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TRAINING MEN TOWARDS PASTORAL ORDINATION  
AT WATSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH  
IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
Toussaint Chrysostom Adams  
December 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

TRAINING MEN TOWARDS PASTORAL ORDINATION  
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## PREFACE

I want to first and foremost thank God. I thank Him for saving my soul. I thank Him for drawing me to Himself by the work of the Spirit and to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has done for me what I could never do for myself.

I want to thank my wife. She is the love of my life. Thank you for being my most ardent supporter. Words cannot express how much I love you and just what you mean to me. Every day we grow closer together and you become more beautiful by the second. This would not have been possible without you, babe. You demonstrated patience and resolve in helping cross the finish line. I want to thank my children, Torah and Mercy, for being patient with me as I sat at the table, read and typed when they wanted me to come downstairs and play. You two bring me so much joy. You are the life of our home and daddy loves you both unconditionally. I also want to thank my dad. He gave me so many resources on the black church. Chapter 3 is because of him. I also want to thank all the ministers who attended the training sessions. This project would not have been possible without you brothers. In addition, thank you to Watson Memorial Baptist Church for your investment in me. I pray this degree serves us for years to come.

Lastly, thank you Dr. Joseph C. Harrod. You being my advisor was the work of God. Being on the other side of this has shown me how God brought us together and how you have helped to make this project the best that it could be. Thank you for all your help.

Toussaint C. Adams

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2021

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This project was designed to strengthen the pastorate at Watson Memorial Baptist Church (WMBC) by focusing on ecclesiology. The pastorate is a New Testament office given to the local church by God. Therefore, in whatever way God intended for the office to function, the body of Christ is to be found faithful. In several ways, WMBC is a healthy church. Yet, if there is any area in which this body should be challenged, it is in adding a plurality of pastors to its ecclesiastical structure.

#### **Context**

One of the strengths of WMBC is its strong tradition of preaching. Six pastors preceded me. Through the fifty-eight years of the church's history, several associate ministers have come under the ministry of each pastor and several have left. Under the current administration, six have been added, bringing the total to seven. Though these men have the ability to preach, they have not been tested to see if they have been called to pastorate as the congregation has no formal program to test such qualifications.

This lack of a formal testing has been a longstanding challenge for WMBC. Without such a ministry, WMBC has had difficulty affirming more than one pastor serving at the same time. One of the leading factors has been insufficient training. The consistent model of pastoral leadership under each pastor was one man leading alongside a plurality of deacons. In accepting the call to pastor in June 2014, this was the model I inherited. A New Testament ecclesiology prizes the plurality of pastors functioning in a local church.

Moving WMBC toward a pastor-led model requires a system for the pastor to train other ministers. One of the significant barriers is mental: associate ministers and ministers-in-training fail to recognize their status as pastors and tend to view their work as



second-class. Beyond the self-perception challenge, key leaders within the congregation do not respect these ministers as pastoral leaders. The glaring problem for shepherd and sheep is having one “pastor” who cannot attend every ministerial need.

A New Testament church is one in which pastors train up other men for ministry (2 Tim 2:1-2). One vital ministry of the pastor-teacher is equipping saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11.). WMBC has not historically followed this biblical precedent, yet within the past four years, the church has taken initial steps toward this direction.

### **Rationale**

There are two offices given to the church. The first is that of the pastor and the second is that of deacon (1 Tim 3:1-13). Both offices come with qualifications for its occupants. Both offices are to be occupied by a plurality of persons (Titus 1:5-9). Since this is clear in Scripture, the church has an obligation to be faithful in these areas. The office of concern for this project is the office of pastor. The church is informed in the New Testament that pastors are to give oversight in and to the church (Acts 20:26-28; 1 Pet 5:1-2; Heb 13:7, 17).

Charles Spurgeon said, “Be fit for your work, and you’ll never be out of it . . . be more concerned about your ability than your opportunity, and more earnest about your walk with God than about either.”<sup>1</sup> At the heart of this quote is the reason for this project. Men must prepare for the ministry and be prepared for ministry. Their preparation is not only in the classroom, but in the practical outworking of what is received in the classroom. For WMBC to be a healthier body of believers, it should pursue a plurality of qualified men in the pastorate. This project demonstrates why this is necessary by observing biblical and ecclesiological precedents for training men toward ordination to the pastorate.

From the title of my project there is a particular emphasis on the training of men. WMBC is a Traditional Black Church (TBC). The proliferation of women claiming

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<sup>1</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), 32.

a call to the preaching ministry has led to the ordination of women to the pastorate, specifically in black churches. It appears all but clear that the role of pastor is limited to men. H. Beecher Hicks, Jr. stated, “Even female preachers will admit that the Bible does not necessarily or specifically aid their cause. Attempts at biblical proof-texting fall far short of the mark, and a search for scriptural support in this matter is tenuous to nonexistent.”<sup>2</sup> H. Beecher Hick’s statement is in agreement with what one finds in the New Testament prescription for pastors. First Timothy 3:2 states that the individual must be “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim 3:2). The phrase is μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα, which can be translated as “a one-woman man.” As Paul speaks of qualifications for the pastor, he is sure to inform Timothy that this is the kind of man that should be in this office.

The pastor as a “one-woman man is nowhere inverted in the New Testament so as to make it a “one-man woman.” The assumption is that individuals who desire and aspire to the office of pastor are men. He is not to be any kind of man, however. It is necessary (δεῖ) that he be a qualified man. While Scripture restricts women from serving in this capacity, not every man should be considered on the grounds that he is a man. He must be godly, which should be evident in his family (1 Tim 3:2-4), and to the outside world (1 Tim 3:7).

The importance of ecclesiology in terms of one’s call to ministry cannot be understated. In commenting on pastors in Ephesians 4:10, John Calvin remarked, “The church cannot be kept safe, unless supported by those guards to which the Lord has been please to commit its safety.”<sup>3</sup> A church without a healthy governing body of pastors is a church without protection. The pastor is to be the resident ecclesiologist to be a faithful pastor. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus demonstrates the protective care which is characteristic of all shepherds (John 10:1-10). His under shepherds are to be models of

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<sup>2</sup> H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., *Peaching Through a Storm: Confirming the Power of Preaching in the Tempest of Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 49.

<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion vol 2* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 1055.

holiness and theological astuteness (1 Thess 2:10). In this way, they may keep the church on the solid ground of doctrinal and moral purity.

Within the church are a number of gracious means to be observed, including prayer, the study of the Word, communion, baptism, church membership, missions, and church discipline. A resident ecclesialogist will know what these means are and how they are to function in a local church. Unless the pastor has a working knowledge of these things, he cannot shepherd effectively.

Since God requires the church to have men who are ecclesiologically astute in the pastorate, it is necessary for this local body to pursue the health of this office. The implementation of this project is needed if this local body is to grow into a mature assembly. By focusing on ecclesiology, these men would be able to lead in a God-honoring way. They would increase their knowledge in this branch of theology. Ultimately, the local church benefits from the outworking of their understanding of this teaching.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to train candidates at Watson Memorial Baptist Church in ecclesiology and toward ordination to the pastorate.

### **Goals**

Four goals were established to move men toward the completion of the ordination process. By examining the character and the theology of each man, a foundation was laid for enrollment into the training program. This program was part of a rigorous theological education with a specific bent toward ecclesiology for pastoral ministry.

1. The first goal was to assess the ecclesiological understanding of the men who desire to be pastors.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-session training in the discipline of ecclesiology.
3. The third goal was to implement the training to increase the candidates' knowledge of ecclesiology.
4. The fourth goal was to evaluate the training's applicability by means of a focus group.

Entailed in these goals is a training program that walked men through the inner workings of the church. This included an ontological and functional understanding of the church.

### **Research Methodology**

The first goal was to assess the theological astuteness of men who desire to be pastors. At the outset, the candidates participated in a pre-training survey. This survey was administered two weeks before the first training session begins.<sup>4</sup> The survey was designed to test the depth of participants' knowledge of licensure, ordination, ecclesial offices, and church structure. In addition, the pre-training survey examined the candidates' knowledge of some aspects of black Baptist historical ecclesiology. This goal was successful when at least seven pre-training surveys were completed and the results analyzed using common descriptive statistics to yield a clearer picture of the candidates' understanding of the matters covered.

The second goal was to develop a six-session training program in the discipline of ecclesiology. The curriculum was designed to increase the candidates' knowledge of the ministry, its structure, and history. The pre-training evaluation helped determine the most important areas of focus to be addressed during the training program. The curriculum covered areas such as the history of licensing ministers in Baptist churches, the biblical foundations and historical practices of ordination, and various ways that Baptist churches have ordered their structures. An expert panel consisting of three ministers reviewed the curriculum using a rubric.<sup>5</sup> Panelists scored the curriculum and a minimum score of "satisfactory" for all rubric rows constituted success. If any aspect of the curriculum did

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in this ministry project.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 2.

not achieve this minimum score, then it was revised and resubmitted for review until it met this standard.

The third goal was to implement six training sessions to increase the candidates' knowledge of ecclesiology. Participants committed to attend at least five of the six sessions, and sessions were delivered during the summer of 2021. Each session covered one aspect of Baptist ecclesiology or preparation for ministry. A post-training survey was used to determine change in knowledge using a *t*-test for dependent samples.<sup>6</sup> If the results of this *t*-test indicated a positive, significant change, then this goal was considered successful.

The fourth goal was to evaluate the training's applicability by means of a focus group. This focus group included participants who attended at least five of the six training sessions and occurred following the final session. Participants were asked a series of semi-structured questions about the training experience to gain more nuanced insight into the training than a survey alone allows.<sup>7</sup> This goal was considered successful when participants provided feedback and their responses had been analyzed to identify key themes about the training's applicability.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definition is offered as a key term to be used in this ministry project.

*Ordination.* *Ordination* is the unanimous recognition of a minister's call to the pastorate by a believing community after a vetting process that affirms the minister by the act of the laying on of the hands.

Two limitations applied to this project. The first limitation was scheduling. The men who showed interest in training for the ministry work full-time jobs outside the

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix 4.

church. In addition, some of them had inconsistent work schedules. Yet, I was able to secure the commitment of seven men who agreed to come to all the training sessions.

The second limitation was family commitment. The majority of the men who had a desire to train are relatively new to fatherhood. As a pastor, my duty to their family is of most importance. Candidates were encouraged to be with their family if there is ever a conflict with the training. Therefore, the obligation to the home could cause them to miss days of training scheduled to take place.

Two delimitations applied to this project. It will take between two to four years to fully train the men and have them ready for ordination. Given the nature of this project, the timeframe is six training sessions, which enabled candidates to get through the material. The foundation laid in this brief period serves as model for future training.

The second delimitation was not being able to reach ordination. Having the church (the believing community) affirm these men in such a short time was not possible. In addition, there are personal limitations. As lead pastor I am responsible for teaching Bible study, counseling members, and leading worship on Sunday morning. The tasks which need to be done may limit the opportunities to train men. External limitations were necessarily imposed on the time spent with these men, which ultimately cut down on teaching time.

### **Conclusion**

There is a need for training men called to the ministry at WMBC. The implementation of this project served to strengthen the pastorate of this local church. Upon completion of the training and concentrated focus on ecclesiology, the candidates for ministry would understand the nature of the church and their role in it. The training program moved men toward ordination to the pastorate and laid a foundation for further training which adds to the overall health of this body.

CHAPTER 2  
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE  
FOR TRAINING QUALIFIED MEN  
FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

The Watson Memorial Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, seeks to train qualified men who desire and aspire to the office of pastor. This chapter will set forth the biblical and theological nature of the pastorate as an office of the church ordained by God. The exegesis of key New Testament text is the ground for having qualified men serving as pastors in the local church. The Bible teaches that God has given pastors who are teachers to the church (Eph 4:11).<sup>1</sup> In addition, the function and character of these men are set forth. This chapter answers two questions: who can be a pastor and what is the function of a pastor?

The health of a church is tied to the health of its leadership. Godly men in the pastorate strengthen the church. The primary function of a pastor is to lead the church via the teaching ministry.<sup>2</sup> The main qualification that separates elders from deacons is that pastors be “able to teach” (1 Tim 3:2). As they teach the Word, they are leading and should be obeyed (Heb 13:7, 17). Yet, character of the individual cannot be separated from the function. Teaching is not enough. He should also be an example to the church of holy living. Once these two preeminent qualifications are observed in the candidate, he may undergo the process of ordination.

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<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 545.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 92.

## The Practice of Ordaining for Pastoral Ministry

The words *ordain* and *ordination* come from the Latin word *ordinare*, which means to “set in order” or “arrange.”<sup>3</sup> The act of being ordained is a response to receiving a call to the ministry and proving that call by meeting the qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-7). Biblically, ordination is communal. The earliest, perhaps non-formal,<sup>4</sup> communal ordination is found in Acts 13:1-3. The Spirit of God set Paul and Barnabas apart in conjunction with their calling. Afterwards, the church lay hands on them. Thus, the church in Antioch not only appears to be the sending agency of Paul and Barnabas, but the ones who implicitly ordain them.<sup>5</sup>

John S. Hammet argues that a believing body must wisely ordain its leaders.<sup>6</sup> The candidate is to have a good standing in his house and in the house of God. The community outside of the believing congregation is to have a say as it relates to the character of the individual. That is, the church should consider what unbelievers have to say about the candidate for ordination. Nineteenth-century Baptist minister Edward Hiscox defined ordination as “that form of service by which men are admitted to the ranks of Christian ministry, and to the exercise of its functions.”<sup>7</sup> Hiscox advanced an argument for the communal aspect of ordination:

While ordination is but one of the avenues by which worthy men can be admitted to, and unworthy men can be excluded from, the sacred office, yet is one, and should be sedulously guarded by watchful churches and conscientious councils and

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 621.

<sup>4</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts*, New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: B & H, 1992), 290. Polhill is adamant that this is not an ordination. He stops short of outright rejection of the term by saying “almost.” If not an ordination, then it has the hallmarks of what would become an official ordination in the future, i.e., 1 Tim 5:22.

<sup>5</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 555.

<sup>6</sup> John S. Hammet, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 208.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Thurston Hiscox, *The New Directory for Baptist Churches* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894), 344.



Presbyteries—that the ministry be kept pure and true to its high calling. For, while neither churches nor councils can prevent a man from preaching if he desires to do it, and secure hearers, they can refuse him recognition and fellowship in such a course, and ought to do it, if they believe him unfit or unworthy.<sup>8</sup>

### **Exegetical and Theological Implications of the Laying on of Hands**

Laying on of hands is the inaugurating mark of ascendancy to ministry. It is an act that has been tied to the ordaining process (Acts 13:2-3; 1 Tim 5:22). To lay hands on a candidate for the pastorate is to associate that individual with the collective body of elders. Laying hands is done by the elders or by the whole church. Benjamin L. Merkle notes that the laying on of hands deals with appointing or commissioning someone for a specific task.<sup>9</sup> He further argues that it is the church's responsibility to ordain elders.<sup>10</sup>

God entrusts the selection of elders to the church. The selection is to be done in public. Thus, ordination to the pastorate is the open identification of an individual as part of the pastorate. It is the benediction given after the process has run its course in the local church.<sup>11</sup> It is debated, however as to whether laying on of hands conveys any inherent power or whether it is simply an acknowledgement of giftedness.<sup>12</sup>

In the New Testament, the recognition of a man's calling is best understood by the act of "laying on of hands" (1 Tim 5:22, 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). Though there may be some continuity with Old Testament accounts of the laying on of hands for blessing or a

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<sup>8</sup> Hiscox, *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, 344

<sup>9</sup> Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 210. Merkle argues against the use of the term *ordain* because in a technical sense it is not used in the New Testament the way in which the church and church leadership use it today. He prefers the usage of the terms *appointment* or *commission*. Yet, it does appear that there is a biblical precedent for ordination demonstrated by other New Testament scholars as will be shown later in this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 211.

<sup>11</sup> Treier and Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 484.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy Titus*, New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: B & H, 1992), 141-44.

particular service (Gen 48:14-22; Num 8:10, 11:16-17, 24-25), what takes place in the church is something with little parallel to those accounts.<sup>13</sup>

New Testament writers use several words denoting an appointment to a task that can be understood as the act of ordination.<sup>14</sup> In Titus 1:5 and Acts 6:3 the word *καθίστημι* is used. The King James Version translates *γενέσθαι* (to become) as “ordain” in the appointing of Judas’s replacement (Acts 1:22). Another word, *χειροτονέω*, means to appoint or install (Acts 14:23; 2 Cor 8:19).<sup>15</sup> It has also been defined as “to raise the hand to express an opinion in a vote.”<sup>16</sup>

Luke uses the word *ἐπιτίθημι* in Acts 6:6 to speak of the laying on of hands in recognition of an appointment.<sup>17</sup> Paul also uses *ἐπιθέσεως* in 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6. The same word is employed by the author of Hebrews perhaps as initiation into the church by way of baptism (Heb 6:2). The word signifies the imposition or superimposing of the hands<sup>18</sup> on something of someone. A. T. Robertson lists several nuances with respect to *ἐπιθεσις*.<sup>19</sup> It could serve as a sign of blessing (Matt 19:13), or healing (Mark 7:32). In Acts 8:17 and 19:6, the imposition of hands are employed in connection with receiving the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands set people apart for special tasks (Acts 13:3).<sup>20</sup> The word set apart is *Ἀφορίσατε*, which means to select one

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<sup>13</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy Titus*, 142-43.

<sup>14</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy Titus*, 141-42.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1083.

<sup>16</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 142.

<sup>17</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 334.

<sup>18</sup> Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 371.

<sup>19</sup> Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Fourth Gospel, the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman, 1932), 374.

<sup>20</sup> Robertson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 374.

person out of a group for a purpose or to appoint.<sup>21</sup> Leaders in the church sought God’s guidance through prayer and fasting in making an appointment to ministry.

According to Acts 14:23, hands were “raised”<sup>22</sup> (χειροτονέω) in the appointing of elders. It could be that the raising of the hands was to vote, but it does not seem likely that a vote would be taking place for the participle employed is Χειροτονήσαντες and has Paul and Barnabas as its subject and not the church (Acts 14:14-22).<sup>23</sup> The apostle Paul and Barnabas are continuing a tradition seen in Antioch (Acts 13:2-3) and their continuance argues for continuance of this tradition in the local church. Preeminently, the calling was by divine appointment (Acts 20:28), which would later be recognized by the congregants. Perhaps the appointment is best seen in the case of Timothy. God calls men to the ministry and the people recognize those whom God has called.

The context of 1 Timothy 5:22 pertains to elders and public identification with, and separation for, that office.<sup>24</sup> Ordination is the end of the vetting process and marks the beginning of pastoral ministry. George Knight affirms this beginning by the act of laying on of hands.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the serious nature of ordination is shown in the caution Paul gives to Timothy to “not be hasty” to lay hands on anyone. Care is required in

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<sup>21</sup> Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 158.

<sup>22</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 142. They argue that the word χειροτονέω originally meant to raise the hands to express an opinion in a vote.

<sup>23</sup> John Chrysostom, “Homilies,” trans. J. Walker, J. Sheppard, and H. Browne, ed. Philip Schaff, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, series 1, vol. 11, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012), 196. The exegetical entry is by George B. Stevens in Chrysostom’s work on the book of Acts. Acts 14:14-22 has Paul and Barnabas in view and not the church.

<sup>24</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 239.

<sup>25</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 370-71. The act of laying on of hands according to Knight is related to admitting Timothy into the ministry and the means (διὰ) by which the gift is bestowed. It appears that this bestowal comes after recognition. Paul already knows that the gift is in him (ὁ ἐστὶν ἐν σοὶ).

commissioning men for the ministry. Public affirmation by a body of believers is the final step in the ordaining process.<sup>26</sup>

In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul reminds the Ephesian elders that Timothy is authorized for public ministry in conjunction with hands having been laid on him. The gift was within him. The imposition of the hands by the elders was the outward show of affirmation for Timothy, identifying him with others who were fit for the task of ministry, “the public reading of Scripture,” “exhortation and teaching.” The gift was not conveyed to Timothy by the imposition of the hands.<sup>27</sup>

The gift was “in” him (2 Tim 1:6). What came later was the acknowledgement of his gifting. The act of laying hands was a communal commissioning (1 Tim 4:14) in conjunction with God’s conversional initiation (2 Tim 1:6).<sup>28</sup> The touching of the hands serves as a powerful reminder to Timothy. It closely aligns with the sacraments of the church. Robert Yarbrough points out the sacramentality of laying on of hands in 2 Timothy 1:6 because of its reinforcement of the reality of divine favor and equipping for tasks greater than flesh alone can undertake.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Knight argues that laying on of hands is the result of a process positing an appropriate timespan before the act takes place.<sup>30</sup>

Laying hands is the culmination of listening to God through prayer and fasting, approving those being set apart for ministry (Acts 13:2-3). It is the acknowledgment and the affirmation that one is qualified to carry out the task and has the character compatible with being in pastoral ministry. It appears that almost at the inception of the church was the recognition of men who were set apart for ministry by the laying on of hands (Acts

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<sup>26</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 374.

<sup>27</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 323-24.

<sup>28</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 324.

<sup>29</sup> Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2018), 356.

<sup>30</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 239.

13:2-3, 20:28; 1 Tim 4:14). The laying on of human hands was in agreement with the Spirit's previous act of setting men "apart for the work" (Acts 13:2). The act of ordaining men to the work of ministry is rooted in the first century church. Stating that the laying on of hands is recognition prevents one from seeing this act as the gift or gifts for ministry being conferred. The gift of the Holy Spirit and the gifts the Holy Spirit gives for the ministry must already be in the one being publicly marked off for the ministry by having hands laid on them.

### **An Exploration of the Titles for the Office of Pastoral Ministry**

It is best to identify biblical offices by their biblical names. The New Testament writers use several titles to describe the pastor (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6; 1 Pet 5:1-2). The pastor is called *ἐπίσκοπος* (bishop), *πρεσβύτερος* (elder), and by way of implication, *ποιμήν* (shepherd).<sup>31</sup> These designations are filled with content from the context of their respective biblical texts. The two prevalent designations are *ἐπίσκοπος*, which carries the idea of oversight, and *πρεσβύτερος*, which denotes the function of governing.

Knight suggests that oversight is a major aspect of a bishop.<sup>32</sup> In the title *elder*, he points to the function of ruling. Though these two terms refer to one office,<sup>33</sup> there are some key differences. *Elder* is a predominately Pauline designation (Acts 14:23, 20:17; 1 Tim 5:17, 19), which appears to have been inherited from the Jewish synagogue (cf. Acts

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<sup>31</sup> The designation shepherd is inferred from Peter's command to the elders who receive his correspondence (1 Pet 5:2). He uses a verb *ποιμάνετε*, an aorist active imperative verb, commanding the elder to shepherd. The command implies that in the shepherding function, there are "shepherds" (*ποιμήν*) who perform the function.

<sup>32</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 150.

<sup>33</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 685. The usual explanation for this repetition suggests the adaptation of parallel traditions (one using the term *elder*, the other the term *overseer*). Their alignment here further suggests either that the two terms were equivalent in Paul's mind (or in some church settings could be), or that the two church roles they describe were evolving into one.

11:30, 15:2).<sup>34</sup> Merkle notes that there is overlap between the synagogue elders and the Christian elders, but also points out that the New Testament church defined for itself the specific duties that those who held this title performed.<sup>35</sup> James M. Hamilton, Jr. states, “The church transcends all ethnic and political distinctions and has no geographic boundaries.”<sup>36</sup> Elders in the New Testament church are different from those that were in the Jewish synagogues.

In the Epistle of Hebrews, the designation *shepherd* is used only of Christ as “the great Shepherd of the sheep” (Heb 13:20). The adjective “great” is emphasized by way of repetition of the article.<sup>37</sup> It is Jesus who is “the Shepherd” and “the Great” One. Christ is the Great Shepherd because of His better blood and superior sacrifice. “Great” being the adjective used to describe Christ as Shepherd suggest that there are other shepherds who are not “great.” Those then, would be His “undershepherds.”

The author of Hebrews simply calls them ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, the ones leading the church in both Hebrews 13:7, and 17. He uses the present tense participle in both texts to underscore what is characteristic of these leaders. They are to be continuously leading by way of the Word, a function found in the elder/bishop classification (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9). An emphasis on the authority is wielded by these leading ones. They derive their authority from the Word of God. They are those “who spoke the Word of God” to their audiences. This speaking of the Word of God could refer to preaching evangelistically (Acts 8:25, 11:19, 13:46) or preaching to the church (Acts 4:29, 31; 1 Pet 4:11).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 680.

<sup>35</sup> Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 69-72.

<sup>36</sup> James M. Hamilton, Jr., *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 31.

<sup>37</sup> David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary, vol. 35 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 627.

<sup>38</sup> Allen, *Hebrews*, 627.

Identifying pastoral titles is significant. The pastorate cannot be regulated by unbiblical or extra biblical terminology. The names of the office for the men who serve in this role must be taken from Scripture for the purpose of having God, through the believing community, regulate this office. Since the Bible is the governing authority in the church, it is necessary to allow Scripture to inform the understanding as to who is to function in this capacity. According to the Bible, a pastor is labeled as an overseer or bishop, an elder or ruler, a shepherd or a leader. The titles not only inform the church as to what ministers are allowed to be called, but also give the form and function of those who occupy the office of pastor.

### **The Form and Function of the Minister in Pastoral Texts**

Ascendency to the pastorate is couched between two main acquisitions. The candidate must have the *form* and *function* of a pastor to be ordained. These two elements are essential for the minister prior to ordination. Both form and function should be taken as non-negotiables. Biblical texts that layout prerequisites and prescriptions often do so by conveying conduct. It is almost assumed that the individuals considering the pastorate are godly and thus, some of the key texts are primarily focused on how a pastor is to function. Still, these same texts demand a godly life in order to qualify for the office of a pastor.

An unholy man is barred from the ministry. The aspirations are thwarted if there is a deficiency in practical purity. Therefore, in Acts 20:17-35, in giving charge to the Ephesian elders, Paul reminds them to take heed not just to the flock of God who the Holy Spirit has made them overseers, but also to themselves (v. 28). Though the office is viewed more functionally than formally in this text,<sup>39</sup> the imperative to “be on guard for yourselves” denotes the minister’s responsibility of self-watch.

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<sup>39</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 427.

If the counsel to be on guard is coupled with other texts speaking to the issue of pastoral ministry (e.g., 1 Tim 4:16), then the minister is to maintain the upkeep of his moral life also. Pastors are first called to a theological, spiritual, and ethical integrity.<sup>40</sup> The minister is to see to himself before he can see to the flock of God. As Paul rounds off his discourse to the Ephesians elders in Acts 20, he ends where he began—he calls the Ephesian elders to a life of holiness, this time by imitating his life (vv. 33-35).

Contextually, he prohibits the elder from being overly attached to money (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:33). The form of the pastor, in this instance, had to do with combating false teaching or a character flaw in the candidate’s surrounding community. Greed is an internal flaw whose seed is covetousness. It is something the Lord warned against (Luke 12:15). The example that the apostle has set is not “lusting” ἐπεθύμησα after anyone’s silver or gold (Acts 20:33).

The admonishment is given against the backdrop of “savage wolves” who would “come in” not “sparing the flock.” False teachers were known by their greed and excesses. According to Titus 1, the Cretans were “evil beasts” and “lazy gluttons” (v. 12). The elder whom Titus was to appoint would be one to shut them up (v. 11). It could not be done with a life similar to the ones who needed to be refuted (v. 9). The possession of a godly life was required. The weight of the pastor’s words is found in his witness.

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, the need for holiness is set forth as an inescapable reality for a pastoral candidate. Both texts contain the overarching qualification for ministry, which is the purity of the aspirant’s life (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). Both texts are also typically translated to the degree that an overseer be “above reproach,” but two different words are used to give the essence of his life. In 1 Timothy 3:2, Paul uses the

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<sup>40</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 846.



word ἀνεπίλημpton, meaning one who is not apprehended. The word points to one who is not caught in a trap, not open to censure, or one who has irreproachable behavior.<sup>41</sup>

The term is also used in the qualification of placing widows on a list to serve the church (1 Tim 5:7) and a general rule given to Timothy at the end of the Epistle in terms of commandment keeping (1 Tim 6:14). Paul is not arguing for sinless perfection for the candidate. He is stating that any man who desires this office should be of stellar conduct without any provable marks against his character.<sup>42</sup>

In Titus 1:6 the term is ἀνέγκλητος, pertaining to a man who cannot be called to account, unreprouvable, unaccused.<sup>43</sup> Both the words of 1 Timothy and Titus are normally translated as “blameless.” There are some slight nuances, however. The point is that anyone who wants to be a pastor is required to have the highest moral character. Who the man really is should align with the biblical portrait of what a godly man looks like. He first of all shows himself fit to lead by not being rightfully blamed of wrongdoing.

John Polhill distills the form of a pastor down to humility as the first of three characteristics.<sup>44</sup> Humility is the “hallmark” of the man oftentimes spoken of as serving (*douleuó*) the Lord (cf. 1 Thess 1:9; Col 3:24).<sup>45</sup> In the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, John Calvin said, “The only way by which you can ever attain true meekness, is to have a your heart imbued with a humble opinion of yourself and respect of others.”<sup>46</sup> He spoke of every Christian, but certainly the model of this sort of humility is to be exemplified by a minister of the gospel. In addition, he is to model what it looks like to be the Lord’s

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<sup>41</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 44.

<sup>42</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 195.

<sup>43</sup> Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 423.

<sup>44</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 424. The two other characteristics Polhill mentions have to do with function.

<sup>45</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 424.

<sup>46</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), bk 3, sec. 5, 10.

slave (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1). Blamelessness is not solely for the pastor. According to Philippians 2:15, the church should be “blameless” and “above reproach.”<sup>47</sup>

For the church to be blameless it must have blameless leaders. Blameless leaders confront immoral conduct in the members and in the communities that surround the church. A pastor’s witness serves as an anchor to hold him steady as he teaches the Word of God. As Paul writes about the form of pastors in the church, he sets the qualification of holiness as supreme. All other qualifications for the pastorate are an outworking of this chief trait. Calvin ties the two texts of 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 together. Having noted the different words used to describe the form of the elder, he summarizes,

There will be no one among men that is free from every vice; but it is one thing to be blemished with ordinary vices, which do not hurt the reputation, because they are found in men of highest excellence, and another thing to have a disgraceful name, or to be stained with any baseness. In order, therefore, that a bishop may not be without authority, he enjoins that there shall be made a selection of one who has a good and honorable reputation, and not chargeable with any remarkable vice. Besides, he does not lay down a rule for Timothy what sort of person he must select, but likewise reminds every one of those who aspire to that rank, to institute a careful examination of himself and of his life.<sup>48</sup>

The authority of the pastor is found in what he says when coupled with how he lives. Paul’s words to Timothy and Titus are, if a man is considering pastoral ministry, then the form of his life is to be godly. This is how he leads the church and replicates other leaders who have the same practical prowess for godliness. What the pastor shows the church in essence is that holiness is not hopeless. The man of God is no different than any other man or woman. He is not the standard of Christianity, but he models the standard

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<sup>47</sup> Paul uses two different words. The first word, recorded in the NASB as blameless is the word ἀμεμπτοι, which suggests to be free from fault or defect. The second word which is translated as “above reproach” is the word ἄμωμα. It means to be without blemish or unblameable. Both words speak to the character of the church, much like the character of the elder. They are marked by conduct not stained by sin.

<sup>48</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 76.

in such a way that if his example is followed, those who imitate his way of life will also become godly.

The summary statements pertaining to key texts on pastoral ministry almost always come back to a life of purity and godliness. The form of the pastor is vital to his function as an elder, which is what Yarbrough concludes when speaking of the indispensable quality and depth of godliness required to be an overseer.<sup>49</sup> Philip Towner makes a similar argument that the qualifications for ministry make for a collective force of the ideal profile of leadership (Titus 1:5-9).<sup>50</sup>

The form is the way in which the New Testament writers speak of the conduct and character of the candidate. The leader's life is worthy of imitation when he models what Scripture says he should be. The church is given the mandate to "consider" and "remember" the outcome of the leader's life (Heb 13:7). After consideration and remembrance, they are given the command to "imitate their faith."

### **The Function of a Pastor**

Having examined the form of the candidate, the function is now set forth. The function is often given in the titles for pastor. For instance, *overseer* suggest oversight. *Shepherd* signifies the act of shepherding. To the term *elder* is attached the function of ruling (1 Tim 5:17). Those who rule well are further defined as οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ, or the ones who are physically, mentally, or spiritually toiling, striving, or struggling<sup>51</sup> in word and instruction.

It is hard work to be an elder. The function entails one who is to work with wearisome effort.<sup>52</sup> The candidate is not to rest on his gifts. Rather, he is to cultivate the

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<sup>49</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 195.

<sup>50</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 690.

<sup>51</sup> Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 558.

<sup>52</sup> Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 355.

gift(s) that God has placed in him. Paul’s delegate, Timothy, receives such a command by way of the apostle telling him to “fan into flames the gift of God” placed on the inside of him (2 Tim 1:6). The task is laborious, but it is not compulsory. The pastoral candidate should not see this work as something that is burdensome.

The two most pervasive prescriptions of the pastorate are giving “oversight” (Acts 20:28) and “shepherding” (1 Pet 5:2). Several other tasks are folded into these general functions. In terms of oversight, the expectation of the overseer is to carry out his Master’s wishes. There were duties to execute, and they were to be done to the fullest extent.<sup>53</sup> The overseer is set over the house of God as a ministerial steward with specific obligations to carry out. The task is not something that can be picked up and put down at will. Rather, it is a faithful commitment to the house of God upon entering the ministry.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the overseer is not to carry the title without having demonstrated first that he can perform the function.

Function is at the heart of what Paul directs in communicating with the elders in Ephesus (Acts 20:17-35). Elders/overseers watch over the flock as shepherds—people who care for their flock by nurturing and by protecting.<sup>55</sup> The duration of their shepherding is continuous. It is picked up in the verb Προσέχετε, a present active imperative, signifying the permanent nature and the responsibility of being vigilant.<sup>56</sup> The task of caring for the flock by divine appointment (ἐθετο), God the Holy Spirit being the one who sets the shepherds apart for this function.

The primary way in which the function of shepherding was carried out in Acts was by being “on the alert,” coupled with the proclamation of the Word of God (Acts 20:31). It is one of the major facets that marked Paul’s ministry—that “he did not shrink

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<sup>53</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 687.

<sup>54</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 687.

<sup>55</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 845.

<sup>56</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 845.

from declaring . . . the whole purpose of God” (Acts 20:27). He proclaimed his message to the church and the world.<sup>57</sup> The proclamation of the Word is a primary function of the candidate for pastoral ministry. As he gives watch over the souls entrusted to his care, he is calling them to obey the Word of God.

The author of Hebrews does not use the technical terms elder/bishop/shepherd. He reserves the term *shepherd* for Christ (Heb 13:20). In referring to pastors, he uses their function as a designation. When, however, he references pastors, he makes use of a participial phrase—*τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν*, “the ones leading you. The verb *ἡγουμένοις* is a present tense participle either in the middle or the passive voice. If it is in the middle voice, then it would mean those that are themselves leading. If it is passive, then the leaders are the ones being acted upon, more than likely by God who is causing them to lead His people.

The best option of the two is to take the verb as being in the middle voice. The pastors are the ones shepherding and no others are functioning in this way.<sup>58</sup> The emphasis is on the authority of these undershepherds.<sup>59</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner contends that pastors are the leaders who have the responsibility of governing the church.<sup>60</sup>

On a broad scale, the pastor is someone who exercises oversight, ruling over a local congregation and leading them by way of teaching the Word (1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:9; Heb 13:17). The pastor as shepherd provides vivid imagery into what an elder does on a constant basis in occupying this office. The command to shepherd, *ποιμάνετε*, is used in 1

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<sup>57</sup> In Acts 20:20, Paul declared the whole counsel of God from house to house. Polhill notes, “The reference to houses most likely is the house–church meetings of the Ephesian Christians.” Polhill, *Acts*, 424. At the same time, Paul also proclaimed his message to the world leaving no one out, neither Jew nor Gentile and this made him innocent of the blood of those that did not accept his message (Acts 20:26–27). It would be incumbent on the elders in Ephesus to follow his lead. Indeed, Paul considers himself an example that they are to follow if they are to function properly as God’s undershepherds.

<sup>58</sup> Allen, *Hebrews*, 624.

<sup>59</sup> Allen, *Hebrews*, 624.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Shepherding God’s Flock* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 115.

Peter 5:2 and Acts 20:28-29. Peter uses the ingressive aorist informing the elders to whom he writes that they are to carry out this task with new vigor.<sup>61</sup> The elders are to watch over “the flock of God,” as those who has no exclusive rights.<sup>62</sup> The oversight a pastor is to give is non-negotiable. Schreiner identifies the lack of rights by giving three functions from Peter’s explanation: they shepherd because it is God’s will, they do so not for money, and they carry out their duty as an example to others.<sup>63</sup>

The shepherd imagery provides the serious undertaking of the pastoral candidate. The shepherd imagery is used of God in the Old Testament (Ps 100:3; Isa 40:11; Jer 13:17; Ezek 34). In the New Testament, Christ takes the metaphor of shepherding to Himself (John 10; 21:15-17; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:2; Heb 13:20). Peter takes the metaphor to himself as a fellow elder writing to other elders (1 Pet 5:2). Furthermore, the man ordained to ministry in a local church is called a shepherd and functions as such.

To thrive in the activity of shepherding is to receive the Chief Shepherd’s reward. The motivation for faithful shepherding is the “unfading crown of glory.” The undershepherd is not worried about pay. This is not to say he should not be paid (1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Thess 5:12-13), but he is not consumed with money—something that is characteristic of false teachers (Titus 1:11; Jude 11). Elders are not greedy for temporal gain.<sup>64</sup>

### **Character and Conduct Proven as Necessity in the Stewardship of Two Homes**

The character and conduct of an elder are wedded together and can never be divorced. The elder cannot have the character without the conduct, and cannot have the

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<sup>61</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 178.

<sup>62</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 178.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 230.

<sup>64</sup> Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 181.

traits without the function. The two places where those entities meet are in two homes. Character and conduct are first seen in the man's home life. Success there permits him to carry out a stewardship in the "house of God." Paul focuses on the candidate as husband and father.

Thus far, what has been provided are the basic measurements for the man who claims a calling to the ministry. Here, one receives guidelines from the qualifications given to the pastoral candidate. These come by way of two key texts, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Both texts deal with the man's home life. According to 1 Timothy 3:4, he is given the mandate to manage his household well, with further explanation as to what that will look like.

In Titus 1:6-7, the necessity of being "above reproach" serves as a bookend to his stewardship over his wife and children. Though there is no direct command to manage the household such as the one found in 1 Timothy 3:4-5, Titus is given the litmus test as to how to assess one's fitness for ministry. He deals with the candidate's private life in the lesser house as the grounds for ministry in the greater house, the household of faith (Gal 6:10). Many of the early churches were house churches (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 1:2, cf. 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2; 2 John).<sup>65</sup>

The reality and the metaphor bring significant weight when considering a man for ministry. In the context of listing qualifications for the pastorate, Paul says that the church is "the household of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim 3:15). A pastoral candidate must have mastery over two homes. He has to demonstrate that he can manage his house and only then can he exercise authority in the second household, which is the house of God.

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<sup>65</sup> It could be that John is writing to an actual woman in 2 John whom he calls the "elect lady." If so, she is a hospitable woman who opened her home for Christians who were passing through. Her home could have been used for worship services and would have been important to that community. Hence the reason why John sternly instructs her not to welcome or greet people who do not bring the teaching of the Apostles (vv. 9-11).

If he cannot provide management in his own home, then “how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim 3:5). In addition, what Titus faced in Crete were those who were “upsetting whole families” (Titus 1:11) as they taught things that ran contrary to sound doctrine. The minister is not a tyrant reigning over his wife and children. The love of God is first seen in his own home and then is carried over into the house of God. Without the former he would be a hypocrite in the latter.<sup>66</sup>

After the overarching qualification of being blameless or being above reproach, the apostle plunges into what that looks like in a pastoral candidate’s life. In both Timothy and Titus he begins with the man’s family, starting with his wife. He assumes that the candidate is married and says he is to be the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). The phrase in both text is *μιάς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα/ἀνήρ*.<sup>67</sup> A literal rendering denotes that a prospective elder is a “one-woman man.”

There are four major views on what is meant by “a one-woman man.”<sup>68</sup> The point being made is that the pastoral candidate is faithful to his wife. If the one being considered is not married it does not mean that he should not or cannot pastor. It means

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<sup>66</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 200.

<sup>67</sup> In Titus 1:6, the word differs in form. In 1 Timothy the word is in the accusative. In Titus it is in the nominative case.

<sup>68</sup> There are four major views on what is meant by “a one-woman man.” First, some say Paul is arguing against polygamy—that the elder cannot have multiple wives. Polygamy would have been unacceptable among Christians and probably did not need such an explicit prohibition. The second view suggests that Paul is disallowing single men to enter the ministry—if he does not have a wife, then he should not be considered for the pastorate. Paul was a single man, however (1 Cor 7:7-8). In addition, he commends the single state as he gave marriage advice to the saints in Corinth (1 Cor 7:1, 32-35). The third view argues that Paul is prohibiting remarriage after divorce, i.e., they can only have one wife for the duration of their life. This does not fit with Rom 7:1-3, where Paul clearly makes the case that one is able to be married when one spouse dies and is no longer bound by law in the event of a spouse’s death. Also, if Paul wanted to prohibit a divorced man from entering into the ministry, then he could have plainly said so. The verb *ἀπολύω*, which means to release or loose to send away or divorce, was used of the action Joseph was willing to take upon hearing that his wife was pregnant without him being the cause (Matt 1:19). Singleness, divorce, and remarriage, nor remaining faithful after the death of a spouse are the point of being a one-woman man. The point is that the pastoral candidate is faithful to his wife. If the one being considered is not married it does not mean that he should not or cannot pastor. It means that he should be sexually pure.



that he should be sexually pure.<sup>69</sup> Sexual purity with or without a wife is required for one to occupy the office of an elder. In addition, the testimony of the wife as it pertains to her husband being considered as an elder would be more than likely taken into account. According to 1 Corinthians 9:5, the apostles had the right to take along a believing wife—a sister in the Lord.<sup>70</sup>

If the pastor were married, then it stands to reason that his wife would also be a believer. Not only would she be a help to him in the ministry (a take along), but she could vouchsafe for the integrity of his life. His wife is his most intimate companion and one who should know him better than anyone else. His ability to lead or the lack thereof would be observable in the church. If his wife did not believe his message or rejected in-home shepherding, then it would not be possible for him to carry out this management in God's house. The elder's wife as a believer is a *sine qua non* for pastoral ministry.<sup>71</sup>

The virtue and vice lists move from the wife to the children of the candidate in Titus 1:6. In 1 Timothy 3:2-3, the virtues to have and the vices to be avoided are mentioned prior to dealing with the candidate's children (1 Tim 3:4). The matter at hand is that the children of the overseer are to be well-behaved and obedient.<sup>72</sup> Instructions given to Timothy come across as less stringent than what is given to Titus. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul says that the children are to be kept "under control with all dignity" or "having children in submission."

The idea is that his children are obedient. They are ἐν ὑποταγῇ (in submission) to the προϊστάμενον (governing) of their father. The father presides or rules over<sup>73</sup> his

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<sup>69</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 195.

<sup>70</sup> Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 401.

<sup>71</sup> Hammet, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 210. Hammet unequivocally marks an elder's wife as a believer if he is going to pastor.

<sup>72</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 281.

<sup>73</sup> George Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (repr.,

children and they submit to his leadership. He is able to keep them under control and they are not accused of riotous living or debauchery. They are not out of control being in the world. The ruler of the house keeps them in line when they go out into the world.

The father does not rule with a heavy hand. He mimics the love and provision of the Heavenly Father. The pastoral candidate keeps in mind that when it comes to his children, he is not to provoke them to anger but is to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). He has control over his house, specifically over his kids.

Titus also provides a similar qualification. Paul’s directive to Titus is for him to appoint elders “having children who believe” (Titus 1:6). The measurement seems higher in Titus. He uses the phrase τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, which gives the impression that if a man is to serve as an elder, then his children must be saved. The word πιστά is taken to mean “faithful”<sup>74</sup> according to this position, softening the requirement of salvation in a word such as “believe.” Some see it as the virtual equivalent of Paul’s words to Timothy.<sup>75</sup> Others take a more stringent position and leave the requirement at the level of belief.<sup>76</sup>

Paul’s counsel to Timothy and Titus is more than likely the same; namely, the children are to be well-behaved and “faithful” to obey their father as the provider and spiritual leader of the house. Regarding the context of Titus, the religious convictions of the father were to be reflected in his children. The pastor’s house was united and, in this way, confronted the divisive situation in Crete.<sup>77</sup> Titus was to set things in order (Titus 1:5). The scene in Crete was different than the established churches in Ephesus that already had

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Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006), 381.

<sup>74</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 290.

<sup>75</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 290.

<sup>76</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 282. Lea appears to argue for the belief of the children. He states that the elder is to be a father as reflected in the behavior and a spiritual father as reflected in spiritual commitment.

<sup>77</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 682.

elders. In fact, there seems to already have been cases of discipline amongst the elders in Ephesus (1 Tim 5:19-20). In Crete, having such disfunction, much of it being on the family level (Cretans were upsetting whole families, v. 11), it would have been vital to appoint men that had their families intact in order to counter the culture. This would set the example in the household of faith and be a magnet to the world around the church.

The first outworking of blamelessness was seen in the man's marriage and how he cared for his children. Care was provided on a physical level but also on the spiritual level. The test of an elder's home would give evidence as to whether a man could manage God's house. The candidate for ministry is a steward of two homes. As he is in his own home, so he is to function as God's steward—*ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον* (Titus 1:7).

The elder as household steward is conspicuous. In 1 Timothy he moves from the lesser house to the greater house (1 Tim 3:4-5). But in Titus 1:7 he is more explicit, using the term *οἰκονόμον*. This designation conveys the idea of one who is the manager of a household or of household affairs.<sup>78</sup> He leads functioning as a superintendent in the church. A pastor manages the affairs of God in the local church.<sup>79</sup>

The form and function come together in Pauline theology by way of moral integrity serving as the adhesive, binding the pastor's duties as shepherd. From faithfulness to his wife, Paul launches into these traits (1 Tim 3:2-3) and then circles back to the candidate's care for his children before giving a prohibition regarding the spiritual immaturity of the candidate—"not a new convert" (v. 6)—and finally addressing his conduct in light of how the world views him, "those outside the church" (v. 7). In Titus he addresses blamelessness by listing five vices and seven virtues (Titus 1:7b-9).

The qualifications form a composite picture of a life capable of outward and visible assessment.<sup>80</sup> They should not be viewed as a checklist. The ministerial candidate

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<sup>78</sup> Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 440.

<sup>79</sup> Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 440-41.

<sup>80</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 684.

is a holy man, a trait not mentioned, but assumed in 1 Timothy 3, yet unequivocally laid down in Titus 1:7. The qualification of holiness is demonstrated by an elder as the model example for a people who are called to the same standard (Deut 32:4; Ps 144:17; Prov 17:26, 21:15).

When comparing 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, the lists are quite similar with slight variations. Both lists call for blamelessness or stipulate that the candidate is to be “above reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). The two texts call for the candidate to be a family man (1 Tim 3:2, 4-5; Titus 1:6a). He is not to be an angry man, but peaceful, gentle, and hospitable, having self-control (Tim 3:2-3; Titus 1:7-8).

Both texts call for sobriety, which could be a major qualification that leads to other sins, such as lacking control and exercising bad stewardship over finances. There is a good possibility that drinking would cause the elder to be loose with his words and even his fists.<sup>81</sup> Thus drinking, though it may not be absolutely forbidden (1 Tim 5:23), requires scrupulosity in maintaining what it means to be “above reproach (Prov 20:1). Perhaps it is better to stay away from intoxicating beverages altogether to avoid the appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22) so that no one is able to speak evil of the pastor (Rom 4:16). The man must maintain a reputation of godliness in the home, in the church, and in the world.

### **Teaching as the Distinguishing Quality of Pastoring**

The traits and functions of a minister are similar to those of a deacon with one major difference. The pastor’s position is one of teaching and overseeing, “ruling” (1 Tim 5:17). The teaching qualification belongs to the office of elder. The *ἐπίσκοπος* and not the *διάκονοι* is said to be the one who is to rule, teach, and manage the house of God.<sup>82</sup> To

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<sup>81</sup> One who is *μὴ πλῆκτης*, “not pugnacious” (NASB) is defined as one who is not a bruiser or ready with a blow—a contentious or a quarrelsome person. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 516. Drinking could lead to violence and in many cases, it does.

<sup>82</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 150.

this point, Titus is unambiguous. The role of the pastor is the ministry of the Word. In commenting on the teaching component of pastoral ministry Chrysostom stated,

For if this is not done, all is lost. He knows not how to combat the adversaries, and to “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” and to beat down reasonings, he who knows not what he ought to teach with regard to right doctrine, far from him be the Teacher’s throne. For the other qualities may be found in those under his rule, such as to be “blameless, to have his children in subjection, to be hospitable, just, “holy.” But that which characterizes the teacher is this, to be able to instruct in the word, to which no regard is now paid.<sup>83</sup>

Many of the qualifications for pastoral ministry are also given to deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13). In addition, the congregation is called to blamelessness (Eph 5:27; Col 1:22; Phil 2:15; Jude 24). The church is also gifted by God to serve (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 1 Pet 4:10-11). Some who are not elders may have teaching roles, e.g., women are called to teach what is good to young women and children (Titus 2:4-8). Notwithstanding, the primary teachers in the church are those whom God the Spirit has appointed as overseers (Acts 20:28).

If a man cannot teach the Word of God, then he cannot be a pastor (1 Tim 3:2). According to Hebrews 13:7, leaders are those who “speak the Word.” They are those whom the congregation is called to obey. They have a communicated authority which they exercise as they teach Scripture, and the congregation has a responsibility to obey biblical teaching. The elder instructs biblically and therefore must know the Word of God.<sup>84</sup>

At Peter’s restoration, Christ commands His disciple to feed His sheep twice and tend or shepherd His sheep once (John 21:15-17). Oversight and shepherding intersect at the teaching and preaching of the Word (Acts 20:20, 28-32). It takes a godly man who is filled with the knowledge of God’s Word and sound theology to lead a local church.

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<sup>83</sup> John Chrysostom, “Homilies,” ed. Philip Schaff, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, series 1, vol. 13, *Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012), 525.

<sup>84</sup> Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God’s Program* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 145.

Timothy receives similar instructions to “pay close attention” to his teaching and as he did so it would ensure the salvation of those who heard him (1 Tim 4:16).

In Crete, “sound doctrine” was a prerequisite for encouragement of the saints and for the purpose of refuting those in opposition to the Word. In Titus 1:9, the present active infinitive *παρακαλεῖν* is pulling double duty. This infinitive verb carries the sense of “exhort” and within the exhortation takes place within the sphere (ἐν) of correct teaching.<sup>85</sup> The overseer cannot be theologically ignorant. An ignorance of healthy teaching will prevent him from encouraging the saints.<sup>86</sup> Acquaintance with the truth is mandatory for the man who desires to enter the ministry.

The second duty is laid down by the use of another present active infinitive, the word *ἐλέγχειν*. The expression defines the action of bringing another person to the point of recognizing wrong doing.<sup>87</sup> The Word of God is integral and inseparable from the pastorate. Those being considered for ordination need to have a good grasp on the Bible. The condition upon which a man may enter the ministry is contingent on whether he holds to the faithful word. Undoubtedly, Paul is heading off someone who does not know truth when he fences off pastoral ministry to someone who is a novice (1 Tim 3:6).

### **A Plurality of Qualified Men as Elders in the Local Church**

The local church should operate with a plurality of qualified men in the pastorate. Terms common in predominantly African American churches, such as

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<sup>85</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 294.

<sup>86</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 489. Yarbrough rightly suggests that encouragement looks differently in different situations. Encouraging saints in seasons of grief will not be identical to encouraging a saint in a discipline situation.

<sup>87</sup> Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 315. Several nuances are used to define *ἐλέγχειν*. All of them suggest that what is being done is in response to correcting someone’s wayward thinking. The opponents of Christ were asked which one “convicts” Him of sin (John 8:46). And it is the Spirit’s role to “convict” the world of sin (John 16:8). It is the exposure of something gone awry in someone else. In the Pastoral Epistles someone is placed under the scrutiny of another for the purpose of correcting that individual (Titus 2:15). It could also denote disapproval (2 Tim 4:2; 1 Tim 5:20).

*associate minister* and *woman minister*, find no parallel in Scripture. The Word of God is clear that the office of pastor is restricted to men. First, the conditional statement “if anyone” (1 Tim 3:1) may suggest that the apostle was leaving open the possibility of women serving in the capacity of pastor. Yet, he quickly moves on and says that the “anyone” being considered needs to be a “one-woman man.” For man, he uses the word ἄνδρα, a specific designation which denotes a man or a husband.

If Paul wanted to use a generic term, thus leaving open the possibility of women serving in this capacity, then he could have used a more generic rendering i.e., ἄνθρωπος, a word meaning humanity. Galatians 3:28 is generally used to argue for the presence of women in ministry. Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female. It looks as though ministerial distinction is abolished, but the apostle is not arguing for abolishment of distinction in role, but one that pertains to being heirs with Christ, sons and daughters of Abraham.<sup>88</sup>

Other passages used to argue for women in ministry are the presence of women at the empty tomb (Matt 28:5-8; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1). Priscilla taught a man named Apollos along with her husband (Acts 18:26). Additionally, women occupied a prophetic role in both Old and New Testaments (Exod 15:20; Judg 4:4; 2 Kgs 22:14; Luke 2:36-38; Acts 21:9). Neither women at the empty tomb nor women in the prophetic ministry make a case for the office of an elder.

The role of pastor is tied to the church. Though there may be some leadership parallels with that of the Old Testament picture of shepherding and even some aspects of what is found in a Jewish synagogue, the church is a new institution.<sup>89</sup> The “woman minister” category is not found in the qualifications of church leadership. Furthermore, not all men are able to serve as elders. Those who occupy the position of pastor have a

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<sup>88</sup> Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 142.

<sup>89</sup> The church does not come into existence until Acts 2, signified by the indwelling and abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit within believers. What comes with the church are the two offices (elder and deacon) with the qualifications set forth in the Pastoral Epistles.

divine expectation and mandate to measure up to the character traits provided in Scripture. Being a man does not qualify one for the office. Meeting the objective standards listed in God's Word constitute the qualification to serve as a shepherd in the house of God.

In many churches, particularly in predominantly African American churches, the "office" of associate minister has brought about as much confusion, if not more so than that of the "women minister." This extra-biblical category cannot be regulated because there are no texts by which the church may do so. The language of both *associate minister* and *women minister* should be done away with in favor of biblical language with respect to the leadership offices. When this is the case, the church can use Scripture as a job description and a character guide to determine whether a man has the form and function of a New Testament pastor.

Finally, the office of pastor in a local church should have a plurality of godly and gifted men who serve in this capacity. The first mentioning of elders in the church is found in Acts 11:30, where Paul and Barnabas were sent to the elders in Jerusalem. A plurality of elders is mentioned in Acts 14:23 and at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. In Acts 20, Paul is giving instruction to a plurality of elders in the Church of Ephesus.

There are only a few examples where *elder* is used in the singular (1 Tim 5:19; 2 John 1; 3 John 1; 1 Pet 5:1),<sup>90</sup> and nowhere in the New Testament argues for a singular elder exercising authority in a local church<sup>91</sup> along with a deacon board who help co-lead and shares authority with the pastor. A biblical ecclesiology informs the local church that there should always be a plurality of elders in the church (1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5; Jas 5:14;

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<sup>90</sup> Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 163. Merkle has a concise discussion on the singular usages that drive home the fact that though the plural for elder is not used in this text, it is not arguing for a singular elder model of ecclesiology. These passages can be explained in the following ways: 1 Tim 5:19 the charge being brought is against only one elder. Thus, the singular usage is necessitated. In 2 and 3 John, John uses the designation as a term of personal designation. He is more than likely known by the believing community as "the elder." Also, in 1 Pet 5, Peter calls himself an elder, but is writing as one to a number of elders. He uses the term *συμπρεσβύτερος*. He is a fellow elder and does not consider himself above the others.

<sup>91</sup> Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 164.



1 Pet 5:1; Heb 13:7, 17). Where this is not the case, there should be leadership development. Men who can serve in this capacity should be identified. If they desire to serve and meet the qualifications, then they should be trained and ordained. Upon ordination, they should be publicly identified by the laying on of the hands as one who has been set apart by God to lead God's people. They are to be family men and men of sound theology, humble leaders with a heart for God's people.

### **Conclusion**

The New Testament teaches that the church should have a plurality of qualified men in one local church. Pastors should be ordained even though the ordination ceremonies performed in churches differ from ordination in the New Testament. Still, qualified men are to be formerly recognized by the believing community as the men whom God has set apart in order to lead the church. There are several biblical designations informing the church of the character and function of pastors. Thus, there is no need to create extra-biblical categories, i.e., associate minister. The office of pastor is governed by what Scripture says and needs to reflect God's original design for that role within the church.

The men who occupy the pastorate must be godly men. If married, these men ought to have singular devotion to their wives in both heart and body. In addition, they must be faithful fathers. In doctrine, the pastor is to not only be knowledgeable, but also sound in what he believes. The moral and theological purity of the pastor enables the pastor to be effective in ministering to the church. The form (essence) and function (exercise) of a pastor should already be operative in candidates for pastoral ministry. If godliness and giftedness are operative in a candidate for pastoral ministry and he has the desire (1 Tim 3:1), then he is permitted to pursue his call, which culminates in the public acknowledgement of the believing community that the man is called to shepherd.

CHAPTER 3  
THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF A CALL TO  
PASTORAL MINISTRY IN BLACK  
BAPTIST CHURCHES

Historically, ordination to ministry in black Baptist churches developed and flourished despite the restrictive and oppressive institution of slavery. This chapter will give insight into the black Baptist ecclesiological model of pastoral ministry. In researching this topic, it is necessary to limit the scope of research to black Baptist pastors as opposed to looking at Traditional Black Churches (TBC) or Predominately African American Churches (PAAC) because there are seven historically black denominations all with their own rich history regarding pastoral ministry.<sup>1</sup>

It is too daunting of a task to cover many of the black pastors in these denominations who made significant contributions to pastoral ministry. The space will not permit such an investigation. Therefore, the scope of this chapter will be limited to black Baptist pastorates. As a black Baptist pastor at a Baptist seminary, it is a personal hope to add something helpful to black church history. The black Baptist pastorate survived the ugliness of slavery. It thrives today and will continue to do so as it remains faithful to God and His Word.

In understanding the history of black Baptist pastorates, four major areas will be examined. The first is ministerial designations and how they prove that preaching is the pathway to ordination. The second area is the preliminary practice of licensing in black Baptist churches. Third, the effects of slavery on black Baptist ecclesiology will be

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<sup>1</sup> The seven historically black denominations are the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion), the “Colored” later changed to Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME), United Methodist Church, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), Baptist, and the Presbyterian.

examined. Then, attention will be given to the common historical structures of pastoral leadership in black Baptist churches. It is said of Andrew Bryan (1737–1812), one of the first black Baptist pastors ordained to the pastorate on American soil, that he became the official head of an established church out of the midst of great persecutions.<sup>2</sup> In like manner, though oppressed and restricted, many black pastors survived those limitations and through their example laid a foundation for black pastorates today.

### **Ministerial Designations in the Development of Black Baptist Pastorates**

Historically, the black pastor is a preacher because preaching has been the pathway to ordination in the black church. Cleophus J. LaRue, Professor of Homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary, said that preaching “continues to be a high calling to that sacred desk—the Christian pulpit.”<sup>3</sup> In examining the black preacher historically, several designations are considered. Some of the more common monikers are “plantation preacher” or “slave preacher.” In his work on the slave community, John W. Blassingame comments, “The true shepherd of the black flock was the slave preacher.”<sup>4</sup> The slave preacher is the one who suffered with his flock, is the accepted counselor on the plantation, and the preferred minister of the slaves.<sup>5</sup>

The slave preacher is considered prophet and priest.<sup>6</sup> As to their call, Henry Love Whelchel, Jr. remarks, “Slave preachers were denied visible church buildings but

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<sup>2</sup> John W. Davis, “George Liele and Andrew Bryan, Pioneer Negro Baptist Preachers,” *The Journal of Negro History* 3, no. 2 (1918): 126.

<sup>3</sup> Cleophus J. LaRue, *Power in the Pulpit: How America’s Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 2.

<sup>4</sup> John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 131.

<sup>5</sup> Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 131.

<sup>6</sup> Love Henry Whelchel, Jr., *Hell Without Fire: Conversion in Slave Religion* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 60.

not the invisible Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> They were larger than life figures.<sup>8</sup> Slaves acknowledged their preacher as pastor and his ability to preach helped plantation congregations recognize their leader.

The slave preacher is identified by other terms as well. Milton C. Sernett lists several religious leaders among antebellum black preachers in the South. Early black preachers are known as exhorters, deacons, or watchmen.<sup>9</sup> Sernett explains the evolution of the black preacher by distinguishing four kinds of religious leaders during this time: ministers, self-appointed preachers, exhorters, and cult leaders.<sup>10</sup> These titles appear to be the most conspicuous pre-formal identifications of the early black pastors. Almost all these designations are concerned with the slave minister as preacher and paved the way toward ordination.

The category of *minister* was typified by men like Lott Cary (1780–1828), a slave born in West Virginia. Although a missionary, he was among the most famous of the negro preachers in church history.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, *self-appointed preachers* had considerable ministerial influence among the slave community. One of the more notorious examples of the self-appointed preacher is Baptist preacher Nat Turner (1800–1831).<sup>12</sup> He felt called by God to preach. Yet, he did not receive formal authorization by any church to do so. Mechal Sobel, Professor of History, explains how it is possible for Turner to be

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<sup>7</sup> Whelchel, *Hell Without Fire*, 61.

<sup>8</sup> Whelchel, *Hell Without Fire*, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Milton C. Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism: White Protestants, Plantation Missions, and the Flowering of Negro Christianity, 1787–1865* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975), 93.

<sup>10</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 95.

<sup>11</sup> Most of what is known about the life of Lott Cary can be found in Carey’s biography. James Barnett Taylor, *The Biography of Lott Cary: Late Missionary to Africa* (Baltimore: Armstrong & Berry, 1837). See also Miles Mark Fisher, “Lott Cary, the Colonizing Missionary,” *The Journal of Negro History* 2, no. 1 (1922): 380-418.

<sup>12</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 99.

respected as a preacher without ecclesiastical authorization. Among Baptists in the early nineteenth century, lay preaching is not considered unusual.<sup>13</sup> In this context, if a person felt called by the Lord to preach, they would simply preach, independent of ecclesiastical approval, and many respected and powerful preachers of this time were not formally ordained.<sup>14</sup>

The third category of preacher is the *exhorter*. The exhorter is viewed by some white ecclesiastical power structures as incapable of serving as a full pastor. Nevertheless, his giftedness met the approval of the masses and he preached at times when gifted whites were not available. The exhorter usually did not have formal ordination and served under the control of white churches.<sup>15</sup> Exhorters could provide assistance to whites, while acting as pastors to the slaves.<sup>16</sup>

The sermons of exhorters were typically authorized by white clergy. Thus, at times they sided with the powers that be to keep the peace. Some were incentivized by their masters who would give them special privileges in exchange for their loyalty.<sup>17</sup> In many instances they did not preach the gospel as they knew it, but a gospel that pleased those who were over them. On some occasions, however, they let the truth slip regarding freedom from oppression even when whites were present.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 159.

<sup>14</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 159.

<sup>15</sup> Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 50.

<sup>16</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in Antebellum South* (Oxford, NY: University Press, 2004), 136.

<sup>17</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 96.

<sup>18</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 99.

Another designation is *cult leader*. Some slaves went to church on Sunday and visited the conjurors on Monday.<sup>19</sup> The cult leader is classified as a voodoo priest, eventually considered a farce among the slave community when their magic did not work.<sup>20</sup> One of the more infamous cult leaders was a man named Gullah Jack (d. July 1822). Gullah Jack brought the practices of voodooism he learned in Africa to America. Slaves revered the voodoo priest but later rejected them when the cult leader failed to save them from the master's whip.<sup>21</sup>

Albert Raboteau identifies another category of slave preacher in the *watchman*. The watchman is responsible for advising in spiritual matters, counseling, leading prayer meetings, and setting a Christian example for the slaves.<sup>22</sup> The watchman kept order on the plantation and in the church. In some instances, he kept people from joining the church and taking the sacraments.<sup>23</sup> The watchman exhibited pastor-like qualities through instruction and counsel.

The bulk of these designations point to a pastoral influence that preaching had on the slaves. Early black preachers were often conflicted in their ministries. They could be vilified as enemies for trying to appease authorities or esteemed as leaders amongst their community by exercising spiritual care. Slave congregations knew well the restrictions placed upon the preacher by the slave institution. Raboteau assesses the slave community's regard for the slave preacher: "They respected him because he was the

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<sup>19</sup> Wilson Fallin, Jr., *Uplifting the People: Three Centuries of Black Baptist in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>20</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 100.

<sup>21</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 100.

<sup>22</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 238.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Quarterman Mallard, *Plantation Life Before Emancipation* (Detroit: Negro History Press, 1892), 132.

messenger of the Gospel, one who preached the Word of God with power and authority . . . slavery's restrictiveness could frustrate but never completely stifle."<sup>24</sup>

Other designations that encompass the pastor as preacher in the slave community are *chairbackers*—preachers who used a chair for a pulpit in a slave cabin,<sup>25</sup> or *floor preachers*, those who were not allowed in the pulpit to preach but had to do so from the floor. There were also *licensed preachers*, and particularly in the South these men were licensed to preach by both mixed churches and black churches.<sup>26</sup> In many instances, these ministers carried these titles without being called a pastor. Yet with the titles they carried out pastoral duties. In the majority of the designations, the primitive ecclesiastical leader of the slaves is a preacher. Preaching is the act that provided the slave minister with his identity as pastor amongst the slave community.

### **Licensing as Preliminary to Pastoral Ministry in the Black Church**

The licensed minister is a significant ministerial role among Baptists. Black Baptist churches inherited the practice of licensing their ministers from white clergy and white Baptist associations. Historically, the act of licensing permitted a man to preach in conjunction with a call to the ministry but stopped short of ordaining him to the ministry. Licensing took seriously Paul's charge to Timothy to be slow to appoint a man as a pastor (1 Tim 5:22). In considering licensing as it pertains to black Baptists, three factors are considered. The first factor is the ecclesiastical accountability between the minister and his church or association. Second, the practice proved beneficial for vetting a man's call to the ministry. Then, there is the question as to whether licensing led to a plurality of elders in a local church.

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<sup>24</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 238.

<sup>25</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 160.

<sup>26</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, 160.

The act of licensing provided accountability between the preacher and his church or denomination from the eighteenth into the twentieth century. Legitimate licensing took place when either the courts, a Baptist association, a church, or multiple ordained ministers granted a license to a man who could successfully exercise his preaching gift. For instance, a white Baptist named John Gano (1727–1804) assumed the practice of preaching without a license in 1751. Subsequently, he received a rebuke from his church, repented, and later obtained a license for the purpose of preaching with the blessing of his church.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, the first minister in Texas to be licensed to preach was a white man named Moses Gage in 1837. Being licensed by his church gave him the freedom to preach.<sup>28</sup> Daniel Marshall (1706–1784), considered the first great Baptist leader in Georgia, is designated as the one who inaugurated the system of licensure of pious men by the church.<sup>29</sup>

In 1803, the New River Baptist Association in Virginia (white) argued for the necessity of licensing preachers. At the meeting, participants communicated the need for more experienced gospel ministers to train the younger preachers. By training younger ministers, relief would come to the Baptist ministry in Virginia. Less gifted men could easily enter and corrupt the ministry. Therefore, the association suggested a regular mode of examining men for the purpose of improving their gifts. A man who felt called to preach had to make his wishes known to the elders of the church. Afterwards, the elders would

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<sup>27</sup> John H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptist from 1769–1885* (Cincinnati: J. H. Spencer, 1885), 119.

<sup>28</sup> James M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptist: Comprising a Detailed Account of Their Activities, Their Progress and their Achievements* (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing, 1923), 125.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Boykin, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia: With Biographical Compendium and Portrait Gallery of Baptist Ministers and Other Georgia Baptists* (Atlanta: J. P. Harrison & Company, 1881), 1:23-24. Many useful ordained men passed through the system of licensure set up by Daniel Marshall, including Abraham Marshall, who ordained Andrew Bryan and gave him the document which constituted his church. James M. Simms, who wrote *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1888), also passed through Daniel Marshall's system of licensure.



give him a private hearing and either encouraged him or stop him according to their opinion of his qualifications.<sup>30</sup>

Not only did white ministers in Virginia receive licenses from the church or from those in leadership, in some cases they also had to appeal to the court.<sup>31</sup> Thus, white Baptist churches and associations implemented the act of licensing to serve as an accountability structure. In these white ecclesiastical settings, some ministers were less gifted than others. Yet, in other instances, even if a man had the gift of preaching, he could not exercise it without going through judicial or Baptist associational channels.

The authority to grant a license for preaching did not lie with a single man, but with the approval of multiple individuals, usually within an established institution. In general, not even white ministers were allowed to preach without the blessing of their church or church associations. However, greater limitations were placed on black ministers. Whereas a license liberated many white ministers to preach freely, many early black preachers still had to secure the additional accountability and trust of the slaveholders. In 1832, Alabama state law required five respectable slaveholders to attend any service where blacks preached in addition to prohibiting free preachers from preaching to slaves without a license.<sup>32</sup>

Obtaining a license did not absolutely liberate blacks to preach in some cases. The personal testimony of a licensed slave preacher named Isham Robinson provides insight. Robinson states, “I was licensed in 1850, but could not preach except when I could secured the presence of two slaveholders.”<sup>33</sup> Licensing is not limited to black Baptists;

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<sup>30</sup> Robert B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of Baptist in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Pitt & Dickinson, 1894), 352.

<sup>31</sup> The Historical Records Survey of Virginia Division of Professional and Service Projects Work Projects Administration, *Negro Baptist Churches in Richmond* (Richmond, VA: Historical Records Survey of Virginia, 1940), iii–iv.

<sup>32</sup> Fallin, *Uplifting the People*, 26.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Octavius Boothe, *The Cyclopedia of Colored Baptist and their Leaders and Their Work* (Birmingham: Alabama Publishing Company, 1895), 196.

rather, the practice had been established in white Baptist churches prior to the founding of black Baptist churches. Black Baptists inherited the practice though initially it came with the additional restrictions furnished by the slave institution.

In the early nineteenth century, the Sunbury Baptist Association of Georgia enacted a law preventing persons of color from preaching. The law stated that no person of color could preach, exhort, or join any religious exercise without a written certificate.<sup>34</sup> The process of acquiring the certificate involved the permission of government officials such as, mayors and justices of the court.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the license had to be renewed every six months to a year and could be revoked at any time. Licensing of black preachers by whites functioned as censorship to keep down the principles of abolitionism.<sup>36</sup> The authorities went a step beyond mere control and affirmation when they conferred a license upon the black preacher.

Next, the process of licensing provided a benefit in vetting a man's call to the ministry. Apart from censorship among black ministers, the history of licensing carried a blessing for black Baptists. Welsh minister named Samuel Jones (1735–1814) penned a work entitled *A Treatise on Church Discipline and a Directory*. Jones became one of the most influential Baptists at an early period in his life and perhaps the most influential Baptist in the whole country during the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Jones wrote the treatise at the request of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1797. According to this document, the ministerial license served to place a candidate for ministry on trial with a view toward ordination.<sup>38</sup> Jones gives an elaborate procedure regarding licensing that first begins with

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<sup>34</sup> Simms, *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America*, 113-14.

<sup>35</sup> Simms, *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America*, 113.

<sup>36</sup> Simms, *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America*, 115.

<sup>37</sup> Samuel L. Jones, "A Treatise on Church Discipline and a Directory" (1805), in *Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life*, ed. Mark E. Dever (Washington: Center for Church Reform, 2001), 136.

<sup>38</sup> Jones, "A Treatise on Church Discipline and a Directory," 142-43.

an internal call and moves to a trial of the candidate's giftedness. After a promising period of trial, a candidate received a letter of license and continued to be watched for the purpose of being ordained to pastoral ministry.<sup>39</sup> According to 1 Timothy 3:1, there is an inward or subjective call. Paul uses the words *oregetai* (aspire) and *epithyme* (desire). Both words describe the internal yearning for the ministry. Biblically, the objective aspect of a call to ministry leads to an examination by the church to see if the man is qualified for the ministry (1 Tim 3:1-7). Licensing enabled a church or association to give careful consideration to the person claiming to be called to preach.

As a general practice, ministers in early black Baptist churches were licensed by white ministers or associations. James M. Simms notes that in Georgia "the courts of jurisdiction would not give our colored ministers a license to preach or officiate in the ordinances of the Church unless they were endorsed by two or more white ministers. Thus, virtually all the colored churches were wards."<sup>40</sup> In Alabama, the process of licensing for the black minister had to be sanctioned by white governing bodies and violation was punishable by physical discipline.<sup>41</sup> Still, black Baptists kept the process of licensing in their churches even after procuring some level of independence from oppression. A brief survey of a few black Baptist associations provides a picture of the widespread event of licensing in black Baptist churches.

In 1864, the Wood River Colored Baptist Association (Illinois) exercised similar caution as the aforementioned Philadelphia Baptist Association. In giving instructions to licentiates, the association recommended that pastors and elders pay closer attention to their

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<sup>39</sup> Jones, "A Treatise on Church Discipline and a Directory," 143.

<sup>40</sup> Simms, *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America*, 96. Simms balances this claim by stating that some white brethren set parameters around the minister through licensure as an act of kindness and to guard the black ministers for their own good.

<sup>41</sup> *Acts Passed at the Thirteenth Annual Session of the General Assembly of the State of Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Wiley, M'cGuire & Henry, 1832), 18.

young preachers in lieu of their call.<sup>42</sup> The pastors and elders instructed these young preachers in the Word so that they would make their calling sure. In 1866, the Colored Shiloh Baptist Association of Virginia made the case for a licensed black clergy. Churches were charged to watch over their own ministers and to not give countenance to them until they had been licensed by the church.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, in 1909, a Baptist association in Tennessee gave instruction for licensing men for the ministry. Churches with candidates for ordination or licensing could send them to the association or call for the aid of a sister church. If the applicant for ordination or licensing passed examination by the governing body, then he would receive validation for ministry.<sup>44</sup>

### **Licensing as Preliminary to Ordination**

Licensing is a practice early black Baptist churches used to examine a call to ministry prior to ordination. Licensing and ordination to ministry remained distinct in both white and black Baptist institutions. Furthermore, ordination to ministry almost always assumed taking on pastoral leadership. A history of the negro Baptists in North Carolina records several men who were ordained to the ministry and subsequently took pastorates.<sup>45</sup> Anthony Binga, Jr. (1843–1919), a black pastor in Virginia, wrote in a sermon on church

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<sup>42</sup> *Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Session of the Wood River Colored Baptist Association* (Springfield IL: S. V. Crossman & Company, 1884), 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Minutes of the Second Annual Session of the Colored Baptist Association* (Petersburg, VA: Daily Index Office, 1866), 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Minutes of the Forty-Third Annual Session of the Big Harpeth United Primitive Baptist Association* (Franklin, TN: Aydelott's Printery, 1909), 10.

<sup>45</sup> J. A. Whitted, *A History of the Negro Baptist of North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Presses of Edward & Broughton Printing Company, 1906), 202, 205. Within this history, Harry L. Cowan, one of the more famous black Baptist, in fact the "Father of Baptist Preachers" is licensed, but is distinct from men, i.e., Arnold B. Williams, who was ordained and took charge of a pastorate, or Anthony W. Welborne, who took charge of Liberty Grove in the late nineteenth century. Whereas Cowan was able to preach freely in different areas, these men were assigned to local churches.

polity that “it does not seem proper for one who has not been ordained to assume the position of a pastor, since he cannot discharge all the duties of that office.”<sup>46</sup>

Whereas licensing provided ministers the opportunity to exercise their preaching gift, ordination led ministers to the office of pastor. The two acts of licensing and ordination are distinct from one another among Baptists and remained distinct among black Baptist.<sup>47</sup> Licensing served the purpose of giving a church the opportunity to examine and sharpen the minister’s gifts. Ordination affirmed his right to shepherd a local congregation. In many instances in Baptist churches, an ordained minister assumed the office of pastor. Although a good number of white and black preachers preached without being ordained,<sup>48</sup> ordained clergy usually pastored churches.

### **A Plurality of Ordained Clergy in Local Churches**

Regarding ordination leading to a plurality of elders in a local church, amongst Baptist there is no consensus. Samuel Jones distinguished between ordained ministers who pastored and ordained ministers awaiting pastorates. In terms of the duties of an ordained minister who only taught and preached, he counseled him to defer the duties of pastoral

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<sup>46</sup> Anthony Binga, Jr., *Scholar Select: Sermons on Several Occasions* (Washington DC: Wentworth Press, 2019), 100. These sermons were originally self-published by Anthony Binga, Jr., in 1889 and later reproduced in this work from the original artifact.

<sup>47</sup> See *Minutes of the Forty-Fourth Annual Session of the Wood River Baptist Association Ministerial Union* (New Orleans: G. H. Walker Printer, 1884), 29; *Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Session*, 8. Designations, i.e., “elders” and “pastors,” are used for those given instruction to the licentiates. According to the *Minutes of the Forty-Third Annual Session of the Big Harpeth United Primitive Baptist Association*, those wishing to be ordained had to be sent to the association, and if any church had ministers who they wished to license, they could call a sister church for assistance (10). In the *Cyclopedia of the Colored Baptist of Alabama*, Boothe records that, in the Southeast Alabama Association, there were thirty churches and several ordained ministers. Yet, they would not license any man who could not read the New Testament (94). Also see *Minutes of the Second Annual Session*, where a distinction is made between the title of “Reverend and “Minister” from the title “elder,” which they used for an ordain minister (7). Whitted records that Harry L. Cowan, considered the Father of Baptist in North Carolina, is licensed to preach freely, but several ministers are ordained and occupy pastorates. Whitted, *History of a Negro Baptist in North Carolina*, 199-205.

<sup>48</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin’ On*, 160.

ministry until the minister became a pastor of a church.<sup>49</sup> According to Jones, the aforementioned minister is restricted to preaching. A. W. Chambliss, a Baptist preacher in Alabama, wrote a catechism for the instruction of colored people (1847). As it pertained to the pastorate, Chambliss viewed the office as a single congregation with oversight from one pastor. Chambliss reasoned against several congregations being placed under one pastor as a violation of Scripture.<sup>50</sup> Binga wrote of a council of ministers whom the church could consult in ordaining a candidate for pastoral ministry. Pastors recommended to the church a minister to be ordained and the church ordained him.<sup>51</sup>

Slave preacher W. E. Northcross (1897) noted that he went from being ordained by a white preacher to establishing churches and recommending ministers for each of those churches.<sup>52</sup> George Liele (1751–1820), one of the first negro preachers to be licensed, wrote a letter to an English Baptist minister and hymn editor named John Rippon (1791). In the letter, Liele recounts one of his ministerial successes saying, “I have deacons and elders, a few, and I am pastor.”<sup>53</sup> Without the record detailing the roles of the elders of whom Liele speaks, it is impossible to know whether they functioned as a plurality in his church. In addition, the first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, William Bullein Johnson (1845–1851), viewed a plurality of elders in a local church as a “perfect equality of rank” among ministers.<sup>54</sup> Still, there is no unanimity amongst white Baptists for a plurality of elders in a local church, historically. In black Baptist churches a plurality of

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<sup>49</sup> Jones, “A Treatise on Church Discipline and a Directory,” 144.

<sup>50</sup> A. W. Chambliss, *The Catechetical Instruction in which the Leading Doctrines and Practices of Christianity are Familiarly Exhibited* (Montgomery, AL: Bates, Hooper and Company, 1847), 334.

<sup>51</sup> Binga, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, 95.

<sup>52</sup> The Federal Writer’s Project, “Slave Narratives: Project, Vol. 1 Alabama, Aarons-Young. to 1937,” accessed August 23, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/>, 302-4.

<sup>53</sup> George Liele et al., “Letters Showing the Rise and Progress of Early Negro Churches in Georgia and the West Indies,” *The Journal of Negro History* 1, no. 1 (1916): 72.

<sup>54</sup> William B. Johnson, “The Gospel Developed Through the Government and Order of the Churches of Jesus Christ,” in Dever, *Polity*, 192.

elders came together in associations to examine, license, and ordain qualified ministerial candidates. In both early white and black Baptist churches there is no universal agreement as to whether there should be a plurality of elders in one church.

### **The Black Church's Historical Handling of a Call to Pastor**

The first black churches were not brick and mortar buildings. They were makeshift structures found in the backwoods of plantations. Black slaves were not generally permitted to have independent gatherings nor their own pastors.<sup>55</sup> To the contrary, they were allowed to attend preaching services with whites that were regulated by whites. Even so, slaves would often steal away to the woods, remote cabins, or canebrakes to have services of their own.<sup>56</sup> The movement to the backwoods for worship services is antecedent to the organized black Baptist church.<sup>57</sup>

In the *History and Heritage of African American Churches*, Love Henry Whelchel specifies the call historically for black ministers: "From the antebellum period to the present the 'call to preach' for Black preachers has often been a means of obtaining recognition and leadership status in the community."<sup>58</sup> The church's acceptance and recognition of the preacher's call is the necessary permission for the preacher to pastor. In the black church's embryonic stage, several men were called to pastor. The way in which the black church vetted the calling of these men for pastoral ministry is at least twofold.

Black Baptist churches looked for conversion in their ministers. The emphasis on conversion in the First and Second Great Awakenings played a vital role in the sort of

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<sup>55</sup> Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985), 31.

<sup>56</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 32.

<sup>58</sup> Love. H. Whelchel, Jr., *The History and Heritage of African-American Churches: A Way Out of No Way* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2011), 325.

minister the first black churches were willing to accept. Though the two Awakenings are different from each other, both had a common concern for worldwide Christian renewal, telling anyone who would listen that they needed to be saved.<sup>59</sup> Early black Baptists experienced mass conversion during the Awakenings and placed emphasis on conversion as a prerequisite for leadership.<sup>60</sup>

George Liele experienced the profound effects of the missionary zeal of the revivals.<sup>61</sup> In 1772, Liele was converted through the preaching of a Baptist clergymen named Matthew Moore, who later baptized him. The church where he experienced conversion had ties to the preaching of George Whitfield.<sup>62</sup> Likewise, two brothers, Hugh and Jonathan Bryan were converted under George Whitefield's preaching.<sup>63</sup> Jonathan Bryan owned the pioneer African American preacher Andrew Bryan, pastor of The First Colored Baptist Church (1788).

The Awakenings had a lasting impact on the slave community and brought about an authentic religious experience.<sup>64</sup> Henry Mitchell ties the formation of the black church to the Awakenings, noting that neither white nor black were content to worship together and therefore produced a longing for separate worship spaces.<sup>65</sup> Still, the effects of the conversion experience influenced black congregations to the degree that having an

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<sup>59</sup> Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 169.

<sup>60</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 133.

<sup>61</sup> James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings*, 38.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 217.

<sup>64</sup> Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings*, 46.

<sup>65</sup> Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings*, 46.



unconverted pastor would be all but unthinkable. Conversion at this time was more important than even the amount of education the slave preacher received.<sup>66</sup>

The second way black Baptists handled a minister's call was by whether the preacher had the ability to gather or establish a congregation. In some instances, churches were formed by whites and then blacks were set over them. Liele gathered his own congregation through his evangelistic work on the plantations.<sup>67</sup> Given the circumstances under which churches like his were gathered, a good measure of diplomacy had to be used. To earn the slave owner's trust, Liele would not receive slaves who did not have their master's permission. This act only increased his membership,<sup>68</sup> garnering the trust of his sheep.

In 1801, a slave who went by the name "Old Captain" gathered a church in Lexington, Kentucky. He is marked out as a converted man, having been convicted of sin and finding hope in Christ. He began to exhort going from house to house after his conversion.<sup>69</sup> Due to his efforts, his church grew to three hundred black members. When Old Captain pursued formal ordination by appealing to the South Kentucky Baptist Association, he was denied; however, his work continued.

A third example bears out the establishment of local churches as part of the process of vetting the call of the black minister. Andrew Bryan pastored perhaps the oldest black Baptist church in America, The First Colored Baptist Church (Savannah, GA). Bryan was converted under the preaching of Liele and began preaching shortly thereafter.<sup>70</sup> Bryan organized this church on January 20, 1788.

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<sup>66</sup> Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau, *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 94.

<sup>67</sup> Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 9.

<sup>68</sup> Davis, "George Liele and Andrew Bryan," 123.

<sup>69</sup> Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptist*, 653.

<sup>70</sup> Davis, "George Liele and Andrew Bryan," 124.

A white minister named Abraham Marshall formally recognized his church and gave two documents, one validating the church and the other its pastor.<sup>71</sup> Marshall's second document read, "This is to certify that the Ethiopian Church of Jesus Christ at Savannah, have called their beloved brother Andrew Bryan to the work of the ministry."<sup>72</sup> Controversy surrounded the formation of the church and the ordination of Bryan on the basis of its irregularity. In 1790, Bryan questioned the denominational legitimacy of his church when he met with the Georgia Baptist Association. The church was constituted without calling a council of ministers. The early black church's handling of the call to ministry considered the conversion experience of the minister. Afterward, the black pastor proved that he could establish or organize a church. In both cases, black Baptists witnessed the minister's ability to shepherd. The two indispensable practices validated the black preacher as qualified for pastoral ministry amongst early black congregants.

### **Effects of Slavery on Black Baptist Ecclesiology and Structure**

The call to pastoral ministry in the early black church was somewhat different to the New Testament prescription due to being born out of the institution of slavery. Slavery not only impacted the black preacher's path to the pulpit but it affected black Baptists' ecclesiology and structure in general. The influence of slavery on black Baptist theology of the church was felt in two impactful ways. First, black Baptist' ecclesiology led to a forced or mandatory separation from white churches. Second, black Baptist ecclesiology fostered community among slaves.

### **An Ecclesiology of Mandatory Division**

Initially, black Baptist churches were dependent on white churches or associations for their existence. Prior to 1800 there were no independent black churches

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<sup>71</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 35.

<sup>72</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 36.

North or South. Rather, the establishment and subsistence of black churches were tied to having some form of white denominational recognition.<sup>73</sup> Whites held trusteeship of land and/or certification to the government that blacks involved in their denominations would be no trouble.<sup>74</sup> The institution of slavery in some ways sought to control the kind of Christianity thought to be fit for slaves. Early slave churches classified the theology of whites as hypocritical. An exodus of blacks from white churches on the plantation began to transpire, originally forming in the backwoods of the plantation. Though not an absolute exodus at the time, those first actions foreshadowed what would come.

Slavery and a biblical understanding of the church could not and would not be reconciled in the minds of slaves. Blacks rejected this white version of the Christian faith, which promulgated an oppressive ideology for a more pure and authentic gospel.<sup>75</sup>

Thomas S. Kidd, writing on the late eighteenth century, notes the tension blacks felt: “Most early white evangelical leaders preached that Christ had come to set people free, but not to set them free in this world.”<sup>76</sup> The preaching was a contradiction, according to Kidd, that would only be accepted for so long.<sup>77</sup>

Writing on the issue of separation in *Between Fetters and Freedom*, Sandy Dwayne Martin identifies the impossibility of whites and blacks practicing two very different approaches to Christianity under the same roof.<sup>78</sup> There was a disconnect

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<sup>73</sup> Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings*, 48.

<sup>74</sup> Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings*, 48.

<sup>75</sup> Fulop and Raboteau, *African American Religion*, 98.

<sup>76</sup> Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 228.

<sup>77</sup> Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 228.

<sup>78</sup> Sandy Dwayne Martin, “Vindicated Faith, Not a Lost Cause: African American Baptist Identity and Vision in the Civil War and Postwar Eras, 1850–1900,” in *Between Fetters and Freedom: African American Baptists Since the Emancipation*, ed. Edward R. Crowther and Keith Harper (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2015), 23. Charles F. Irons writes in their same work and argues in his essay entitled, that a number of black worshippers remained in white-controlled churches. According to Irons, the exodus was not unanimous. Still, he admits a majority exodus at certain points during the post Civil War world. Charles F. Irons, “North Carolina’s Black Baptists and the Predicament of Emancipation,” in Crowther

between orthodoxy (what the Bible taught) and orthopraxy (what the slave preachers were experiencing). Slave preachers in particular became increasingly aware of the disabilities and dehumanization of the slave institution.<sup>79</sup> They derived from Scripture their understanding of human dignity. Leroy Fitts rightly assessed the mentality of slaves at this point:

Separate churches could not have been born during slavery if nobody had become dissatisfied with their religious experiences in white churches. The nature of this dissatisfaction may be seen in the necessary response of a Christian conscience to its own enslavement. Central to any independent movement is the prior emergence of free thought.<sup>80</sup>

The Baptist view of the autonomy of the local church aided the mandatory separation for blacks. Early black Baptists took notice of the doctrine and the failed application of it by whites.<sup>81</sup> In the South, restrictions continually threatened the independence of black churches and the ministries of black pastors.<sup>82</sup> Restrictions tightened especially after Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831. With more freedom in the North, black Baptists could capitalize off the polity of autonomy easier than their slave brethren in the South.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the issue of slavery was so controversial that unity among white and black Baptists looked to be hopelessly impaired.<sup>83</sup> The split of Southern Baptists in 1845 from national mission societies who objected to slavery exacerbated tensions among black Christians. For blacks, the issue of separation was not doctrinal. A dissatisfaction with their religious experience served as a catalyst for

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and Harper, *Between Fetters and Freedom*, 28-56. The general consensus is that when blacks saw an opportunity to separate and form their own independent churches, they took it.

<sup>79</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 44.

<sup>80</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 44.

<sup>81</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 43.

<sup>82</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 139.

<sup>83</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 30.

such a drastic change. In addition, the separation and formation of the black church was not for the purpose of getting rid of white people. Blacks and whites cooperated in the anti-slavery movement and blacks offered the hand of fellowship to “good whites.”<sup>84</sup>

A major ecclesiological issue at this time is blacks wanting control over their religious experience instead being controlled. Black Baptists made the conscious and calculated decision of what denominations to be part of based on how much autonomy they would have.<sup>85</sup> They refused to have their ministers silenced and to have their voices go unheard in the affairs of church life. In interracial church settings blacks lost their right to vote in business meetings and terms of endearment like “brother” or “sister” were generally dropped.<sup>86</sup> In certain churches, blacks became the majority and as the majority they were not silent regarding their religious experience.<sup>87</sup>

In mixed congregations where black membership continued to grow, the religious experience of blacks dominated church life. Ironically, whites felt the need to get out from under black “domination” and blacks welcomed what was becoming an increase in their freedoms.<sup>88</sup> On both sides of the racial line there seemed to be only an impetus to sever ties. In 1851 at the First Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, expectations were set for at least one white man to be present at each black meeting. Yet, whites were hard pressed to find anyone willing to take on that responsibility. Sobel states, “Therefore, whether by omission or commission, the whites abetted the development of extensive black autonomy.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Fulop and Raboteau, *African-American Religion*, 98.

<sup>85</sup> Blassingame, “The Slave Community,” 91.

<sup>86</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin’ On*, 210.

<sup>87</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin’ On*, 210.

<sup>88</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin’ On*, 210.

<sup>89</sup> Sobel, *Trabelin’ On*, 210.

The impact of slavery brought about the separation of blacks from whites as they grew restless in the balconies where they were made to sit away from their white counterparts.<sup>90</sup> In many instances, blacks grew weary with the unbiblical example of Christianity they saw in their white churches. Furthermore, whites were equally discontent with this mixed association and wanted separation. Slavery gave way to these factors and impacted black ecclesiology by forcing the separation.

### **An Ecclesiology of Fostered Community**

A second area that slavery affected regarding the black ecclesiological structure is community among black Christians. A group formed amongst slaves in the balconies of white churches.<sup>91</sup> Paradoxically, outside forces that decided to exclude them from their fellowships created a fellowship inside their own churches. The black church became a church within a church. Regarding black clergy in this setting, they were unifiers of the flock who could console, uplift, and inspire black people.<sup>92</sup>

Carter G. Woodson, who is considered the Father of Black History, spoke of the black church as “the only institution which the Negro, in few places in the South and throughout the North, was permitted to maintain for his own peculiar needs.”<sup>93</sup> Woodson also picked up on the communal aspect of the black church: “The Negroes must go to church, to see their friends, as they are barred from social centers open to whites.”<sup>94</sup> The black church served as the newspaper, a match-making location for the young man to meet his wife, and a place for the businessman to learn about various ventures.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 43.

<sup>91</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 43.

<sup>92</sup> Blassingame, “The Slave Community,” 131.

<sup>93</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1921), 180.

<sup>94</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 148.

<sup>95</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 148.

The separation that blacks undertook is classified as an exit from a restrictive and oppressive ecclesiological atmosphere. Although separated from whites, blacks pressed into each other. The church was a refuge. Dale P. Andrews, Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology, states, “The African American Historical model of ecclesiology is perhaps best scrutinized in its refuge conceptualization.”<sup>96</sup> He argues that African-American ecclesiology is communal and was developed primarily through preaching and pastoral care.<sup>97</sup> The black church fulfilled the needs of black people who were alienated.<sup>98</sup> Slavery effected the exodus of blacks from white churches and brought togetherness through preaching and pastoral care in the black churches that were forming.

### **Historical Structures of Pastoral Leadership in Black Baptist Churches**

The early black Baptist preacher operated as overseer. He exercised oversight regarding slave congregations, but his oversight was restricted by slavery. He functioned as the spiritual authority in the slave church. Whether an exhorter, minister, self-appointed preacher, cult leader, or watchmen, the slave preacher was considered a pastor. He was revered by his black congregation while being kept from fully functioning due to the restrictive structures of oppression. Therefore, the first historical structure of pastoral leadership in black Baptist churches is the restrictive pastorate.

#### **A Restrictive Black Baptist Pastorate**

The black preacher as restricted bishop was due first to the limitations placed on him by civil authorities. Black preachers who felt the call to preach were licensed and ordained to the ministry until laws were passed restricting them from that task.<sup>99</sup> In the

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<sup>96</sup> Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 34.

<sup>97</sup> Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches*, 34.

<sup>98</sup> Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches*, 34.

<sup>99</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 137.

South, black churches and ministers were always threatened by restrictions.<sup>100</sup> For a time, blacks tolerated having to worship in racially mixed churches beneath a sinfully oppressive ecclesiastical structure. It pushed them into what is known as “the Invisible Institution”—a gathering of Africans who worshipped secretly in thickets and swamps away from the slave master.<sup>101</sup>

A significant number of Africans embraced Protestant Christianity, or the evangelical faith, during the Great Awakening (eighteenth century). They worshipped in white churches but valued the “Invisible Institutions” above those white settings.<sup>102</sup> The Invisible Institutions were places black Christians could participate in worship services conducive to their own culture and experience. Beyond the worship experience, however, they had freedom from the oppressive culture of slavery.

The Invisible Institution was the initial black Baptist church. The preachers were normally uneducated theologically, and what little they learned they more than likely learned from the slave master or from the family of slave owners. On many occasions they were instructed by white families who used the Bible. Yet, the slaves possessed the kinds of minds that enabled them to retain a lot of what they heard, and they were able to preach what they heard to their congregations. E. Franklin Frazier, in writing on the Negro Church in America, captured the essence of the restricted pastor. He remarked that all forms of social effort were forbidden, and in conjunction to this was the absence of an established priesthood among blacks during this time.<sup>103</sup> He went on to say that “the Negro preacher played the important role in the invisible institution of the church among

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<sup>100</sup> Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 143.

<sup>101</sup> Welchel, *The History and Heritage of African-American Churches*, 329.

<sup>102</sup> Welchel, *The History and Heritage of African-American Churches*, 83.

<sup>103</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 24.



the slaves. The Negro preacher was “called” and by his personal qualities achieved a position of dominance.”<sup>104</sup>

However, the quest for a liberated pastorate was not quelled due to the inroads made in the invisible institution. Total independence from the restricted conditions was the concern of the early black preacher. The black preacher could be silenced and banned from his state by civil authorities.<sup>105</sup> In addition, informers were incentivized to report violations of banned blacks remaining in certain states. In 1839, a regulation was enacted in Maryland that no free black belonging to another state could enter. Some white churches looked unfavorably upon these restrictions.<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, the slave preacher could not claim freedom while remaining restricted.

The slave preacher was also restricted by white clergy from carrying out their ministry. A throng of black preachers were trained by white ministers.<sup>107</sup> Post-Civil War black bishops and ministers had either been converted or ordained by antebellum white denominations.<sup>108</sup> White southerners feared expansion and therefore limited the activity of black preachers, and because many blacks were converted by white clergy and trained by white clergy, they had the theology of white clergy.

Many white preachers, who were instrumental in converting blacks to the faith, were themselves uneducated; nevertheless, they are part of the story of the theological development of black ministers and the black church. The theology of whites, whether informed and deep or shallow and deficient, had a direct impact on the theology of blacks. A smattering of black ministers who belonged to slave-holding clergymen were permitted

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<sup>104</sup> Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, 24.

<sup>105</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 62.

<sup>106</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 62.

<sup>107</sup> Blassingame, “The Slave Community,” 91.

<sup>108</sup> Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 91.

to be assistants, but restrictions prevented them from telling the truth as they knew it. Therefore, some men ended up defending the institution of slavery.<sup>109</sup>

It could have been out of fear or diplomacy that black preachers publicly defended the heinous institution of slavery. In certain instances, the exhorters had one message that kept peace with the slave master or white clergy. What kept the peace between he and the authorities would also keep peace between the authorities and the slaves. The peacekeeping is another dynamic of the slave preacher pastoring his flock by protecting his flock. Usually, the slave merely mouthed the message heard from white ministers. In contrast is the gospel of freedom that slave preachers preached to the slave on the sly.<sup>110</sup> The early black preachers shepherded their congregations regardless of restrictions by civil authorities or white oppressive ministerial clergy.

### **Liberated Black Baptist Pastorate**

A second historical structure of black pastoral leadership is the liberated pastorate. This model was less restricted, but not absolutely free. Churches and pastors had long since committed themselves to this model though it was not fully realized until after the Civil War for many black Baptist churches. By the early nineteenth century, black preachers were the primary instruments in the conversion of their race. They were more than preachers; they were shepherds. Though whites may have had legal control particularly in the South, it became nominal in many cases.<sup>111</sup>

Preceding the Civil War, blacks heard the message of evangelical Christianity and took it upon themselves to pastor their own people. They were becoming independent

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<sup>109</sup> Blassingame, "The Slave Community," 92.

<sup>110</sup> Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, 98-99.

<sup>111</sup> Fulop and Raboteau, *African-American Religion*, 93.

from whites as it pertained to the Christian gospel.<sup>112</sup> Raboteau writes to the issue of black clergy becoming more independent at this time:

Initially, blacks had heard the message of evangelical Christianity from whites, but rapidly a cadre of early black preachers, licensed and unlicensed took it upon themselves to convert and to pastor their own people. By 1830, these “pioneers” had been succeeded by a second and more numerous generation of black clergymen, so that blacks were no longer exclusively dependent upon whites for the Christian gospel, though white missionaries might think so.<sup>113</sup>

The seeds of freedom were planted as preachers believed on the accounts of God being a deliverer of those who were oppressed. The post-Civil War context served as a stimulus for the black Baptist preacher to now act for himself with regard to pastoral duties.

For black Baptists in the North, more opportunity existed to exercise the liberties they already enjoyed. Nonetheless, in the South, blacks were no longer constricted to being in lockstep with slave regulations.<sup>114</sup> The doctrine of autonomy of the Baptist church made a gospel proclaiming liberation easier to spread. The ministry brought prestige, and some ministers claimed to be called but may have only been looking for a following. The downside is that Baptist preachers became a law unto themselves. However, under these newly liberated black pastors, many of the churches they pastored became beacons of light.<sup>115</sup>

The black Baptist church grew in its understanding of ecclesiology and with its growth so did the theology of the pastorate. On the other hand, black Baptist pastors stuck closely to what God ordained for preachers in the ministry. They shepherded the people entrusted to their charge. They also led them through one of the most difficult times in history. The product of a liberated pastorate is perhaps best pictured in a black pastor like the free slave Anthony Binga, Jr., who sought to build up the black Baptist church. As the

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<sup>112</sup> Fulop and Raboteau, *African-American Religion*, 92.

<sup>113</sup> Fulop and Raboteau, *African-American Religion*, 92.

<sup>114</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 104.

<sup>115</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 109.

black pastorate became more emancipated from restriction, it furnished the black church with an opportunity to be even more biblically grounded. Freedom helped broaden the focus to a more biblical model of the pastorate.

The origin of the black Baptist church is found and developed out of slavery. Nevertheless, the black Baptists progressed through slavery and advanced another pastoral model. During and after the reconstruction era (1863–1877), black Baptist churches began to see the pastor as a social or political leader. According to John M. Giggie, these ministers casted shadows over their sincerity as they peddled expensive goods to their followers.<sup>116</sup> These religious leaders sought to obtain respectability, which would lift many burdens for the adherents of this particular ideology.<sup>117</sup> Carter G. Woodson notes the phenomena during this era: “Many Negroes who were trained for ministry never entered thereupon because of the lure of politics during the days of Reconstruction.”<sup>118</sup> Instead of being churchmen, the pastor as political leader divided his time between his profession and politics, and sometimes it was for the purpose of attaining positions of prominence.<sup>119</sup>

However, the pastor as political leader was not wholly embraced by black Baptists. After Reconstruction there remained a wide swathe of ministers who separated themselves from the political arena.<sup>120</sup> Most notably, the Rev. Joseph Harrison Jackson (1900–1990), former president of the National Baptist Convention (1953–1982), railed against the integration of pastors as political leaders. The black Baptists’ acceptance of the pastor as political leader made its way into the church through the conduit of Black Liberation Theology. Jackson called it a “second-rate religion or a Christianity without

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<sup>116</sup> John M. Giggie, *After Redemption: Jim Crow and the Transformation of African American Religion in the Delta 1875–1915* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140.

<sup>117</sup> Giggie, *After Redemption*, 141.

<sup>118</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 121.

<sup>119</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 121.

<sup>120</sup> Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 132-34.

Christ or a theology without a living God.”<sup>121</sup> Both the pastor as political leader and the pastor separate from the political sphere exists to this day.

### **Conclusion**

Black Baptist pastorates thrived despite restrictive and oppressive structures of slavery. Several impediments to the black preacher’s ability to shepherd have been identified in this chapter. The lack of acknowledgment as pastors, the preventing of obtaining ministerial license, and going without formal ordination in some instances all worked against the black preacher. Nevertheless, he remained faithful to the flock entrusted to him. James Melvin Washington said of the black church that it is a “Frustrated Fellowship.” The same can be said of the black pastorate—it is a frustrated pastorate.

The black pastorate suffered at the hands of slavery; nevertheless, preaching proved to be the pathway to the pulpit for early black preachers. Almost every designation conferred upon the black preacher demonstrates that preaching is the rite of passage to pastoring. Whether the black preacher is called minister, exhorter, chair backer, watchman, or floor preacher, he functioned as pastor amongst his community. It is by the preaching of blacks that black congregations were able to identify their shepherds. They could not hear without a preacher (Rom 10:14).

Perhaps one of the best developments coming out of slavery is the act of licensing from which Baptist churches and associations had the opportunity to examine their ministers. By the act of licensing, black churches could help sharpen the gifts of their preachers prior to ordination. Black Baptists took seriously the call to shepherd, utilizing whatever tools given to them, even slavery. E. Franklin Frazier said, “Slaves learned of Christ in slavery and the Christianity was a religion which served to bolster

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<sup>121</sup> Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 317. To show the division between the political model of black Baptist pastorates versus pastorates that were mainly concerned with the local church, all one needs to do is read how Fitts criticizes Jackson’s stance. Fitts says Jackson “fails to understand the nature and purpose of black theology.” Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 318.

social cohesion.”<sup>122</sup> In this way, slavery produced community and black preachers such as George Liele, Andrew Bryan, Charles Octavius Boothe, and black Calvinist Caesar Blackwell (1769–1845) who sought to elevate black Christianity<sup>123</sup> and played integral parts in the uplift of their race.

Models of pastoral ministry varied in black Baptist churches as they did in white Baptist churches. In the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, there was no consensus among Baptists on the matter of a plurality of elder, and the matter remains unsettled today. However, as the ecclesiology of blacks developed there is a plurality of elders in their associations. The elders examine, license, and aid churches in ordaining men to the ministry. Historically, the call to the ministry is the call to pastor. Early black preachers performed their duties as pastors and in many instances, when the circumstances permitted, became pastors. Black ministers exercised their preaching gifts as those marked out for pastoral ministry until they were officially recognized as such.

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<sup>122</sup> Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, 14.

<sup>123</sup> Fallin, *Uplifting the People*, 25.

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

At the start of this project, it was my purpose to train men toward ordination to pastoral ministry at Watson Memorial Baptist Church. Participants who completed the training sessions were given a foundation upon which they could build in pursuit of their calling. The first step in the process for project implementation was to have my teaching syllabus reviewed by an expert panel. Second, I recruited men to participate in six training sessions. Seven men agreed to attend the six training sessions. Third, a pre-training survey of twenty questions was sent to the seven participants. The fourth step was to train the men, using the reviewed curriculum, entitled “Residential Ecclesiology.” After the six training sessions, the men participated in a focus group to give feedback on what they learned and what they needed to be taught to further prepare them for ordination. Following the focus group, a post-training survey was given to test the men’s knowledge of a call to ministry. What follows are the findings of the six training sessions.

#### **Project Preparation**

On May 27, 2021, I contacted a panel of three pastors to review the rubrics and course curriculum. I received feedback that the material was good. One pastor suggested that I should clarify what I meant on question 3 of the pre-training survey regarding the statement that pastors “differ in character.” He also suggested that I rephrase question 4, “the Bible teaches that elders function differently from one another.” The pastor stated that these were the only items that needed adjusting. Another pastor offered a critique that there was not a functional skills portion to the training. While this feedback was helpful, I explained that the project’s scope did not include skills and that skills would be part of

future training. After approval from the panel of three pastors, I began to look for men to be part of the training program.

On Thursday, June 3, 2021, I began recruiting men to train for ordination. I entitled the training sessions “Residential Ecclesiology,” and informed the men that the sessions would deal with exegetical and historical material of a call to ministry. The sessions were based on the stated goals of my project methodology. Registration for these six sessions remained open for three weeks. I contacted nine men to participate in the training sessions. Six of these men were from our local church and were licensed ministers. Three of the men were from other Baptist churches in Kentucky. None of those contacted were ordained ministers and only one of the men was not licensed. Out of those nine men, seven committed to participating. There were six licensed ministers in the class and one who was considering his calling to pastoral ministry. The men were encouraged to attend all six sessions in order to provide the best feedback and to get the most out of the training. Once the men agreed to participate, I sent out the pre-training survey.

By June 11, 2021, all the men who agreed to participate had completed the survey, which gave me two weeks to analyze responses and to begin writing the curriculum. The first session was conducted on Saturday, June 26, 2021, followed by a break and then the second session. The third and fourth session were taught in the second week of July. The last two sessions were taught on July 17, 2021. Following the last two sessions, the participants were invited to a focus group lunch to discuss the six sessions of teaching. Afterwards, a post-training survey was conducted with the men who agreed to participate, which was completed by July 19, 2021.

In addition, the participants were given reading assignments to increase their biblical and historical knowledge regarding the call to ministry. The reading corresponded to each session and was broken down to Bible reading and historical readings pertaining to a call to ministry. They were assigned 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, which they were to read through at least twice. Other biblical texts included Acts 6:1-7 and Hebrews 13:7, and



verse 17, which they were to read as many times as they could before class began. The historical readings were C. H. Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students*, chapters 1–3, and two sermons from Anthony Binga, Jr., from his work, *Sermons on Several Occasions*. The first sermon from Binga was entitled “A Model Christian” and the second sermon was entitled “Church Polity.”<sup>1</sup> The assigned reading was given once the pre-training survey results were analyzed in order to help improve upon test scores once the class was taught and the post-survey was administered.

## **Implementation of the Project**

### **Session 1: Setting a Biblical Foundation for Ordination to Pastoral Ministry**

The first session set a biblical foundation for ordination to pastoral ministry. The class opened with a definition of *ordination*, which gave not only its meaning, but also its origin. In laying the grounds for ordination to ministry, the men learned from the exegesis of key texts how the process looked in the early church. In this unit of teaching, attention was given to ordination as a communal process; namely, God entrusting the selection of a pastor to the believing community. They were instructed regarding problems with the terminology of *ordination*, for example, that such a process was essentially a non-formal act in the New Testament. In other words, the formation of the process which would be developed in the historical session of my teaching was not set forth that way from the inception of the early church.

In a defining *ordination*, the men learned that the term itself was not found in the New Testament. Rather, the language, i.e., appointment and/or commission (Acts 14:23) would serve better (Acts 14:23). In the appointment language we concentrated on the passive voice of the participle “χειροτονήσαντες” which demonstrates that a man

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<sup>1</sup> I chose the sermon “A Model Christian” because it was a sermon out of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 4:12-13) by an African American pastor speaking to the proper conduct of a Christian. The second sermon by Anthony Binga, Jr., entitled “Church Polity,” spoke to the issue of pastoring and even seemed to suggest a plurality of elders in black Baptist churches.

does not put himself in the ministry, but is placed there by someone else. In developing what the New Testament presented on the issue of calling, it was clear that the Spirit of God placed men in the ministry (Acts 20:28) and then came the recognition of the community. The initial text was Acts 13:1-3. The instruction developed the practice of the first century church in that they affirmed the Spirit's work in setting men apart for ministry by the laying on of hands. Attention was given to how the believing community in conjunction with the Spirit's choosing validated a man's call to ministry. Furthermore, the men were taught that the act of laying hands on a minister was done publicly.

Other important aspects of ordination developed in the first session were the biblical designations. I argued that the specific titles are given to ministers and that they should be called by those names in order to regulate the office of the pastor. Texts which were examined to some degree for the term *elder* included Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5, for bishop 1 Tim 3:1; 1 Pet 5:2; and Heb 12:15. Additional titles were *shepherd*, in which we examined 1 Peter 5:2 and for the term *leader*, we looked at Hebrews 13:7 and 17. At the conclusion of session 1, we revisited the language of *ordination*, noting that term *ordination* could be used if we meant the communal act of identifying men whom God had set apart for ministry.

## **Session 2: Examining the Form of a Man Called to Pastoral Ministry**

The second session of the teaching pertained to the form of a man called to ministry. In this session I set forth what the New Testament says about the minister's conduct and his doctrine. The headings under which I addressed both dynamics of the man's life were the inescapable reality of purity in a man's conduct and the non-negotiable mandates of soundness in his doctrine. Class instruction regarding the first aspect centered on a number of biblical text. As to holiness in a minister's life, I started with the doctrine of justification in an attempt to teach the men that this is the only way sanctification could

take place. The foundation for all that was taught in session 2 was based on the necessity of a minister's conversion.

From the point of conversion, I began to teach what Scripture had to say about the character of the minister. For the term character, the word *form* was used interchangeably. I unpacked several key biblical texts (Acts 20:28, 33-35; 1 Tim 4:16). In addition, I broke down personal or practical holiness into general and specific views. Utilizing the phrase *above reproach*, the class saw the indispensable nature of a call to purity. Furthermore, I was provided evidence in the usage of the Greek verb  $\delta\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$ , which demonstrates the necessity of the minister's calling to a purity of life. I provided additional biblical proof by having the men examine Titus 1:6; namely, the language of blamelessness.

In specific areas of holiness, I taught on the pastor and money from four texts (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:33). Correspondingly, I had the ministers look at Paul's words to Titus in Titus 1:9-11. From those verses I provided further insight as to how greed would undermine a pastor's ministry. Equally important was the section on the pastor and his home life. One of the facets of this teaching was the household language of the New Testament (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 1:2; 16:19; Col 4:15), specifically in 1 Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6-7. I explained that the character of a man who was called was to be morally pure. We looked closely at what it means to be a "one-woman man" (1 Tim 3:2). I argued that the quality of a man's private home life enabled him to shepherd the household of God (1 Tim 3:5).

Teaching on the form of a man called to ministry dealt with the mandates of soundness in doctrine. We went deeper in the Scriptures to see the other side of purity, which I taught was purity of doctrine. They took note of this teaching by observing Acts 20:28-29 and other passages that communicate truths regarding the minister's responsibility to maintain sound doctrine. I reasoned that to protect the church doctrinally the minister needs to know doctrine himself. The chief example I used to close out this

section was the Lord Jesus Christ by applying John 10:1-13 to the shepherding terminology learned in the previous section.

### **Session 3: The Historical Handling of the Pastor's Calling in Black Baptist Churches**

On Sunday June 11, 2021, at 3 p.m., we began the third and fourth sessions of the class. The third session examined the function of a man called to pastoral ministry. This was the last session underneath the biblical portion of my teaching. Though I previously taught in the first session on ministerial designations, I revisited the titles to show how the designations gave function to men called to ministry. In other words, the argument was that the function of a pastor is most notable in the titles the New Testament provides. This was not something distinct from what I had taught in the first session; rather, I was looking at the titles from a different perspective.

I conveyed to the men the differences of form and function—the form being the essence of the man in ministry and the function being the exercise of the ministry. We began by looking the title of “overseer” (1 Tim 3:1). From the title overseer, I showed how the term suggested giving oversight. The first function was to preside over the local church. Second, we interacted with the designation “shepherd.” I took the participants back to Acts 20:28 and had them see that the pastor not only oversees, but in this same text showed them that God the Spirit calls the minister to “shepherd the church of God.” We looked at the words προσέχετε, τῷ ποιμνίῳ, and ποιμαίνειν. I showed the men from the verb to “take heed” (present active imperative 2nd person plural) that the duration of shepherding was permanent.

We noted who the minister was supposed to shepherd; namely the flock (τῷ ποιμνίῳ). Afterwards, we engaged the infinitive verb “to shepherd” (ποιμαίνειν). In teaching on the terminology of the ministry, I demonstrated to the men how the titles denoted the work of ministry. The effect of teaching on titles from this perspective informed the participants that they could not have the titles without desiring the work.

From this point, I continued to develop the calling of the minister as one who is to rule in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:17. I instructed the men that the participial form of the verb “ruling” was used, which meant one who had been placed before or at the head of the church, and had the responsibility in that position to rule, lead, and direct.<sup>2</sup>

The next designation showing how the pastor functions was that of “leader.” I taught the men about the pastor as leader from Hebrews 13:7 and 17. The phrase for *leader* is actually from the participle of the aforementioned two texts, which uses the phrase, “the ones leading.” As I explained the meaning of the pastor as being one who leads, I brought one particular aspect of leading out from the text. The participants were instructed that leading was done by the administering or the speaking of the Word of God (Heb 13:7). In like manner, they were the ones watching over souls, which pointed the class toward the eternal ramifications of the exercise of leading (Heb 13:17).

The last of the designations given to the class was that of “teacher.” The distinguishing mark of teachers was communicated as something that separated them from deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13). The men learned that teaching was the primary exercise of the pastor (1 Tim 3:2, 4:16). We came full circle with the doctrinal purity aspect of the calling as the ministers were instructed from the Word to teach sound doctrine.

The second part of session 3 was on how the New Testament provides the directive for men called to the ministry to give oversight to the church. We were still dealing with function at this point, and I added two essential elements to this teaching. The first was that the minister had to give oversight to his own home. The function of a man called to the ministry served to bridge what was taught in session 1. I argued for a two-home model pastorate. The class learned that what makes a man a minister comes together in their own home and leads to service in God’s Great House. We observed the biblical concepts of husbandry and fatherhood in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The

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<sup>2</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 232.

case was made that a man is able to lead the church only if he can lead his own family (1 Tim 3:4).

#### **Session 4: The Historical Handling of the Pastor's Calling in Black Baptist Churches**

After a lunch break, we convened for session 4, which was the start of the historical portion of the teaching. The fourth session pertained to the historical handling of the pastor's calling in black Baptists churches. We began with the embryonic stage of the black Baptist church. The men were instructed that the start of the black Baptist church, or the Afro-Baptist faith, is dated as early as the 1750s.<sup>3</sup> We looked at the designations for black pastors in the early Baptist church. I signified that there were six major designations and a seventh, more significant one, which I would address in session 5.

The men learned that the six designations for early black Baptists were slave preacher, ministers, self-appointed preachers, exhorters, cult leaders, and watchmen. The point of the designations informed the class that the function of early black Baptist preachers was that of pastoring, even though they were not acknowledged as such. The class was instructed that these designations proved that the path to the pastorate ran through the pulpit. In addition, participants were taught that all these designations fail to capture the actual activity of the slave preacher.

Having looked at the designations and given examples under each, we transitioned to the next section in this session. We turned to the prerequisites of pastoring in black Baptist churches. At this point in the instruction eyes were opened. I informed the class that in this day and age society has a desire to cancel anything that has oppressed black people. Yet, the prerequisites of pastoring in black Baptist churches began with the First and Second Great Awakenings. The first Great Awakening in particular was headed up by two men who owned slaves—George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards. In teaching

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<sup>3</sup> Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), xxii.

the men about this point in history, I communicated that one of the main reasons black Baptists have placed a premium on conversion was due to the emphasis on conversion during the Great Awakenings. I informed them that both black and white historians agreed on this point, the most notable black scholar being Henry H. Mitchell. Thus, the first prerequisite of pastoring in black Baptist churches as early as slavery was having a converted minister.

The second prerequisite the class learned about was the ability of slave preachers to establish a congregation. The churches these men pastored were able to vet their callings by whether they were able to gather and settle a congregation. Examples were provided to the men from black Baptist history, e.g., George Liele and Lewis Craig, also known as “Ol’ Captain.” The class learned how these aspects of conversion and gathering were at work in the lives of the slave preachers. From the designations and prerequisites of pastoring in black Baptist churches, I was able to furnish proof of the legitimacy of the pastorates amongst the early black Baptists.

### **Session 5: The Historical Precedent for Licensing as Preliminary to Ordination among the Baptists**

The last day of class commenced on July 17, 2021, at 7:45 a.m. This was a full day. The fifth session continued the historical analysis of a call to ministry in black Baptist churches. The class was brought to the concept of licensing ministers under the heading of the historical precedent for licensing as preliminary to ordination among Baptists. My goal was to explain where licensing came from and why it was important. The make-up of the class was six licensed ministers and one man considering his calling who had not been licensed. I found it interesting that even though the majority of the men were licensed (two under me), none of them knew exactly why they were licensed.

Before the start of the project, I did not fully understand it either. So, it was a learning experience for me in writing this project and it was learning experience for the men who sat under the teaching provided in these training sessions. As I started out, I

gave a definition of licensing as the practice early Baptist churches undertook prior to ordaining men to ministry. I provided evidence that in many cases the licenses were legal documents. I covered how licensing differed from ordination, the importance and purpose of licensing, and gave examples of licensing in black Baptist associations. I gave this information as an answer to “What is licensing?”

The class was impressed with the seriousness which the Baptists (black and white) took to try and ensure a man was truly called to pastoral ministry. In the second section I asked, “How did the process of licensing begin in black Baptists churches?” I demonstrated to the men that the practice of licensing, which the majority of them had experienced, was an inherited practice. I admitted that I could not find exactly where it came from as it pertained to white Baptist churches, but I was 100 percent certain that black Baptists received this practice from white Baptists. I proved this by giving examples of white Baptists who had the practice or started the practice before the formation of black Baptist churches. Most of all, I gave the reason for the existence of the practice in the church today.

### **Session 6: The Historical and Biblical Views toward a Plurality of Pastors in the Local Church**

The last session was on historical and biblical views toward a plurality of pastors in the local church. In this final session I summarized my teaching and answered the question as to why black Baptists did not usually have a plurality of qualified men functioning as elders in one local church. The first realization I made was that this was not just a black Baptists church phenomena. I supplied the class with reasons why ordination did not lead to a plurality of elders in one local church among the Baptists. There were two main headings for this session. The first heading pertained to a differing consensus among the Baptists.

The men in training sessions were introduced to white and black ministers who differed on the issue of a plurality of elders. The most striking aspect of this section was



that a plurality of elders was not universally agreed upon amongst white Baptists. Most of the men believed the black church historically only had one pastor. I deduced this from the answer the men gave to question 18 on the pre-training survey. They did not come to the training sessions with the expectation that black Baptists historically had a plurality of elders. It would have been good to have a question as to whether they thought that to be true for white Baptists churches. However, from the discussion I could tell that the men assumed that white Baptists had general agreement on the issue of a plurality of elders.

I gave the class several examples of differing views on the issue of a plurality of elders in one local church. I made the historical case for a plurality of elders in black Baptist churches from the language used amongst black Baptists in their associations and denominational meetings. I admitted that though it was an argument for a plurality of elders, it was not a strong argument because there was not enough proof to argue for it definitively. The second heading concerned history and exegesis. I could say with confidence that the New Testament presented a picture of a plurality of elders in one church providing leadership and guidance to God's people. I demonstrated this earlier in my teaching by giving the plural usage of the word "elder" in conjunction with the churches. I argued that the New Testament appears to assume that one church would have a team of pastors.

I also provided reasons for the differences in ecclesiastical leadership. For black Baptists, their churches were born out of slavery and as a result inherited their model of ecclesiology from white Baptist. From church history I was able to explain that white Baptists were wrong in certain aspects of ecclesiology or did not have unanimous agreement regarding their ecclesiology. I was able to demonstrate that the disagreements in particular pertained to pastoral models for ministry. So, as black Baptists came out of slavery they took what they were taught and made the most of it. As I closed out my lectures, I made the point that as the black Baptists became more liberated, their ecclesiological astuteness, namely biblical literacy, increased

## **Summary of Focus Group Interview**

When the instruction concluded we took a break and resumed later that day for lunch so that those who agreed to attend could provide feedback. The interview consisted of six questions and two questions had sub questions to give more clarity regarding my research. One minister had to leave but joined the focus group through FaceTime when he got home. Another minister provided written responses to the questions because he could not be physically present for the focus group. The first question was, “What was the most important thing you learned in this training series?” The responses I received were almost unanimous regarding not knowing about the importance of licensing. The one individual thinking about his calling did not know licensing preceded ordination because he did not come out of the traditional black Baptist church. Another minister stated, “The most important thing I learned in this training series is that licensing is not new and it’s actually a good process if it’s used in a way of examining those who have sensed the call to ministry.” One responder conveyed his amazement over the slave community’s healthy skepticism of the voodoo priest.

The second question was, “What was the most surprising thing you learned in this training series?” One individual noted the high calling of being a pastor and that it was not a “laid back approach.” Another minister added that the most surprising thing was the white clergy’s recognition of black clergy in how they went to lengths to keep blacks from being ordained. One minister added that he was surprised about the Great Awakenings’ involvement in the formation of the black Baptist church. Two ministers found the different ministerial designations used as most surprising. In addition, another minister said he was most surprised by the historical call in the black Baptist church.

The third question had a sub question. The first part was, “What part of this training was most challenging to understand?” I pressed the class to help me in this area, but most of the class did not find anything challenging about the training. Only one minister expressed a challenge to the training—he wanted me to further explain the differences between licensing and ordination in terms of function. He also added that he

would like to know “How each elder functions in the local church especially those that are not preaching and teaching?” This was his answer to the main question and also the answer he provided to the subquestion, which was, “How might this part be made more understandable in the future?” Only one other man responded. He stated that he wanted clarity on people preaching without a license today and more on the concept of licensing.

Likewise, the fourth question had a main question and a sub question. Question 4 was, “What part of this training series was least helpful/interesting? The sub question was, “What might be done to make this part of the training more helpful/interesting?” In one section of the teaching, I noted how Richard Baxter was quoted by Carter G. Woodson as being against slavery. The quote came from Woodson’s work entitled, *History of the Negro Church*. In my teaching, I demonstrated how we needed to be careful by lumping everyone into the same category of oppressing blacks. One minister would have liked that reality fleshed out more, that is, Puritans spoken of in a positive light and how they might have been helpful to the black church without negating why the black church would take a negative outlook. No one else had anything to add to either of these questions.

The fifth question was, “Was there something this training series did not cover that it should have included?” Only one minister offered an answer. He stated that it did not cover the essence of ministry in the local church. In conjunction, he would have also liked to know what part he would play as a minister in the context of the local church. No one else offered feedback on this question.

Question 6 was, “What advice would you have for the next time this training series is offered?” There was a universal answer to this question: there needs to be more time given to the material and there needs to be more sessions. Two ministers gave that response and the rest of the class agreed. Once this response was given, I informed the men that this concluded the training and that a post-training survey would be coming to them via email.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter evaluates the biblical foundation for ordination to ministry, the teaching methodology, and the effectiveness of the curriculum for training men toward pastoral ministry at Watson Memorial Baptist Church. I am content with what I accomplished through this project and feel it is a building block to a more rigorous training program. What has been put in place through the research and teaching will serve to enable men who feel called to the ministry to pursue that calling, but do not necessarily know what the next step is in that pursuit. The class will begin to equip biblically qualified pastoral candidates to move from calling to training for the ministry. While this chapter evaluates the material which was written and the curriculum which was taught, it also reveals some of the pitfalls I faced. There are areas for improvement, but overall, I am grateful for what I carried out having gone through this process.

#### **Evaluation of the Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to train candidates at Watson Memorial Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, in ecclesiology and toward ordination to the pastorate. The purpose of this project arose from the desire to strengthen the church by following what Scripture teaches regarding pastoral leadership. Based primarily on what the New Testament teaches, the church should have more than one pastor serving in the local church if it is able to establish such a model. In some cases this is not possible, such as if the church is small; nevertheless, if God has placed more than one gifted man in a local church, he should be shaped and sharpened to help strengthen the pastorate and ultimately the church.

Pastors should train their ministers, but they should not do so in order to keep them at an associate minister level. The purpose of instituting training sessions for pastoral candidates is to eventually see them be ordained as pastors. Those who are called to ministry need opportunities to exercise their giftedness. At the same time, they need to know who they are and what they are called to do. The training sessions initiated at Watson, by God's grace, will serve to supply that demand for years to come.

### **Evaluation of the Project Goals**

The effectiveness of this project was based on four goals. The first goal was to assess the ecclesiological astuteness of men who have a desire to be pastors. The first goal was measured by administering a pre-training survey to the seven participants through Google Forms. By utilizing Google Forms, I was able to collect the responses of the participants and evaluate their knowledge of a call to ministry. I used Google Forms prior to placing my findings in Txccl and running a *t*-test. Google Forms allowed me to isolate certain items in the pre-training survey which not only showed the biblical and historical strengths of the participants but also the areas in which they needed improvement.

In terms of ecclesiological astuteness, the pre-training survey enabled me to see where the class was as a whole. Observing a sampling size of the participants' responses through the means, median, and standard deviation of scores demonstrated the data was not skewed but was balanced. A sampling size of survey items pertaining to the participants' biblical understanding of ecclesiology showed that they were starting from the same knowledge base. The participants came into the training sessions with some understanding of what the Bible taught regarding the doctrine of the church. And even in what the participants did not know, from a biblical standpoint they started from the same knowledge base.

From an historical perspective, the participants demonstrated an unfamiliarity with what early Baptists believed about a call to ministry. Whereas the participants began with some level of understanding as to what the Bible taught about the church and pastoral

ministry, they did not demonstrate that same level of knowledge in the historical section of the training sessions. I used a six-point Likert scale with zero being the lowest a participant could score. I gave this score for the response of, “I do not know.” Table 1 shows the consistency of low scores among the participants.

Table 1. Means, medians, standard deviation sampling size

Item	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
14) The Bible offers specific details on how to conduct ordination.	1.14	0	1.57
15) Historically, ordination was a quick process.	2.14	2	2.19
16) Historically, black Baptist churches have been unique in requiring ordination.	1.71	0	2.21
17) Historically, licensure to ministry has come before ordination.	0.85	1	0.69
18) Historically, only black churches have required licensure.	1.42	0	1.90
19) Historically, licensure and ordination were the same thing.	2.42	4	2.29

The responses for these items, displayed from the means, median, and standard deviation, demonstrate that they had room for improvement from both a biblical and historical standpoint. The mean scores were lower in the latter parts of the pre-training survey when compared to the earlier scores. The data in table 1 also demonstrates that the data was not skewed. The participants were consistent in the gaps in knowledge coming into the training series. For example, responses to item 19 showed that participants tended to conflate ordination and licensing. In addition, the pre-training survey shows a consistency in what the participants did know. Understanding these strengths and weaknesses helped me in writing the six training sessions.

The survey data collected was used to (1) analyze if the men understood what it means to be called to ministry, biblically; (2) see if they knew how ordination to ministry was carried out, biblically; (3) examine if they knew how a plurality of pastors functioned according to biblically; and (4) find out if they understood how the process of

ordination was carried out, historically. The goal was considered successful when all the candidates for pastoral ministry completed the survey and the results had been analyzed. The completion of the survey gave me a better focus of what to cover during the teaching section of the project.<sup>1</sup>

The second goal was to develop a six-session training program in the discipline of ecclesiology. In accordance with the research methodology, the training sessions covered the necessary biblical and historical data which would serve to increase the candidates' knowledge of pastoral ministry. The six sessions were developed after the completion of the pre-training survey so that I could accurately compile a syllabus that would meet the needs of the students based on their initial responses. An expert panel of three pastors reviewed the curriculum and provided helpful feedback to assist with the transmission of accurate and poignant information.

Some of the critiques given were based on the language used in chapter 2 of this project. Some of the items critiqued could not be changed, but were clarified during the training session. Another critique was offered but could not be resolved due to the nature of the project. The input of the expert panel significantly helped shape the course and provided satisfactory curriculum evaluation of the rubric with a score of over 90 percent scoring the curriculum at satisfactory or higher.<sup>2</sup>

The third goal was to implement training sessions to increase the candidates' knowledge of ecclesiology. This goal was accomplished with six training sessions on ecclesiology. The dates for the training sessions were sent out on June 3, 2021. Seven men participated in the training sessions. Six of the men were licensed ministers and one was considering his call to the ministry. The teaching sessions were biblical and historical in nature and were considered informative by the class. All seven men attended all six training sessions. This goal proved successful by the results of the *t*-test, which

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 for the survey.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 2 for curriculum evaluation rubric.

demonstrated an increase in knowledge. Furthermore, a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in pre and post training survey scores. Table 2 demonstrates the change.

Table 2. *T*-test: paired two sample for means

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Means	44.28571	62.14286
Variance	67.90476	55.47519
Observation	7	7
Pearson Correlation	0.710678	
Hypothesized Means Difference	0	
df	6	
t Stat	-7.85868	
P(T<=t)one tail	0.000112	
t Critical one tail	1.94318	
P(T<=t) two tail	0.000225	
t Critical two tail	2.446912	

The *t*-test confirmed that there was a significant statistically positive difference in the pre and post training surveys, indicating an increase in the participant’s biblical and historical understandings of ecclesiology ( $t_{(7)} = 7.858$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

Examples of the increase in knowledge could especially be observed in the historical portions of the teaching. Overall, the pre- and post-survey scores increased significantly. Everyone who participated in the six training sessions increased in their biblical and historical knowledge of what it means to be called to ministry. Table 3 demonstrates the increase in the participant’s knowledge between the pre- and post-training surveys.

Table 3. Pre- and post-training survey scores

Participants	Pre	Post
Participant 1	37	50
Participant 2	33	59
Participant 3	48	71
Participant 4	56	69
Participant 5	39	62
Participant 6	51	67
Participant 7	46	57



The fourth goal was to evaluate the training's applicability by means of a focus group.<sup>3</sup> Everyone who participated in the focus group attended all sessions of the class. A total of eight questions were given, two of those questions being sub-questions. Three themes came from the men's responses. The first was the seriousness of ordination to ministry. The second significant theme was the importance of licensing ministers in the local church. One of the men who attended did not come out of the Traditional Black Church and was able to see the effectiveness licensing has in training men toward ordination. The third theme was that there was not enough time to go in-depth in some areas. This goal was considered successful because all the men who attended the class gave valuable feedback in the focus group.

### **Strengths of the Project**

This project has several strengths. The first strength was the biblical and exegetical arguments made for a plurality of pastors in a local church. In chapter 2, I provided a biblical argument not only for what a pastor is, but how the pastorate is to function. Readers of this project will find in chapter 2 a section saturated with the Word of God. A second strength of this project is the contribution made to the understanding of licensing. My research in this area was personally informative. I did not fully understand licensing, its purposes or reasons before writing this project. The men whom I was able to train uttered the same sentiments. For black Baptists, the practice of licensing is still utilized. The section on licensing could help those wondering what it is and understand its importance when it is done right.

A third strength of this project are the sources used. I tried to use as many black scholars and authors as I could to write my project. I desired to allow them to speak for themselves regarding the times of slavery in which ministry thrived. In doing this, I encountered several figures from history that I was not familiar with before the start of

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 3 for focus group questionnaire.

my project. The bibliography section should prove beneficial for those desiring to do further research on this topic.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

There were also several weaknesses about the project. The first weakness is that there was a lot of information, but not enough time to cover it. Admittedly, trying to cover the exegetical data of the New Testament and provide historical proof on the subject was impossible in six sessions. The men who I had the privilege of training desired more time to go deeper into the material. In addition, there were things about the black Baptist church that I was not able to give attention to which I covered in chapter 3. The second weakness is that it was a class set up to train men for the ministry, but it lacked an opportunity for the men to exercise their gifts.

Exercising a giftedness to preach was one of the ways in which early black Baptists churches vetted a man's call to ministry. Slaves who felt called to ministry had to demonstrate their ability to preach. The men who came to class learned a lot about what the Bible and history taught, but they did not have an opportunity to preach to vet their own calling or, for the licensed men, a chance to preach to further sharpen their gifts. A third weakness is that reading was given to help the men increase their knowledge of a call to ministry, but we were not able to interact with the reading at length. There is a fourth weakness of the project which could be related to the shortness of time, but for a class on ordination, there was no simulation of an ordination council. It would have been helpful to bring each minister before the expert panel of pastors to be questioned as to their biblical and theological knowledge.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

If I could do this project over again, I would have started earlier in recruiting for the class and I would have added more sessions to the class. I would have also invited the deacons to participate in the training. Like so many churches, the deacons and the

pastor combine to form a somewhat of a quasi-elder board. The training brought out those differences and informed the ministers that the authority rests in the office of the pastor because it is the one office in the church that is responsible for the communication of the Word. I believe the more people in our church who could be brought in on the training of the ministers would be helped greatly in hearing the content which was taught. In addition, I would have read wider. The more I read the more clarity I had and the more I learned about the subject.

### **Theological Reflections**

The health of the pastorate is tied to the health of the church. If the pastorate is unhealthy, then the church will be unhealthy. As I look at my own context and the ministers we have, I see the potential to increase our growth, spiritually. I am reminded of Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, which inform me that the ministry must be entrusted to faithful men. The phrase that shaped the training sessions I taught was "Resident Ecclesiology," which was derived from Robert Smiths, Jr.'s *Doctrines that Dance*. Smith declares, "The pastor is a resident theologian who goes into the study and wrestles with the profound mysteries of doctrine and theology, comprehends those truths, and makes the complex information comprehensible when mounting the pulpit."<sup>4</sup>

I attempted to lay a foundation that would make resident ecclesiologists out of the men who came to train. My desire for the men was that they would know the church like a heart surgeon knows the heart. I wanted them to see the importance of ecclesiology in the stewardship of their own homes, which furnishes the proof that they could lead in God's House. If there is any branch of theology out of systematic theology that a pastor must know, it is ecclesiology. He must be a man of the church.

First, he must know that God the Spirit has placed him there amongst His people. He should be well acquainted with its ordinances e.g., the Lord's Supper and

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Smith, Jr., *Doctrines That Dance: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life* (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 45-46.

Baptism. In knowing who he is, he will know how to function. In the biblical titles for the minister, God has conveyed to the pastor what he is supposed to be doing. It was impressed upon me in writing the training sessions curriculum that the pastor is to be pure in character and also in doctrine (1 Tim 4:16). The life and the doctrine are a package deal. Out of all the things that someone could be in life, to be responsible for God's people is the highest of all callings in the world. To live and set the example and to teach and bring about real change is the highest of all duties.

I am thankful for the historical portion of this project. I fought back tears several times as I wrote about men who look like me but did not have the opportunities I have. These men made the most out of the situation they found themselves in and led God's people. They paved the way for me. Men like Uncle Harry Cowan, Lott Carey, George Liele, Charles Octavius Boothe, Anthony Binga, Jr., Caesar Blackwell, and Andrew Bryan are the original residential ecclesiologists. Perhaps if I had never embarked upon this project, I would never have met them. These men were of sound theology and were faithful pastorally. They are heroes of the faith. These men are my heroes.

### **Personal Reflections**

My heart is filled with gratitude for reaching the end of this project. This was God's doing. He made me a pastor and he brought me to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to explore this topic. I have been allowed to train the men that God has entrusted to me. To hear the ministers at my church tell me how blessed they were having gone through this initial phase of ordination and how they are hungry for me has exceeded all my expectations. When I came to Watson Memorial Baptist Church, I had two ministers leave me. Yet, God has seen fit to bless me with seven ministers in my seven years as pastor of this church. I am committed to training men for ministry. I know that they will not be with me always. I also know that I am not waiting before they are sent out to ordain them for ministry. By God's grace, I hope to start the formal ordination process with several of them in the coming months. This project has made me firmer in my

conviction that the local church should be led by a plurality of godly men who are sound in the faith. The opportunity I had to put something in place for ministers through this degree program can only be expressed by the term “praiseworthy.”

### **Conclusion**

This project aimed to train men toward ordination for pastoral ministry. When a man says he is called to preach, particularly in the way it is used in the black church, that calling needs to be vetted. What exactly does that man mean by saying, “I am called?” God gives the church pastor-teachers for the equipping of the saints (Eph 4:11-12). The call often is to pastoral ministries and if that is the case, then the church should sharpen the man’s gifts. A church should recognize the work of God in sending them a godly man who is able to teach them and set an example. Therefore, a church should have in place a program to enable the man to become all that God would have him to be. In training the man for ministry, the church will reap the benefits.

First, they will reap the benefits spiritually. Provided that the man has been set apart by God the Spirit for pastoral ministry, he will feed the sheep the Word of God. He will give them sound doctrine. Second, he will set an example for them to follow. A pastor is proof that holiness is hopelessness. He may not be a perfect man, but he will be a godly man, and if the church mimics his behavior then they will become more like Christ. For these reasons it is necessary to train men. In training men for ministry, the church will experience growth, spiritually, and perhaps even numerically.

APPENDIX 1  
PRE-TRAINING SURVEY

**Agreement to Participate**

You are being asked to participate in a study designed to better understand your knowledge of essential matters of ecclesiology and ministerial training. This research is being conducted by Toussaint Chrysostom Adams for purposes of doctoral project research. In this research, participants will complete the survey attached. Any information respondents provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will a person's name be identified with his responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and the participants is free to withdraw from this study at any time.*

**Part 1: Participant Information**

Participants may provide their name or choose to complete this survey anonymously by providing a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN). For research purposes, it is important that participants provide either a PIN or their name. If participants provide a PIN, number, consider using a memorable 8-10 digit number like your birthday or anniversary (example: 07281972 or 042102). The number should be easily memorable as participants will use it at the end of the training series.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ OR PIN: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2: Demographic Information**

[placeholder]

**Part 3: Ecclesiology and Ministry Survey**

Instructions

The following survey will be used to better understand a participant's knowledge of ecclesiology and ministry. Please read each statement below and check the box that best describes your understanding or opinion of the statement. Choose only one answer per statement.

Statement	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree Strongly	Do Not Know
1. A church has freedom in structuring its government.						
2. The Bible gives a specific pattern for church government.						
3. The Bible teaches that elders differ in character from one another.						
4. The Bible teaches that elders function differently from one another.						
5. Elders and Deacons carry authority in the church.						
6. Elders and Deacons have differing kinds of authority.						
7. A church has only one pastor.						
8. The titles "Pastor," "Elder," and "Bishop" are biblical titles.						
9. The titles "Pastor," "Elder," and "Bishop" are synonymous titles.						
10. The Bible restricts the office of pastor to men.						
11. The Bible teaches that anyone who feels called to be a pastor should be allowed to pursue this call.						
12. A period of testing those called to ministry came after the Bible was written.						
13. Ordination is a practice taught in the Bible.						
14. The Bible offers specific details on how to conduct ordination.						
15. Historically, ordination was a quick process.						
16. Historically, black Baptist churches have been unique in requiring ordination.						
17. Historically, licensure to ministry has come before ordination.						

Statement	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree Strongly	Do Not Know
18. Historically, only black churches have required licensure.						
19. Historically, licensure and ordination were the same thing.						
20. Historically, black Baptist churches have had only one pastor.						



APPENDIX 2

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR RESIDENTIAL  
ECCLESIOLOGY CURRICULUM

1= insufficient 2= requires attention 3= sufficient 4= exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
<b>Scope and Sequence</b>					
The curriculum framework includes the scope of what will be taught.					
The scope addresses major developmental areas (knowledge and skill).					
The scope addresses all major content areas.					
The sequence reflects known developmental, pedagogical and logical principles and practices (head, heart, hands)					
The scope and sequence includes meaningful and functional skills.					
<b>Biblical Faithfulness</b>					
This curriculum uses major biblical passages regarding the subject being taught.					
The curriculum addresses the pertinent biblical issues regarding the curriculum.					
The curriculum demonstrates a high view of Scripture.					
The curriculum demonstrates faithfulness to the biblical text.					
The curriculum uses the Bible as its foundation for teaching.					

## APPENDIX 3

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROMPTS

The following prompts were used to understand participants' perceptions of the applicability of the training curriculum.

#### **Prompts**

1. What was the most important thing you learned in this training series?
2. What was the most surprising thing you learned in this training series?
3. What part of this training series was most challenging to understand?
  - a. How might this part be made more understandable in the future?
4. What part of this training series was least helpful/interesting?
  - a. What might be done to make this part of the training more helpful/interesting?
5. Was there something this training series did not cover that it should have included?
6. What advice would you have for the next time this training series is offered?

## APPENDIX 4

### COURSE SYLLABUS

Watson Memorial Baptist Church  
7217 Nachand Lane  
Louisville, Kentucky 40218

**INTRODUCTION TO RESIDENTIAL ECCLESIOLOGY**  
Toussaint C. Adams, Instructor Email: [tousreformed@gmail.com](mailto:tousreformed@gmail.com)

### SYLLABUS

#### Course Description

This course is designed for pastoral candidates at Watson Memorial Baptist Church. This course will serve to sharpen men who are aspiring to pastoral ministry. Currently, there are no ordained ministers. The majority of the men have been licensed for the Gospel ministry.

#### Course Content

This course serves as an Introduction to Residential Ecclesiology. The content is broken down into two sections: 1) The biblical foundation of a call to ministry including what it means to be ordained and what the character and conduct of the minister should be; 2) The historical analysis of the call to ministry in the Baptist context with a focus on the black Baptist's handling of the minister's call, the preliminary act of licensing, and a historical summation of a plurality of elders.

#### Objectives

1. To set a biblical foundation for being ordained for the man who aspires to pastoral ministry.
2. To show from Scripture the character and conduct of the man who aspires to pastoral ministry.
3. To increase biblical and theological knowledge regarding what it means to be called to pastoral ministry.
4. To begin to prepare aspiring pastors for ordination to the pastorate.
5. To provide a historical framework from the black Baptist tradition as to the seriousness of a call to the ministry.

#### TEXTS

##### REQUIRED:

The Pastoral Epistles

Acts 6:1–7; Hebrews 13:7, 17

Anthony Binga Jr. *Sermons on Several Occasions: A Model Christian* p.225-238; *Church Polity* p.88-103

C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* Chapters 1-3

**SESSION 1**  
**Setting a Biblical Foundation for Ordination to Pastoral Ministry**

**Outline and Learning Outcome**

- *This session is designed to provide an exegetical basis for the process of ordaining men to the ministry for the purpose of pastoral candidates to measure their call against the Word of God.*

**Introduction:** Robert Smith Jr. said, “The pastor is a resident theologian who goes into the study and wrestles with the profound mysteries of doctrine and theology comprehends those truths, and makes the complex information comprehensible when mounting the pulpit on Sunday morning” (Doctrines that Dance, p.45-46).

**1. What does the term ordination mean?**

- a. Defining the Concept:
  - i. The word “ordain” or “ordination” comes from the word *ordinare* which means to “set in order” or to “arrange.”
- b. “Appointment” and/or “commission” terminology:
  - i. In Acts 14:23 of the *πρεσβυτέρους*/elders
  - ii. In 2 Corinthians 8:18 there is “a brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches.”
  - iii. Appointment language as ordination is owed to patristic Greek and interpreters reading the word back into the New Testament so e.g. in Acts 13:1-3, it is Paul and Barnabas ordaining men to the office of elder by laying their hands on them (*40 Questions about Elders and Deacons*, 209).

**2. What did the act or process of ordination look like in the New Testament?**

- i. Ordination as communal: God entrusts the selection of elders to a community of godly believers.
  - Acts 13:1-3 contains the earliest, albeit non-formal act of ordination. The Spirit of God sets apart Paul and Barnabas and the church in Antioch recognized the work of the Spirit.

*Polhill states, “The gesture almost certainly was not an ordination...the gesture was more a symbol of the congregation’s endorsing the work of the two” (Acts, 290)*
  - The New Testament seems to show that there must be an affirmation from a community of believers conclusively accepting and embracing what the Spirit had done in placing men in the ministry.

- ii. Laying on of Hands: God has entrusted the selection of pastors in some regard to the local church. The office of pastor should never be pursued without the blessing of a believing body. In the New Testament the affirmation of man's call is concluded with the laying on of hands.
- The prophetic utterance could be viewed in 2 ways. 1) The preposition *διὰ* could indicate the means by which Timothy received his gift or 2) it could point to prophecy as an accompanying activity.<sup>1</sup>
  - The verb is *ἔδóθη* is an aorist passive indicative which indicates that Timothy was give this gift by God/the Spirit.
  - Towner suggests, "It was probably rather a reference to words of the Spirit spoken by a prophet (s) that confirm and identify Timothy's giftedness and thereby authorize his ministry in the community."<sup>2</sup>
  - The imposition of the hands/laying on of hands can be identified with a communication of healing cf. Mark 6:6; Luke 13:13; Acts 28:8 of blessing cf. Gen 48:14; Mark 10:16, of spiritual gifts or skills cf. Acts 8:17; 19:6; 2 Tim 1:6. Also see Num 27:18-23; Deut 34:9; Acts 6:6 for of kinds of authorizations and appointments.

### 3. What is the importance of biblical designations for men called to the ministry?

- a. Ministers should be called by biblical names and not by extra biblical or unbiblical names. In other words, what titles does the New Testament confer upon men who are in the ministry? There are several.
- i. *Πρεσβυτέρους*/elder: those who presided over the assemblies (or churches): Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:18; 1 Timothy 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1, 5;
  - ii. *ἐπισκοπή*/bishop/overseer:
  - iii. *Ποιμαίνω/ποίμνην*/shepherd: The noun is inferred from from the verb which is used in 1 Peter 5:2. So, the pastor is a shepherd and shepherding is his function.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 323.

<sup>2</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 323.

- Jesus is called the Great Shepherd in Hebrews 13:20. The adjective “Great” is used to describe Christ as Shepherd, but also distinguish Him from shepherds who are not great.
- iv. ἡγουμένων/ ἡγέομαι/leader:

**Conclusion:** The terminology of ordination is not found in Scripture. If by ordination we mean the public and communal identifying of men whom God the Spirit has set into ministry, then we can rightfully designate the imposition of hands as the act of ordaining pastors. The imposition of hands does not confer ministerial giftedness on the man. He has the gift the moment the Spirit of God sets him apart. Furthermore, the church should use the titles which the New Testament has set forth for men in ministry. By using the ministerial designations the church can better understand the office of pastor and submit to those whom they have agreed God has called and set over them.

**SESSION 2**  
**Session 2: Examining the Form of a Man Called to Pastoral Ministry**

***Introduction:*** Regarding the minister's self watch Spurgeon said, "How horrible to be a preacher of the Gospel and yet to be unconverted! Let each man here whisper to his own inmost soul, "What a dreadful thing it will be for me if I should be ignorant of the power of the truth which I am preparing to proclaim!" Unconverted ministry involves the most unnatural relationships. A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics, philosophizing upon sight and vision, discoursing upon and distinguishing to others the nice shades and delicate bleedings of the prismatic colours, while he himself is absolutely in the dark! He is a dumb man elevated to the chair of music; a deaf man fluent upon symphonies and harmonies! He is a mole professing to educate eaglets; a limpet elected to preside over angels."

***Outline and Learning Outcome***

- *This session is designed to develop the high character and sound theological qualifications of the minister as set forth in Scripture in order to set biblical expectations for the pastoral candidate.*

**1. The inescapable reality of purity in the man's conduct**

- a. The one who rises to the office of pastor must have acquired two essential characteristics.
  - i. Form does not start with sanctification. The form of a man called to the ministry begins with justification.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish minister Charles J. Brown stated, "Well; the position is already established, so far as mere proof is necessary. For, an unconverted man, a man destitute of personal godliness is an enemy to Christ. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be (Rom 8:7). To imagine that Jesus should commission an enemy for any such service is out of the question. The ministry is a high and very confidential service of the Lord Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

- ii. Acts 20:8
  - iii. In Acts 20:33-35, he calls them to imitate his life.
  - iv. 1 Timothy 4:16, again the Apostle says, "Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
- b. General Overview of Practical Holiness
    - i. Above reproach in general: 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:5-9 provide the grounds for overall purity.
      - George W. Knight remarks, "Because of the nature of the task, there is a 'therefore' the consequent necessity that such an overseer be above reproach. οὐν indicates that an inference is to

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<sup>3</sup> Charles J. Brown, *The Ministry: Address to Students of Divinity* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2010), 3.

be drawn. Which denotes compulsion in the sense of what is necessary or one must do, states the inference to be drawn by means of the accusative and infinitive that follow.”<sup>4</sup>

Dave Harvey noted that *“Too often a man is set aside from ministry because of church politics or vague assessment deficiencies. And too often, when a man’s character hasn’t stood the test, he remains in ministry by simply rewriting the test...Scripture provides clear, evaluative categories that focus on the observable fruit in a man’s life and ministry...The man is assured that he’ll be held accountable to clear, biblical criteria.”*<sup>5</sup>

- ii. Titus 1:6 the term which Paul uses is. It pertains to a man who cannot be called into account, unprovable or unaccused (Joseph Thayer, 423).
- c. Specific Areas of Practical Holiness
  - i. The Pastor and Money: The internal flaw of greed bars the man from ministry. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:33
  - ii. The Pastor and His Home Life: The Character and conduct of the elder are wedded together by God. The man of God is to be a high character man and a man of irreproachable conduct.
- a. The basic measurements of a man called to ministry is his home life. In the qualifications, Paul distills the pastor’s ability shepherd down to whether or not he is a good husband and father.
  - i. The pastor is to be a “one-woman man.”
    - 1. This qualification limits the pastorate to men. The language is unequivocally clear. It does not say a “one man woman.” That would lead to the reality of woman pastors.
    - 2. Rather, it is the man who is to be singular in his devotion to his wife.
  - ii. 1 Timothy 3:4
  - iii. Titus 1:6-7 The pastor being “above reproach” serves as the bookends to his stewardship over his wife and children. His children are to be believing/faithful children, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. The pastor’s home life is couched between the mandate of him being above reproach.
  - iv. For household churches see Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:2 cf. 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15.

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<sup>4</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 155.

<sup>5</sup> Dave Harvey, *Am I Called: The Summons to Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 80.



## 2. **The non-negotiable mandates of soundness in his doctrine**

- a. The other side of purity is purity of doctrine.
  - No man should serve as pastor who does not have a firm grasp on Bible doctrine. As a Resident Ecclesiologist, the pastor is a master of doctrine.
    - i. Warnings against false teachers is proof that the pastor must be sound in his own theology. Acts 20:28 the elder is to be on guard for himself and not only for the flock. In verse 29 he says, “I. know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”
- b. Sound doctrine serves as the fence which keeps the sheep within the bounds of orthodoxy.
  - i. Romans 16:17-18, those whom the shepherd must keep an eye out for. Notice, they are those who are causing dissension by their teaching.
  - ii. John 10:1-13, Christ is the primary example of the Shepherd who protects.

**Conclusion:** John Stott commented this way on two text, Titus 2:7 and 1 Timothy 4:12. He said of the pastor that he is “...to be a visual aid to the congregation. Titus was told, ‘Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds’ he went on to say, “We preachers cannot expect to communicate verbally from the pulpit if visually out it we contradict ourselves...If we want our gospel credible, we must embody it” (John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today*, 78.)

## SESSION 4

### *The Historical Handling of the Pastor's Calling in Black Baptist Churches*

**Introduction:** Ordination in black Baptist churches developed and flourished out of the institution of slavery. The way in which black pastors arrived at ordination is unorthodox when compared to the biblical case which has been made for it in the previous section. The reason for this is due to the circumstance from which black Baptist church has grown. This session begins the historical development of pastoral ministry in black Baptist churches.

#### *Outline and Learning Outcome*

- *This session is designed to provide the foundation which early black Baptists laid for vetting a man's call to the ministry.*

#### **I. Ministerial Designations in the Development of Black Baptist Pastorates**

- a. Embryonic stage of the black Baptist church: In speaking of the black Baptist church, it should be noted that there would be no black church without the institution of slavery. Mechal Sobel dates the Afro-Baptist Faith around 1750.
  - i. The first black churches were not brick and mortar buildings. They were makeshift structures found in the backwoods of plantations.
  - ii. While blacks were allowed to attend preaching services with their white counterparts, they were prohibited from having gatherings of their own. Slaves would steal away to the woods and cabins, or canebrakes to have church independently and this movement to the backwoods served as the antecedent to the organized black Baptist church.
- b. Preaching as the pathway to the pulpit: The titles which were used historically of black pastors demonstrates that he must be gifted before he is able to pastor. Cleophus LaRue said of preaching it, "continues to be a high calling to that sacred desk – the Christian pulpit" (Power in the Pulpit, p.2)
  - John W. Blassingame stated, "*The true shepherd of the black flock was the slave preacher. Often one of the few slaves who could read, the black preacher was usually highly intelligent, resourceful, and noted for his powerful imagination and memory. Because of his traits of character and remarkable personality, he was able to unify blacks, console the sick, weak, and fearful, uplift and inspire them*" (The Slave Community, p.131).
  - That preaching was the path to the pastorate is most clearly demonstrated in the titles that were used of early black pastors.
    - i. Slave Preacher: this is foremost of all titles by which early black pastors were identified.
    - ii. Ministers: These were officially recognized (by white counterparts/denominations see Sernett, p. 95) ministers of the Gospel.
      - Lott Carey (1780 – 1828) was one of the more notable of this kind of preacher.

- In addition, Caesar Blackwell (1769 – 1845) is also considered a minister.
- iii. Self-appointed preachers: These preachers would have been men who did not look to be acknowledged by any white governing body. The most notable of these kinds of preachers was Nat Turner (1800 – 1831).
- iv. Exhorters: The exhorter was viewed by some as being incapable of serving as a full pastor. His giftedness could not be denied, however and would preach when gifted whites were not available.
- v. Cult leaders: Most notable characterized as a voodoo priest. A key figure was Gullah Jack (? – 1822).
- vi. Watchman: this another category of slave preacher who was responsible for advising in spiritual matters, counseling, leading prayer meetings and setting a Christian example for the slaves.

## **II. Prerequisites of Pastoring in Black Baptist Churches**

- a. The Great Awakenings impact: The black Baptist looked for conversion in their ministers. The aforementioned, Caesar Blackwell is clear example of the thinking of many slave preachers and their congregations. One reason for this concern is due to an emphasis on conversion which was fostered by the two Great Awakenings.
  - i. Conversion experience: The two Awakenings were different even from a ministerial leadership point of view.
    - 1. The First Great Awakening (1730's and 1740's) consisted of 3 major figures who were of different denominational backgrounds.
      - a. George Whitfield (1714 – 1770) was Anglican.
      - b. Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758) was Congregational.
      - c. Gilbert Tennent (1703 – 1764) was Presbyterian.
    - 2. The First Great Awakening differed theological from the Second Great Awakening (1790 – 1840) as well, emphasizing the sovereignty of God in salvation and also man's inability to save himself.
    - 3. The Second Great Awakening was spearheaded by Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples (Early slogan, "In essentials, unity; in non essentials, Liberty, and in all things charity).
    - 4. The Second Great Awakening differed theological in that it suggested that God bestowed on all people the ability to come to Christ (Noll, 170).
  - ii. Though there were differences the one thing that both of the Awakenings had in common was a common concern for

worldwide renewal, telling anyone who would listen that they needed to be saved.

- iii. Henry Mitchell notes that black Baptists experienced mass conversion during the Awakenings and placed emphasis on conversion as a prerequisite to leadership (Mitchell, 38).
  - 1. George Liele (1750 – 1820) was converted in 1772 through the preaching of a Baptist clergymen named Matthew Moore who would later baptize him.
  - 2. The church where he experienced conversion had ties to the preaching of George Whitfield.
  - 3. Hugh and Jonathan Bryan were brothers and were converted under the preaching of George Whitfield. It was Jonathan Bryan who owned the pioneer African American preacher Andrew Bryan (1737 – 1812), pastor of the First Colored Baptist Church (1788).
- b. The Ability to Establish a congregation: Another way in which early black Baptist churches handled a minister's call was by whether the preacher had the ability to gather or establish a congregation.
  - i. George Liele gathered his own congregation through evangelistic work.
    - 1. The use of pastoral diplomacy
    - 2. This did a number of things.
  - ii. 1801 a slave name Old Captain gathered a church in Lexington, Kentucky.

**Conclusion:** The historical designations of early black Baptist pastors identified them as preachers, but preaching was the way to the pulpit for the black preacher. If he could not preach he could not pastor. Furthermore, the church had the responsibility of identifying their shepherds by first of all marking his conversion and second, recognizing his pastoral gifts by whether he could establish a congregation. Where these two indispensable qualities were found, the minister showed that he was qualified to shepherd.

## SESSION 5

### The Historical Precedent for Licensing as Preliminary to Ordination among the Baptists

#### Outline and Learning Outcome

- This session is designed to examine the history of licensing among the Baptist and to set forth a precedence for the continual usage of the practice in keeping with the patient process of ordaining men to the ministry.

#### I. What is licensing?

##### a. Definition:

- i. The early black historian J.A. Whitted in his history of Negro Baptist in North Carolina informs that Harry L. Cowan, “Uncle Harry” was licensed which enabled him to preach freely in different areas and that men such as these were assigned to local churches.

In the case of Cowan, the license gave him the privilege to preach freely and where called “Privilege Papers.” The record states, *“This is to certify that whosoever is interested about my man Harry he has the privilege to preach and marry also ; to baptize any one who makes a profession of faith.” His success was so wonderful and so much of the confidence of his master was imposed in him his privileges were soon extended, and he was not only allowed to preach on his master's " plantations ” but wherever he was promised “ protection.” God greatly strengthened his ministry and thousands of his own race and many of the white race heard this man of God in his simplicity proclaim the glad tidings of salvation as contained in the word of God.”* (History of the Negro Baptist in North Carolina, p. 199).

- ii. The license was usually a legal document.
- iii. Legitimate licensing took place when either the courts, a Baptist Association, a church, or multiple ordained ministers granted a license to a man who could successfully exercise his preaching gift.
  1. The authority to grant a license to preach did not lie with a single man, but was usually granted by multiple people usually within an established institution.
  2. In the early 1832, the Sunbury Baptist Association of Georgia, (the association of which Andrew Bryan was affiliated) enacted a law preventing persons of color from preaching.
  3. In the same year (1832), Alabama state law required five respectable slave holders to attend any service

- where blacks preached in addition to prohibiting free preachers from preaching to slaves without a license.
4. Obtaining a license did not absolutely free blacks to preach in some cases.

iv. Distinguished from ordination: Licensing was not the same as ordination.

1. Licensing was mainly concerned with allowing a man to exercise his gifts while placing him under the watch of church, pastors, or Baptist association.
2. Ordination almost always assumed taking on pastoral leadership.

Anthony Binga Jr. (1843 – 1919) stated “it does not seem proper for one who has not been ordained to assume the position of pastor, since he cannot discharge all the duties of that office.”

3. Licensing gave a man a right to preach. Ordination affirmed his right to pastor.

b. It's importance and Purpose

i. Provision of accountability:

1. Licensing was an act which sought to take seriously Paul's charge to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:22, “Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others. Keep yourself free from sin.”
2. Biblically, the objective aspect of a call to ministry leads to an examination by the church in order to see if the man is qualified for ministry.
3. The purpose of licensing was to permit a man to preach, but to stop short of making him an ordained minister.

ii. A period of examination and training: Historically, licensing provided the people of God with an opportunity to vet a man's call to ministry and it gave the minister an opportunity to sharpen their own gifts.

1. Edward T. Hiscox commented on the practice saying, “*It is one of the prevailing customs of our churches to grant a license to young men believing themselves, and believed by others, to have been*

*called to preach the Gospel, but not yet prepared to enter upon the work of the ministry”*

2. When the call of a man was announced or made known, it gave the believing community to give careful consideration to that man.

ii. Examples

1. 1864, the Wood River Colored Baptist Association (Illinois) were giving instruction to licentiates, recommending that pastors and elders pay attention to their young preachers that they might make full proof their ministry.
2. 1866, Colored Shiloh Baptist Association of Virginia made a case for licensing. Churches were charged to watch over their own ministers and to not give countenance to them until they had been licensed by the church.
3. 1909, the United Primitive Baptist Association stated that Churches with candidates for ordination of licensing could send them to the association or call for the aide of a sister church. Only if they passed examination would they receive the proper validation.

**II. How did the process of licensing begin in black Baptist churches?**

- a. An Inherited practice: The licensed minister came to be one of the more significant kinds of ministers among the Baptists.
  - i. The black Baptist church inherited the practice from white Baptist churches and/or associations.
    1. One the earlier accounts of the practice is found in the history of Kentucky Baptist. A man named John Gano (1727 – 1804) was preaching without a license in 1751.
    2. Daniel Marshall (1706 – 1784) considered the first great Baptist leader in Georgia is designated as the one who inaugurated the system of licensure of pious men by the church.
    3. In 1803, a white Baptist association argued for the necessity of licensing preachers. According to the record, a man who felt called to preach had to make his wishes known to the elders of the church. Afterwards, they gave him a private hearing and

either encouraged him or stopped him according to their opinion of his qualifications.

4. Samuel L. Jones (1735 – 1814) is one of the more notable contributors to the discussion of licensing. In his work entitled, *Treatise on Church Discipline and a Directory* he notes that ministerial license served to place a candidate for ministry on trial with a view towards ordination (p. 11-12).
- b. Difference among white and black Baptist: Licensing was practice by both white and black Baptists. It preceded the black Baptist church and was different from the white Baptist churches and associations.
- i. It functioned not only to give permission, but to control the black Baptist church.
  - ii. The act of licensing among blacks was under the authority of whites whether that was government, clergy, associations, or churches.
  - iii. The black Baptists kept the practice on into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even after the Civil War because it gave them an opportunity to train their ministers and sharpen their gifts.

**Conclusion:** In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century C. Eric Lincoln noted, “In the Baptist churches there are but two categories of official ministry, the one being preliminary to the other. Candidates are first licensed by the local church, usually in consultation with an association, upon satisfactory preaching of a trial sermon. The “licensed preacher,” to become a minister, must satisfy the study requirements of the local association, if any; be examined by a group or council of ministers and lay persons convened by the local church; and experience the ritual of ordination which is performed by the laying on of hands by ministers who usually are members of the local association.”



## SESSION 6

### *The Historical and Biblical Views towards a Plurality of Pastors in the Local Church*

#### *Outline and Learning Outcome*

- *This session is designed to demonstrate how the Baptist viewed a plurality of elders and compare it to the biblical teaching on a plurality of elders.*

#### **I. A differing consensus among the Baptists**

- a. Historical examples of what Baptists did: among white and black Baptists there is no consensus as to whether a church should have a plurality of elders. Several examples will aid in understanding what the Baptists did.

- i. Samuel L. Jones was one of the leading Baptist of his day and wrote his work *Treatise of Church Discipline* as the request of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. In this work he distinguished between;

1. Ordained ministers who pastored
2. Ordained ministers awaiting pastorates

Jones stated, "...while he remains only a teacher or preacher, and is not connected with any church as their pastor or minister, he can have but little to do besides preaching." The acquiring of the title pastor would come, "by means of taking the oversight of some church, which will much enlarge his sphere of action" (*Treatise on Church Discipline*, p.12).

- ii. A.W. Chambliss was a Baptist preacher in Alabama who wrote a catechism for the instruction of colored people in 1847. He viewed the pastorate as a single congregation with oversight from one pastor.
- iii. In the autobiography of a slave in Alabama named W.E. Northcross (1897) he noted that he went from being ordained by a white preacher to establishing churches and recommending ministers for each of those churches. It appears that he advocated for the single pastor model.
- iv. George Liele (1751 – 1820) was one of the first negro preachers to be licensed. He wrote a letter to an English Baptist minister named John Rippon (1791). In that letter Liele recounts one of his ministerial successes saying, "I have deacons and elders, a few...and I am pastor."
- v. The first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, William Bullein Johnson (1845 – 1851) viewed a plurality of elders in a local church as a "perfect equality of rank" among ministers (*Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life*, 192)

- b. An associational/denominational case for a plurality pastors: It is clear that the Baptist were not clear as to whether a church should have a plurality of pastors in one church. The best case that can be made is not found in the church, but in the denominations/associations.
  - i. Anthony Binga Jr. wrote of a council of ministers whom the church could consult in ordaining a minister for pastoral ministry.
  - ii. In some instances whether ordaining to ministry or licensing a minister, the candidate was brought before the elders and these were usually the elders of an association.
  - iii. If the elders/pastors doing the ordaining of ministers are being called by churches so that these pastors can examine them before the associations one would at least have the concept of a plurality of pastors exercising oversight albeit in the denomination or association and not necessarily in the church.

## **II. History and Exegesis: Concluding Arguments about a plurality of elders in one local church.**

- a. New Testament sets forth a team of elders
  - i. The overwhelming evidence is that the New Testament sets forth a team of elders functioning together in one local church.
  - ii. These men must acknowledge that they are called (subjective) and then they can be vetted (objective) to either affirm or deny that God has done this work within them.
- b. Reasons for the differences: The black Baptists ordained men to the ministry differently from what the New Testament taught for several reasons.
  - i. The black Baptist church was birthed out of slavery and many of the ministers were instructed by their white counterparts who may have had a deficiency in their own ecclesiology.
  - ii. White churches were not unanimous on whether there should be a plurality of elders in one church and in some cases even argued against it and for a single pastor model.
  - iii. If blacks were being catechized as they were in Alabama with Chambliss' catechism, instructing them that there should be one pastor over a single congregation, then they would imbibed that theology and and would not institute a plurality of elders.

**Conclusion:** Ordination to ministry in black Baptist churches was a processed that flourished despite the restrictiveness of slavery. The call to ministry was vetted by way of their conversion experience being examined as well as their giftedness. As the black pastorate became liberated it grew in its understanding of how the pastorate should function. What increase the awareness was continued biblical literacy. The black church has survived the ugliness of slavery with a growing understanding of ecclesiology. For

this to continue, the resident ecclesiologists must continue to make their calling sure through the study of the Word, a good grasp on sound theology coupled with holy living.

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## ABSTRACT

### TRAINING MEN TOWARDS PASTORAL ORDINATION AT WATSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021  
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The purpose of this project was to train qualified pastoral candidates at Watson Memorial Baptist Church for ordination to pastoral ministry. Chapter 1 sets forth the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, delimitations, and research methodology of the project.

Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological rationale for training qualified men for pastoral ministry. First, the chapter examines key texts surrounding ordination. Then, the chapter examines the character of the pastoral candidates followed by the way in which pastors function within pastoral ministry.

Chapter 3 provides a historical analysis of a call to ministry in the black Baptist churches. The chapter seeks to answer the question, “why has the black Baptist church done things differently from the New Testament prescription in ordaining a plurality of qualified pastors?”

Chapter 4 gives a detailed description of the implementation of the project. Chapter 5 evaluates the research of this project.

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