

Chapter 3

The Biblical Witness to the Office of Bishop, and to the Work of God in General

Whenever trying to understand what the Lord Jesus intended for his Church, it is always best to go back to the words of Scripture; and the Bible has much to say not only about episcopacy, but about God's general patterns of working His will in the world. Much has been said and written about "Apostolic Succession of Bishops" as an unbroken chain of episcopally-governed ordinations from the times of Jesus and the Apostles, to the present day. But what did Jesus himself say on the subject?

Too often, the wrangles over the Scriptural basis of ecclesiology miss the context within which the Lord and his Apostles set forth their teachings on the subject. The very Jewish component of the Gospels often seems to be forgotten. Although Anglo-Catholicism makes much of the Jews' sacramental rituals, when discussing the Eucharist, it seems to make little of the fact that Christian church order grew out of the synagogue structure. In fact, one of the points that is most forgotten is that the English word "priest" does not derive from [nhk], the Hebrew word for the persons who offered sacrifices in God's tabernacle or temple. Nor does it derive from the Greek word ἱερεὺς, the Greek word for the one who makes religious sacrifices. Rather, the English term derives from πρεσβύτερος, the Greek word for "elder," or "aged man." The elders in the synagogue were by no means Aaronic priests or Levites; rather, they were the older men of each Jewish community who ran the Sabbath services at the synagogue, and administered the business of the congregation.

This heritage from the synagogue is important to keep in mind when discussing the next point—that the traditional threefold ministerial orders of bishop, priest, and deacon did not exist in New Testament times in the strongly hierarchical form which appeared later. The orders did not, apparently, represent differences in "order" or rank, but rather differences in function. In fact, the term "bishop" (from the Greek word ἐπισκοπος, "overseer," is often used interchangeably in the New Testament with the term πρεσβύτερος.¹⁶

Even as indisputably Anglican a source as George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, holds to an Evangelical¹⁷ position regarding Church orders. In the

¹⁶ Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-2.

¹⁷ Tim Bradshaw asserts that "evangelical," in terms of Anglican church ministry, means the classical Reformed heritage, holding that ministry is grounded in God's covenantal relationship with His people. Tim Bradshaw, *The Olive Branch: An Evangelical Anglican Doctrine of the Church* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, published for Latimer House, Oxford, England), 129.

1982 article “The Origins of the Threefold Christian Ministry,” written when he was vicar of St. Nicholas, Durham, England, Carey asserts that ministerial order is indeed important, and that a theology of ministry is to be found in the pages of the New Testament. At the same time, however,

ministry in the New Testament is always secondary. It presupposes a prior concern with the gospel itself. Whether we talk of the great three—apostles, prophets and teachers—or the local ministry of bishops, deacons and presbyters, the clear fact is that they are part of that medium by which the gospel comes and the church is organized. Ministry, in a New Testament sense, serves both gospel and church and very properly is a servant of both soteriology and ecclesiology and is called into being by the Spirit. Gospel, church and Spirit are the threefold foci of ministry.¹⁸

Carey goes on to say that, properly speaking, “an apostolic succession is not ‘high’ enough,” because New Testament ministry takes its starting-point from Jesus Christ and *his* ministry.¹⁹ “Jesus called to him men and women to live and teach his gospel. Jesus the ‘preacher’ becomes Jesus the ‘preached one’. The ‘Word lived’ becomes the ‘Word expressed’ in words which become revelation to his people.”

Secondly—and very importantly—Carey asserts that from the beginning, “ministry is functional, not ontological: that is, it does not proceed from a carefully formulated ‘necessity’, but rather from the more makeshift life of the New Testament which found it had something to say to the world. The terms ‘apostle’, ‘prophets’, ‘bishops’ and ‘deacons’ show this functional aspect.”²⁰ In current Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic practice, the diaconate is seen as a lesser ministry than the priesthood or the episcopacy. This is clear from the fact that one must, in all three Churches, serve as a deacon before advancing to the “higher” orders. The New Testament, however, does not refer to deacons as having a lesser ministry. In fact, it is dangerous to consider Christian service in hierarchical terms at all. Carey argues even that “there is no room for distinction between *kleros* and *laos*, between clergy and laity. The *laos* is the people of God, and all are *kleros* because all are called to exercise functions within the body.”²¹ The diaconate is to be understood—as are all the church offices—as a *ministry*, that is, a form of practical service. When the Apostles found themselves overwhelmed with matters such as the distribution of food to widows, to the

¹⁸ George Carey, “The Origins of the Threefold Christian Ministry,” *Churchman*, vol. 96, no. 1, 1982, 36.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

detriment of their duties of prayer and teaching, they asked the general body of Christians to appoint seven men for the duties of service.²²

Bradshaw, another Evangelical Anglican, holds a position similar to that of Carey: “The church is not constituted by the ordained ministry, but this ministry serves a crucial role: the continuing teaching of the faith, the handing on the tradition, in the pastoral and evangelistic life of the people of God.”²³ Because the Church is, as the Articles of Religion put it, “a congregation of faithful men,”²⁴ it crosses man-made barriers. The Church, as the body the Christ,

means the whole body of Christians who are jointed to Christ in the bond of the Holy Spirit. Christ indwells each one and the whole body therefore forms a unity which crosses all the barriers of denomination, culture and nation. The body of Christ is a catholic spiritual koinonia, a worldwide fellowship across time and space of all inwardly united to the living, redeeming head of the body.²⁵

The Evangelical attitude distinguishes clearly between things crucial to salvation and things indifferent (*adiaphora*). Evangelical Anglican church order “regards the body of Christ as already extending across denominational barriers, the Holy Spirit being no respecter of persons or structures, as Peter, the arch-ecclesiological conservative in Acts, was forced to learn. Even Gentiles could be indwelt by the Spirit and therefore included in the people of the covenant, without undergoing circumcision.”²⁶

One can indeed argue (as did the 17th-century Anglican theologian Richard Hooker) that the threefold ministry in its hierarchical form is a legitimate development;²⁷ one must recognize, however, that monarchical episcopacy was

²² Acts 6:1-6.

²³ Bradshaw, *The Olive Branch*, 158.

²⁴ Article 19 “Of the Church,” in “Articles of Religion,” in *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Together with The Psalter or Psalms of David* (New York: The Church Pension Fund, 1945), 606.

²⁵ Bradshaw, *The Olive Branch*, 141.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

²⁷ See Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book III, p. 245 of the Keble edition of 1865. Regarded by some as the supreme expositor of the Anglican *via media*, or “middle way” between Genevan Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, Hooker argues that Christians are not obliged (as were the Jews) to keep an immutable order of church government. In chapter six, he declares that the “laws positive,” or particular commandments,

are not framed without regard had to the place and persons for which they are made. If therefore Almighty god [sic] in framing their laws had an eye unto

not the form of government used universally by the primitive Church in its earliest days. Christ had given the Apostles the charge to preach the good news of salvation to all the world.²⁸ In order to aid their work in fulfilling this commission, the Apostles appointed “elders” to continue their ministry within local bodies of believers. The Apostle Paul apparently sent Titus to Crete to continue and order the evangelistic work there, including the appointment of elders in every town, “as I directed you.”²⁹ As necessary, these elders appointed successors. This succession does not prove claims that bishops are the very *essence* of the Church; rather, it merely shows that the Apostles instituted successors to themselves to carry on the work of the Church.

It is important to understand the Jesus was not training the Twelve to become “princes” of the Church as bishops later became following the legalization of Christianity in the 4th century. As Messianic king, Jesus could have claimed territorial dominion over the land of Israel; yet, his words to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate were: “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”³⁰ Jesus’ own relationships, especially his relationship with his Father, show the radical humility expected of disciples (and, by extension, of his bishops or overseers).

Gruenler speaks of the relationship between Eternal Father and Divine Son in so-called “subordinationist” terms. By this, he firmly declares his intent to avoid heretical views such as those of the ancient Arians, who considered the Son of God not to be God the Son, but a being of a lesser essence than the Father. There is, Gruenler says, no eternal order of inferiority or subordination among the Persons of the Trinity; rather, “each person is ‘subordinate’ to the other persons in respect of love, servanthood, and hospitality, seeking always to please one another.”³¹

Jesus tells the disciples in John 14:28b that if they loved him, they would be glad that he was going back to the Father, for “the Father is greater than I.” This represents the deference of the incarnate Son, Jesus, to his heavenly Father.

the nature of that people, and to the country where they were to dwell; if these peculiar and proper considerations were respected in the making of their laws, and must be also regarded in the positive laws of all other nations besides: then seeing that nations are not all alike, surely the giving of one kind of positive laws unto one only people, without any liberty to alter them, is but a slender proof, that therefore one kind should in like sort be given to serve everlastingly for all.

²⁸ Matt. 28: 16-20; Acts 1:8.

²⁹ Titus 1:5.

³⁰ John 18:36.

³¹ Royce Gordon Gruenler, “The Congregational Nature of the New Testament Church,” TMs, Hamilton, MA, 1989, 2.

However, because Jesus also makes statements which refer to his own authority,³² one can consider him to be making a statement about his position within the Godhead:

The Son subordinates himself to the Father not because he is less than the Father but because it is the nature of all three persons of the Triune Family to subordinate themselves to one another in ultimate deferential love and hospitality.³³

The Lord chose as his closest disciples twelve men from relatively humble walks of life. Peter and the sons of Zebedee (James and John), as well as Peter's brother Andrew, were all fishermen. Matthew was probably Levi the publican, a Jewish tax collector in the pay of the Roman occupation and thus considered a traitor by his own people. Even though John apparently had connections to the High Priest Caiaphas himself (note his ability to enter the Sanhedrin's chambers during Jesus' trial),³⁴ none of the Twelve was a member of the Levitical priesthood, nor were any of them scribes, the teachers of the Mosaic Law.

As Jesus himself performed the lowly task of washing the disciples' feet before supper, as Jesus himself did not stand upon his titles of King and Messiah, as Jesus himself did not have a place to lay his head at night, it becomes clear that his Apostles were expected to do the same. And if the Apostles were expected to do this, then it seems likely that their successors, the bishops, must do the same.

The Lord's choice of lowly men for important office seems in itself part of the disciples' training for *ἐπισκοπή*, or oversight. When one reads through the Scriptures as a whole, it becomes clear that God has historically chosen those who were considered of little or no account to work his purposes. In addition to this, one sees that God did not always take into account a person's lineage. Sometimes, the Lord even disrupted a lineage, in order that his purposes might be fulfilled. Among the sons of Jacob, it was Joseph and not his elder brothers who gained the governorship of Egypt. Among his elder brothers, it was Judah and not Reuben, the eldest, who made the forefather of the Messiah.³⁵ Among the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite, it was David and not one of the elder brothers who was chosen to replace Saul as king of Israel. And even Saul was surprised when the prophet Samuel told him that he, Saul, was God's choice as Israel's first monarch, because

³² Cf. John 8:58, where Jesus says to the Pharisees, "I tell you the truth. . .before Abraham was, I am!"

³³ Gruenler, 5.

³⁴ John 18:15.

³⁵ Matt. 1. See also Gen. 49:8 where Jacob pronounces that Judah will replace his brothers Reuben, Simeon, and Levi as leaders of the family: "Judah, your brothers will praise you...your father's sons will bow down to you."

Saul was of the clan of Jacob's youngest son, Benjamin.³⁶ The Lord's favor to the humble is also made known in the *Magnificat*, the song which the Virgin Mary sings upon learning that she shall be the Messiah's mother. In words reminiscent of those spoken by Hannah, the mother of Samuel, Mary says: "He has brought down rulers from their thrones/but has lifted up the humble./He has filled the hungry with good things/but has sent the rich away empty."³⁷

Paul says the same thing in his first letter to the Corinthian Church, regarding human wisdom and influence. In choosing the Corinthians, God did not choose the lordly and powerful, but rather the humble and weak:

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.³⁸

We see then, that episcopacy is best not regarded in strict hierarchical fashion. Although some offices in the church may be regarded with more honor than others, and though some officers may wield authority over others, all officers in the church need to remember that they are there to serve the congregation, and not the other way around. Their Lord, Jesus Christ, set them the first and best example of this—not only in washing the disciples' feet, but also by giving himself as a ransom, by dying a death he did not deserve. Many prelates in the Anglican tradition, including the Continuing Anglicans, have made the mistake of considering themselves just that—prelates, a word which rings of medieval lordship and grandeur. Pope Gregory the Great, though he was certainly one jealous of his own episcopal prerogatives, got the thought right when he termed himself "the servant of the servants of God."

More specifically to the point regarding apostolic succession, however, we might think on Paul's own appointment as an Apostle. In many ways, Paul's situation was very similar to that of the Continuing Church bishops regarding

³⁶ I Sam. 10:21. "Saul answered, 'But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?'" See also Judges 20:46-48 for how the tribe came to be greatly reduced in number.

Compare, too, the song sung in I Sam. 2:7-8 by Hannah, Samuel's mother. The song treats of God's dealings with both the rich and the poor: "'The LORD sends poverty and wealth;/he humbles and he exalts./He raises the poor from the dust/and lifts the needy from the ash heap;/he seats them with princes/and has them inherit a throne of honor.'"

³⁷ Luke 1:52-53.

³⁸ I Cor. 1:26-29 (NIV?)

ministerial credentials. They face hostility from the mainstream, because of questions concerning the validity of their consecrations. Paul faced hostility from other Christian leaders because he did not trace his authority from the Twelve, but claimed direct appointment from the Lord Himself. Paul says as much in his letter to the Galatians, regarding his dealings with the Church in Jerusalem. In recounting his conversion to Christianity, Paul says that when God

who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus.³⁹

In light of Christ's selection of humble followers, and in light of Scripture's general tenor regarding leadership, it seems strange, then, to read something written on this subject by a 20th-century "overseer"—the Right Reverend Ethelbert Talbot, the PECUSA bishop of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania just before World War I. Discussing the number of young men in his day who felt calls to the Christian ministry, he bemoans that

*it too often happens that the ranks of the ministry are recruited from those families who are less prominent in the social and commercial life of the world. These men are often earnest and devoted, and some of them reach positions of distinction and power; but they start out in their professional life inadequately equipped, and are always more or less hampered.*⁴⁰

Talbot considers the work of the ministry as one which demands the highest gifts and graces of culture and refinement of body, mind, and spirit. The young man to whose intellectual equipment has been fortunately added the advantages of gentle breeding and the ease which results from good manners has a far better prospect of usefulness and success. I have noted that even the poor, and those who have had few advantages of education, never fail to recognize a true gentleman in their minister. Other things being equal, that clergyman has the decided advantage whose early home training has been of the right kind.⁴¹

One might ask Talbot, or those who hold similar views of the ministry: where, then, did the words come from, which the apostles spoke on the day of

³⁹ Gal. 1:15-17 (RSV).

⁴⁰ Ethelbert Talbot, *A Bishop Among His Flock* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1914), 108 [emphasis added].

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 108,109.

Pentecost,⁴² or which Peter and John preached before the Sanhedrin tribunal of the Jews?⁴³ The apostles, as said before, were “unlearned men,” who had not had long hours of rabbinical training.⁴⁴ Jesus himself was not rabbinically trained; that was one of the charges which his opponents continually laid upon him. Yet the Holy Spirit empowered them to preach with power to the multitudes, the same Spirit whom Jesus had promised to his disciples during their last supper with him. “All this I have spoken while still with you,” Jesus told them. “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”⁴⁵

It is also worth pointing out that not only were Jesus and his Apostles “unschooled, ordinary men” in comparison to the scribes (the “university men” of their day), they also did not belong to any of the recognized groups within Judaism, such as the Pharisees or Sadducees. The disciples were not known for and did not take their standing from their community affiliations; rather, they were known for and took their standing from their faith in the Lord Jesus.

Again, we emphasize that Jesus was not training his disciples to be “lords” over the Church⁴⁶—rather, he was preparing them to be its teachers and servants. The 19th-century theologian Alexander Bruce discusses this point as a main theme of his book *The Training of the Twelve: or, passages out of the gospels exhibiting the twelve disciples of Jesus under discipline for the apostleship*. Bruce considers the apostles to have assumed the position of Christ’s “deputies” or “substitutes,” following the Lord’s Ascension. Simon Peter was “the leading man or representative man, though not the Pope, of the infant Church.” And the character of the Twelve “was altered to fit them for their high functions.”⁴⁷

Bruce focuses on how Jesus prepared the disciples to become what the Scot calls “under-shepherds,” in service to Christ the Great Shepherd. To be a

⁴² Acts 2:4.

⁴³ Acts 4:8-14.

⁴⁴ Compare the incident at the Sanhedrin, to Moses’ appearances before Pharaoh. Even though Moses had grown up in the Pharaoh’s household, and at least according to legend was one of the most accomplished men of his time, he was not, apparently, a confident public speaker. At the burning bush, Moses complained to God about this lack of eloquence. God had answered him, “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? No go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.” (Ex. 4:10-12). This principle, that God gives to His servants whatever they need to serve the Church, may be considered to hold true when it comes to ordination as well.

⁴⁵ John 14:25-26.

⁴⁶ Matt. 20:25-28. Cf. I Peter 5:3.

⁴⁷ Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: or, passages out of the gospels exhibiting the twelve disciples of Jesus under discipline for the apostleship*, with a new introduction by D. Stuart Briscoe (reprint, New Canaan, Connecticut: Keats Publishing, Inc., 1979), 521 (page references are to reprint edition).

dutiful under-shepherd is, “in another view, to be a faithful sheep, following the Chief Shepherd whithersoever He goes. Pastors are not lords over God’s heritage, but mere servants of Christ, the great Head of the Church, bound to regard His will as their law, and His life as their model.”⁴⁸

In showing the limits of an apostle/bishop’s authority, Bruce uses the example of Jesus’ questioning of Peter in John 21. Three times Jesus asks Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Three times, Peter answers affirmatively; and three times Jesus tells the Big Fisherman to take care of the Lord’s lambs or of his sheep. Bruce comments on the significance of the threefold repetition: “It shows for one thing, that when Jesus said to Peter ‘Feed my sheep,’ He had no intention of making him a pastor of pastors, a shepherd or bishop over his fellow-disciples.”⁴⁹ In Roman Catholic theology, the lambs represent the laity, with the grown sheep representing the “under-shepherds,” the apostles and bishops. “How strange, if this be true,” Bruce notes, “that Peter should be checked for looking after one of the flock [i.e., the Apostle John], and asking so simple a question as that, ‘Lord, and what shall this man do?’”⁵⁰ Christ is reproving Peter for being a busybody, which Bruce considers a fault afflicting other under-shepherds as well, both past and present.

Jesus’ exhortations to Peter and the others of the Twelve were that they should preach the Gospel—this was their primary duty. He did not tell them that they were to become politicians and administrators, along the lines of earthly princes. Nor did he tell them that their primary function would be to celebrate the Eucharist. Rather, their main job was to preach the Gospel, and to build up the congregation, the flock. Though these may be considered as arguments from silence, it is important to note in comparison to all the positive injunctions to preach the Gospel and to *care for* the little ones.

Having considered the spirit of leadership which Jesus intended for his heralds, the Apostles, let us examine the training he gave them in the actual Good News which they were to preach. We have seen that much of what he taught them was to be brought back to their mind by the Holy Spirit. At the same time, however, Jesus was himself the Great and Authoritative Teacher, the only true Rabbi. The High-Church Anglican scholar A.M. Farrer compares the Lord to other rabbis of the Jews, regarding the circle of disciples which Christ drew to himself. Though one may consider as Jesus’ disciples all those who heard the Lord attentively,

yet, like other rabbis, He has a limited number of official disciples, whose chief business is to be at school with Him and learn the trade. For the disciples of a rabbi, thus trained with him and official acknowledged by

⁴⁸ Bruce, 524.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 527.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

their master, became rabbis themselves. There was no other way. Now the relation of the disciples to Jesus is not to be the same as that of any rabbi's pupils to their teacher. The rabbinic pupil became himself a rabbi, as able to add his own grain to the pile of wisdom as his master had been. Ultimately, of course, all are Moses' disciples, but that is a long way back.⁵¹

Farrer considers that by creating this sort of rabbinate, Jesus did not intend to cut off the line of "tradition" at the Twelve. If the Lord had made these official disciples, who had full authority to teach in his name,

is it not equally essential that their companions and delegates shall succeed them as the custodians of the Gospel?...Because the word of instruction has become the very word of salvation, does it suddenly cease to matter whether the succeeding preachers have studied under their predecessors and been approved by them?⁵²

One may agree with Farrer's point, that the Apostles had their own disciples and associates (one thinks especially of Paul's relationships with Timothy and Titus); these relationships do not, however, necessarily show the need for a chain of rightly performed ordinations in order to possess apostolic teaching. King David and the Apostle Paul are, as we have seen, two classic Biblical examples of how one may obtain a kingdom or a ministry without the actions of officers in a human chain of command. David became king without the consent or blessing of the existing king, Saul. Paul became an apostle because of the Lord's direct action, not because of any action by the Twelve.

Bishop Cummins, the founder of the Reformed Episcopal Church, set forth the New Testament view of episcopacy in his December 14, 1873 consecration sermon for the Reverend Charles Edward Cheney.⁵³ Cummins argues on the principle of form following function, i.e., that the ministry's form takes its shape from the needs of the Gospel, and not the other way around. The first bishops were simply "presbyters," or "elders." The apostles commissioned or set them apart to exercise powers for the good of the Church, since they

⁵¹ A.M. Farrer, "The Ministry in the New Testament," in *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of the Episcopacy*, ed. Kenneth E. Kirk (New York: Morehouse-Goreham co., 1946), 132.

⁵² Farrer, 133.

⁵³ George David Cummins, "Primitive Episcopacy," a sermon preached December 14, 1873; *History of the Free Church of England, otherwise called the Reformed Episcopal Church*, by the Right Reverend F. Vaughn, D.D., Bishop Primus (Bath, England: H. Sharp & Sons, 1936), 134. Although the names are the same, the Reformed Episcopal Church referred to in the book's title is not the American church founded by Cummins, but a British relation which Cummins' REC helped to found.

themselves were not able to do all the work. For example, Paul commissioned Timothy and Titus to have special authority in Ephesus and Crete. They were not, however, the permanent bishops there, and had no special title.⁵⁴ That the offices of presbyter and bishop were interchangeable is noted in Phil. 1:1, Acts 20:28, and Titus 1:7.⁵⁵

Robert Sanderson, bishop of Lincoln, England during the early 1660's, reinforces this view of the ministry as a calling from God, and not as a work of men. In the 1621 sermon *Ad Populum*, Sanderson declares that the Apostle Paul's call derived from God rather than from the imposition of human hands.⁵⁶ Taking I Cor. 7:24 as his text, the bishop asserts that since God Himself called Paul

it is needless to confer with flesh and blood, or to seek confirmation at Jerusalem from them which were Apostles before him, by the imposition of their hands...God's work in him supplieth abundantly the want of those solemnities [sic]; and Paul is as good an Apostle as the best of them, although he be an Apostle, not of men, neither by man (Gal. i.1).⁵⁷

We see, then, that in preparing the Twelve for apostleship, the Lord Jesus was also training them to exercise 'επισκοπη, or oversight. This training for "episcopal" responsibilities did not mean the Twelve were to become mighty lords and princes, in the style of the Gentiles. Nor were they or any other Christians to concern themselves with lineages and genealogies.⁵⁸ Rather, they were to become servants exactly like their Master, who washed their feet. Because, too, Christ is the Head (κεφαλη) of the Church, and all Christians are in connection with the Head, apostles or bishops are not the very essence (Latin *esse*) of the Church. Jesus Christ himself is the Church's essence, and reason for being. Regarding the bishops' call and consecration, we need to consider also the all-important role of the Holy Spirit, who moves wherever He wills. It is in this context of the Spirit-breathed Holy Scriptures that we will consider the history of the *episcopi vagantes* and their kin, the χορευτισχοποι.

⁵⁴ Cummins, 138.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵⁶ Robert Sanderson, "Ad Populum," in *The English Sermon, volume I: 1550-1650, an anthology*, ed. Martin Seymour-Smith, general ed. C.H. Sisson, Val Warner, and Michael Schmidt (Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, England: Carcanet Press Limited, 1976), 221-222.

⁵⁷ Sanderson, 221-222.

⁵⁸ I Timothy 1:4; Titus 3:9.