The choice of learning style rests with the learner and is both time and situationally sensitive. The church learning opportunities and leader facilitation must be broad, deep and critically aware, in order to encourage dialogue.

Jane Vella in *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, sought to assist leaders/teachers to design their learning activities for dialogue, in order to provide the necessary conditions for adults to learn. Her study and work has been on an international basis, and the results show less of the North American “WASP” limitation. She puts forward a useful set of principles, but effective learning is based on a primary premise: “The basic assumption is that all learners come with both experience and personal perceptions of the world based on that experience, and all deserve respect”.³⁴⁸ Of her twelve principles for effective adult learning, the ones on needs assessment, sound relationship, praxis, respect for learners as subjects, and engagement of the learners in their learning, seem to offer the most relevant support to the Christian adult learning — lay ministry dialogue. When adults have such varied work experiences and feel so separated from church education, then a careful needs assessment might help to bridge the gap. The three needs assessment tasks: (ask, study and observe) would be of great value here. Before we can provide Christian learning for anyone’s work situation, the church educator needs to know more about the reality and pressures of their workday world. Interviews or questionnaires for the potential learners would be helpful. The building of a strong relationship of mutual respect between the leaders who are engaged in or leading the Christian education programs and those who might be interested in participating, also builds bridges. The personal individual approach would also assist in the attracting, encouraging and engaging of slightly reticent, yet potential adult learners, into a learning experience in which they can learn some relevant way of ministry, try it out and then reflect on the experience. The use of others of Vella’s principles would need to be carefully considered and appropriately applied in each case, or they could drive a wedge

³⁴⁸ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 22.

into the existing cleavage. The principle of immediate usefulness of the new learning could be a problem when we deal with this separation. But it could be used to an advantage if small learnings were applied repeatedly over a long period in order to discover their benefit and evaluate the methods as in the praxis principle. Putting the Christian learning into action in the work situation is, after all, what we are seeking.

Various studies of learning like that of Malcolm Knowles, gave expression to principles and characteristics of the learners that are used to build a theory or a model for adult learning. As one studies a model like the androgogical model, one sees a specific kind of person being revealed. This person might best be described as a middle or upper class, upwardly mobile adult who is looking for educational (often formal) experiences that might improve their position in life. In a major national study of 1,539 adults in the USA, Aslanian and Brickell contrasted learners with non-learners and found the former to be younger, better educated, more affluent, more likely to be employed, and to be a professional.³⁴⁹ The studies seemed to be drawn from these kind of people, and therefore have a bias. When we want to build bridges, a narrow slice of the continuum of humanity is not helpful. Stephen D. Brookfield of Teachers' College, Columbia University, presents a critical look at many of the studies and the resultant typologies. He does not accept some of the conclusions, because the studies were usually made on those engaged in formal institutionally based education and other characteristics noted above. He is critical of some of the ideas and characteristics put forward on adult learning, like its self-directedness, its so-called problem-centred focus and its need for immediate

³⁴⁹ Aslanian and Bricknell, *Americans in Transition* (1980), 46.

application.³⁵⁰ Brookfield does accept the role of past experience in affecting how adults interpret the present. He notes, among the observable commonalities, how learning involves “exploration of a field of knowledge ... or in a collective reflection upon common experiences ... participants in these explorations bring to the encounter a collection of experiences ... that are going to influence how new ideas are received...and how the experiences of others are interpreted”.³⁵¹ He refers to other observations on how every adult’s prior learning and experience “coheres into a ... mediatory mechanism through which new experiences and knowledge are filtered”.³⁵² This emphasis of the adult’s past experience is helpful to the issue at hand, but there is still the problem of bridging the gap. The value of the process of participatory learning practice in the presenting of new knowledge “to adult learners in a manner that is comprehensible in terms of their own experiences”,³⁵³ is diminished when the lack of relationship between the “two worlds” blocks this bridge. He also makes a strong case for the need of transactional or collaborative encounters in adult learning in order to be effective. On this point, the assumption is that all people are capable and willing to enter into such a dialogue or will accept facilitation to engage in it. While this model or concept is likely good for some adult learning, it is too demanding for others. There is a need to recognize the level of ability and knowledge of the adult learners and use of some of the group dynamics model to lead the group to a level where dialogue can become effective. For some it takes one teacher at the other end of the log with one learner in order to develop a critical reflection on

³⁵⁰ Stephen D. Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 120.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 12.

his/her experience, and develop it to a level where the “collaborative interpretation and exchange” of experiences can then take place. I have found this in working with Senior Adults in study situations. The problem for many church people is the fear of being critical in a learning situation that is also meant to be collaborative. They need to acquire particular skills and knowledge to engage in either the critical reflection or collaborative learning. The members of any congregation need to learn how to reflect critically on their interactions and activities as a church, without being divisive.

Henri Nouwen, formerly a priest with the L’Arche Community of Toronto, made a very precise analysis of teaching in the church in *Creative Ministry*, that is relevant to this learning concern as well. He contrasts teaching as a violent process that is competitive, unilateral and alienating; with teaching as a redemptive process, which is evocative, bilateral and actualizing.³⁵⁴ What he says about schools can relate well to adult Christian education: “But when schools are places where community can be experienced, where people can live together without fear of each other, and learning can be based on a creative exchange of experiences and ideas, then there is a chance that those who come from them will have an increasing desire to bring about in the world, what they experienced during their years of formation”.³⁵⁵ It is important that churches be communities of learning. Nouwen’s analysis does not go far enough. Churches also need to engage in corporate discernment rather than just “open ended discussion”, also in multilateral learning rather than bilateral teaching. Although Nouwen tried to imply that every Christian is

³⁵⁴ Henri Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 6-13.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

a minister and hence a teacher, he still holds the priest-teacher as the visible focus and therefore, primary. The teaching act, for him, had ascendancy over the learning activity.

4.2- Resistance to Learning

Nouwen does give a brief but excellent analysis of “Resistance against Learning”. In it he refers to crucial ideas about “Insight” by Bernard Lonergan of Regis College, made in 1957. “To exclude an insight is also to exclude the further questions that would arise from it and the complementary insights that would carry it towards a rounded and balanced viewpoint. To lack that fuller view results in behavior that generates misunderstanding both in ourselves and in others”.³⁵⁶ This results in a blind spot or a scotosis “by which we prevent our own experience from becoming part of the learning process”.³⁵⁷ There may be in many adults this deep aberration, which prevents the connection of work and life-related experiences with church-related perspectives, that could give rise to “unwanted insights”. Nouwen suggests “three reasons that keep us from learning”: a wrong supposition (better to give than receive), false pressure (formal recognition: degrees etc.), and the horror of self-encounter (resistance against conversion that involves kenosis). We have here a teacher centred problem, a student centred problem and one that centres on both. The student centred issue (false pressure) can relate to the concern of this paper specifically in the way that most learning in the secular and work setting focuses on formal acknowledgement on learning through certificates, degrees and/or job advancement. Adult learning in a church setting has very little formal recognition. So in like

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 15.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 16.

fashion to Nouwen's point, this fact "tends to pull us away from our own more personal needs and to prevent us from coming to insights into our own experiences that can form the basis of a creative life project".³⁵⁸ The issue of resistance to a mutual or corporate self-emptying is, I

think, an even greater barrier to adult learning in the Church and to bridging the work-faith gap.

John Hull of the University of Birmingham, England, has presented an extensive study of such resistances in *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?*. He makes a good point for the way in which adults puerilize whatever they consider is not needed for engaging adult, modern daily life. Hence Christmas, fairy tales, religion and Christian Education become — for children only. The confusion and pressures of the weekday become the adults' world.

Weekends and especially Sundays are seen as sanctuaries cut off from the modern world for individuals or family or church. This not only results in resistance to adult learning in the church, but in an almost total rejection of its relevance. Hull also notes that one's

denominational or church affiliation (communal or individualistic) can be a barrier to learning.

It becomes an enterprise in which the old knowledge has to be dealt with or even set aside in order to understand the new knowledge. Sometimes, in my observations, the opposite is also being done, and the new is set aside.

A characteristic of modernity, noted by Hull, is futurity. In pre-modern societies, past experiences were recognized and those people who had long years of experience were honoured for their wisdom and the repository of tradition they bore. Today experience is no longer valued as useful. We still need to learn from the past to face the future, but "a Christian

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 19.

education which is nothing but transmission, is destructive of the future *as future*".³⁵⁹ This transmission type of teaching, that adults perceive is still going on in Church education, is a barrier to participation in what today is usually experiential based learning. Another characteristic of modernity is liberation: freedom in mobility and choices etc. This may be true for some white, upper or middle class, northern American or European Christians, but many others, even in this country, do not experience this liberation. Hull is right, though, in affirming that one's experience of and attitude toward modernity effects one's learning ability or desire.

Learning in this pluralized world of today is also affected by the many worlds in which a person's life or experience exists. Each of our many worlds (work, marriage, church etc.) has the power to create a world of meaning. The world of Christian meaning becomes just one alongside others. "Its meanings only have meaning within that world to which they apply and it does not occur to many Christian adults that they might apply or can apply to the other world".³⁶⁰ Hull also points to the multiple worlds of consciousness within us, which compound the interpretation of our experience by many frames of reference. My own personal journey has shown how learning is affected by the separation of worlds in one's life, and by the various kinds of experience and ways of experiencing the external world (student, scientist, pastoral minister, parent, School Board Trustee, Retreat Centre Director etc.) These life roles all provide different ways of reflecting upon the varied experiences. In some people there is a tendency to absolutize that part of the pluralistic experience into a "totalitarianism of consciousness". This is a great danger not only for learning but for life itself.

³⁵⁹ John M. Hull, *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991), 22.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

Hull's position is based on a view that modernity has a future oriented knowledge bias. He indicates that Christian people translate that into seeing faith as loyalty to a certain set of facts. In such an understanding there is no room for inquiry or learning, because that would equate to expressing doubts about their faith and even doubts about themselves, and even to guilt. Hull seeks to encourage learners to realize that inquiry does not stem from doubt or disdain of our faith experience. Nonetheless learning is limited or restricted by self-doubts deep within us. That is why affirmation is so important in learning.

Other important moulders of the interpretation of our experience are ideological "commitment",³⁶¹ and our "construct systems".³⁶² In the world of training and work related education we often experience doing something and then develop personal meanings or constructs to shape the experience. In the affective learning and religious dimension we often have had our ideological commitment formed before the experiences are gained. Our construct systems or our ideological position can shape our experience of reality. Hull indicates that our faith or religious related constructs can particularly become impermeable and thereby resist or severely distort new experiences. This is seen in a resistance to change, which is true not only in the religious realm, but it is most problematic for our interactions when it is expressed in the church. In this modern, fast moving, "white water" world of change, work related constructs cannot be impermeable or else change would be resisted and the viability of a person or organization would be compromised. This diversity of attitude toward change can also hinder the interchange between faith and work. Parker Palmer in *The Courage to Teach* advocates

³⁶¹ Ibid., 67.

³⁶² Ibid., 104.

connectedness and the embracing of the paradoxes of life to overcome the separations that plague us. Opposites must be joined in order to make sense of the world. Learning/Teaching should be a joining of opposites.³⁶³ When we join facts and feelings, we give life and immediacy to the facts and provide grounding to the feelings. When we do the same for theory and practice, we gain life-based theories and informed practice. Therefore, when we join faith and work life, we should discover an empowered and spiritual work experience and a faith that is informed and incarnated in life.

4.3- Strengthening the Learning Activity of the Church

4.3a What Some Others Have Written

A potential reinforcing factor for adult learning noted by Hull is the experiences of adult stage transitions. Using Levinson's structures of maturational change, he recounts three overlapping time periods of everyone's life, with times of transition between them. He might also have used Fowler's seven stages of faith development to show a sequence of faith changes but these stages are not automatic and regular. Adults experience an array of lifestyle, religious and other changes during these times. Another set of factors are found in the research on transitions and triggers by Aslanian and Brickell, mentioned earlier. Although they were working with formal courses in adult education, and thus the impact of religion was understandably low on such choices, there would still be some correlation. The impact of many of the other life areas on religion and Christian faith and life studies would likely be very significant. It needs to be approached with an informed eye of faith.

³⁶³ Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 66.

These periods of change called stages, transitions and triggers could be useful times to bridge between faith-development and ministry in the world, and contribute to equipping for ministry in daily life. The limit on these applications is the fact we are not usually aware of our religious faith evolving. When it is just taken for granted we do not realize the development or changes in faith that can serve the development in our cognitive or working lives. Another limit is in the notion of “deficiency motivation” which describes learning that comes out of discomfort or short- falls. During human transitions we find times when existing patterns of life, decision making, coping or interactive skills etc., are not sufficient, so we seek to learn new ones. Once the deficiency is met, the need disappears. Hull states that “what stops some Christian adults from learning is thus seen to be the fact that Christian faith may spring from a range of deficiency needs”³⁶⁴. In childhood, especially pre-adolescent, the religious symbols and experiences met these needs; but later, in adulthood, the needs are met by other things. Because there was no growth experience on a continuing basis, the religious involvement no longer meets their needs. Adult learning needs to bridge this divide.

In *The Learning Congregation*, Thomas Hawkins of Eastern Illinois University, joins together learning and ministry into leadership. Hawkins sees the congregation and its teaching ministry in a more affirming view than Hull, (especially, in its potential). He presents an integrated and broadly encompassing picture of the whole congregation engaged in learning — as individuals, small groups and total organization/membership. Learning for him is comprehensive, relational and public, (can happen in any group). He could have said more on it being developmental and growth oriented, but he follows a definition of a learning organization by Senge, that describes

³⁶⁴ Ibid., *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning* (1991), 168.

one that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. Hawkins, along with Hull and Keegan, are concerned with the church being able to confront and relate to a world of rapid change. The new church teaching organization must be fast and flexible, changing, participatory, diverse in settings and engage in multiple tasks. In short it needs to be proactive rather than reactive. He focuses clearly on the leaders of such an endeavour. The leaders need to be “responsible for cultivating learning environments where people transform their everyday experiences into new meaning that can guide their actions and shape their personhood”.³⁶⁵ This forms a part of what it means to be “equipping the saints for the work of ministry”. Along with this, equipping also includes encouraging, providing living models of ministry, emotional support, and a safe place for the sharing of one’s story.

Hawkins contrasts post-figurative culture where the old pass on the wisdom, with the pre-figurative society where knowledge is continually being constructed by all generations willing to be engaged. This is a major paradigm shift for society and life today. He advocates that adults become life long learners in order to seek understanding and meaning in all this. We know that this is definitely happening in the secular realm. One wonders why we have to struggle to get adults out of the post-figurative in the religious realm. It could be ego, fear, short-sightedness or any of the other barriers that Hull notes. Hawkins advocates a continuous dialogue between Christian tradition and contemporary experience to join the two realms. In this activity, he sees new meanings being given to them both. For our purposes, this learning dialogue needs to take place when and where the “white water rafting” changes are taking place, and that is in the world of daily life and work. Hawkins sees daily human experiences as

³⁶⁵ Thomas R. Hawkins, *The Learning Congregation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 11.

vital and integral to Christian learning and ministry. He sees learning happening in daily experience through examining and divesting oneself of certain assumptive frameworks, reflecting on meaning-perspectives and transforming, altering or adding to them. He advocates a critical self-reflection. His approach shows the importance of standing back, looking at, thinking through, dialoguing together, learning, and perhaps changing. He could have added a phase of communal discernment. Adult learning takes place at the intersections where persons meet face to face and learn to work together, where they share themselves, their experiences and their dreams, and share themselves with one another. When people in churches fail to meet, share, and learn together, the ministry of daily life suffers. This can have a negative effect on the self-esteem of the membership, who then become more prone to disagreements, arguing over issues and then conflict results. An active ministering congregation could overcome this problem through openness and sharing.

Hawkins sees the church as very much involved in the world and as such he presents two forms of equipping of the laity going on: through formal instruction and through engaging in ministry along with ongoing, practical theological reflection. He puts the priority on the latter. The church is to be a “school house of faith”,³⁶⁶ linking participation in ministry with educational processes that allow people to reflect on what they are experiencing. The problem with this is that although many churches present themselves as involved, in reality they stand aloof and don’t corporately recognize the ministry that is going on in individual members’ daily lives.

Hawkins also outlines some barriers to learning which he describes as: preventative (social

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 67.

pressures), anomic responses (withdrawal from the threatening), alienating responses (objectifying subjects) and presumptive (habits that lead to mistakes). We learn from this the importance of open minded thinking, courage to span the gulf between the normal and the new, the importance of loving care in the treatment of all learners, plus several important skills like asking questions, framing issues, etc.. We see here that learning, like living and faith, is best done in community. Also we learn that sometimes the great barrier to learning is unexamined experience. But a life examined in solitude is not fully examined. We need the support and dialogue with others. The primary task for the church is to bring its member-servants/lay ministers into a caring community where it is safe and affirming to share their experiences and engage in the exciting activity of learning together.

4.3b A Further Proposal

Martin Luther in his commentary on Psalm 112 wrote: “someone who holds an office and conducts a business must know many things. For example ... a farmer ... (a list of responsibilities is given) ... this keeps him from becoming lazy. The same thing happens in other businesses and trades, in governing and in housekeeping. This makes them experienced people who can talk about these things and teach others”.³⁶⁷ This is not only true in the practical life of the people about whom Luther was writing. It is also true for the faith perspective they bring to that life or which grows out of their experiences.

When we approach the adult learning experience in the Church and the lay ministry experience in the world in their full potential and possibilities, we see some great similarities. Both realms

³⁶⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* Vol. 13, 398.

can be creational and life giving and should be transformational, community based, dialogical, co-operative and caring. Lay ministry is focused on persons and their needs in their daily environment and adult Christian Education should be learner driven and responsive. The ministry should be founded on being responsive to the gospel call of God, thus being Biblically and theologically informed through the learning enterprise. The learning experience needs to develop a mature self-giving faith so the people in the work place can experience a self-giving, adult faith. The learning should focus on relationships of love and caring so that the same can be expressed in our daily communities. Learning should be person centred and responsive to the community around us so our daily ministry can be responsive to people's needs. Where the learning uses an action-reflection model the ministry expresses itself as active rather than just verbal. The learning should engage all members (of any category) in continuous learning, just as the ministry should engage all members in daily service.

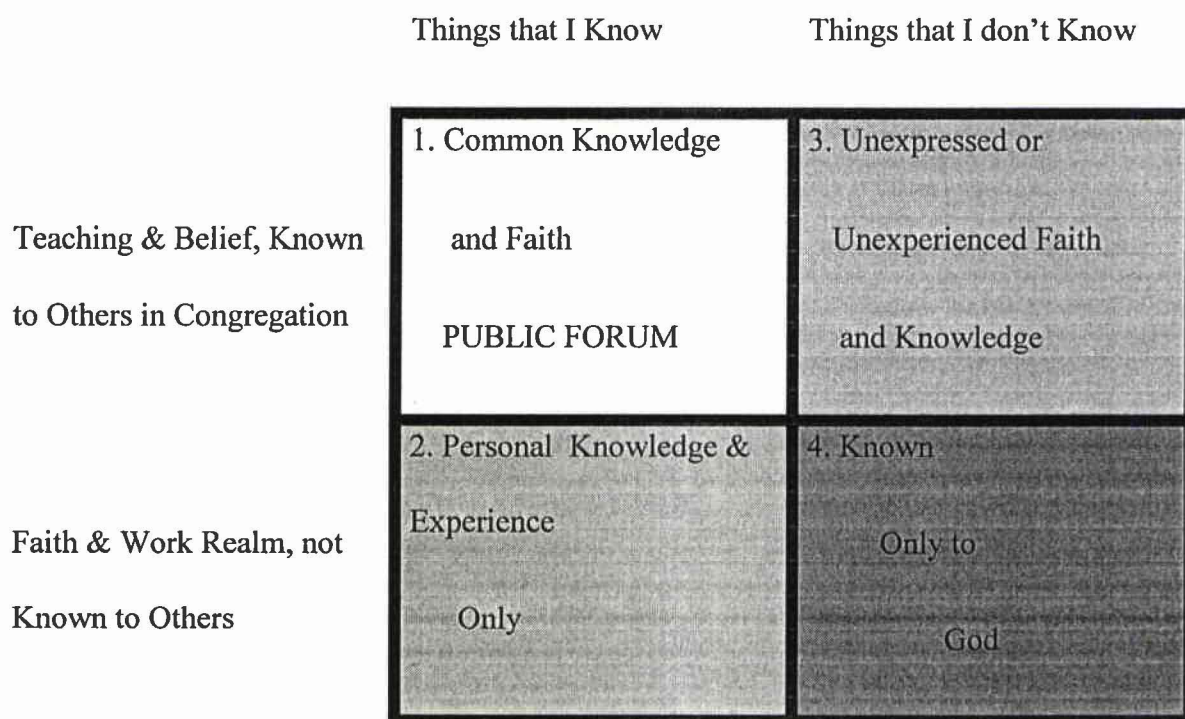
The engagement of all members in learning is very hard to achieve and impossible for it to occur for everyone at any one time. But if the church was to utilize more of the times of personal or family transitions as learning opportunities, we might be able to occupy more in both the learning and ministry experience. A method for dialogue and disclosure learning could be used at these transition times based on the idea of the Johari Window Model, which is for soliciting and giving feedback. This **"Lay" Ministry & Adult Learning Window** (fig. 4) can be visualized as having four panes in a box formation (the two above representing the teaching and belief of one's own church; and the other two below representing things of work and faith experience, unknown to others, that each person brings to the dialogue, as well as some that are completely hidden issues known only to God.). The upper left "window pane" (1.) or public arena, represents the things of one's faith, of one's own Church and of Scripture that are also

commonly known to each participant or member of that group. Only this part of the window is completely clear. The lower left “pane” (2.) represents those things in each person’s faith, life and work that are known only to one self personally. The upper right “pane” (3.) represents the teachings of the church and experiences of the people of God, past and present, not generally known to most “lay” people. These would likely be known by some of the participants or leaders who have studied these matters, or received education in these fields. The lower right “pane” (4.) represents those possibilities of the interface of faith and life that have not yet been discovered by anyone. This pane is completely dark and opaque. As the participants, in the learning endeavour, reveal their personal life and experience in work issues and concerns (pane 2.), the public arena of knowledge expands down into this (pane 2.) area. As the church teachers/facilitators or more experienced participants respond to this increase of knowledge and understanding they open up more of the faith (pane 3.) that is relevant to the members of the group and therefore capable of acceptance. But as in such a figurative window, when you move the lower mullion strip on (pane 1.) down, and move the right one over more into the right pane, you make the public forum of knowledge larger. This enlarged pane (1.) then reaches into the unknown area (4.) in each person’s life and the relation to God, and thereby reveals completely new insights relevant to the church and to the world of everyone’s daily life and work. The goal of such learning activity is to make the public window (1.) larger and larger without threatening or disengaging the learners. This is done by clearing more of the mist on the translucent panes (2. and 3.), and allowing God to remove some of the opaque covering on more of the pane (4.) known only to God. In this we evoke or identify and enable the God given gifts for ministry of God’s people. This is a co-operative exercise of the people of God.

The gathering of each group, for this kind of learning, could be specific to the different life stages or transitions and triggers that people are going through at any particular time. They would also be focused in providing Spiritual and other resources explicitly to the transition and the period of life ahead, with a component that addresses the task or opportunities of ministry to others who are in that stage. These special learning events would be inserted within the regular ongoing Christian Education program, as best suits the local situation. Where possible the classes could be cross congregational and even ecumenical, if feasible. The invitation to gather should be offered to persons in similar times of transition, when help is highly desired and people are most open to learning. These times of transition could include: just before entering secondary school, and again before entering college, university or the work force, pre-marriage, pre-Baptism (of first child) therefore pre-parenthood, pre-parenting of teenagers, work transitions — (termination's, firing, unemployed and job searching), pre-retirement, and in times of grief. A pastoral care and education support team of church members would need to be available to enable this learning and these experiences to be born out into the community beyond the walls of the church building. Members of this support team could also be equipped to operate as mentors of these various transition learning groups.

Such a learning experience should issue in Christ-like action and commitment in daily life, and in turn, model this Christ-like behaviour and express this commitment in the life lived, the decisions made, the words spoken, and actions taken in the world by the members of Christ's Body. Such learning should be marked by enthusiasm and joy, and express that enthusiasm, joy, love and hope in the ministry of daily life and work in the world.

Figure 4. The “Lay” Ministry and Adult Learning Window



Chap.8 - RESEARCH

1.- Process of Research Studies

1.1- Research Objectives: and the Questionnaire

This present research seeks to carry out a correlational study of several variables related to the sense of Christian vocation of the “laity”, their involvement in ministry in daily life, their participation in expectations for adult Christian Educational programs and other possible means of equipping. Since many of the various interpretations of vocation, ministry etc., and the motivators found in adult education and adult learning will be in operation here, they will have to be considered and controlled in this study by noting and tabulating them. The significant independent variable to be measured is the experience of God’s call or Christian vocation, or lack thereof.

This questionnaire is meant to explore the image of ministry in daily life and the needs for equipping toward that end. In order to test some of my presumptions from experience, and to discover if there are some patterns on these issues among the “laity”, the attached questionnaire on “Ministry in Daily Life” was developed. It is based on parts of a questionnaire by Donald P. Smith, when he was Director of the Vocation Agency UPUSA, which was used in a study in the United Presbyterian church in the USA. It was published in the book by Smith: *Congregations Alive*³⁶⁸. I have received permission from him to use parts of his questionnaire. The current

³⁶⁸ Donald P. Smith, *Congregations Alive: Practical Suggestions to Bring Your Church to Life Through Partnership in Ministry* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 185-87.

version, as I have revised it, is made up of seventy-nine variables spread among nineteen specific questions. The first question had a dual purpose. Firstly, to document the spectrum of different aspects that could be expressed by the religious word “ministry”. Secondly to discover if the “laity” in the Presbyterian Church had any preferences or any sense of agreement on the meaning or definition of the term. The second question was to get a profile of the participants’ concepts of their congregation, to see if there is any pattern related to ministry in daily life. Question three sought to focus upon the personal concept or meaning of vocation or Christian calling for each respondent, while question seven sought to identify each persons’ sense of their own call, if they had one. Question six attempted to ascertain the frequency or degree of identity each person had to being a “minister” to people around them at home and/or at work.

Question four and five inquired about their educational experiences related to leadership that was carried out within the congregation, (#4) and for educational experiences that helped toward ministry or service in ones daily life, in the world, or in the church, (#5). Because this last question was more central to the investigation of equipping for ministry in daily life, it included multiple variables.

Having worked from the concept of ministry as definition, to the sense of personal identity with some ministry in their own daily life, it was now time to seek what kind of equipping help would be most desirable according to the source (#8), methods (#9), topics (#10), and time periods available (#11). The personal data is designed to define the sample and identify any other variables that might be relevant. Educational background and extent or type of formal church participation, might have some effect on ministry or equipping choices.

There is a need to study the responses of some people who have made a commitment to continued Christian Education as part of their response to the call from Christ, and those of a group that should have a greater commitment because of their more extensive involvement in the life and decisions of the church. The latter group is the Session and its elders. They have been chosen for their task by a process whereby the membership of the congregation seeks to determine God's call for those who will lead and govern. They should have a strong sense of vocation. The former group are those who are involved in the Presbyterian Cursillo movement.

A significant movement for renewal in the Church that involves and promotes adult education is Cursillo. (N.B. I referred to it earlier in Chapter 7,3.1.) It began in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, but has spread throughout the world and other denominations. Its goal is "to create nuclei" of Christians who engage in leavening their environment with the Gospel, helping to discover and achieve their personal vocations".³⁶⁹ The Cursillo movement "is designed to make it possible for [persons] to live what is fundamental for being a Christian what is fundamental for being a Christian is summed up in the phrase "living the life of grace and spreading it" or in the words "saints and apostles".... in other words *being* a Christian".³⁷⁰ A Cursillo weekend involves three full days of Christian teaching in close community during which the participants' response is encouraged to Jesus Christ as the Way — whom they are called to actively serve; the Truth — whom they are called to study and know; the Life — whom they are called to love.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ W. L. Alcuin, et al. *Cursillo, Spiritual Director's Manual* (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications 1976), 16.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

The cursillistas (those who have completed a Cursillo weekend) commit to an ongoing program referred to as “the three legged stool”: spirituality, study, and action. They are encouraged to carry out a spiritual check-up in a group setting on a regular basis, at least monthly. The goals are stated on a small wallet-sized “Service Sheet” that they carry with them. It states “Christ needs you. He needs you committed in faith, so that you may witness that faith in Christ with your brothers and sisters through: your Spiritual Life, your Study, your Action.” Under ‘Spiritual Life’ they are encouraged to “worship the Lord with your whole heart” in the following ways: morning devotion, prayer life, worship attendance, communion, *spiritual retreat*. Under ‘Study’ is stated, “you will realize God’s presence through: reading Holy Scriptures and daily spiritual guides. Your horizons will be widened through reading: religious publications etc. You will grow in your religious understanding by attending: *bible studies, church school classes, religious seminars*. ‘Action’ calls them to “Go into all the world preaching the good news.” They are to ask themselves, “what have you done during the week so Christ will be better known and loved in your: *family, vocation, community*, small group, Christian community.” (Italics added here for emphasis.) The participation in adult Christian Education activities is very central to the commitment of cursillistas. Their responses to the questionnaire will be noted with interest.

The early drafts of this questionnaire were pre-tested on several individuals (lay persons) from the congregations to be approached. These people worked through the draft questionnaire, answered the questions and made comments on it. As well as these local pre tests, I shared the draft questionnaire with some Christian professional educators working in this field of laity development. They made some helpful comments. A few minor changes were made for clarity and inclusiveness and the questionnaire was ready for distribution.

When analyzing the responses it became evident that the questionnaire worked fairly well but had a few shortcomings. Similar sources of help listed in question 4 (on leadership training) and on ministry in daily life: 5 (past), 8 (future), might have been described in a more parallel fashion. This may have effected the responses somewhat. Question 4 did not use a Likert scale, but since it was not on the key focus of this study, I did not see that as a problem. Some kind of topic groupings could have helped the responses to that question (10), but it might have provided a lead that would have biased the results. The present form of that question caused a lot of work in tabulation. The time frame question (11), could have allowed for some variation in number of hours per month, week or day etc: a one hour meeting or class is hardly worth calling together.

1.2- Distribution of the Questionnaire

The questionnaires, with the covering letter, were delivered on December 17,1998 to the four Presbyterian Churches in Guelph; Kortright, Knox, St. Andrew's and Westminster-St. Paul's, as well as St. Andrew's in nearby Fergus, Ontario. These were chosen for ease of collection of completed questionnaires and because I am well known in those congregations. Some stamped, self-addressed envelopes were supplied, plus bulk envelopes for drop-off returns. Each church, through its minister and/or church secretary, was asked to distribute the questionnaire to people who were actively involved in the life of the church and knowledgeable of the work of the church. They were also asked to identify an appropriate number of questionnaires needed. Each congregation then carried out the distribution in its own way, some by announcement and invitation, others by insertion in specifically chosen family file folders. The method choice was left to the congregational contact. These persons expressed the desire to get them out to the

people whom they thought would respond. This meant that the more committed population of laity in these congregations was polled.

On December 21 and 22, twenty-two questionnaires (with the letter) were mailed out to eleven former participants at related educational programs at Crieff Hills Community, retreat and conference centre, (where I was a director). These lay people had expressed interest in follow-up on education for ministry in daily life, therefore were also committed church members. The eleven came from eleven different congregations in Ontario, outside of the above study area. Each was sent two copies with the request to find a second person to fill out the other. In this way it would not usually be possible to identify the individual response. Thus 172 questionnaires were distributed, and the goal was to obtain 100 back.

The responses started coming in by December 23, less than a week after the first forms were delivered to the churches. Follow-up calls were made to the five congregations to encourage more respondents on the Sunday at the end of the year. Some were picked up at their church offices and some came by mail. By December 31, 62 had been returned or picked up; 100 by January 19, 1999. The 106th response arrived on February 2, 1999, a 61.6 % return on the 172 that were distributed to the congregations and they came in over an approximate seven-week period. The good response was likely due to the work of the contact staff persons in each congregation, and to persons that I knew personally, who encouraged potential respondents to reply within a short time line. All those who responded are to be thanked for their work, especially since it was over the Christmas and New Years' season.

2.- The Responses

2.1- Demographics

Congregation (A) had the highest percentage of response (76%), when they returned 31 completed questionnaires out of 41 distributed. The others have had the following response: Congregation (B) 18 / 25 (72%); Congregation (C) 18 / 40; Congregation (D) 18 / 40; Congregation (E) 5 / 20; and the out-of-the-region individuals had sent back 12 / 22. These latter responses have been considered in a group with the 4 forms that were returned with no congregational identification.

Slightly more of the respondents were female (54%). The age representation was highest in the 50's, with 77% being middle-aged or older (40-70).³⁷² Most were married (86%), with the greatest number being without dependents (60%). Of those with children, the number peaked at 2. Among those who were single (14%), more than a third, had never been married.

The largest portion of the participants in the questionnaire were employed full time out of the home (31%) and second in significant numbers were the retired at (27%). When combining those full time, part time, and occasional and self-employed workers, we had 56% employed, plus another 11% working full time in the home. The remainder included one student and three seeking employment. To the inquiry about the type of work, we found the largest percentage of respondents were in management (16%), followed by other professionals (not medical or educational) at 13%. Considering all the professionals and the management respondents

³⁷² Charts listing some of the data are included in Appendix 3.

together we find that 61% of those who listed themselves as working, were in that group.

Considering educational level, 68% had completed some form of post secondary education and of those, 20% had completed some post-graduate education. The ratio of members to adherents was 10:1. These demographics compare fairly well with what one observes in the Presbyterian churches in the area, excepting children and teenagers.

There was a significant amount of participation in church activities. Of the 106 respondents there were 42 elders, 16 managers, 26 group leaders and 59 group participants, (more than 3/4 were involved in groups). As well there were 21 teachers, 28 choir members, 25 Cursillo members, 5 Alpha participants, and 15 pastoral visitors. Those who filled out the "other" section in question 16 included 6 in worship leadership, 5 in practical helping tasks around the church and Sunday school, and 2 in prayer chains.

The 79 variables of these 106 cases were recorded in the SPSS Base 8.0 computer program for analyzing research survey data. Each of the values were recorded in an appropriately designed grid, where each variable was named, defined and assigned a scale of values. The computer program was then used to generate a report of frequencies of each choice. Several cross tabs were chosen in order to further analyze the data and its relationships.

2.2- Frequency of Responses to Questionnaire

When expressing their perceived meaning for "ministry" the largest majority most strongly agreed with the statement (#1.6) "lives out his/her faith in relation to family, friends and neighbourhood" (57.1%), while 90% agreed and/or strongly agreed (placing it in second place) cumulatively. The next strongest response was (#1.7) the statement that it includes the ways a

person lives out his/her faith in his/her occupation, 50.5% strongly agreed while 91% agreed and/or strongly agreed which was the highest number for the combined agreement. The third choice for agreement was “serving people of the community outside the congregation”, (#1.4) 46% strongly agreed and a cumulative 88% agreed. The lowest responses were given to “ministry” as “corporate action by the church to change unjust economic or political conditions of life” (#1.5), 45% agreed or strongly agreed. In total, there seems to be a strong degree of understanding of ministry in daily life and work as involving service to others. The order of priority seems to be family and friends, fellow workers and then those outside the church. An early goal of equipping should be to increase the understanding of what “ministry” means. The corporate action of ministry for justice and change was hardly acknowledged, and this deserves some more recognition in education and/or preaching.

Table: Frequency Response for question #1

Ministry includes:	-in percentage	Strng Agree	Agree	Agree Disag	Disag	Strng disag	No opin	No comm
1.4-serving out in the community		46.2	41.5	10.4	-	0.9	0.9	-
1.5-includes corporate action		15.1	29.2	36.8	9.4	5.7	2.8	0.9
1.6-living of faith in relation to family etc.		56.6	32.1	7.5	1.9	0.9	-	0.9
1.7-living of faith in occupation		50.0	40.6	4.7	1.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Ministry is:								
1.1-pastoral minister, professional		34.9	23.6	18.9	8.5	12.3	1.9	-
1.2-pastors and elders shared		34.3	35.2	18.1	7.6	4.8	-	-
1.3-shared by whole congregation		51.4	31.4	14.3	1.0	1.9	-	-

When considering who carries out this ministry, the choice that ministry involves the whole congregation serving each other came in first at 51% strongly agreeing and a combined 82% agreeing. The lowest agent of ministry was the pastoral minister (#1.1), “ministry is the special work of the professional pastoral minister who serves the needs of the congregation” (59% cumulatively agree). The shared ministry of pastors and elders was tied with the choice of ministry by pastors alone with those who strongly agreed, but when considering all who agreed it moved into second place behind ministry as done by the whole congregation. The response to these questions may have been affected by the fact that #1.1 –1.3 each asked two different kinds of questions: who does ministry — the minister, shared leadership or whole congregation, and who is served — the congregation itself. The responses still indicate that a significant minority saw ministry as taking place primarily within the congregation by professional ministers.

The frequency responses on the description of the congregations (#2), indicated that 46% judged their congregation as very much like the description that “members may choose many different ways to serve”, (#2.8), and this was the highest response. The second was (#2.2), “pastors and lay leaders share leadership as genuine partners.” The lowest percentage for the most positive valuation was for (#2.5), “members actively participate in evangelistic activities”, (6%). The highest score on the most negative side (“not at all alike”) was for (#2.13) “members are publicly recognized by the congregation for their service in the community and workplace” (30%), and this came 13 out of 15 on the most positive side of the responses. The broad brush picture of these congregations indicate them as places where laity are busily engaged in working together in small groups in service inside and to the congregations themselves, but participation in ministry outside the congregations has less of a priority. The responses to these questions on the congregations reveal a different attitude than the first question series on

ministry. Although people may choose many ways to serve, there is not a strong feeling of a clear sense of purpose or challenges from the congregation to “participate in community activities or organizations”. What might be done under those concepts of ministry would unlikely be recognized as a ministry by many of these people.

Table: Frequency of Response for Question #3

Personal Concept of Vocation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
It applies to:			
the ordained ministry	5	4.7	4.8
one who feels called by God to a specific occupation (secular)	20	18.9	19.2
one who feels called by God to witness to Christ in daily life	25	23.6	24.0
living a responsible Christian life in whatever we do	31	29.2	29.8
serving others in our volunteer times	3	2.8	2.9
entering some form of full-time Christian work	15	14.2	14.4
meaning the same as occupation	1	0.9	1.0
some other response listed	4	3.8	3.8
Total responses	104	98.1	100.0
No response	2	1.9	
Total questionnaires	106	100.0	

When the respondents were asked to think of the terms “vocation” or “Christian calling”(#3), no one was “not familiar” with the terms. For the largest group of people (as noted in the above table), the most ready image was the desire of God for us “to live a responsible, Christian life in whatever we do”, (#3.5 = 29%). It was followed a close second by being applied “to anyone who feels called by God to witness to Christ in our daily life”, (#3.4 = 24%). After that came a sense of call to a “specific occupation” (#3.3 = 19%), and a person “called by God into full time

Christian work", (#3.7 = 14%). The rest of the choices were chosen much less frequently with the lowest (1%) for the meaning "the same as occupation" (#3.9). Some significant remarks were written in "other" category by some respondents: viz. "God calls to service in action"; "specific ways God calls me to minister wherever I am"; "being in the centre of God's will for you to do what He calls for that moment, day or lifetime in relationship with family, job, neighbourhood and world". One person expressed that the "Question was difficult because it could mean different things to different people at a particular time in their life that exemplifies God's calling, whether it be a vocation or volunteer work or witnessing, etc.". The participants showed a similarly, strong inclination toward definitions that implied ministry in daily life, when presented with the terms "vocation" or "Christian calling" as they did with "ministry" in question one, but there was still a significant number who favoured the image of a specialist as "called", or as "minister". This term deserves more focus in any equipping or educational endeavour.

When evaluating the sources for the most adequate training for leadership positions in ones' congregation (#4), there was a tie for first choice between "teaching, preaching guidance by the pastor", and for "leadership programs developed in your own congregation", (32% each). These were followed by individual study (14%), conference/retreat centre (12%), and from presbytery programs, (1%). Synod and interdenominational contributions were both zero. Leadership training appears to come from within the congregation for most of these people. Recent regional and district, organized training events had almost no impact upon the respondents.

With the change of focus to educational programs and other help for “living a life of service to others”, (#5), the influence of the professional pastoral minister remains quite high. Sunday worship service and sermons rated “very much” helpful by 50% of the people. Second and third rating went to “the inspiration of my pastor as a model of Christian service”, and “the way my pastor loves and accepts me as I am”. These were followed by “fellowship with other members”, and “personal study and prayer”. The “work of the Holy Spirit in our congregation” came just ahead of the “love and acceptance of members”. Help from congregational educational programs did not do as well in providing help for members’ service to others, as it did for church leadership training. It was the third lowest with only 4% affirming they received very much help and another 10% expressing moderate support. Conference centre events or programs were next lower in the response rating, (3% very much, 7% moderate). Again the very lowest support came from presbytery and synod events or programs (1% very much, 2% moderate). It appears that the worship and personal/interpersonal aspects of help for carrying out a ministry in daily life and work or “a life of service to others”, have been judged higher while formal programs of education have been less helpful.

When the questionnaire moved to a more personal level in regard to each one’s frequency of ministry in daily life and work (#6) and the personal sense of calling (#7), some interesting responses were given. Those who thought of themselves as a “minister” to other people, either daily or several times per week, amounted to 61% of the sample with once a week and 2-3 times per month accounting for another 23%. Only 6% never thought of themselves as such a “minister”. Three quarters of the respondents felt they had a Christian calling. Many of the eighteen percent who were not sure, still indicated a frequency response that they thought of themselves as a “minister”. The focus on the time when one’s calling was felt to begin was

centred around the priority of the activity or thoughts of the individuals: “when I committed my life to Christ” (35%); “when I began to think seriously about the kind of person I want to be” (20%), rather than the Reformed perspective of “when I was baptized” (1%). There is a tremendous need for education here. Who does the calling or the choosing regarding vocation, - God or me?

The next series of questions sought to learn the kind (#8), methods (#9), topics (#10) and timing (#11) for any educational program that, in the future, might help the laity engage in a ministry in their daily life and work. With respect to the kind of help, “sermons on the topics/issues” again topped the list as most helpful (46%), with a total of about 93% expecting them to be helpful to some degree. The next highest type of help hoped for was the “support of a fellowship group”(43% and 88%), which came out somewhat higher than the present experience in that area. “Prayer groups on issues” came third, (33% and 80%). Great expectations and ever present hope for future improvement, showed itself in the choice of “congregational programs” as most helpful by 22% of the respondents, a great increase from the 4% who presently found “very much” help from that source. Most respondents looked for some degree of help, great or small, from congregational programs (85%). There was also a moderate increase in expectations from conference centre programs from 3% to 13% in the “most helpful” level. But still the lowest forecast for help came with regard to presbytery or synod programs (3% for “most helpful”, 24% for “somewhat helpful”). All the methods of learning listed (#9), were chosen to some degree by the respondents, and the list must have been sufficiently exhaustive, because no additional ones were added. The highest choice was for discussion groups (61%), followed by experiential workshops (59%), with Bible Study in third place (51%). The remainder of the choices were lectures (25%), reflection-action (19%),

formal courses (19%), self directed study (17%), visual-video (16%), role play (7%) and web chat sites (2%). Other than the last two, all the choices were made by a significant number of people.

The investigation into the various personal information cross tabs with methods of learning did not show any significant variance (+/- 2%) with the total priorities. In other words, members and adherents, men and women, married and single, the various ages, occupations, educational levels, elders, teachers etc., did not vary significantly from the general populace. While the top three choices remained discussion groups, workshops and Bible study, their relative order shifted in only a very few specific areas — those in their thirties, those employed part time, (e.g. homemakers preferred Bible study slightly more than the other choices). There is little help for the planning of courses for equipping to be found here. The future of education may be on the world wide web, but in this study it was of interest to only two males in their 20's and 30's, employed and with a high school education.

About half of the respondents listed suggested topics that they felt would be useful for equipping for ministry in daily life. Fifty-nine people gave 143 suggestions, which reduced to 118 different topics when the repeats were considered. There were relatively few repeats, therefore a very wide ranging course of study was given. In an attempt to quantify the responses, the topics were clustered into ten topic areas and the frequency of topics in each is listed below. A full list of the topics can be found in Appendix 2.

TOPIC AREAS	Total Topics	% of Topics	Different Topics
Biblical Studies	10	7 %	5
Personal & Pastoral Skills	35	24.5 %	21
Topical Studies	19	13 %	19
Christian Principles	7	5 %	6
Theological Studies	5	3.5 %	5
Church Leadership Skills	15	10.5 %	15
Global Issues	10	7 %	9
Spiritual Gifts / Growth	10	7 %	8
Christian Lifestyle & Witness	17	12 %	10
Prayer	14	10 %	9
other	1	0.7 %	1
TOTALS	143		118

The largest area of interest was a vast number of topics that could be clustered under the heading, “Personal and Pastoral Skills”. There were a few repeat topics mentioned and these might be considered somewhat of a priority: communication and listening skills (7 times) and dealing with or counselling grief (6 times). There was a general similarity in the eight different suggestions of topics in the area of prayer out of the 14 given. The same is true with the Biblical studies (5 different out of 10). In the Christian lifestyle and witness topic area, evangelism, witness or faith sharing accounted for ten of the choices. Other topics mentioned twice or three times include counselling, caring for the elderly, Christian parenting, pastoral visitation, piety, small group dynamics, assessing and prioritizing need, poverty, healing, identifying your gifts and answering questions from non-believers. It would be very hard to offer a study course that would cover the priorities or interests of the majority of the

respondents. But none-the-less there is an interest in these study or equipping topics, it is just a very diverse one.

The amount of time available for equipping also varied greatly, but the most frequent choice was an hour/week (26%), followed by a weekend/year (16%). The three monthly periodic options (hour, day, part day) were each moderately low. The daily study option (hour/day) and the longest period that would imply a continuing education course,(one week/year), were both very low. The latter tied at 2% with those who were willing to give no time at all to equipping for ministry in daily life. A careful look at the choices by gender, age, education etc., showed very little variance from the pattern of response for the general population. Some of the very few differences include a higher than average interest of men in theological topics and of women in prayer, (but personal and pastoral skills remained the most frequent choice for both). Those who were employed full time chose “Christian life and witness” second after “personal skills”, while slightly more of the retired were more interested in topical studies than anything else. More of those with a university education showed an interest in “church leadership skills”, while more post graduates favoured “Christian life and witness”. The variances were small and may have been influenced by other variables or interests.

2.3- Information from Crosstabulations³⁷³

Respondents by Church. Most of Congregation A was in “strong agreement” with accepting “ministry” as the work of the professional, and of “shared in by pastors and elders which serves members of the congregation ...”. They were only in basic “agreement” with the aspects of:

³⁷³ Some of the most pertinent cross-tabulations are displayed in table format on pages 4 & 5 of Appendix 3.

“serving people of the community outside the congregation”, changing systems that are unjust, living out faith in personal relationships, and living out faith in the work place. All the other congregations had a larger proportion of people who were in strong agreement with ministry being lived out in daily relationships, and in work/occupation. Only Congregation D had a very strong expression of serving people outside the congregation. The corporate action choice for ministry was lower in all congregations.

In most of these responses on the Likert scale, Congregation D respondents followed a pattern very different to the rest of the congregations, having generally more strongly positive views. The few responses from Congregation E were generally negative. The exception was the consideration of “members are challenged in specific ways to participate in community activities or organizations”. The majority in every congregation, except D, said “this was somewhat like my congregation”; Congregation D respondents were all across the scale with their answers. Congregation A affirmed this as “somewhat like my congregation”. In congregation D, which is strongly involved in evangelism, there may have been a difference on what constitutes “service” to people outside the congregation, and the time involved meeting in the church building or homes of fellow members.

The responses to the public recognition of members for service in the community and workplace (#2.13), were the most divergent across the scale, with only a few holding the most positive view. Congregation D was almost unanimous about how the “sharing of joys and concerns in Sunday worship” was very much a part of their worship. The other congregations varied between a “little” and “not at all”. The majority in almost all the congregations had a positive view toward the fact that members in their congregation had an opportunity to choose

many different ways of serving. The personal concept of vocation (#3) was widespread in its responses in all congregations. Congregation A had a breadth of sources for leadership training (#4) found in the congregational programs, the work of the pastoral minister and individual study. The respondents from other congregations tended to concentrate on only one source.

A significant minority in each congregation answered “daily”, to the frequency in ministry question (#6), (except for congregation E), so it was not an unknown idea or experience in those congregations. A little less than half in Congregation A answered the question about having a Christian vocation (#7) with something other than “yes”. In the other congregations it was less than one quarter who answered with a “no”, “not sure” or “don’t understand”. Since they also had the most people answer “never” to the frequency question, congregation A appears to need some more educational focus in this area of “lay” ministry and vocation. Yet each congregation needs more focus on ministry in daily life and work, in order to see that this is a daily experience rather than something that happens on occasional scattered times. Each congregation showed a similar focus on the preferred methods of learning (#9): discussion groups, experiential workshops followed by Bible study. Lectures and formal courses were lower on the scale for each of them except for the “out of area” congregations, who, perhaps because of their higher level of connection with retreat and conference centre programs, had a significant number choose formal courses.

Congregation D had the highest response for evangelistic activities being a part of their congregation and a larger percentage of its members chose “called to witness” as their concept of vocation, so it is not surprising to see that many of their choices for topics fell in the Christian life style and witness area. For the other four congregations, the inner life of the

congregation is more central. The most frequent choices in them was for the topics “personal and pastoral skills” and of a topical nature. The out of the study area congregations mostly chose “prayer” as a topic that would help them with ministry in daily life. While respondents from congregations A to C primarily favoured the hour/week choice for equipping, those of congregation D mostly chose longer time periods, weekend/year and day/month. This could be the nature of their commitment and/or the type of equipping help that they think that they need. The participation activities of the people in congregation D also differed from the other four congregations. Almost half of them were non-members, none of them were elders, but the highest proportion of any congregation were group members (83%). The next closest was congregation B with 61%. This could have had an effect on the answers related to group support etc.

In summary, the character of each of the five congregations was different in several areas, but there was still a basic degree of similarity in many areas. These may have created some of the diversity of the responses, but the diversity within congregations was also significant. A larger sample of any one of the congregations would be needed, in order to be able to make specific recommendations.

Does Public recognition of members by the congregation for their service in community and workplace (#2.13) have measurable effect on ministry in daily life? Public recognition seemed to have little or no affect on the various concepts of ministry, and had no affect on those definitions that imply an outward direction to their activities. Where public recognition was perceived as being practiced, it did not show a stronger affirmation toward such ministries than from those who do not perceive any such recognition in their congregation. Recognition

seemed to go hand in hand with the sharing of joys and concerns in Sunday worship. When recognition was present, there was a little more help toward encouraging initiative in identifying needs and ways to serve. There is a positive correlation between public recognition and the love and acceptance of the pastor. The crosstab between public recognition for service in the community and workplace, and feeling “that you have a Christian vocation”, showed the respondents were all across the scale in both directions, i.e. there was no trend or relativity between the two, except most people felt they had a Christian vocation. Where public recognition was experienced there was some sense of help toward ministry in daily life and work perceived, but it was not a major factor. The public recognition or lack of it for service in the community and workplace does not seem to have an affect on the frequency at which one thinks of themselves as a “minister” to the people around them, nor does it appear to influence whether or not they feel that they have a vocation or Christian calling.

Does the feeling that you have a Christian calling or vocation (#7A) affect other

responses? People who did not have a strong sense of Christian vocation tended to agree that ministry is “work shared in by the pastor and elders which serve members of the congregation” to a greater proportion than those who had positive feelings toward having a Christian vocation personally. But the latter group spread their responses across the entire Likert scale. A general pattern appeared to be that those who had a sense of vocation were strongly in agreement with most of the ministry descriptions, with “agree” being second. While those who were not sure, the reverse pattern is seen. Two-thirds of those who felt they had a Christian vocation saw vocation as being called to witness or to live a responsible Christian life. Those who said “no” to their having a vocation, saw it as being that of the ordained ministry or some special occupation. Most of those who were unsure of their own vocation, saw it as a form of full time

Christian work or a specific occupation. This would be expected because of the varied viewpoint from focus on self through to that of focus on others. Those who were not sure of their Christian vocation tended to have a slightly lower than average response to receiving help from Sunday worship, (from very much down to moderate).

The amount of help perceived from congregational programs showed a positive influence on the perception of having a Christian vocation in the lives of the respondents. The positive perception of having a Christian vocation tended to produce a higher frequency of seeing oneself as a minister, but those who were not so positive still had a significant perception of being a minister, with half of the “not sures” expressing that they minister once a week or more. One would have expected otherwise — the problem could be a difference of perception between “minister” and “vocation” or “calling”. But the word “minister” seemed to engender the higher rating on the scales.

Even those respondents with no sense of having a Christian vocation still saw that they could receive help in order to better engage in ministry in daily life from sermons, support of a fellowship group, a congregational program, and for a very few, a prayer group on issues. Of course those with a sense of vocation or who were not sure, saw all these and the others (except presbytery/synod programs), as somewhat helpful or better. Those who were not sure of their vocation seemed to prefer the same priorities for methods of equipping as the majority, namely experiential workshops, discussion groups and Bible study, but they also highly favoured lectures. Their highest topical area was that of personal and pastoral skills with Christian life and witness being second. They also followed the “time for equipping” choices of the majority group.

Those who felt “yes”, they have a Christian vocation, were in the ratio of 4:3, female:male, while the “no’s” were 1:4. Those “not sure” were evenly divided female and male. While each of these response groups were found all across the age range, the Bell curve for the “yes” peaks between 50-59 years. The curve for the “no” rises from 50-79 years and the line for the “not sure” bulges up at 60-69 years. The non “yes” answers are mainly found among those in the retirement years, but not exclusively, because the only 80+ respondent definitely feels she has a Christian vocation. All the non respondents to this question were married and most with no dependents, but they were a small minority of that group. The scattergram for all three choices (#7a) compared to occupational status follows a similar pattern except that there were no “no’s” among full time household/family, self-employed, students or those seeking employment. Most of the “not sure” were found in professional (“education” and “other”) and support services. The educational level attained did not seem to have an effect on the vocational recognition. All five who answered “no” to a vocation were members of the church and almost half were elders. None were Sunday School teachers or Cursillo members.

Does one’s concept of what constitutes a vocation (#3) cause significant variations in other answers? Those who thought of vocation or Christian calling in terms of a call to enter a “specific occupation” (secular), attested to the highest degree of help that they received, came from the way their pastor loved and accepted them as they are. A close second was help from “Sunday worship”. Those who saw vocation as “a call by God to witness for Christ in their daily life”, found the most help from Sunday worship and then from “fellowship with other members”. For those who saw vocation as “living a responsible Christian life” in whatever we do, the greatest help came primarily from “Sunday worship”, followed by “fellowship with other members” and then the “inspiration of the pastor as a model of Christian service”.

Programs offered by the congregation, conference centre or presbytery rated low with all these concepts of vocation. There is no doubt that the pastoral minister, the Sunday morning worship and the fellowship of other members must be highly supportive for any equipping to an outward looking personal ministry of the laity.

A key variable that affected the participants' response on whether or not they had a Christian vocation themselves was their idea or understanding of what is a vocation or Christian calling. If a lay person saw vocation as something to do with "ordained ministry", they did not see themselves clearly having a Christian vocation. If they saw that it required entering "some form of full time Christian work", they were almost evenly split between the affirmative and being not sure; which probably indicates some personal decision-making going on. But where vocation was seen as a call to a "specific (secular) occupation", to witness to Christ in "daily life", or "to live a responsible Christian life", almost all the respondents (82%) said, "yes", they had a Christian vocation. Only 4% answered "no". As would be expected, these three groups in the personal concept of vocation, thought of themselves as ministers at home or work most often in the "daily" and "several times a week" categories. Ones' personal concept of vocation should be a key focus for any learning within the church.

Those who saw vocation as a call to witness, most often noted their calling beginning upon their commitment to Christ (72%). The same thing to a less degree (45%), is true for those who saw it as a call to a "specific (secular) occupation". But for those who thought of vocation in terms of living a responsible Christian life, most experienced the call after serious personal thought (39%), followed by "upon commitment"(31%). The only person who thought of their calling as beginning with Baptism was one who had a personal concept of vocation as living a

responsible Christian life. This baptismal beginning of vocation is a concept that needs more educational support and personal affirmation.

When we move into the area of future help to engage in ministry in daily life, we find similar, but not congruent, responses. Those thinking in terms of witness and being called to a specific (and likely secular) occupation will be looking for the highest degree of help from the support of a fellowship. Those thinking of it as living a responsible Christian life will favour sermons, with fellowship a close second. When we move to the “somewhat helpful” on the scale, there was a strong showing from all three of these groups in the “help that could be provided” from sermons, fellowship group, prayer group, congregational program, interdenominational program and conference centre program, (most of the “specific occupation” group had “no interest” in this latter source).

Does Gender Make a Difference? The respondents from each of the five churches were well balanced between male and female, but most of the other or outside group were female.

Females were stronger in their agreement with ministry meaning the living of ones’ faith in work. The ratio of female to male identifying their personal concept of vocation as “called to witness” or “to live a responsible Christian life” was about two to one, in both cases. The male responses were higher in the area of “ordained minister”, “specific occupation” and “full time Christian work”. This shows a stronger emphasis in personal responsibility for ministry among females, while males tended to see a specific person or even someone else doing it. The response of women to receiving much help for a life of service from small groups was more than double than that of men. In all other areas in question five, the responses from females and males were largely parallel. The same was true for the questions dealing with personal

calling and ministry. Women expected a higher degree of support from a fellowship group than men. There were no significant differences in the gender choices of the preferred methods for learning. Female choices of topic areas were higher in Biblical studies, personal and pastoral skills, topical studies, spiritual growth, Christian lifestyle and prayer. Male choices were higher in theological studies and slightly higher in church leadership skills. The responses to time available for equipping showed no significant differences by gender.

Does age have an effect on responses? Those in their 40's appeared to gain more help from "fellowship", "small groups", and love and acceptance of members than those in their 50's and 60's. Those in their 30's fell in between these. The priority for receiving help from personal study/prayer seemed to fall off as the decades increased. Those under 60 tended to think of themselves as a minister more frequently than those over 60 (except for the one 80+ person). There were also a greater percentage of "not sure" or "no" answers to having a Christian vocation in the sixty plus stages, although "yes" remained the dominant answer until 70 years (and for the one octogenarian). Those over 60 were less likely to list any topics in question ten. It could be that they are less inclined to continuing education. There was little difference in the pattern of choice of available time except that no one under 39 or over 60 chose a weekend per year or a week per year.

Affect of marital status. Single people do not appear to be helped as strongly in ministry in daily life by small groups as do the married folk, but they do experience the love and acceptance of other members. When looking toward future help for such a ministry, the single are very optimistic.

Influence of occupational status. There was very little difference in the concept of “ministry” among the various types of occupational status, except the retired people scored somewhat lower in agreeing that it was the living out of one’s faith in work, with family and friends, and serving people outside the congregation. The personal concept of vocation for the various types of occupational status were spread over almost the entire scale with no significant pattern identifiable other than that of the general population. Retired people responded significantly lower on the scale when answering to the questions about receiving help for ministry from fellowship with other members, from small groups, and personal study and prayer. They also were somewhat lower in seeking help from love and acceptance of other members. While the largest proportion of the respondents think of themselves as a minister, several times a week, at home or work, those who were retired were spread out across the scale and were the only group to express that they never think of themselves as ministers in such situations. (Half of those retired who expressed “never”, were secondary school graduates and the other half university post graduates.) While they are no longer in a work situation, they still would likely have a connection to a home. Thus when almost one quarter of the respondents expressed the negative choice, it would appear that retirement has occurred in their personal concept of and engagement in ministry as well. Yet more than half of the retired still felt they had a vocation or Christian calling. Ministry in daily life needs to be encouraged and supported for those who are in their retirement years.

Does the education level completed have an impact? There is no significant variance in personal concept of vocation with differing levels of education. More than one-third of the university post-graduates were retired and another third were self-employed and almost one half were over 60. University post graduates tended toward a less strongly positive opinion of

ministry as the living out of one's faith in one's occupation. The few (3) disagreements to this came from university graduates (both under- and post-). People with post graduate education tended to rate the helpfulness for ministry attained from Sunday worship lower than those at other levels of education. The same was true for help from fellowship, the model of the pastor and, to some extent, for love and acceptance from other members and the pastor. There is no measurable variance between the education levels on the frequency of thinking of oneself as a minister at home/work, nor on having a Christian vocation, nor when it began. The various levels also show little variance in response when looking at future kinds of help for ministry in daily life.

Church affiliation . Two thirds of adherents came from one congregation (D). Their responses regarding concept of ministry and description of congregation, and of vocation followed close to that of the average member. Where they did differ they tended toward the pattern of choices of members from that particular congregation. Adherents had a similarly strong sense of Christian vocation and ministry at home or work as members. So in summary there is little significant difference in the responses from church members and church adherents. The only small exception is that almost all of the adherents listed topics that would assist them to carry out their ministry in daily life (only half of the members did), thus indicating the high degree of interest in equipping the adherent portion of the congregations.

Responses of elders. The elders almost always showed the same pattern of choice as the majority of people in the congregations. Where there were slight variations, these could be explained by the broader knowledge of the congregation that elders usually have or the fact that one congregation (D), had no elder respondents. As would be expected, the elders had a higher

regard for future help from presbytery's possible programs, than those people of the general congregation. In total, the elders showed no significant difference of attitude toward vocation, ministry in daily life and equipping for that ministry. I had hoped there would have been a greater degree of enlightenment and a stronger commitment. This is an obvious area for more education and building of awareness.

Responses of teachers. Teachers followed the voting trends of others in this survey, even more closely than the elders, except they were helped somewhat more by love, acceptance and appreciation shown by members. The importance to teachers of being appreciated and not being devalued is evident here. They also tended to think of themselves as ministers at home/work more frequently, and not one of them did not feel they had a Christian vocation, (although two were not sure).

Responses of Cursillo members. The responses from Cursillo members fit with the total answers in almost all the questions. One significant variance was that the majority (almost half), of the cursillistas saw vocation as being called to witness, where less than a quarter of the others expressed the same view. On the average, they did not think of themselves as ministers at home or work any more or less than non-Cursillo members. But not one expressed that they did not have a Christian vocation, (though one was not sure). Two elders expressed that they had no such vocation and six were unsure. The solid positions of Cursillo on education and ministry in daily life did not evidence itself in a stronger response than the general population. I had expected a stronger positive response from this group. This calls for some educational work among this group of people.

3.- Educational Program Considerations

The time for and method of learning preferred by most participants was clearly an hour per week in either discussion groups, Bible study, experiential workshops or lectures (in that order).

The time-method grid is more scattered for the other less preferred methods, and there were far less people choosing them. It would seem that an appealing program of equipping should take place weekly when the interest or motivation is highest. Each period should be an hour or two in length. The general pattern for such weekly studies in churches has been six to eight weeks, but the experience and preference of the group on each program will have to be determined.

The big issue is when to hold these programs and the topics upon which to focus. The choices are so broad. I know from many years of experience that just because people express interest in an educational course or retreat program, does not mean that they will show up when it is offered. It is also my experience that the topics for study that most people want are not necessarily the ones that they truly need for development of their Christian life and service. We need to strengthen the motivation and increase the motivators.

When making a comparison between the help currently experienced from various programs and the future help expected from these same programs a few interesting findings surfaced. Present and future measurements of help from worship or sermons remained strongly in the superlative positive choices. The strong sense of support from current fellowship waned somewhat when participants were asked to judge the future. Likewise expectations of the help from prayer groups fell back from current experience, but this might have been partially the result of adding the term "issues" to the future help statement. But the same addition did not have detrimental effect on the "sermons" choice. The current help from synod or presbytery programs was

judged by most to be none existent. When future possibilities were considered the response became scattered between “somewhat helpful”, “unlikely a help”, “no interest” and “no opinion”. It would appear that programs put on by the courts of the church have such a low image that it would be unwise to put a lot of effort into this area. Presbytery and Synod might be better to operate as brokers for effective congregational programs that can be shared by different congregations, or design and resource assistance could be offered. The current experience of help from conference centre programs peaked somewhere between “none” and “little”, but the respondents shifted to a solid “somewhat helpful” when considering future possibilities of help. There is a sufficiently good image of the centres that programs might well be offered in this venue as long as problems of timing and topics are carefully addressed. Current congregational programs brought a response that reached its height between “some” and “little”, while the future hope was a very strong “somewhat helpful” with a significant number making the “most helpful” choice. The people of these congregations truly want their congregations to offer them programs and have high hopes that they will be helpful. Since this optimistic attitude is present, it would be well to put maximum effort into this area, and address the particular issues of time, topic and method.

Those respondents who had an outward looking concept of Christian vocation of the whole “laity” or “people of God” expressed strong preferences for learning methods. This group brings together those who saw “vocation” or “Christian calling” as being called to a “specific (mainly secular) occupation”, called to witness, called to “live a responsible Christian life”. The call “to serve others in our volunteer times” would also fit into this perspective but very few people (2.8%) made that choice. The preferred methods for learning for ministry in daily life and work would appear to be discussion groups, experiential workshops and Bible study (in

that order). These choices were the top three for each component of this combined, “personal concept of vocation” group. After that the other methods were chosen less frequently and in varying degrees by each sub group. Since “lectures” was the 4th, 5th or 6th choice of each of the three sub-groups, we can see that this group especially, is not seeking to be taught by teachers or lecturers, but want to learn together. It also could be assumed that this might be the kind of Bible study they would want, but we cannot be completely sure.

When we look at the topic choices that would assist this group for their ministry in daily life, they do not exhibit the same defined focus, but the participants did have priorities. All three sub groups most frequently chose topics in the personal and pastoral skills area. Those in the “called in a specific occupation” and “to live a responsible Christian life” indicated a second area of preference in topics about church leadership skills. Those who felt vocation was a call to witness favoured both topics on Christian lifestyle/witness, and prayer next after the personal and pastoral. Biblical studies were chosen fifth most frequently by these sub groups (and even lower for the other concepts of vocation). It would appear that desires for Bible study are not aimed at learning the Bible itself, but relating it to life and work.

4.- Conclusions

4.1 Findings

The background reading for this project thesis has made it very clear that God has called the people of Christ’s Church to re-present Christ in the world. The church’s very existence is to be ever engaged in this mission. God’s calling and sending action forms its identity. As such, the laity of the church are an integral and indispensable part of that mission. This call requires

an informed body of disciples. At many points along the history of the Church, there were failures in discipleship and loss of understanding of the Mission of its *laos*. When this happened new groups, sects or churches formed in response to the work of the Holy Spirit and the needs of that time. New disciples were equipped and commissioned, and the gifts from God were shared once again. It is a dire thing for any church to neglect the ministry to which it is called. God's mission will continue even though whole denominations should fail the Lord whom they claim to worship.

Not only is this mission central, but the equipping for it is crucial. God means for the *laos* to develop in their faith, to express their unity in the Trinity, and to enable others to learn what the Gospel can mean in their lives. Many disciplines like learning theory, educational techniques, motivational theory and faith development can inform this equipping process as noted above in this thesis.

This research project has indicated that the people of the Presbyterian churches who responded, have some understanding for this ministry in daily life, and they have an openness to some kind of equipping. Some of the assumptions noted in chapter one (2.3 and 2.4), have been confirmed, but only partially. The laity who responded did show signs of conceiving a division between Sunday's ministry of grace and a daily life of work. Some of them saw that congregational maintenance and survival type work was the task of ministry. But significant numbers responded with views that were more wholistic and outward looking. There is no question that these laity would need to be agents of their own formation, but they are looking for gifted and aware equippers. If the priority for ministry in daily life in judicatory offices is indeed low, it would likely be the result of partially poor responses from the laity to their

programs. No data was available from this study to measure the assumptions of ordained ministers, denominational offices, seminaries or colleges, and independent church-related organizations. These could be possible topics for further investigations by others.

My assumptions on equipping and openness were confirmed, but that on clear or definitive topics for equipping, was not. The need for many gifted and committed leaders in this enterprise was a readily deduced result from the responses. Such teachers and pastors are needed to open the ministry of daily life and its ultimate support and power source to the people of the churches.

Considerable data has been gathered on the defining question of the project (Chap. 1:3.2).

There are many educational needs that have been identified in the data and they will be addressed in summary in the next sub-section. The same is true for the educational experiences required.

My governing hypothesis (Chap. 1:4.1), appears to have been largely supported, at least in intentionality. There was considerable interest by more than half of the respondents with specific topics. But the vast majority (up to 88%) expressed interest in educational or equipping opportunities beyond listening to sermons. Almost all (97%) had some specific preferential responses for a method of learning or equipping for service. Nearly the same percentage expressed a willingness to set aside some time for this kind of equipping. Those who saw themselves engaged in such ministries in their daily lives did express a stronger interest in the equipping means and methods. The hypothesis of "recognition and honouring of these ministries" was not upheld by this project for it showed no significant impact on the responses, nor were the needs expressed by the respondents "narrowly specific" as

hypothesized. As noted above they were very diverse and it would be hard to set priorities that would be supported by even this group. Dialogue and discussion were affirmed by the people who responded positively to fellowship and prayer groups (80% and more), also to the support received from other members (73%). The question that remains is whether or not these intentions would be carried out in actual practice. To determine that could be the topic for another project by someone engaged in leadership within a specific congregation, rather than by one who is in more of a consultative role, like myself.

Another area for further investigation would be denominationally specific studies of the relation between particular denominational polity, theological perspective, history and practice with the resultant concept and engagement in ministry in daily life. Another perspective would be to look at the issue from the point of view of some of the equippers (i.e. clergy) or the educators of the equippers (i.e. divinity colleges, theological seminaries and adult educators).

4.2 Recommendations

There may be some priorities for topics and methodology for an educational endeavour to equip the people of the Presbyterian church (as based on this sample) for carrying out ministry in their daily life and work; but to design a course would be quite difficult. It might be possible to do planning in one congregation if a larger and more extensive cross section of laity were involved in a research study similar to this one. Even then it would be unlikely because the diversity of definitions, breadth of topics, personal preferences and other issues would still be extensive.

Any course of study would need to be cognisant of a wide variety of personal issues that can not be categorized or defined by age, marital status, occupational or educational criterion. We see from the study that certain variables tend to emerge that appear to be supportive of or associated

with ministry of the laity in daily life and work. These methods, topics and times can be used when considering an educational endeavour, but the most important element is the people to be involved. How can we reach a larger group of laity for this ministry? The key seems to be the sense of support and fellowship from other members and the minister. The makeup or membership of the group may have more relevance to the choice of whether to participate or not, than do the topics of study. Affinity groups may be the answer. But how do we get to them?

The first task is to build up an awareness and a common understanding of a ministry of the laity in daily life and work, along with the gospel truth that God calls us all to this ministry with our baptism. Related to this is the fact that ministry is daily service rendered by all the baptised. The key method for this educational task is through the preaching, teaching and witness of the pastoral minister. This should become the atmosphere in which the whole congregation of the *laos* exist. It is crucial that the ministry of the laity not be affirmed at the expense of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Ministry is too big a reality or work to be restricted to just one portion of the church. The examples of this broader expression of ministry, as they currently exist, need to be highlighted and brought to the attention of the worshipping congregation with thankfulness and challenge. These need not be done in a way to publicly recognize the ministry, but to illustrate possibilities.

The responses indicate another important contributing factor to this atmosphere for lay ministry. The worship service needs to be an experience of all the people working together as ministers or servants of God, just as the daily life of the membership needs to be recognized as worship taking place in scattered locations throughout the community. In this Sunday morning

worship experience, the people of God should be gathered as one, experience forgiveness, renewed with the wonder and love of God, challenged with the Gospel, empowered with the Spirit and sent out to continue Christ's ministry in life throughout the week. The worship service is both a celebration and a time for equipping.

The issue of baptism as God's commissioning of His people to full time, life long, Christ centred service, needs to be taught to the whole congregation as a part of the lead up to baptismal and confirmation of baptism services. This needs to be reinforced at pre-baptismal classes or counselling for parents of new-borns, at pre-confirmation classes, Sunday Church School, youth groups and adult classes. The expression of vocation as a call of God to all of us should become part of our life experience. All existing means of education in the congregation need to include a co-ordinated expression of this ministry, along with whatever study focus is currently being used in the curriculum. Education that follows in the early years after baptism should lead to this understanding of a discipleship that learns and serves Christ. This should also continue throughout all of adulthood. The problem of older members feeling less inclined toward having a vocation needs to be addressed. Disciples of Christ do not retire, nor should they run out of work to do for Christ, in their daily lives. God's call involves life long learning and life long ministry. As chapters two and five made clear, God calls people to continue the witness of Christ that the (Kingdom) Reign of God has come and everyone needs to respond to its coming.

The problem for adult education in this or any area is motivation and time. If the motivation is strong enough, the time is found. The place to start is in already existing activities, or in areas where interest is expressed. An example of the latter in this study was the openness to learning

activities that was expressed in the responses of the adherents. Seeker's classes or similar groupings could be used.

Another area for education in this ministry is in Kirk-session meetings, as part of continuing development of the elders. Considering the key place that the session holds in the Presbyterian Church, there should never be elders who do not affirm that they have a Christian vocation. They should be modelling ministry in their daily life and work, as well as affirming it in their visits to the families in their districts. The various fellowship and mission groups, which are primarily part of the women's expression of church life, should also renew the sense of life long ministry in daily life. One problem for most congregations is that not as many men are drawn into such ongoing fellowship groups.

This research indicated that both women and men in these congregations did want congregational programs on a broad spectrum of topics. They were most open to discussion groups, experiential workshops and Bible studies. In addition there was a fairly strong affirmation of fellowship. The time and motivation have to be right, but even more, the group has to relate to their life at that point and be of help to them personally to deal with the issues and problems that they are facing at that time period in their lives.

The results of this questionnaire indicate that the steering committees for the Presbyterian Cursillo Movement need to seriously consider the basic educational, apostolic and other goals of the movement and engage in them more actively. The ongoing nature of the equipping process should be reaffirmed. The importance of learning in community and supporting one another in this equipping process should be central to the ultreyas and other post-cursillo groupings. The cursillistas need to engage in a specific program of awareness building in

regard to their vocational call and its resultant ministry in daily life and work. Current intentions and considerations about starting up a School need to be pursued. The world organization of the Cursillo Movement (OMCC) has expressed: "The School has always been and is to this day *an element that is essential to the continuity and development of the Movement.*"³⁷⁴ The world organization has stated that the school has three convergent dimensions: holiness, community and formation. This project's results have indicated that the second and especially the third dimension of formation need to be emphasised. This formation process would need to seriously consider the praxis of ministry in daily life.

My further recommendation is that congregations institute a **Life Transitions Model** of community building and adult learning groups in addition to their existing programs. These could involve a short- term series of sharing, and learning (and teaching especially at the younger ages), events or groupings. These would be specific to different life stages or transitions. At those programs the participants would build a community, bring their experiences or issues, and receive spiritual and other resources explicit to the transition and the period of life that lies ahead of them. Along with this, would be a learning focus of ministering to or helping others outside the group who are going through that same transition. Some such transitions include: 1) just before entering Secondary School, 2) when about to enter College, University or the Workforce, 3) Pre-marriage, 4) Pre-parenthood (before baptism of the first child), 5) Pre-parenting of teenagers, 6) for people in work transitions (termination, unemployment and job seeking), 7) preparation for retirement and upon retirement, 8) grief

³⁷⁴ Gerald P. Hughes, (ed.) *The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement*, 2nd Edition, (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications 1992), 200.

support. For the *laos* to grow into apostles engaged in God's mission to the world, spiritual growth toward maturity, measured in Jesus Christ, is needed. As was indicated in chapters six and seven, dialogue with others at different stages of faith development is crucial. Equipping requires bridges of dialogue to be built between the people at various stages so that they may move onward. Because this does not happen naturally these groups created by triggers and/or transitions could have a strong influence for growth. These fellowship experiences could also inform and inspire the building of the most important bridges which are those that go out into the world community.

These programs and others would be defined by local needs. Where possible the groups should be based in a congregation. In some cases congregations within a local area may need to cooperate to bring together a group large enough to enable dialogue and growth to take place. These clusters might also be ecumenical, if feasible. The responses did not show a strong acceptance of equipping programs taking place outside ones own congregation so considerable work on motivation and recruitment must be done to encourage such events. The groups should usually meet frequently enough (likely weekly) and long enough (2-2 ½ hours) for fellowship to build and where learning can take place. The situation and the particular transition would define the time frame (4-8 weeks). The program content could largely grow from the group itself, with guidance from the Teaching minister. If the group wishes to continue as an ongoing support, they would make that decision and plan the future fellowship themselves. The first stage (and perhaps the only one) of the group (4-6 weeks) should have the support and facilitation leadership of the pastoral minister(s). Each group should have the ongoing support of an equipped mentor, who can relate to the participants and assist in their faith development on the journey toward maturity and ministry in daily life. These groups are

the occasions when a process like the “**Lay Ministry**” and **Adult Learning Window** should be explained, facilitated, and then allowed to begin to operate specifically for that situation. The commitment to and understanding of personal and corporate faith growth would be most important. After this stage any ongoing group could be self-facilitating. Even with a calling together of a new life transition group, they would likely bring together some of the earlier groupings because people all grow older and journey through life on somewhat comparable courses. The task of the Church is to make the *laos* aware of God’s call to Ministry for all God’s people, and to enable those in the Church to minister in Christ’s name to those in the world.

4.3 Summary and Implications for Others

This project thesis has revealed to me that there is an achievement gap between the theology and theory of lay *diakonia* ministry and its praxis. This has been evidenced in several periods of the Church’s history, in my current networking and in this research. The scriptural background and expressed teachings on the subject are evident, but the follow through has been too frequently incomplete. I contend that the witness of the Church has suffered because of this, and it could be a significant factor in the general decline of participation in this country and perhaps the whole western world. This research has indicated that the resources and means for enabling this ministry have been available for many years, but the equipping and engagement have been limited in impact, both in a geographic and numeric sense. This project has convinced me that equipping and engagement for ministry in daily life can take place, but it requires a total commitment of the churches to this purpose. The commitment should involve

every aspect of the church's life and especially its educational activities. The missional call from God requires such a commitment.

Many implications of this project should be applicable to other mainline churches and other denominations. Discussions that I have had with members and clergy of other churches and traditions have indicated similar concerns and parallel attempts at developing lay *diakonia* ministry. In this day and age the similarities in life and praxis between churches of different denominations are more evident than differences. My twenty-four years as director of a retreat and conference centre that hosted many congregational groups from a spectrum of traditions, has confirmed this. The laity of all these groups were searching for similar clarifying concepts to provide meaning to their Christian life and guidance for their work and relationships in the world. My experience in the North American and global networks of Church and adult education leaders has confirmed for me that many of these findings are applicable to other places and situations.

In those covenantal traditions practicing infant baptism, the need for widespread education on the meaning of baptism and confirmation, has been recognized. In spite of the theological position of most of these churches that baptism represents a call to full time Christian service, most members fail to understand or practice that. Ed. White, a Presbyterian (USA) Church consultant with the Alban Institute, noted last year, that at a recent seminary continuing education event only about 15 out of over 100 clergy present stated that they believed and taught that baptism is such a call.³⁷⁵ Education about the full implications of baptism needs to

³⁷⁵ Edward A. White, in a lecture on "This Call's For You" at Crieff Hills Community, Ontario, March, 1998.

be a pervasive part of every church of that tradition. The equipping for and practical engagement in ministry in daily life should be of interest to all churches including those of the adult baptism tradition (only it would be in a different form).

In summary, equipping for ministry in daily life in the world should involve a plan of action with several components. These can be summarized as: 1. providing an atmosphere, 2. establishing a foundation, 3. building a structure and 4. extending a bridge. The atmosphere for lay ministry in daily life and baptism as a call to service, is provided through sermons, worship services and programs in existing classes, groups and committees. The call for the Church to continue the mission of Jesus Christ in its community should be a central part of the whole life of the congregation, be related to all its membership. The consciousness of the whole congregation toward ministry in daily life is raised during these activities, and becomes the very air they breath.

The foundation for this ministry is established through new equipping endeavours of adult learning opportunities. These should be of an affinity type; for example using the **Life Transitions Model** to bring people together who are responding to similar triggers, but who may be at different levels of faith development. Dialogue, fellowship and group learning enable these groups to build a strong, outward-looking, mature faith. Such a faith that among other characteristics, integrates faith and life, has a personal sense of responsibility for others, seeks to grow, seeks to serve humanity through love and justice, and advocates social change for greater justice and equality. Each person's gifts for ministry should be identified during this second phase.

In the structure built upon this foundation the **Adult Learning Window** could be operative bringing daily life and work into the church and enabling faith to operate in the world of work. The content and methods for engaging in a ministry of daily life would be part of this phase. In this plan the judicatories, seminaries, centres, regional ecclesial and ecumenical councils should operate as resource back up. Their activities should focus on equipping the equippers, both lay and clergy. Programs for youth leaders and teacher training as well as congregational governance are always in demand. This equipping can be provided by such institutions beyond the individual congregational level.

The fourth and ultimate activity or part of the plan is the extending of a bridge to the world. This bridge is built by informed involvement of the laity offering *diakonia* service in the world as a continuation of Christ's ministry. This bridge could reach the persons and situations of need in the world and draw them into the experience of the realm of God. Like any bridge this action phase should provide support for those engaged in carrying out their ministry in daily life, as well as support and assurance for those who start to come across the bridge from the world's side. This bridge would begin with the acceptance of the issues and experiences of daily life and work into the activities and learning enterprises of the church. It is extended and broadened when the faith, informed by this engagement, goes back into the community in the lives of the saints who have been equipped for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ.

Appendices

Request Letter

Announcements

Questionnaire

Topic Areas and Topics Suggested

Some Response Data Tables

Some Crosstabulation Tables

Seven Deadly Sins That Impede Ministry

Rev. Robert C. Spencer, BA. BD.

28 Kipling Ave., Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1H 8C2

(519)822-4015

December , 1998

Dear Christian Lay Person:

I am currently engaged in research for a project thesis for a Doctor of Ministry degree at McMaster Divinity College, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. I am working under the supervision of a faculty advisor: Principal, William H. Brackney (Ph. 905-525-9140, x23501). The purpose of the study is to determine what members of Presbyterian churches understand about ministry in their own daily life and work. It will also seek to discover the Religious Education needs and personal spiritual development priorities of Christian Laity that would enable them to better carry out their responsibilities as Christians in the world today. It is entitled: *A Curriculum for the Equipping of the Saints for the Work of Ministry in Their Daily Life in the World.*

I am seeking a significant quantity of responses (100) to the **attached questionnaire**. It should take about 15 - 20 minutes to complete. The responses will be analyzed quantitatively through use of a computer program, to determine the opinions and needs of respondents according to the various personal characteristics for report in the project thesis. The original questionnaires will be destroyed at the end of the process. I am also seeking a small number (10-12), who are willing to meet further (possibly two evenings for 2-1/2 hrs.) to study the results and help in the developing of a proposed program for laity education or other possibilities as identified by the questionnaires' findings. The written notes taken at these

meetings will be made part of the report for the project thesis. (But no participant will be identified.)

Your individual answers will be confidential and not shared with anyone outside the researchers. Every attempt has been made to ensure that individual identities are not revealed in the questionnaire. You can return the completed questionnaire by sending it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope or return to a bulk mailing envelope at your church office...if that is where you picked up the blank form.

You may refrain from answering any of the questions you prefer to omit, but the process is aided when as many questions are answered as possible. If you indicate your interest in the follow-up group and later wish to withdraw, you may do that at any time.

If you wish to participate in the follow-up discussion and/or receive a copy of the research findings, please fill out the form below and return it to me. (Under a separate cover if you wish).

Thank-you for your interest and consideration.

Best wishes, Grace and Peace,

The Rev. Robert C. Spencer.

✂-----Name

----- Address ----- Postal Code

Phone #----- E-Mail -----

I would like to receive a copy of the research findings

I would like to participate in a short follow-up study Best day to meet:

SUGGESTED ANNOUNCEMENT for SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20.

Respondents Requested

Adult volunteers are invited to answer a brief questionnaire on the subject of the ministry of the laity in their daily life and work. Rev. Bob Spencer is seeking this information for a study connected with the thesis for his Doctor of Ministry studies. It should only take about 15 - 20 minutes. He would like your answers as soon as possible, and definitely needs them before the end of the year. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated. The resultant report should be helpful to this congregation and others. The questionnaires with an explanatory letter are available

(Thank-you Rev. Bob Spencer)

(Further information - 822-4015)

On the following four pages is a copy of the Questionnaire.

MINISTRY IN DAILY LIFE

A Questionnaire for Laity

1. The word "ministry" is used with different meanings. Please circle the number opposite each of the following statements which best represents the extent of your agreement with that statement.

	strongly agree	agree	agree & disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	no opinion.
.1 Ministry is the special work of the professional Pastoral Minister who serves the spiritual needs of the congregation (preaching, Bible teaching, pastoral calling etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
.2 Ministry is the work shared in by pastors and elders which serves members of the congregation and their spiritual needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
.3 Ministry is the work shared in by the whole congregation which serves the people of the congregation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
.4 Ministry includes serving people of the community outside the congregation such as visiting prisoners, volunteering for community service projects, or serving on the boards of community organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6
.5 Ministry includes corporate action by the church to change unjust economic or political conditions of life (such as a task force to deal with issues related to international debt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
.6 Ministry includes the ways a member lives out his/her faith in relation to family, friends and neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6
.7 Ministry includes the ways a member lives out his/her faith in his/her occupation.	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. To what extent do each of the following statements accurately describe your congregation? (Circle one response for each.)

	very much like my cong'n	somewhat like my cong'n	only a little like my cong'n	not at all like my cong'n	don't know
.1 Members have a clear sense of the congregation's purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
.2 Pastors and lay leaders share leadership as genuine partners.	1	2	3	4	5
.3 Members know that the church has high expectations for their commitment to and accountability for service.	1	2	3	4	5
.4 Members actively serve in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
.5 Members actively participate in evangelistic activities.	1	2	3	4	5
.6 Members pray together in many different times and places about common concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
.7 Members are involved in the work of the congregation as soon as they unite with the church, if not before.	1	2	3	4	5
.8 Members may choose many different ways to serve.	1	2	3	4	5
.9 Members are challenged in specific ways to participate in community activities or organizations.	1	2	3	4	5
.10 Pastor(s) invite the sharing of joys and concerns during Sunday worship.	1	2	3	4	5
.11 Members frequently minister to one another's needs.	1	2	3	4	5
.12 There are many small groups or other face to face opportunities for study, prayer, and mutual ministry.	1	2	3	4	5
.13 Members are publicly recognized by the congregation for their service in the community and workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
.14 Members provide leadership in Sunday worship	1	2	3	4	5
.14 Members take initiative in identifying needs and proposing ways to serve.	1	2	3	4	5

3. When you think of the terms "vocation", or "Christian calling", which of the following comes to your mind MOST READILY? (Please check only one response.)

- .1 ☐ I am not familiar with these terms
 .2 ☐ terms which have to do with the ordained ministry [mechanic, etc.
 .3 ☐ terms which might apply to anyone who feels called by God to enter some specific occupation like a doctor, teacher
 .4 ☐ terms which might apply to anyone who feels called by God to witness to Christ in our daily life
 .5 ☐ terms which mean that God wants us to live a responsible Christian life in whatever we do
 .6 ☐ terms which mean that God wants us to serve others in our volunteer times
 .7 ☐ terms which mean that God wants a person to enter some form of full-time Christian work
 .8 ☐ terms which mean the same as occupation
 .9 ☐ other (please describe) _____

4. From what source(s) do church members receive the most adequate training for the leadership positions in your congregation? (Check one response only.)

- .1 ☐ Presbytery events or programs
 .2 ☐ Synod events or programs
 .3 ☐ Leadership programs developed in your own congregation
 .4 ☐ Teaching, preaching guidance by the pastor
 .5 ☐ Reading and individual study
 .6 ☐ Interdenominational events
 .7 ☐ Conference/retreat centre programs
 .8 ☐ Other _____ (specify sv)

5. How much help in living a life of service to others (at home, at work, in the community or in the church) do you now receive? (Circle one response for each.)

	very much	moder- -ate	some	little	none	no su
.1 from Sunday worship services and sermons?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.2 from fellowship with other church members	1	2	3	4	5	6
.3 from small study groups and prayer?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.4 from personal Bible study and prayer?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.5 from the way other church members love and accept me as I am?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.6 from the way my pastor loves and accepts me as I am?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.7 from the inspiration of my pastor as a model of Christian service? *	1	2	3	4	5	6
.8 from the way others in my congregation express their belief in my ability to serve?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.9 from the work of the Holy Spirit in our congregation?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.10 from appreciation I receive when I have served?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.11 from Synod/Presbytery events/program?	1	2	3	4	5	6
.12 from conference centre events/programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
.13 from congregational educational programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
.14 from groups outside the church (ie. _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6
.15 other _____ (please specify)						

6. How often do you think of yourself as a "minister" to the people around you at home and/or at work? (Check one response.)

- .1 ☐ daily
 .2 ☐ several times a week
 .3 ☐ about once a week
 .4 ☐ 2 or 3 times a month
 .5 ☐ about once a month
 .6 ☐ several times a year
 .7 ☐ once a year or less
 .8 ☐ never

7. Do you feel that you have a vocation or Christian calling? (Check one response.)

- .1 ☐ yes .2 ☐ no .3 ☐ not sure .4 ☐ I don't feel I understand these terms

B. If "yes", when do you feel your Christian calling began? (Check one response.)

- .1 ☐ when I decided what kind of occupation I would prepare myself for
 .2 ☐ when I started work in a job I thought I would spend much of my life at
 .3 ☐ when I was baptized
 .4 ☐ when I became a member of the church
 .5 ☐ when I recognized injustice or social need
 .6 ☐ when I committed my life to Christ
 .7 ☐ when I began to think seriously about the kind of person I want to be
 .8 ☐ at some other point in my life, namely: _____ (please specify)

8. What kind of help would you like in order to enable you to better engage in some kind of ministry in your daily life, family life, larger community and workplace? (Circle one response for each.)

	most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion
.1 sermons on the topic/issues	1	2	3	4	5
.2 support of a fellowship group	1	2	3	4	5
.3 prayer group on issues	1	2	3	4	5
.4 synod/presbytery program	1	2	3	4	5
.5 congregational program	1	2	3	4	5
.6 conference centre program	1	2	3	4	5
.7 interdenominational program	1	2	3	4	5
.8 other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

9. What methods of learning or equipping for service would you prefer? (Check up to three responses)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| .1 lectures | .5 Bible Study | .9 self-directed study |
| .2 workshops (experiential) | .6 reflection-action (in service) | .10 role play |
| .3 discussion groups | .7 visual-video | .11 (other) _____ |
| .4 web chat sites | .8 formal courses | (please specify) |

10. What topic(s) would be useful to assist you in this ministry or service to others in your daily life? (Please specify briefly)

11. How much time would you be willing to set aside for this kind of equipping/education for service? (Check one only)

- | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| .1 an hr/month | .4 a weekend/year | .7 a part day/week | .10 _____ other |
| .2 an hr/week | .5 a week/year | .8 a part day/month | (please specify) |
| .3 an hr/day | .6 a day/month | .9 no time | |

Personal Data

12. Gender .1 female .2 male

13. Age

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| .1 teens | .4 40-49 yrs | .7 70-79 yrs |
| .2 20-29 yrs | .5 50-59 yrs | .8 80 yrs plus |
| .3 30-39 yrs | .6 60-69 yrs | |

14. Are you married or single?

- .1 single .2 married .3 number of dependents: _____
- If currently single, have you ever been married?
- .4 yes .5 no

15. Occupational status (check one that is closest to your situation)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| .1 employed full time, out of home | .5 self employed |
| .2 employed part time, out of home | .6 student, full time |
| .3 employed occasional/seasonal | .7 seeking employment |
| .4 engaged in household/family care, full time | .8 retired |

16. If employed what type would closest describe your work: (check one)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| .1 professional (medical) | .5 management | .9 tradesperson |
| .2 professional (education) | .6 technician | .10 sales |
| .3 professional (other) | .7 support services | .11 other _____ |
| .4 service worker | .8 civil servant | (please specify) |

17. Educational level completed (*check one*)

- .1 ___ elementary school .3 ___ vocation institute/college .5 ___ post graduate
.2 ___ secondary school .4 ___ university undergraduate

18. Church affiliation

- .1 ___ adherent .2 ___ member -of congregation _____ (*please specify*)

19. Church participation (*check all that pertain currently*)

- .1 ___ elder .4 ___ teacher .7 ___ Cursillo member .10 ___ other _____
.2 ___ manager (Board of) .5 ___ choir member .8 ___ Alpha participant .11 ___ other _____
.3 ___ group leader .6 ___ group member .9 ___ pastoral visitor (*please specify*)

Please return to: Rev. Robert C. Spencer
28 Kipling Ave. Guelph, ON N1H 8C2

These responses will be used in a research assignment for a Project Thesis for McMaster Divinity College toward a Doctor of Ministry degree. They will be shared (without personal identifiers) in summary form in the printed Project Thesis, and by way of a published report to parties interested in the Church's Adult Christian Education programs.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS? Call Bob at: (519) 822-4015
or E-mail: robertc.spencer@sympatico.ca

Thank you very much for your assistance.

LAYQUEST.DOC

Appendix 2: Topic Areas and Topics Suggested by Respondents

1 BIBLICAL STUDIES: Bible relation to life, Bible study and Prayer, Bible Study x4, deeper Biblical knowledge x2 and understanding, Christian proof in the Bible

2 PERSONAL AND PASTORAL SKILLS: Relate to people's needs, counselling x2 mentoring, caring for (Srs.) elderly x2, for terminally ill, listening skills x4, grief counselling x2, response to or dealing with grief x4, Christian parenting x3, pastoral visitation x2, setting boundaries, seeing Christ in others, family and work place interaction, palliative care, family, human behaviour, listening and giving advice, compassionate listening, communicating skills x3, looking for Jesus in difficult people, coping with teens, confidence building.

3 TOPICAL STUDIES: Jealousy, validation, honesty, music, literature, church drop out, reaching the non-churched, Christian writing (non-fictional), joy, patience, divorce, unselfishness, community responsibility, different religions, dealing with non-church people, marriage issues, dealing with anger, Christian education for adults, contemporary worship music.

4 CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES: Hospitality, serving, love one another, Christian ethics, commitment, piety x2.

5 THEOLOGICAL STUDIES: Holy Spirit, God's omnipresence, in-depth study groups led by a theologian, clarification on the purpose of Baptism, Basic Theology.

6 CHURCH LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Conflict resolution, (meaningful) eldership,

Christian leadership models, leadership assessing and prioritizing need, small group dynamics, adult teaching skills, youth leadership, S.S. teacher, administration, form and maintain groups, team ministry skills, ministering to children, leading Bible Study groups.

7 GLOBAL ISSUES: Poverty x2, hunger, war, underprivileged children, development projects, support of missionaries, drugs, abuse (physical and mental), helping street people.

8 SPIRITUAL GIFTS/GROWTH: Healing x2, identifying & developing your gifts x2, spiritual disciplines, the indwelling Christ, spiritual warfare, daily walk, learning personal strengths, helping new Christians grow in faith to maturity.

9 CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE AND WITNESS: Evangelism x3, ministry in daily life, relevance of faith in daily lives, Christian in the workplace (with non-Christians), witness x2, answer questions of non believers/doubters x3, Christian lifestyle, Christian in today's' world, spirituality x2, communicating faith and sharing faith or articulating itx2.

10 PRAYER: Intercession (for congregation) x3, using prayer power, power of spoken word; scripture and prayer, prayer x3, effective prayer, commitment in prayer, power of prayer, establishing a regular prayer group.

11 OTHER: Success stories of others.

Appendix 3: Some Research Data Tables

Frequency Table On Ministry

is the special work of the professional

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	37	34.9	34.9	34.9
agree	25	23.6	23.6	58.5
agree & disagree	20	18.9	18.9	77.4
disagree	9	8.5	8.5	85.8
strongly disagree	13	12.3	12.3	98.1
no opinion	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

is corporate action to change unjust systems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	16	15.1	15.2	15.2
agree	31	29.2	29.5	44.8
agree & disagree	39	36.8	37.1	81.9
disagree	10	9.4	9.5	91.4
strongly disagree	6	5.7	5.7	97.1
no opinion	3	2.8	2.9	100.0
Total	105	99.1	100.0	
Missing 22	1	.9		
Total	106	100.0		

personal living of faith with family & friends

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	60	56.6	57.1	57.1
agree	34	32.1	32.4	89.5
agree & disagree	8	7.5	7.6	97.1
disagree	2	1.9	1.9	99.0
strongly disagree	1	.9	1.0	100.0
Total	105	99.1	100.0	
Missing 22	1	.9		
Total	106	100.0		

living ones' faith in work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	53	50.0	50.5	50.5
agree	43	40.6	41.0	91.4
agree & disagree	5	4.7	4.8	96.2
disagree	2	1.9	1.9	98.1
strongly disagree	1	.9	1.0	99.0
no opinion	1	.9	1.0	100.0
Total	105	99.1	100.0	
Missing 22	1	.9		
Total	106	100.0		

How often think of self as a minister at home/work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	daily	23	21.7	22.1	22.1
	several times / week	40	37.7	38.5	60.6
	once / week	12	11.3	11.5	72.1
	2/3 times a month	12	11.3	11.5	83.7
	once a month	2	1.9	1.9	85.6
	several times a year	6	5.7	5.8	91.3
	once a year	3	2.8	2.9	94.2
	never	6	5.7	5.8	100.0
	Total	104	98.1	100.0	
Missing	22	2	1.9		
Total		106	100.0		

when did your Calling begin?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	preparation for occupation	3	2.8	3.7	3.7
	starting of job "for life"	1	.9	1.2	4.9
	at baptism	1	.9	1.2	6.1
	on becoming member	4	3.8	4.9	11.0
	on recognition of need	3	2.8	3.7	14.6
	on commitment to Christ	37	34.9	45.1	59.8
	upon serious personal thought	21	19.8	25.6	85.4
	other	12	11.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	82	77.4	100.0	
Missing	22	24	22.6		
Total		106	100.0		

amount of time willing to set aside for equipping

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	an hr/mon.	8	7.5	8.0	8.0
	an hr/wk	28	26.4	28.0	36.0
	an hr/day	6	5.7	6.0	42.0
	a wknd/yr	17	16.0	17.0	59.0
	a wk/yr	2	1.9	2.0	61.0
	a day/mon.	12	11.3	12.0	73.0
	a part day/wk	11	10.4	11.0	84.0
	a part day/mon.	11	10.4	11.0	95.0
	no time	2	1.9	2.0	97.0
	other	3	2.8	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	94.3	100.0	
Missing	22	6	5.7		
Total		106	100.0		

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-29 yrs	3	2.8	2.8	2.8
30-39 yrs	10	9.4	9.4	12.3
40-49 yrs	26	24.5	24.5	36.8
50-59 yrs	31	29.2	29.2	66.0
60-69 yrs	25	23.6	23.6	89.6
70-79 yrs	10	9.4	9.4	99.1
80 yrs plus	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

occupational status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid employed FT out of home	32	30.2	30.2	30.2
employed PT out of home	15	14.2	14.2	44.3
employed occasional	2	1.9	1.9	46.2
FT household/family	13	12.3	12.3	58.5
self employed	11	10.4	10.4	68.9
student FT	1	.9	.9	69.8
seeking employment	3	2.8	2.8	72.6
retired	29	27.4	27.4	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

type of work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid professional (medical)	7	6.6	9.1	9.1
professional (education)	10	9.4	13.0	22.1
professional (other)	14	13.2	18.2	40.3
service worker	6	5.7	7.8	48.1
management	17	16.0	22.1	70.1
technician	2	1.9	2.6	72.7
support services	9	8.5	11.7	84.4
civil servant	3	2.8	3.9	88.3
tradesperson	2	1.9	2.6	90.9
sales	3	2.8	3.9	94.8
other	4	3.8	5.2	100.0
Total	77	72.6	100.0	
Missing	22	29	27.4	
Total	106	100.0		

educational level completed

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid elementary	5	4.7	4.8	4.8
secondary	28	26.4	26.7	31.4
vocational college	21	19.8	20.0	51.4
university undergraduate	30	28.3	28.6	80.0
post graduate	21	19.8	20.0	100.0
Total	105	99.1	100.0	
Missing	22	1	.9	
Total	106	100.0		

Crosstabs

Help now from Sunday worship * Future help from sermons Crosstabulation

Count

		Future help from sermons					Total
		most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion	
Help now from Sunday worship	very much	38	9		1	1	49
	moderate	8	19	1			28
	some	2	13		2		17
	little	1	5	2			8
Total		49	46	3	3	1	102

help now from fellowship with other members * future support of fellowship group Crosstabulation

Count

		future support of fellowship group					Total
		most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion	
help now from fellowship with other members	very much	19	15		1		35
	moderate	13	13	1	1	1	29
	some	10	12	4	1	2	29
	little	3	3			1	7
	none		1				1
Total		45	44	5	3	4	101

help now from small groups * future help from prayer group on issues Crosstabulation

Count

		future help from prayer group on issues					Total
		most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion	
help now from small groups	very much	13	13	1		2	29
	moderate	9	7	1		2	19
	some	6	12	2	1	2	23
	little	3	12	2			17
	none	3	3		2	3	11
	not sure	1	1			2	4
Total		35	48	6	3	11	103

help now from congregational prog * future help from congreg'l prog Crosstabulation

Count

		future help from congreg'l prog					Total
		most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion	
help now from congregational prog	very much	1	3				4
	moderate	3	7				10
	some	11	20	2			33
	little	6	16	1	1	1	25
	none	3	14	3	2	2	24
	not sure		3			3	6
Total		24	63	6	3	6	102

help now from conf. centre prog * future help from conf. centre prog. Crosstabulation

Count

		future help from conf. centre prog.					Total
		most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion	
help now from conf. centre prog	very much	2	1				3
	moderate	2	5				7
	some	2	10	2	1		15
	little	2	19	3	5	1	30
	none	4	8	8	12	5	37
	not sure	2	1			5	8
Total		14	44	13	18	11	100

help now from Synod/Presbytery prog. * future help from presbytery/synod prog Crosstabulation

Count

		future help from presbytery/synod prog					Total
		most helpful	somewhat helpful	unlikely a help	no interest	no opinion	
help now from Synod/Presbytery prog.	very much	1					1
	moderate		1	1			2
	some	1	6	1	1	1	10
	little		7	9	2	4	22
	none	1	10	15	17	13	56
	not sure		1			8	9
Total		3	25	26	20	26	100

Appendix 4: Seven *Deadly* Sins That Impede Ministry

1. *To allow the clergy and people to think that the clergy are "the ministers" and the people are the consumers —*
ALL THE BAPTIZED ARE MINISTERS.
2. *To allow people to think that they are volunteers —*
WE HAVE COVENANTED WITH GOD TO MINISTER
TO HIS WORLD WHEREVER WE MAY BE,
WORKPLACE, FAMILY, CHURCH, COMMUNITY.
3. *To allow someone to think that "their" ministry is the most important —* THERE IS ONE MINISTRY,
THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST. ALL OF OUR
MINISTRIES ARE IN SERVICE TO JESUS' MINISTRY.
4. *To think that any individual can fill any position —* EACH
PERSON IS ENDOWED WITH UNIQUE GIFTS. THE FAITH
COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL TOGETHER
MUST DISCERN WHAT THOSE GIFTS ARE.
5. *To ask a person with discerned gifts to enter a ministry without detailing the expectations, providing training or the resources needed to accomplish the ministry.*
To offer an opportunity to minister, to support, and then not to carry through.
6. *To allow the faith community to think that "church activity" is the only arena of ministry or that it is more important than being Christ's representative wherever you are in the world.*
7. *To allow the ministries in the workplace, family, church and community to go unnoticed and unappreciated. —*
PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE IN YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY;
TELL THEM THAT YOU DO, AND THAT YOU ARE
THANKFUL FOR THE MINISTRY THEY
CARRY OUT AS REPRESENTATIVES OF JESUS.

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