

Church Government

Paul and his Associates

Jesus as Master Educator

Alternative Education Models for Church and Missions

Has Roman Catholicism Changed?



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New Testament Church Structure – Paul and His Coworkers – An Alternative Theological Education – A Critique of Catholic Canon Law



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Church Government: The Three Levels of Government in the New Testament Church

*Condensed from a chapter of Ethics
[‘Ethik’, 2001, 2nd edition, vol 3; 2002, 3rd edition, vol 5]*

Translated by Cambron Teupe, MA, MTh

The Offices in the New Testament Church

All New Testament apostles and authors agree that Christ is the absolute Head of the Church, and that no one else can contest that role. For this reason, He can bear any leadership title: ‘*Bondservant*’ (Phil. 2:7, as well as in Matthew and in Acts), ‘*Servant*’ (Rom. 15:8, Lk. 22:27), ‘*Apostle*’ (Heb. 3:1, cf. Mk. 9:37, Lk. 10:16, Jn. 3:34), ‘*Teacher*’ (Mt. 23:8, Jn. 13:13. The Greek term ‘*didaskalos*’ appears 58 times in the Gospel, the Aramaic ‘*rabbi*’ 15 times.), ‘*Overseer*’ or ‘*Bishop*’ (1 Pet. 2:25), ‘*Shepherd*’ (1 Pet. 2:25, Heb.13:20, Jn. 10:11-14), ‘*Chief Shepherd*’ (1 Pet. 5:4), ‘*Cathechet*’ (Mt. 23:10), ‘*Lord*’ (appr. 100 times in the New Testament), ‘*Master*’ (7 times in the four Gospels). Above all, Jesus is the highest priest (‘*High Priest*’ or ‘*Chief Priest*’) of His Church (Heb. 2:17, 4:14-15, 5:10, 6:20, 7:26-27, 8:1, 9:11, 10:21).

Note that Jesus is not only Head of the universal Church, but also of the local congregation, as 1 Cor. 12:14-21 makes clear. His leadership has very practical consequences for the local church and for its structure (see 1 Pet. 5:1-4, Jn. 13:13-17, Mt. 23:8-12). We find here, by the way, a typical example of apparent inconsistency. All authors agree that Jesus can use any title, but apply different titles in different situations. (Besides, we do not know which other titles might have been used, but do not appear in the texts which have been handed down to us.)

In the New Testament, the local church always originated with the proclamation of the gospel by itinerate believers (either fleeing persecution or simply emigrating), by evangelists, apostles or their assistants. It

was the apostles' responsibility to ordain local elders, who then led the congregation under the supervision of leaders responsible for several churches, while the apostles tried to reach new areas for the gospel (see 1 Thess. 1 and Rom. 15:14-33¹).

The apostle, his colleagues and his successors led the churches until elders had been appointed, but continued to hold an authoritative position, described as *'father'* (1 Cor. 4:14-16. 3 Jn. 4). The local church ruled itself, on the one hand, but was responsible to the apostles and their assistants and successors, on the other. Paul's relationship to the church in Corinth best demonstrates this principle.

From the very beginning, the government of the local New Testament consisted of several elders and deacons elected to office on the basis of their good reputation (Acts 6:3, Tit. 1:5-9, 1 Pet. 5:1-4). For this reason, Paul, Luke and Peter determined and handed down lists of qualifications. Beside a good reputation, spiritual gifts were required. As these cannot be closely conceptualized, we find quite varied always fragmentary lists, consisting only of examples². Both Paul and Peter speak of spiritual gifts (1 Pet. 4:10-11), which determine the individual's ministry (1 Cor. 12:4-7). As some are important for leadership ("*some ... apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.*" Eph. 4:11), various offices are named after them ("*apostles and elders*" for example, in Acts 15:6 and 23, 16:4; or "*prophets and teachers*" in Acts 13:1-3).

The Scripture does not distinguish between professional and lay ministry. It does, however, describe the appointment to 'full-time' service in the sense that proven, gifted Christians were ordained by the spiritual leaders and by the church to offices and duties which required the individual's complete time and energy. As in the Old Testament³ (1 Cor. 9:13, Lev. 6:16, 26, Lev. 7:6, 31ff, Num. 5:9-10, 18:8-20, 31 [particularly verse 10]; Deut. 18:1-4; cf. the tithe⁴) these New Testament church workers were paid by the congregation as a matter of course (1 Cor 9:1-18, par-

¹See commentary on this text in Thomas Schirmacher, *Der Römerbrief*, vol. 2, Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1994, pp. 291-297.

²See Thomas Schirmacher, *Ethik*, vol. 2, Chapter 24, Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1994, pp. 87-98.

³See Walter C. Kaiser. "The Current Crisis in Exegesis and the Apostolic Use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:9-10", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978) 1: 3-18.

⁴See Thomas Schirmacher, *Ethik*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 432-441.

ticularly verse 14, 1 Tim. 5:17-18, 2 Tim. 2:4,6). Paul writes very plainly to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:4), “*No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him a soldier.*” It was not the salary, however, which distinguished the professional minister, but the priority he put on that service, which determined the use of his time. According to our contemporary definition, Paul, for example, was only a lay worker as mission leader, because he earned a living for himself and his colleagues (Acts 20:33-35, 1 Thess. 2:9, 1 Cor. 9:12, 2 Cor. 11:5-9, Acts 18:3). His colleagues would therefore be considered ‘full-time’, but it is Paul whom we see as the prototype of a full-time Christian worker.

I believe that we have too few full-time workers in the church and in missions. In the Old Testament, a whole tribe, the Levites, were appointed to serve God’s people full-time. Many were priests, others teachers, musicians or legal advisors. They lived on the tithes. The amount of the tithe, ten percent, demonstrates God’s evaluation of the need for full-time workers.

Let’s carry the principle of paying the priests and the Levites over into the church. Is there no contradiction between paying the deacons and elders (pastors) and the general priesthood of all believers? Both Peter and John speak of a priesthood consisting of all Christians: “*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ...*” (1 Pet. 2:9). Jesus has “*made us kings and priests ...*” (Rev. 1:6), but this is, as a matter of fact, the renewal of an Old Testament reality, for the Law of Moses had already declared God’s people to be a general priesthood. “*And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” (Ex. 19:6, See Isa. 61:6). The general priesthood of believers in the New Testament no more contradicts the necessity of deacons, pastors, and bishops, than the general priesthood of believing Jews contradicts the necessity of Levites, priests and high priests in the Old. Israel had, as a nation, a priestly ministry to the world, but only a certain group of people carried it out on a professional basis. The same principle is valid in the New Testament.

For this reason, the New Testament emphasizes the special position of the offices of church leadership. In Philippians 1:1, Paul greets “*all the saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi*” on the one hand, and, on the other hand, particularly the “*bishops (or overseers) and deacons*”. The exhortation to the church to submit to the full-time workers is very clear: “*Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you*” (Heb. 13:17). “*... and that they have*

devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints - that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us” (1 Cor. 16:15-16). “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Objecting to its meaning in the Roman Church, John Calvin opposed the use of the term ‘clergyman’, but wrote:

“It was in itself, however, a most sacred and salutary institution, that those who wished to devote themselves and their labour to the Church should be brought up under the charge of the bishop; so that no one should minister in the Church, unless he had been previously well trained, unless he had in early life imbibed sound doctrine, unless by stricter discipline he had formed habits of gravity and severer morals, been withdrawn⁵ from ordinary business, and accustomed to spiritual cares and studies.

On Ephesians 4:1-16, he added:

„By these words he shows that the ministry of men, which God employs in governing the Church, is a principal bond by which believers are kept together in one body. He also intimates, that the Church cannot be kept safe, unless supported by those guards to which the Lord has been pleased to commit its safety....“⁶

Korah’s rebellion is an Old Testament example of wrongly-understood democracy. They ‘*rose up*’ (or ‘*gathered together*’) against Moses (Num. 16:2,11.) by questioning the absolute claims of Moses and of his law on the wrongly understood premise that “*all are holy*” (Num. 16:1-13). The congregation participates in the appointment of the deacons, elders and bishops through the means of election, but is not the highest instance, and cannot simply disregard the government structure designed by God. John uses Diotrefes, however, as an negative example of a single, tyrannical leader, who wanted to dominate the church (3 John). Spiritual leadership is, therefore, not licence (see 1 Pet. 5:3: “*Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock*”). As we will see, it is also possible to bring an action against an elder.

⁵ John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994. p. 333 (Book IV, Ch. 4, Section 9)

⁶ *Ibid.*, S. 317 (aus Book IV, Ch. 3. Section 2)

The apostolic council, for example, consisted of the full-time leaders of the congregations. “*Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.*” (Acts 15:6) Still, the “whole church” played a certain role beside the elders and apostles, as well (Acts 15:4, 22). At the end of the first Christian synod, we are told, “*Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company ...*” (Acts 15:22).

Here again are two errors to avoid⁷, overrating of the office of spiritual leadership, and underrating it. I believe that the New Testament church structure consisted of three levels of leadership (deacons, elders, regional conference),⁸ although only two terms are used. Above the deacons were the presbyter or elders — leaders of the local congregation — and over them, those responsible for several churches, such as Timothy or Titus, who held no ‘office’ specifically defined in Scripture.

The Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and some Reformed denominations have retained this classic terminology: “The orders are the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate.”⁹ (Whereby the various confessions interpret the third, supraregional level differently, and I understand this level completely differently than the churches mentioned above).

I would like to begin with the second level, since this office represents the leadership of the local congregation, and since most denominations agree on most aspects concerning it. Then we will investigate the first level, the diaconate, which is also generally fairly uniform, although we will have to go into a little more detail when we deal with the issue of women deacons. Finally, we will discuss the third level, and investigate the issue of the existence of supraregional authority over the New Testament congregations. This question will take up the most space, because of

⁷See Chapter 5.B.2 on the Complementarity of Biblical thought.

⁸I thank Ray R. Sutton for giving me a copy of his unpublished manuscript *Captains and Courts: A Biblical Defense of Episcopal Government*, 96 pp, Philadelphia (PA), 1992. Beside this Reformed-Episcopal study see a Lutheran view on bishops in Karsten Bürgener, *Amt und Abendmahl und was die Bibel dazu sagt*, Selbstverlag: Bremen, 1985.

⁹*Codex Iuris Canonici: Codex des kanonischen Rechtes: Lateinisch-deutsche Ausgabe*, Verlag Butzon & Bercker: Kevelaer, 1984². p. 451 (Catholic Canon Law Can. 1009 § 1). Of course there are deep differences between the view of the nature of office in the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches that hold to those three offices.

the wide range of interpretations and practice among the various denominations.

The second level of government: Elders (Pastors)

The New Testament refers to the second level of leadership in several different ways: ‘rulers’ (Heb. 13:17), ‘those who are over you’ (1 Thess. 5:12), ‘pastors’-that is-‘shepherds’ (Eph. 4:11), ‘elders’ (Tit. 1:5), and ‘overseers’ or ‘bishops’ (1 Tim.3:1, Phil. 1:1). The titles ‘overseers’ and ‘bishops’ can be used interchangeably. Acts 20 describes ‘elders’ (20:17) who have been appointed as ‘overseers’ and who, like shepherds, are to take heed for the flock (20:28). 1 Peter 5:1-4 admonishes the elders to “shepherd the flock of God”; the Chief Shepherd is Christ, and Peter a fellow elder. Titus 1:7 speaks of ‘elders’ who are to be appointed, but in verse 5, Paul defines the qualities required of an ‘overseer’.

The elders were involved in the ministry full-time, not merely in teaching, and usually received a salary. The arguments for paying church workers in leadership positions are usually formulated with apostles, elders and traveling ministers in view. The elders in the New Testament Church were equivalent to our pastors, but not to laymen who served the church only in their free time. Scripture draws a parallel to the salary of the priests and the Levites. In 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, the salaries of the priests and Levites are used to justify provision for the elders and apostles (Compare Lev. 6:16+26, 7:6+31ff, Num. 5:9-10, 18:8-20+31, particularly verse 10, Deut. 18:1-4. Compare the tithe.) In 1 Corinthians 9:7-10, Paul refers to Deuteronomy 25:4, “Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’ Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes?” Similarly, in 1 Tim. 5:17-18, he refers to the same text and to Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:10, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’” According to these statements, not only were the elders (presbyter) to be paid, but anyone primarily involved in ministry was to carry greater responsibility and to receive higher wages.

In the original languages of the Old and New Testaments, the word for ‘honor’ could also refer to a salary or to money, as is obviously the case here. See examples in the singular form: Mt. 27:6, Acts 5:2, 7:16, 1 Cor.

6:20, 7:23; in the plural: Acts 4:34, 19:19). Besides, Scripture repeatedly emphasises that money or goods can and should be employed to express respect. “Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;!” (Proverbs 3:9). Paul mentions an offering made to “honor the Lord himself,” (2 Cor. 8:19), and admonishes Timothy to honor true widows by providing them with a pension¹⁰ (1 Tim. 5:1-2) and relates taxes and customs to the honor due the State (Romans 13:7).

The classical Presbyterian tradition, to which I belong, in spite of my criticism, distinguishes between the ‚teaching elder‘ – the full time pastors– and the ‚ruling elder‘. I do not believe that this distinction is justified by New Testament teaching, which makes all elders responsible for both teaching and counseling. In fact, the time consuming social duties were to be left up to the deacons, so that the elders could dedicate their energies to teaching.

Calvin also distinguished between disciplinary authority and doctrinal authority; in his opinion the disciplinary action in Matthew 18:15-18 was to be carried out by the whole congregation, as represented by the lay elders, whereas the doctrinal authority defined in Matthew 16,19 and John 20:23 was limited to the pastors.¹¹

„From the order of the presbyters, part were selected as pastors and teachers, while to the remainder was committed the censure of manners and discipline. To the deacons belonged the care of the poor and the dispensing of alms.“¹²

Elsie Anne McKee has demonstrated that the primary reason for the distinction between permanent and temporary offices lay in the fact that Ephesians 4:11 was understood to define offices rather than responsibilities or spiritual gifts.¹³

Ever since, 1 Timothy 5:17-18 has been used to classify the elders as ruling, lay elders and teaching, mostly fulltime elders; a view originated by Calvin and long characteristic of Reformed-Presbyterian churches.

¹⁰Vgl. zur Altersversorgung als Ehrung der Eltern Lektion 15.5. zum 5. Gebot und Lektion 28.4.

¹¹ Elsie Anne McKee. *Elders and the Plural Ministry: The Role of Exegetical History in Illuminating John Calvin's Theology*. Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance Librairie 223. Droz: Genf, 1988. pp. 28+33+62

¹²Johannes Calvin. *op. cit.*, p. 328 (Book IV, Ch. 4, Section 1)

¹³Elsie Anne McKee. *Elders and the Plural Ministry*. *op. cit.*, pp. 162-165

Prior to Calvin, the text had been interpreted as a distinction between paid elders and better paid elders, i. e. pastors.¹⁴ Homer A. Kent, writing about 1 Timothy 5:17, says:

„This verse does not give sufficient warrant for the Reformed view of two classes of elders, those who ruled and those who taught. Every elder [is] engaged in teaching (3:2) However, some would do so with more energy and excellence than others. The differentiation in this verse is between those who do the work perfunctorily and those who labor to the end of strenght performing their function.“¹⁵

Reformed churches have begun to question the classical Reformed interpretation of 1 Timothy 5:17, in spite of the fact that it has been the most typical feature of their theology.¹⁶ The Reformed New Testament theologian Jan van Bruggen disagrees with Calvinistic tradition at this point, for the New Testament, including 1 Timothy 5:17, requires only that all elders should teach, not that there are two classes of elders.¹⁷

A comparison¹⁸ of the qualifications of elders and overseers ((Tit. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 3:2-7) and of the deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-12) shows that the only qualification required only of elders, was the ability to teach: “ A bishop then must be ... able to teach,“ (1 Tim. 3:2). Paul describes the elder as “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

The New Testament never calls church officers, especially the elders, ‘priests’, even though Paul uses Old Testament ritual language to describe

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 88-89. This book includes a thorough history of the exegesis of 1 Tim. 5:17 up to the end of the Reformation.

¹⁵Homer A. Kent. *The Pastoral Epistles*. Moody: Chicago, 1977 (repr 1958). pp. 181-182

¹⁶Elsie Anne McKee. *Elders and the Plural Ministry*. op. cit., pp. 103-114

¹⁷Jan van Bruggen. *Ambten in de Apostolische Kerken: Een exegetisch mozaik*. J. H. Kok: Kampen, 1984². S.98-104 und Jakob van Bruggen. „Apostolischer Gemeindebau: Widersprüchliche Ekklesiologien im Neuen Testament?“. pp. 57-82 in: Helge Stadelmann (Ed.). *Bausteine zur Erneuerung der Kirche*. TVG. Brunnen: Gießen & R. Brockhaus: Wuppertal, 1998. S. 69. Ihm stimmt der Presbyterianer Reinhold Widter. *Evangelische Missionskirchen im nachchristlichen Europa*. Theologische Schriften 3. Evangelisch-Reformierte Medien: Neuhofen, 1999. pp. 85-86 zu.

¹⁸Vgl. die Tabelle in William Hendriksen. *I & II Timothy & Titus*. New Testament Commentary. Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1976 (Nachdruck von 1960/1957). S. 347-349

his ministry (for ex. Romans 15:15-16), terminology he also applies to all Christians (for ex. Romans 12:1. See also 1 Peter 2:5-9).

The first level of government: Deacons and deaconesses

The first level of leadership consists of the deacons and deaconesses. The Greek word ‘diakonos’ is often translated as ‘*servant*’ in various translations, and, according to the majority of exegetes, is used as the official title of ‘deacon’ in only three instances. The term originally designated the person who served at table or took care of others. The New Testament term is intimately connected with serving and with service in general, and can only be understood in those terms.

1. The original meaning: Out of the thirty occurrences of the word ‘*servant*’ in the New Testament, only a few reflect the original meaning. Matthew 22:13 John 2:5 used the word to describe the servants at a wedding. In Romans 13:4, Paul calls the governing authorities ‘servants’. The aspect of material and personal service, however, is never completely absent in New Testament usage, particularly when designating the ‘*servant*’ (deacon).

2nd Meaning: Discipleship als ministry: Jesus was the role model of the servant, even though the Bible never uses the term explicitly as a title (In Romans 15:8, He is a “servant of the Jews (Greek: circumcision)”, which describes his submission to Jewish custom). For this reason, discipleship is equated with service: “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.” The services of Christians is, however, radically different from secular rulership (Matthew 20:26; 23:11; Mark 9:35; 10:43; See also 1 Peter 5:2-4). Whether service or ministry pleases God or not depends on the person it is dedicated to. There are servants of Sin (Gal. 2:17) and servants of Satan who „masquerade as servants of righteousness.“¹⁹

3rd Meaning: Minister: While every Christian is a servant, special duties may carry the designation ‘Ministry’. Paul, who includes his assistants, sees himself as a minister, who led the Corinthians to Christ (1 Cor. 3:5), as a minister of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6), as a minister of God (2 Cor. 6:4), as a minister of Christ (2 Cor. 11:23) or as a minister of the Gospel (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23) or of the Church (Col. 1:25). He applies the same title to Tychicus, who is both a faithful servant in the Lord (Eph

¹⁹See: 2 Cor. 11:14

6:21) and „a fellow servant in the Lord,“ (Col. 4:7). Epaphras is a „our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,“(Col. 1:7), and Timothy is admonished to be a „good minister of Christ Jesus,“ (1 Tim. 4:6). In these contexts, the word ‚servant‘ or ‚minister‘ means a fulltime colleague with a leadership function in church and mission work.

4th Meaning: The office of church leadership. Assuming that the texts which designate full-time workers as servants of God are not referring to a specific office, we find few instances in which a ‚deacon‘ held an official function. Philippians 1:1, with its greeting, “*to all the saints ... with the bishops and deacons*”, is the only definite evidence that the New Testament church had an office of deacons alongside the actual leadership position of the elders and overseers. Unfortunately the text does not define the office more clearly. In 1 Timothy, Paul lists not only qualifications for the overseers, but also for the deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Parallel to the qualifications for the elders and overseers (bishops), a deacon must demonstrate a good reputation for their service, good leadership of their families and a blameless life. Paul, however, fails to describe the deacon’s responsibilities.

Were the ‚women‘ in 1 Timothy 3:11 the deacons’ wives or deaconesses? I find the arguments in favor of the deaconesses more convincing²⁰. It seems significant to me that Paul gives no list of qualifications for the wives of the elders. Why should more be required of the deacons’ wives than of the elders’ wives?²¹ The fact that Paul gives deaconesses an extra list of qualifications besides those of the deacons, but none for female bishops or overseers, corresponds to the rest of the New Testament: women could carry out responsible functions, but were not ordained as fathers of one or more churches.

²⁰ See the arguments in Gerhard Lohfink, "Weibliche Diakone im Neuen Testament", *Diakonia* 11 (1980) 1: 385-400 and Hermann Cremer, Julius Kögel, *Biblisch-Theologisches Wörterbuch des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, F. A. Perthes: Stuttgart, 1923, p. 290. Thomas R. Schreiner, "The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership: A Survey of Old and New Testament Examples and Teaching", pp. 209-224 in: John Piper, Wayne Grudem (ed.), *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Crossway Books: Wheaton (IL), 1991, lists pp. 213-214 the arguments for deaconesses, but follows the arguments against it (pp. 219-221), even though he proves p. 220 that the difference between the offices of presbyters and deacons is that presbyters teach and govern and deacons not (1 Tim. 3,2, 5).

²¹ See Gerhard Lohfink, "Weibliche Diakone im Neuen Testament", op. cit., p. 396.

Romans 16:1 proves that the church had deaconesses. Phoebe is described as a “*sister, who is a servant (or deacon) of the church in Cenchrea*”. Since the masculine form of the word is used, it would seem to describe a specific office rather than a general term, an office open to women. Besides, the addition, “*of the church in Cenchrea*”, indicates that Paul means an office in a specific local congregation, not a general sort of service.²² Besides, Phoebe is also called a προστάτις (‘Patroness’: Romans 16:2), which emphasises her official role. The Greek word means ‘protectress’ or ‘patron’²³. The corresponding form indicated a patron, a chairperson, a legal advisor.²⁴

The office of deaconess was well known in the Byzantine Church until the 11th century²⁵, and in Rome, Italy and the Western Church until the 5th and 6th centuries²⁶. There is also documentation for the office in the West up until the 11th century²⁷. The Monophysites had the office until the 13th century,²⁸ and the Eastern church defended the office, following Johannes Chrysostomos, while the Western Church gave it up in order to avoid ordaining women, according to Ambrosiaster and Erasmus von Rotterdam²⁹.

These deaconesses definitely carried out spiritual duties. Elsie Anne McKee rightly says, that there is heavy evidence, that the deaconesses

²² See Hermann Cremer, Julius Kögel, *Biblisch-Theologisches Wörterbuch des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, op. cit., p. 290 and Thomas Schirrmacher, *Der Römerbrief*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

²³ Walter Bauer, Kurt und Barbara Aland. *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments ...* W. de Gruyter: Berlin, 1988⁶. Col. 1439

²⁴ G. E. Benseler, Adolf Kaegi. *Benselers Griechisch-Deutsches Schulwörterbuch*. B. G. Teubner: Leipzig, 1926¹⁴. p. 794

²⁵ Adolf Kalsbach. Die altkirchliche Einrichtung der Diakonissen bis zu ihrem Erlöschen. *Römische Quartalsschrift*. Supplementheft 22. Herder: Freiburg, 1926, especially pp. 63-71, in which the author discusses the problems of widowhood, virginity and the office of deaconess in the Early Church.

²⁶ Vgl. L. Duchesne. *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution: A Study of the Latin Liturgy up to the Time of Charlemagne*. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge: New York, 1931. pp. 342-343

²⁷ Ebd. S. 79-94 im Detail

²⁸ Adolf Kalsbach. Die altkirchliche Einrichtung der Diakonissen ... op. cit., pp. 59-60

²⁹ Alles nach Elsie Anne McKee. John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving. op. cit., pp. 161-163

where employed by the church and were counted among the church officials.³⁰ They thus shared the status, privileges and restrictions of clerical persons such as the right to provisions³¹ ordination³² and celibacy,³³ and are mentioned in Canon 19 of the Council of Nicaea for this reason³⁴.

Since the time of the early church, the specific responsibilities of the deacons and deaconesses have been drawn from Acts 6. The apostles distinguish between their responsibility, “*to give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word*” (Acts 6:4) and the duty to “*serve tables*” and to rule this business (Acts 6:2). Certain qualifications are required and an election is carried out. It is certainly authorized to use this as example for the diaconate, for other cases in the Scripture also discuss duties without clearly designating the ‘right’ office. The duty is essential, not the title, which may vary.

A comparison³⁵ of the necessary qualities of the elders and overseers (Tit. 1:5-9, 1 Tim. 3:4-5) and of the deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-12), shows that the only qualification required of the elders above and beyond that of the deacons, was the ability to teach; “*able to teach*” (1 Tim. 3:2); “*holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*” After all, the deacons in Acts 6 were appointed so that the apostles and elders did not neglect “*prayer and the ministry of the word*”.

Social ministry was the deacons’ first priority, but that does not eliminate the possibility of other responsibilities. The only deacons in the whole New Testament about whom we learn details are Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60) and Philip (Acts 8:4-40). Both were active as evangelists. Philip baptized as a deacon (Acts 8:12, 16, 36), but apparently did not carry out the laying on of hands which followed baptism (cf. Heb. 6:2 for example), for the apostles, Peter and John came as representatives of all apostles to

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65

³¹ *Ibid.*, p 66

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Deaconesses, like the priests, were required to remain single, which Protestants see as a possibility, but cannot consider a law. The necessity of remaining celibate proves that the office of deaconess was understood as a spiritual office.

³⁴ *Ibid.*,. 46-49

³⁵ See the table in William Hendriksen, *I & II Timothy & Titus*, New Testament Commentary, Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1976 (reprint from 1960/1957), pp. 347-349.

Samaria for this purpose. (Acts 8:14-17). It was also the two apostles, not Philip, who excommunicated Simon Magus from the church (Acts 8:18-24).

A comparison with the Old Testament Levites further clarifies the role of the deacons. Subject to the priests, the actual spiritual leaders of the people of God, the Levites assisted in the services and in teaching, in organizing the distribution of the tithe and the provision for the the poor, provided the music and took on other duties.

Under Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, the church continued to use the title 'deacon' in a general way but later limited it to the designation of the official responsible for the provision of the poor, or to assistants at the Eucharist, often forgetting how closely these two duties are related (food for the starving and spiritual nourishment for the congregation at Communion). Not until this century did the office of deacon regain its responsibility for the practical concerns of the church. Modern church practice orients the duties of deacons and deaconesses on the functions described in the New Testament, although the appropriate Biblical structure is often otherwise absent.

In many churches, the diaconate has become merely a preparation for the presbyterate. However, in 1967 at the Second Vatican Council, even the Catholic Church recreated the diaconate as a separate office, which can be held for a longer period of time or even for a life-time³⁶. Primarily due to this development, women were not permitted to become deacons, because the ordination to the diaconate would practically allow them to become priests or elders as well³⁷. The diaconate is certainly a natural antecedent to the priesthood, but need not necessarily lead to it. As Calvin did, we may consider the diaconate a "step to the priesthood"³⁸, without making the priesthood a necessary result or requiring the deacon to seek the priesthood in the near future.

The Reformed refer to Calvin as the source of their doctrine of church

³⁶See Rudolf Weigand, "Der ständige Diakon", p. 229-238 in: Joseph Listl, Hubert Müller, Heribert Schmitz (ed.), *Handbuch des katholischen Kirchenrechts*, F. Pustet: Regensburg, 1983, p. 229.

³⁷So auch Leon Morris. „Church Government“. S. 238-241 in: Walter Elwell (Hg.). *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1986 (Nachdruck von 1984)

³⁸Johannes Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, op. cit., p. 349, (Book IV., Ch. 5, Section 15; See also Vol. IV, Ch. 3, Section 9)

office, but his high evaluation of the office of deacon and deaconess has been largely forgotten.³⁹ He adopted this attitude from Martin Bucer, and had first encountered it in Strassburg.⁴⁰ Like the Early Church, he considered Acts 6:1-6 not merely a report, but a norm for all time.⁴¹

Calvin deliberately revived the office of deaconess,⁴² which he justified with reference to New Testament texts which speak of female deacons,⁴³ but had been ignored throughout the Middle Ages, as in the case in most modern Evangelical churches, in which the pastor is the actual leader of the Church, although in theory he is only one elder among many.

In my opinion, most churches would do well to increase the number of pastors and reduce the number of elders, for many lay elders carry out administrative duties more appropriate for deacons or for a church committee. Adminstrating buildings, book-keeping and paying salaries is not the responsibility of the elders, but take up most of the presbyters' time in many churches. Churches should appoint a committee, which with the assistance of the deacons, takes care of the 'earthly' matters, so that the elders, who should be elected according to the time and ability they have for teaching and counseling, should be able to dedicate themselves to these areas. This would mean that we would have more pastors, salaried or not, but smaller presbyteries.

³⁹So bes. auch Elsie Anne McKee. *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*. a. a. O. S. 13; vgl. etwa Jean Calvin. Calvin-Studienausgabe. Bd. 2: Gestalt und Ordnung der Kirche. Neukirchener Verlag: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1997. S. 257-259 (aus *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques* [1541/1561] S. 227-279)

⁴⁰Elsie Anne McKee. *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*. op. cit., pp. 129+153; See also the note on Bucer's 1538 pamphlet, 'Von der Waren Seelsorge' on p. 179. McKee also mentions John Chrysostomos as an influence on Calvin's thought on the diaconate (p. 153). She also shows that, following Bucer, Calvin applied Romans 12:8 to the diaconate, which no one does today (pp. 185-204).

⁴¹Elsie Anne McKee. *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*. op. cit., . 156

⁴²*Ibid*, pp. 213-217

⁴³*Ibid.*, pp205-210

Excursus: Social Responsibility in the New Testament Church according to Acts 6

The appointment of deacons in Acts 6 and in the New Testament church in general is of great significance. It is surprising, that besides the offices of overseers (bishops) and elders, who were responsible for leadership and teaching, the church had only one other office, that of the deacons and the deaconesses, whose duties were exclusively social in nature. The social responsibility of the church for its members is so institutionalized in the office of the deacons, that a church without them is just as unthinkable as a church without leadership or Biblical teaching.

- 1) **The church carries fully the social responsibility for its own members, insofar as the individual's family is unable to do so.** This duty consists in more than donations or symbolic assistance for a few, but in responsibility for all.
- 2) **Therefore the church must distinguish clearly between its social obligations toward fellow Christians and its social responsibility for others.** The former has been institutionalized in the office of deacons and is binding, insofar as funds and possibilities are available (assuming that the individual has not willfully brought the situation upon himself). Proverbs 3:27 speaks of both cases, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so." Galations 6:10 speaks of our duties toward all men, but emphasizes the priority of the believer: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially the those who are of the household of faith."

The command in Matthew 25:45 should also be understood in this sense. Jesus is speaking of believers, not of everyone. Were the "brethren" mentioned in verse 40 intended to mean all men, this would be the only text in the New Testament that uses the term figuratively to indicate anyone other than church members or fellow Christians.⁴⁴

A comparison with the question of peace-making will help clarify the matter. The Scripture obliges Christians to live in peace with fellow-believers. If they do not, than the church leadership is to interfere. As far as the relationship to non-Christians is concerned, Paul

⁴⁴Kurt Hennig, "Beim Wort kommt es auch auf die Worte an", *Das Fundament*, (DCTB) 1, 1991, pp. 9-24 (particularly pp. 22 and 19-24).

says, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). The New Testament church is based on a covenant binding on all members. The expectation that the believer is obliged to care for all men stems from a false understanding of fairness and justice, for the Bible requires the believer to provide first for his own family, next for the members of the local congregation, finally for the world-wide church. Only when these obligations are fulfilled, does he have any responsibilities for other people.

3) Acts 6 gives great priority to the social obligations of the church towards its members, but the responsibility for proclaiming the Word of God and prayer remains more important and is institutionalized in the offices of the elders and the apostles.

The apostles give the following reason for refusing to accept this “business” (Acts 6:3), “but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Prayer and proclamation of the Word, which always belong together, have priority over social engagement and must never be neglected. The combination of prayer and teaching is not new. Long before, it, for example, had been the ministry of the prophet Samuel to “pray” and to “teach” (1 Sam. 12:23).⁴⁵

The provision for the socially weak was also considered a matter of course in the Early Church, which universally reserved special funds for social purposes.⁴⁶ Its provision for widows was exemplary.⁴⁷ As a matter of fact, more money was spent on social concerns than on the salaries of the elders and pastors. According to the Church Father, Eusebius, the church in Rome in the year 250 A.D., for example, supported 100 clergymen and 1500 poor people, particularly widows and orphans. Alois Kehl writes, “Never, in the whole of antiquity, had there been a society or a religious group which cared for its members as the Christian Church did.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Compare the combination of prayer and watching in Neh. 4:9.

⁴⁶ Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (VMA-Verlag: Wiesbaden, o. J., reprint 1924⁴), pp. 178-183, and the chapter, “Das Evangelium der Liebe und Hilfsleistung”, pp. 170-220.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 184-186.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 182-184.

Arnold Angenendt adds:

„Becoming a Christian automatically means practicing social service. Every Christian church has its ‘social services’, and the bishop is to prove himself a father to the poor. This was a quite new idea in the ancient world – in all of the Greek and Roman world, there is not one legal enactment dedicated to the needs of the poor.“⁴⁹

By the way: The responsibility of the wealthy, above all, for the provision for the poor, gave the donors no special rights in the congregation. For this reason, James 2:1-13 energetically attacks their attempts to exploit their position in the church.

The third level of government (first part): Congregationalism and Presbyterianism

At this point, we need to investigate the third, supraregional level of church leadership. Let’s take a look at the structures in the Evangelical denominations.⁵⁰

The Baptist-oriented churches are generally **Congregationalist**⁵¹ in structure, that is, they consider the local congregation the basic and essential element of church.”⁵² Church government consists of only a two-part hierarchy, that of the deacons and the elders, offices seldom exercised on a full-time basis. Above the local congregation is no further hierarchy but only a loose confederation of churches (which does wield a certain amount of unintended authority by employing and training the editors of denominational literature, the presidents of denominational seminaries, etc.).

⁴⁹ Arnold Angenendt. *Heilige und Reliquien: Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*. C. H. Beck: München, 1997. p. 48

⁵⁰ For a good, concise comparison, see; Leon Morris, “Church Government,” p. 218-241 in Walter Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1996, repr. from 1984.

⁵¹ ‘Congregationalist’ from ‘congregation’, i.e., the local congregation has the last word on all issues.

⁵² John Huxtable. „Kongregationalismus“. 452-462 in: Gerhard Müller (Ed.). *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Vol. 19. de Gruyter: Berlin, 2000/1990 (Studienausgabe), p. 452. For the history of Congregationalism, see the whole article.

There are two different forms of Congregationalism. The most extreme is to be found in denominations such as the Brethren, which in theory acknowledge no supraregional structures at all, but in reality permit a single publishing house or publisher and a single seminary to determine their theology and practice. Besides, the fact that local congregations all belong to one denomination points to a sense of a certain inter-congregational accountability. Some of these churches have no officers at all; all decisions are made by the membership (the brethren). In other churches, laymen serve as officers, but can be overruled by the congregation at any time and are seldom employed on a full-time basis. The few full-time ministers are usually 'itinerant brethren' who preach in various churches, but have no authority over the local congregation.

The second type of Congregationalist structure permits a loose affiliation of local congregations (denomination), which provides seminaries, publishing houses, or synods, but maintains the fundamental independence of the local congregation. The deacons, elders and pastors elected by the congregation wield actual authority as long as they are in office. This structure thus serves as the transition to the Presbyterian system.

Since the visible Church consists of all members accepted on the basis of their confession of faith, the authority of the local congregation to elect its officers is not to be denied, but since, as we have seen, the office of elder is essential to church government, a structure without elders is unsustainable. At the same time, such elders are in reality the highest church officers designated in the New Testament and require neither ordination nor the authorisation by a higher officer. Nor must the local church of the New Testament visibly belong to a larger unit or submit to a higher authority in order to be 'Church' in the full sense of the word. This aspect of Congregationalism is a truth not to be denied or surrendered. We will see, however, that this concept neither denies the possibility of supraregional cooperation between congregations and their spiritual leadership nor forbids any sort of supraregional direction above the local elders and pastors. As a matter of fact, most congregationalist denominations have some sort of advisory synodical structure which consists of delegates sent by the local congregation and functions as a cooperative governing body.

The **Presbyterian churches**⁵³ have only a two-part church government (elders and deacons), but form a third level of government by collecting

⁵³The term designates the structure of church government, but is frequently used to indicate Reformed since this form developed in that tradition. See; James K. Cameron. "Presbyterianism," pp. 340-359 in: Gerhard Müller (ed.) *Theologi-*

the elders of several churches synods, without giving any single person supreme authority.⁵⁴ The ‘Presbyterian-synodal constitution’

“describes an ecclesiastical principle evolved within the Reformed tradition of the 16th century, in which ecclesiastical authority (church government) lies in a cooperative body, in which both theologians and non-theologians discuss and resolve pertinent issues.”⁵⁵

“The theological intent of the presbyterial-synodical constitution is to be found in the conviction based on Matthew 18:15-20, that the Church can be led by lay elders without bishops or local princes. Jesus Christ Himself rules His Church through His Word in such a way that He entrusts the churches with certain functions, so that the Gospel is brought to all men in various forms. These officers and offices are of equal authority, and since each congregation is a Church in the full sense of the word, no church has power over any other. Synods consisting of delegates from all the congregations resolve all interchurch issues so as to avoid permitting the supremacy of any one officer or individual congregation.”⁵⁶

The authority of the synod varies, depending on the range of issues in which its decisions are binding on the local congregations. The boundaries between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism are rather fluid in this respect. In some Presbyterian groups, representatives from the synod exercise visitations in order to investigate the state of the congregations or to examine candidates for the pastorate, but these officials act only as the representatives of the larger gremium and have no personal authority.

The idea of a synod consisting of officials and lay delegates originated neither with Calvin nor with the early Reformed synods,⁵⁷ which were

sche Realenzyklopädie. Vol 27. de Gruyter: Berlin, 2000/1997 (textbook edition)

⁵⁴ Gerhard Troeger. „Bischof III: Das evangelische Bischofsamt“. pp. 690-694 in: Gerhard Krause, Gerhard Müller (ed.). *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. vol. 6. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 1980, p. 693 writes, quoting Hans Dombois: „Calvin’s rejection of the office of bishop is still alive in the Reformed Church, like an allergy against any form of officialdom dependent on any individual“.

⁵⁵ Joachim Mehlhausen. „Presbyterial-synodale Kirchenverfassung“. pp. 331-340 in: Gerhard Müller (Ed.). *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Vol. 27. de Gruyter: Berlin, 2000/1997 p. . 331, On origin and history, see the complete article.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁵⁷ Irmtraut Tempel. *Bischofsamt und Kirchenleitung in den lutherischen, reformierten und unierten deutschen Landeskirchen*. Jus Ecclesiasticum: Beiträge zum Staatskirchenrecht 4. Claudius Verlag: Munic, 1966. p. 54

merely assemblies of the presbyters of the local churches. The first mixed synod were held in 1559 in Paris and, in Germany, in 1571 in Emden. Beginning in 1610, mixed synods were held in Jülich, Cleve, Berg and Mark.⁵⁸ Both the synod itself and the mixed synod have biblical roots in the Apostolic Council of Acts 15, in which apostles, elders and the church participated. “Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company ...“ (Acts 15:22).

As a unique historical event, the Apostolic Council serves as the prototype for a synod, but cannot be used to warrant an absolute rule. Note, however, that the Council did have a leadership structure. Simon Peter (Acts 15:7-10) and James (15:13-21) had the veto – James, as chairman formulated the final decision (15:1-20), to which the others agreed. All full-time elders and all supraregional officers were present: “Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.“ (15:6. See also Gal. 2:9, where John, Peter and James are called the ‘pillars’. See also; 1 Cor. 9:5). Acts 21:18 also mentions a meeting between Paul and the synod of the elders and James, the leader (‘bishop’) of the church in Jerusalem: „On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.“ Within the highest level there may be further hierarchies – James, for example, presided over the Council, but we do not know whether he merely represented the others or had more authority over them. Paul’s associates, Silas and Timothy, also take their orders from him (Acts 17:15). The New Testament frequently mentions the fact that Paul, in an ‘episcopal’ role, sends his assistants out to their new fields (for example, Timothy in Phil. 2:23 or 1 Thess. 3:2).

The synodical principle of the Reformed churches has, by the way, been adopted by almost all churches in the world,⁵⁹ and determines the constituents of the supraregional bodies of the Congregationalist denominations as well as of the Episcopal bodies.

In both Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches, the full-time pastor plays a special, fairly independent role not intended in the original model, such as that of the teaching elder in the Presbyterian church, in contrast to the ‘usual’ governing elders, although the pastor is theoretically and legally on the same level as the other elders.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁵⁹ Joachim Mehlhausen. „Presbyterial-synodale Kirchenverfassung“. *op. cit.*, pp. 331-332

Elsie Anne McKee has shown that the Calvinists in fact had instituted three governing offices: pastors, elders and deacons,⁶⁰ with a fourth office, the teacher, in the Genevan church.⁶¹ In this combination, the pastor often plays a role similar to that of the bishop, when the congregation officially opposes the idea of episcopal government. At least in larger congregations, the office and function of the main pastor corresponds very closely to the role of the bishop in the Early Church. The Baptist Johannes Jansen wrote in 1931:

Many churches have liberated the preacher from the burden of administration by electing two or more elders, so that he is only responsible for the spiritual direction.⁶²

Many Baptist congregations have resolved the problem by designating only the pastor as elder and calling the other members of the leadership structure deacons, just as the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches, in which the pastor is the ‘priest’ (derived from ‘presbyter’, which means ‘elder’). All other officers are subject first to the pastor, then to the deacons. In both cases, the individual congregation has only one elder, which is possible, but not recommendable.

The fact that the Book of Revelations mentions the ‘Angel of the Churches’ seven times (Rev. 2:1+8+12+18; 3:1+7+14) is often used to justify this one-man leadership, whether for a local pastor or for a bishop. The meaning of the term has been disputed and interpreted in so many ways that the text cannot serve as an adequate argument.

The third level of government (second part): Episcopalianism

The view that the early church had professional leaders responsible for several churches and their elders, is called ‘episcopal’, because the early church had begun to give this inter-church function the title ‘bishop’. (Actually, ‘overseer’: Greek, ‘episkopos’, which is the origin of the word

⁶⁰Elsie Anne McKee. *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*. Tra-vaux d’Humanisme et Renaissance Librairie 197. Droz: Geneva, 1984. p. 134

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁶²Johannes Jansen. *Gemeinde und Gemeindeführung: Episkopat, Presbyterium oder Demokratie?* Gemeinde und Gegenwart 2. J. G. Oncken: Kassel, 1931. p. 5

‘bishop’), in contrast to the ‘elder’ (Greek, ‘presbyter’, the origin of the word ‘priest’, that is, the pastors of the local church).⁶³

Within the episcopal churches, the authority of the bishop varies. It declines as we move from the sacramental and judicial power of the Roman Catholic bishop through the Orthodox, the Anglican,⁶⁴ the Lutheran to the Methodist bishop, whose duties are representative and advisory rather than judicial.

As we have already seen, the titles, ‘elder’ and ‘overseer’/‘bishop’ can be used interchangeably. ‘Overseer’ describes the governing function of the elders (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:7, Phil 1:1-“bishops and deacons” without further specification. In 1 Pet. 2:25, Jesus is called the “Shepherd and Overseer of your souls”.) We also find the term, “office of overseer” (Greek, ‘episkope’) used to describe the office of apostle (Acts 1:20) as well as of the office of the elder (1 Tim. 3:1. “If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”).

Adolf Schlatter assumes that Tit. 1, 5+7 distinguished between bishops and elders, and that Paul had chosen bishops out of the presbyterate.⁶⁵ Leonard Goppelt, in studying the Pastoral Epistles, comes to the conclusion that each body of elders was led by an overseer (‘bishop’).⁶⁶ Similarly, Ray R. Sutton believes that Titus 1 defines the qualifications of the bishops, who are to be examples for the elders and are responsible for

⁶³On the development of the term ‘bishop’ in Judaism, in the New Testament and in the Early Church, see: Hermann Beyer. „episkeptomai ... episkopos ...“. pp. 595-619 in: Gerhard Kittel (Ed.). *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. Bd. II. W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1990 (repr from 1935), here pp. 604-617; and Theo Sorg, F. O. July. „Bischof/Bischofsamt“. pp. 279-281 in: Helmut Burkhardt, Uwe Swarat (Ed.). *Evangelisches Lexikon für Theologie und Gemeinde*. Vol. 1. Brockhaus: Wuppertal, 1992

⁶⁴The ‘continuing churches’, independent churches who have taken over their the bishops’ office from the Anglican Church and ordain their bishops by laying on of hands. To a certain extent, these churches demand the same sort of submission to the bishop as the Roman Church does.

⁶⁵Adolf Schlatter. *Die Kirche der Griechen im Urteil des Paulus: Eine Auslegung seiner Briefe an Timotheus und Titus*. Calwer Verlag: Stuttgart, 1958². p. 182 (see also: pp. 181-183).

⁶⁶Leonhard Goppelt. „Kirchenleitung und Bischofsamt in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten“. pp. 9-33 in: Ivar Asheim, Victor R. Gold (Ed.). *Kirchenpräsident oder Bischof? Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des kirchenleitenden Amtes in der lutherischen Kirche*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1968. p. 21

them.⁶⁷ A. M. Farrer also objects to the identification of elders with overseers in the New Testament and applies the duty of overseeing mentioned in Acts 20:17-18+28 to the elders. He sees this idea more definitely in 1 Peter 1:5-4 and in Hebrews 12:14-15,⁶⁸ where only the verb ‘to oversee’ is used. He divides Titus 1:5-7 into one list of qualities for elders and one for overseers, but suggests that Vers 6 does not apply to elders, but belongs to the following section, since the expression, “If a man ...” (Gr. ei; ti,j) is used four times in the Pastoral Epistles to introduce a new paragraph (1 Tim. 3:1; 5:4+16; 6:3).⁶⁹ These views may be valid, but are unconvincing – their argumentation is a rather forced attempt to read the modern terminology back into the New Testament. The designation of Timothy as overseer would have been a more convincing attestation for the existence of a first century supraregional level of authority above the elders.

The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses the same word, ‘episkopos’ or ‘overseer’ to designate the ‘overseers’ of the sons of Benjamin (Neh. 11:9, 14, 22), as well as the overseers of the Temple builders (2 Chr. 2:2; see also 2 Chr. 34:17 and compare the verb in verse 12.) and political officials.⁷⁰ In these cases, ‘episkopos’ indicates a normal office, not superior one in the hierarchy.

The New Testament evidence thus neither proves nor contradicts the use of the term ‘bishop’ or ‘episcopal’, but the appellation has always been controversial among Christians. On the other hand, the supraregional structure was retained for centuries after the Reformation, even by many Anabaptist churches, who retained some sort of supraregional structure in order to provide a necessary supervision of their pastors. The question is not, whether the *term* itself is biblical, but whether the *office* existed in the New Testament church.

⁶⁷Ray Sutton. Captains and Courts, op. cit., p. 84.

⁶⁸A. M. Farrer. „The Ministry in the New Testament“. p. 113-182 in: Kenneth E. Kirk. The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of Episcopacy. Hodder & Stoughton: London, 1957 (expanded repr. from 1946). pp. 134-141.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 160

⁷⁰See: Johannes Neumann. „Bischof I: Das katholische Bischofsamt“. pp. 653-682 in: Gerhard Krause, Gerhard Müller (Ed.). Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Vol. 6. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 1980. p. 653 und Hermann Beyer. „*episkeptomai ... episkopos ...*“. op. cit., p. 611. Neumann cites examples from Grecian culture.

The New Testament often uses one title to indicate a variety of offices, and Jesus was often given titles used for many other offices and duties in the church. The apostles are only “fellow elders” but have authority over the other elders, but could also classify themselves simply as elders. The elders have received a certain degree of authority from God, but remain simply brethren: “The elders who are among you I exhort, . . . shepherd the flock of God. . . nor as being lords, . . . but being examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:1-5).

No one disputes the fact that the apostles were church leaders responsible for larger geographical areas, and that they appointed the first elders in each region. “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (Acts 14:2).

Since many assume that the apostolic office died with the twelve apostles, we must ask whether the supraregional responsibility was limited to them or at least to their immediate successors, or whether it was carried on by a third level of leadership. Because we know almost nothing about the apostles’ assistants, except for Paul’s associates Timothy and Titus, and nothing about their subsequent activities, we can only ask which responsibilities Timothy and Titus carried and which of Paul’s responsibilities they later took over. Unfortunately, this issue has been insufficiently explored in discussions of church hierarchy.

Apostolic practice and particularly that of the church in Jerusalem, in so far as the Scripture reports it, is considered to be the model for all the churches of Jesus Christ, as Paul writes to the church in Thessalonika, “*For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus*” (1 Thess. 2:14). Besides, we find not only reports in the New Testament describing church structure and leadership issues, but - particularly in the pastoral letters (First and Second Timothy, Titus) - we also find concrete directions about the expression of the church’s essential character in structural and organizational matters. How did the apostles deal with the fact that they were unable to oversee certain areas because they were involved elsewhere in evangelization? What did they do to provide the church with leadership in the event of their deaths? Apparently, they ordained their successors by laying on of hands, so that these men could oversee the congregations and their elders. The best known successors are the recipients of the Pastoral Epistles, Timothy (Acts 16:1-3; 17:13-15; 19:21-22; 20:3-4; Romans 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; 15:10-11; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; 2:19-21; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 3:1-8; 1 Tim. 1:1-2+18; 4:14-15; 5:23; 2 Tim. 1:1-2+5-6+8; 3:10; 4:9-22; Phlm

1:1; Heb. 13:23) and Titus (2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:6-7+12-16; 8:16-24; 12:16-18; Gal. 2:1-4; 2 Tim 4:10; Tit. 1:1-5; 1:1+15; 3:+9+15).

Timothy was originally ordained by laying on of hands by the elders (1 Tim. 4:13-15; See also 1:18), but probably later ordained by Paul into a higher office (2 Tim 1:6) -- unless both verses refer to the same incident -- as ordination is always carried out by a higher official (Acts 1:24; 6:6; 13:3).⁷¹ His ordination by Paul clearly indicates that he took on the apostle's responsibility. In the Old Testament, successors were ordained by laying on of hands (ex. Moses and Joshua; Elijah and Elisha).⁷²

Titus was to "appoint elders" (Titus 1:5) and resist heretical teachers in the churches, and was responsible for all of Crete (Titus 1:5). Timothy had the same charges and was responsible for Ephesus and its surroundings (1 Tim. 1:3).

The word used for 'appoint' (Gr. 'cheirotonein') can mean either 'to raise one's hand in voting' or 'to point at someone', i. e. 'to elect a person' or 'to appoint'.⁷³ In 2 Corinthians 8:19, it indicates the selection of an delegate by the congregation. Acts 14:23 uses the word to describe the election and ordination of elders by the apostles, and probably intends both the election by the congregation and the confirmation and the ordination by the apostles.⁷⁴ The apostles apparently suggested several candidates, from which the congregation selected the person consequently ordained by the apostles. This process is used frequently in the Bible when ecclesiastical or political offices are to be filled: the superior nominates candidates, his followers then elect the official. The best example is the election of the first deacons in Acts 6:1-6.

⁷¹See also: Eduard Lohse. „*cheir, ... cheirotoneo*“. pp. 413-427 in: Gerhard Kittel (Ed.). Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. Vol. II. W. Kohlhammer. Stuttgart, 1990², hier pp. 417-418+420-423

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 418.

⁷³Walter Bauer, Kurt und Barbara Aland. Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments ... W. de Gruyter: Berlin, 1988⁶. Col. 1757; Eduard Lohse. „*cheir, ... cheirotoneo*“.op. cit., p. 426-427

⁷⁴Josef Bohatec. Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Organismusgedankens. Untersuchungen zur Deutschen Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte 147. M. & H. Marcus: Breslau, 1937 [=Josef Bohatec. Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Organismusgedankens. Scientia: Aalen, 1968 (Repr of 1937)]. p. 478

Timothy's responsibility for several churches and particularly for their elders can be seen in 1 Tim. 5:19-21: "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and in the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality." Timothy deals here, as superior elder (bishop) over several churches with accusations against the elders of local congregations..This duty has a personal aspect unsuitable for a committee or synod . The bishop, Timothy, is, above all, teacher and counselor to the pastors (elders). Who cares for the personal and dogmatic needs of the pastors, when there is no inter-church leadership? Who provides them with 'soul-care' if the supraregional authority consists only of committees, which make decisions, but cannot handle personal, spiritual needs?

Timothy and Titus exercised these episcopal functions during the lifetime of the apostles. Before Paul, others had done so. Barnabas, for example, ordains elders with him (Acts 14:23). The existence of a body governing several local congregations can also be observed in Jerusalem, where James is bishop and chairman of an episcopal college. The Twelve led the entire Church under Peter's direction; James and the elders led the church in Jerusalem,⁷⁵ and James, as main pastor of the mother church in Jerusalem, was honorary chairman of the apostolic council.

The Pastoral epistles are generally dated rather late, but the episcopal system is already in operation⁷⁶ (which is of course all the more true, if we date the Pastoral Epistles later).

I have dealt with the failure of Protestantism, not only of the liberal camp, to seriously study the Pastoral epistles and their supposedly late, 'non-Pauline ecclesiology, in my theological thesis⁷⁷, since Emil Brun-

⁷⁵Leonhard Goppelt. „Kirchenleitung und Bischofsamt in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten“. op. cit., p. 13

⁷⁶Z. B. Gerhard Tröger. Das Bischofsamt in der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Jus Ecclesiasticum: Beiträge zum Staatskirchenrecht 2. Claudius Verlag: München, 1966. pp. 20-21; Leonhard Goppelt. „Kirchenleitung und Bischofsamt in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten“. op. cit., pp. 19-20

⁷⁷Thomas Schirmacher. Das Mißverständnis des Emil Brunner: Emil Brunner's Bibliologie als Ursache für das Scheitern seiner Ekklesiologie. Theologische Untersuchungen zu Weltmission und Gemeindebau. ed. von Hans-Georg Wüch and Thomas Schirmacher. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Weltmission und Gemeindebau: Lörrach, 1982. 54 p.; Revised and abbreviated in: „Das Mißverständnis

ner's rejection of the New Testament treatment of church office depends on his rejection of the Pastoral Epistles. This has led me to a more intensive scrutiny of these epistles, their authenticity and their ecclesiology.⁷⁸ I have yet to find a reason for the general failure to recognise Timothy's and Titus' responsibility as church officers above the local officers, and to underestimate the role of the deaconate, as I mention in the first edition of my *Ethik*.⁷⁹ The issue requires much more study, and I hope that my ideas will stimulate further discussion.

What can we conclude from our knowledge of Timothy and Titus?

1. Timothy and Titus had spiritual authority and advisory roles within and over the local churches, but their activities were not tied to any specific office. Whereas we can clearly demonstrate that deacons and elders/overseers (Gr. 'presbyteros', 'episkopos') existed as specific offices not designated by specific titles, Scripture never designates any third office with any sort of title carried by the two men. For this reason, I consider their roles an argument against the creation of a third office with definite duties and areas of authority, although I believe their responsibility for spiritual guidance to be essential, especially for the spread of the Gospel.
2. Even though no final word can be spoken on the issue, I believe that their duties in Crete and Ephesus probably corresponded to the roles later carried out by pastors. They were not bishops in the modern sense of the word, but pastors. That would explain the fact there is no historical documentation of an episcopal system in the Early Church derived from the Pastoral Epistles. The bishops of the Early Church derived their offices from the apostolic successors, but seem

der Kirche und das Mißverständnis des Emil Brunner“. *Bibel und Gemeinde* 89 (1989) 3: 279-311 and „Zur neutestamentlichen Gemeindestruktur: Ergänzungen zu ‚Das Mißverständnis der Kirche und das Mißverständnis des Emil Brunner‘“. *Bibel und Gemeinde* 90 (1990) 1: 53-62

⁷⁸See: Thomas Schirmacher: „Die Pastoralbriefe Factum“ 3+4/1984: 9-10 and „Plädoyer für die historische Glaubwürdigkeit der Apostelgeschichte und der Pastoralbriefe“. a. 181-235/254 in: Heinz Warnecke, Thomas Schirmacher. *War Paulus wirklich auf Malta?* Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1992

⁷⁹Thomas Schirmacher. *Ethik*. Band 2. Lektion 44. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1994¹. pp. 525-566, especially pp. 532-546, Abbreviated as article: „Die drei Ebenen der neutestamentlichen Leitungsstruktur“. *Anstöße – Beilage zu Neues vom Euroteam* 1/1994: 1-4

to have been officers of the local congregation above the elders, not supraregional bishops with sacramental authority.

3. I believe that Timothy's and Titus' duties outside of the local congregation within the framework of a growing missionary movement should be understood as a facet of the expanded New Testament apostolic concept, which we must investigate more thoroughly.

Nine Propositions on Church Structure and Leadership

I would like to conclude with nine propositions on the subject, and a call for spiritual leadership.

1. **The question of New Testament church structure does not depend solely on the terminology** used in Scripture: the issue is not whether to call a pastor's superior a bishop, superintendant, a visitator or nothing at all, but whether such an institution can be found in Scripture. If so, what duties and authority should such a person carry?

A Christian with the title 'Brother' can be dictatorial, while another with the title 'Father' or 'Bishop' may prove to have no authority at all in the decisive moment, when evil must be opposed. A man with no authority at home may be adamant in his demands for female submission. Another, who supports women's rights in public, may be a tyrant at home.

2. The issue of proper church government cannot to be decided on paper or in theory, but only in the everyday reality of church life. We must not forget that theory and practice are often worlds apart. The Pope, whose theoretical authority is supreme on earth,⁸⁰ has little influence in many local Roman Catholic churches, but I have experienced the absolute authority exercised by the editors of one of the Brethren's publishing companies, often the secret leader of the whole denomination. Although the denomination officially vehemently rejects the idea of any

⁸⁰See: Thomas Schirmacher. „Has Roman Catholicism Changed? An Examination of Recent Canon Law“. *Antithesis: A Review of Reformed/Presbyterian Thought and Practice* 1 (1990) 2 (März/Apr): 23-30. For the Roman Catholic position, see: Knut Walf. „Knut Walf. „Kollegialität der Bischöfe ohne römischen Zentralismus?“. *Diakonia: Internationale Zeitschrift für die Praxis der Kirche* 17 (1986) 3: 167-179, here pp. 167-173; and Joseph Kommonchak. „Das ökumenische Konzil im neuen Kirchenrechtskodex“. *Concilium (German edition)* 19 (1983) 8/9: 574-579

sort of power or authority outside of the local congregation, all of the churches in that denomination accepted his decree that a foreign Christian was not to speak in the churches.

3. The use of a term such as ‘episcopal’, ‘presbyterian’ or ‘congregational’ has little to do with the reality within a church or denomination. The buildings of some congregationalist churches belong to the denomination, and those of some episcopal churches belong to the local congregation. In the latter case, the local church is more independent than in the former. If an episcopal church elects its own pastors (and if this denomination has no seminary of its own), it is more independent than a congregationalist church which can select only pastors trained at the denomination’s own seminary.

The seminary administrations, the people who determine which students may study at a seminary, and who refer their graduates to the congregations, often have more influence on the denomination than the bishops. (The role of the director of a seminary partly corresponds to that of the Early Church’s bishops.)

4. Even when form and content agree, and even though the visible forms of church life have a certain significance, spiritual goals must have the first priority. We are always in danger of paying more attention to visible differences than to the invisible ones, but true spiritual humility is more important than the limitations of authority on paper. An arrogant person will destroy any office, but a humble man will never abuse even the most exaggerated authority. Anyone who intends to exercise personal power in a church will do so – with or without the authorisation of a church constitution. A person whose first priority is the spiritual welfare of the church will never harm her, even though the constitution may give him absolute power.
5. **Both the Old Testament and the New limit authority delegated from below through authority delegated from above.** A summary of New Testament decision-making⁸¹ demonstrates that the actual procedure depends on the situation; sometimes authority is exercised from

⁸¹Joost Reinke, Jürgen Tischler. *Dynamisch leiten*. *Missiologica Evangelica* 10. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. pp. 68-70 in Anlehnung an Johannes Jansen. *Gemeinde und Gemeindeführung: Episkopat, Presbyterium oder Demokratie?* J. G. Oncken: Kassel, 1931. p. 49. For an opposing view, see: Jeff Brown. *Gemeindeleitung nach dem Neuen Testament*. VTR: Nürnberg, 2000. pp. 14-15.

above, sometimes from below. Some decisions are made by consensus, some by an individual. Johannes Jansen writes:

“Neither the episcopalian, the presbyterian nor the congregational leadership models comprehend completely the dimensions of the first churches’ constitutions, individually or in their entirety. We find administration by qualified individuals (autocratic-episcopal), as well as through cooperation between elders, groups of apostles, the individual apostle and the elders of Jerusalem (presbyterian) and authority carried by the congregation (democratic-ecclesiastic). Yet, in all models, all submit to each other, and to Christ. The New Testament provides a happy union of liberty and obedience, a synthesis of all three principles. There is neither monarchical apostolate or episcopate, nor all-powerful presbyter, nor absolute congregational democracy with elected officers.⁸²

Decision making in the New Testament				
Text	Problem	Participants	Procedure	Structure
Acts 1:15-26	enlargement of the apostolate	11 Disciples and 120 Men (+ Women?)	Peter takes the initiative, two candidates are nominated. The choice is made by casting lots.	Democracy, the congregation
Acts 5:2+6,1-2	The church account and the care of the poor.	12 Apostles	Distribution and administration by the disciples alone.	presbyterial, leadership team
Acts 6:1-7	The care of the poor is more than the Twelve can handle.	12 Apostles, the church (> 1000?), 7 Deacons	Initiative: apostolic counsel, election with confirmation	presbyterial, democratic
Acts 10:48	Conversions – and baptism	Peter and several brethren from Joppa	Peter orders the baptism	episcopal, authoritarian
Acts 14:23	Ordination of elders	Paul and Barnabas	both elected	almost episcopal, but also presbyterial (as two were involved)
Acts 15:1-35	Apostolic council	Paul, Barnabas,	The congregation	presbyterial, demo-

⁸²Johannes Jansen. *Gemeinde und Gemeindeführung*. op. cit., p. 49. On p. 3, he summarises: one leads, a council of brothers leads, all lead.

	, Fellowship between Jews and Gentiles.	the apostles and elders, the churches Antioch and Jerusalem	and a final meeting of elders and apostles--> resolution of the church	cratic
Acts 15:36-40	Qualifications of John Mark for the planned missionary journey	Barnabas, Paul (Objekts: Barnabas, possibly also Silas)	Dispute -- >separation. The mission is carried out in spite of the division. Reconciliation at a later time.	? episcopal? (Two bishops at odds??)
Acts 21:17.25	Paul's visit to Jerusalem. Rumor that Paul is contradicting Jewish law.	Paul, James, the elders of the church at Jerusalem	Meeting of the elders leads to resolution, which is carried out by the congregation.	presbyterial
1Cor. 14:26ff	Directions on the form of worship.	Paul and the church at Corinth	written directions	episcopal
2 Cor. 13:2-4.10	Sin in the church	Paul and the church at Corinth	„do not spare the sinner“; Paul uses his authority“	Episcopal

6. Both the Old Testament and the New limit both the power of the leadership to make decisions and the authority of the group. Robert Woodward Barnwell points out that the New Testament equally values the authority of individuals and that of the many.⁸³ He rightly says, that papalism has magnified authority so much that consensus died, while congregationalism emphasized consensus so much, that authority died.⁸⁴ Synods are therefore important, but they have never shown the activity, initiative and daring essential to the advancing of the Kingdom of God. The great missionaries and church builders have always been individuals. Monte E. Wilson writes:⁸⁵

⁸³ Robert Woodward Barnwell. *The Analysis of Church Government*. The Franklin Press Company Publ.: Petersburg (VA), 1907. pp. 250+269+279.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 252

⁸⁵ Monte E. Wilson. „Church Government: The Problem of Tyranny and Anarchy within the Local Church.“ Chalcedon Report Nr. 416 (March 2000), pp. 18-19, here p. 18.

A biblical case can be made for each of the above mentioned forms of church government. Each of them has a revered history. Each also has its potential weaknesses. Congregationalism can degenerate into a democracy where we vote on God's revealed will and everyone does what's right in his or her own sight, a.k.a., anarchy. Presbyterianism may morph into a ruling aristocracy detached from and insensitive to the spiritual needs of the congregation. Episcopacy can lead to an autocracy that is utterly divorced from the local congregation it presumes to lead.

Central to biblical church structure are the offices of deacon and elder, who require authorisation by the congregation's membership. The deacons are responsible for the practical and social needs of the congregation, the elders, who govern the church, for doctrine and spiritual guidance. Besides these structures within the individual congregations, the New Testament churches demonstrated a sense of spiritual responsibility for each other, which implied supraregional cooperation and mutual support.

Personally, I find a combination of elements of the three models the best solution to the problem. The Bible does not necessarily imply synthesis of congregational, presbyterian and episcopal elements, and there may, of course, be other ways to handle the matter. Essential to the solution are: 1. a strong, relatively independent local congregation whose elders have both authority and responsibility. 2. synods, in which the full-time ministers, the elders and the congregations both correct and stimulate each other, and 3. supraregional leaders, spiritual role models who observe general developments and manage missions, but have no sacramental or legal powers.

7. Authority, whether it flows from above or below, is in the last instance subject to the Word of God – neither office nor constitution have the last word, but Scripture. Authority belongs to the person whose admonitions are drawn from the Bible and the Holy Spirit. When Paul took leave of the elders of Ephesus, he left them neither a church code or an office. He merely admonished them, “ “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:32) That is what the church is for. When the church fails in its missionary responsibilities, it needs spiritually gifted, independent, courageous leaders to admonish and recall her to her duties, as the Old Testament prophets did. They disregarded the Levitical priests, when these officials neglected their duties or exploited their positions. On

the other hand, leaders in the local congregation must be replaced when they misuse their authority or substitute bureaucracy for missionary perspective. In that case, the membership, insofar as it is motivated by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, is called upon to reprove the leadership.

No constitution or structure, as excellent as it may be, is infallible. Even if it has provided for cooperation and mutual restraint from above and from below, a church government can founder, when it follows unbiblical doctrine or unspiritual leaders. God stands by His Word and the work of His Spirit. In any conflict, He will support those who, like the Old Testament prophets, exhort according to His Word with or without the legal justification of church constitution or custom. Because Scripture was on their side, Paul (and Barnabas) were right in daring to accuse even Peter (“I withstood him to his face,” Gal. 2:11-14+18) of betraying the Gospel („... they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel,” Gal. 2:14).

Paul later writes in a similar vein when rebuking the Corinthians about their doctrinal disputes. “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.” (1 Cor. 4:6). Anyone who goes beyond Scripture is vain and endangers the church, whether or not he is authorised by his church’s constitution.

Just as the State should be subject the Law (the constitution)⁸⁶ and not to any individual, the New Testament church acknowledges no person, either local or supraregional not subject to the Bible. Scripture is the only constitution given to the Body of Christ, even though denominations and congregations may find it practical to formulate concrete regulations or confessions of faith.

8. Pastors need counselors and mentors. Visitators, bishops, etc. are above all the pastors and counselors of the pastors (Lat. pastor pastorum), not administrative bosses or officials. Pastors need encouragement and exhortation just as much as other Christians do, but such mentors should not be members of the pastor’s own church. In the New Testament, the errors of one pastor concerned not only his own congregation but also the other churches. When, however, a pastor or elder was in difficulties, he was first approached by an individual, not

⁸⁶See: Thomas Schirmacher. Ethik. Vol 2, Lektion 59 and 60, op. cit.

by a synod, a committee or a church court, just as in the case of a sinning church member in Matthew 18:15.⁸⁷

In episcopal churches, the office is carried out by a ‘synodical bishopric’ in which the bishop is elected by the synod as a visitor, and is thus subject to the synod. In the other churches, a synodical president, a deacon or visitor carries out these duties. This officer should have at least enough authority to require a synod to reconsider wrong decisions, but the synod should have the power to call the visitor to account, to dismiss him or to regulate the limits of his authority.

Marie M. Fortune insists that the elders of congregationalist churches have the authority to interfere, when pastors misuse their office. She blames the lack of such restraints for the repeated cases of pastors who entertain sexual relationships to women seeking counseling.⁸⁸

9. A church should have enough counselors to provide sufficient personal and spiritual guidance. These should be active in a local congregation as well. No one can know 50 pastors and 300 elders (for example) well enough to provide the ‘soul care’ they need.

Few episcopal churches have enough bishops to be aware of all that goes on in the local congregations. Except for practical administrative and organisational matters, such as calling synods, etc., the church needs no hierarchy above the bishops. Episcopal churches need to learn from the Early Church, which had bishops to 1. as ‘pastors’ over small areas and 2. and as colleagues, who supported and exhorted each other.

To conclude, I would like to cite Monte E. Wilson. After discussing the three basic forms of church government, he writes:⁸⁹

A biblical case can be made for each of the above mentioned forms of church government. Each of them has a revered history. Each also has its potential weaknesses. Congregationalism can degenerate into a

⁸⁷ Ibid., Lektion 57.

⁸⁸ Marie M. Fortune. *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship*. Harper & Row: San Francisco, 1989. p. 98

⁸⁹ Monte E. Wilson. „Church Government: The Problems of Tyranny and Anarchy within the Local Church“. *Chalcedon Report* Nr. 416 (March 2000): 18-19, here pp. 18-19. The whole article is excellent.

democracy where we vote on God's revealed will and everyone does what's right in his or her own sight, a.k.a., anarchy. Presbyterianism may morph into a ruling aristocracy detached from and insensitive to the spiritual needs of the congregation. Episcopacy can lead to an autocracy that is utterly divorced from the local congregation it presumes to lead.

Because of the usage of the word, '*apostle*', in the New Testament, I assume that there were founding apostles, such as Peter or Paul ("*apostles of Jesus Christ*"), whom God had confirmed by signs and miracles, and whose directions were absolutely binding on all churches. This office no longer exists, but the spiritual gift and the office of apostle in a general sense still do ("*apostles [or messengers of the churches]*", 2 Cor. 8:23, Phil. 2:25)⁹⁰. These apostles were and are missionaries with a particular gift for starting churches where none previously existed and where there are no believers. First, Jesus' twelve disciples are called apostles. Later, Matthias, a substitute for Judas, and Paul are added. All of these had seen Jesus (Paul in a vision), were appointed by Him, confirmed their apostolic authority by signs and miracles and assisted in the revelation and recording of the New Testament message.

Occasionally, other workers in the New Testament churches are called apostles, namely Jesus' brothers, James and Jude (1 Cor. 9:5, 15:7, Gal. 1:19,) and possibly Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14) and others (1 Cor. 15:7, possibly Acts 1:25). In the case of Barnabas, the term may already be used in the general sense, as in 2 Cor. 8:23. Paul, speaking here of the 'apostles' or 'messengers' of the churches, refers to colleagues whom he has sent out as missionaries (the word, 'missionary' being the Latin translation of the Greek 'apostle' or 'messenger'), with governing duties over several congregations. They are not '*apostles of Jesus Christ*' in the narrower sense of the word, but correspond to modern missionaries involved in founding new churches, or to missionary bishops.

As important as the general responsibility of the missionary is, note that only the founding apostles are meant, whenever Scripture speaks of the words or commands of the apostles, the foundation of the New Testament Church or of the revelation of God's word.

⁹⁰See my list and discussion of all NT-texts speaking of apostles in Thomas Schirrmacher, *Ethik*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 542-546 and Thomas Schirrmacher, *Der Römerbrief*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 292-296.

It becomes apparent, therefore, that the office of founding apostle existed only in the generation during and immediately after Jesus' life on earth. In the second century⁹¹, however, there were still 'apostles' in the sense used in 2 Cor. 8:23, as there are now as well, although, in order to avoid confusion, one should call them missionaries and bishops.

⁹¹See Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, VMA-Verlag: Wiesbaden, o. J. (reprint from 1924⁴), pp. 361. According to Einar Molland, "Besaß die Alte Kirche ein Missionsprogramm?," pp. 51-76 in: Heinzgünther Frohnes, Uwe W. Knorr (ed.), *Die Alte Kirche, Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte 1*, Chr. Kaiser: München, 1974, p. 57 missionaries were still called 'apostles' during the Middle Ages.

Paul and His Associates: How ‘New Testament Missionaries’ Work Together

Lecture for the 1997 annual meeting of the Arbeitskreis für evangelikale Missiologie e.V. (Association of German Evangelical Missiologists – German Evangelical Alliance)

Learning from Paul

Wolf-Henning Ollrog once aptly remarked that numerous studies have been done on Paul’s opponents, but few on his friends and colleagues.⁹² A strange situation, since not only Acts, but also the Pauline epistles provide us with many details of the apostle’s closest circle of friends and associates; the pastoral epistles concentrate on this subject!

In our present Bible study, we cannot collect systematically all the details on Paul’s relationship to his friends and to the churches, as worthwhile as that effort would be. Nor can we set up an infallible catalogue of rules for mission boards and missionaries to carry in their pockets. Instead, we can only investigate a few selected New Testament situations which portray the triangle of apostle – associates – church, in order to find out what they tell us about Paul and his relationship to his colleagues. Our question will be, “What wisdom can we gain for our own dealings with each other?”

⁹² Wolf-Henning Ollrog. *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter: Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten Testament 50 (Neukirchen, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979) p. 3. Beginning with the historical data in the New Testament on Paul’s associates, and a word study on the term ‘synergos’, Ollrog divides Paul’s colleagues into three groups: the apostle’s closest colleagues, who accompany him at all times, the independent associates, who aid him in particular ‘chance’ situations, and representatives of the churches, sent by their churches in order to participate in the missionary effort. This last group made a close relationship between church, missionaries and mission field. Ollrog’s book is unfortunately incomplete, for he assumes that 2 Thess., Eph. Col., and the pastoral epistles are non-Pauline (p. 1) and thus ignores a large amount of material. Many questions which he leaves unresolved could be answered, if such rigorous criticism would give up restricting the amount of authentic material. Acts is also treated in this fashion: the book is considered Lucan, but is not taken seriously – the author is convinced that Luke has falsified his data.

Because human relationships are much too varied, changeable and complicated to be simplified to one common denominator, Scripture does not try to regulate them with absolute laws, but recommends a wise⁹³ response gained through experience, examples and careful analysis of the situation. Ecclesiastes 10:8 (“He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.”) is wise advise on relationships among people, but neither a law nor automatic. The Old Testament book of Proverbs, by the way, is the book to read on personal relationships, although it dispenses with laws and regulation. In fact, some proverbs even seem to contradict each other.

A classical example for this is Proverbs 26:4, „Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.“ Should we give the fool an answer or not? There are two sides to the question, and our response depends on the situation -- the Bible gives us no absolute law in this case. The wise man must decide in the concrete situation with a concrete person, what sort of response will bring the best result.

We find a further example of a wisdom rule which is to be applied only in a concrete situation in two texts which use the fact that people get tired of even honey (Chocolate would be more appropriate to our culture) to illustrate a point. Proverbs 25:16-17 tells us; „Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and *so* hate thee.“ Proverbs 25:27, however, reminds us that, „*It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory*“ The reference to honey gives us a general principle which can help us to avoid annoyance on both sides. The Teacher of Wisdom simply has no absolute rule for the amount of contact or praise we owe our friends. Such decisions require experience, as well as knowledge of the individual friend; to visit or to praise a good friend too often is not a sin, but it is unwise.

⁹³ Thomas Schirrmacher. *Ethik* (Neuhausen, Germany: Hänssler Verlag, 1994) Vol. 1, pp. 492-503. “Besides the absolutely valid, directly applicable laws, we find ‘wisdom’, whose decisions depend on the situation and the knowledge of the persons involved. Wisdom can only be expressed in proverbs, parables, examples and illustrations, and includes experiences, which are only true under certain conditions. (see Prov. 15:2; 22:6)” pp 492-493.

Since the Book of Proverbs is the epitome of wise teaching, I would like to apply an appropriate proverb to the various aspects of Paul's missionary activity.

Scene 1: Paul gives Titus precedence

(Paul, Titus, the church in Corinth)

„Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established.“ (Proverbs 15:22⁹⁴)

Paul's relationship to the church he had founded in Corinth was deteriorating,⁹⁵ as part of the church took a completely new line which was leading to catastrophic results. Some church members were participating in idol worship, visiting prostitutes, neglecting their marriage and ignoring starving members at Communion: and this all in God's name,⁹⁶ yet the church leadership then refused to discipline such behavior, a mockery of the very idea of the Christian life. In response, Paul wrote sharper words than in any other of his letters, except Galatians. When neither his very explicit letters (one which has been lost; 1 Cor. 5:9-11 and 1 Corinthians) nor his visits brought any improvement, the apostle was in despair, full of fear and tears (2 Cor. 2:4) and saw no purpose in a further visit (2 Cor. 2:1). What did Paul do, as the apostle and the watchman of the Gospel? Excommunicate the church? Assume that the Corinthians had sealed their own fate by rejecting him? Give up?

No, in the midst of his despair and pain, he showed his true greatness: completely incapable of continuing without assistance, instead of insisting on solving the problem himself, he called on Titus, probably from Crete.⁹⁷ „For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;“ (2 Cor. 7:5-6). This colleague, whose arrival so

⁹⁴ See also Proverbs 11:4; 20:18; 24:6

⁹⁵ Heinz Warnecke, Thomas Schirmmacher. „Plädoyer für die historische Glaubwürdigkeit der Apostelgeschichte und der Pastoralbriefe“, in *War Paulus wirklich auf Malta?* (Neuhausen, Germany: Hänssler Verlag, 1992). pp. 181-235.

⁹⁶ Thomas Schirmmacher. *Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier: Eine alternative Sichte von 1. Kor 11:2-16*. Biblia et symbiotica 4 (Bonn, Germany: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1993) pp. 111-152.

⁹⁷ Heinz Warnecke, Thomas Schirmmacher. *War Paulus wirklich auf Malta?* op. cit.

comforted Paul, was now sent to Corinth with a new letter, the so-called „Letter of tears“ (after 2 Cor. 2:4), written between 1 and 2 Corinthians. Paul was ecstatic when Titus was able to succeed where Paul had failed (2 Cor. 2:5-13; 7:5-16)

The apostle had apparently counted on the possibility that another person with a different personality, different gifts and a different relationship to the church might be better able to achieve the necessary goals. Leaving the precedence and the success to his pupil, he expected that the disturbed relationship between himself and the Corinthians was hindering reconciliation, and that a neutral mediator could transform the situation. The possible loss of face was not so important to him, for he himself relates his own despair, tears and incapability. Rectifying the situation was more important to him than salvaging his own reputation. He was concerned about the others, not about himself.

Paul himself describes how weak and depressed, unable to work in spite of open doors, he remained until Titus returned from Corinth, “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.” (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

What can we learn from this episode?

Paul could work in a team. He didn't work well alone; the presence of his colleagues encouraged, comforted and encouraged him. Luke tells us that he arrived in Corinth alone, but begged his associates to come as soon as possible (Acts 17:15). Not until they had arrived did he begin his true missionary activity. “And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ.*” (Acts 18:5).

Even after Paul's vision of the call to Macedonia (Acts 16:9 “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.”), he consulted with the others before making a decision. Not until the group confirmed the idea, did he leave (Acts 16:10). And that after a vision!

Paul did not see himself as the unapproachable, superior missionary who solved all problems objectively. Instead of creating his own monument to himself, he spoke openly of his own feelings, such as fear or grief, or of his own personal obstacles to his work, and of his lack of candor in preaching the Gospel, which leads him to beg the churches to pray for him, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and

watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.“ (Ephesians 6:18; see also Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1; Acts 28:31).

Instead of boasting of his abilities, his endurance or his successes, he confessed to the Corinthians, „If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.“ (2 Corinthians 11:30; see also 12:5-9)

For Paul, problems were not only deep spiritual or theological issues, but equally important issues of personal relationships, which concerned the whole person, including his feelings. No wonder that he so often speaks of his tears. (2 Cor. 2:4, Phil. 3:18; acts 20:19+31; 2 Tim. 1:4-5)

By the way, it is also remarkable, *that the most significant decisions were made directly on the missionary field, not by a far-distant missionary board.* Missionaries were directing missionaries. Both principles were adhered to in the first centuries, but then forgotten. Not until the early faith missions such as the China-Inland Mission (OMF) and the WEC of the last century, were these principles rediscovered. Paul did interview new associates' home churches about the candidate's record (Acts 16:1-3), and expected them to support their missionaries through prayer, money and ordination, but the essential decisions were made where the problems arose. The churches were then informed, but did not interfere.

Scene 2: Admonition for an apostle

(Paul and the Church in Rome)

„He that hateth reproof is brutish (Proverbs 12:1) ... „but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.“ (Proverbs 12:15).

After completing the collection of offerings for the church in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26-28), Paul intended to travel from Corinth⁹⁸ by way of Je-

⁹⁸ Paul is living in the home of Gaius (Rom. 16:23), a Corinthian (1 Cor. 1:14), and recommends Phoebe of Cenchrea, Corinth's port (Rom 16:1). She may have delivered the letter to Rome, since she is the first person mentioned in Paul's list of greetings in Romans 16, and since Paul recommends that the church receive her warmly. It thus seems reasonable to assume that Paul dictated the epistle to Tertius, his secretary (Rom. 16:22) in Corinth or Cenchrea, and then gave to Phoebe to deliver. Adolf Schlatter points out the numerous parallels between Romans and the Epistles to the Corinthians, and deduces that the Epistle to the Romans must have been written

Jerusalem and Rome to Spain (Romans 15:27-31), using Rome as his base – or home church, we might say --instead of Antioch. In order to account for his missionary activity and to share his aims with the Roman Christians, around 57 AD⁹⁹ he wrote his great Epistle to the Romans, the Bible's most systematic exposition of the Gospel and its most detailed justification of world missions.¹⁰⁰

Even though he did not know the Roman church personally, he prayed for them continually (Rom. 1:9-10) and longed to meet them (Rom 1:10+13; 15:22-23). His personal greetings to several associates and acquaintances living in Rome (Rom. 16:3-15) show the extent of his personal relationships. He also greets the house church of his associates, Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. 16:4, possibly other cell groups in 16:10-11).

Remarkable is Paul's descriptions of some of these friends. Let us examine a few examples.

Phoebe, the deaconess of the Cenchrean congregation,¹⁰¹ is to be supported in every way. “ : for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.” (Rom. 16:1). Referring to Priscilla and Aquila, he writes, „Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.“ (Romans 16:3-4). He greets three men as „beloved“ (Romans 16:5+8+9), Maria, „who bestowed much labour on us.“ (Romans 16:6), Andronicus and Junia,¹⁰² who had been imprisoned

against the background of the conflict with the Corinthian church. See: Adolf Schlatter. *Gottes Gerechtigkeit: Ein Kommentar zum Römerbrief* (Stuttgart: Germany: Calwer Verlag, 1975⁵) pp. 9-16.

⁹⁹ Paul does not decide to visit Macedonia and Achaia, or to go from Jerusalem to Rome until Acts 19:21. In Acts 20:2, he travels through Macedonia and Achaia, probably collecting offerings for the believers in Jerusalem, which agrees with Romans 15:26. He probably wrote the letter prior to his journey to Jerusalem in the three months in Greece which he mentions in Acts 20:3. In this case, the letter would have been composed around 57 AD.

¹⁰⁰ See Thomas Schirmacher. “Romans as a Charter of World Missions: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology” *An International Journal of Frontier Missions* 10 (1993) 4 (Oct): 159-162. or in *Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology* 4 (1993/94) 1/2 (Sept.-Nov): 34-39; in *Chalcedon Report* No. 342 (Jan 1994): 43-47. For a more detailed discussion, see: Thomas Schirmacher. *Der Römerbrief*, “ 2 Vols. (Nehhausen, Germany: Hänssler Verlag, 1994), a commentary on Romans from the viewpoint of missiology and dogmatics.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Schirmacher. *Der Römerbrief*, op. cit., pp. 311-312.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p 312, on the question of whether Junia was a man or a woman.

with Paul and „are of note among the apostles,“ (Romans 16:7), Urbanus, „our fellow-worker“ (Romans 16:9) and „the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord, “ (Romans 16:12) and „Apelles, approved in Christ.“ (Rom. 16:10), etc.

What does Paul want to achieve through this letter? What is he intending to do in Rome? At the beginning of the letter, he writes, „For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.“ (Romans 1:11-12). Paul wants to have fellowship with the believers in Rome, so that both he and they could share spiritual gifts. The word ‚comforted‘ in verse 12 could also mean ‚admonished‘, and is sometimes translated in this way. Some interpreters couldn’t imagine that Paul not only had something to say to the Romans but also expected some comfort and admonition from them! Paul was convinced, that the Christians in Rome were “Full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.“ (Rom 15:14). Why should he exclude himself from their exhortations?

In spite of his apostolic authority, Paul always shows himself to be dependent on the aid and prayers of other Christians. We can learn the following principles – principles already familiar to us from the situation in Corinth -- from him:

Admonition and comfort were not one way streets in his ministry. He created and looked forward to conditions in which he could receive these spiritual ministries from others.

He did not consider himself alone to be the personal counselor, leader, advisor and exhorter of his associates. He always mentioned their labor very explicitly. Praising God and praising others were no contradiction for him; rather he considered them two sides of one coin. Gratitude for God’s help and gratitude for others’ assistance go together, and should both be expressed openly, not just in ‘the inner room.’

Even when Paul had to admonish others – as a matter of fact, particularly then – he emphasized all they had done for him, for the church and for God. A explicit example is in Philippians 4:2-3, “ I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel.“ He even ‚boasted‘ of the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 1:14; 7:4; 9:2-3), even to Titus, before sending him to remedy the chaos in the church (2 Cor., 7:13.16)! Paul admonished and critici-

zed with uncompromising sharpness, but never without expressing commendation and gratitude, or without recognizing the positive elements.

Scene 3: Paul refuses to mount a spiritual pedestal

(Paul, Apollos and the Corinthian church)

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.
(Proverbs 13:10)

Let us return to the tense relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. One problem was the spiritual cliques, who each appealed to different spiritual leaders. Paul describes the situation as following: “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:12).

C. S. Lewis writes appropriately: "The devil. . . always sends errors into the world in pairs - pairs of opposites. And he always encourages us to spend a lot of time thinking which is the worse."¹⁰³ The Corinthians were divided on almost everything, but Paul almost never sided with any one position,¹⁰⁴ but generally criticized both opinions, for neither agreed with God's concepts. The issue of spiritual leaders was no exception. Some honored Paul so much that he asked, “Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Cor. 1:13). To those who denied him any authority whatever, he insisted on his apostolic calling. The fact that the Lord had entrusted him, a mere servant of God, with great truths, was endangered by those who made him the center of attention, as well as by those who – perhaps in reaction to the first – scorned both the apostle and the revelation he preached.

Paul had to teach the Corinthians, that not he, but his divine commission and the revelation in divine Scripture, had priority. “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.” (1 Corinthians 4:6). To reject an unbiblical viewpoint does not guarantee that one is without error. And one may still be just as arrogant as his opponents. In Paul's opinion, the Corinthian problem was that everyone ba-

¹⁰³ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: The Macmillan Company) 1952, p. 160.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Schirrmacher. ¹⁰⁴ *Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier*. op. cit., pp. 114-122. See also Karl Wieseler. *Zur Gesichte der Neutestamentlichen Schriften und des Christentum*. (Leipzig, Germany: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1880) pp. 1-53 on the Corinthian parites.

sed their opinions on special revelations and doctrines which went beyond scriptural revelation, and then cited some apostle, teacher or even Christ, to prove their position, playing God's ministers off against each other, although all taught the same truths, even though with differing gifts and assignments.

The most painful part of these party politics was that they pitted Apollos, an associate introduced to the Corinthian church by Paul himself, against him. As we have seen, Paul pin-pointed the problem not as differences in personalities or gifts, but in exaggerations and misinterpretation of the Scripture.

Paul refused to participate in this sort of rivalry: he declined any discussion of importance, significance or achievement. “ Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:5-11; see chapters 3 and 4)

In a situation in which church members attempted to alienate Paul and Apollos, construing differing theologies on the basis of their differing personalities and gifts (a tactic copied much too often), Paul sought reconciliation, not by pointing to himself or insisting on unity, but by pointing to the one foundation, Jesus Christ, as the basis on which varieties of styles, personalities, gifts and commissions could develop.

And Apollos? Although we know nothing of his reaction, we can imagine that he was relieved and encouraged by Paul's refusal to sanction the divisions and the apostle's endeavor to find common ground. Rather than destroying his colleague, Paul strengthened his friend's position in the complicated situation in Corinth.

Scene 4: Training by Example

Give *instruction* to a wise *man*, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just *man*, and he will increase in learning. (Proverbs 9:9)

Let us return to the tense and complicated situation in Corinth again. In 1 Corinthians 4:4-16, Paul compares his relationship to the church with the relationship of a father to his children. He calls them “his beloved children,” and himself their father. Because he is their father, he must reprimand them so sharply. “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*.” (vs 14). Note that Paul reserves the term ‘Father’ for himself; other believers who provide for the Corinthian church are only ‘instructors’. In fact, Paul sees a great difference between himself and the other ‘instructors’. The tutor or instructor (Gr. ‘paidagogos’; the source of our word ‘pedagogy’) was only a slave responsible for academic training. Paul is saying, “Even if you had ten thousand excellent tutors teaching you all sorts of good and right things, that would not make me any less your father!” Since a father teaches his child not only ideas but also life, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to imitate him (vs. 16). Parents not only examine their childrens' ideas but also their actions; they are not only available in routine affairs, but also in danger and crises.

Lawrence Richards, defining the difference between modern education methods and Biblical education, suggested that modern methods aim at teaching a student what his teacher knows; Christian education aims at teaching the pupil to live as his teacher lives.¹⁰⁵

Paul’s associates were mostly his own converts or pupils trained from the very beginning (ex. Timothy. Acts 16:1-3; Aquila and Priscilla: Acts 18: 1+18+26, Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). Others were ‘apostles of the churches’ (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil 2:25), missionaries with responsibility for several churches, sent to assist Paul by the congregations. Besides these associates, Paul also concentrated on discipling the elders of the new churches, generally the first converts in the area. He ordained them surprisingly early (Acts 14:6-7+22-23) and left soon after they had taken over the responsibility. His longest stay in one area was three and a half years (with frequent interruptions) in Ephesus (Acts 18:23-19:40).

Paul was merely imitating Jesus’s training methods. Mark tells us, “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.” (3:14-15). Three aspects in Jesus’ selection are significant.

¹⁰⁵ Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), p. 30. See also: *Lawrence Richards, A Theology of Church Leadership*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979); *Lawrence Richards, A Theology of Personal Ministry*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981).

A). *Jesus concentrated on a small group of disciples, „that they should be with him,...“ Just as a father can only care for a small number of children properly, so Jesus chose to share His life and teaching with a small group of disciples. No one can really live so intensively with more than a few people. We can see Jesus‘ deliberate limitation in the concentric circles of his friends; the smaller groups enjoyed closer fellowship with him. He even had one favorite disciple, John (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7+20; see also 19:27).*

Paul also had concentric circles of friends, with Timothy at the center. “For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.“ (Philippians 2:20). As the apostle’s closest associate, Timothy collaborated on five of the epistles (Phillipians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Philemon¹⁰⁶), and was the recipient of two more. Paul addressed him as “ Timothy, *my own son in the faith*“ (1 Tim. 1:2; 1:18) and „*my dearly beloved son*:“ (2 Tim. 1:2).

B). *Jesus chose the disciples “ that he might send them forth to preach.“* The goal of such intensive fellowship with the Lord and the dependence on Him was future ministry. Jesus never intended that the Twelve remain in ‘tied to His apron strings --; they were to go into the world and continue His work after He had returned to Heaven. His goal was the Great Commission, “ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world.“ (Mat. 28:19-20).¹⁰⁷ The long training program in missions, in which the disciples lived with the proto-type of the missionary –Jesus Himself -- was not erratic, but carefully planned, according to the following strategy: 1). Jesus first preached by Himself, then 2). preached while his disciples observed. Finally, 3). he let the disciples preach while He observed, and then 4) He sent them out on their own (but remained by them in spirit as the risen Lord. (See Mt. 28:20).

¹⁰⁶ See the first verse of the books.

¹⁰⁷ Robert E. Coleman. *Des Meisters Plan der Evangelisation* (Neuhasuen, Germany: Hänssler, 1983).

Paul trained his associates in the same way. As father and example, he worked towards the future independent ministry of his churches and his colleagues.

C) Jesus' training comprehensive program included life and doctrine, theory and practice, individual and group counseling, inner and outer growth, activity and rest, profession and private life. Doctrine corresponded to counseling and practice.

Paul imitated Jesus in this aspect as well, as we see in 1 Thessalonians, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy," (not just Paul) not only preached the Gospel „in word only," but were also willing to share their lives with the believers (1 Thess. 1:1+5; 2:8). Of course they preached with words and doctrine; no one could otherwise have understood what their example meant! The epistles to the Thessalonians demonstrate that Paul had taught both Silas and Timothy by his example, and that the Thessalonians themselves became examples for others.

Paul includes Silas and Timothy in 1 Thessalonians 6: „and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord." Many object to this statement. How can Paul compare himself and his associates with Jesus? The Bible, however, often uses human role models to point to God's example. Isn't that realistic? A child derives his image of God from the example of his parents, and spiritual children derive their image of God from the example of their spiritual parents. Every father is a role model, whether he wants to be or not; he only has the choice between being a good example or a bad one. All who carry responsibility in the church, every politician, is a role model, whether good or bad.

But did only Jesus and Paul restrict their training programs to such small groups? 2 Timothy 2:2 contradicts this idea: „Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Paul gives a rule for discipling. The Lord's church grows by the personal supervision of small groups by spiritually mature believers, not by the efforts of one leader to take care of dozens, hundreds, or nowadays, of thousands. True spiritual growth and fruitful training occurs when spiritually mature Christians concentrate on small groups of spiritual children, sharing both life and doctrine until the young believers have become mature enough to become independent. This is the best way to fulfill the Great Commandment to make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all things that Christ had commanded (Mat 28:18-20).

What principles can we learn from Paul?

1. Paul loved his associates and was available to them, comprehensively. His love did not lead him to treat them like eternal children, but to direct them to spiritual maturity and independence.
2. Paul invested more in the relationships of the missionaries to each other and in their spiritual maturity than in technical details or strategic issues (although he was quite aware of this sort of problem, as well!).
3. Paul prayed constantly and intensively for his colleagues and his churches, and expected them to do the same.
4. Paul encouraged the development of his associates' gifts. He knew that God had created different sorts of personalities and expected Him to use them accordingly.

Jesus as Master Educator¹⁰⁸

"People do not care what you know,
until they know that you care."

1. Teaching and Life

As far as Christians are concerned, the issue of education must be addressed from the divine revelation of the Word of God. The New Testament text which most clearly teaches the divine inspiration of Scripture also clearly teaches the Bible's role in education. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work," (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul is concerned not only with imparting knowledge about the Bible or with academic education or the formation of character or spiritual qualities, but with a comprehensive training which covers all aspects of life which thoroughly equips the Christian "for every good work." If full-time service in the church or in missions is to be worthwhile, the Bible is necessary in the preparation for carrying out that service. Not only is the biblical *content* important, but also biblical instructions on *how* those contents are to be communicated.

Many Christians have a split faith! Because they distinguish between character, ethics, doctrine and life, they lack a comprehensive unity in their lives -- at least as far as education is concerned. The 'Enlightenment' (a term which summarizes a multi-faceted development) has created a division between thought and action which disagrees with biblical teaching. Ever since, a university professor's life and character are considered insignificant to his scientific achievements, even when reality -- even if only the reality of his students or colleagues -- catches up with science.

¹⁰⁸ Originally published as and extended from "Jesus as Master Educator and Trainer". Training for Crosscultural Ministries (World Evangelical Fellowship) 2/2000: 1-4; "Paul and His Colleagues". Training for Crosscultural Ministries (World Evangelical Fellowship) 3/2000: 6-8; "Having a Role Model, Being a Role Model". Training for Crosscultural Ministries (World Evangelical Fellowship) 1/2001: 4-7

'Perception', 'learning', 'understanding', 'teaching', 'training' etc. are all terms which the Bible relates to intellectual aspects as well as to the ability to apply what one has learned.¹⁰⁹ The Old Testament usage of the word 'to know' to describe consummation of the marital relationship demonstrates this aspect very well (Gen. 1:4,17,25; 19:8; 24:16; 1 Kings 1:4),¹¹⁰ for this 'knowledge' involves the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical experience of the individual.

Countless scriptures point to the indivisibility of doctrine and life, but one example will do. Paul tells Timothy, a colleague and successor he had trained himself, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine," (1 Tim. 4:16; see also 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:10; 3:-4:5; 1 Thess. 1:1-2:12). For Paul, it is obvious that Timothy's responsibility for himself and for several churches includes resistance to doctrinal error.

The Book of Proverbs is the Bible's greatest handbook for education. Its description of comprehensive training includes the ability to be independent in daily life and to cooperate with others by working with them, caring for them, making peace and instituting justice and righteousness. Central to all is the "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10; 1:7; 15:33; Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10). The goal of Proverbs' training program is clearly to lead the student to 'wisdom', the pre-requisite for independence, by instructing him to obey the rules of his instructors and the Law of God. Wisdom is, of course, not only an intellectual exercise, but also the ability to apply knowledge to life and to personal relationships (see Prov. 4:1-9).

In the Old Testament, the term 'disciple' or 'student' is often used to designate the believer. "The LORD God has given me the ear of the learned ... He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned" (Isa. 50:4-5). The word 'disciple', was derived from the superlative form ('discipulus')¹¹¹ of the Latin word 'junior' (an apprentice, a pupil or a subordinate¹¹²) and means 'a pupil'. The New Testament first uses the term 'mathetes' to designate the twelve apostles (beginning with

¹⁰⁹ See: Laurence O. Richards. *A Theology of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975) pp. 32-24.

¹¹⁰ Friso Melzer. *Das Wort in den Wörtern: Die deutsche Sprache im Lichte der Christus-Nachfolge: Ein theo-philologisches Wörterbuch* (Tübingen, Germany: J.C. B. Mohr, 1965) p. 113.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237-238.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 237

John 2:2 and in general in this gospel) and then to describe all followers of Jesus (Luke 6:17, Acts 9:25). The Great Commission, which also uses this word, expressly speaks of teaching and of doing what has been learned, "... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ..." (Mt. 28:18-20). Christians are students who never stop learning, a characteristic typical of wisdom. The more one knows, the more one realizes how little one knows and how much more there is to learn, "... The fear of the LOrd is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:8-10).

2. The Training of the Twelve Apostles

The best example for the significance of training and education is the training of the twelve apostles, which was built on a detailed pedagogical program which we can only sketch here. More detail would require information on the chronology of the material Jesus covered in the three years and a description of His behavior in individual and group counseling. At any rate, His program dovetailed instruction and life, everyday life and lecture, teaching and individual counseling and resulted in a comprehensive education.¹¹³

The Twelve had already heard Jesus preach before their conversion and first became general followers of Jesus. Not until later were they elected out of the larger group to become apostles. (Examples for the general calling are the calling of Peter in John 1:35-42 and Luke 5:1-11; the calling of Levi/Matthew in Matthew 9:9-13, Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32. Compare the calling of other disciples in Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20).

All three synoptic gospels describe the special calling of the Twelve, including a complete list of their names (Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-17, Luke 6:12-16). Let us take a look at the three accounts. "And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease " (Matthew 10:1. The list follows in verse 2-4). In Luke 6:12, Jesus prays all night, then calls His disciples and chooses twelve, "whom He also named apostles" (Luke 6:13. The list of names follows in verses 14-

¹¹³The best study is still: A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publ., 1971 (originally publ. 1894)

16). Jesus must have had more followers than the Twelve; Luke 6:17 distinguishes between the "great multitude of people" and the "crowd of the disciples", which also included women who accompanied the Lord (Luke 8:2-3). When Jesus spoke of the requirements of discipleship, many turned away, but many, including the Twelve, remained (John 6:66-69¹¹⁴). Mark tells us, "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might sent them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons" (Mark 3:13-16. The list of names follows in verses 16-19). Jesus therefore chose the Twelve out of a larger group of disciples, but this last text describes the process and the goal of His selection.

I would now like to summarize the characteristics of the training program given to the Twelve as described in Mark 3:14. Three factors were of importance in the selection of the Apostles:

1) Jesus limited his group of pupils to a small number, for, just as a father can only properly care for a small number of children, He could provide adequate training to only a few followers at a time.

The Twelve had been chosen to be with Him and to share His life, but no one can share his life with a larger group of people. Marriage, the closest human relationship, is limited to two people. The number of children in a family is larger, but still manageable -- no individual could carry out his parental responsibilities sufficiently if he had 40 children -- only an orphanage or juvenile institution would try. (Although I would never criticize the self-sacrificing labor of the social workers employed in such institutions, I must note that they cannot fully provide the same intensive care which parents can give to the smaller number of children in a family.) Jesus' conscious restriction can also be seen in the decreasing concentric circles of the groups of His friends, the smaller groups having more intensive contact with Him. He even had a favorite, John, the "disciple whom He loved" (John 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20, 19:27). The two brother-pairs, James and John, and Peter and Andrew, shared many events not experienced by the others (Matthew 4:21, 10:2, Mark 1:19, 3:17, 10:35,41, Luke 5:10, 6:14, 9:54, Acts 1:13, 12:2). All four brothers were present in Mark 1:29, 13:3, three of them (with Andrew missing) in Mark 5:37, 14:33 and Luke 8:51 and particularly at the Transfiguration, Matthew

¹¹⁴Unlike the other Gospels. the Book of John uses the term 'disciple' to designate only the Twelve.

17:1-3, Mark 9:1-4, Luke 9:28-30 and later, as a pillar of the church in Galatians 2:9).

The Concentric Circles around Jesus

Largest Number (= all), loosest relationship

- * The crowd
- * the group of disciples
- * all the disciples who accompanied Him, including the women
- * the Seventy
- * the Twelve
- * the four disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John
(the two pairs of brothers or, sometimes only Peter, James and John)
- * His favorite disciple, John

Smallest Number (= one), closest relationship

2) Jesus chose the Twelve, "that they might be with Him and that He might send them out". The goal of the intensive fellowship with Jesus and the dependence on Him was preparation for their mission.

This intense relationship with Jesus was not the final goal of the disciples' training. Rather, they were to go out alone and continue His work. Just as He had been 'sent' by His Father (John 3:16-18, 8:16,26,29, 12:45-49, 16:5,28, 17:3,8) and sends out the Holy Spirit in His place (John 14:15-31, 16:5-11, 12-17), He transfers His commission to the apostles. In John 17:18, He tells His Father, "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world". In John 20:21, He tells the Twelve, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you".

Jesus had intended from the very beginning to prepare them for the Great Commission, to "... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ..." (Matthew 28:18-20). They were to do the same thing in the world that He had done with them -- preach the Gospel to the masses, elect disciples out of the larger group of converts, and by sharing their lives and by teaching, train the chosen to become spiritual leaders.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ See Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelisation*, Old Tappan: Revell, 1963

His prayer in John 17 clearly demonstrates that besides achieving our salvation on the Cross, He had another specific assignment to be carried out with the Twelve. In verse 4, He says, "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" and adds the reason, "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have know surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me" (Verses 7-8). Jesus wanted the disciples not only to know what He knew, but to live as He had lived. The goal of His training program was for them to follow in His steps (except for His divinity and for His sacrificial death on the Cross), as He had repeatedly taught them.

The context of Luke 6:40 is particularly interesting ("A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher."). In verse 39,¹¹⁶ He asks, "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?" Blind leaders of the blind are people who may speak well, but are poor role-models, for they have nothing worth copying.

Important is the fact that both aspects belong together, "*that they might be with Him and that He might sent them out.*" Such close ties between teacher and pupil are only justified when they are intended to help the pupil become independent. Raising children properly always includes a certain tension in the development from the helpless infant completely dependent on its parents to the independent adult. Every tie, including the insistence on obedience, is directed toward independence, not only in child raising, but also the training of workers in the Kingdom of God. From the very beginning of His training program, even as He was calling His disciples, Jesus had the Great Commission in view. He knew what they could not yet see, that He had chosen them in order to train them as the future leaders in church and mission field, for the day that He would leave them.

3) Jesus' training program was not haphazard, but followed a clear plan. The disciples were to be trained for the mission field by living and working several years with the prototype of the missionary, Jesus Himself. The chronological order of His program makes this clear. First, He preached alone, then preached while the disciples observed. Next He

¹¹⁶Lawrence O. Richards. *A Theology of Christian Education*, op.cit., pp. 54-56.

let them preach while He observed. After that He sent them out in groups of two and discussed the results with them. This first, short term assignment is described in Matthew 10:1-11, Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6. Finally He sent them out alone,¹¹⁷ (remaining with them as Risen Lord - Matthew 28:18-20). The Twelve continued by doing the same with other Christians.

On the Way to Independence

- 1) Jesus preaches by Himself
- 2) Jesus preaches while His disciples observe
- 3) The disciples preach while Jesus observes
- 4) The disciples are sent out for a short term assignment
- 5) The disciples are sent out on a permanent assignment
- 6) The disciples preach while others observe
- 7) et cetera

- 1) I
- 2) I and You
- 3) You and I
- 4) You try alone, I comment
- 5) You are completely alone
- 6) You and another
- 7) Another and you
- 8) et cetera.

This scheme works well, not only in the training of church workers, but in every kind of education which sets itself the proper goal, independence under God.

4) Jesus' training program for the disciples included the full scope of instruction and life, theory and practice, individual and group counseling, personal and public activity, activity and rest, profession and private life. Teaching and counseling formed a single unit.

¹¹⁷The first, short term assignment is described in Matthew 10:1-11, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6. See also the sending out of the Seventy in Luke 10:1-16 and His discussion with them about their experiences in Luke 10:17-21.

These apparent contradictions were not compartmentalized into separate areas of life, but were carried out at one time, depending on the demands and possibilities of the situation.

3. Paul and his Colleagues

Beside Jesus and the Twelve, the best-known example for a discipling process which includes life and instruction, teaching and counseling, pattern and imitation, is Paul's work with his colleagues, which we know only from a few 'chains of role models'.

Examples of Chains of Role Models

Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges: Moses - Joshua - the elders

1 Peter 5:1-3: Jesus - Peter - the elders - the disciples

2 Timothy 2:2: Paul - Timothy - "faithful men" - "others also"

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7: Paul - Timothy & Silvanus - Thessalonians - Province of Achaia - the whole earth

Paul did not work alone, but was accompanied by assistants or colleagues (Acts 17:15 for example), who received spiritual training while with him. Before beginning his evangelistic work in Ephesus, he waited until his colleagues had arrived: "When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 18:5) Even after he, the apostle, had dreamed of a man calling him to Macedonia, he consulted with the others before starting the journey: "Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:10). These assistants were generally people he had led to Christ and had trained from the very beginning, Timothy (Acts 16:1-3), Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2,18,26; Romans 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). There were 'apostles of the churches as well (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25), missionaries sent to take responsibility for the churches Paul had founded.¹¹⁸ Besides his assistants, Paul concentrated on training other disciples, especially the elders of the new churches. He ordained elders at a surprisingly early stage in the work (Acts 14:22-23), usually the first converts, and remained for only a short time in one area, for he expected the elders to carry on his work. His longest stay, three and

¹¹⁸Thomas Schirrmacher. *Der Römerbrief*. 2 Vols, (Neuhausen, Germany: Hänssler, 1993) Vol. 1, p. 291-299.

a half years, in one area was in Ephesus, and that was probably punctuated by long interruptions.¹¹⁹

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are the most beautiful testimony that not only Paul, but also his colleagues (Silvanus and Timothy), not only preached the Gospel, but were prepared to share their own lives (1 Thessalonians 2:8) as models. Naturally all three proclaimed with words and with doctrine. Otherwise, how would their audience understand the meaning of their example? These letters demonstrate how Timothy and Silvanus, trained by Paul as their model, became models themselves for the Christians in Thessalonica who were also to become models in their turn.

Silvanus and Timothy are included, for 1 Thessalonians 1:6 tells us, "And you became followers of us and of the Lord". Many have found this statement offensive. How can Paul compare himself with Jesus? But the Scripture itself recommends models to emulate God's example. And is that not always so? A child's understanding of God depends on his parents', whether good or bad. Spiritual children are influenced by the good or

Doctrine and Life, Model and Imitation in the Letters to the Thessalonians

1 Thess. 1:5-9: "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

1Thessalonians. 2:7-12 "But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember,

¹¹⁹Heinz Warnecke. Thomas Schirrmacher. "Plädoyer für die historische Glaubwürdigkeit der Apostelgeschichte und der Pastoralbriefe." in War Paulus wirklich auf Malta (Neuhausen, Germany: Hänssler, 1992) pp. 223-227.

brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thess. 2:14: (to the church in Thessalonika) "For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans."

2 Thess 3:7: "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;"

2Thess. 3:9: "not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us."

bad example of their spiritual parents' relationship with God. Everyone is a role model: we cannot choose whether we want to be an example or not, but only between being a good example or a poor one. Every church leader and every politician is an example and can only choose what kind of example he wants to be. This is particularly true for theological training.

There are many studies about Paul's opponents, but his friends and colleagues have been greatly ignored.¹²⁰ There are two publications on Paul's colleagues, both written from a different point of view.¹²¹ Wolff-Henning Ollrog assumes that Paul's use of many assistants was not made by a random decision, but a deliberate missionary strategy. Beginning with the historical information given in the New Testament and a study of the terminology 'synergos' ('colleague'), this revised dissertation arrives at three circles of assistants.: 'the closest colleagues', who accompanied Paul continually, 'the independent colleagues', who aided him in specific,

¹²⁰Wolf-Henning Ollrog. *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament* 50 (Neukirchen, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979) p. 3.

¹²¹Ibid., and Manfred Bönig. *Wir haben die Welt erobert: Die Mitarbeiter des Apostel Paulus* (Witten, Germany: Bundes Verlag, 1980).

'chance' situations, and the 'envoys of the local churches', delegated by their congregations to accompany the apostle in order to take part in his missionary efforts. The last-mentioned group made cooperation possible between congregation, assistants and missions. Ollrog concludes with a study of the theologies of the individual and a discussion of Paul's evaluation of them. The book opens new fields of investigation and uncovers relationships overlooked by traditional studies, but is unfortunately fragmentary, since the writer rejects 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians and the pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) as non-Pauline¹²², thus ignoring quite a bit of material. Many of the questions he fails to resolve could have been answered, if a rigorously critical method had not eliminated authentic material. The Book of Acts suffers a similar fate, for Ollrog fails to take it seriously, although he considers it to be the work of Luke. Ollrog always seems to know why Luke supposedly distorted his facts.

This last problem does not occur in Bönig's book.¹²³ Concentrating on their relationship to the apostle, the writer describes sixteen of Paul's assistants. Although Bönig provides an excellent study derived from a thorough study of all New Testament sources, he fails to consider Paul's strategy in his choice of methods. Again, we encounter the old problem: the liberal critic provides an excellent study which opens new dimensions of the New Testament, but ignores too much material to break through traditional barriers, while a conservative author gives us a work which is edifying but insufficient. Until it becomes possible to unite academic thoroughness and conservative interpretation, the interested reader must read both books and reap the best out of them.

One might object that this intensive sharing of life and work with a small number of spiritual children is restricted to Jesus and to Paul. 2 Timothy 2:2 refutes this assumption, however, by commanding discipling as an ongoing program for church and missions: "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also". Jesus' example is made into an obligatory training program. Christ's church expands through the intensive occupation of mature, spiritually minded Christians with small groups of believers, not by the attempts of one responsible leader who tries to do justice to dozens, hundreds or even thousands at once. True spiritual

¹²²Ollrog, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

¹²³Manfred Bönig, *op. cit.*

growth and fruitful training occurs when spiritually-minded, mature Christians concentrate on a small group of spiritual children, with whom

Definition of Discipling¹²⁴

Every line describes a major point

- Discipling others
 - is the process,
- by which a Christian with a
 - life worth emulating
 - commits himself
- for an extended period of time
 - to a few individuals
- who have been won to Christ,
 - the purpose being
 - to aid
 - and to guide
- their growth to spiritual maturity
- so that they can reproduce themselves
 - in a third spiritual generation,
- which they build up through discipling.

they share life and instruction until the children have become independent adults, themselves capable of taking on responsibility for others. This is the best way to fulfill the Great Commission, "... Make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). We find many such chains of models in the Bible.

4. Having a role model, being a role model

Scripture considers role models a significant element of preparing the individual for independence. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, describing his vision of the renewed Church, writes:

"The Church cannot underestimate the value of human 'role models' (originating with Jesus and so highly valued by Paul!): not termino-

¹²⁴This definition is an adapted version of the definition in Allen Hadidian, *Successful Discipling*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1979. p. 29. The book is a good introduction to discipling in the local church.

logy, but the 'role model' gives its word emphasis and power. (I will write on role models in the New Testament especially! We have almost lost the idea!)"¹²⁵

Peter is in agreement with Jesus and with Paul when he gives the elders the commandment, not to rule, but to win their authority by their example. "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:1-3).

The best overview of the New Testament teaching on examples and imitation can be developed by collecting all references to the appropriate terminology (see the box at the end of the article).

Being an example does not require perfection, as Lawrence O. Richards, the American theologian and educator, explains. He describes the role model as an example not of perfection, but of growth (or change).¹²⁶ When Scripture itself assumes that mature Christians should serve others as role models, any opposing arguments or fears prove to be excuses which appear more pious than the Bible itself.

In 1 Corinthians 4:14-16, Paul describes his relationship to the Church in Corinth: "I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me." Paul calls the congregation 'his beloved children, himself their father. Because he is their spiritual father, he must admonish them (verse 14). Surprisingly, Paul not only identifies himself with the other Christians who serve the Corinthian believers, but he also claims a higher position. He distinguishes between himself and these 'instructors' (Greek 'paidagogos'). This term referred to slaves who taught children and is the origin for our term 'pedagogy'. These instructors were responsible for the intellectual education of their pupils. Paul is saying, "Even if you had 10,000 excellent teachers, who taught you only good and correct things, that would not

¹²⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Widerstand und Ergebung: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus der Haft* (Munich, Germany: Chr. Kaiser, 1958) p. 262. As far as I know, Bonhoeffer never managed to write on the subject.

¹²⁶ Lawrence O. Richards. *A Theology of Christian Education*, op.cit., p 142.

change the fact that I am your father. From your father, you learn not only doctrine, but also life. And a father questions not only his children's thinking, but also their actions. He is not only present when all is going well, but also in emergencies and in danger."

Lawrence O. Richards once described the difference between modern pedagogical methods and those of the Bible in a way which reflects Paul's ideas. "Much of education is concerned with helping people know what their teachers know; Christian education is concerned with helping people become what their teachers are."¹²⁷

In the world, a pupil is often expected to know what his teacher knows, but in the church a student should live like his teacher lives. As Lawrence O. Richards¹²⁸ reminds us, Jesus told His disciples, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master" (Mt. 10:24-25). After washing His disciples' feet, He tells them, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (John 13:15-16).

Of course we need knowledge! Without it a people or a church will lose control (Proverbs 29:18), but if a church is dead, knowledge is of no use. Has the modern church neglected role modeling? Isn't it easier to refer to good books or sermons, than to share one's life with others as an example? If we want new believers to grow in Christ and remain in the faith, however, we must take an interest in their lives. In order to do that, we must ourselves have a personal relationship to Christ and must live according to his law. Can we still challenge others to imitate our example (1 Cor. 4:16)? Is our Christian life worth imitating? Do others experience enough of our lives that they can imitate us in a scriptural fashion?

Theological instructors must become strong fathers and mothers who no longer share only knowledge, but who are available in all aspects of life.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30

¹²⁸ See Lawrence O. Richards. *Ibid.* See also Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), and Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Personal Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981)

Not by chance does the book of Proverbs give the teacher of wisdom the title 'Father' (4:1), and call his pupil his son (13:1; 1:10.15). Elijah and Elisha are also addressed as 'my father' by their 'children', the sons of the prophets (2 Kings 20:35; 2:3.57; 4:1.38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1)."¹²⁹

Discipling is significant for the training of spiritual leaders and workers in the church and in world missions. Although the examples of Jesus and Paul, or of Old Testament leaders, can only be imperfectly carried over into modern life, this is still the best way to train and form the leaders of the future.

Who is a Role Model?

The following texts all use the word 'model' (Greek 'typos', 'hypotyposo') and the terms 'imitator' or 'to imitate' (Greek 'mimetes', 'mimeistai' or 'symmimetai').

1. God

Ephesians 5:1 "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children".

2. Jesus Christ

1 Thessalonians 1:6 "And you became followers of us and of the Lord."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

3. The Apostles etc.

Philippians 3:17 "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern."

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 "And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia."

2 Thessalonians 3:7 "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you."

2 Thessalonians 3:9 "... not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ."

1 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore I urge you, imitate me."

4. Men and women of history

Hebrews 6:12 "... that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Hebrews 13:7-(8) "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of

¹²⁹Hans Walter Wolff. *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments*. Chr. Kaiser: München, 1977³. p. 263.

their conduct."

5. Our spiritual father, who introduced us to Biblical truth

1 Corinthians 4:(14)-16 "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me."

6. The elders

1 Peter 5:(1)-3 "The elders who are among you I exhort, ... Shepherd the flock of God ... not as being lords over those entrusted to you; but being examples to the flock."

7. Young men who are true

1 Timothy 4:12 "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

8. Other churches

1 Thessalonians 2:14 "For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus"

1 Thessalonians 1:7 "so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe."

9. The Old Testament and its people

1 Corinthians 10:6 "Now these things became our examples"

1 Corinthians 10:11 "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition (Compare the Old Testament examples in verses 1-13)

10. Sound Doctrine

Romans 6:17 "... yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."

2 Timothy 1:13 "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus."

11. All which is good

3 John 11 "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good."

Titus 2:7 "... in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works."

An Appeal for Alternative Education Models for Church and Missions: 21 Propositions

*Presented at the 1999 annual meeting of the Association of German Evangelical Missiologists as introduction for a discussion between mission leaders and heads of seminaries.*¹³⁰

Translated by Cambron Teupe, MA, MTh

The best model available for the preparation of full time church workers is to be found in the way Jesus trained the twelve disciples and in Paul's preparation of his associates, as well as in the educational practices of Old Testament leaders. These principles apply to all kinds of training, but are especially important in the instruction of our future leaders.

It is easy to become a pastor; but it is not easy to be one.¹³¹

The eternal problem in the education of spiritual leadership is that pastors and missionaries need two seemingly mutually exclusive kinds of schooling: 1). a good academic theological education and 2) practical on the job instruction accompanied by personal mentoring and independent study. The goal of such programs must be to produce proven, independent, spiritually mature leaders with practical experience in real church life. Nowadays, some study theology on an academic level without gaining the

¹³⁰ Published originally in German as "Ausbilden wie Jesus und Paulus". S. 7-43 in: Klaus W. Müller, Thomas Schirmacher (Ed.). *Ausbildung als missionarischer Auftrag. Referate der Jahrestagung 1999 des afem.* edition afem - mission reports 7. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1999; see also "Jesus as Master Educator and Trainer". *Training for Crosscultural Ministries* (World Evangelical Fellowship) 2/2000: 1-4; "Paul and His Colleagues". *Training for Crosscultural Ministries* (World Evangelical Fellowship) 3/2000: 6-8; "Having a Role Model, Being a Role Model". *Training for Crosscultural Ministries* (World Evangelical Fellowship) 1/2001: 4-7; and *Dios Quiere que Tú Aprendas Trabajes y Ames*. Funad: Managua (Nikaragua), 1999¹; 2000² (Spanish)

¹³¹ Adapted from the German proverb 'It is easy to become father, but is not easy to be one'.

character development won through personal counseling and experience and without the concrete direction of experienced pastors or missionaries. Others receive practical experience within the realm of everyday church life, but never acquire the necessary knowledge of church history, modern sects and religions or biblical languages.

Jesus and Paul trained their disciples by combining 1. information 2. individual counseling 3, group counseling 4. coaching towards independence 5. on the job training. Can we find no way to combine highly qualified academic studies in theology with personal training by within the environment of everyday missions and church life? We find no set training system for full-time workers in the Bible, but, just as in church work and in missions, we can investigate and apply the principles laid down in Scripture, adapting them wisely to our own conditions without ignoring spiritual essentials.

As I am convinced that a modern orientation towards biblical standards and the acknowledgement of modern needs will both lead to the same results, I believe that the following propositions of changes point agree with Scripture as well as with analysis of our own day and age, our society and its educational needs . Education is on the brink of a new age just as the media are. Certainly, change is not automatically good, but we can use many of these new developments to our advantage. We cannot afford to miss opportunities as the world of secular education in Germany is doing it.

Three Reasons for the Necessity of Changes in our Theological Education Programs

1. Biblical awareness:

Examples given by Jesus and Paul,
the significance of role models,
the imperative of missions,
the spiritual requirements of leadership

*2. Shifts in modern education*¹³²:

the constant changes and increases in the material to be learned,
globalisation,
the need for constant further education,¹³³
significance of mentoring,
correspondence courses,
the Internet,
the significance of EQ=emotional quotients,
Andragogy instead of pedagogy.¹³⁴

*3. International experiences on the mission field, particularly in the Third World*¹³⁵:

TEE (Theological Education by Extension)¹³⁶
and other alternative training models,¹³⁷
training models in other cultures,¹³⁸
the increasing number of older applicants for full-time service,
studies on the reasons that missionaries return from the mission field,
Member Care,
the training of workers in large churches.

¹³² See for example; Wolf Lodermann. "Management-Gurus aus USA in Europa auf Studenten Jagd: MBA-Titel als Sprosse auf Karriereleiter". Bonner Rundschau 7. Sept.1996; Bärbel Schwertfeger. "International, praxisnah und teamorientiert: Der MBA setzt sich auch in Deutschland durch". Welt am Sonntag vom 7.Oct. 1997

¹³³ See; Detlef Jozok. "Lernen als Beruf: Arbeit und Bildung in der Informations- und Wissensgesellschaft". Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Beilage zu Das Parlament) B 9/99 (26. Feb.1999): 31-38

¹³⁴ See; below

¹³⁵ See for example; F. Ross. Kinsler (Ed.). Ministry by the People. WCC Publ.: Genf & Orbis Books: Myrknoll (NY), 1983; Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). Missions and Theological Education. Associates of Urbans: Farmington (MI), 1984; Tom Chandler. "A Caring Model of Training". Training for Cross-cultural Ministries (Occasional Bulletin of the International Missionary Training Fellowship) 1/1996: 4-5 (on India); David & Rosemary Harley. "Missionary Training in Africa is Gaining Momentum". Training for Crosscultural Ministries

Siegfried Buchholz said on a congress for Christian leaders:

“The second opportunity that we dare not miss is our treatment of education and training. We must assume that education will be the next century's the most important raw material. Our present educational system is not preparing our young people for the future, because it fails to comprehend the needs of business and industry. Schools serve only to convey the sorts of knowledge that can be taught and learned in the traditional form, and assumes that students will remain for the rest of their lives in traditional professions, that already no longer exist. More than the skills and knowledge required by specific employment, students must learn the skills of employability, i.e. the willingness and the ability to adapt to a world of constantly changing job profiles and professions, to be able to jump onto the boats that are leaving the harbor. And we are not learning this in our present educational system.”¹³⁹

The combination of information, individual and group counseling and on the job training – the model provided by Jesus and Paul – is in my opinion the only way to help modern Christians develop biblical leadership quali-

(Occasional Bulletin of the International Missionary Training Fellowship) 2/1994: 3-4; Heinz Suter. "Training Tentmakers from the Latin Context". Training for Crosscultural Ministries (Occasional Bulletin of the International Missionary Training Fellowship) 1/1996: 5-6 (on Latin America)

¹³⁶ See for TEE's 'mother seminary', a Reformed seminary in Guatemala: Kenneth B. Mulholland. "Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala: A Modest Experiment Becomes a Model for Change". pp. 33-41 in: F. Ross. Kinsler (Ed.). Ministry by the People. op. cit. On TEE, see the summary in: Fred Holland. Teaching Through T. E. E.: Help for Leaders in Theological Education by Extension in Africa. Evangel Publishing House: Nairobi (Kenia), 1975 and Richard Hart. "New Paths in Theological Education". PTEE info (Program for Theological Education by Extension, Amman, Jordanien) 1/1998. p. 1; "Experiencing the Aspect of 'Extension'". PTEE info (Program for Theological Education by Extension, Amman, Jordanien) 1/1995. p. 1

¹³⁷ See the description of alternate models for theological education in ;David Kornfield. "Seminary Education Toward Education Alternatives". pp. 191-210 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). Missions and Theological Education. op. cit.

¹³⁸ See: Harvie M. Conn. "Teaching Missions in the Third World: The Cultural Problems". pp. 249-279 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). Missions and Theological Education. Associates of Urbans: Farmington (MI), 1984. pp. 268ff "ethnoandragogy"

¹³⁹ Siegfried Buchholz. "Fit für die Zukunft - Aufspringen auf einen fahrenden Zug". pp. 7-20 in: Jörg Knoblauch, Horst Marquart (ed.). Fit für die Zukunft: Konzepte christlicher Führungskräfte. Brunnen: Gießen, 1999. pp. 13-14

tes (1Tim 3,1-13; Titus 1, 5-9) so that they are qualified to take on the responsibilities of church life and mission field. One characteristic emphasized in the Bible, the ability to teach, includes both knowledge and the ability to share it. Theological education tends to disregard other qualities (self control, maturity through testing, exemplary family life), for seminaries fail to provide either counseling or cooperative practical training by instructors in everyday church life.

Detlef Lehmann expects the following from good theological training: A future pastor or missionary should:

1. be trained to teach (not only know doctrine, but know how to share it)
2. display an exemplary life style
3. place highest priority on worship and prayer¹⁴⁰

Thus, theological training should be designed to promote independence, and should integrate counseling and cooperative practice in church activities with classical theological material, so that Christians are prepared to spread the Kingdom of God in cooperation with others.¹⁴¹

Not like this!

A thinker earned his bread
with the thesis, living is dead.
His rival, who taught
The opposite thought
was also respected and well-fed.¹⁴²

The challenge we face from the changes in education is obvious. Back in the 70's. Milton Baker of the Evangelical Fellowship of Missions (EFMA) wrote:

“We are not training enough leaders. 2. We are not training the real leaders. 3. The cost of training is too high. 4. Traditional training in

¹⁴⁰ Detlef Lehmann. "Gedanken und Überlegungen zur Frage der Ausbildung von Pastoren in den lutherischen Kirchen". Evangelium - Gospel 10 [= 21] (1983) 3 (June-Aug): 382-399

¹⁴¹ See: Wolfgang Simson. Gottes Megatrends: Sechs Wege aus dem christlichen Ghetto. C & P: Emmelsbüll & Koinonia: Rothrist (CH), 1995. pp. 49-51

¹⁴² Translation by Cambron Teupe of a German limerick

residential schools segregates prospective leaders so they become professionals. 5. We are training men in irrelevant concepts.”¹⁴³

How are we to overcome these deficiencies? Let me submit a few propositions. These may well be incomplete,¹⁴⁴ but I hope that they will at least stir up the discussion we need about the further development of our training programs for missionaries and pastors.

I do not want to arouse unnecessary controversy, for we have not come to this conference to glorify each other, but to struggle constructively for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and to consider new ideas from other people and missions.

1. The goal of education is to assist the individual to become independent, not to make him a life-long adherent of a role-model.

This means that a student needs to know *how* his teacher arrived at his conclusions, just as much as to know the conclusions themselves. A minister consult his instructors when he faces problems in every day life; he must be able to find his own answers. Education must therefore teach the student to learn, even without a teacher, just as the ancient Romans said: “non scholae, sed vitae discimus” -- ‘We learn not for school but for life.’ Seminaries teach classes on the classical sects, for example, but because of the rapid changes in many sects, and the constant rise of new sects, students desperately need to know how to analyse the teaching and practices of new groups, so that they can warn their church members appropriately and assist them in their witness to members of such groups.

2. Theological education must keep its goals in view, just as Jesus taught His disciples with the Great Commission in mind.

¹⁴³ Cited in Fred Holland. Teaching Through T. E. E. : Help for Leaders in Theological Education by Extension in Africa. Evangel Publishing House: Nairobi (Kenia), 1975. p. 9

¹⁴⁴ For further, similar suggestions, see: Paul A. Beals. A People for His Name: A Church-Based Missions Strategy. William Carey Library: Pasadena (CA), 1995². pp. 199-206 (für instructors) und pp. 207-214 (for students). I have won many suggestions from the World Evangelical Fellowship’s (WEF) International Missionary Training Fellowship (Journal: Training for Crosscultural Ministries: Occasional Bulletin of the International Missionary Training Fellowship):: Robert Ferris (Ed.). Establishing Missionary Training. World Evangelical Fellowship Series 4. William Carey Library: Pasadena (CA), 1995; David Harley. Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-Cultural Mission. World Evangelical Fellowship Series 3. William Carey Library: Pasadena (CA), 1995; William D. Taylor (Ed.). Internationalizing Missionary Training. Paternoster Press: Carlisle (GB), n.d.(ca. 1994)

Jonathan Lewis¹⁴⁵ classifies the goals of theological education in three areas; “cognitive outcomes,” (knowledge) “Skill outcomes” and “affective outcomes”, (emotional).¹⁴⁶ Because seminaries allow society to set their goals instead of Scripture, most training programs fail to provide for more than one of these areas.¹⁴⁷ “In order to be effective, ministry training programs need to focus on the true objective of training - godly and effective kingdom workers”¹⁴⁸

3. The knowledge, experience and maturity of both instructor and students are of equal importance.¹⁴⁹ Theological IQ¹⁵⁰ is not enough without theological EQ.¹⁵¹

Theory and practice, IQ and EQ must all be emphasised. Seminaries will not encourage their students to learn willingly and well by providing opportunities for cooperation in numerous evangelistic crusades at the expense of academic quality, nor by expecting them to master too much specialised material without providing opportunities for them to gain practical experience.

Because students need as much guidance in their personal lives as in their intellectual development, the five elements important to Jesus and to Paul must be woven together into a comprehensive training program: 1. information, 2. individual counseling, 3. group counseling, 4. promotion of independence, 5. training on the job.

¹⁴⁵ Jonathan Lewis. "Matching Outcomes with Methods and Contexts". Training for Crosscultural Ministries (Occasional Bulletin of the International Missionary Training Fellowship) 2/1998: 1-3

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 1

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 2

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 3

¹⁴⁹ Particularly in: Paul A. Beals. A People for His Name. op. cit., pp. 210-212

¹⁵⁰ Intelligence quotient

¹⁵¹ Emotional Quotient, or 'emotional intelligence'. See; Daniel Goleman. Emotionale Intelligenz. Hanser: München, 1996 = dtv: München, 1997 [I do not share Goleman's Buddhist tendencies! See; Daniel Goleman (Ed.). Die heilende Kraft der Gefühle: Gespräche mit dem Dalai Lama ... dtv: München, 1998²]; Robert K. Cooper, Ayman Sawaf. Emotionale Intelligenz für Manager. Heyne: München, 1997; Branko Bokun. Wer lacht lebt. Ariston: München, 1996; Andreas Huber. Sichwort Emotionale Intelligenz. Heyne: München, 1996⁴. In 1962, the Ciba-Symposium on the future of mankind, discussed the overemphasis of IQ and the importance of the individual's ability to deal with others. See: Gordon Wolstenhom (Ed.). Man and His Future. J. & A. Churchill: London, 1963

4. Education must be adapted to life, not life to education. Since the student's situation has a strong influence on his ability to learn, theological training can never become too flexible.

We must give up the demand that a student must adapt completely and solely to his seminary. Training centers must also adapt to the student's situation. The one way street must be replaced with a give and take.

5. Modern theological education must provide and combine a variety of traditional and alternative methods.

Theological training requires more flexibility than other fields, because it must take into consideration the variety which God has designed for His Kingdom. How sad that Evangelical theological training in Germany is even more rigid than the secular programs investigated in universal studies on education.

Our modern world has provided us with a multitude of methods. Besides lectures, textbooks and class instruction, we can employ correspondence courses, independent study, internships, mentoring, modular courses, internet courses, tutored courses, research, discussion groups – not for their own sakes, but for the sakes of our students.

The present controversies about the ideal educational program is being carried out in a very unhealthy atmosphere in which traditional and alternative methods are being played out against each other. We Christians should intensively, joyfully and flexibly take advantage of all available methods, in order to further our students and their role in the Kingdom of God.

6. Theological students are adults and should not be taught according to the same principles as pupils in the first twenty years of life. Educators must respect their maturity. Adults learn differently than children do.¹⁵²

Educators used to transfer too many pedagogical concepts ('Pedagogy', 'to lead a child' comes from the Greek word 'pais') to the field of andragogy (from Greek 'andros', 'adult'). Newer literature provides sufficient insights into the needs of adult students.

¹⁵² See: Duane H. Elmer. "Education and Service". pp. 226-244 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed). *Missions and Theological Education*. Associates of Urbans: Farmington (MI), 1984. pp. 227-229 ("Paedagogy and Andragogy") und Harvie M. Conn. "Teaching Missions in the Third World". op. cit., pp. 268ff "ethnoandragogy"

Training can no longer be dominated by lectures and class room instruction, which only provides about 20% of the necessary knowledge anyway!¹⁵³ How many books of the Bible can be taught in class in four years?

7. The student's learning type must be taken into consideration as much as possible. We want him to *learn* as well and as intensively as possible, not to merely satisfy our institutional requirements.

God has created so many different kinds of people and so many different kinds of Christians. If God creates His children with special ministries in mind, how can theological institutions afford to force them into educational straitjackets? Many theological educators seem to be completely unaware of the new insights won in the fields of adult education and the psychology of learning.

8. The student's learning type and his personal gifts must be taken into more consideration.

Has 1 Peter 4,10 (As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.) no validity in theological training? If we want to prepare people to use their gifts for the rest of their lives in the advancement of the Kingdom of God, then those gifts must play a central role in a student's training. Since different spiritual gifts automatically influence the student's learning type and his interests, a study program should combine the essential basics with possibilities for specialisation. Only a few spiritual gifts can be furthered in the classical theological fields, which offer few possibilities for the student to develop his own personal talents.

9. Instructors should be active as pastors, missionaries or involved in other ministeries as well as being teachers and scholars.

Many of the instructors in many German seminaries have little experience in active ministry, if any at all, yet are preparing students for a profession of which which they themselves have little or no idea. Although we love to criticise the theological training in the State churches, we have been emulating them in this aspect. Instructors should be qualified academically and have made their contribution to scholarship, but they should also be still active full- or part time in church and mission life. A professor of surgery cannot teach effectively if he carried out his last operation

¹⁵³ Anil D. Dolanky. "A Critical Evaluation of Theological Education in Residential Training". pp. 156-168 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). *Missions and Theological Education*. op. cit., p. 157

seventeen years ago! His students expect him to be up to date with the newest developments and to be able to refer to recent experience in the operating theater. Academic studies and continuing practical experience are also both essential to theological education.

10. Since the personal lives of instructors are just as essential as their intellectual capacities, seminaries must consider more than just academic, intellectual or ‘optical’ aspects in selecting their faculties.

The most important qualification of an instructor should be his ability to be a good role model for his students, and to work with them on a practical basis. His gifts should play as important a role as his position in family, church, missions or society.

It should also be possible to engage instructors without official academic qualifications to teach classes on subjects in which they have special knowledge or experience. Rabi Maharaj, for example, as a former Hindu priest, is better qualified to teach on Hinduism than an instructor who has only studied it academically. Would we employ only Paul and ignore John’s personal contribution?

11. Seminaries should provide students with close contact to teachers outside the classroom and regularly scheduled counseling possibilities on theological, church and personal problems as a matter of course.

Instructors who must spend large amounts of time away from the campus or cannot be available on weekends should at least take along a few students, so that they can observe and learn from real life.

12. Students must learn above all to handle the stress and responsibility of church and mission field. The ability to deal with examination stress is simply not as important!

A single examination at the end of the training period tells more about ability to handle examinations than about knowledge. We would discover more about the student’s knowledge and his ability to use it by taking a comprehensive look at his theological and practical achievements over the whole period.

Perhaps each student could be guided by a personal tutor throughout the entire training period. This instructor could then evaluate the individual’s entire development and achievement, including his personal growth, his involvement in the local church and other questions. His assessment could then be discussed and evaluated by others who have played a role in the student’s training.

13. Besides the multitude of specialist instructors, every student should have his own personal tutor. Continuous ‘soul care’ and regular counseling should be common practice in theological education.

This, of course, means fewer students, not for the seminary as an institution, but for the individual teacher. Reducing student numbers alone will not automatically achieve this goal, which depends on the instructor’s capacity for including his students in his own work and life.

14. The integration and team work of teachers and students in a church ought to be standard procedure, especially since our students will later be taking on leadership responsibilities. Patience and sacrifice cannot be learned in short term projects but only in continuous responsibilities.

The practical experience gained in short term activities such as internships, summer mission trips at home or abroad has its value, but in contrast to the future profession, the end of short term projects are in sight. Unresolved problems can be left behind. Later on, when the student has taken on a full-time job, he must face problems and then bear the responsibility for things he would much prefer to change. He can avoid neither continual critics, nor theological controversy, nor the long, drawn-out process of reaching consensus in a board of contentious elders.

15. Training should not be available to young people only. We need programs which will enable older believers and experienced church workers to get a good theological education without having to withdraw from their jobs and families.¹⁵⁴

In our increasingly unchurched society, there are fewer and fewer young people from Christian backgrounds who begin seminary immediately after finishing school, but the Bible sets no age limit on the beginning of full-time ministry. Why can’t a person who has only been a Christian for 5 years start theological training at the age of 50, assuming that he is personally and spiritually mature?

The fear that young people who have found their place in professional life will no longer be interested in full –time ministry has led to the ‘doctrine’ that the ‘normal’ pastor or missionary must be won at the outset of his career. When a middle-aged person – like the apostle Paul – enters the ministry, we are all surprised. But doesn’t Paul warn the church against giving too much responsibility to “ ... a novice, lest being lifted up

¹⁵⁴ See: Thomas Schirrmacher. "Aus meiner Sicht: Mission und Bewährung". *Evangelikale Missiologie* 1/1989: 2

with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil,” (1 Tim 3:6)? Isn’t this a frequent complaint on the mission field, when younger pastors or missionaries disdain the experience of more mature native believers? Nowadays we desperately need proven ministers with personal maturity and sufficient experience in church and missions to handle numerous tensions with wisdom and sensitivity.

16. Both in its content and in its methods, theological education should provide a comprehensive Christian view of the world¹⁵⁵.

Faith in Jesus Christ should encompass all aspects of our lives. If Jesus, in and through Whom the world was created, is its Lord, then nothing can elude His influence. A comprehensive approach does not mean that we withdraw into the ivory tower of a piously narrow subject matter, but that the whole expanse of our thought and life becomes involved in our theological training and is submitted to our faith in Christ. We afford neither to ignore or even denounce nontheological disciplines, such as pedagogy, psychology or history, nor to swallow uncritically whatever others say. Our students must learn to evaluate! As the instructor’s influence determines to a large extent the way his students’ deal with the immense amount of information confronting them, he must be very aware of his role as example.

17. Western Christians have a lot to learn from Christians in other countries.

As our globalisation envelops our world, instructors and students need to learn more from Christians of other cultures. Living and working in another culture, even for a short time, has stimulated many young people – even if only to recognise the influence of their own culture on their Christian life style. At the same time, many have become more interested in missions – even if they do not become missionaries later, they can ensure that missions will become an integral part of their church’s awareness.

German theologians – not just the liberals, by the way – may consider themselves the center of the universe, but in the realm of education, we have a lot to learn from other cultures.¹⁵⁶ I am very impressed with the way Asian believers have combined high academic standards with inten-

¹⁵⁵ Especialy, Paul A. Beals. *A People for His Name*. op. cit, pp. 199-200

¹⁵⁶ For an excellent assortment of alternate models, including other countries, see: Robert W. Ferris. *Renewal in Theological Education*. Billy Graham Center: Wheaton (IL), 1990.

sive spiritual zeal. Lesslie Newbigin, for example, suggests that Western training programs be reformed in structure, methodology and content, according to the experiences made in other cultures.¹⁵⁷

18. The rigid separation between disciplines leads to over-theorisation and over-specialisation.¹⁵⁸ It is one of education's major responsibilities to establish and suggest relationships between bodies of knowledge, but in theology, this is generally left up to the student.

How quickly instructors are to make their class the center of the universe, judging students according to their achievements in his own field and completely ignoring the rest of his development. Paul A. Beals, who calls this blindness 'educational provincialism',¹⁵⁹ doesn't even absolve exegesis from its responsibility to serve the church and missions,¹⁶⁰ even though Evangelical seminaries often revere this field as a sort of sacred cow which needs no justification. Exegesis need not be subject to Bible Criticism, but it must submit to the Biblical assertion that all Scripture is "profitable for doctrine," (1 Tim 3:16). As important as exegesis is, it must contribute to the Church's needs.

In 1787, Johann Philipp Gabler demanded that 'Biblical Theology' be separated from 'Dogmatic Theology'.¹⁶¹ Ever since, the Church has suffe-

¹⁵⁷ Lesslie Newbigin. "Theological Education in World Perspective". pp. 3-18 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). *Missions and Theological Education*. Associates of Urbans: Farmington (MI), 1984

¹⁵⁸ Especially John M. Frame. *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. op. cit., pp. 206-214

¹⁵⁹ "Educational Provincialism", Paul A. Beals. *A People for His Name*. op. cit., p. 200

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 201-202

¹⁶¹ Johann Philipp Gabler. *De iusto discrimine theologiae biblicae et dogmaticae re-gundisque recte utriusque finibus*. Inauguralrede an der Universität Altdorf. Altdorf, 1787; on Gabler, see: Otto Merk. "Anfänge neutestamentlicher Wissenschaft im 18. Jahrhundert". pp. 37-59 in: Georg Schwaiger (Ed.). *Historische Kritik in der Theologie. Studien zur Theologie- und Geistesgeschichte des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* 32. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980, here p.. 57. Lutheran theology paved the way for this development. According to Robert Scharlemann. "Theology in Church and University: The Post-Reformation Development". *Church History* 33 (1964) 23ff, Melanchthon distinguished between academic theology, which orients itself on historical developments, and kerygmatic theology, which preaches to the modern church; a distinction which Lutheran orthodox theologians such as Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) developed further. See; *Ibid.* Reformed theology adhered to John Calvin's example. Calvin treated scholarly exegesis and sermon as a two elements of a single discipli-

red from the increasing deviation between the representation of ‘Christian’ truth and the exegesis of Scripture. Modern Historical Criticism could never have developed without it! Evangelical Bible Colleges were often founded in order to combat the critical seminaries, but unfortunately have often taken over their disciplines, structures and demarcations, unconsciously preserving fundamental critical results instead of overthrowing them. The often retained one of Historical Criticism’s most devastating results instead of instigating a revolution which emphasises the interpretation of the Word of God and demonstrates its involvement in Systematic Theology, dogmatics, ethics and apologetics as well as in counseling and missions all at the same time.

John M. Frame objects strongly to the prevailing philosophical view that the classification of knowledge and scientific disciplines is necessary to scholarship.¹⁶² He considers this arrangement a matter of convenience, and contradicts the Reformed Dutch scholars, whom he otherwise greatly admires: Abraham Kuyper and Herman Dooyeweerd, who taught that the division of disciplines and the proper classification are essential to an accurate comprehension of the world.

19. Missions should be central to the curriculum. All aspects of theological education must be directed towards church planting and world missions.¹⁶³

Each discipline should be taught with the advancement of the church and of missions in mind. Students should be inspired by the opportunity to cooperate in God’s great work in evangelisation and missions. “Regardless of his particular academic discipline, every faculty member in a theological school should teach his subjects with the mission of the church in view.”¹⁶⁴ The late South African missiologist David Bosch once descri-

ne.(See: . K. Karl Müller. Symbolik. A. Deichert: Erlangen, 1896. pp. 340-343+389+454-463).

¹⁶² John M. Frame. *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. op. cit., pp. 91-92

¹⁶³ See: Lois McKinney. "Why Renewal Is Needed in Theological Education". *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 18 (April 1982) 93-94 and the collection; Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). *Missions and Theological Education*. op. cit., especially David Bosch. "Missions in Theological Education". pp. xiv-xlii and Horst Engelmann. *Mobilmachung für die Mission: Wie können Mitarbeiter für den Missionsdienst gewonnen werden?* Missionshaus Bibelschule Wiedenest: Wiedenest, n.d. (ca. 1983) 60 pp.

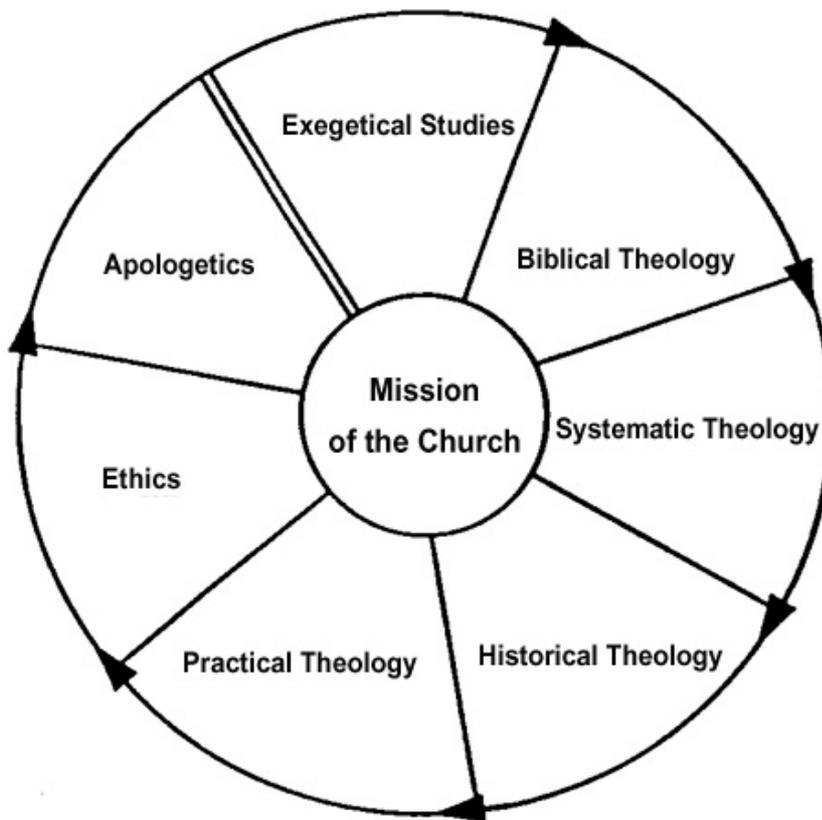
¹⁶⁴ Paul A. Beals. *A People for His Name*. op. cit., p. 199

bed the critical role of missiology, which ought to permeate all other fields like leaven.¹⁶⁵ He notes,

“A major problem is that the present division of theological subjects was canonized in a period when the church in Europe was completely introverted.”¹⁶⁶

We will take a closer look at the curriculum later.

The following graph¹⁶⁷ demonstrates the centrality of the Great Commission to the motivation and direction of all other disciplines.



The mission idea should motivate and govern the theological work in all other fields

Let me repeat the propositions I formulated in my book on Romans¹⁶⁸ as basis of Paul’s thinking:

¹⁶⁵ David Bosch. "Missions in Theological Education". op. cit., pp. xxxi-xxxii

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. xxx-xxxii

¹⁶⁷ Derived from Paul A. Beals. *A People for His Name*. op. cit., S. 201

¹⁶⁸ *Der Römerbrief*. 2 vol. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1994¹; RVB: Hamburg, 2001²; see also "Romans as a Charter of World Mission: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology". *Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology* 4 (1993/94) 1/2 (Sept-Nov): 34-39 = *International Journal*

1. Anyone who pursues missions pragmatically but ignores doctrine is ministering in his own commission; he is disregarding what God has said about evangelisation.
2. Anyone who teaches 'doctrine' not centered in missions and not aimed towards evangelisation is teaching his own doctrine and is disregarding God's reasons for doctrine.
3. Biblical missions always begin with sound doctrine. Sound doctrine always leads to missions.

20. The failure of evangelical Bible schools and seminaries to recognise each other is a catastrophe.

Evangelical schools must begin to acknowledge each other's courses and programs. Programs should be mutually compatible, so that students are able to change schools, when another institution would be better suited to the individual's personality, situation or future plans – and the seminary should then encourage them to do so! Programs should be better coordinated in order to provide appropriate variety and flexibility.

21. Accreditation standards with their strict requirements often reflect old ways of doing things and make it often impossible for newcomers, new and innovative schools, to get accepted.¹⁶⁹ In the future, they should also take the practical, spiritual and personal aspects of education into account.

Accreditation is supposed to serve to ascertain whether a school adequately prepares its students for a given profession, and is an important mechanism for evaluating the suitability of the institution for the student's goals. Because the profession of pastor, missionary or Christian leader depends only partially on academic abilities, accreditation should also observe the extent to which the graduates of a given institution have been prepared to lead, to work with people, to react to their changing world, and to explain spiritual truth.

At the moment, accreditation tends to overemphasize formal aspects of education such as bureaucracy. These classical criteria (eg number of

of Frontier Missions 10 (1993) 4 (Oct): 159-162 = Chalcedon Report No. 342 (Jan 1994): 43-47; reprinted in Thomas Schirrmacher. *World Mission – Heart of Christianity*. RVB: Hamburg, 2000

¹⁶⁹For the best contributions on the issue of accreditation, see: Samuel F. Rowen. "Accreditation, Contextualization and the Teaching of Mission". pp. 137-155 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). *Missions and Theological Education*. Associates of Urbans: Farmington (MI), 1984

books, finances, number of instructors with a doctorate) are easier to measure, but are often of little real value for theological training.¹⁷⁰ More important than the number of books in the library is the availability of books, whether in the schools' library or in the libraries of the instructors. And of what use are the books, if students are not taught to use them independently according to their own personality, gifts and future ministry? Bureaucratic changes to fit accreditation rules seldom improve quality.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Particularly *Ibid.*, p. 139

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141 and Anil D. Dolanky. "A Critical Evaluation of Theological Education in Residential Training". pp. 156-168 in: Harvie M. Conn, Samuel F. Rowen (Ed.). *Missions and Theological Education*. Associates of Urbans: Farmington (MI), 1984. pp. 158-159

Has Roman Catholicism Changed? An Overview of Recent Canon Law

Or: The Disempowering of the Council
by the Papacy (1990)¹⁷²

Translated from the German by Tim J. Harris

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¹⁷² Reprinted from "Has Roman Catholicism Changed? An Examination of Recent Canon Law". *Antithesis: A Review of Reformed/Presbyterian Thought and Practice* 1 (1990) 2 (März/Apr): 23-30.

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Some observers speak of significant reforms taking place within Roman Catholicism, but an evaluation of recent official pronouncements suggests another course.

I. The Starting Point: Use of the Term 'Tradition' in Scripture

Before discussing the new Catholic Church Law, let us start with clarifying certain presuppositions. We examine the teachings and organizational structure of any Church according to the divine revelation found in Holy Scripture. This approach can be briefly applied to the notion of "tradition".

The word "tradition" (Gr. *paradosis*; Lat. *traditio*) in the New Testament may refer to the act of "passing on" (delivery); or it may point to the content which was passed on (delivered). Usually it has to do with the transmission of teachings or instructions. The Biblical use of the term does not in itself imply a valuation: the tradition can be divine or human, true or false.

A. Tradition in the Old Testament

The Old Testament does not have a special word for "tradition". The activity itself, however, is described by many concepts. Genuine tradition grounded in acts of revelation of *Yahwe* are to be passed on to the next generation. False tradition, based on man's wisdom, is attacked: "Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, ... [but rather] walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezek. 20:18-19). Holding fast to the genuine tradition imparts life (Prov. 4:13); it does not stifle (Prov. 4:12).

B. Tradition in the New Testament

In addition to using the term "tradition" in the sense of the substance delivered, the New Testament also uses the verb form "deliver", sometimes with the meaning "to surrender". The passages may be divided between those pertaining to the positive transmissions, which are to be held fast, and those dealing with negative ones which are to be eschewed. Luke identifies the oral transmission of eyewitnesses as the source for his gospel account (Lk. 1:2).

1. Divine or Sound Tradition

Paul also expressly appeals to eyewitnesses to defend the transmitted account of the death and resurrection of Jesus as consistent with Scripture (1 Cor. 15:3ff). The Lord's Supper goes back to Divine transmission (= tradition) which was passed on by men (1 Cor. 11:23ff, cf. already v.2).

Along with the transmission of historical events is the transmission of special instructions of the Apostles of the Gospel or of faith as such. The resolutions of the Jerusalem council were transmitted to the congregations as firmly established teachings "to keep" (Acts 16:4). In 2 Thess. 2:15 and 3:6 the traditions are to be held firm, which were passed on "whether by word or our epistle" (2:15). 2 Pet. 2:21 speaks of holy commands "delivered unto them". Defection from these commands is equated with a defection from the faith itself. Parallel to this, Jude 3 admonishes "... that ye

should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints". In the New Testament, then, the positive sense of tradition as godly transmission (= tradition) encompasses the Scriptures (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15ff), the Gospel, and faith as a whole, as well as the particular historical accounts and instructions of the Apostles, the latter being available to us only via the Scripture.

2. Human or False Traditions in New Testament

To the same extent that the New Testament portrays the Gospel itself as tradition, it opposes other traditions which only lay claim to divine authority. According to 1 Pet. 1:18, redemption is needed from precisely that vain manner of living "received by tradition"¹⁷³ from your fathers"! This judgment applies to all human traditions: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men ..." (Col. 2:8).

Amidst all the variety of evangelists and teachers, Paul does not want anybody to go astray from that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6), for that would lead to one puffing himself up against another, *whereas that which was transmitted unites* (1 Cor. 4:6-7)!

Paul's dispute is especially with the Jewish traditions which had been added to the Old Testament. Paul explicitly rejects these "traditions of the fathers" for which he himself was so zealous prior to his conversion to Christ (Gal. 1:14). The polemic is found especially in the discussions between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees. (The Sadducees, for the most part, rejected the oral tradition along with great parts of the Old Testament.) In Mt 15:1ff and Mk 7:1ff, traditions are set in sharp contrast to the command and Word of God. To the extent that tradition is observed, the Word of God is made void (Mk 7:13). In this connection Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13: "Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of man.' For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men ..." (Mk. 7:6-8).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses particular examples to distinguish the Law from the traditions of the elders (Mt 5:17-6:18). He doesn't increase the obligations of the Law, but only recalls them: Cursing, lusting for a woman (tenth commandment!), divorce except in the case of unchastity, hatred of one's enemies, etc. have already been de-

¹⁷³This is the only occurrence of the Greek word *patroparadotos* for tradition.

clared abhorrent in the Old Testament. The Pharisaical traditions do not clarify the Bible, but stand in direct contradiction to the Word of God whenever they lay claim to divine authority (cf. Mk 7). Surely there will always be certain circumstances relative to the various cultures where innovation is appropriate - e. g. the hour of the worship service, seating arrangements, etc. But these may never bind the conscience of all men, unless they are based upon the Bible. Stumbling against such innovations does not mean one stumbles against the eternal and universal doctrine of God. All opinions regarding how a Christian should live, if they lay claim to divine validity, may be tested and questioned in terms of the Bible. This also applies to the new Roman Catholic Church Law, which is the subject of the following discourse.

II. The Essence of Catholic Church Law

A. Roman Catholic Church Law in General

1. Claims to be "divine"

Catholic Law does not simply provide legal structuring of the Church in the sense in which every organization in time subjects itself. The Catholic Church Law has a totally different character from that of Protestant churches, even if the latter may be criticized in its own right. One Catholic dictionary defines Church Law as "law created by God and the church, for the church"¹⁷⁴.

2. Reflects the essence of the Church

Because of its supposedly divine character, Church Law in the Roman Church is not an arbitrary factor, but rather reflects the essence of the Church: indeed, it determines the essence of the Church. The German conference of Bishops explained it like this:

"Jesus Christ Himself established the fundamental form of this order. The Church is of divine origin. Its life flows from the Word of God, the Sacraments. The guarantor of its unity is the seat of Peter. Bishops lead their dioceses as followers of the Apostles in unity with the Pope.

¹⁷⁴K. Mörsdorf, article "Kirchenrecht" in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2. edition, ed J. Höfer et al., (Freiburg 1986), vol. 6 pp. 245-250, here p. 245

Church Law is thus the way of life of the Church, the expression of her unity and the rule which defines how to care for souls."¹⁷⁵

This perspective remains valid even in recent times as the quote shows, and has not been weakened by all the alleged reforms of the Roman Catholic Church in the last decades. In his introduction to the new Church Law, the chairman of the German Canon Law Translation Commission, Winfried Aymans, writes:

"Church Law grows, according to Catholic understanding, out of the essence of the Church itself. It is, according to the teaching of the second Vatican Council, the external side of a complex reality; it is at the same time the human expression of a manifold spiritual reality whose root is in God."¹⁷⁶

3. Mediates salvation

Catholic Church Law, according to the Roman Catholic Church, goes back to God and the spiritual authority of the Church. Thus, it has the character of mediating salvation. The above-cited lexicon says,

"The salvation-mediating function of Church Law finds succinct expression in the old formula *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church there is no salvation), which in its original understanding referred to the visible, hierarchically constituted Church. Its judicial ordinary power plays a decisive role in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ."¹⁷⁷

Furthermore,

"Church Law is Holy Law on account of its divine origin and its function of mediating salvation; this was expressed in the early Christian terms for Church Law, for example, *jus divinum, sacrum, poli, coeli* (divine, holy, true, heavenly law)."¹⁷⁸

The jurisdiction of Catholic Ecclesiastic Law extends therefore far beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church. Certain parts apply to all men, others to all baptized persons of whatever confession.

"Catholic Church Law is the law of the Church united under the Pope as her visible head, which understands itself as the Church of Jesus

¹⁷⁵ Deutsche Bischofskonferenz 1983 as quoted in W. Aymans, *Einführung in das neue Gesetzbuch der lateinischen Kirche*, Arbeitshilfen 31 (Bonn 1983), p. 5

¹⁷⁶ W. Aymans, *op. cit.* p. 8

¹⁷⁷ K. Mörsdorf, *op.cit.* p. 246

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

Christ: therefore, her judicial order applies fundamentally to all baptized persons ... Though the claim with respect to non-Catholic Christians generally cannot be enforced, yet it still has practical significance whenever the legal relation to non-Catholic Christians (e. g., the legitimacy of a marriage) is brought before the Catholic forum."¹⁷⁹

B. The Distinction Between Divine and Human Justice in Church Law

Since there is now a new version of the Canon Law, clearly not all aspects of it are immutable. In particular, a distinction must be made between divine and human law under the rubric of ecclesiastical law.

"Purely ecclesiastical law, like all human law, may change in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Divine law is unchangeable, though it should not be thought of as a fixed quantity. Just as there is progress (doctrinal development) in the course of understanding and unifying the stuff of revelation, so the Church also grows in its understanding of positive divine law - for example, the teaching regarding papal primacy. This applies above all to the natural divine law."¹⁸⁰

Herman Avenarius explains the distinction more precisely:

"Catholic Canon Law proceeds from the primacy of divine law (*ius divinum*). This is divided into two categories: positive divine law (*ius divinum positivum*) as revealed in redemptive history, above all in the Scriptures; and natural law (*ius naturale*) based on God's natural revelation in the created order. The *ius divinum* is universal and valid at all times; it cannot be set aside by force, nor be altered. Under this category are included the Ten Commandments, the ordinance of the Sacraments ... and papal primacy. Human law stands in contrast to the *ius divinum* and in turn can be divided into the categories civil law (*ius civile*) and Church law (*ius humanum ecclesiasticum*); it is in its essence changeable. Legislative authority for *ius humanum ecclesiasticum*, which is only binding for baptized persons, lies in the Pope for the Church as a whole, and in the Bishop at the level of the diocese."¹⁸¹

In any new edition of the Canon Law, divine law may only be reformulated, while human law may be completely changed. Still, the former pronouncements continue to have meaning:

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 245

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 246

¹⁸¹ H. Avenarius, *Kleines Rechtswörterbuch*, (Bonn 1985), p. 217

"the old, cancelled law lives on as to substance in the CIC¹⁸², and continues to have significance for the ongoing interpretation of it."¹⁸³

One should bear in mind the history of this distinction. In the words of one Catholic canonist, "the distinction between *ius divinum* and *ius humanum* was not consciously recognized until the Reformation"¹⁸⁴.

To the outsider, it may be difficult to distinguish between divine and human law within Canon Law. Even Catholic professors of Canon Law have their disputes over this.¹⁸⁵ This is equally true, however, for the doctrines of the Catholic Church. All infallible dogma is derived from a particular teaching via a complicated ranking process. In the German edition of the most important teachings and texts of the Catholic Church, the attempt was made to divide the teachings into those that are "infallible" or unchangeable, and those that may be revised.¹⁸⁶ This work recommends itself as a good complement to the study of Canon Law.

We summarize the characteristics of Catholic Canon Law in the words of Erwin Fahlenbusch, a professor of church symbols:

"The Roman Catholic Church carries out its worship and its life in this world in disciplined fashion: its organization is judicially structured. The Canon Law (or Catholic Church Law) consists of the totality of all rules (law statements; "canon," measure, standard) governing action and institutions of the Church ... The necessity for such a law is, for the Roman Catholic Church, not deduced merely from the fact of being a social corporation, and needing, like every other society, binding rules. Rather it sees its possession of discipline as given along with its constitution and mission. In other words, the discipline of the Church is redemptive-historically conditioned and is logically and materially prior to the standards necessary for any societal organization. It includes the rules needed for organization and protection, but goes beyond this in that it is essentially related to the mediation of salvation. Canonical Law distinguishes itself from every other jurisprudence just as the Church is distinguished from every other community. It is the

¹⁸² CIC is the acronym for *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Code of Canon Law) and indicates the written compilation of Catholic Church Law.

¹⁸³ K. Mörsdorf, article "Codex Iuris Canonici" in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2. edition, ed J. Höfer et al., (Freiburg 1986), vol. 2 pp. 1244-1250, here p. 1246

¹⁸⁴ E. Corecco in *Handbuch des Katholischen Kirchenrechts*, ed J. Listl et al., (Regensburg 1983), p. 14

¹⁸⁵ e. g. Listl et al., op.cit.

¹⁸⁶ J. Neuner, H. Roos, *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung*, 10. edition, (Regensburg 1979)

reflection of the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of its own nature."¹⁸⁷

III. The New Catholic Canon Law of 1883

A. Church Law as Papal Expression

Catholic Church Law derives its authority ultimately from the papal office of Peter, as is clear from the quotations above. Aymans writes in the context of presenting the gradual emergence of the new laws:

"the work of reform, initiated and assisted by the Council, and its result in the form of the now promulgated¹⁸⁸ Codex, were only issued forth by means of the authority of the Pope."¹⁸⁹

This state of affairs stands forth clearly in the title of the new Canon Law:

"Code of Canon Law, promulgated by the authority of Pope John Paul II" (translated from CIC 1984 edition).

B. The Relevance of the Canon Law

The new Canon Law of 1983 is a superb vehicle for ascertaining the current state of development of the Catholic Church. One who would engage in polemics with Catholic Church Law will not need to answer the objection that he is attacking outdated Catholic positions or trying to drag peripheral issues to the center stage. The Church Law of 1983 is:

- inspired by Vatican II, and claims to take up its reforms and put them into concrete form;
- a century-long work in our own time, and has brought about a flood of new literature commenting on the changes and suggesting practical applications;
- published by the authority of the current Pope;

¹⁸⁷E. Fahlenbusch, *Kirchenkunde der Gegenwart*, Theologische Wissenschaft 9, (Göttingen 1979), p. 73

¹⁸⁸"Promulgate" is the official phrase for the ceremonial papal clarification, which gives power to a particular document.

¹⁸⁹W. Aymens op.cit. p. 9

- like all Canon Law, tied up with the essence of the Catholic Church as well as its notion of salvation.

The relevance of the new Catholic Church Law will be even better understood if we look at its historical development.

C. Historical Background of the New Canon Law

The Church Law always played a major role in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. For centuries, however, it was scattered among many documents, and parts of it were buried within other writings and often only derivable from current practices. In 1917, after many years of effort, the countless scattered laws and determinations were gathered together in the large work "Codex Iuris Canonici" (CIC), which remained in force almost without change or correction until 1983.

On Jan. 25, 1959, anticipating the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Pope John XXIII announced a revision of Church Law, which was to incorporate especially the changes of the (then) upcoming second Vatican Council. Numerous commissioners worked on it after the Council.

Pope John Paul II, who took office in 1978, gave the project substantial impetus. On Jan. 25, 1983, after long preparation, he released the new Catholic Law - in Catholic terminology he "promulgated" it - setting November 27, 1983 as the date it would come into force. Was it just a coincidence that Martin Luther's 500th birthday, solemnly celebrated by many Protestant Churches, fell in the same month?

The new Catholic Law applies to all Catholic Christians in the Latin branch of the Catholic Church. Many of the determinations claim validity for all baptized persons; many others, to all Catholics. Many of the provisions, however, apply only to the Latin, or Roman, Catholics, that is, not to the (mostly very small) Orthodox Churches that are attached to the Roman Catholic Church. The original intention of creating a Church Law applicable equally to all non-Latin Churches within the fold of the Catholic Church failed. So to some extent, other provisions apply to these Churches, mostly of orthodox heritage. In terms of numbers, however, these Churches are insignificant.

D. Differences Between the Ecclesiastical Laws of 1917 and 1983

Both in structure and contents there are many differences between the laws as published in 1917 and 1983.

Where the Church Law of 1917 was strongly modeled after the ju-

ridical structure of Roman law (persona/res/actiones, i.e. persons/things/actions) the new Law is oriented more toward personal questions in accordance with Vatican II. After a long introduction, Book I starts with "General Norms". Book II follows with "The People of God". It is considerably more detailed than the first book and contains rights and duties of laymen and the important section on the clerics. It is here that the Roman Catholic ecclesiology (= theory of the church) is unfolded. In contrast, Book III on the "The Teaching Office of the Church" is very short! It is striking that this section also takes up the rules for Catholic schools and universities. The detailed book IV, "Office of Sanctifying in the Church", comprises, significantly, the entire sacramental ordinances. The other sections are V. "The Temporal Goods of the Church", VI. "Sanctions in the Church", VII. "Processes"; these three describe the entire judicial structure of the Church along with its court system.

E. General Remarks on the New Church Law

With the new Church Law, the Catholic Church reveals itself once again as pure religion of (human) law. Luther rightly spoke of the "law of the Pope". Only Biblical Law including the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament has the divine origin which the new Canon Law unjustly claims (e. g. Apost. Const. 14, 17). Biblical Law distinguishes itself from the Catholic Canon Law in that it is short, comprehensive, and simple; for the most part it is expressed in principles and case examples which can be applied to concrete situations. The Catholic Church Law is quite different. The 1,752 Canons along with subparagraphs treat everything from the Church's right to exist to processing costs, from the Catholic university to Confirmation certificates, excommunication to the sale of relics. In all of this nothing is left to chance; the terms are all precisely defined.

Two examples will show the extent of attention to detail.

The Bishop is instructed as follows:

"Except for a serious and urgent reason he is not to be absent from his diocese on Christmas, during Holy Week, on Easter, Pentecost, or Corpus Christi." (Can. 395 §3)

The definition of an illegitimate child goes:

"Children are presumed to be legitimate if they are born at least 180 days after the celebration of the marriage or within 300 days from the date when conjugal life was terminated." (Can. 1138 §2)

F. Motion Toward the Bible?

One hears promises of a departure in the direction of the Bible in the new Canon Law. Many passages do in fact have a new, Evangelical ring to them. One reads of "justification by faith" (Apost. Const. 15), "rebirth in Christ" (Can. 208) and much more. But appearances are deceptive. The words are there, but they mean something quite different. A few examples will show this.

The Bishops work together in a "collegial spirit" (Apost. Const. 7, 13, 20), but their word has no further significance apart from approval by the Pope (ibid., esp. 13, 20). Ecumenicity is advocated (Apost. Const. 22; Can. 256 §2; 383 §3; 755 §1), but attaches the condition "as this is understood by the Church" (Can. 383 §3). They speak of "continual sanctification" (Can. 210), but they mean thereby that the sanctification of believers takes place through the partaking of the Sacraments (cf. Book IV "The Office of Sanctifying in the Church" on the Sacraments; Can. 834; 1253; & esp. 835 §1). From modern missiology, they derive the idea that the laity should participate "in the apostolate" (Can. 225 §1), but at the same time strengthen the sacramental precedence of the clerics. They say the "gospel" ought to be proclaimed to all peoples (Can. 9, 11; 747§1; 757; 781ff), but understand this entirely sacramentally and add "in regard to the whole Church, the task of proclaiming the Gospel is principally entrusted to the Pope and College of Bishops" (Can. 756 §1). The task can then be delegated to the priests (Can. 757).

G. Advancements in the New Church Law?

The new Church Law certainly contains a series of "advancements". However, they do not move in the direction of a loosening of Catholic teaching in favor of a return to the Biblical foundation, but instead add yet more to the same system which has been growing through the centuries.

1. The Development of the Papacy

The best example of this advancement is the position of the papacy. In the course of the centuries, the papacy was enlarged ever further. The relation of the Pope to the assembly of Bishops, the Council, has always been an essential point of contention. Finally, the changes reached the point that only the Pope could call a Council - yet the Council in meeting still could infallibly decide doctrinal issues and stood with equal rights vis-a-vis the Pope. After this, the next step could be taken in the 19th century: in 1870, declarations "ex cathedra" of the Pope were declared to be infallible. The

Pope pushed this dogma through the Council, using methods that were not always transparent and convincing, as Catholic historian August Bernhard Hasler has shown.¹⁹⁰

Nevertheless, this doctrine remained largely theoretical after the initial test of strength, either because the Pope and Council were united on the current questions, or as the case may be, no *ex cathedra* decisions were needed. Only after 80 years could the papacy take the next step: the application of the dogma of papal infallibility. The Pope, without a Council meeting and without being able to refer to the slightest precedent in known church tradition, declared the dogma of the ascension of Mary.

After this "step of progress" in the empowerment of the Pope, the next step could be prepared: the juridical disempowerment of the Council. For until now, the Council had had equal rights with the Pope and could itself make infallible decisions.

2. The Disempowering of the Council by the Papacy

This disempowering of the Councils was silently and secretly completed by the new Catholic Church Law (esp. Can. 749 §2).

In this matter the beautiful word "collegiality" must not delude, as already remarked above. The tension is evident in Can. 333 §2, which develops the unlimited power of the Pope over the Church as described in Can. 333 §1.

"The Roman Pontiff, in fulfilling the office of the supreme pastor of the Church, is always united with the other Bishops and with the Universal Church; however, he has the right, according to the needs of the Church, to determine the manner, either personal or collegial, of exercising this function."

The Pope, according to this paragraph, works "collegially" only as long as he desires to do so. An appeal to a Council against the Pope is forbidden (Can. 1372). The Council "together with its head, and never without its head, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the Universal Church" (Can. 336). Thus, decrees of the Council are only valid with the agreement of the Pope (Can. 341 §1)!

¹⁹⁰ A. B. Hasler, *Wie der Papst unfehlbar wurde* (Frankfurt 1981); cf. H.Küng, *Unfehlbar? Eine Anfrage* (Frankfurt 1980)

The Expansion of Papal Power in Modern Times

The Pope is ...

1983: Church Law of	... lord over Council
1950: Dogma of Mary	... infallible without the Council
1870: Papal Dogma	... infallible like the Council

3. *Church Law as New Papal Law?*

The whole Church Law appeals to the authority of the Pope (Apost. Const. 13, 30). Again and again his supreme authority is established. He is the highest judge, who himself cannot be brought before the court (Can. 1404-1405): without him, no Council can reach decisions or even meet (Can. 336-341); he is infallible in his doctrinal decisions (Can. 749 §1; cf. 2). Can. 331 says,

"The Bishop of the Church of Rome [i. e., the Pope,], in whom resides the office given in a special way by the Lord to Peter, first of the Apostles, and to be transmitted to his successors, is head of the College of Bishops, the Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the Universal Church on earth: therefore, in virtue of his office he enjoys supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he can always freely exercise."

To be sure, the title 'Vicar of Christ' was used before, but is now for the first time anchored in Church Law. Canons 330-336 very much strengthen the papal office, it being up to him "to determine the manner, either personal or collegial, of exercising this function". The talk about the College of Bishops is only a formality, since both Council and Synod are disenfranchised.

The authority of the Pope, which could scarcely increase any further, is further documented in other quotes:

"There is neither appeal nor recourse against a decision or decree of the Roman Pontiff." (Can. 333 §3)

"The Roman Pontiff is the supreme judge of the entire Catholic world; he tries cases either personally or through the ordinary tribunals ..." (Can. 1442)

"The students are to be so molded that, imbued with the love for the Church of Christ, they are devoted with a humble and filial love to the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, and are attached to their own Bishop as his trustworthy co-workers ..." (Can. 245 §2)

"Clerics are bound by special obligation to show reverence and obe-

dience to the Supreme Pontiff and to their own ordinary." (Can. 273)

"As regards the Universal Church the duty of proclaiming the Gospel has been especially entrusted to the Roman Pontiff and to the College of Bishops." (Can. 756 §1)

Generally, one gets the impression that the new Church Law is in reality a Papal Law. In all important chapters the absolute precedence of the Pope is stressed above anything else, whether the subject matter is the care of souls, evangelization, the property of the Church, judgments, or legislation of the Church. All the functions of the Church are actually only carried out as commissioned by and in representation of the Pope, and from this derive their authority (Can. 204 §2: leadership of the people of God; Can. 377 §1-3: appointment of Bishops; Can. 782 §1: direction of missions; Can. 1256: authority over all goods; 1273: administration of ecclesiastical goods; etc.)

4. Catholic Criticism of the New Papal Rights

Criticism from the pens of learned Catholics also shows how much the new Catholic Church Law is a further expansion of papal preeminence. The Catholic journal "Diakonia" dedicated an issue (May 1986) to the theme "The Bishop". In it the Catholic canonist Knut Walf concluded that the postconciliar development did not deliver what the Council had promised with the term collegiality. He writes:

"The new 'Codex Iuris Canonici' of 1983 may present an invincible obstacle in the way of reducing tensions between the Primate and Episcopacy in the foreseeable future. It cannot too often be repeated: the new Codex does not breathe the spirit of collegiality in its legal, constitutional sections. Rather, it petrifies the papal standing of primacy in a way foreign even to the 1917 codex."¹⁹¹

As examples, Walf cites the following:

- The "shift in accent to the greater position of power of the Pope" in Can. 331, "in which this power of the Pope in the Church, but especially also within the College of Bishops, is newly defined in a way that cannot be exceeded", in contrast to which Walf refers to the "modest formulation of the earlier codex".
- The arrogation of the title "Vicar of Christ" in Can. 333.

¹⁹¹K. Walf, article "Kollegialität der Bischöfe ohne römischen Zentralismus?", in *Diakonia: Internationale Zeitschrift für die Praxis der Kirche*, vol. 17 (1986) 3, pp. 167-173, here pp. 171-172; cf. examples pp. 172-173

- Taking over the title used in the Roman Empire for the emperor, "principatus" in Can. 333 §1 and the implied enlargement from juridical power over the entire Church to "ordinary" power, which stretches out over "all particular churches and all groupings of churches" (Can. 333 §1).
- The relativizing of the Ecumenical councils. According to Walf, "the Council is systematically and by Law pinned into a dead corner". While the old Church Law handled Pope and Council, each with equal rights, in their own sections, in the new Church Law the differences are erased. The Council is constituted in the section on the Pope, and the College of Bishops may be called to order by mail and by other previously unheard-of methods, always under the leadership of the Pope.

Similar criticism of the new preeminence of the Pope with respect to the Council has been published by numerous other Catholic authors. The international "Concilium-Foundation" devoted an entire issue of its journal "Concilium", which appears in several languages, to the meaning of the Ecumenical Council in the new Canon Law, asserting the disempowerment of the Council¹⁹². In his contribution The Italian canonist Giorgio Feliciani¹⁹³ criticizes the commission which prepared the determinations of the College of Bishops, on the grounds that the central role of the Council was abandoned without offering any justification. American professor of theology, Joseph Komochak¹⁹⁴, showed that the new Church Law distorted the determinations of Vatican II in favor of a new papal rule. He fears that the Bishops will, in the end, be relegated to "yes-men" for the Pope, no longer having any of their own authority.

Further criticism include the Pope's string of new titles (e. g. "Vicar of Christ"), while, at the same time, a list of similar titles for the Council easily fall by the wayside.¹⁹⁵

The Concilium-Foundation sees in all this a development leading to a "neutralization of the Ecumenical Council". The Council "is no longer defined as its own legal institution independent of the primate. On the contrary, there is now the danger that the Council will be absorbed by the papal primate"¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹² *Concilium* vol. 19 (1983) 8/9, pp. 499-586

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, pp. 526-530

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 574-579

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 585

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 586

Naturally, I do not intend to save the Catholic Ecumenical Council. All this is only to make clear the following:

If there is any sort of "progress" in the new Catholic Church Law, then it is "progress" in a very definite direction. No progress is to be discovered in the direction of opening up the simple Biblical truths nor toward Evangelical teaching. Instead, we find a further expansion of papal power: an expansion that is falling upon sharp criticism even within the Catholic Church and which is seen as a break with Catholic tradition.

H. Examples of the Retention of Catholic Teachings in the New Church Law

Several further examples should show that the Catholic Church in its new Church Law has kept practically the teachings and practices which Protestants criticize and which cannot be reconciled to the Bible; indeed to an extent the Church has sharpened them. A refutation of the specific teachings from a Biblical perspective is omitted here, since this is already done in worthy books by Reformed theologian Boettner¹⁹⁷ and Dispensationalists Uhlmann and Bühne¹⁹⁸, as well as other writings.

1. Veneration of Mary and the Saints

The salvation of souls is under the protection of Mary (Apost. Const. 3 1). Seminarians are to foster especially "devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary", the rosary and other exercises (Can. 246 §3), which are a means for their sanctification (Can. 276 §5). The people of God should "cultivate a special devotion to the Virgin Mother of God, model and protector of all consecrated life, including the Marian rosary" (Can. 663 §,4). *Relics are to be found in every fixed altar in all churches* (Can. 1237 §2), holy images, even in a "moderate number", are to be set up (Can. 1188), and should furthermore be venerated as a means of sanctification (Can. 1186-1190; cf. also Can. 663 §4).

2. Baptismal Regeneration

Baptismal regeneration is firmly anchored in the Church Law. Through baptism men are born again and come into the Church (Can. 11, 96, 111,

¹⁹⁷L. Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, (Philippsburgh 1962)

¹⁹⁸P. H. Uhlmann, *Die Lehrentscheidungen Roms im Lichte der Bibel*, (Berneck 1984); W. Bühne, *Ich bin auch katholisch: Die Heilige Schrift und die Dogmen der katholischen Kirche*, (Bielefeld 1988)

112, 204, 205, 217, 787 §2, 849ff).

"Baptism, the gate to the Sacraments, necessary for salvation in fact or at least in intention, by which men and women are freed from their sins, are reborn as children of God and, configured to Christ by an indelible character ..." (Can. 849)

3. The Holy Ghost is Received through Confirmation

Receiving the Holy Spirit by means of Confirmation remains intact:

"The Sacrament of Confirmation impresses a character and by it the baptized, continuing on the path of Christian imitation, are enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church ..." (Can. 879)

4. The Eucharist

Moreover, the Eucharist is the central point in the congregation of the faithful (Can. 528 §2) and is a literal sacrifice (Can. 897, 904). The faithful should venerate the eucharistic element "worshiping it with supreme adoration" (Can. 898). The Eucharist may never be celebrated together with other denominations (Can. 908). Priests must celebrate it daily (Can. 276 §2; 719 §2).

5. Excommunication and Schism

Even if "excommunication as punishment" is restricted to fewer cases than in 1917, they are still heavyhanded enough. Exercising physical force against the Pope (Can. 1370) leads to automatic excommunication as does abortion (Can. 1398), but especially "offenses against religion and the unity of the Church" (Book VI, Part II, Title I). Under this rubric is included the "apostate", i.e. one who has totally repudiated the Catholic faith as a whole (Can. 1364, 751, 194 §1, 694 §1); the "heretic," who obstinately doubts certain Catholic truths (Can. 751, 1364); and the "schismatic" (Can. 751, 1364):

"Schism is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or to communion with the members of the Church subject to him" (Can. 751).

To be counted as a schismatic, it suffices, therefore, to fail to subordinate oneself to the Pope. Whoever, in addition, doubts Catholic teachings, is at the same time a heretic and will easily become an apostate, one who has fallen. So that the notion of "separated brothers" (Can. 825 §2) as well as other expressions in referring to other Christian Church does not really

indicate a change at all. Thoses "brothers" are still condemned as ever despite of the nice title they bear now.

6. Marriage Issues

The rules regarding the invalidity and annulment of marriages are shocking. A marriage with an unbaptized person is plain and simply invalid (Can. 1086); the same is true for an impotent person (Can. 1084). An unconsummated marriage can be annulled by the Pope (Can. 1142). Can. 1143-1150, especially 1146, deals with the possibility of divorce from an unbaptized partner. A marriage with an unbaptized person who cannot live out the marriage due to imprisonment or persecution can be annulled even if the partner has in the meantime become baptized (Can. 1149).

There is such a thing as a secret marriage (Can. 1130-1133). The definition of legitimate children already cited above then presumably leaves it to guesswork whether children "born at least 180 days after the celebration of the marriage or within 300 days from the date when conjugal life was terminated" should count as legitimate!?

7. Indulgences and Penance

The subject of indulgences has an entire chapter dedicated to it (Book IV, chapter IV; Can. 992-997). "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment for sin, the guilt of which is already forgiven. A properly disposed member of the Christian faithful obtains an indulgences under certain and definite conditions with the help of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies authoritatively the treasure of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints" (Can. 992).

It is clear that the subject of indulgences again divides the spirits. While the Bible only knows one single forgiveness in Jesus Christ, which cancels guilt and satisfies the sentence of eternal punishment, the Catholic Church distinguishes between the cancelling of sin through absolution after the confessional, and the remission of temporal punishment achieved through satisfactions, indulgences, and time in Purgatory. With this, the finished redemptive work of Jesus Christ is placed in question, in that it is only half-accepted. The atonement of the Cross and the prayer for forgiveness does not, for the Catholic Church, also bring about the remission of temporal punishment (in Purgatory)! Reconciliation is also tied to confession in the confessional (Can. 964 §2). The Sacrament of penance is moreover the only way to forgiveness. "Individual and integral confession and absolution constitute the only ordinary way by which the faithful person who is aware of serious sin is reconciled with God and with the

Church" (Can. 960). Sin is directed not just against God, but against the Church as well (Can. 959, 960), which is arrogance.

I. Conclusion

One need merely read the new Catholic Church Law to realize where it has defected from the Bible. In the last pages only selections from the new Church Law have been presented, nothing from other writings. The Catholic Church is cast as always it has been; the writings are only friendlier and formulated more collegially. To know the new Catholic Church Law is enough to prove that there is no possibility for ecumenical fellowship for any believer in the Biblical sense of that word. How many people who think they may remain in the Catholic Church haven't long since earned excommunication according to the Canon? The Protestant state Bishop Eduard Lohse should have read the Church Law carefully before recognizing the title of Pope and addressing the same as "brother in Christ".

The new Catholic Church Law can therefore be a good help in discussions between Catholics and non-Catholics, to show that in its heart the Catholic Church has not changed. Having reviewed the arguments for the relevance of the Canon Law in section III, one need only examine a copy of the Canon Law in order to become convinced of the state of things in terms of black and white.

Particularly the paragraph on indulgences (Can. 992) with its teaching that forgiveness through Christ does not provide redemption from retributive punishment, along with the paragraphs on the Pope (Can. 331, 333) would provide an outstanding springboard for presenting the Biblical Gospel.

IV. Important Sections of the New Church Law

The following list indicates the more important paragraphs of the new Canon Law with an abbreviated indication of contents. The list is only a selection from the German version of this article. *The most important issues are marked with an asterisk*; naturally there is some subjectivity here. The list is designed to be a help for self-study. It can also help to prepare for conversations with Catholics. I suggest marking the key places in a copy of the Canon Law and also taking a copy of the list along. One might begin with passages which prove that the Catholic conversational partner has long ago defected from the position represented by the Church

Law. In other cases, the best approach may be to start with the subject of the growing power of the Pope. Passages dealing with salvation and the forgiveness of sins are especially good for setting forth, by way of contrast, the Biblical message, perhaps using Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

204 §1	The faithful = those baptized
204 §2	Pope governs the Church
210	Sanctification
*212 §1	Obedience to leaders as "representatives of Christ"
*218	Freedom of inquiry if respect for magisterium (not Bible) observed
223 §2	Ecclesiastical authority regulates rights of faithful
245 §2	Seminarians to be obediently devoted to Pope
246 §1	Eucharist the center of life of the seminary
246 §3	Devotion to Mary and rosary advocated
*273	Clerics obey Pope and Bishop
276 §3	Clerics to fulfil liturgy of hours every day
*276 §5	Devotion to Mary a means of sanctification
277 §1	Celibacy
*330	Pope + Bishops = Peter + Apostles
*331	Power of the Pope; Vicar of Christ
*333 §1	Pope's ordinary power over all particular churches
*333 §2	Pope leads Church by himself or, if he wants, with Bishops
334	All offices carry out their tasks in name of Pope
*336	College of Bishops never without Pope
*341 §1	Decrees of Ecumenical Council only obligatory if approved by Pope
337 §1	Bishops in place of the Apostles
400	Bishops to venerate the tombs of Peter and Paul
528 §1	Eucharist the center of the "assembly of faithful"
*663 §4	Veneration of Mary and rosary
*749 §1	Infallibility of papal teaching office
*749 §2	Ecumenical Council only infallible in connection with Pope
*750	Scripture and tradition
*751	Heresy, apostasy, and schism
*752	Not heartfelt belief, but obedience
825 §1	Publication of Bible only with papal approval

825 §1	Publication of Bible only with "appropriate annotations"
834 §1	Santification through holy liturgy
847	How to consecrate holy oils
*849	Baptism frees from sin
*879	The gift of the Holy Spirit is received through Confirmation
*897	Eucharist contains Christ and is a sacrifice
*898	Eucharist to be worshiped with supreme adoration
*899 §2	Priests act "in the person of Christ"
*901	Mass for the dead
*904	The Eucharistic sacrifice as work of redemption
932 §2	Sacrifice to be performed on a dedicated or blessed altar
947-51	Rules for accepting payments for masses
*959	Sacrament of penance
*959	Reconciliation with God and the Church
*960	Confession only way of reconciliation
964	Confession normally using confessional stall only
978	Father confessor is judge and healer
981	Acts of penance
*992-6	Indulgences
*1084	Marriage with non-baptized invalid
*1149	Divorce possible if partner becomes imprisoned
*1186	Sanctification through veneration of Mary
1187	Veneration of saints
1188	Sacred images in moderation
1190	Relics
1235-39	Altars
*1237§2	Every fixed altar erected over relics
1251	Abstain from meat on Fridays
1251	Everyone to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday
*1256	Supreme authority of Pope with respect to ownership of all goods
1264	Payments for favors and administrations of Sacraments
*1273	Pope the ruler of all church goods
1365	Forbidden participation in other denomination's services
1367	Automatic excommunication for misuse of eucharistic elements
1370	Automatic excommunication for physical force against Pope

- 1371 Penalty for teaching contrary to any doctrine condemned by Pope or Ecumenical Council
- *1372 No appeal to Ecumenical Council or Bishops' College against Pope
- 1388§1 Automatic excommunication for breach of confessional privacy
- *1398 Automatic excommunication for abortion
- *1404 Pope can be judged by no court
- *1442 Pope the highest judge

Citations from Canon Law, counted after canons ("Can") and paragraphs ("§"), are taken from the English translation *The Code of Canon Law - A Text and Commentary*, New York: Paulist 1985. Note that only the Latin edition, that has been used in writing this article, is legally binding. The Apostolic Constitution (quoted "Apost. Const.") is the papal preamble to the Canon Law and can be found in the same edition.

The (slightly longer) German version of this article is:

"Hat sich die katholische Kirche geändert? Zum neuen katholischen Kirchenrecht". *Bibel und Gemeinde* 89 (1989) 2: 181-207

Hat sich die katholische Kirche geändert? Zum neuen katholischen Kirchenrecht. *Schriften des Bibelbundes*. (Sonderdruck aus: *Bibel und Gemeinde* 89 (1989) 2: 181-207). Verlag des Bibelbundes: Waldbronn, 1990

Shorter articles written by Dr. Schirmacher at the time of the first and second editions of the new Canon Law are:

"Das neue katholische Kirchenrecht". *Licht und Leben* 95 (1984) 9: 198-200

"Das neue katholische Kirchenrecht". 2. überarbeitete Ausgabe. *Gemeinde Konkret* Nr. 16 Juli 1985: 15-16

"Das römisch-katholische Kirchenrecht". *Bekennende Kirche* (Neuhofen) (1993) Null/1 (20.2.): 5-6+14-15