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A TRIPERSPECTIVAL APPROACH TO SHARED PASTORAL
LEADERSHIP BASED ON THE *MUNUS TRIPLEX CHRISTI*

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PREFACE

I never thought I could or would be a doctor of anything. Yet in this endeavor, as well as in every other of any significance, it was my wife, Tessa, who believed in me, encouraged me, and, as much as another person can, enabled me to do what I thought I could not. This educational work and to whatever it may lead is for her, our family, and the accomplishment of the dreams God has put in us.

I am thankful for my parents, Gene and Kay, for cheering me on and consistently valuing the role of education in my life. I also thank the hundreds of men who comprise the Acts 29 Network and who have encouraged and edified me in church planting and pastoral ministry over the years. I am still learning what it means to be a pastor from their collective wisdom. Dr. Michael Wilder and Dr. Timothy Jones re-kindled my love for the classroom and, through their kindness and graciousness, helped me to enjoy the kind of scholarly research that takes place at a great institution like Southern.

Lastly, I thank my friends at The Rooted Church and The City Church. These brothers and sisters have spurred me on and supported me in this pursuit, even when my weaknesses as a leader have been abundantly evident. To the elders, I am honored to serve alongside of godly and yet imperfect men who together cling to a perfect Savior. What an adventure it is to experience both the unity and diversity that come as we try our best, by the power of God at work in us, to lead together as prophets, priests, and kings.

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CHAPTER 1

LEADING LIKE JESUS

Pastors must lead like Jesus. Christ told his disciples when reminding them of his role as servant, “I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Whatever ministry the Christian pastor executes, it is ultimately not his own but is a continuation of Christ’s ministry on earth.¹ The Scriptures are clear that Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Eph 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23), Jesus is the Apostle who plants the Church (Heb 3:1), Jesus is the leader who builds the Church (Matt 16:18), and it is ultimately Jesus who closes churches down when they have become faithless or fruitless (Rev 2:5).² Jesus is the primary minister (Heb 8:2), the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4), and the Great Shepherd (Heb 13:20). The ministry of the pastor, then, is the ministry *of* Jesus Christ, *to* the Father, *through* the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the church and the world.³ Through his own union with Christ, the pastor shares in the ministry of his pastoring God.

Presentation of the Research Problem

A more firm footing for pastoral ministry is needed amidst a landscape of pastoral confusion, frustration, and fakery. Even while “ministry” is commonly used to

¹The more appropriate term for what is generally known as “pastor” is “elder.” The noun “pastor” appears only once in the New Testament and is used as a descriptive metaphor rather than an ecclesiastical office. Still, in light of the overwhelming popularity and familiarity with the term “pastor” and the subsequent discipline known as “pastoral ministry,” the term “pastor” will be used throughout.

²Mark Driscoll, *On Church Leadership* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 12.

³Stephen Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 9-10.

denote a concept so basic to religious faith and practice that its meaning appears on the surface to be self-evident, divergent theologies, ecclesiologies, and approaches to cultural interaction have led to a lack of consensus, not to mention articulation, concerning the nature of pastoral ministry.⁴ More than that, American society now largely regards terms such as “Rabbi,” “priest,” “pastor,” and “imam” as interchangeable designations for essentially identical religious offices. The religious climate of Western culture, particularly in the United States, has lumped such roles together under the category of “religious leaders,” leading to a generalized and superficial conception of what ministry must mean for each, and therefore trivializing them all. Accordingly, pastors often have little idea of what exactly they are to be doing.⁵

Furthermore, of over a thousand Reformed and Evangelical pastors surveyed, more than three-quarters said they did not have a good marriage, almost the same number only used their Bibles when preparing to teach, 7 out of 10 admitted they battled depression beyond fatigue on a weekly or even daily basis. More than 80 percent could not point to any effective effort to deepen the faith of the souls in their churches. Less than a quarter said they were content with their standing in Christ, in their church, and in their home. Thirty percent have had an affair with a parishioner. Over half would leave the ministry if they had a better place to go.⁶

The typical response to such a state of affairs is to offer tips and tricks that claim to lighten the load. Charles Scalise writes,

Too many Christian leaders have been seduced by programs claiming to show “five simple ways” to build a great church, “six easy steps” to sanctification, or “seven perfect practices” to know God. The shelves of Christian bookstores are lined with

⁴Earl E. Shelp and Ronald H. Sunderland, *A Biblical Basis for Ministry* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 11.

⁵Ibid., 17-18.

⁶Richard J. Krejcir, “Statistics on Pastors,” accessed 15 June 2014, <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562>. This study represents the culmination of eighteen years of research into pastoral ministry.

volumes on ministry or “pastoral theology,” which, instead of offering critical reflection upon Christian action, consist of marketable “helps and hints” on succeeding in ministry or exploit the latest fad or social issue.⁷

Almost fifty years ago, Orley Berg had already observed the growing list of roles that were expected to be filled by the pastor: administrator, organizer, promoter, salesman, businessman, financier, fund-raiser, builder, public relations expert, personnel director, marriage and family counselor, preacher, shepherd, and soul winner.⁸ For those that are able to hang on, they know that “the life of a pastor can leave you feeling like a ringmaster—scrambling to run a three-ring circus and keep all the tigers and clowns in their places.”⁹ Such an abnormal, pedestal-sized load of expectations is enough to crush any man, no matter how deft he may be at navigating the circus.

Unfortunately, instead of pastoral ministry returning to its biblical and theological heritage, it has been in recent years more influenced by the insights and practices of the behavioral sciences, the marketplace, and emerging technologies. The result has been a perhaps well-intentioned yet appallingly adolescent and culturally obedient American evangelicalism; adolescent because it has kept in step with the juvenilization of the wider culture,¹⁰ culturally obedient because it now reflects more often than subverts the wider culture.¹¹ Such a state of affairs underscores the urgency and necessity of returning to and investigating the classical biblical and theological foundations of the nature and scope of pastoral ministry.

⁷Charles J. Scalise, *Bridging the Gap: Connecting What You Learned in Seminary with What You Find in the Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 18.

⁸Orley Berg, *The Work of the Pastor* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1966), 10.

⁹Richard Stoll Armstrong, *Help! I'm a Pastor: A Guide to Parish Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 3-4.

¹⁰Thomas Bergler, *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

¹¹Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2012); Leslie Newbiggin, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

An overarching schema is desperately needed by which pastors are able to think about themselves and their work, one with a center and a legitimate chance at healthy sustainability, one that is built upon the person and work of the Great Shepherd. Thomas Oden says in his seminal work on pastoral theology, life in Christ is the single center around which all the varied activities of the pastor must revolve.¹² A theological and, more specifically, christological understanding of who the pastor is and what he is doing will become the backbone that holds up a lifetime of fruitful and joyful ministry.

When Christian Leadership Meets Secular Theory

Before a christological model of shared pastoral leadership can be proposed, existing popular models of leadership that have influenced the landscape of pastoral ministry must be examined. Professors of leadership Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter summarize the trends in academic leadership study during the last century and a half.¹³ During the latter half of the nineteenth century, leadership research concentrated on the so-called Great Man theory. This theory focused on those men who had affected the course of history due to superior leadership capacities or particular circumstances. In the first half of the twentieth century, the focus shifted to identifying traits characteristic of leaders, including intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, attention in leadership studies moved from leadership traits to leadership activity, especially leaders' behaviors and styles, resulting, for example, in popular tools such as The Managerial Grid.¹⁴ During the 1970s and 1980s, leadership studies paid increasing attention to the context in which leadership took place,

¹²Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: Harper Collins, 1983), 3.

¹³Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 49-56.

¹⁴Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, *The Managerial Grid III: A New Look at the Classic That Has Boosted Productivity and Profits for Thousands of Corporations Worldwide* (Houston: Gulf, 1985).

for example, leadership styles best suited to military contexts. Over the last two decades, leadership study has grown more complex, focusing on areas such as social responsibility, shared or distributed authority, spiritual influences, ethical codes, and the global and multicultural character of leadership.

These historical trends in leadership theory are often reflected in the contributions of Christian practitioners. Modern discussions on Christian leadership generally fall into a handful of categories. The Great Man theory of leadership is reflected in the character studies of Old Testament saints or early church leaders who are said to have displayed extraordinary leadership that can be practiced today.¹⁵ Studies dealing in the positive character traits of effective leaders are reflected in the work of Robert Greenleaf and subsequent works on servant leadership.¹⁶ More current discussions of shared leadership and distributed authority are reflected in works on Trinitarian-based and team-based approaches to Christian leadership.¹⁷ While many of these contributions

¹⁵See Christopher A Beely, *Leading God's People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Leadership Commandments* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012); Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership In Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision* (Chicago: Moody, 1997); John C. Maxwell, *Running with the Giants: What the Old Testament Heroes Want You to Know about Life and Leadership* (Brentwood, TN: FaithWords, 2002); Gregory K. Morris, *In Pursuit of Leadership: Principles and Practices from the Life of Moses* (Lakeland, FL: Leadership, 2013); Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007); Lorin Woolfe, *The Bible on Leadership: From Moses to Matthew: Management Lessons for Contemporary Leaders* (New York: Amacon, 2002).

¹⁶See Robert K. Greenleaf and Larry C. Spears, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1977); Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Power of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1998). See also James A. Autry, *The Servant Leader: How to Build a Creative Team, Develop Great Morale, and Improve Bottom-Line Performance* (New York: Three Rivers, 2001); Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The Servant Leader: Transforming Your Heart, Head, Hands, and Habits* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003); James C. Hunter, *The World's Most Powerful Leadership Principle: How to Become a Servant Leader* (New York: Crown Business, 2004); Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence. *Focus on Leadership: Servant Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002).

¹⁷See George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2001); George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999); Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry*; Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

provide helpful insights, they often follow the trends of popular leadership study at the time and attempt to “christianize” secular theory. Few works on Christian leadership offer a model that is clearly and thoroughly grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ and therefore may be called uniquely and distinctively Christian. Unfortunately, the foundation for what often passes as Christian leadership is superficial and sentimental spirituality that is far removed from biblical Christianity.

Management specialist Stephen Pattison argues provocatively that business leaders and managers have become the cultural heroes of the modern era, and that much so-called secular thinking and writing about managerialism has evolved into a sort of utopian religious faith. Theories of Christian leadership are regularly baptized into this modern day faith, taking on its values and practices and celebrating and emulating its secular heroes. Pattison helpfully applies the same critical spirit that theologians have applied to religious belief to this utopian faith. His analysis of several leading writers on leadership reveal that many current ideas on leadership spring from a particular worldview permeated by quasi-religious ideas. He makes his case in four areas.¹⁸

First, Pattison argues that many leadership theorists are in essence selling “faith, hope, and meaning” through the religious-sounding possibilities they offer, possibilities based on the beliefs that human beings have the capacity to control the world and shape the future, that the customer’s immediate gratification is ultimately sovereign, that everything significant can be measured objectively, and that the success of an organization is the greatest good. Such beliefs stem from Enlightenment thinking and the Industrial Revolution and are essentially inadequate from a Christian perspective. He likewise details the pervasive use of mystical language and metaphors in leadership literature (terms such as vision, mission, and service). Such religious language reveals the

¹⁸Stephen Pattison, *The Faith of the Managers: When Management Becomes Religion* (London: Cassell, 1997); idem, “Recognizing Leaders’ Hidden Beliefs,” in *Faith and Leadership: How Leaders Live Out Their Faith in Their Work and Why It Matters*, ed. Robert Banks and Kim Powell (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

basic beliefs and ultimate concerns of leaders. He also examines “sacramental rituals” (an organization’s customary ways of doing things that assume symbolic importance) that operate in a way similar to religious rituals. Finally, Pattison addresses parallels between assumptions and behaviors in the business world and those in evangelical Christian groups, including corporate identity and adherence; conversion to an organization’s aims, values, and practices; a sense of purpose and belonging; the search for excellence; and values of obedience and conformity in the midst of rhetoric on individual empowerment. Pattison concludes,

Belief or faith free leadership is probably not realistic or even desirable. . . . [Leadership] contains important symbolic, non-rational, and even spiritual elements. It is easy to deny them, but instead . . . leaders might become more critically aware of their basic beliefs and assumptions. This awareness would allow them to engage in more careful assessment of the nature, content, effects, and desirability of their beliefs.¹⁹

Summary of the Research Problem

If, as Pattison proposes, leadership is unavoidably religious, is Christian leadership merely a subset of a generalized spirituality that pervades all leadership? Are exemplary Old Testament figures or general ideas of servanthood sufficient to provide a framework for leadership that is distinctively Christian? In considering the widespread development of leadership theory over the past century and a half, Banks and Ledbetter propose that leadership bearing the “imprint of faith” includes the characteristics of intentionality, reflection, self-evaluation, covenant building, intellectual and ethical integrity, followership, and perpetual learning and development.²⁰ But is this sufficient? Do the above eight characteristics or something like them outline a kind of leadership that is sufficiently and uniquely Christian? Are they adequate to inform an understanding of faithful pastoral leadership?

Such approaches are inadequate. Not only must an understanding of pastoral

¹⁹Pattison, *The Faith of the Managers*, 152.

²⁰Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 55-56.

theology center on the person of Jesus Christ, it must derive its methodology of pastoral work from that of Jesus himself. Such is the case made by Professor of Pastoral Theology Andrew Purves: “We should think about ministry as empowerment for faithfulness that God does in and through us by *joining us to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.*”²¹ He explains how union with Christ is the foundation for pastoral ministry:

Through our union with Christ, ministry is accordingly shaped to the christological pattern. Thus Jesus’ statement at John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life,” is the singular basis not only for piety and faith, but also for life and ministry, for it is in union with Christ that we can walk the way, know the truth, and live the life of those who serve in the name of Christ. In this way we share in his ministry, in which he ministers the things of God to us and the things of humankind to God, to the glory of the Father and for the sake of the world. Apart from union with Christ, ministry is cast back upon us to achieve.²²

Pastors must consistently remember that their ministry is not their own, somehow separate from or in addition to Jesus’ own. Rather, faithful pastoral work is an extension of Jesus’ own pastoral work. He shepherds his sheep through faithful under-shepherds as they are united to him and his ministry by faith.

Such is the pattern and power for ministry throughout the New Testament. As the local church is rooted and grounded in love, strengthened to comprehend the love of Christ, and filled with the fullness of God (Eph 3:17-19), believers share in Christ’s ministry from the Father. Jesus prays to the Father for the church: “As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). Likewise, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21). Purves explains that

as the body of Christ the Holy Spirit joins us to Christ to share not only in his communion with the Father, but also in his mission from the Father. . . . It is the job

²¹Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 43.

²²*Ibid.*, 45. It should be noted that Purves does indeed provide a wonderful and comprehensive Christological foundation for pastoral ministry. Oden calls it “the most significant and substantive reflection on the christological foundation of pastoral theology in this decade.” Thomas C. Oden, endorsement to Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology*, dust jacket. Yet Purves considers Christ’s twofold ministry as Apostle and High Priest rather than his threefold ministry of prophet, priest, and king.

of the church to be the present form of God in Christ in and for the world Thus the ministry of God becomes the ministry of the church.²³

In union with Christ, that which is his becomes ours.²⁴

Research Question

If shared pastoral ministry is to be a reflection and extension of Jesus' own ministry, one must answer the question: *Who is Jesus in his ministry to his people?*²⁵ Only after adequately answering this first question can an answer to a second begin to form: *How can pastoral ministry reflect and be an extension of the ministry of Jesus?*

Regarding the first question, the Westminster Shorter Catechism (1648) poses, "What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer? Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation."²⁶ Historically referred to as the *munus triplex Christi* (threefold office of Christ), Jesus serves as Chief Shepherd of his people through his roles as prophet, priest, and king. Unfortunately, as J. Robert Clinton, Senior Professor of Leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary, remarks, "Of the leadership models in Christ's ministry, only the servant model has received any in-depth treatment."²⁷ As valuable as this servant model is, much treasure has yet to be mined from Jesus' leadership according to his *munus triplex*.²⁸ Because Jesus serves as Chief Shepherd of his people through his roles as

²³Ibid., 41-42.

²⁴Ibid., 171.

²⁵Certainly there are aspects to Christ's ministry and leadership that are unique to him (i.e., vicarious substitution, securing redemption, receiving worship, pronouncing certain judgments, etc.).

²⁶Westminster Shorter Catechism Project, "Question 23," accessed February 10, 2013, http://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/wsc/wsc_023.html.

²⁷Robert J. Clinton, endorsement to Timothy S. Laniak, *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Reflections on Biblical Leadership* (Matthews, NC: ShepherdLeader, 2007), dust jacket. Clinton recognizes that Laniak's work begins to fill this void by providing a detailed treatment of the shepherd model.

²⁸In 1994, As Gary Breshears of Western Seminary wrote, "To my knowledge no one has attempted to define the Church in relation to the offices of Christ." Gary Breshears, "The Body of Christ: Prophet, Priest, or King?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 1 (March 1994): 5.

prophet, priest, and king, and because faithful pastoral ministry must be a reflection and extension of Jesus' own ministry, the *munus triplex Christi* provides a remarkable Christ-centered model for shared pastoral leadership in the local church.

Though some progress has been made in years since, the gap remains very large.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shared leadership in the local church is a topic starving for attention. While a handful of works have made important contributions, in light of the grand scale and scope of works on leadership in general, relatively little has been done in the area of shared leadership, particularly for pastoral ministry.¹ Early leadership scholars argued for the importance of leadership being shared among team members.² Gibb, the first to so argue, stated, “Leadership is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions which must be carried out by the group. This concept of ‘distributed leadership’ is an important one.”³ Nevertheless, subsequent research in the field of shared leadership has been largely concentrated on individual contributions rather than those aspects shared among many. Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone explain, “Most existing research on team leadership has focused narrowly on the influence of an individual team leader (usually a manager external to a team), thus largely neglecting leadership provided by team members.”⁴

¹Such neglect is grave indeed, especially in light of the clear biblical data concerning the plurality of elders/pastors. The apostles always established plural oversight within the churches they planted. There were elders (plural) in Jerusalem (Acts 11:30), the four churches in South Galatia (Acts 14:23), Ephesus (Acts 20:17), Philippi (Phil 1:1), and the churches in Judea (Jas 5:14), and they were to be acknowledged in each city in Crete (Titus 1:5). To speak of pastoral ministry in the local church is to necessarily speak of *shared* pastoral ministry. See also Acts 11:29-30; 15:2-6, 22-40; 21:17-18; Eph 4:11; 1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:17-19; Heb 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Pet 5:1-2.

²C. A. Gibb, D. T. Gilbert, and G. Lindzey, *Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1954), 54; D. Katz and R. Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1978).

³Gibb, Gilbert, and Lindzey, *Leadership*, 884.

⁴Jay B. Carson, Paul E. Tesluk, and Jennifer A. Marrone, “Shared Leadership in Teams: An Investigation of Antecedent Conditions and Performance,” *Academy of Management Journal* 50, no. 5

The overemphasis on individual leadership is certainly due in part to the lack of a common understanding of what is meant by shared leadership. Bass's encyclopedic *Handbook of Leadership*, considered the standard in collecting and presenting leadership theory, includes nearly 10,000 references. Still, no agreed upon definition of shared leadership, or even of the term leadership, has ever been established.⁵ For purposes of the present research, shared leadership simply refers to a team process where leadership is carried out by the team as a whole, rather than solely by a single designated individual.⁶ This model of leadership contrasts with the conventional paradigm (referred to as "vertical leadership" by Pearce and Sims)⁷, which emphasizes the role of the manager who is positioned hierarchically above and external to a team, has formal authority over the team, and is responsible for the team's processes and outcomes.⁸ Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone describe the general concept of shared leadership:

Building on these ideas of distributed influence and drawing upon Gibbs's original conceptualization, we believe shared leadership can be conceptualized along a continuum based on the number of leadership sources (i.e., team members) having a high degree of influence in a team. Anchoring the low end of the continuum are

(2007): 1217.

⁵Bernard M. Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2008).

⁶Michael D. Ensley, Keith M. Hmieleski, and Craig L. Pearce, "The Importance of Vertical and Shared Leadership within New Venture Top Management Teams: Implications for the Performance of Startups," *The Leadership Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (June 2006): 217-31. Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone offer a very similar definition: "A team property whereby leadership is distributed among team members rather than focused on a single designated leader." Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone, "Shared Leadership in Teams," 218.

⁷C. L. Pearce and H. P. Sims, "The Relative Influence of Vertical vs. Shared Leadership on the Longitudinal Effectiveness of Change Management Teams," *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 6, no. 2 (2002): 172-97.

⁸For example, see V. U. Druskat, and J. V. Wheeler, "Managing From the Boundary: The Effective Leadership of Self-Managing Work Teams," *Academy of Management Journal* 46 (2003): 435-57; J. R. Hackman and R. E. Walton, "Leading Groups in Organizations," in *Designing Effective Work Groups*, ed. P. S. Goodman and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 72-119; S. W. J. Kozlowski et al., "Team Leadership and Development: Theory, Principles, and Guidelines for Training Leaders and Teams," in *Advances in Interdisciplinary Study of Work Teams: Team Leadership*, ed. M. M. Beyerlein and D. A. Johnson (Greenwich, CT: JAI, 1996), 3:25-92; Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone, "Shared Leadership in Teams," 218.

cases in which team members follow the leadership of a single individual. Although the leadership exhibited by this single individual might be quite strong, leadership here originates from only a single source. In contrast, at the high end of the shared leadership continuum are teams in which most, if not all, team members provide leadership influence to one another. Here, the source of leadership influence is distributed among team members rather than concentrated or focused in a single individual. In these teams, team members both lead and follow one another in such a way that at a given time, members are both providing leadership for certain aspects of team functioning and also responding to the leadership provided by other team members in different areas. Teams with high levels of shared leadership may also shift and/or rotate leadership over time, in such a way that different members provide leadership at different points in the team's life cycle and development.⁹

With this definition of shared leadership in place, current models of Christian leadership can now be examined. It must be noted that ideas of shared leadership in the church have not been developed like they deserve. Instead, three models of leadership in general dominate the landscape of leadership in the local church. While only one (trinitarian) specifically lends itself to shared leadership, all three must be critiqued in order to understand how leadership is typically viewed and practiced in the church today as well as to appreciate the necessity of an alternative model that is distinctively and uniquely Christian. Figure 1 demonstrates these three dominant models of Christian leadership.

Reviewing Current Approaches to Christian Leadership

As mentioned, Banks and Ledbetter have summarized the trends in academic leadership study during the last century and a half.¹⁰ Whether focusing on the Great Man theory, leadership style, or the contexts of leadership, they argue that such academic work has filtered down into popular writing on leadership oriented more to practitioners than to academics. Whatever the differences among them, these writers tend to share a number of common emphases:

1. They frequently define leadership as potential in everyone, not just a special group.
2. They see authority as shared, distributed, or pervasive throughout an organization.

⁹Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone, "Shared Leadership in Teams," 220.

¹⁰Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004): 49-56.

3. They emphasize the servant-leader paradigm or an image of the leader as a steward or trustee.
4. They use the language of organizational purpose and vision rather than positional power.
5. They focus on transformational language, attitudes, and practices.
6. They believe leaders model the way for and are prime encouragers of others.
7. They see leaders as key figures on a team rather than as soloists.
8. They see a reciprocal relationship with the empowerment of followers as a vital theme.
9. They emphasize the importance not only of ethics but also of wider values in relation to leadership.¹¹

These emphases are important to note not only to summarize popular thought on leadership in general, but also to point out just how similar these emphases are with those found in the three most prevalent models of Christian leadership. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Seminary, laments,

In too many cases, Christians have just imported models and concepts of leadership from the secular world. Much of the supposedly “Christian” literature about leadership is just secular thought with a few Bible verses printed alongside. This can lead to the importing of unbiblical models of leadership into the church, and it has produced an evangelical culture of pragmatism that is subversive of both the gospel and of the church itself.¹²

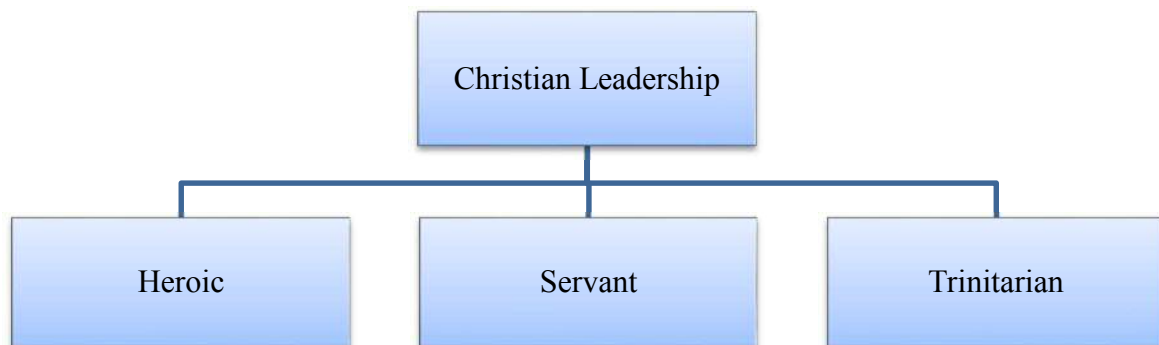


Figure 1. Three models of Christian leadership: heroic, servant, trinitarian

¹¹Ibid., 53.

¹²R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Leadership and Conviction: Recovering the Vision,” *Southern Seminary Magazine* 79, no. 4 (Fall 2011), 30.

Heroic Leadership

Heroic leadership, like the more secular Great Man theory of the nineteenth century, is the category of leadership theory concentrated on men who have affected the course of history. For Christians, this means key biblical figures through whom God worked to accomplish significant events in redemption history. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Barnabas, and Paul are all commonly viewed as exemplary leaders who should be emulated today.¹³ These heroes of the Bible, considered heroic because they faithfully and at great cost carried out the leadership roles God had assigned them, all followed timeless and transcendent leadership principles that many have attempted to articulate and apply for leadership today. Banks and Ledbetter offer a list of leadership attributes that “bear the imprint of faith,” including intentionality, reflection, self-evaluation, covenant building, intellectual integrity, ethical integrity, followership, and perpetual learning and development.¹⁴ Their list serves as a prime example of those attributes promoted by advocates of heroic leadership. A similar approach has been articulated in Clinton’s “leadership emergence theory,” which looks both to Scripture and to the great men and women of Christian history for patterns of leadership development that could be

¹³For example, see George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2001); Christopher A. Beely, *Leading God’s People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Leadership Commandments* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012); Kenneth O. Gangel, *Feeding and Leading* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989). Kenneth Gangel writes, “A theology of leadership is best learned by the study of the lives of people whom God used.” (Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership In Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision* [Chicago: Moody, 1997], 45). See also John C. Maxwell, *Running with the Giants: What the Old Testament Heroes Want You to Know about Life and Leadership* (Brentwood, TN: FaithWords, 2002); Gregory K. Morris, *In Pursuit of Leadership: Principles and Practices from the Life of Moses* (Lakeland, FL: Leadership, 2013); Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007); L. O. Richards and C. Hoeldtke, *A Theology of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980); J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 39-50, 163-66; D. A. Steele, *Images of Leadership and Authority for the Church: Biblical Principles and Secular Models* (Lanham, MD: University, 1986); Lorin Woolfe, *The Bible on Leadership: From Moses to Matthew—Management Lessons for Contemporary Leaders* (New York: Amacon, 2002).

¹⁴Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 55.

seen as transhistorical in relevance.¹⁵

Foremost among the great heroes of the Bible, of course, is Jesus Christ. Without necessarily viewing him as the Son of God or savior of sinful humanity, a number of authors still consider him to be the foremost leader in history. Many popular texts take a rather eisegetical approach, finding a plethora of modern managerial practices in the life and ministry of Jesus.¹⁶

Kenneth Gangel offers what he calls a biblical theology of leadership by examining key biblical characters and identifying fifteen dimensions of leadership:

Biblical team leadership takes place when divinely appointed men and women accept responsibility for obedience to God's call. They recognize the importance of preparation time, allowing the Holy Spirit to develop tenderness of heart and skill of hands. They carry out their leadership roles with deep conviction of God's will, clear theological perspective from His Word, and an acute awareness of the contemporary issues which they and their followers face. Above all, they exercise leadership as servants and stewards, sharing authority with their followers and affirming that leadership is primarily ministry to others, modeling for others, and mutual membership with others in Christ's body.¹⁷

Gangel provides as good a summary of heroic leadership as anyone. Yet as positive as his contribution is, what he provides are *aspects* of leadership rather than a *framework* for leadership: "In reality Christian leadership ought to be characterized by all the legitimate earmarks of effective secular leadership, plus factors that make it distinctively Christian." He goes on to mention the "obvious spiritual elements" of faith, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and the authority of God's Word. These elements are surely necessary for Christian leadership, yet they are necessary for all Christians, leaders or

¹⁵J. R. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988).

¹⁶For example, see J. D. Batten, G. Batten, and W. R. Howard, *Leadership Principles of Jesus: Modern Parables of Achievement and Motivation* (Joplin, MO: College, 1997); W. Beausay, *The Leadership Genius of Jesus: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Business* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998); B. Briner, *The Management Methods of Jesus: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Business* (Nashville: Nelson, 2005); L. B. Jones, *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* (New York: Hyperion, 1996); idem, *Jesus, Entrepreneur: Using Ancient Wisdom to Launch and Live Your Dreams* (New York: Crown, 2002); C. Manz, *Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1998).

¹⁷Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 64.

not. There is nothing unique in their necessity for leadership specifically. Gangel then spends time explaining how, beyond these obvious elements, “spiritual” leadership is marked by an acceptance of responsibility, meekness and humility, teachableness, and care for followers.¹⁸ This time, the elements he lists as necessary speak to leadership specifically, but they are not uniquely Christian. What is needed is a framework that is both distinctively and uniquely Christian and at the same time specific to leadership.

The heroic approach to Christian leadership is open to the most critique. It is obvious that key characters in Scripture exercised leadership, both good and bad. It may also be appropriate to glean general leadership principles from their faithful and effective leadership. Who would dare argue that risk-taking (e.g., Abraham), delegating (e.g., Moses), and casting a vision (e.g., Nehemiah) are important considerations for a leader? Yet such an approach falls far short of providing a Christian theology of leadership.

First, general principles do not lead to a comprehensive theory. Positive leadership traits may provide some of the content for a theory of leadership, but they do not provide the framework into which such content is placed. Second, the leadership qualities so often heralded as revolutionary by advocates of heroic leadership are generally common sense. Biblical figures may have very well displayed such qualities, not because they or the principles were inspired by God, but simply because general revelation tells that such qualities are good. Third, a concentration on emulating biblical figures leaves one prone to picking and choosing. Just which aspects of their lives reflect godly leadership and which must be avoided? Often those aspects regarded as ancient leadership principles end up looking suspiciously similar to prominent principles of secular leadership theory of the day. Fourth, and most important, these qualities are often so general and universal that they cannot be claimed as distinctively Christian. Teachability, integrity, and humility are indeed positive character qualities in the leader,

¹⁸Ibid., 84-86.

but they can be and are in varying degrees practiced by the non-Christian leader just as they are by the Christian one. Some have agreed, and therefore emphasize as well the role of the Holy Spirit in cultivating such qualities in the Christian leader in ways they never could be in the non-Christian leader. While the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary, the list of character qualities remains the same, lacking distinctiveness, and the missing comprehensive framework for leadership has still not been addressed.

Servant Leadership

Some see in Jesus Christ more than just a great figure who displayed strong leadership skills. They see a unique figure whose pattern of life is to be emulated by all leaders. Servant leadership involves serving others and placing their good and that of the organization over the leader's self-interest.¹⁹ Robert Greenleaf introduced the idea of servant leadership during his time as a manager at AT&T. A Quaker by background, Greenleaf encountered the writings of the famous German novelist Herman Hesse (who was largely influenced by Eastern thought) and developed the idea of the servant as leader. Greenleaf saw the servant leader motif displayed most prominently in the life of Jesus, the archetypal leader, though he also made reference to servant leadership as seen in figures such as Lao Tzu, Buddha, and Confucius.

Larry Spears has identified characteristics of servant leadership from

¹⁹For example, see James A. Autry, *The Servant Leader: How to Build a Creative Team, Develop Great Morale, and Improve Bottom-Line Performance* (New York: Three Rivers, 2001); Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The Servant Leader: Transforming Your Heart, Head, Hands, and Habits* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003); Gangel, *Team Leadership*; Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Power of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1998); Don N. Howell, Jr., *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003); James C. Hunter, *The World's Most Powerful Leadership Principle: How to Become a Servant Leader* (New York: Crown Business, 2004); Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012), 241; Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 21-26; Perry W. Shaw, "Vulnerable Authority: A Theological Approach to Leadership and Teamwork," *Christian Education Journal* 3 (2006): 119-33; Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, *Focus on Leadership: Servant Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002); Larry C. Spears, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1977).

Greenleaf's work, including the ability to listen to others and discern the will of a group, have empathy, help make both others and oneself whole, rely on persuasion rather than coercion and positional authority, think and act beyond day-do-day realities, hold in trust and be a good steward of an institution, and build community among one's colleagues and fellow workers.²⁰

Walter Wright, also influenced by Greenleaf, offers a similar list of working principles of servant leadership: influence and service, vision and hope, character and trust, relationships and power, and dependency and accountability.²¹

Works on servant leadership have arguably been the most influential in Christian leadership. After all, Jesus is the consummate servant, not only modeling servant leadership, but also commanding that his followers serve as he served. In Mark 10:42-45 Jesus explains to his disciples,

You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Philippians 2:5-7 commands Christians to "have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant."

There is great value in the servant leadership model. It is clear in Scripture that servanthood is to be the disposition of the leader. It encourages the humility and sacrificial service that Christ calls his people to. It is a helpful model when navigating interpersonal relationships, allowing the leader to consider the good of others before his own. Quite simply, servanthood is Christlike.

Still, servant leadership is inadequate as a framework for Christian leadership.

²⁰Larry Spears, ed., *Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's Theory of Servant Leadership Influenced Today's Top Management Thinkers* (New York: Wiley, 1995), 4-7.

²¹Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service* (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 2000), 13-17.

The work of Greenleaf as well as many of those who followed him is built on presuppositions that cannot be squared with biblical theology. Servant leadership generally implies a very optimistic view of humanity. Leaders are encouraged to tap into their inherent goodness in their quest to be servant leaders. It is assumed that it is within human nature to be a servant, ignoring the necessity of the new nature that comes only by repentance and faith in Christ. Put simply, Greenleaf believes one can be like Jesus apart from Jesus. He also does not sufficiently address what will inevitably become an unwillingness to continue in servant leadership when suffering and sacrifice become too much and internal resources have been exhausted. Greenleaf also displays a pervasive distaste for existing institutions and communities (e.g., the church) and instead wants to create new ones. It is interesting that so many Christians look to his work when it diminishes the very context in which they are looking to apply it. Finally, Greenleaf and his disciples encourage leaders to move people towards a goal, but that goal is never defined. Greenleaf and others expect these end goals to be defined by an organization's leadership. Whether customer satisfaction, increased profits, or the fulfillment of a corporation's mission statement, these goals are insufficient for Christian leadership.

Even when the model of servant leadership is strengthened by those who take biblical theology more seriously, it still fails to answer a fundamental question: what are the means by which Jesus is a servant? Or, to reiterate one of the driving research questions, who is Jesus in his ministry to his people? Yes, Jesus is a servant. But *how* is he a servant? Because the model of servant leadership reduces the answer to mere traits such as dependency and accountability, it cannot be said to provide an adequate framework for leadership that is distinctively and uniquely Christian.

Interestingly, at least one author sees the framework of threefold leadership, which is offered as an alternative model for shared pastoral ministry in the next chapter,

as inadequate because it fails to encompass the role of servant.²² He makes the mistake, however, of seeing Jesus' prophetic, priestly, and kingly roles as somehow separate from his role as servant. It is precisely in these three roles that Jesus carries out his service to his people. He humbly serves as prophet as he announces and declares the words of God; he humbly serves as priest as he offers his own life as a final sacrifice for the life of his people; and he humbly serves as king as he exercises power and authority not in order to destroy or cast his people out, but to enliven them, inviting them into his kingdom, and sharing with them his rule and reign. Threefold leadership, then, actually carries forward and completes the servant model of leadership.

Trinitarian Leadership

Trinitarian leadership speaks to Christian leadership in light of the Trinity.²³ In the sixth century, the doctrine of *perichoresis* was articulated to temper the suggestion of tri-theism in Trinitarian debates.²⁴ *Perichoresis* means mutual indwelling, permeation

²²John Begley, "Prophet, Priest, and King," in *The Word in the World: Essays in Honor of Frederick L. Moriarty*, ed. Richard J. Clifford and George W. MacRae (Cambridge, MA: Weston College Press, 1973), 153.

²³For an introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity and its application to Christian leadership, see Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Jim Horsthuis, "Participants with God: A Perichoretic Theology of Leadership," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 10, no. 1 (2011): 81-107; Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Stephen Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005); Thomas Tumblin, "The Trinity Applied: Creating Space for Changed Lives," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 6, no. 2 (2007), 65-73; Dwight Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 6, no. 2 (2007): 43-63. See also Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership*; George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999); Gangel, *Team Leadership*; Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); R. Scott Rodin, *The Steward Leader: Transforming People, Organizations and Communities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 29-49.

²⁴G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: William Heinemann, 1936), 293; Graham Buxton, *The Trinity, Creation and Pastoral Ministry: Imaging the Trinitarian God* (London: Paternoster, 2005), 130.

without confusion,²⁵ the reciprocal interiority of the Trinitarian persons.²⁶ It therefore speaks to both the unity and diversity among the members of the Trinity. Verna Harrison illustrates this by saying,

The Father gives all that he is to the Son. In return, the Son gives all that he is to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, too, is united to the others in mutual self-giving. This relationship among the persons is an eternal rest in each other but also an eternal movement of love, though without change or process.²⁷

Perichoresis attempts to get at the mysterious truth Jesus articulated during his high priestly prayer in John 17:20-23:

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Later, 1 John 4:13 speaks to how the Holy Spirit is wrapped up in this perichoretic relationship: “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”

In short, because God is both plural and singular, and because of how Jesus opens up the rich relational environment of God to his disciples (not just so that they might mirror at a distance the unity of the Godhead, “that all of them may be one,” but, profoundly, that they “may also be in us”), life in Christ, which includes any roles in Christian leadership, is best experienced in relationship and in community with one another. Horsthuis writes,

We do not lead churches, but we are participants in Christ’s leading of the church by the Father’s will and the Holy Spirit’s enablement. The doctrine of *perichoresis* is

²⁵Catherine Mowery LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 270-71.

²⁶Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 209.

²⁷Verna Harrison, “Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 35 (1991): 53-65.

essential to establishing this participative understanding because it roots this practice of leadership in the richest theological context possible, the Triune God.²⁸

Trinitarian leadership is an attempt to practice in leadership what is true of humanity in general as image bearers of a triune God. In the literature, this practice is conveyed through a number of leadership principles. Shaw defines these as full equality, glad submission, joyful intimacy, and mutual deference.²⁹ Seamands builds off Shaw's work by stressing Christian leadership that is characterized by relational personhood, joyful intimacy, glad surrender, complex simplicity, gracious self-acceptance, mutual indwelling, and passionate mission.³⁰ Zscheile offers his own derived principles:

1. **Community:** Leadership communities in the image of the Trinity embrace a level of mutuality, reciprocal acknowledgement of each other's gifts, vulnerability to one another, and genuine shared life that transcends simply getting the job done.
2. **Collaboration:** Rather than construing the leader as operating alone, wielding authority in isolation from others, the Trinity points toward a collaborative, shared, team-based approach.
3. **Common Mission:** Just as the Trinity has a common goal, so do leadership teams. God as a communion of distinct yet inseparably united divine persons shares a common life of mutual love and creativity. That love is not inward-looking or closed, but rather outward-reaching and generative. The Triune God is always seeking to invite and draw all creation into the reconciled communion of the divine life. Such is the ultimate destiny of the church and indeed the cosmos. As such, it is the ultimate end or telos of Christian leadership.
4. **Diversity in Unity:** In a trinitarian perspective, otherness is not to be erased, diminished or overwhelmed, but rather treasured and enhanced within the pattern of a larger unity and purpose. Thus reconciled diversity, not uniformity or division, becomes normative for a trinitarian understanding of human community. Diversity-in-unity operates not only in the form of social differences (race, class, gender, culture, etc.) but also charismas.
5. **Cruciform Leadership:** God's manner of identification with humanity is one of self-emptying power, prestige, and honor into the other (humanity) in order to serve and redeem. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "God is a God who bears."³¹ The Son of God bore our flesh, he bore the cross, he bore our sins, thus making atonement for us. In

²⁸Horsthuis, "Participants with God," 86.

²⁹Mark Shaw, *Doing Theology with Huck and Jim* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 63.

³⁰Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God*.

³¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 90.

the same way, his followers are also called upon to bear. Cruciform leadership involves such a deep other-orientation that one's own status, power, and prestige are put at stake in order that the other may flourish.

6. Visioning: An emphasis on individualism, self-reliance, autonomy, and heroic ideas of leadership in modern American culture have tended to foster a solitary conception of visioning, in which the leader huddles with God privately and then returns to dictate the vision to the people. A collaborative, trinitarian approach calls instead for the leader to listen attentively in community for God's movement in its midst and in the world, particularly at the grass roots.³²

Trinitarian leadership, especially when compared with heroic and servant models, takes seriously biblical doctrine as well as the nature of God himself. Advocates of this model attempt to emulate the best practice of shared leadership in existence, God himself. Subsequently, they derive important principles that can inform human leadership, especially in the church. This model provides a rich and mysterious framework when considering leadership. It offers particular value in its emphasis on intimacy, deference, and diversity in unity. While such characteristics of leadership may be advocated across other models, trinitarian leadership promotes them from within a framework that is uniquely centered on the person and work of God.

One difficulty of the model advocated by Grenz, Horsthuis, Seamands, Zscheile, and others is its somewhat abstract and mysterious nature. Scripture provides glimpses of the intra-trinitarian life, and those glimpses are no doubt helpful as leadership and service toward others are considered. Yet it is easy to make speculative inferences regarding how God thinks, plans, decides, and acts within himself. One may say, "I can imagine *this* is how it must take place within the Trinity, therefore *this* is how we will do it as well." There is much to learn from what God has revealed about both his unity and plurality. Yet care also must be taken when deriving universal principles and applications from God's nature that are not already explicit in scripture.

One significant difference between trinitarian leadership and what is being presented as threefold leadership is that of emphasis. The trinitarian model concentrates

³²Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," 43-63.

on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the threefold model concentrates more narrowly on the person and work of the Son, Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is the head of the Church (Eph 1:22–23; 4:15; 5:23), the primary minister (Heb 8:2), the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4), and the Great Shepherd (Heb 13:20), and because the pastor shares in the ministry of a pastoring Savior through his own union with Christ, pastoral ministry is best modeled not after the Trinity in general, but after the incarnate Son in particular. Scripture was not written primarily to reveal the inner workings of the triune God. It was, however, written to reveal the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 5:39; 2 Tim 1:10), that his followers might build their lives and ministries upon his.

One may suspect that because Trinitarian members are being dealt with in either case, significant commonalities may be found among trinitarian and threefold leadership. This will in fact prove to be true. As will be shown, the triperspectival foundation of threefold leadership is also a strong foundation for trinitarian leadership, and therefore the pastor and pastoral team will find invaluable insights from the interaction of both models.

A Fourth Model: Threefold Leadership

With the three most prevalent models of Christian leadership addressed, a fourth model can now be examined. Threefold leadership is named from its basis in the threefold office of Christ. Before the philosophy and practice of this model are discussed, it is valuable to briefly trace the development of the *munus triplex Christi* as well as examine the literature regarding its interaction with Christian ministry and leadership theory.

Seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king is as old as the New Testament accounts themselves. The process of drawing out their theological significance for life and ministry, however, has developed over centuries. The prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ were placed side by side as early as

the fourth century by Eusebius of Caesarea.³³ In *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius recognized that prophets, priests, and kings were typological foreshadowings of Christ. After Eusebius, the threefold office of Christ was also recognized and increasingly articulated by John Chrysostom (c. 347-407), Peter Chrysologus (c. 400-450), and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). The first Protestants to portray Christ in these terms were Andreas Osiander (1496-1552) and Martin Bucer (1491-1551). Bucer apparently inspired John Calvin to employ this framework, as Calvin spent three years in Strasbourg at Bucer's invitation and, in certain respects, under his tutelage.³⁴ Though articulated in more rudimentary ways before him, it was Calvin and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* who introduced into modern systematic theology the threefold pattern of Christ's office. Wayne Grudem agrees that "John Calvin was the first major theologian to apply these three categories to the work of Christ."³⁵

In Book II of *Institutes*, Calvin writes, "Therefore, that faith may find in Christ a solid ground of salvation, and so rest in him, we must set out with this principle, that the office which he received from the Father consists of three parts. For he was appointed both Prophet, King, and Priest."³⁶ Calvin connects these three offices with the concept of *messiah* and its relation to anointing, noting that three specific spiritual offices in the Old Testament received a holy anointing by God: prophet, priest, and king. The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) makes this same connection:

Question 31. Why is he called "Christ", that is, the anointed? Answer: Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief

³³Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library 153 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 35.

³⁴Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 66.

³⁵Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 633.

³⁶John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 1:426.

Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and to be our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of his body, has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession with the Father for us; and also to be our eternal King, who governs us by his word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in that salvation, he has purchased for us.³⁷

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) conveys the same concept: “It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King.”³⁸

George Wainwright explains that the threefold office of Christ has been used as a framework in five primary ways throughout history: Chrysostom (fourth century) used it as a framework for both Christology and baptism; Calvin (sixteenth century) applied it soteriologically; Roman Catholics (of the nineteenth century) used it in a ministerial sense to describe the teaching, sacerdotal, and governing roles of church hierarchy;³⁹ and John Henry Newman and others (nineteenth century) used it ecclesiologically to explain how the church is an extension of the incarnation and thus participates in Christ’s ongoing prophetic, priestly, and king roles.⁴⁰ In the modern era, a number of theologians have employed the threefold framework, most often within larger systematic works.⁴¹

³⁷Heidelberg Catechism (1563), “Question 31,” accessed January 2, 2013, <http://www.reformed.org/documents/heidelberg.html>.

³⁸Westminster Larger Catechism (1648), 8.1, accessed January 2, 2013, <http://www.creeds.net/Westminster/c08.htm>.

³⁹Roman Catholics utilize the *munus triplex* in a different way from what is proposed here. For example, the priestly role is largely considered to continue through the function of Catholic priests, while prophetic and kingly roles are exercised through bishops. Furthermore, the priestly role assumes a sacerdotal and sacramental caste system that requires that the faithful may only approach God through the priest. These and other important distinctions are the Protestant’s protection against falling into the Catholic misuse of the *munus triplex*. See Joseph H. Crehan, “Priesthood, Kingship, and Prophecy,” *Theological Studies* 42, no. 2 (1981): 216-31.

⁴⁰Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 110-17. See also Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from Its Sources*, rev. ed., ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950). Heppe cites over a dozen different Reformed theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who utilize the threefold framework.

⁴¹See J. P. Baker, “Offices of Christ,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. David F. Wright,

A number of theologians have made significant contributions to an understanding of the *munus triplex* in more particular ways.

Andrew Murray utilizes the threefold office of Christ to develop a biblical anthropology, noting that the three offices correspond typologically to humanity: “We were created with a nature that has three great faculties: the power of knowing, the power of feeling, and the power of willing. Christ’s offices correspond to these faculties.”⁴² He also describes both how sin has corrupted these human faculties and how God redeems them through Jesus, explaining that Christ as prophet brings light to a darkened heart by revealing sin, as priest brings the sinner near to God through love, and as king “fits [the Christian] to rule over sin and self.”⁴³

Edmund Clowney developed a helpful biblical theology of the three offices.⁴⁴ Using the metaphorical and analogical aspects of Scripture, he consistently showed how the Old Testament pointed forward to Christ. Referring to Clowney’s work, Vern Poythress says that “Christ as prophet, king, and priest is the ultimate model for the Old Testament ectypal instances of prophets, kings, and priests.”⁴⁵

Sinclair B. Ferguson, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 476-77; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), 4:128-54; Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, trans. O. Wyon (London: Lutterworth, 1952), 271-321; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 624-30; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1929), 2:459-609; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993); R. L. Reymond, “Offices of Christ,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 793; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 438-75.

⁴²Andrew Murray and John Flavel, *The Believer’s Prophet, Priest and King*, ed. Louis Gifford Parkhurst (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 26.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁴Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961); *idem*, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003).

⁴⁵Vern Sheridan Poythress, “Multiperspectivalism and the Reformed Faith,” in *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Theology of John M. Frame*, ed. John J. Hughes (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2009), 189.

Gary Breshears considers the *munus triplex* as a foundation for local church ministry: “If the Church is his body making his work concretely visible throughout the world today, then the categories that elucidate his work illumine the Church's work.”⁴⁶ He concludes, “The offices Christ fulfilled give direction to the work of the Church continuing the mission of our Savior.”⁴⁷ Breshears is helpful in applying the offices of Christ to the ministry of the church today, yet he stops short of applying it specifically to church leadership.

Robert Sherman has utilized the offices as a framework for a trinitarian understanding of the atonement.⁴⁸ He proposes that Christ’s multifaceted reconciliation to God can only be understood if one “recognize(s) a certain correspondence and mutual support between the three persons of the Trinity, the three offices of Christ, and the three commonly recognized models of his atoning work [Christus Victor, vicarious sacrifice, and moral exemplar].”⁴⁹ There is particular value in terms of pastoral leadership in Sherman’s sections on “Pastoral Application” that conclude each of the three chapters on the offices of prophet, priest, and king. He provides great insight to help the pastor in communicating the rich beauty of Christ’s person and work, yet he does not discuss how the offices inform the pastoral role itself. Sherman’s work is thorough, to be sure, yet he admits, “[This book] offers nothing more than a tool: three complementary ways, grounded in the act of the triune God, of framing and presenting the gospel message of atonement.”⁵⁰ He leaves much of the efficacy of this tool and its practical application up to the reader.

⁴⁶Breshears, “The Body of Christ: Prophet, Priest, or King?” 5.

⁴⁷Ibid., 26.

⁴⁸Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*.

⁴⁹Ibid., 9.

⁵⁰Ibid., 263.

Thomas Oden applied the roles of prophet and priest to pastoral theology, saying, “The Christian ministry of word and sacrament unites and transmutes two venerable offices of the older Hebraic tradition: prophet and priest.”⁵¹ Though Oden asserts that “it is the bold intention of Christianity to combine . . . the prophetic and priestly ministries into a single ordained public office,”⁵² he does little to connect these offices to Christ, nor does he find ways to include the kingly function in his discussion of pastoral theology.

Chris Bruno has written on the *munus triplex* as a framework for biblical masculinity.⁵³ He answers the intriguing questions, “What does the *munus triplex Christi* indicate about God’s original intent for humanity . . . ? Was ever man originally intended to be a prophet, priest and king of his own domain?”⁵⁴ Bruno does an admirable job of relating the offices to Adam and outlining his failure in faithfully fulfilling them. He explains how this necessitated the arrival of Jesus, his perfect fulfillment of the offices as the second Adam, and the subsequent ability of Spirit-filled men to now reflect Christ in these roles: “By gaining a model of masculinity from the *munus triplex Christi*, and by taking one’s place in the redemptive work and life of the Second Adam, Christian men can depart from modern depictions of manhood.”⁵⁵ Applying the offices of Christ specifically to manhood is indeed intriguing and helpful, but Bruno does not specifically deal with them in terms of church leadership or shared leadership.

⁵¹Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (New York: Harper Collins, 1983), 86.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Chris Bruno, “The Interplay of Two Typologies: The *Triplex Munex Christi* and Second Adam—A Model for Masculinity?” accessed January 2, 2013, <http://restorationproject.net/resources/writings/triplex-munex-christi/>.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

In his article “Seeking Pastoral Identity,” John Johnson does deal with church leadership, arguing that “the roots of pastoral identity are found in the Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king. . . . From these offices the fundamental marks of a minister emerge.”⁵⁶ He further identifies and argues for the inclusion of a fourth office, that of sage. Johnson’s article is excellent, yet its weakness is found in his choice to limit his application to the individual pastor. Johnson concludes, “Though pastors’ gifts, temperaments, and training will cause them to gravitate toward one identity more than the others, these four offices teach them to maintain their ministry in the church in balance.”⁵⁷ If the biblical model for local church leadership is a plurality of elders,⁵⁸ then it is more appropriate to apply Christ’s threefold office not only to the individual pastor but to the pastoral team as they strive to faithfully reflect Christ’s leadership together.

A thorough treatment of the relationship between the *munus triplex* and pastoral leadership, perhaps surprisingly, can be found in a 2008 project by Albert C. Clavo on Pentecostal pastoral training in the Philippines. He synthesized theological thought on the offices of Christ with local church leadership better than most, stating that “previous metaphors are insufficient for describing and rooting pastoral ministry in the image of Christ, a different metaphor must be sought. I propose the threefold office of Christ . . . as the more suitable metaphor for pastoral ministry.”⁵⁹ After laboring to encourage pastors to not separate their prophetic, priestly, and kingly roles but to find each “flowing into and feeding the others,” he concludes by saying, “Because Christ is

⁵⁶John Johnson, “Seeking Pastoral Identity,” *The Spurgeon Fellowship Journal* (Fall 2007): 2.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁸For a thorough defense of this position, see Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995).

⁵⁹Albert C. Clavo, “Prophet, Priest, and King: The Impact of a Pastoral Theology Course on the Practice of Pentecostal Pastors in the Philippines” (D.Min. project, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2009), 90.

the model and pastoral work flows out of his threefold ministry, pastors must find a way to connect the various pastoral roles to the person and work of Christ.”⁶⁰ As excellent and thorough as Clavo’s work is, he too fails to apply Christ’s threefold office to the context of a plurality of church leadership.

Banks and Ledbetter have provided an excellent review and evaluation of current approaches in the field of leadership from a Christian perspective.⁶¹ They consider the threefold ministry according to classic Presbyterian polity in which ministers proclaim the word (prophets), deacons serve and meet needs (priests), and elders rule (kings).⁶² Their discussion is brief and largely descriptive as they compare this framework for leadership to that of the Benedictine, Lutheran, Quaker, and Pentecostal traditions. Considering Banks and Ledbetters’ review of current approaches in the field of leadership, it becomes clear that only in recent years, and only in a handful of places in the literature on leadership, has the *munus triplex Christi* been considered as a framework for shared pastoral leadership in the local church.

One theologian who has made such a connection is John Frame. In developing

⁶⁰Ibid., 46.

⁶¹Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*.

⁶²The Presbyterian model of leadership has historically provided the most consistent portrayal of a classic Reformed understanding of the threefold office of Christ. In Presbyterian polity, these roles are expressed by ministers of the Word who proclaim God’s will to the church; deacons who serve the needs of the people; and elders who administer God’s rule in the congregation. This model takes seriously Christ’s person and work, acknowledging that because Christ was at once prophet, priest, and king, it follows that in the Christian community all three must be represented in leadership. However, if one rejects certain aspects of traditional Presbyterian polity and affirms that the role of elder is that which represents and displays Christ’s role as Chief Shepherd, then the corresponding functions of prophet, priest, and king must fall not to the three separate leadership roles of minister, deacon, and elder, but must be exercised through a diverse team of pastors/elders. Interestingly, John Frame, the reformed theologian whose epistemological framework will form the foundation for the model of shared pastoral leadership offered here, puts forth a slightly different approach: “The apostle is normative, for his teaching governs all the teaching in the church for all generations. The elder is situational, the one who applies the apostles’ teaching to all the situations and problems of each church. The deacon is existential, the one who ministers Jesus’ love to those in need.” John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2006), 245.

his triperspectival epistemology, Frame offers a number of “triads” where such an epistemology may be utilized. One of these is Jesus’ threefold ministry as prophet, priest, and king:

Since believers are united with Christ, many have drawn analogies between these offices and the status of believers. . . . In turn, these offices have been seen as models for church officers: the teaching elder (1 Tim 5:17) represents especially God’s authority; the ruling elder (same verse) God’s control, and the deacon the priestly ministry of mercy. As perspectives, none of these gifts can function adequately without the others. But sometimes one or another is more prominent. Indeed, there are sometimes imbalances in churches that have too much emphasis on teaching, discipline, or mercy at the expense of the others.⁶³

Frame’s epistemology is incredibly useful at this point and is expanded upon next. Frame himself does not spend time developing the threefold ministry in terms of leadership, but he does open the door for such further work to take place.

Professor of Applied Theology, R. Paul Stevens, devotes all of chapter 7 in his work on reinventing the clergy/laity distinction to the leadership roles of prophet, priest, and king.⁶⁴ He provides an excellent discussion of this threefold ministry, ultimately focusing on its application to what he calls “every member ministry in the church and the world.”⁶⁵ He explains,

The threefold offices under the Old Covenant . . . is a biblically founded expression of the missionary identity of the people of God: prophets speaking God’s word, priests mediating God’s presence, and kings extending the rule of God into all of God’s creation.⁶⁶

He spends his closing paragraphs discussing how “a leadership team in a local church should embody all three,”⁶⁷ yet his overwhelming concern is not on church leadership but the broader community of faith.

⁶³John M. Frame, *The Collected Shorter Theological Writings* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008).

⁶⁴R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 164-90.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 188.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 164.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 188.

Dan Allender's *Leading with a Limp* provides the most comprehensive treatment of prophet, priest, and king roles as it relates to modern lay leadership.⁶⁸ He describes the offices,

The king ran the theocracy, establishing the realm by creating an infrastructure that maintained safety, justice, and order. The realm was given meaning by the stories, art, rituals, and comfort that were the domain of the temple and the priests. And when people wandered from God's desire for them, the prophet disordered both worlds by speaking on God's behalf."⁶⁹

Allender effectively describes the three roles historically, calls leaders to identify their primary role, describes how the roles are woven together in the fabric of an organization, and relates the three to modern day examples of leadership theory and practice. He also does an admirable job of relating his personal experience with the proposed model of leadership:

God intends my life to become a reflection of all three roles as I mature. I am called to personally be a prophet, priest, and king. God also intends for those three roles to be represented in an organization by different people, and I am called to create space in our organization for all three roles.⁷⁰

In regard to prophets, priests, and kings working together on teams, Allender writes,

We must put all three types of leaders in a room and invite each of them to value the strengths of the others more than they value their own strengths. Seeing the others as more valuable and necessary can happen only to the degree that each one is a broken and limping leader.⁷¹

As pivotal as Allender's work continues to be, he deals with threefold leadership primarily at a popular level and for broad application to modern day leadership contexts.⁷²

⁶⁸Dan B. Allender, *Leading with a Limp: Take Full Advantage of Your Most Powerful Weakness* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2006). Idem, "Mimicking Our Disruptive Father and Our Diverse Older Brother: Learning Prophetic Disruption, Priestly Connection, and Kingly Service," *Mars Hill Review* 5 (Summer 1996): 34-46.

⁶⁹Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3243-46.

⁷⁰Ibid., 3273-75.

⁷¹Ibid., 3462-64.

⁷²An additional work that applies shared leadership in light of the threefold office to a variety of modern day leadership contexts is Richard J. Mouw, "Leadership and the Three-Fold Office of Christ," in *Traditions in Leadership: How Faith Traditions Shape the Way We Lead*, ed. Richard J. Mouw and Eric

He is not so concerned with the biblical and theological foundations of Christ's threefold office, nor its specific use in the local church, including pastoral ministry.

A final work closely associated with the present discussion is "Prophets, Priests and Kings: Re-imagining Ancient Metaphors of Diffused Leadership for the Twenty-First Century Organization" by Blair, Kunz, Jeantet, and Kwon.⁷³ Their article is perhaps the only academic work to encourage and detail the interplay between leaders as prophets, priests, and kings in the context of shared organizational leadership.⁷⁴

We propose or, more accurately, seek to recover and re-imagine a coherent typology that recognizes that leadership is ideally diffused throughout an organization or community, rather than operating solely from its center. And we suggest that this understanding, which we tentatively term the "Trioptic Typology," has been imagined or practiced from ancient times in the complementary roles of prophets, priests and kings.⁷⁵

The authors' motivation is not theological, but rather secular and practical, citing the high-profile failures and scandals of leaders, the global leveling effect of technology, and the resulting renewed interest in shared and team leadership in organizational theory.⁷⁶ They admit that though the prophet, priest, king metaphor has deep roots in monotheistic religions, they are more concerned with its transcendent application to contemporary organizational life.

The strongest contribution offered by Blair and his colleagues is their insight

O. Jacobsen (Pasadena, CA: The De Pree Leadership Center, 2006), 118-38.

⁷³Anthony L. Blair et al., "Prophets, Priests and Kings: Re-imagining Ancient Metaphors of Diffused Leadership for the Twenty-First Century Organization," *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion* 9, no. 2 (2012): 127-45.

⁷⁴A handful of popular works encourage the use of this model, but do so through brief exhortation and explanation rather than detailed study. See, for example, Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger, *Creature of the Word: The Jesus-Centered Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 114-16; Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: the Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 67-77; Mark Driscoll and Gary Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 10, 260.

⁷⁵Blair et al., "Prophets, Priests and Kings," 127.

⁷⁶Ibid., 128.

into the function of each of the three roles as well as the organizational interplay between them. Ultimately though, their concern is for a more general and secular application of what they deem a helpful albeit ancient leadership model. Unlike the present work, the authors make no reference to Jesus Christ nor do they attempt to ground their trioptic model in his unique and supreme fulfillment of the *munus triplex*. Instead,

Recognizing . . . the substantial precedents for a typology of diffused leadership, we argue that the primary benefit of the trioptic typology of prophets, priests and kings is that it provides contemporary organizations a more effective means of initiating vital transformation in an era of rapid change and suspicion of formal leadership.⁷⁷

The above authors provide much of the rich data necessary to draw out a theology of shared pastoral leadership in the local church based on the *munus triplex Christi*, or threefold office of Christ. The biblical data has been mined, much of the difficult theological thinking has been done, and excellent applications have been made. Still, there is yet to be a work that details the offices of Christ as a model specific to shared pastoral ministry. If Jesus serves as Chief Shepherd of his people through his roles as prophet, priest, and king, and if faithful pastoral ministry is to be a reflection and extension of Jesus' own ministry, then such a model is exactly what is needed today.

⁷⁷Ibid., 130.

CHAPTER 3

EPISTEMOLOGICAL, BIBLICAL, AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Chapters 1 and 2 reviewed dominant models of pastoral leadership including theories of shared leadership, traced the historical development of the *munus triplex Christi* on which the proposed alternative model of threefold leadership is based, and brought to attention the void in literature regarding such a model of leadership. Chapter 3, then, explains the epistemological, biblical, and historical premises for threefold leadership, leading to the inferences and conclusions of chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

First, this chapter explains and applies the multi-perspectival epistemological framework advanced by theologian John Frame. This triperspectival (to use Frame's language) model provides an epistemological basis for considering and applying Jesus' leadership through his roles as prophet, priest, and king. After outlining the epistemological foundations of threefold leadership theory, a brief biblical theology of the *munus triplex* demonstrates how such an epistemology is an appropriate framework through which one may read the Bible and consider its claims related to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Finally, this chapter mentions historical considerations related to the legitimacy of utilizing Old Testament offices in the context of the New Covenant community of faith. With this groundwork laid, the epistemological, biblical, and historical premises are established that allow the construction of a threefold theory of shared pastoral leadership as well as a discussion of its practical outworking, including the necessary inferences and conclusions in the remaining chapters.

Epistemological Foundations

While others have made the connection between the *munus triplex Christi* and

the role of the pastor today, none have provided an adequate epistemological basis for such a connection.¹ Such a basis may be found in the triperspectival framework of John Frame. Frame's approach developed out of his realization that Calvin began his *Institutes* not with a discussion of God himself, but with a discussion of human knowledge of God. Calvin points out that knowledge of God and knowledge of one's self are interconnected, such that one cannot know one's self without knowing God, or vice versa.² Calvin was describing the same human knowledge from multiple perspectives. Frame was also influenced by Cornelius Van Til, who drafted his definition of ethical goodness triperspectivally in terms of goal, motive, and standard. Van Til found his inspiration for such a categorization in the Westminster Confession of Faith, 16.7.

These multiple perspectives of human knowledge led Frame to develop what he calls a triperspectival epistemology, in which law, object, and subject, the three aspects of human knowledge, are perspectivally related. Knowledge of God (who is known through his Word), the world, and the self are interdependent and ultimately identical. All knowledge, for example, is knowledge of God's Word since such knowledge comes by understanding the Word's relation to the world and the self. All knowledge is also knowledge of self since one knows all things by his own experience

¹See Dan B. Allender, *Leading with a Limp: Take Full Advantage of Your Most Powerful Weakness* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2006), 3228-486; idem, "Mimicking Our Disruptive Father and Our Diverse Older Brother: Learning Prophetic Disruption, Priestly Connection, and Kingly Service," *Mars Hill Review* 5 (Summer 1996):34-46; Gary Breshears, "The Body of Christ: Prophet, Priest, or King?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37, no. 1 (1994):3-26; Albert C. Clavo, "Prophet, Priest, and King: The Impact of a Pastoral Theology Course on the Practice of Pentecostal Pastors in the Philippines" (D.Min. project, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2009); John Johnson, "Seeking Pastoral Identity," *The Spurgeon Fellowship Journal* (Fall 2007), 1-12; and R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 164-90. Each of these works helpfully expounds on the threefold model for effective leadership. However, each one applies the *munus triplex* to leadership in general, ministry done by all Christians across the church, or the role of the solo pastor. They do not consider shared pastoral ministry or, as noted, a foundational epistemology. See chap. 2 for a fuller treatment of each work.

²John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 1.1.1. See John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Beliefs* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2013), 697.

and thoughts. And all knowledge is knowledge of the world since all one's knowledge (of God or the world) comes through created media. Frame writes, "The three kinds of knowledge, then, are identical but 'perspectivally' related; they represent the same knowledge, viewed from three different 'angles' or 'perspectives.'"³ He calls these perspectives the normative, existential, and situational, respectively. Frame explains,

I call these "perspectives" because each of them covers the whole field of knowledge from a particular angle, a perspective. It's not that the normative covers some things, the situational others, and the existential still others; rather, each perspective covers everything. The normative focuses on God's revelation, but it looks both at the world and the self, for everything is revelation. The situational focuses on the world, but it also looks at the Word and the self, which are parts of the world. The same is true for the existential. It focuses on the self, but it is through the self (our thoughts and perceptions) that we know everything else. Each of these three perspectives deals with the whole world but does so from its peculiar, well, perspective.⁴

Theological Triperspectivalism

Frame applies his triperspectival grid to a great many relationships, arguing that such an approach to knowledge is fruitful in helping one to understand the divine attributes, the persons of the Trinity, the aspects of human personality, the commandments of the Decalogue, the order of the divine decrees, the offices of Christ, as well as many other matters.⁵ Most pervasive in Frame's thought is the application of his triperspectival framework to what he calls the lordship attributes of God: authority, presence, and control. Examples of Frame's triperspectival epistemology applied theologically can be seen in table 1.

God's Word, therefore, tends to present relationships perspectivally because doing so reflects the nature of God himself. Frame explains that God's omniscience, for

³John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987), 89.

⁴John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2006), 78.

⁵*Ibid.*, 192. See Frame's *The Doctrine of God* for his list of 112 triads that reflect this triperspectival framework. John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002), 743-50.

example, means that he not only knows all facts about himself and the world, he also knows how everything appears from every possible perspective. If, for example, there were a fly on an office wall, God knows not only everything about a person typing in that office, but also how that typing appears to the fly. Indeed, because God knows hypothetical situations as well as actualities, God knows exhaustively what a fly in that position would experience, even if there were no such fly. God's knowledge, then, is not only omniscient, it is omni-perspectival. He knows from his own infinite perspective; but that infinite perspective includes knowledge of all created perspectives, possible and actual. As creatures, humans are different. We are finite, and our knowledge is finite. We can only know the world from the limited perspective of our own body and mind.⁶ To have a balanced, well-rounded view of God, the gospel, the church, and indeed everything is difficult for a creature that is only capable of seeing a thing from one perspective at any given moment.⁷

And yet, God knows that humans benefit when they see things from multiple perspectives. The four gospels are four perspectives on the same events. The same history is recorded in Kings and Chronicles, each from a different perspective. The Ten Commandments may be considered ten perspectives on the same basic ethic (deca-perspectival).⁸ Humans also benefit from multiple perspectives when it comes to a relationship with God. One may know the Bible that reveals God, himself as he has experiences with God, and the world in which he knows God. Human knowledge, then, can be understood in three ways: as knowledge of God's norm, as knowledge of

⁶John M. Frame, *John Frame's Collected Shorter Writings* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2014), 4.

⁷*Ibid.*, 7.

⁸John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2008), 75-89.

ourselves, and as knowledge of the world. None can be achieved without the others.

Table 1. Examples of Frame’s triperspectival epistemology applied theologically

	Normative	Existential	Situational
The Trinity	Father	Spirit	Son
Frame’s lordship attributes ⁹	Authority	Presence	Control
Redemptive history	The Father plans salvation	The Spirit applies salvation	The Son accomplishes salvation
God’s self-communication	Word (special revelation)	Spirit (existential revelation)	Nature (general revelation)
The human’s greatest need	A new legal status	New life	A new family
Christ’s work to meet humanity’s greatest need	Justification	Sanctification	Adoption
Jesus’ self-designation (John 14:6)	The Truth	The Life	The Way
The <i>munus triplex christi</i>	Prophet (speaks God’s word)	Priest (mediates God’s presence)	King (extends God’s rule)
Human faculties ¹⁰	Intellect	Emotion	Will
Ministries of the church ¹¹	Worship	Nurture	Witness
Millard Erickson’s Framework ¹²	Revealing	Reconciling	Ruling
François Turretini’s Framework ¹³	Heals ignorance (shows people to God)	Heals guilt (leads people to God)	Heals oppression and bondage of sin (joins people together with God)

⁹Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 20-31.

¹⁰Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 94.

¹¹Ibid., 256.

¹²Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Baker: 1998), 280.

¹³François Turretini, “François Turretini on the Threefold Office of Christ,” in *The Christian Theology Reader*, ed. Alister E. McGrath, 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 248.

Of course, no one sees things perfectly from all three perspectives. Each person will tend toward one of the three. Frame explains, “Some people are normativists, always seeking justice. Others are situationalists, wanting to be committed to a cause or activity beyond themselves. And some are existentialists, focused on their own feelings.”¹⁴ While one tendency is not better than another, each is limited since the person “knows” from primarily one perspective. Instead, striving to understand a matter, especially life with God, triperspectivally allows one to see more clearly things as they really are, helps one to understand and appreciate the views of others (since often differences of opinion stem from a difference in perspective), and guards from the errors that come when only see one side of an issue is apparent.¹⁵

Consider, for example, one’s view of salvation. A person may view salvation as it relates to God the Father, who is the authoritative architect of salvation (normative); one may view it as it relates to God the Spirit, who enables the individual to trust in Christ and experience transformation (existential); or one may view it as it relates to God the Son, who came to the earth at a particular time and in a particular place to accomplish redemption (situational). Often a person will think of salvation from only one of these perspectives at the expense of the others, thus limiting his appreciation for just how wide the scope of salvation really is. Yet each of the three perspectives is infinitely important and necessary if one is to have a right understanding of who God is and how he works.

¹⁴Frame, *Collected Shorter Writings*, 18.

¹⁵Frame gives the helpful example of the different ways the “central message” of the redemptive work of Christ has been presented in the modern period: covenant, sacrifice, atonement, resurrection, purification, new creation, obedience-righteousness, kingdom-conquest, liberation, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, revelation, judgment, courtship, adoption, etc. When considered perspectivally, each motif summarizes the whole gospel from a different point of view. Therefore, one can agree with all of them, up to a point. Each motif describes a “central doctrine” of Christianity. Or, to say it another way, Christianity has one center (Christ) that can be expounded in many ways. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 193.

After all, humanity suffers from a triple misery for which Christ is the triple cure.¹⁶ All three perspectives are also necessary if God's people are to value and worship him in all his fullness.

It is not difficult to see in one's self, others, and even entire churches a tendency toward one perspective at the expense of the others. If a person tends to be a normativist, he may think about redemption exclusively as mental assent to a normative message, divorcing from it the radical new identity the believer is to experience and the kingdom-minded lifestyle that results. A one-sided view like this can result in an overemphasis on individual personal salvation, an abuse of doctrinal minutiae, or a self-centered mentality. If one is an existentialist, he may think about redemption purely in terms of personal experience, overly concerned with his emotional state while negating sound doctrine and counter-cultural living. If one is a situationalist he may frame redemption in terms of social action and justice, yet fail to think about the gospel message correctly or experience its identity-transforming power. A triperspectival epistemology encourages the Christian to view redemption, and indeed all things, from all three of perspectives.¹⁷

Triperspectivalism and the *Munus Triplex Christi*

The normative, existential, and situational perspectives correlate with Christ's

¹⁶Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from Its Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), 452-53. The triple misery includes ignorance, alienation, and powerlessness.

¹⁷Reading the Bible triperspectivally proves to be tremendously helpful. Numerous examples could be cited. See, for example, Paul's commendation of the Thessalonian believers in 1 Thess 1:2-9. Paul presumptuously declares that he knows that God has chosen them because three necessary things took place: the truth of the gospel was preached ("our gospel came to you not only in words" [normative]), the renewing power of the Spirit accompanied it ("also in power and in the Holy Spirit" [existential]), and the resultant life was lived out among them ("you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake" [situational]). As a result, the gospel message produced fruit, namely, faith, love, and hope. See also 2 Cor 5:17-21, in which Paul describes the gospel in terms of an historic event (5:18a, 19a, 21 [normative]), a radical change of identity (5:17 [existential]), and a mission that is to be carried out in all places (5:18b, 19b, 20 [situational]); as well as Christ's three-part temptation to abuse his messianic anointing in Matt 4:1, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-2. Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 110-15.

roles as prophet, priest, and king, and therefore go a long way in helping one to better understand his ministry. In asking one of the foundational research questions already posed, who is Jesus in his ministry to his people? and answering that he is prophet, priest, and king, it is not being suggested that Jesus somehow has three separate ministries, clocking in as prophet at particular times, priest at other times, and king at still other times. Rather, Jesus is always performing a single, unified ministry to, through, and on behalf of his covenant people. Reformed theologian W. A. Visser 't Hooft comments,

The three offices are so related to one another that Christ is Prophet in a priestly and royal manner; Priest in a prophetic and royal way; King, but King as priest and prophet. The three offices can be distinguished; they cannot be separated. At every moment Christ acts in all three capacities. . . . It is, therefore, not permissible to emphasize one of the three offices to such an extent that the other two are forgotten.¹⁸

The redeeming and pastoring work of Jesus is singular, and yet it may be considered from a prophetic (normative) perspective, a priestly (existential) perspective, or a kingly (situational) perspective at any given time. With this epistemological foundation in place, the individual roles of prophet, priest, and king can now be further examined in chapter 4.

Biblical Foundations

Threefold leadership finds a solid epistemological foundation in a triperspectival view of human knowledge. It is also supported by a rich history in Scripture. The development of the prophet, priest, and king framework may be followed in the biblical narrative by looking at four biblical scenes: first, its inception in human history in the person of Adam; second, in the leadership and life of national Israel; third, in its culmination and fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ; and fourth, in the life of the church both presently and into eternity.

¹⁸W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *The Kingship of Christ* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 16-17.

Adam (Order)

God's intention was for Adam as the ideal man, made in the image of Christ, to perfectly fulfill his role as God's vice-regent through functioning as prophet, priest, and king. As a prophet, Adam received revelation from God, had true knowledge of God, and always spoke truthfully about God and his creation. He also exercised this prophetic authority as seen in his naming of the animals (Gen 2:20). As a priest, Adam was the ideal worshipper, freely and openly offering prayer and praise to God, and in this way offering his sacrifice to God (cf. Heb 13:15). Adam was also king in the sense of having been given dominion and rule over the creation (Gen 1:26–28).¹⁹

Adam failed in his appointed roles. As prophet Adam failed to guard his home and instruct his family according to God's revealed truth, instead allowing Satan to tempt and deceive (Gen 3:6). As priest Adam failed in his role as worshipper, instead offering his life to sin and death (Rom 5:12). And as king Adam failed to work and keep the earth as well as protect and provide for those under his care in obedience to God, instead opening creation up to futility, strife, and dominion by Satan (Gen 3:17-19). As God's appointed prophet, priest, and king, Adam ought to have stood triumphantly with the crushed head of a serpent underfoot. Instead he was evicted from his domain and handed his offspring over to death.

National Israel (Dis-order)

God initiated the restoration of the roles of prophet, priest, and king in national Israel. The prophets spoke God's words to the people (e.g., Nathan, 2 Sam 7:2), the priests offered sacrifices, prayers, and praises to God (e.g., Abiathar, 1 Sam 30:7), and the kings ruled over the people as God's representative (e.g., King David, 2 Sam 5:3). Indeed, this threefold ministry serves as a template for understanding the maturation of Israel throughout the Old Testament. Though the phases overlap and each builds on the

¹⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 629.

previous stage, there is a progression from a priestly, to a royal, to a prophetic Israel.

The Mosaic system marked the priestly stage of Israel's history. When God met with the people at Sinai, he established them as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:6), with the tabernacle as its centerpiece. When David rose to power, God established a new order of things, a covenant in which kingship was highlighted by the establishment of a permanent monarchy, with the temple as its centerpiece. Prior to this period, political leaders had arisen in Israel only on an ad hoc basis (cf. Judges). When the Davidic kingdom split, the monarchy came to an end, and Israel ceased to be an independent kingdom, leadership was provided mainly by prophets in the exilic and post-exilic periods of Israel's history. Priests continued to lead worship in the temple and there were indeed political leaders, but the most prominent figures in the nation became prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah. Ultimately, when Jeremiah wanted to demonstrate Israel's national decline into idolatry, he listed the three categories of its leaders: "At that time, declares the Lord, the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs" (Jer 8:1).²⁰

Interestingly, among all figures of the post-Eden Old Testament, only Moses and Samuel come close to uniting all three roles of prophet, priest, and king (although neither is explicitly given all three titles in the biblical text).²¹ Neither man, however, is able to fulfill the roles in an Edenic sense nor in the way that only Christ will as the preeminent prophet, priest, and king. Moses is chastised for disobedience and is forbidden by God from entering the Promised Land (Deut 3:27). Samuel is prophet, priest, and ruler (not quite king, but a ruler nonetheless by virtue of being a judge; 1 Sam 7:15-17). Yet when the people of Israel reject Samuel and the God who appointed him and instead

²⁰Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, 165. See also Jer 2:26; 4:9; Neh 9:32.

²¹Ibid., 164. It should be noted that David was a prophet and a king only.

choose Saul, they trade the prophet-priest-ruler trifecta for a very poor substitute. The rejection of Samuel foreshadows the rejection of the true prophet, priest, and king Jesus Christ, at whose judgment seat the people will cry out, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15).

Jesus Christ (Re-order)

Israel awaited a prophet (Deut 18:15), a priest (Ps 110:4), and a king (2 Sam 7:12-13; Isa 9:6-7; Ps 2:6; 45:6; 110:1-2). Jesus acquired all three titles when he was declared to be the Christ, the anointed, who received the anointing that had previously served as the inaugural sign for all three offices in the Old Testament (1 Kgs 19:16; Exod 28:14; 1 Sam 15:1). The writer to the Hebrews says it best:

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son [prophet], whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins [priest], he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs [king]. (Heb 1:1-4)

As prophet Christ reveals God and speaks God’s words (Isa 61:1-2; Matt 17:5, John 1:14, 17-18); as priest Christ both offers a sacrifice to God and is himself the sacrifice that is offered (Ps 110:4; Gal 4:4-5; Heb 7:26-28; 1 John 2:1-2); as king Christ rules over the church and over the universe (Ps 89:35-7; 110:1; Matt 28:18, John 18:36-37, 2 Tim 4:18).

Jesus’ identification with these roles is seen, for example, in the opening of Mark’s Gospel. Mark titles Jesus the “Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1), already signifying a messianic anointing. Jesus is then declared to be the object of the Father’s love and pleasure during his baptismal announcement: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). The language here points backward to Psalm 2. The Psalmist tells of an earthly monarch who, at his coronation, is invested with the kingly authority that has up to this point belonged exclusively to his royal “father.” The King who sits enthroned in heaven imparts his own worldwide dominion to the one of whom he says, “I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill . . . You are my Son . . .” (Ps 2:6-7).

At his baptism, Jesus is invested with God's universal reign, granted universal authority, and identified as God's Son.²² As Jesus is anointed for his ministry through the descending of the Holy Spirit, the scene recalls the three Old Testament offices that God also established through the act of anointing: prophet, priest, and king.

Life in the Church and in Future Glory (Order Perfected)

Not only do these three roles characterize Adam before the fall, leadership in national Israel, and the person and work of Jesus Christ, they also characterize life in the church now as well as the believer's future status with Christ. Christians today function as prophets as they proclaim the gospel to each other and the world, are a royal priesthood and a spiritual temple (1 Pet 2:9), and share now in some degree Christ's kingly reign and authority now that they are able to say "all things are ours" (1 Cor 3:22–23; Eph 1:11, 14).²³ Grudem writes,

If we look back at the situation of Adam before the fall and forward to our future status with Christ in heaven for eternity, we can see that these roles of prophet, priest, and king had parallels in the experience that God originally intended for man, and will be fulfilled in our lives in heaven.²⁴

In his eternal home, the Christian will know fully as he is fully known (1 Cor 13:12), worship as a priest forever (Rev 22:3-4), and rule over the universe with Christ (1 Cor 6:2-3; Rev 22:5). In a very real way, the final restoration of believers to the roles of prophet, priest, and king that will be enjoyed forever (i.e., conformity to the image of Christ; 2 Cor 3:18) brings humanity full circle to the kind of life God intended in the Garden so long ago.

²²Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 69-70.

²³Frame, *Collected Shorter Writings*, 13.

²⁴Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 629.

Historical Foundations

As this drama of redemption unfolded, it may seem that because early church leaders were developing structure for an emerging faith they had to make it up as they went along. Fortunately, early Christian leaders were not starting from scratch. Because Christianity emerged out of Judaism, Christian leaders were able to draw from the best of Judaic leadership practices and organizational structure. Jesus borrowed from the servant psalms of the prophet Isaiah to define the nature of his ministry while pronouncing that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:16-21). The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus as not just a priest, but as a high priest in the order of Melchizedek who would complete the law (Heb 7:15-20). Matthew's Gospel takes great pains to identify Jesus not only as the rightful inheritor of the throne of David, but also as its redeemer (Matt 1).²⁵ Just as Jesus and the biblical writers reinterpreted traditional leadership roles to explain Jesus' work, so early church leaders pushed their images of leadership even further in response to their own need to conceptualize and practice a new kind of leadership that reflected Jesus's own.²⁶

Consider the significant connections between Israel's leadership and the leadership prescribed and initiated by Jesus Christ. The twelve disciples, who as a collective body are prominent in the early chapters of Acts, likely corresponded to the twelve heads of the tribes in the original constitution of Israel in the wilderness (Num 1:4-16). They belong therefore to the community's consciousness of itself as the nucleus of the restored Israel, reconstituted through a new exodus as the new people of God.²⁷ Accordingly, the primary leadership roles God initiated in national Israel (prophets, priests,

²⁵Nelson Granade, *Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006), 55.

²⁶Ibid., 53-55. See also Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 59-60.

²⁷Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 175-76.

and kings) may legitimately be considered in the New Covenant community today.

Furthermore, the New Testament role of elder has a Jewish heritage (Num 11:16–25).²⁸ The frequent references in the Gospels to the elders of the Jews (e.g., Matt 16:21, 21:23; Mark 14:43, 53; Luke 20:1; Acts 4:5, 8; 25:15) reflect the structure of the Jewish nation as organized around groups of elders, whether it be on the national level (the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem), the village council level, or the synagogue level inside or outside Palestine. Thus it was natural for the early church, which at first was simply an alternative “messianic” synagogue and even in Gentile areas normally began with a group of Jews, to take over this structure (which was also not foreign to the Greco-Roman world).²⁹ When Peter, for example, exhorts local church elders to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:2), he is recalling an Old Testament image (Ps 23; Isa 40:11; Jer 23:1-4; Ezek 34:1-31) that in turn becomes prevalent in the New Testament (Matt 18:10-14, 26:31; Luke 12:32; John 10:1-18, 21:15-17; Acts 20:28-29; Heb 13:20).

Finally, the triune God practices and patterns an empowering delegation throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, God delegated and empowered Adam (Gen 1:28), Moses (Exod 3:12), Samuel (1 Sam 3:19-21), David (1 Sam 16:12-13), and the list goes on. Most significantly, God delegated and empowered Jesus who in turn delegated and empowered the apostles: “As the Father has sent me so I send you” (John 20:21).³⁰ The apostles, in turn, delegated leadership to the local elders of each church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet 5:1-2). Those called to pastoral ministry are ultimately commissioned and sent by Jesus, just as he himself was called and sent by the Father. Thus pastoral

²⁸See W. Horbury, “The Twelve and the Phylarchs” *New Testament Studies* 32, no. 4 (1986): 503-27.

²⁹Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 175-76.

³⁰Perry W. H. Shaw, “Vulnerable Authority: A Theological Approach to Leadership and Teamwork,” *Christian Education Journal*, ser. 3, vol. 3, no. 1 (2006): 128.

leadership is naturally a ministry to be patterned after Christ's, who faithfully serves his people as prophet, priest, and king.

Summary of Foundations

The epistemological foundation of threefold leadership has been considered. The development of the prophet, priest, and king motif throughout the biblical narrative and into eternity has been traced. The new covenant community's identity as a restored Israel, the leadership origins of the prescribed role of elder in the local church, and, above all, the culmination and fulfillment of the *munus triplex* in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ have all been considered. In light of these epistemological, biblical, and historical foundations, it is indeed wise and faithful for shared pastoral leadership in the local church to follow the ancient pattern of prophet, priest, and king, for in this pattern it is discovered who Jesus is in his ministry to his people as well as how pastoral ministry today can both reflect and be an extension of the ministry of Jesus.

CHAPTER 4

PASTORS AS PROPHETS, PRIESTS, AND KINGS

With the epistemological, biblical, and historical foundations for threefold leadership established, the individual roles of the pastor as prophet, priest, and king may now be examined and their interplay in teams within the local church considered.

A Reformed reading of the Bible understands the three offices as serving a mediatorial function between God and his covenant people. The prophet mediated the truth and commands of God, the priest mediated the holiness and forgiveness of God, and the king mediated the sovereignty of God.¹ Israel needed all three. Played out within the community of faith, the prophets ministered to public and social needs, the priests to personal and spiritual needs, and the king to organizational and political needs. These three types of leaders also equipped Israel to accomplish God's purpose of being "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:6) and so fulfill God's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations.² While an acute awareness of how the three roles of prophet, priest, and king functioned in Israel is unquestionably necessary in considering their application today, a proper Christian understanding of the roles ultimately must be determined not primarily by their Old Testament usage, but by Christ's fulfillment and redefinition of them.

¹Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 74.

²R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 166. See also Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Social-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1995). Claiming to be the first "complete study of the major religious specialists and their relationships in ancient Israelite society" (xiii), Grabbe provides a comprehensive overview of the roles and functions of the prophet, priest, and king (as well as the diviner and wisdom figure) in ancient Israel. He helpfully concludes each chapter by describing a Gestalt of the ideal type, putting together all information on the role available: text, archeology, anthropological studies, and ancient Near Eastern texts.

The Prophet

In the Old Testament, prophets were appointed and anointed by God to “tell forth” God’s purpose in order to bring people to repentance and faith (e.g., Isa 7:14; Jer 31:31 ff.). They proclaimed and interpreted the will of God to humanity: “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). A moral content was typical to their messages, addressing areas such as obedience to God, current political situations, injustice and oppression, and true religion as contrasted with pagan and cultic practices. Accordingly, their role was usually societal rather than individualistic in scope, meaning, and significance.³ Put simply, prophets were the “watchpersons” for all of Israel (Hos 9:8), assessing the true spirituality and morality of the society and its collective faith. As such, the forceful messages of the prophets were vital to the health and stability of the nation, and were often dramatized by the use of startling symbols that reinforced the message (e.g., Isa 20:1-6; Hos 1:2-3; Amos 7:8; 8:1-2). The prophets experienced their respective calls to such a ministry as leaving them no options. They were called by God, sent by God, given a special message or mission from God, and therefore obliged to obey God.⁴

Christ, like the prophets before him, was anointed by the Holy Spirit to proclaim to people the saving knowledge of God. His titles bear witness to his prophetic identity (Rabbi, Master, Teacher, Apostle).⁵ Some in his day even took him to be Elijah or one of the other prophets (Mark 8:27-28). While Jesus certainly fulfilled the ancient prophetic role, he also redefined it. Earlier prophets found the power of the prophetic message in its source, not in the one who spoke. Not so with Jesus. He is himself the way that he taught others to walk; he is himself the truth whose knowing is sufficient for salvation (John

³Earl E. Shelp and Ronald H. Sunderland, eds., *The Pastor as Prophet* (New York: Pilgrim, 1985), 9.

⁴Ibid.

⁵See Mark 9:5; Luke 8:24; John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 13:13; Heb 3:1.

14:6); he is himself the message that is to be told forth. Indeed, Jesus is more than a prophet speaking words received from God. He is the very Word of God (John 1:1).

In Jesus' day the people were amazed at the authority with which he spoke, unlike the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt 7:28-29). His words were to serve as the foundation of all of life (Matt 7:21-27; John 6:68; Acts 20:32), and they will be the measure by which all people are judged in the last day (John 12:48). Not only did Jesus speak his prophetic word during his earthly ministry, the entire Old Testament is his word as well: "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10). Indeed, everything in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings are about him (Luke 24:25-27). The Bible is Jesus' book, so in one sense he is the one and only true prophet.⁶

The Pastor-Prophet

Today, pastoral ministry may be a reflection and extension of Jesus' own pastoral ministry as pastors faithfully function in prophetic ways.⁷ More than just a teacher, the pastor-prophet motivates others to new ways of seeing and acting. As researchers Blair, Kunz, Jeanet, and Kwon point out, "Prophets are people with visionary imaginations, with great capacity to be the first to see what is coming, to name the change that must happen. Thus, prophets are not content to settle for what already is."⁸ The

⁶John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Beliefs* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2013), 900-901.

⁷It should be noted that "prophet" here is not being used in the fivefold sense of Eph 4:11 (a discussion beyond the scope of the present research), but as a function of the pastor/elder role in the local church in light of the *munus triplex Christi*. For a treatment of the former see Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 34a (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974); and John A. Mackay, *God's Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1957). One approach to systematizing the five leadership roles in Eph 4:11 can be found in Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012). Hirsch and Catchim write, "The reality is that the Ephesians 4 typology (the fivefold ministry that we call APEST: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher) is a major piece of Pauline ecclesiology. Although there have been bits and pieces of affirmations, we have not been able to find a single theologically substantial published book dedicated solely to this topic" (1017-19).

⁸Anthony L. Blair et al., "Prophets, Priests and Kings: Re-imagining Ancient Metaphors of Diffused Leadership for the Twenty-First Century Organization," *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and*

prophet “exposes, arouses, and disturbs in order to call people back into right relationship with God.”⁹ His own words and actions are often dramatic and counterintuitive, even paradoxical. He sees himself as a disrupter, bringing disorder when a present misalignment or stagnation becomes too personally evident. The prophet can therefore tend towards eccentricity, causing some to eagerly follow with a sense of excitement and awe while causing others to desert because the message proclaimed has unnerved or simply given rise to an abundance of caution.

The pastor-prophet lives to “awaken hearts that have grown dull and fat.”¹⁰ He is faithful when he boldly speaks the truth in love and in so doing communicates and motivates others toward a vision centered on God and his glory. He tends to be strong-willed, self-motivated, discontent with the status quo, focused on biblical and theological accuracy, and a strong communicator. Without faithful prophets, churches can live in constant chaos on the one hand (lacking a comprehensive vision) or lifeless stagnation on the other (lacking the disruption necessary to spark significant change). The prophet is apt to point out how current conditions are not true, good, or lovely. After all, “a prophet’s highest loyalties are generally invested in the creation of what will or must be, rather than in the conservation of what is.”¹¹ In order to pronounce truth and such initiate change, the prophet is willing to play the fool, sacrificing popularity and approval for the sake of something better. When he shouts, whether literally or figuratively, the prophet arouses in his hearers desires and dreams of redemption and wholeness. He “poetically touches ache for what is not and calls forth a vision of what will come.”¹²

Religion 9, no. 2 (2012): 134.

⁹Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3300-301.

¹⁰Ibid., 3427.

¹¹Blair et. al, “Prophets, Priests and Kings,” 132.

¹²Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3419.

The pastor-prophet, then, is an odd interplay of visionary, coach, teacher, motivator, and shepherd. He is not merely a person who enjoys reading and understanding Scripture, but who also expounds and announces it. He disrupts the paradigm of comfort and complacency. Not only does he envision and communicate what could be, he energizes others toward it. It was Brueggemann who called the prophet a “destabilizing presence” in that the prophet proclaims an alternative truth about the rule of God to that offered by a corrupted system.¹³ Like Jesus and the ancient prophets before him, the pastor-prophet displays a willingness to be exposed to ridicule and injury. For the sake of his message he will face the unrelenting hostility of the representatives of existing systems and ways of life.

Challenges of the Pastor-Prophet

Peter commands elders to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (1 Peter 5:2), indicating that pastors are to not to lead from the outside in, nor from the top down, but from the inside out. That is, they lead from within the community of faith. While the prophetic role certainly lends itself to the image of an individual standing on the margins (e.g., Jeremiah), a “voice crying out in the wilderness,” ultimately the pastor-prophet is called by God to live among the people. He is a sheep before he is a shepherd. Therefore, the pastor-prophet must be immersed in the community of faith, accountable to the other elders, and a member of the body as it works to build itself up in love. This is among the great difficulties of leading as a prophet: living within and accountable to the community, yet maintaining the ability to see the community from the outside in, consistently voicing a perspective that critiques, brings disorder, and speaks prophetically. A pastor-prophet must wisely hold this tension.

¹³Walter Brueggeman, “The Prophet as a Destabilizing Presence,” in *The Pastor as Prophet*, 49-77. Brueggeman uses the term “destabilizing presence” to refer primarily to engagement with and on behalf of those on the margins of a society.

In the biblical account, when prophets challenged the status quo they were often sent into exile or killed.¹⁴ Allender explains, “Few people want their lives disrupted by visions, poems, and stories that wreak havoc on the comforts of daily life. . . . To normal people, a prophet may be intriguing but unpredictable and dangerous.”¹⁵ As a result, prophets often feel most comfortable and understood in the presence of other prophets. Such kinship can develop into healthy friendships with much relational benefit. Caution should be taken, however, to ensure that such prophetic community does not deteriorate into cynicism and self-absorption, two weaknesses to which pastor-prophets are prone.

Accordingly, the prophet’s reward is not often the praise of the people, for he is frequently resisted and often rejected. Instead, his reward is the conviction that a prophetic voice is indeed necessary and is now present, and that what has been spoken both communicates God’s desires for his covenant community and, accordingly, is precisely what the community most needs in order to continue growing into a faithful local body. It is this faith in the future that allows the prophet to optimistically lead others forward, even when the benefits of a proposed change cannot yet be felt or even imagined. Among the three roles of prophet, priest, and king, it is the prophet whose leadership will often be seen as destructive. A faithful prophet does not buckle when such accusations abound. Instead, he stands up stronger underneath them, since he knows that active opposition can be the very evidence that what he is leading toward is the decision most needed. In the midst of such opposition, a godly prophet must still ensure that he uses his prophetic role not for his own pleasure but for the edification of the church.

The prophet fails when he becomes authoritarian and uses his influence to bring about fear, shame, or to control the actions of others. He may become overly

¹⁴1 Kgs 19:14; Neh 9:26; Jer 37:11-16; Matt 23:37; Luke 4:24; 6:23; 11:50.

¹⁵Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3429-34.

dogmatic and divisive on secondary issues. He can communicate truth with little grace, even becoming condescending toward those who do not share his passions and doctrinal convictions. As one who tends to disrupt, the prophet easily focuses on what needs to be changed at the expense of celebrating what is going well.

Reinhold Niebuhr recognized a further challenge for the pastor-prophet in the local church: fear in telling the truth because he may be economically dependent upon the people to whom he speaks. Yet the difficulty goes even deeper:

I think the real clue to the tameness of a preacher is the difficulty one finds in telling unpleasant truths to people whom one has learned to love. To speak the truth in love is a difficult, and sometimes an almost impossible, achievement. . . . I'm not surprised that most budding prophets are tamed in time to become harmless parish priests.¹⁶

The prophet also fails when he divorces the message from the souls who need to hear it. He may forget that Jesus is the Word of God *made flesh*; the message intimately mingled with humanity. A zealous prophet, who tends to view matters from the normative perspective, can easily love the message he is called to proclaim more than the people whom he is called to shepherd. Interestingly, then, the prophet faces dual and opposite dangers: taming his message out of concern for the people and injuring people out of concern for the message.

Because prophets become adept at announcing and proclaiming, over time it becomes easy to merely announce words without allowing the time and space necessary for human beings, with typical slowness and stumbling, to comprehend and faithfully respond. It is not uncommon for a prophet to expect and require from others immediate understanding and obedience toward truths it took him years to grasp. Prophets need patience. In other words, they need priests, who are able to patiently walk with individuals through change and challenge, and kings, who can help create the space and structure necessary for sustainable growth to take place. Though tempted by his own

¹⁶Reinhold Niebuhr, *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (New York: Meridian, 1960), 74.

sense of boldness, the prophet must not venture out on his own and ignore the wisdom and balance that come from threefold leadership.

The Priest

Jewish priesthood was a national institution. They were the keepers of the temple (including the responsibilities of sacrifice and intercession) and leaders of ceremony. Priests maintained the sanctuary and the sacrificial system (Num 18:1; Ezek 44:15-27), guarded and taught the law (Deut 27:9), judged, especially in matters of ritual uncleanness (Ezek 44:24), and discerned the will of God (Exod 28:30). As R. Paul Stevens summarizes, priests were responsible to build a community of faith that would be characterized by God's dwelling with his people.¹⁷

The author of Hebrews calls Jesus a High Priest (Heb 7:26), in the line of priests of old and yet utterly unique in his priesthood. Jesus is not the keeper of an erected temple but is himself the temple where humanity can now be reconciled to God (John 2:19). Jesus not only offers a sacrifice on behalf of people, he is the sacrifice offered. He freely lays down his own life as the pure and holy sacrifice without blemish offered to appease God's wrath and anger (John 10:18; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19). Indeed, all of the New Testament texts referring to Jesus' priesthood point to his self-offering (1 Tim 2:5-6; Heb 9:14, 10:11-18). More still, Christ's priestly service is not only offered in the past. He is the believer's everlasting intercessor, the basis for Christian confidence in prayer and praise (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1). As a priest concerned with ritual, Jesus also solidifies the practice of baptism (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 16:16) and institutes the Lord's Supper (Matt 26:26-29) to display and reinforce the gospel story in the lives of his followers.

¹⁷Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, 165.

The Pastor-Priest

In the New Testament, the only individuals referred to as priests are those of the Old Testament and Jesus. There is a priesthood of the entire people of God (1 Pet 2:9), but never of a leader of worship or intercession.¹⁸ In the New Testament there are no Christian priests. The term should not therefore be taken to mean an institutionalized office such as that in the Roman Catholic Church, but as a perspective of the ongoing ministry of Jesus reflected in the pastoral care of elders within the local church.

The pastor-priest is concerned with building a community of faith that practices the presence of God. He is therefore highly relational, strong at personally embodying the fatherly care of God, quick to sympathize, and has a heart aimed at patiently admonishing and encouraging others toward the enjoyment of God and godliness. Darrin Patrick writes that priests are “encouragers, affirmers, servants, loving confronters, listeners, truth-tellers, wise counselors, and more.”¹⁹ While people may at times feel crushed by overbearing prophets or mechanized by kings obsessed with order, priests labor to offer dignity, respect, and honor not just to the church in general, but to the individuals who comprise it. When people cannot find their place between the vision of a prophet and the direction of a king, priests come alongside to help navigate the way.

The pastor-priest helps create meaning through story. He engages with the stories of both the church as a communal organism as well as of the individuals within it. He listens well to individual narratives while also sensitively offering a compelling narrative of redemption and hope, centered on God and the gospel with which any individual story may intersect. Such ability allows a person to wrestle through questions of identity, meaning, and purpose with a sense of security and trust. This personal effort is the means by which the priest helps connect individual lives with a larger vision and

¹⁸Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop* (New York: Paulist, 1970), 13.

¹⁹Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 72.

mission. Just as Moses functioned as a priest to the people of Israel, telling and encouraging others to tell the exodus story of freedom from bondage, the pastor-priest retells the gospel story to people who need to hear it again and again, both individually and corporately. He also leads the way in encouraging and equipping all believers to realize and function in their priestly role (1 Pet 2:9). It is in this vein that Lesslie Newbigin argues for the whole church as the body of Christ to be the place where the love of God is made available to people and where forgiveness is mediated: “The supreme function of the priestly ministry is so to minister that the whole body attains to and retains its true priestly character.”²⁰

The pastor-priest reinforces the gospel story through symbol and ritual. He brings people back again and again to the cross, the ultimate symbol of Christianity. He tends to find great resonance with the sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) as ritualized symbols that communicate the core gospel story and the values inherent within it (death, resurrection, humility, cleansing, etc.). The priest is “not merely a storyteller but a translator who brings our individual stories into the larger story.”²¹

The pastor-priest tends to be people-focused, caring, empathetic, careful with words, good at listening, and skilled at identifying and supportively responding to emotions. He is adept at identifying and meeting people’s personal needs, considering others in the midst of communication and change, and causing people to feel loved and cared for as individuals. It is no surprise then that the priest typically leads the way in prayer and calls others to lives of prayer. Regardless of proclamations or plans, the priest is most concerned with how people will be impacted. As a result he most enjoys ministry contexts where he can be relationally connected to those around him.

²⁰Lesslie Newbigin, “Four Talks on 1 Peter,” in *We Were Brought Together: Report of the National Conference of Australian Churches Held at Melbourne University, February 2-11, 1960*, ed. David M. Taylor (Sydney: Australian Council for the World Council of Churches, 1960), 97.

²¹Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3372.

Challenges of the Pastor-Priest

If prophets can wrongly influence the head to the exclusion of the heart, pastor-priests can give such priority to the heart that they disregard the right ordering of the head. The priest must ensure that he is not overly concerned with existential experience to the neglect of alignment with orthodox belief or interaction with the surrounding world. The existential perspective of the priest must also not result in an overemphasis on the individual at the expense of the entire body. A pastor-priest fails when he does not embrace and lead others toward a vision greater than any one individual. Being mired in the day-to-day issues of individual lives can easily cause such tunnel vision. Furthermore, because his ministry will be of a personal and intimate nature (rightfully so), the priest's own interests may be so embedded with the individual souls of the church that he forgets the wider world beyond the community of faith. As a result, various forms of isolation can become a real danger.

Finally, if prophets can be bullies, priests can be wimps. Pastor Darrin Patrick writes, "While prophets must fight arrogance, many priests must do battle against cowardice. Because priests can often value subjective feelings over objective truth, priests can let sin slide so as not to upset the apple cart of someone's life."²² The pastor-priest best reflects Christ when his concern and counsel toward individuals is unwavering in his commitment to the authority of the prophetic message.

The King

The kings of Israel had a position of great responsibility under God. They were representatives anointed to bring order, justice, and peace to the nation. Allender describes the role well:

The king led, protected and provided for the safety of the realm. He secured the infrastructure necessary for civilization. He justly applied the law of God to the government, commerce and care of the state. . . . The king was not only a warrior, but he also was the representative of the realm in conversations with the "world."

²²Patrick, *Church Planter*, 76.

He planned strategies, negotiated alliances, and applied the word of God to daily conflicts. . . . In so doing, he became the one who took the truth of God into the world and invited unbelievers to know and bow before the God of Israel.²³

Paul D. Hanson explains the goal of godly kings:

To submit to the sovereignty of Yahweh was to be drawn into the orbit of what, in the Hebrew Bible, is called *shalom*, that is, the harmony of a fully integrated, life-enhancing community of faith and love, which harmony extended outward to embrace the entire created order (Deut 30:15-20).²⁴

Both in sweeping visions for the wellbeing of a society and in the mundane realities of day-to-day existence, kings facilitated the realization of God's sovereign kingship over the people.

In the New Testament, the unequaled kingship of Jesus is made clear, which includes creation (John 1:3; Col 1:16), providence (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3), and miracle (John 10:37-38). More than that, Jesus is of the royal family line of David (Matt 22:42), whose incarnation brings the kingdom of God to earth (Mark 1:15). Though always king, his kingship was demonstrated especially in his resurrection, as Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 1:4).²⁵ The risen Christ has all authority and power throughout the created universe (Matt 28:18-20). At his return, every eye will see him and bow before him as the rightful King over all (1 Thess 4:16-17; Rev 1:7).

To recognize Christ's kingship is also to recognize that he is the eternal protector and defender of the church, which assures its everlasting preservation.²⁶ As Calvin said so well,

²³Dan B. Allender, "Mimicking Our Disruptive Father and Our Diverse Older Brother: Learning Prophetic Disruption, Priestly Connection, and Kingly Service," *Mars Hill Review* 5 (Summer 1996): 41.

²⁴Paul D. Hanson, "The Servant Dimension of Pastoral Ministry in Biblical Perspective," in *The Pastor as Servant* (New York: Pilgrim, 1986), 7.

²⁵Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 908.

²⁶Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*, 67.

Thus it is that we may patiently pass through this life with its misery, hunger, cold, contempt, reproaches, and other troubles—content with this one thing: that our King will never leave us destitute, but will provide for our needs until, our warfare ended, we are called to triumph.²⁷

Just as he does in his roles as prophet and priest, Jesus redefines what it means to be a king. Unlike other kings, Jesus does not need his subjects. He is king because of who he is, not because he has followers. His anointing as king is not one of oils, perfumes, and luxury, but of “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2).²⁸ In his incarnation, King Jesus displays his power through humiliation, embodying and modeling humble service of the highest order (Phil 2:5-8). In line with the paradoxical nature of his kingship, Christ’s disciples learn at his washing of their feet that a true king is a servant. Indeed, the more accurate term is slave, meaning that in Christ’s kingdom the Master of all becomes the slave of all in order to release humanity from spiritual bondage. Such a king leads others to find freedom in a new kind of captivity, slavery to righteousness (Rom 6:18), inside a kingdom of peace and joy (Rom 14:17). Presently, as a king ascended to his throne, Jesus orders, directs, and preserves the church as its head (Eph 1:22) and provides its every resource (Eph 4:8). Even with all this, the full revelation of Jesus’ kingship is reserved for his second coming when he establishes the fullness of his reign on earth (Rev 19:16).

The Pastor—King

The mention of a king may incite notions of a heavy-handed ruler ready to oppress or neglect his people for his own sake, or it may bring to mind a position existing only for the sake of tradition and photo opportunities. Yet the question of what a true king has been answered. Jesus is Lord. The pastor-king, as a result, orders and

²⁷John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 4.489-99.

²⁸Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*, 67.

encourages people to live all of life in light of Christ's kingship. It is a role concerned with both the present and eternal well-being of individual persons in relation to the kingdom of God and the pattern of life present within such a kingdom.

The pastor-king takes charge, shapes strategy, and aligns people. He develops plans for bringing the vision and mission of the church to fruition. The king brings order to chaos. Such ability moves a church through crisis and challenge. The pastor-king labors to create an environment, with all its corresponding practicalities, dominated by "a love that unites all those loved by God in a sense of faithful solidarity."²⁹ Allender explains, "A king builds infrastructure to provide for the needs of his people and protect them from harm. As he works for a fair and just society, a king juggles crises, decision making, allocation of resources, talent development, and issues of survival and growth."³⁰ Kings are faithful when they move the church toward long-term clarity, purpose, and health.

Kings tend to be logical, self-motivated, and organized. They are adept at crafting processes that enable people to practice what is taught, developing plans and strategies, wisely stewarding resources, and creating structures and systems that ensure long-term sustainability and growth. At the same time, pastor-kings know that the church is a community of Spirit-filled saints, each empowered with gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. Therefore, Kings develop means by which abilities may be evaluated, strengths developed, weaknesses addressed, and individuals entrusted with responsibility to share the load of ministry toward one another and the world. Christ-like kings also wisely deal with anyone who threatens the integrity and energy of the church and its mission.

²⁹Hanson, "The Servant Dimension," 15.

³⁰Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3307-9.

Challenges of the Pastor—King

Legitimate kingship is person-centered and, at the same time, intensely aware of the impact of social structures and norms on individuals. A true king must seek health and wholeness not for his own sake, but for the sake of individuals within the kingdom. It is not difficult for the pastor-king to spend his days laboring to create tools that serve people, yet without personally interacting with and expressing loving concern for those same people as an under-shepherd. An unhealthy isolation from people becomes a real risk. At the same time, a king must be able to suffer loneliness when his decisions are not popular. He must at other times display deep humility (as opposed to arrogance that hides his fear) when his decisions may turn out to be confusing, detrimental, or simply wrong.

Just as a prophet can love a message more than the people it is meant to reach, a king can love the systems and strategies he has developed more than the people they are designed to serve. The pastor-king must be careful to avoid an assembly line mentality, coldly pushing people through a process in order to meet some desired end. Efficiency is not the rain that makes disciples grow in the garden of the Lord. God alone brings growth (1 Cor 3:7). Similarly, the king must appreciate the nuances of individual creatures made in the image of God. Each person will respond differently to what the pastor-king implements. Therefore the king should be on guard against thinking his created solutions are so profound that all would be well if everyone would simply follow the recommended procedures.

The pastor-king can easily become overly critical of minor details. He may lack grace when processes or structures break down. Because kings are often the ones to help get things done and then assess the outcomes, the subsequent focus on results can easily shift the pastor-king's eyes from things that are unseen (and often unmeasurable) to things that are seen (and often measurable); the exact opposite of where a pastor's eyes should fall (2 Cor 4:18).

The king category also tends to be comprised of those individuals who have been or are quite able to be professionally and economically successful. To serve the

church they must often give up some or all of this prestige. They must also experience freedom from the self-centered motivations that usually underlie professional choices and decisions. Such freedom “exists in the life of one whose needs for status and recognition are satisfied by the deep sense of being accepted and sustained by a gracious God.”³¹ When the pastor-king no longer needs the praise and subordination of others and is freed from the need to find his significance in his role as a leader, he is truly free to serve in authority and under authority.

Mimicking and Mingling the Three Roles

Jesus imparted his model of ministry to those he led (John 20:21). Therefore, pastors today should find their work defined by Christ’s work. After all, the genesis of pastoral leadership does not begin with technique, competence, or even spiritual gifts but in union with Christ. The Father sent his Son to fulfill and redefine the ancient roles of prophet, priest, and king, and in so doing accomplish redemption and restore humanity to its original purpose as a kingdom of truth-loving priests. Mimicking Jesus and his ministry to his people, pastor-prophets, pastor-priests, and pastor-kings are all necessary for pastoral leadership in the local church.

Determining where one falls in the threefold model of leadership is a fairly straightforward process in light of the unambiguous picture presented and the triperspectival philosophy that undergirds it. The larger challenge for the pastor comes in embracing how God has made him to function in leadership and, to an even greater degree, being honest about the role or roles in which he is weak. The godly pastor knows his strengths and calls them good because God has given and blessed them. He also knows his greatest weaknesses, considers root issues as to why he may be lacking, and joyfully seeks out other leaders who can complement his strengths for the good of the church. This kind of honesty and humility are byproducts of a heart gripped by the grace

³¹Hanson, “The Servant Dimension,” 18.

and freedom found in the gospel of Jesus Christ, who apportions grace to each person as he sees fit (Eph 4:7). Such a pastor will be quick to put all three types of leaders in a room and invite each of them to equally value the others as they share leadership.

In the everyday exercise of such ministry, one role does not take preeminence over the others. In fact, in any given situation, pastoral context may determine just who is best suited to serve.³² The roles are also not ultimately contingent upon personality. Emotional people are not immediate priests. Those who speak boldly must not carelessly be labeled prophets. Organized leaders can be more than kings. Patrick offers wise counsel,

Any church developing a leadership culture that incorporates the prophet, priest, king philosophy must avoid the temptation to view it as a personality test. Since Jesus was the perfect prophet, priest, and king, and since as believers we are becoming more like Christ, we should be growing in all these areas. Leaders, especially pastors, must not lock people (themselves included) so firmly into any of these categories that they limit the usefulness of the gifts God has given them to build up the church.³³

Certainly there is a division of labor between the roles. David Specht, for example, summarizes the responsibilities of the prophet as teaching, critiquing, and envisioning; the priest as modeling, caring, and celebrating; and the king as governing, managing, and building.³⁴ And yet the boundaries between the three can be fuzzy. Even in the Old Testament, priests taught the law, prophets sometimes brought order, and kings could be caring. Jesus as priest proclaimed truth. Jesus as king tenderly advocates for those in his kingdom. Jesus as prophet allowed time and space for people to respond.

Furthermore, remembering that epistemologically any one perspective necessarily contains the other two, any one role of the pastor must be intimately informed

³²See Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*, 75, who recognizes a “christological equilibrium” among all three.

³³Patrick, *Church Planter*, 75.

³⁴David Specht, “Theological Roots of the Three-Fold Model: A Framework for Many Occasions,” accessed May 12, 2014, http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/publications/seeingthingswhole/STW08_Specht.pdf, 4-9.

by the remaining two roles. A prophetic sermon must thoughtfully consider the reception of the hearers (priestly) and the practical implementation in ordinary life (kingly). Priestly counsel must be grounded in God's Word (prophetic) and applied in everyday contexts (kingly). Kingly strategies likewise must reflect Scripture and historic orthodoxy (prophetic) as well as appreciate the consequences for and responses of individuals (priestly). David Fairchild proposes that there are different kinds of prophets, priests, and kings based on one's secondary perspective (e.g., priestly kings, prophetic priests, etc.). This secondary perspective may be thought of as the delivery method through which the primary perspective is exercised. Fairchild's work proves helpful in carrying forward the practical application of threefold leadership.³⁵ Allender makes a similar case:

We are not to be solely a prophetic leader, nor priestly, or kingly. We are to be all three, all at once, and with all three in play with, for, and against one another. To lead is to mirror Jesus in all three of these capacities. But the fact is obvious: we are likely stronger in one dimension and weaker in another. And we hold the strength and weakness together by middling abilities in the third office.³⁶

Every pastor must be well rounded and growing in his threefold service toward others. Nelson Granade summarizes the point well:

Like prophets, we must speak words of truth and hope for the betterment of all. Like priests, we must find ways of reminding people of God's gracious presence of in all circumstances. And like kings, we need to protect our community, unite others for the common good, seek solutions to conflicts, and encourage the use of communal resources.³⁷

Assuming that any individual pastor may function solely in the domain of his respective role is both unhealthy and reductionistic. Prophets must be more than just preachers and teachers. Priests must be more than counselors. Kings ought to be more than merely administrators. While each pastor has gifts and skills that place him primarily

³⁵David Fairchild, "Furthering the Triperspectivalism Conversation, Soma 201 Training, 2010," accessed May12, 2014, <http://www.goodmanson.com/church/furthering-the-triperspectivalism-conversation/>.

³⁶Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3265-68.

³⁷Nelson Granade, *Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006), 85-86.

in one category, Christ-like pastors will have an evident blend of all three. As the interplay of the three roles on pastoral teams is considered next, it must not be forgotten that every individual pastor, and more importantly every individual Christian, is being transformed from one degree of glory to another into the image of the perfect prophet, priest, and king, Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18; 4:4).

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICING THREEFOLD LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH AND INTO THE FUTURE

Articulating the individual roles of prophets, priests, and kings in pastoral ministry is relatively straightforward. The dynamics of how they work together on teams is more complex. Allender summarizes the interplay of the three types of leaders in Israel:

The king ran the theocracy, establishing the realm by creating an infrastructure that maintained safety, justice, and order. The realm was given meaning by the stories, art, rituals, and comfort that were the domain of the temple and the priests. And when people wandered from God's desire for them, the prophet disordered both worlds by speaking on God's behalf.¹

The same general responsibilities continue today. While acknowledging the dangers of oversimplification, the prophets are the truth tellers, the priests are counselors and storytellers, and the kings are stewards and administrators.² Though certainly pastors in the local church must be obedient to all the commands of Scripture concerning elders (all must be above reproach, able to teach, lead in crisis, provide wise counsel, etc.), the practice of the threefold model of leadership on pastoral teams means that particular pastors will devote themselves most often to leading in the areas most aligned with their gifts and skills.

The pastor-prophet devotes himself to the exhortation and teaching of the whole counsel of Scripture (Acts 20:20, 26-27; 1 Tim 4:13, 16; 2 Tim 4:1-4; Titus 2:1), exposing false doctrines and teachers (Acts 20:29-31; 1 John 4:1), and prayerfully seeking God's will for the church community (Acts 20:28). The pastor-priest devotes

¹Dan B. Allender, *Leading with a Limp: Take Full Advantage of Your Most Powerful Weakness* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2006), 3244-46.

²Nelson Granade, *Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006), 56.

himself to caring for the church, including praying for the afflicted (Jas 5:14), helping the weak (Acts 20:35), speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15-16), and seeking the church's growth in grace, truth, and love (Col 1:28). The pastor-king gives himself to equipping the members of the church for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-16) and, when necessary, leading the way in lovingly exercising biblical discipline (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19-20).

In relationship to each other within the local church, prophets tend to ask “what” questions (what is our mission? what are we to become?), priests ask “who” questions (who needs to be cared for? who is being left behind?), and kings ask “how” questions (how will the mission be accomplished? how will people grow in godliness?).³ Bank manager Sandra Herron acknowledged the same when considering threefold leadership in the banking industry:

What do prophets do? Their work is discerning, communicating, teaching, exposing. Priests are the bridge builders; mediating, expressing meaning, evoking faith, blessing, bringing grace. Kings work is ruling, organizing, planning, providing, nurturing, integrating, solving problems, coordinating, expediting, consummating. The prophet helps discover what God intends for them to become, the priest cares for people and serves as a model, and the king acts as a faithful steward of people and resources.⁴

In short, the prophet proclaims, “This is where God is leading us!” The King organizes the effort with shouts of, “This is how we can get there!” The priest reassuringly tells the people, “You can be a part of this. I’ll help you!”⁵

Visualizing the Roles

Previously a brief biblical theology of the *munus triplex* was traced using the

³Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 69-73.

⁴Sandra Herron, “Reflecting Christ in the Banking Industry: The Manager as Prophet, Priest, and King,” in *Faith Goes to Work*, ed. Robert J. Banks (Washington, DC: Alban, 1993), 80-92. A similar approach has been put forth in D. T. Williams, “The Christian and the Environment: Prophet, Priest, and King,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 66, no. 6 (1994): 143-58.

⁵Dick Kaufman, “Multi-Site Conference: Developing Leaders,” accessed May 12, 2014, <http://pcamna.org/churchplanting/documents/Breakout6Lecture--DevelopingLeaders.pdf>.

terms order, disorder, and reorder. The same terms are helpful when considering the roles of the prophet, priest, and king. Prophets function as a destabilizing presence, bringing disorder into an existing community through their critique of an existing way of life and pronouncement of an alternate truth. Kings stabilize and may systematize the resulting change, typically working behind the scenes to bring order. All the while priests maintain a laser-like focus on the people, reordering and re-centering those who are disoriented during the difficult transitions that the disordering/ordering process inevitably brings.

Allender describes the relationship among the three:

The king creates a strong center. The priest strengthens the center with myth and meaning. The prophet disrupts the center in order to keep it from becoming stagnant. In the disruption, a new center will be created and new meaning will be revealed.⁶

This relationship among the three roles is best understood by visualizing where each stands in relationship to the local church (see figure 2).

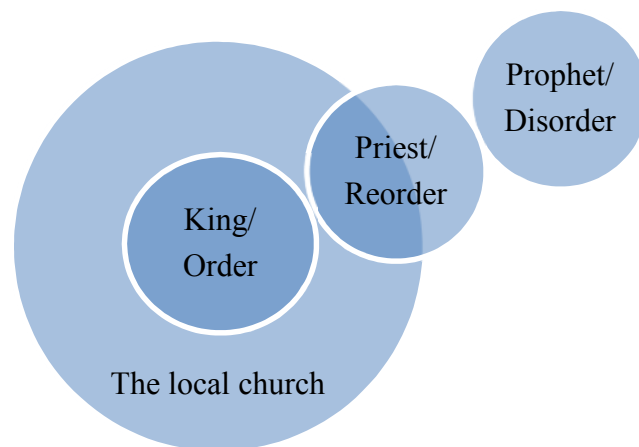


Figure 2. The pastoral prophet, priest, and kings' leadership function in the local church

⁶Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3452-53.

While keeping in mind the exhortation that all pastors must carry out the duties of an elder as well as be immersed in and accountable to the community, in terms of leadership function each may play a very different role. Prophets function at the margins of a community. This position allows them the ability to assess the health of the church, bring necessary critique, and initiate transformative change. Kings are positioned at the center of the church organizationally. They implement the transformational change initiated by the prophet. Priests are positioned between the margins and the center to care for the persons of the community during the change dynamics.⁷ While prophets envision the future and kings make things work, priests maintain a laser-like focus on the people, never getting distracted from how the sheep are doing.

Tension

It is not difficult to imagine the fruit that can come when all three types of leaders work together to beautifully complement one another. As imperfect people, they also irritate each other. Isolation from one another, however, is not an option. The prophet left alone will indulge in drama and self-absorption for the sake of escaping boredom. The isolated priest will fall into accommodation for the sake of avoiding conflict. The king left alone will become a dictator who shuns chaos. They need one another to elude the trap of their own narcissism.⁸

There will always be conflict and misunderstanding among prophets, priests, and kings. One type of leader will inevitably hold the other two in some degree of suspicion. Yet one of the great benefits of the threefold approach to pastoral leadership is the embracing of tension within the leadership team. If a pastor recognizes Jesus as Chief Shepherd and threefold pastoral ministry as a reflection and extension of Jesus' own

⁷Anthony L. Blair et al., "Prophets, Priests and Kings: Re-imagining Ancient Metaphors of Diffused Leadership for the Twenty-First Century Organization," *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion* 9, no. 2 (2012): 130-31.

⁸Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 3465-67.

ministry, then he will come to greatly appreciate the ways in which his fellow pastors image forth Jesus in ways he can not. Prophets, for instance, will grow to love faithful priests and kings because they are ministering like Jesus, albeit with an emphasis not his own. For the leader who genuinely desires the name of Jesus to be promoted, he will rejoice when other pastors serve the body in Christ-like ways. On a team that displays great humility, genuinely values shared leadership, and labors together for the honor of Jesus, chaos need not ensue.

Valuing the Pastor-Prophet

If one of the three types of leaders tends to be most difficult to work with, it is the prophet. Allender writes,

As long as (priests and kings) give one another what is necessary for their survival, a relative peace can exist, that is, until a prophet comes to town. It is no wonder that most organizations fall into the king-priest dyad. It is also no surprise that most organizations will only occasionally allow a prophet to come into their ranks, usually in the form of a paid consultant. Seldom will an organization have the wisdom to hire and keep on staff a prophet who disrupts complacency and awakens desire through dreaming. Prophets are not the easiest people to have around.⁹

There is likely to be an ongoing back and forth between the prophets and the kings; a tennis match of sorts. The prophet brings disorder, the king order. From an outside perspective, it appears as if one is always sabotaging or undermining the other. Just when the king has developed adequate systems and structures, the prophet speaks disorder into the whole thing. Just as the prophet announces the shake up that must take place, the king fights to maintain the order that has already been established. The two roles appear to clash.

Yet a good king understands that what is sacred to an organization is not its systems or structures, but its vision and mission. He therefore expects periods in which much of what he has labored to construct will begin to be shaken by the prophets. A king must not be so enamored by what he has built that he fights tooth and nail against needed

⁹Ibid., 3398-401.

change initiated by the prophets. The king, therefore, must be marked by a tremendous humility, always deferring to the ultimate needs of the body over his own desires to maintain what he has worked so hard to build.¹⁰ In fact, the kingly pastor must have his own prophetic bent, providing him an ability to look beyond immediate results to potential outcomes, as well as to discern when existing structures and systems are no longer useful.

Likewise a good priest will celebrate truth declared by the prophet. Without it, the priest has no compelling vision to counsel people toward. While it is unfortunately true that some of his priestly work will be to heal wounds inflicted by zealous prophets who use careless language, such work ensures that individuals are restored to the very enterprise articulated by the prophet in the first place.

Valuing the Pastor-Priest

Faithful prophets and kings recognize the necessity of the priests. The prophet expects instances when a priest will represent the people before him and call him to simplify theological musings, ease up on critiques of the status quo, or take a break from initiating change. The prophet also needs a compelling story to justify going to war or reallocating resources. The priest is skilled in just this ability, framing the work of the prophet inside a narrative that both carries forward the cause and brings cohesion across the community. Blair and colleagues are at their best when describing team dynamics such as this:

When a prophet calls for organizational change, the priest is uniquely equipped to nurture cohesion in the chaos which usually follows. The priestly leader connects the past to the future in meaningful ways for the people, and thus makes the call for change more concrete, tangible and possible for the people.¹¹

Though priests and kings complement each other well, there can also be great tension between them. A kingly leader may view a priest as overly emotional, far too

¹⁰Blair, "Prophets, Priests and Kings," 142.

¹¹Ibid., 138.

slow to enact change, and as spending too much time with the people deemed difficult. The priestly leader can view the king as a taskmaster, treating people as projects, valuing productivity over individual souls, and not caring enough to actually talk to people. A good king, however, appreciates a critical role of the priestly leader: to understand, articulate, and harmonize the dynamics of change put in place by the king. A king like this expects the priest to sometimes call for less formalization, a greater awareness of individuality and humanness as opposed to systemic alignment, or a need for growth and change to be more organic.

The king instructs people where to go and what to do while the priest provides the rationale for “going there” and “doing that.” It is these stories the priest tells that serve as the glue that holds the community together, thus preserving the significance and work of the king. The pastor-priest, with his focus on story, will also consistently lead the way in celebrating. While a prophet looks to *what could be* and the king to *how to get it done*, the priest ensures that *what has already been* is not overlooked. Christ-like prophets and kings recognize the tremendous importance of celebrating these individual and corporate stories of God’s faithfulness. Celebrations, most often led by the priests, ensure that God is glorified, people are encouraged, and joy in Jesus is upheld.

Valuing the Pastor-King

Good prophets do bring disorder, but they do so in concert with the kings. They inform the kings early of coming disruption. While an arrogant prophet may pride himself on his ability to drop bombs on a landscape, requiring the kings to rebuild the ruins, it is the effective prophet who forecasts not only what will need to change from a high level, but how the process and structures on the ground will necessarily change as well. The prophet himself may not build these processes and structures, but he works closely with the king to prepare him for what is coming. Such a relationship requires great humility on the part of the prophet, for he relies on and values the king as his co-

laborer who will work diligently to implement needed change.¹²

Priests likewise utilize strong kings both backward and forward. Backward, by championing the structures and processes established by the king and bringing people into what is already happening within the community. Forward, by tapping into the king's strength to build ministries of care and counsel into the fabric of the church culture. By systematizing and streamlining priestly ministry in appropriate ways, kings enable priests to shepherd more effectively, multiply their ministry, and resource countless others to join in the priestly ministry of shepherding one another. When a virtuous organizational king is operating at the center of church life, his work is greatly valued as it sets the stage for both the prophet and the priest to carry out their unique leadership functions.

Valuing the Threefold Pastoral Team

Great fruitfulness and joy can come when pastoral ministry is practiced as a part of a team that collectively reflects the ministry of Jesus. The individual pastor is able to both specialize in his areas of strength while also growing in his areas of weakness by learning from and laboring alongside of other pastors who are gifted in very different ways. Just as in the body of Christ, there is great unity in diversity. The pastor should also find relief and joy in knowing that his co-laborers are giving themselves to areas of pastoral oversight to which he himself is not fully able. Priests and kings may rest assured that prophets lie awake at night thinking about where the church should go. Prophets and kings know that priests are kept up thinking of who needs to be cared for. And prophets and priests rejoice that kings stay up thinking how the church can better function.

Admittedly, it is no easy task for such diverse leaders to lead together in the day-to-day realities of church life. While this research contributes to the discussion of the roles of prophet, priest, and king as well as their interaction on teams, much can and

¹²Ibid., 142.

should be written regarding the long-term health of such teams and the maturation processes they must inevitably grow through together.

Conclusion

The present study began with concern at the lack of a model of shared pastoral leadership that is uniquely and distinctively Christian, and which would therefore result in local church leadership that is healthy, biblical, and honoring to the Chief Shepherd Jesus. As has been argued, pastoral ministry is to be a reflection and extension of Jesus' own ministry. Accordingly, two questions have been answered. First, *who is Jesus in his ministry to his people?* He is prophet, priest, and king, flawlessly fulfilling and even redefining ancient roles present not only in Israel, but also in God's design for humanity from the start and to be enjoyed by his people into eternity. This led to a second question: *How can pastoral ministry reflect and be an extension of the ministry of Jesus?* It should come as no surprise that the same threefold division of prophet, priest, and king offered in the *munus triplex Christi* can be practiced today, and therefore serves as a remarkable Christ-centered model for shared pastoral leadership in the local church.

Threefold leadership suggests that a church community functions best when all three roles are explicitly embraced and intentionally inhabited. This is true because the model best imitates Jesus' own pastoral ministry, but also addresses the pressures and pains created by unhealthy and unrealistic expectations placed on lone pastors as noted at the outset. As one researcher describes,

The severity of the cultural shifts we have witnessed in recent years emphasizes that one person is not likely to provide the breadth and acuity of leadership demanded by such an environment. Expecting any one individual to meet such extraordinary demands is not only naive, but borders on being cruel to the leader and unjust to the enterprise he or she leads.¹³

Leadership theorists Pearce and Conger agree: "It is increasingly difficult for a single individual holding the position of chief executive officer to lead. In many ways,

¹³George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2001), 14.

organizations are today ripe for shared leadership across all levels.”¹⁴ Unfortunately, many churches continue to expect a single pastor to carry out the unrealistic and often unbiblical CEO role. What has been argued for here is an alternative that is both more Christ-like and more healthful for leaders and those being led.

Threefold leadership presents a theology and philosophy that has as its source an orthodox and historic understanding of the very person and work of Jesus Christ. Many of the current leadership trends in the church stem from secular management theory baptized for a Christian context, and therefore end up being not very Christian at all. The dominant models of leadership in the church (Heroic, Servant, and Trinitarian) also have been considered and shown to suffer from their own shortcomings. In contrast, threefold leadership based on the *munus triplex Christi* has been presented as a model of shared pastoral leadership that is both uniquely and distinctively Christian.

Just as in the ministry of Jesus toward his body, God intends for prophetic, priestly, and kingly service to resound throughout the local church and its leadership. One of the most fruitful decisions a local church, pastor, or pastoral team can make is to create space within a leadership team for all three roles to be strongly represented. Such intentionality not only helps to ensure that the ongoing ministry of the Chief Shepherd is represented well in the church, it also releases any given leader from the pressure to be all things to all people.

When threefold leadership is implemented and practiced well, the individual pastor will continue to struggle in pastoral ministry. Such is the nature of a fallen creature called to such a glorious task. Yet because he has placed his feet on the firm epistemological, biblical, theological, and historical ground of the threefold ministry of Jesus Christ, he can continue to stand upright. Not only will he have other prophets, priests, and kings present to minister to his soul and hold him up, he will also know what

¹⁴Craig L. Pearce and Jay A. Conger, eds., *Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), xii.

it is to be encouraged by the precious promises of Prophet Jesus, comforted with the tender care of Priest Jesus, and led once again by King Jesus to fullness of life found in a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. He will find new strength to press on and continue the work of a pastor as he joins the chorus in praise to the Chief Shepherd:

We bless the prophet of the Lord,
That comes with truth and grace;
Jesus, thy Spirit and thy word
Shall lead us in thy ways.
We reverence our High-Priest above,
Who offered up his blood;
And lives to carry on his love;
By pleading with our God.
We honour our exalted King;
How sweet are his commands!
He guards our souls from hell and sin,
By his almighty hands.
Hosanna to his glorious name,
Who saves by different ways;
His mercies lay a sovereign claim
To our immortal praise.¹⁵

¹⁵Samuel Worcester, ed., *The Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the Rev. Isaac Watts* (Boston: Croker & Brewster, 1855), 452. Isaac Watts wrote this hymn in 1707.

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ABSTRACT

A TRIPERSPECTIVAL APPROACH TO SHARED PASTORAL LEADERSHIP BASED ON THE *MUNUS TRIPLEX CHRISTI*

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
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Those in pastoral ministry are inundated with countless leadership theories, tips, and tricks all competing for their attention and allegiance. Is there a timeless model for pastoral leadership that is uniquely and distinctively Christian? More than that, how can pastoral ministry reflect and be an extension of the ministry of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ? One finds such a model in the threefold ministry of Jesus (the *munus triplex Christi*), a model that is epistemologically, theologically, biblically, and practically grounded in his person and work. Just as in the ministry of Jesus toward his body, God intends for prophetic, priestly, and kingly service to resound throughout the local church and its leadership.

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Developer and Lead US Trainer, Seed Adoption, Addis Ababa, Nazareth, and
Awassa, Ethiopia, 2011-2014
Church Planter and Pastor, The City Church, Fort Worth, Texas, 2008-

ORGANIZATIONAL

Acts 29 Church Planting Network, Member and Regional Coach, 2009-
Society of Professors in Christian Education, 2014-