

CLERGY LAITY RELATIONSHIPS

The pastor is of major importance in a church program of evangelism. He determines the atmosphere of the church. He determines the success or failure of programs. Not many programs will continue to succeed if they do not have the pastor's blessing. He is also the model for the church. What he does will influence the people to do it too. If he does not practice evangelism, the church will not do it either.

Once when I was an associate pastor, I trained up an evangelistic team and started a wonderful visitation program. The pastor of the church decided that he needed to go to some seminars instead of continuing to participate in the visitation program. Within a month, the program died. If it was not good enough for the pastor to continue, then the perception became that it was no longer worthwhile for the team members.

According to 2 Timothy 4:5, the minister must do the work of an evangelist in order to fulfill his ministry. The church takes the attitude of the pastor. As the shepherd and overseer, he is the officer in charge of equipping the local congregation in one place. Unlike pastors, apostles have responsibility for the universal church, prophets are wandering proclaimers making application of God's Word and calling for repentance, and evangelists are wandering proclaimers of the Gospel. All are given by God to the Church to equip Christians for the *Missio Dei*, *info footnote*: The Mission of God is to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10) but the final responsibility is the pastor's.

The evangelization of the world rests upon equipping every member of the church for the *Missio Dei* and getting them to use their gifts and equipping in ministry.¹ However, the final responsibility rests upon the pastor-teacher.

Pastor means shepherd, and so if you are a pastor, then you are a shepherd, but sometimes God uses the term elder, and sometimes he uses the word bishop. Pastor, elder, and bishop, all mean the same thing, but the three terms are coming at the pastoral office from three different directions. Pastor is the overarching term that includes within itself the two sub-meanings of bishop and elder.

Bishop has a reference to the pastor in connection with his overseeing function. So if bishop is used in the Scripture (we do not use those terms today in our church talk, however, it is good biblical talk), then it means primarily the function of an overseer. To be an overseer means that you stand up above the heads of the congregation as the watchman who is looking around for danger. That is what a bishop does. He stands above the flock because they are younger siblings, and a bishop is an elder sibling, the elder brother who is supposed to look after his younger siblings. Thus the overseer functions as the watchman.

A pastor, then, is supposed to be a watchman. Isaiah talked about the watchman being on the wall watching for attacking hostile armies posing danger to the city. He does not sleep. When the babies are asleep, he is up on the wall, alert, looking outward,

¹ These concepts are taught in the semester-long course on evangelism.

and he is looking for the enemy. That is what a bishop does, and it is also one of the functions of a pastor.

Elder, the other term for pastor, addresses the office in terms of dignity. Thus the elder brother is a person that the younger should esteem because there is dignity of position in that person. Where does the dignity come from? It is not in his personhood. It accrues in his maturity and produces in his function. You should hold in high esteem one who never sleeps while you are sleeping. He does not have the income that you have, he suffers all the pain when you are comfortable, he watches out for you, he teaches you, he ministers to your needs as they arise, and he is on his knees praying and begging God for help for you while you are just going about your life. That is what an elder does. And he is deserving of some esteem and dignity because of what he is doing for you.

The normal meaning of the term pastor is shepherd. The shepherd feeds the flock, he also does the oversight of the flock (which is where the bishop title comes into play), and he also holds dignity because of his maturity (which is where his elder title comes into play). God has tapped him and said, "I want you to adopt a sacrificial life style to do the shepherding of My flock, and by the way, you are not going to have all the things your flock has. You are going to be deprived. They are going to be indulged in their immaturity. You are going to take responsibility. They are going to be carefree in their immaturity. You are going to answer to Me for their welfare." Bearing that office of pastor is difficult!

The pastor suffers for the welfare of the others. That suffering, by definition, is *agape* love. So the elder brother must love the congregation via self-sacrifice for the benefit and welfare of the others. That is what Jesus did for us while we were yet His enemies. We are called to do the same thing for those who are of His Household, for our brethren, for our siblings.

And then when we are in the pastoral role doing the ministry for the saints within the congregation, we must also step outside of the place of safety in the church and do ministry in the world. We have to make great effort to bring lost people along into the Kingdom. You must grab hold of one, get him saved, train him, turn him loose, and then grab another, get him saved, train him, and turn him loose. After a while there will be other equippers whom you have trained. They will grab hold of one, get him saved, train him, and turn him loose. Next thing you know you have five trainers, and after a while you have ten trainers, and they are multiplying.

That foregoing process is how the ministry grows. That is where you came from. Because of somebody's faith, someone grabbed you, got you saved, trained you, and turned you loose. Now here you are sharpening your equipping skills for more service. Apostles, prophets, and evangelists are wandering all about. They have a wide-ranging responsibility, and so if there is going to be one person who is going to have a responsibility of evangelism "in the local church," it is going to be the pastor-teacher of the local church. The pastor not only does evangelism, but he must train the congregation to form up into ministry teams to accomplish all five ministries of the *Missio Dei*.

If the pastor is not there for helping the saints discover their gifts and get involved with Jesus in their own special ministry, if he is just there trying to build up some kind of

edifice to himself, if he is just trying to get his payroll increased, if he is there for some other reason, maybe for bragging rights, then the members of the church are cheated. And the church members are robbed from participating with the Lord in the *Missio Dei*. And the world is robbed of the salt and light of Christian impact. So the bottom line is that the responsibility belongs to the pastor. He is going to give an account for every member of his congregation.

Pastors are to concentrate on his pastoring inside the church and on his evangelism outside of the church. Certainly, he will do evangelism inside the church, but he needs to concentrate on his pastoring inside the church. To this end, he must strive to get every member connected in his own particular ministry, and at the same time, strive to get every member involved in evangelism outside of the church.

Sunday School teachers have a pastoral function. If you are a Sunday school teacher, you too must train your people for the *Missio Dei*. If you are a training union teacher, you too must train your people for the *Missio Dei*. If you hold any office of responsibility in the local church, you must train your people for the *Missio Dei* because you are going to give an account to God for your people.

The major premise for evangelization of the world rests upon equipping every member of the church for the *Missio Dei*. But it does not stop with the training. The evangelization ministry rests solidly on the foundation of Christianity, i.e. discipleship to Jesus. ***You pastors must use your administration gifts to provide open doors to ministry for those who have been trained.*** The pastor's administration of moving people into ministry is the goal of discipleship. Discipleship requires self-denying, cross-bearing followship of Jesus in *His Missio Dei*. It is upon this foundation of discipleship that we are building every ministry.

THE FOUR CLERGY-LAITY MODELS OF RELATIONSHIP

Which is the best clergy-laity model of relationship? and how does education apply to it? (Four models plus eleven statements.)

1. **Clericalism:** Domination of the laity by the clergy, who are the ruling order. Clericalism is that kind of collar-wearing clergy who have all of the power vested in them. They do the ministry. You either applaud and pay for the ministry, or just be spectators and get the ministry done to you.

Superstar pastoring is another example of this model. There are many Protestant churches that have superstar pastors. In these churches, the pastor performs all the ministry, and the members just watch and applaud his performances.

Clericalism is not a shared ministry in which every member is a minister. In this model, the extent of church ministry by the members is all contained inside the church, such as deacons, teachers, and choir.

2. **Anti-clericalism:** A reaction of the church members as if the clergy does not exist. This is the other end of the clericalism spectrum. In this model, there is no such thing as clergy.

In my opinion, Quakers are an example of this model. The relationships in this model would be anything that is horizontal without any vertical eldership or anybody

who is able to be the watchman, to oversee the flock. In this model, ministry is done by the members. The ministries are inside and outside the church walls. In our early American history, the Quakers did much ministry in their leading the fight to abolish slavery. Normal church members did all of this ministry.

3. **Dualism:** The clergy and laity each have their own assigned spheres of activity. In this case, you would have the laity who do not cross the line into ministry. Across the line on the other side is the clergy who do what they are supposed to do. The clergy do not do the laity thing, and the laity do not cross over to do the clergy thing.

In this model, there would be no preaching by the laity, no baptisms by the laity, no being sent by the pastor to supply for other churches, etc. The laity would enter the work-a-day world to earn the money to support the church, its ministers, and their ministry.

4. **Service model:** The people (both clergy and laity) are the church. The clergy are there to serve and equip the laity so that they will do the work of the ministry that God expects of every saint.

The clergy are the equippers. The equippers see to it that every member of the church is helped to discover their spiritual gifts, to get related to the *Missio Dei* as represented by the five-fold ministry model, and trained for the specific ministry to which the member believes the Lord is calling him. While the clergy is doing this equipping ministry, they are also to oversee (bishop) the church, meet their members' needs (elder), and lead the congregation into good pasture for feeding (shepherd).

- a. Our ministry is determined largely by our gifts. 1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 12.
- b. This model contains the priesthood of the believer. 1 Peter 2:9.
- c. This is the body concept (different parts and functions but with a corporate divine mission [*Missio Dei*]). Romans 12:3-8.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

I have eleven statements having to do with the application of Christian education:

1. The clergy should motivate the laity.
2. The clergy should equip the laity.
3. The clergy should help the laity set objectives.
4. The clergy helps the entire congregation develop a comprehensive plan (the *Missio Dei* as functioning in the Five-fold Ministry Model).
5. The clergy makes certain that every program is relevant to the members (person-centered).
6. The clergy helps the laity fulfill God's intent for them.
7. The clergy helps the laity reach out to the lost world.
8. The clergy helps develop leaders among the laity.
9. The clergy uses administration in all phases of developing the laity for ministry.
10. The clergy helps the laity find and develop their gifts for service in the *Missio Dei*.
11. Deacons teach by example, meeting needs, equipping others, and linking all ministries to evangelism.

Item #5: When you are dealing with programs, you can make them program centered, or you can make them person centered.

Take this case: I am a clergy person. Suppose that I am trying to equip the saints for ministry. I am trying to develop a follow-up team. I have ready a great evangelism team that goes out and wins people all over the place. I need a follow-up team to go behind them to go visit those who have gotten saved.

I want to grow the new converts, give them some assurance, bring them into the church, incorporate them into the body, get them baptized, start them in a new members class, start training them, and help them get out there in ministry using their gifts. Some of them may become evangelists, some of them may become teachers, some of them may become service-oriented ministers who feed and clothe the poor, etc.

In this example, I am trying to build a follow-up team. If I develop a program of follow-up, and I fit the people to the program, then it is program-centered, and you get people trying to conform to something they may not really fit into. But if you make it person centered, then you take the people, and you say, "How would you like to do this? These are the objectives, and these are the requirements to reach those objectives. How would you like to do that?" The prospect might say: "Well, I don't think I could do it just straight up and down, going there by myself, and doing all this ministry which I do not know how to do." I would say: "Well, we will get you a partner and some training for you both."

The prospect may say: "I do not want to go visit someone cold. We will also need some kind of an entrée." My response would be: "I am open to all suggestions." One idea for an entrée would be to take the new convert a loaf of home-baked bread. With this entrée, we could incorporate the teaching about Jesus being the bread of life. Maybe we can get the ladies of the church to bake some loaves of bread, and then we could go visit the new converts for follow up and give them bread and talk about the bread of life, the bread being the manna and the life-giving sustenance of God. The follow up visitation team could say: "Since you have committed your life to Jesus, we wanted to bring this bread as an expression of our love, and also as a symbol for us to use to begin to tell you about the bread of life."

And so, then, the prospective lay minister might say, "Yes, that sounds like a good idea. We can get some bread and go visit the new converts two-by-two. What about our wives, can they go?" I would reply: "Yes, that is fine, you can go as a couple."

The clergyman in this example has then become a person who is moving people out of the pews right into ministry. You are not forcing them to become conformed to some stagnant program or idea. You are giving them an opportunity to express their creativity and become all that God wants them to be. It should be person-centered because it is the people who make the difference, not the programs.

Item #9. The clergy uses administration with the laity. Many clergymen despise the gift of administration, but the gift of administration is something that you desperately need to help organize and lead and plan for the laity. It will help you get them up and out, and not all confused and running and bumping into each other and increasing in

confusion and despair. Jeremiah said that God was going to punish Israel because of their drunkenness by smashing them together as he illustrated by smashing bottles together. That is what happens when you do not have administration in the treatment of your laity. They get to smashing together, and all of the energy is used up before they actually get into the world and on to their proper paths.