

THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE BRETHREN ELDER

by Jack L. Oxenrider

What is the role of the elder within the tradition and polity of The Brethren Church? The term elder is the predominant historical designation for "pastor" in The Brethren Church. When persons were/are ordained to the Brethren pastoral ministry, it is to the office of elder. Preacher, minister, bishop, elder, helper, pastor, exhorter, and reverend are various designations which have been used throughout Brethren history to refer to this role.¹ The late twentieth century finds the role designated by the terms preacher, minister, elder, or pastor.

Traditional definitions and pastoral models will not suffice due to the uniqueness of Brethren polity. Brethren Church polity is Believers' Church polity.² The genius of Brethren polity was best captured by Alexander Mack, Jr. in the Second Preface to *The Rights and Ordinances of the House of God*. There he said:

These eight persons (the original Brethren) united with one another as brethren and sisters in the covenant of the cross of Jesus Christ as a church of Christian believers.³

The role of the Brethren elder should be defined by its ecclesiology, but the Brethren have no systematic ecclesiology. "The Brethren avoided creeds and confessions. . . ." ⁴ The texts of Scripture constitute Brethren ecclesiology. Thus, the elder's role is defined by Scriptural teaching and example.

The use of the term "elder" within The Brethren Church was derived from the New Testament. The Greek word *presbyteros*, which is translated elder, is used in three different ways: (1) The "elders of Israel", (2) The senior/aged members of the church, and (3) A technical reference to leadership. The model for the New Testament elder is rooted within the "elders of Israel" and the Old Testament cultural reverence for their character, counsel, and ability.⁵

The term "elder" is used throughout the New Testament as an inclusive designation for varied functions of leadership which included apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, deacon, and bishop. Within the New Testament definition of the role, there is neither hierarchical nor sacerdotal distinction. Thus, the elders were not the unquestioned authorities of the church who made all decisions, controlled the organization, practice, and future direction of a congregation. Neither were they endowed with special "priestly" powers to mediate between God and man. They were people selected by God, through the church, to serve (Acts 14:23, I Timothy 5:22, Titus 1:5, Philippians 1:1).

Because of their wise and respected counsel, the growing maturity of their Christian character, their accumulated experience and ability in ministry, they were often influential in the direction of the church. They were leaders because the church respected their personal character and abilities in ministry. They were granted power and authority by the church, yet they were the servants of the church both subordinate and accountable to it.

In the New Testament, great care and detail are given to characterize the kind of person who is best able to fulfill the role of elder. The New Testament calls for careful discernment by the church in the process of selecting its leaders (Titus 1:5-9, I Timothy 3:1-7, II Timothy 2:24-26).

The duties which are to be fulfilled are pastoring, ruling, preaching, teaching, and evangelizing. In every case, the elders were not the only ones who performed these ministries; yet, these ministries were a major part of their function and were essential to their congregational service (I Peter 5:1-5, I Timothy 5:17-18, II Timothy 4:1-5). When the church "set apart" elders, it placed itself under their leadership, pastoral care, preaching, and teaching. The congregation had responsibility of the care of the elder (I Timothy 5:17-18).

The New Testament displays and teaches interdependence, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability between the elders and the congregations. Elder and people were equally a part of the *koinonia* community.⁶

It was the desire of the early Brethren (1708-1735) to reflect the New Testament Church in their faith and practice. While they may not have achieved a perfect likeness to the primitive church, there was a similarity. They were able, to a degree, to leap back 1600 years to recapture in a different culture and time the basic essence of the primitive church.

There were four prevalent values within the mind of the first Brethren of 1708 which influenced the formation of the role and position of the elder: (1) The Brethren had an aversion to ecclesiastical hierarchy,⁷ (2) The Brethren position of leadership was shaped by the Pietistic-Anabaptist influence,⁸ (3) The early Brethren desired to recapture the practices and faith of the New Testament Church,⁹ (4) The early Brethren adhered to the Bible as it read.¹⁰ It was the balance of these four values which shaped The Brethren Church and, consequently, the elder.

The early Brethren never wrote a theology of the church; there is no ecclesiology. They never wrote a theology of the elder; there is no pastoral theology. Yet, an understanding of the values which shaped the early Brethren and an observance of the tasks which the early Brethren leaders performed can help us to remold an

impression of the elder within the early Brethren Church.

From the very conception of The Brethren Church, there has been a continuing recognition and practice of accepting, choosing, and following leaders. The early Brethren clearly accepted the interpretation of Gottfried Arnold on leadership. Arnold taught that there was no essential difference between the early church leaders, including apostle, prophet, teacher, preacher, and deacon. He further believed the elder, as a general term, could be applied to every position of Christian leadership.

For the early Brethren, there was little distinction between leader and laity. The baptism account of 1708 details the extreme measures the early Brethren employed to maintain equality. Alexander Mack, Sr., as leader, baptized the other seven. This marked the beginning of The Brethren Church; yet, at the same time, he was baptized by them. The care and discipline which characterizes the first baptism is an example of the balance which existed within the early Brethren Church between the leader and the people. This example captures the very essence of the Brethren spirit with regard to the role of the elder and the leadership model for The Brethren Church.¹¹

The leadership Mack exercised within the early Brethren Church demonstrated that he was indeed the elder in the New Testament sense of the word. As Dale Stoffer has written:

It was to a large measure due to Mack's preaching, teaching, and writing skill that the young church expanded to several locations in Germany. Finally, it was as a result of his pastoral leadership that the scattered and, at times, disillusioned flock of Brethren who had come to America achieved a new sense of community and mission.¹²

His [Alexander Mack's] Christian character appears to have been that of a primitive follower of Christ. Humility, zeal, self-denial, charity were conspicuous among the graces that adorned his character. The high estimation in which he was held by his brethren is seen in the circumstances that he was chosen by them to be their master. He was the first minister of a little Christian community organized in Schwarzenau in 1708, and labored zealously and successfully to enlarge the borders of their Zion. Of his private character as a Christian father, we may infer favorably from these circumstances that all his sons became pious and were united with the church before they had completed their 17th year.¹³

The choosing of leaders became a growing practice for the Brethren. In 1729, Alexander Mack journeyed to America and settled in Germantown where he assisted Peter Becker, the elder of that congregation.¹⁴ Conrad Beissel served the Brethren at Conestoga. The early Brethren considered an elder to be an essential ingredient of a fully organized and recognized congregation.¹⁵ By 1720, there was

a distinct organization of The Brethren Church and a clear practice of choosing and ordaining leaders.¹⁶

The mid-eighteenth century witnessed a distinct practice of Brethren worship. The characteristics of this worship exemplify the position of the elder within the early Brethren community. It also exemplifies the degree to which the brotherhood had taken organizational shape.¹⁷

The second period of Brethren history (1736-1880) is that of organization and development which followed the death of the first generation leadership. This period was marked by a process of institutionalization. The elders were the key contributors to the institutionalization, and it powerfully affected their role. This period of approximately 150 years reveals a consistent pattern of change. There was a rise in the elder's power and what appeared to be a growing separation between clergy and laity. There was a continuing policy of the elder's subjection to the church, but the elders developed such power and control that, for all practical purposes, they were the church.

During the first twenty-five years of The Brethren Church in America there was consistent growth which centered around Germantown. The pastoral leadership was a key element of this growth. As a Brethren historian writes:

The leadership in the eighteenth century congregation at Germantown was outstanding. It included such personalities as Peter Becker, Alexander Mack, Sr., Alexander Mack, Jr., and the two Christopher Sauers. In 1788, the congregation elected to the ministry a man named Peter Keyser, Jr., whose ministry was destined to span the period of the eclipse of Germantown by Philadelphia. He was a minister in Germantown and Philadelphia for sixty-one years and an elder for forty-seven. No man is more truly linked between Colonial and American time than that of Peter Keyser, Jr.¹⁸

Pennsylvania is one example of the kind of growth in that period. The Brethren in Pennsylvania grew to approximately fifteen congregations, in excess of 700 members. During this time, the Brethren began to move toward "levels" in ministry. Of the fifteen churches which existed in the brotherhood in 1770, there were twenty-one ministries; eight were ordained elders and thirteen held a lower degree of ministry referred to as "exhorters."¹⁹

Morgan Edwards summarizes his historical research into the early Brethren with these words:

. . . in this province fifteen churches of Tunker Baptist, to which appertain eight ordained ministers, elders or bishops, and thirteen exhorters, or probationers. . . . We see also that their families are about 419, which contain about 2,095 souls allowing five to a family whereas 763 persons were baptized and in communion.²⁰

By the year 1780, there were clear and accepted practices within the church which were referred to as "the way of the Brethren." These were unstated attitudes and assumptions which were felt to characterize Brethren tradition and polity. As Annual Meeting began to take power and authority within the church, the "way of the Brethren" began to be written down. Thus, there came to be a standard of polity and tradition for the church. Donald Durnbaugh has stated:

The Yearly Meeting, held at Pentecost, brought together most of the elders and many of the other members. A committee of elders which came to be called Standing Committee prepared the business for presentation to the assembly. Decision was by unanimous consent. If there was a difference of opinion, the matter would be set back for a year.²¹

The first Annual Meeting was held in 1742. The records of *The Classified Minutes of Annual Meeting* begin in 1778. The meeting was initiated by the elders who consequently took responsibility for leadership. This set in motion an increasing control of the elders over the church.

During the period of 1776 to 1850, the elders gained prominence within the brotherhood. There were few congregations who were without ministers, and these ministers had growing respect and authority within the church. "Ministers were elected by the congregation so a church seldom lacked an elder for any more than a brief period of time."²² The main responsibility of the elder during this period was to preach, baptize, counsel, and "rule" through the giving of opinion and direction. Stoffer explains:

Brethren preaching (at this time period) tended to be devotional, emphasizing such typically Brethren themes of self-denial, non-conformity, discipleship to Christ, obedience to the precepts of the Scripture, love of God and one's neighbor; somewhat apologetic, defending the Brethren view of baptism and the love feast, especially; evangelical, based on one biblical text which the speaker developed by using biblical and non-biblical illustrative material; and, at times, evangelistic, giving a low-key invitation to believe in Christ.²³

Institutionalization was a necessary "evil" for the Brethren. As the church grew in the number of congregations, baptized believers, and elders, and as they were spread geographically throughout the United States, organization became necessary. *The Classified Minutes of the Annual Meeting of The Brethren* give a general overview of the issues which faced the Brethren and how these issues were handled.²⁴

The first issue was the three-degree ministry or three stages in the ordination process to eldership or "full ministry." The minutes of Annual Meeting reveal the development of a three-degree Breth-

ren ministry. In 1864 and again in 1865, the question of a three-degree ministry came to Annual Meeting. The origin of the three-degree ministry within The Brethren Church is very difficult to trace. There seemed to be no historical arguments for its development. Rather, it appears that it was a practice which was slowly accepted into the church. As mentioned earlier, by 1760 there had developed a two-stage ministry and, by 1860, there was a fully defined three-stage ministry within the church. Church historians believe that the three-stage ministry within the Brethren was adopted from their Mennonite brothers.²⁵

It was during the late 1700s and early 1800s that some clear distinctions and identifications within the church offices began to develop. A bishop was in charge of overseeing the various degrees of elder within the specific church. Durnbaugh noted:

The church leaders were elected by the entire church membership (male and female). . . . This meeting usually produced the most able, or at least sincere, leadership. Congregations appreciated but did not demand eloquence. Since there were ordinarily several ministers in the congregation, different talents could come into play. Some were known as excellent counselors and administrators of church affairs, while others were known for their preaching.

No salary was paid to ministers, although expenses might be reimbursed. . . . Church officers were chosen for life. Eldership entailed an extra sacrifice for this involved much travel to other congregations. Most of the men had limited schooling but they applied themselves to the study of Scriptures and used the books they did own to their excellent advantage.²⁶

Readings in journals, sermon copies, and articles from this period indicate that some developed considerable skill in their theology and work of ministry. Yet, it also becomes clear that others were very poor at handling the biblical text and spoke more from prejudiced opinion and church tradition than from the model of the first century church and the teachings of Scripture.

The second issue was the elder's relation to the church. The outstanding characteristic of the nineteenth century Brethren Church was the elder-controlled church. General conference was largely influenced and controlled by elders.²⁷ Foremost in the historical mind of the Brethren has been a question of the relationship of the elder to the church. Thus, Annual Meeting repeatedly dealt with questions which referred to the elder's relationship to the church. All their decisions maintained the authority of the church over the elder.²⁸

The decisions of Annual Meeting continually reaffirmed the principle that the congregation was the decision-making community and that the elders should always consult the congregation. When

there was a difference in opinion, the congregation had the final word. Such an attitude not only reflects the Brethren of 1708, but it is also characteristic of the New Testament Church. Such a balance of power is an essential element to the life of the brotherhood. Within the organization of a Believers' Church the elders must be accountable to the church.

It is not surprising that the growth and expansion of The Brethren Church, coupled with the institutional character of Annual Meeting, was to bring about controversy. There were several areas of controversy which rose to the surface between the years of 1860 and 1882. These controversies led to a major schism of the church which resulted in the birth of The Brethren Church based in Ashland, Ohio.

The elder was at the center of the controversy with issues such as a paid ministry and a mono-pastoral system. The paid ministry was first introduced to The Brethren Church in 1860. The one pastor system began to grow as the Brethren expanded throughout the northwest and midwest, resulting in more contact with the styles of other Christian churches. Thus, the mono-pastoral model became an option.

Another controversy which developed during this period was the power of the elder within Annual Meeting.

In 1868, Annual Meeting agreed that the Standing Committee should be composed of representatives elected by the representative districts of the church, rather than being selected by the elders of the church hosting the Annual Meeting.²⁹

Such a decision was an obvious reaction to the power which the elders had maintained within Annual Meeting.

The year 1851 has traditionally been recognized as the pivotal point in the Brethren history, for in April of that year, Henry Kurtz began his monthly paper the *Gospel Visitor*, at Poland, Ohio.³⁰

Henry Holsinger, the leader of the Progressives, calls the period between 1850 and 1880 "transitional" and states that "with the appearance of the *Visitor* was ushered in the Progressive era in the Tunker Church."³¹ *The Christian Family Companion* and its successor, *The Primitive Christian*, became the "soapboxes" for the Progressive movement of the church. These papers began to offer criticism of the existing structures within the brotherhood and called for progressive reform.

The competence of the elders began to be questioned. While there were many elders who fulfilled their jobs well and who were skilled at church administration, preaching, and teaching, there were elders who were poor at these functions and who were unable to lead

congregations. The Progressive movement saw a solution to these problems in the full-time pastor and the mono-pastoral ministry. The emphasis of the Progressive Brethren was not upon the pay, the profession, or the lone pastor, but upon the education, training, and total devotion to the work of ministry. James Quinter said in 1878:

In our travels among the churches and our observation in regards to the causes of trouble and difficulties with which these churches are so often afflicted, we have been painfully impressed with the circumstance that we frequently find that the preachers are not implicated in the troubles, but apparently their indiscretion or misconduct has been the cause of the trouble. We are therefore fearful that our ministers do not always appreciate the great responsibility that rests upon them or the effects of their influence upon the church.³²

While this criticism could not be leveled against all elders and congregations within the brotherhood, there was growing concern. Tension and controversy surrounded the church in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It equally surrounded the elder.

The schism of the early 1880s within the German Baptist Church led to radical reforms within the Progressive element. The Progressive Brethren, under the leadership of Henry Holsinger, were incorporated in Ashland, Ohio, in the year 1883. They took the name, The Brethren Church. Stoffer wrote:

Holsinger indicates that the Progressives were especially discontented by the incompetency of many of the elders and bishops. This incompetency was a direct result of their lack of education. Holsinger felt that the German Baptist Brethren were strangling, numerically and spiritually, because their leadership lacked the education necessary to participate in the modern world.³³

The most obvious changes made by the Progressive Brethren were in relation to the elder. The three-degree ministry was quickly abolished and a single-degree ministry, marked by the ordination of the elder, was established. In 1934, a probationary period of licensure was adopted by the Brethren Ministerial Association. But there has been within the Progressive movement only one level of ordination to the office of elder.

During the first decade, there was considerable discussion over the role of elder and the relationship of the elder to the church. Henry Holsinger pointed out:

The overseers have a duty to perform and are invested with certain authority, and it is against the abuse of this authority and the usurpation of power, nor theirs, that occasionally calls for the protest of the church. The same fatal mistake is now occurring that has occurred on several occasions in the history of the

church—the elders consider themselves rulers while in reality, they are but servants.³⁴

It was this controversy that was the central force to reshape and redefine the position and the role of the elder within the church. Yet, the abuse of the power of the elders in The German Baptist and the harsh expulsion of the Progressives by the parent church did not lead to a reactionary abandonment of the elder's role. They were able to redefine the church and the elder from the historic Pietistic-Anabaptist perspective and in relation to the New Testament Church.

The Progressive Brethren had a strong desire to follow the New Testament. The Progressive revolt was centered in the authority of tradition which was captured in the statement "the way of the Brethren." The Progressives felt that tradition had been elevated to an equal or superior position with Scripture. The model of the Progressives became "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." They considered the New Testament to be their only guide of faith and practice. This became most evident by an insignia: THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS OUR ONLY AND ALL-SUFFICIENT RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.³⁵

The Brethren Evangelist, the paper for the Progressive Brethren, carried an array of articles in relation to the church and the pastor's roles, duties, and qualifications.³⁶ For example, Allen Bricker defined the elder as equivalent of pastor, teacher, and evangelist. He then defined the duties or functions of the evangelist. The roles he named are as follows: (1) Be an example to the flock (pastoring-teaching); (2) Examine and care for spiritual needs (pastoring-teaching); (3) Study and preach the Word (preaching); (4) Do the work of an evangelist (evangelizing); (5) Rule the flock (ruling).³⁷

Henry Holsinger, who was monitor of the 1883 Convention of The Brethren which met in Dayton, Ohio, addressed the convention on the subject of the elder and called for quick and radical reforms.³⁸ The actions of the 1883 convention demonstrated that the Progressives assumed the position of an elder as a part of a Believers' Church. They considered the role and/or position of the elder to be essential, as did the early Brethren. The resulting committee report appeared to define the tasks of the elder as preaching, teaching, and ministering (or pastoring).³⁹

The suggestion of Henry Holsinger at the 1883 conference in Dayton set a precedent for the operation of the Brethren. Following the committee report, there was a continuing flow of denominational material which defined the offices of the church and the relation of those offices to the church.

In the year 1897, the Brethren developed what they entitled, *The Manual of Church Expediency*. This manual was a forerunner of

what today is called *The Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*. Herein the articles of faith were defined, as well as the organization of the church, its officers, and the duties of its officers.⁴⁰ The elder is defined as the first and only degree of ministry. The duties of the elder which are described in this manual are categorized as follows: (1) Pastoring; (2) Evangelizing; (3) Ruling (to assist in); (4) Preaching; (5) Administering the Ordinances. The polity of The Brethren Church as described in the manual gives clear authority to the church over its elders.

Approximately ten years after the publication of *The Manual of Church Expediency*, C. F. Yoder published *The Gospel Church Government*. Yoder addressed the power of the church, the officers and gifts of the apostolic church, the elders and bishops and their duties, deacon and deaconesses and their qualifications, and miscellaneous concerns with relation to church offices.⁴¹ Yoder reiterates the qualifications for an elder from I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 2, and I Timothy 4. He saw five duties for the elder within the church. They were: (1) Preaching; (2) Teaching; (3) Administering the Ordinances; (4) Ruling; (5) Evangelizing.⁴²

In 1901, J. Allen Miller wrote an article entitled, "The Preacher and the Preaching for the Day." In the article, Miller outlines five qualifications for the preacher: (1) The preacher must be called of God; (2) The preacher must be trained in intellect; (3) The preacher must be intensely spiritual; (4) The preacher must be self-surrendered; (5) The preacher must be a prophet.⁴³

In 1924, Miller was on a committee of three which published *The Brethren Minister's Handbook*, designed to help give uniformity in the Brethren practice. The attitude of the church toward its ministers in the early twentieth century is captured in the preface of this handbook.

The minister's duties are so varied and oft times so pressing upon him that he welcomes, if he is an earnest and effective worker, every suggestion that offers help. There is scarcely a relation of human life, no matter how sacred or joyous or how tragic or distressful to which a pastor is not called to enter. Upon all such occasions the individual resources are oft time too limited to make possible the best service. Here again the faithful and sincere worker gladly accepts any help offered. Once again the administration of the affairs of the church, the celebration of the ordinances and sacraments of the church, and the conducting of public and special services lay heavy toll on the ability and the skill of the pastor and preacher. The work of the minister should be carefully, decorously, and prayerfully done. Beauty, order, and harmony in the services, whatever their nature may be, will always attract folks to the church. Dignity, spirituality, and meaning will always edify. The right way will always be the best way. The one purpose of the handbook is expressed in the words of Paul in I Corinthians 14:40—let all things be done in dignity and in order.⁴⁴

The final step of the early twentieth century which helped define the role of the elder within The Brethren Church was *The Message of the Brethren Ministry*. This action of the Brethren Ministerial Association was imposed by the fundamentalist fears that liberals were invading the church. All Brethren elders who were ordained in the brotherhood and accepted in the Brethren Ministerial Association were asked to and expected to ascribe to the articles herein.⁴⁵

By the means of three items, *The Manual of Procedure* (or *Manual of Church Expediency*), *The Message of The Brethren Ministry*, and *The Brethren Minister's Handbook*, the Brethren outlined the duties of the elder and his relationship to the church. These became the accepted practice and guidelines for the elder in the early twentieth century. They continue to exercise considerable authority and influence within the church.

The Brethren Church today is a continuation of the Progressive movement and its 1883 origin. Since 1924, only three articles have been written in *The Brethren Evangelist* which discuss the Brethren understanding of elder and the duties of the elder within the church.⁴⁶ Within this framework, the elder is an accepted and assumed necessary position of leadership within the Believers' Church polity of The Brethren Church. The role and function of the elder in The Brethren Church today is outlined in *A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*.⁴⁷ Yet there exists in The Brethren Church today a tension between the polarities of the Believers' Church and the proponents of hierarchical organization. It is in the midst of that tension that the Brethren have continued to define the role and position of the elder.

While the Brethren have never achieved a perfect reproduction of the first century church nor the New Testament practice, their desire to do so has been evident. It would be unreasonable to expect the Brethren to reproduce a carbon copy of the New Testament church. To do so would require living in a New Testament world. The best that the Brethren can hope for, or any church can hope for, is to reproduce an equivalent of the New Testament church within its culture. The elders of the twentieth century Brethren Church are the equivalent and obvious successors of their early Brethren counterparts and the New Testament elders.

The duties of the Brethren elders have been defined and redefined by the accumulated practices recorded in the Brethren history. No particular Brethren-written history has been all-inclusive in its definition of duties of the elder. Yet, historical practice has defined six specific functions which Brethren elders fulfilled: (1) Preaching; (2) Pastoring; (3) Teaching; (4) Ruling; (5) Administering the Ordinances; (6) Evangelizing.

The role of the Brethren elder has existed and has been defined in the midst of the natural tension which existed between the authority and responsibility of the office and the principles of servanthood within a Believers' Church. The brotherhood requires careful and sensitive leadership. This leadership must understand and be committed to the principles of a Believers' Church. Such was the perspective of Alexander Mack. His example of strong and capable leadership, carefully maintained within a true Believers' Church community, is exemplary.⁴⁸

FOOTNOTES

¹Donald F. Durnbaugh, *European Origins of The Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1958), p. 340 (the 35th Question).

²I. D. Parker, "Church Polity", and D. L. Miller, ed., *Two Centuries of the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1980), p. 161.

³Durnbaugh, p. 121; also see Alexander Mack, *The Rites and Ordinances of the House of God* (Mansfield, OH: Century Printing Co., 1939), p. 15.

⁴Dale R. Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) and The Brethren (Progressive) Churches (c. 1650-1979)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1980), p. 216.

⁵Samuel Macauley Jackson, ed., *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 103.

⁶Jack L. Oxenrider, "Sharing Leadership in The Brethren Church: A Leadership Design for an Elder (Pastor) Within the Tradition and Polity of The Brethren Church" (D. Min. document, Ashland Theological Seminary, 1982), pp. 15-65.

⁷John W. Leer, "The Brethren Past and Present," *Brethren Life and Thought*, Winter 1958, p. 16.

⁸Angel M. Mergal, ed., *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. XXV, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 240-41.

⁹Stoffer, p. 232.

¹⁰James H. Lehman, *The Old Brethren* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 1967), pp. 46-47.

¹¹Durnbaugh, pp. 120-22.

¹²Stoffer, p. 204.

¹³Ibid., Compare Alexander Mack, *The Rites and Ordinances of the House of God* (Mansfield, OH: Century Printing Co., 1939), p. 10.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 279.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 212.
- ¹⁷Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Church of The Brethren, Past and Present* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 1971), p. 20.
- ¹⁸Floyd E. Mallott, *Studies in Brethren History* (Elgin: Brethren Publishing House, 1954), p. 60.
- ¹⁹Ibid., c., p. 87.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 88.
- ²¹Durnbaugh, *Past and Present*, p. 19.
- ²²Stoffer, p. 316.
- ²³Ibid., p. 319.
- ²⁴*The Classified Minutes of the Annual Meeting of The Brethren* (Mt. Morris, IL., and Huntington, PA: Brethren's Publishing Company, 1886), pp. 102-27.
- ²⁵Stoffer, pp. 324-25.
- ²⁶Durnbaugh, *Past and Present*, p. 19.
- ²⁷Leer, p. 16.
- ²⁸*Classified Minutes*, pp. 112-15.
- ²⁹Stoffer, p. 330.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 421.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²James Quinter, "Editorial," *The Progressive Christian and Pilgrim*, August 6, 1878, p. 489.
- ³³Stoffer, p. 430.
- ³⁴Henry Holsinger, "Church Government," *The Progressive Christian*, September 6, 1882, p. 2.
- ³⁵Henry Holsinger, ed., *The Progressive Christian*, October 8, 1880, p. 2.
- ³⁶Oxenrider, pp. 111-13.
- ³⁷A. Bricker, "The Church and Her Officers," *The Brethren Evangelist*, June 18, 1884, p. 1.
- ³⁸Albert Ronk, *History of The Brethren Church* (Ashland: Brethren Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 171-72.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 161.
- ⁴⁰*The Manual of Church Expediency* (Ashland: Brethren Publishing Co., 1897), pp. 234-39.
- ⁴¹C. F. Yoder, *The Gospel Church Government* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 5-25.
- ⁴²Ibid.

⁴³J. Allen Miller, "The Preacher and the Preaching for the Day," *The Brethren Evangelist*, January 3, 1901, p. 5.

⁴⁴J. Allen Miller, G. W. Rensch, Dyoll Belote, eds., *The Brethren Minister's Handbook* (Ashland: Brethren Publishing Co., 1924), p. ii.

⁴⁵*Minutes of the Thirty-third General Conference of The Brethren Church*, 1921 (n.p., n.d.), p. 16.

⁴⁶See Delbert B. Flora, "Qualifications for the Elder," *The Brethren Evangelist*, April 9, 1949, p. 4; C. Y. Gilmer, "The Pastor and the Church Officials," *The Brethren Evangelist*, February 5, 1944, p. 6; and Albert T. Ronk, "Elders, Bishops, and their Duties," *The Brethren Evangelist*, November 29, 1958, p. 4.

⁴⁷*A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*, 1967 (n.p.), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁸For a more detailed study see, Jack L. Oxenrider, "Sharing Leadership in The Brethren Church: A Leadership Design for an Elder (Pastor) Within the Tradition and Polity of The Brethren Church" (D. Min. document, Ashland Theological Seminary, 1982), available through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.