

The Priesthood of all Believers

[Introductory comments from Shepherd]

(PRIESTHOOD IN THE BIBLE)

C.S. Lewis on "priest": did he have it right?

- a] Christian clergy are not successors to OT priests.
- b] "priest" (in the singular) is never used of the NT church.
- c] "priest" is always used in the plural of the NT church, and it refers to the entire church as church; e.g., "You (i.e., the congregation) are... a royal priesthood." (1 Pet. 2:9)

Is there a place in a scripture-normed church for clergy? If so, how are they related to laity? to apostles?

[1] Is the worship/identity of Israel rooted chiefly in the temple? the synagogue? the "root" event of Red Sea/Sinai?

What are the theological emphases of temple and synagogue respectively?

[2] Don't drive a wedge between priest and prophet in OT as so many Prots. want to do. What appears as a disjunction in the OT in fact is not. Where was Isaiah when received his vocation as prophet? Who was John the Baptist's father?

[3] Note the comparison with the church re: its identity, its "great high priest", its prophetic ministry, its "synagogue" or teaching dimension. (If the latter is placed first, rationalism arises.)

[4] The church building is not the successor to the temple: Jesus Christ is "God's house."

(THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT)

[1] All Xns are baptized in the HS by definition.

[2] All Xns have been Spirit-gifted for ministry.

[3] The charisms of the Spirit aren't merely natural talents, yet note how they are (may be) related.

[4] Spiritual gifts are never for the exaltation of the individual but for the edification of the church.

[5] While all Xns have a ministry, that ministry can take any form at all.

[6] Different kinds of renunciation are required of different Xns.

[7] Note the features of the "anarchist" and "illuministic" tendencies that ministries and orders combat.

[8] To prevent such "a" and "i" we must recall Ref'd insistence on conjunction of Word and Spirit. We must in turn acknowledge Spirit to be the living address of the living God. (I.e., When God speaks he doesn't contradict S.; and God's speaking is just that, not a rational deduction from S.)

p.109 Note the distortion of "Montanism", and why it occurs.

Note the place Luther and Calvin ("*the* theologian of the Spirit") gave to the HS.

Calvin as theol'n of the Spirit: e.g., scripture, preaching, sacraments.

Why did L and C both suspect the Anabaptists concerning the HS?

(HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT)

episkopos = *presbuteros* = overseer

What is the relation of office gift for the work of the office?

Note how this issue developed, especially in the 5th and 6th centuries.

Note the features of the Catholic Reformation that was underway *before* the Prot. Ref.

1] distinctive dress for clergy

- 2]incumbency
- 3] special tax on priests' children (and on bishops')
- 4] massive emphasis on priests' literacy
- 5]renewed emphasis on preaching

The *Catholic* Reformation gives way to the *Counter* Reformation.

p.111 What does Kueng mean by "sacralization of the church's ministry"? Do we have it today?

p112. Luther and Calvin always insisted on an ordained ministry. Why?

p113. In what sense do you think the ordained ministry is essential to the *being* (not merely well-being) of the church? in what sense not?

p116. What are the relative strengths and weaknesses, e.g., of Brethren, Quakers, Pentecostals?

p118. Note how Bonhoeffer (Lutheran) reflects Calvin's understanding of pastoral authority.

(THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS)

What is meant by "apostolic succession"? How do Catholics, Reformed and Methodists differ?

Points to note:

[1] Jesus Christ is *the* priest.

[2] individuals have a ministry through their immersion in the body of Christ.

[3] the fact that all Christians have a ministry doesn't mean that we always know completely what it is.

[4] within the ministry of the total body of Christ some are charged specifically with holding the congregation to the apostolic confession of JC. The "wolves" are always waiting! (See Acts 20)

[5] the apostles are unique and irreplaceable.

[6] none the less, the ordained ministry is "first cousin" to the apostles. Like the ministry of prophets and apostles, the call to such a ministry is "from above"; the church neither creates it nor cancels it; the church hopes to recognize it and permit it institutionally. (What if the "pillar apostles" -- Gal. 1 -- had *not* recognized Paul as an apostle? What would he have done?)

[7] without the ordained ministry the church will forfeit the gospel.

[8] does the ordained ministry possess "powers" that lay people lack?

[9] the ordained minister's ministry has to do chiefly with understanding and articulation.

(TOWARD A CATHOLIC BALANCE)

Are structures needed? How are they related to Spirit? What did Ernst Kaesemann mean by "Fruekatholizismus" (early catholicism)?

p127. "The Power of the Keys": the dispute over this matter was of an order comparable to that over justification at the time of the Reformation.

RC'm: the power of absolution is vested in the clergy.

Prot'm: the power of absolution is vested in the gospel. While this is so, operatively the power of absolution tends to be vested in the functioning of the clergy.

What do you think?