

# The Provision of an Adequate Ministry: Some Historical Reflections\*

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In the title given this paper the key word is 'adequate'. It can have either quantitative or qualitative connotations, I assume that we are here concerned with both aspects, i.e. how is the church in India to provide enough ministers to meet the increasing needs of the churches and how is it to maintain the standards of that ministry?

Can history throw some light on this problem? It can if too much is not expected of it. It will not provide easy answers to our particular problems for if the history of the church demonstrates anything it demonstrates that Christians have had to find solutions in keeping with the particular circumstances of their age and place. Nevertheless history should at least cause us to reflect upon the reasons why the present patterns of the ministry have evolved and the dangers inherent in certain approaches to the problem.

Because the scope of this study must of necessity be limited I have concentrated on the two aspects of the subject implied in the word 'adequate'. First, there is the question of standard. This involves moral and spiritual qualifications as well as training. Second, there is the question of support which for us is one of the major considerations in providing both a quantitatively and to some extent a qualitatively adequate ministry. But neither of these questions can be dealt with out of the context of expectation. What has the church expected that its ministers should be? What functions has it assigned to them? In brief, what has been its conception of the ministerial office?

Generally speaking the traditional roles of the ministry have been priest, preacher (which involves both prophetic and teaching functions), and pastor. Different ages and different churches have elevated one of these roles above the others; seldom have all

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three been emphasized with equal force. It is impossible to deal with questions of adequacy before the question of function has been dealt with. Let us consider one example. In the medieval Western church the primary role of the parish ministry (and in this study we will concentrate upon the ministry at that level) was priestly. In only a very secondary sense was he a pastor, and preaching was almost entirely left to 'specialists' such as the friars and theologians. The minister was primarily a ceremonial functionary and in this role it was not thought that extensive education was necessary. The Reformation in rejecting this conception of the role of the minister elevated the role of preacher to the prominent position. To adequately fulfil this role a highly educated ministry was necessary. In this changing conception of the role of the minister we find the basis of the modern system of theological education.

Again, the adequate provision of a ministry is closely related to the kind of society in which the church exists. It obviously makes a difference whether that society is professedly Christian or predominantly non-Christian or secular. In Christendom the church becomes the spiritual functionary in a society which regards itself as totally dedicated to Christian ideals. The ministry becomes a kind of chaplaincy and the State assumes many responsibilities which otherwise would have to be met by the church itself. The role of the church and its ministers in a hostile or indifferent society is of necessity different. Its prophetic and evangelistic responsibilities will be more obvious and it must be self-contained.

In this paper we will concentrate upon developments in the patterns of the ministry up through the Reformation period and primarily in the Western church. During this period the church struggled with most of the problems which are confronting us today in India. Furthermore most churches have inherited their conception of the ministry from some period prior to 1600.

#### THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD (A.D. 30—A.D. 100)

The apostolic church almost defies an analysis of the kind we are attempting to make. Who was a minister? Each Christian was likely to assume one or several of the functions which were later assumed by the clergy. One is tempted to say simply that the church of this period solved the problem of providing an adequate ministry by making every member a minister.

Nevertheless certain men can be identified as exercising particular ministries—either by appointment of the church or through the calling of the Holy Spirit (the two calls are, of course, not exclusive). One immediately thinks of the apostles, the seven at Jerusalem, the elders, prophets, teachers, etc. Moreover as the church grew and some ordering of its life became necessary the very problems which now concern us began to appear. The more the ministerial functions devolved upon a smaller group of men

the more acute the problems became. How any particular church in this period dealt with these problems depended largely upon how far these developments had gone. One cannot imagine, for instance, that the early Jerusalem church was greatly troubled over such matters as the selection and support of its leaders. The apostles were the natural and undisputed leaders. The communal economy and adventism of the church made support no problem. It is possible that for a time no one in the Jerusalem church engaged in a regular occupation. Later this was to be a source of difficulty in some of the churches, and Paul found it necessary to admonish those who were not making their contribution to the resources of the Christian community.<sup>1</sup>

In the later part of the period the matter of selection and support was becoming a more pressing issue. This is certainly true in the churches with which Timothy had to deal. In the interim between the two *termini* of the early Jerusalem church and the later part of the period these problems were gradually assuming more importance, though no one pattern seems to have emerged at this time. Much depended upon the size of the community, its economic condition, and the demands that were made upon its leaders. The functions of the ministry had not yet been regularized.

The ministers of this period can be roughly divided into two classes: the charismatic ministers and the appointive ministers. This is a somewhat arbitrary classification but it is useful.

The charismatic ministry was made up of men (and, in some cases, women) who received their calling directly through the Holy Spirit. Also included in this group were those called by Christ during his earthly ministry. The evidence of this call lay in visible manifestations of the power of the Spirit, usually through the performance of miracles or the ability to speak in 'tongues' and probably to a lesser extent in the evident inspiration of prophetic utterances (it should be noted that though Paul preferred the prophetic 'proofs' he was careful to remind his readers that he too had the gift of 'tongues').<sup>2</sup> Such ministers were not appointed by the church though in the later part of the period it had become necessary for the church to 'test' the calling of the Spirit in order to protect itself against the false prophets who were exploiting this ministry for personal gain.

The function of the charismatic ministry was to instruct, edify, inspire, and in some cases to supervise the churches. More often than not such ministers were itinerating, though not necessarily so. Upon them rested the chief spiritual ministry of the church. They were the guardians of the faith and the chief mediators of the Spirit. To exercise such a ministry no special training was required though among those with supervisory functions there was a kind of apprenticeship provided by working together

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. 4:10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Cor. 14:18.

with senior men. Thus Paul worked with Barnabas and Timothy worked with Paul. Age seems to have been no consideration—men like Timothy being at least young enough to arouse some opposition on that account.

As a general rule the charismatic ministers were supported by the churches though they certainly did not receive anything like a fixed stipend. Support was given by providing hospitality and other simple needs as they arose. In the case of itinerants it was evidently the practice to give them a small sum of money to provide for their journey to the next place. The giving of money was carefully regulated, however, to avoid exploitation. The need for such regulation is evidenced in the careful instructions given in the *Didache*, the writing of which coincides with the end of this period.<sup>3</sup>

But the churches did not always readily extend support to these men. Paul found it necessary on several occasions to remind the churches that their spiritual leaders deserved, indeed had a right to, material support. His longest statement on this subject is found in 1 Corinthians 9. Though this is a personal statement, explaining why Paul himself and Barnabas did not request such support, it nevertheless clearly affirms both the right to and the fact of this kind of support.

‘Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?’<sup>4</sup>

Paul answers his own question: yes, he and Barnabas like the others do have such a right. He presses the argument by referring to the Deuteronomic law which states that oxen on the threshing floor should not be muzzled. Even as the oxen have a ‘right’ to eat some of the grain so too the spiritual worker has a right to share the material resources of the Christian community.

It is equally clear that at least some of the ministers of this class forewent this right. While on occasion Paul himself received support from the churches—evidently substantial help from the Philippian church and at least hospitality from many of the churches he visited—he nevertheless tried to maintain economic independence through the practice of the tent-making craft. This was a craft particularly well suited for his purposes as it could be practised anywhere for as long or short a time as circumstances allowed. Paul’s reasons for adopting this approach were varied. He indicates that he did not wish to be a burden upon the churches but this was probably a secondary consideration. He was probably primarily concerned to avoid the charge that he was a professional preacher, i.e. one who was preaching simply to

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<sup>3</sup> See especially chapter 11. .

<sup>4</sup> Verses 4-6.

make a living. We see this motive in the passage to which we have already referred.

‘But I have made no use of any of these rights (to support), nor am I writing this to secure such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel ! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward ; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward ? Just this: that in my preaching I make the gospel free of charge, not making full use of my rights in the gospel.’<sup>5</sup>

Paul was undoubtedly influenced by the scorn with which the Hellenistic world regarded a teacher who received pay for his services. This attitude was to influence the church for some time to come—at least with respect to what we would call salaried ministers. But in the apostolic church Paul was an exception, or at least the representative of a small minority in his repudiation of regular or extensive support.

The value of the charismatic ministry of the New Testament period as a precedent for later developments is severely limited by the fact that in the second century Montanism dealt it a death blow, though in fact a charismatic tradition of sorts did continue. More clearly related to the major developments of later times was the appointive ministry of the apostolic period. The most important of these appointive offices was that of the elder. Some of the teachers who like the elders were residential rather than itinerating were in a similar position. These were ministers either appointed by an apostle in consultation with the congregation (what Roland Allen refers to as the principle of mutuality) or by the congregation itself. Because these men were selected by the church it became necessary to determine qualifications which would govern the choice.

In the first place, as the very name implies, the elders were chosen from among the mature and experienced. The Holy Spirit might be rash enough to choose the young, the church was not. Undoubtedly this was accounted for not only by the Jewish precedent which was almost certainly followed but also because the elders were expected to assume pastoral duties as well as increasing juridical and financial responsibilities. Beyond his maturity the main qualification was that he should be of upright character with deep spiritual commitment, a man of ‘good report’.<sup>6</sup> In 1 Timothy the qualities to be sought in a bishop are thus given :

‘Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher,

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 9:15-18.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 6:3.

no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money.<sup>7</sup>

No special training is indicated nor was it probably given, but at least an adequate knowledge of the scriptures and the faith is implied in the phrase 'an apt teacher'.

The extent to which the resident elders and teachers required support probably depended upon the nature of their responsibilities. If their administrative and limited spiritual duties did not take a large portion of their time, support would have been unnecessary. The Jewish elders were not supported by the synagogues and neither would those of the Christian church so long as their duties were light. However there appear to have been teachers in at least some of the churches who were sufficiently busy with their religious duties as to require support. Thus Paul wrote to the Galatians, 'let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches'.<sup>8</sup> As the church became larger and the elders assumed more extensive functions, it became necessary for the church to support them as well.<sup>9</sup> Much depended upon local circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

By and large the provision of a ministry was not a complex problem during the apostolic period. Nevertheless certain developments pointed the way to the later patterns. By the end of the period the responsibilities for the spiritual leadership of the church which had previously been held by the charismatic ministry were beginning to devolve to the appointive officers. This tendency was dictated by the necessity of counteracting the exploitation of the churches by false prophets—both those who sought personal gain and those who were introducing heretical teaching. With the increasing duties of the ministers the need for establishing some sort of a financial system within the church was becoming apparent.

#### THE PRE-CONSTANTINIAN PERIOD (A.D. 100—A.D. 313)

Under the various pressures to which the growing church was subjected in the post-apostolic period (external pressures in the form of increasing if sporadic persecution and internal pressures from the heretical teachers) a more or less uniform pattern emerged out of the informal and undefined ministry of the earlier period. The most significant feature of this change was the increasing prominence given the appointive ministry at the expense of the charismatic. Whereas a kind of charismatic ministry did continue in the confessors and, later, the monks, it was as a rule pushed to the sidelines by church officials. This tendency was

<sup>7</sup> 1 Tim. 3:2, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Gal. 6:6.

<sup>9</sup> See 1 Tim. 5:18.

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed discussion of finance in this period see Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (London, 1960), p. 49 ff.

accelerated by the discrediting of the Montanists. The spiritual functions of conducting worship, preaching, and teaching were now largely in the hands of the appointive ministers.

This change did not take place without opposition. The *Didache* makes it clear that while the appointive officers were becoming more prominent there were still those in the church who gave higher honour to the charismatic prophets and teachers. Christians had to be told that they should give at least equal honour to the church overseers and assistants. Montanism represented a strong reaction to this development and for a time received widespread support. In the third century Christian monasticism arose to challenge the presuppositions of authority of the appointive ministry. The disputes between the bishops and the confessors reflect a similar uneasiness. In fact the tradition of what might be called spiritual anti-clericalism was never to die out—as we shall attempt to show later in our discussion of medieval monasticism.

Despite the opposition the spiritual gifts which had previously been so widely distributed came increasingly to be concentrated (or at least so it was thought) in the hands of the appointive clergy, and, more particularly, in those of the monarchical bishop. By the end of the second century the bishops were regarded as the principal guardians of the faith and the channel through which the gifts of the Spirit flowed outwards to the other clergy and the whole Christian body. They were the leaders of worship, the disciplinary officers, and the pastors. They were also the church treasurers. The deacons and presbyters had become assistants to the bishop with sometimes one, sometimes the other, being regarded as the more important. The bishops of the second century were not diocesan bishops in the later sense, however, but bishop-pastors with charge over one congregation or at most a few city congregations to which they could easily minister. Well into the third century the bishop provided the main pastoral ministry at the congregational level.

Corroborating with the regularization of the ministry was the sacerdotal interpretation of it. The threefold order of bishop, presbyter, and deacon came to be described as having that relationship to the new dispensation that the high priest, priest, and Levite had to the old.<sup>11</sup> Thus not only did the functions of the ministry come to be exercised by a relatively few men but the ideological foundations for the distinction between clergy and laity had been laid. The ministry was fast becoming the responsibility of a select and distinct spiritual caste.

Church organization was becoming more complex and a rudimentary hierarchy was being formed. The Christian communities were still largely concentrated in the cities and so for a time the bishop was able to fulfil the role of pastor as well as supervisor and priest. But by the middle of the third century the size of the major city churches had passed beyond the point where the bishop

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<sup>11</sup> See I *Clement* 40.

could adequately do the whole job himself. He therefore began to delegate many of his functions to the presbyters who now in effect replaced the bishop as the parish minister.

The need for this devolution of function is evident in the statistics of the Roman church given in a letter written by Bishop Cornelius in the middle of the third century. Under the bishop's supervision were 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 sub-deacons, 42 acolytes, 52 exorcists, readers and janitors—154 altogether. As if this were not enough he was also responsible for the care of some 1,500 dependents.<sup>12</sup>

In light of the recent discussion of a limited sacramental ministry in rural areas a passing reference to a remarkably similar development in the period under consideration may be of interest. As the church spread into rural areas the metropolitan bishop found it difficult to minister to the congregations there. In order that the sacraments might be made available to them rural bishops or *chorepiskopoi* were appointed. These men were not regarded as so well qualified as the city bishops and their sacramental functions were severely limited. Though at first they seem to have held a relatively high status (at the Council of Nicaea they signed in their own right) they were increasingly subject to the metropolitans (at the Council of Chalcedon they signed only as the representatives of their metropolitan) and while they were idealized by men like Chrysostom as a general rule they were scorned by their city cousins. The late fourth century canons of Laodicea forbade the further appointment of such bishops, indicating that they should be replaced by visiting priests. Similarly the Council of Sardica prohibited the appointment of bishops to small places in order that the honour of the episcopal office might not be sullied. Nevertheless the office continued, particularly in the East, though in function the *chorepiskopoi* were reduced to the position of the modern archdeacon. After the thirteenth century they disappeared entirely. Just why this form of ministry fell into discredit is difficult to determine exactly. Undoubtedly the growing power of the metropolitan bishops and their jealousy of competition from the rural bishops had much to do with it. It is also probable that there was a feeling that episcopal functions should not be in the hands of men not adequately qualified for the position.<sup>13</sup>

With the development of a distinct sacerdotal, teaching, and pastoral ministry arose the idea that the clergy should be distinguished from other Christians in their manner of living. Popular demand for celibacy, special dress, and abjuration of temporal occupations among the clergy began to mount. Throughout the pre-Constantinian period such demands were held in check and often opposed by prominent fathers. With respect to clerical celibacy men like Tertullian and Gregory of Nyssa defended the right

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI.43.11-12.

<sup>13</sup> See G. H. Williams in H. R. Niebuhr and D. D. Williams, eds., *The Ministry in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1956), pp. 56, 57. Also see entry in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.

of the clergy to marry (though it must be admitted that in so far as both were married they had a vested interest in the dispute). In a period of persecution it was unwise for the clergy to adopt a special form of dress, making it that much easier for their enemies to identify them. The use of special vestments in worship was becoming common, however. The matter of temporal occupations will be considered below.

As the appointive ministry assumed a dominant position in the church the selection and qualifications of those who were to occupy these offices became a matter of considerable importance. Gradually the mechanics of selection became normalized. The greatest importance, of course, was attached to the selection of the bishop. Increasingly the lower clergy were simply appointed by the bishops, though at least in some parts of the West the more ancient practice of election of the presbyters by the congregations continued. By the end of the second century the bishop was usually selected in the first instance by the local clergy, with the presbyters playing the dominant part. The selection would then be approved by the neighbouring bishops who would then determine whether the people over which he was to rule were agreeable.

In this period as in the former the primary qualification for the office of bishop was proven moral character. Though the bishops were regarded as the guardians of the faith, theological ability was low on the list of qualifications, as is amply proved by a study of the early councils. The bishops were simply expected to maintain the faith as they had received it and to eliminate heresy. For this purpose intellectual ability was not thought necessary. The *Didache* mentions humility, lack of avariciousness, and proven character as the chief qualifications of a bishop.<sup>14</sup> One of the main concerns at this time was that the bishop should be trustworthy in handling the church funds, over which he came to have complete control. The persecutions aided the churches in their selection, for often confessors would be leading candidates for elevation to the episcopal office.

It was expected that the holders of any ministerial office would be orthodox in faith (a major issue in the Donatist and Novatian controversies), but as I have suggested this did not imply any special theological training. Bishops often relied upon their lower clergy for theological advice—as evidenced, for instance, in the services of the presbyter Athanasius to Bishop Alexander at the Council of Nicaea. Institutions like the catechetical school in Alexandria can in no sense be compared to modern theological colleges. Attendance at such schools was certainly not prerequisite to any ministerial office.

However, as the practice of elevating deacons (in some places the archdeacon was almost automatically the successor) and presbyters to the episcopate and of drawing the higher clergy from the lower became common, a system which amounted to a form of

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<sup>14</sup> *Apology*, 39.4.

in-service training developed. As an individual worked his way up through the orders he gained extensive practical experience under the influence of mature clergy. Apart from this the general level of education was low, thus earning the scorn of intellectuals like Celsus who dismissed the Christians as ignorant. The fact that the church did produce some brilliant theologians at this time does not alter the over-all picture.

As the size of the church and the number of its dependents increased a more elaborate financial system began to appear. At first the main use to which church funds were put was the care of the destitute. The extent of this obligation is well illustrated by the letter of Bishop Cornelius to which we have already referred in which he says that the church in Rome had 1,500 dependents.

Increasingly the clergy too came to be supported out of these funds, though the exact extent of this support is difficult to determine. It probably varied greatly from place to place. Much would have depended upon the resources of the particular church. There was also difference of opinion as to whether it was desirable that the clergy should receive such support.

On the one hand there were those who apparently shared the Hellenistic disdain for the professional teacher or religionist. To receive payment—especially in cash—for religious services in some sense detracted from the pure motives of such service. This attitude is reflected in some of the bitter attacks upon the Montanists who evidently had a kind of salaried clergy. Apollonius describes Montanus scornfully as one 'who appointed collectors of money; who organized the receiving of gifts under the name of offerings; who provided salaries for those who preached his doctrine, in order that its teaching might prevail through gluttony.'<sup>15</sup> (We can only be glad that Apollonius isn't around to comment on our latter-day stewardship programmes!). In the same vein while arguing that local officials should be supported the *Didache* says that any prophet that asks for *money* should be held suspect. Similarly both Tertullian and Justin went out of their way to emphasize that the money collected by the church through weekly or monthly offerings was primarily used for charitable purposes and not for paying the clergy. The primary objection here was not to support but to support through the payment of money.

Whether for ideological or practical reasons it is a fact that large numbers of the clergy were engaged in various occupations of a temporal sort through which they supported themselves. While W. G. B. Ream in an article in the *I.R.M.* probably makes too much of the fact, he does offer ample proof of the prevalence of a self-supporting clergy up through the fifth century.<sup>16</sup> In the early records the clergy are described as being employed in many different types of work—they were physicians, silversmiths, gold-

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<sup>15</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, V.18.2.

<sup>16</sup> 'The Support of the Clergy in the First Five Centuries A.D.', *I.R.M.*, Vol. XLV, No. 180 (Oct., 1956), pp. 420-28.

smiths, potters, officers in the imperial household, etc. The strongest evidence comes from the conciliar canons which sought to regulate (but not eliminate) such clerical professions.

Ream classifies these canons as those which forbid certain occupations, those which restrict or regulate clerical involvement in trade, and those forbidding the clergy from assuming managerial positions in business establishments.

To what degree was this secular activity simply the child of necessity and to what degree was it ideological? This is, of course, a critical question. Whereas in areas like that under the supervision of Cyprian self-support as a supplementary source of income beyond the grants provided was obviously practical, in other cases there seems to have been an ideological basis for it. Exhortations to the clergy to follow some trade lest they become disdainful of manual labour were not uncommon. For similar reasons the practice of a craft by the clergy was widespread in the East. On this subject Chrysostom waxed eloquent. In a somewhat romanticized picture of the *chorepiskopoi* he thus described the ideal minister:

‘These men you may see sometimes yoking the oxen and driving the plough, and again ascending the pulpit and cultivating the souls under their care; now uprooting the thorns from the earth with a hook, and now purging out the sins of the soul by the word.’<sup>17</sup>

That some of Chrysostom’s contemporaries did not share his enthusiasm for this type of ministry is seen in their systematic efforts to do away with the *chorepiskopoi*.

Whereas some may have idealized the early worker-priests there were others in this same period who felt that the employment of the clergy in secular occupations was undesirable. In this vein Cyprian argued that ‘the ministers of the Church ought to serve exclusively the altar and sacrifices, and to give their whole time to the supplications and prayers.’<sup>18</sup> This, of course, reflected the growing feeling that the clergy should be set apart to live a distinct ‘spiritual’ life different from that of other Christians. But there were others whose arguments were primarily practical. These advocated church support for at least the higher clergy in order to counteract certain common abuses.

The very canons that Ream mentions in support of his thesis that the larger portion of clergy in this period was self-supporting indicate that there was sufficient dissatisfaction with the system to warrant conciliar action. The various secular occupations seem to have often assumed more importance to the clergy than their religious duties. There was more tent-making than ministry, more interest in material advancement than in religious service. Episcopal visitations, we are told, often more closely resembled trade

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in *I.R.M.*, Vol. XLV, No. 180 (Oct., 1956), p. 424.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

missions. The conditions described at the Council of Chalcedon reflect a situation which began during the earlier period :

‘ It has become known to the Holy Council that some members of the clergy from base covetousness hire other people’s goods and enter into contracts for secular business, disparaging the service of God, while gadding about the houses of secular people and taking over the management of property for love of money.’<sup>19</sup>

Despite the scorn heaped upon him by his opponents it is worth remembering what Montanus represented. One of the main planks on his platform was a criticism of the worldly character of the clergy of the catholic church. Any practice introduced among his own clergy would certainly have been designed to counteract such worldliness. Putting them on ‘ salary ’ must certainly be seen as an effort to overcome abuses of the kind we have been considering.

However, even those who advocated complete church support for the clergy were opposed to the idea of a fixed stipend. It was this aspect of their practice that brought the Montanists and the Artemonians of the third century under fire. Support should only be given in ‘ kind ’, i.e. food, clothing, and other simple necessities supplied as the need arose. The provision for the needs both of the clergy and poor was not regularized during this period though the beginnings of the more systematic finance of the later period can be seen. The *Didache* suggests a system based upon the Jewish offerings of the first fruits. Here and there emphasis was placed upon tithing but for the most part church funds were raised through periodic voluntary collections. The common meal also provided a kind of support. By the end of the second century the bishop had become responsible for administering all church funds. He was also expected to meet his own needs out of these funds—though he should exercise care in doing so. That all was not well with this arrangement is revealed in the words of the third century *Didascalia Apostolorum* which says that the bishop ‘ ought to be nourished from the revenues of the church, but not devour them ’.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of the period under consideration most of the higher clergy at least were entirely supported by the church and the general situation is well summarized by Williston Walker :

‘ In practical life the clergy, by the middle of the third century, were a distinct, close-knit spiritual rank, on whom the laity were religiously dependent, and who were in turn supported by laymen’s gifts.’<sup>21</sup>

(To be continued)

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in *I.R.M.*, Vol. XLV, No. 180 (Oct., 1956), p. 423.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426.

<sup>21</sup> W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, revised ed. (Edinburgh, 1959), p. 84.