

# Teaching The Teachers: Pastoral Education In The Early Church

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Denominations vary drastically in the education of their pastoral clergy. Some have no formal system or requirements, while others require a great deal of secular and religious education. Some have a system of "in-house" training, while others send their candidates to secular or inter-denominational institutions of higher learning. Some denominations require a very rigid program of studies in residence while others, especially in mission situations, use primarily non-residential or extension education (often known as TEE). Some stress moral training, others academic requirements. With burgeoning pastoral shortages and increasing numbers of second-career candidates, the diversity, if anything, is increasing. Yet it is notable that although such vast diversity exists, little has been written about the pastoral education of the clergy during the church's formative years. Did the early church have formal or informal, residential or non-residential, secular or in-house training? This article hopes, in at least a preliminary way, to explore some of the evidence.

## I. Who Were the Pastors?

Our study begins with a problem. There was no single office in the early church which was exactly equivalent to our "pastor," i.e., a congregation's preacher, teacher, counselor, administrator, role model, public representative, and figurehead.

Paul says, "God gave some to be ἀποστόλους, some to be προφήτας, some to be εὐαγγελιστάς, and some to be ποιμένας and διδασκάλους" to build up the body of the church (Eph. 4:11,12). He tells Timothy that it is noble to desire to serve in the office of ἐπισκοπή which will take care of (ἐπιμελήσεται) God's church (1 Tim. 3:1,5). In the same letter Paul mentions διάκονοι, and in his letter to Titus he says πρεσβυτέρους need to be appointed in every town (1:5).

The qualifications listed for all these jobs are very similar. For the office of ἐπισκοπῆς the prerequisites include being above reproach, monogamous, temperate, self-controlled, hospitable, apt to teach (διδασκτικόν), not quarrelsome, not greedy for money, a good family leader, not a recent convert, and having a good reputation outside the church (1 Tim. 3:2-7). Διάκονοι must meet similar requirements, including that they be tested (δοκιμαζέσθωσαν) and "must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith (τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως) with a clear conscience" (vv.8-10). Paul tells Timothy in his second letter to entrust the true teaching "to reliable men (πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις) who will also be qualified (ικανοὶ ἔσονται) to teach (διδάξαι) others" (2 Tim. 2:2). The πρεσβύτεροι have similar qualifications listed in 1 Timothy. Since each one is an ἐπίσκοπος and God's οἰκονόμος (v.7), he must "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (v.9). Some of these elders will also be involved in teaching and preaching (ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ, 5:17).

Thus we have a whole list of terms for church leaders (ἐπίσκοπος, διάκονος, πρεσβύτερος, ποιμὴν, εὐαγγελιστής, διδάσκαλος, etc.), all with nearly identical entrance requirements and all with overlapping if not identical job components (teaching, preaching, exhorting, defending, preserving, and passing on the truths of Holy Scripture). Without trying to investigate the extent of each title and where and how they might differ and complement each other, let us merely note that by the mid-second century the clergy had resolved itself in most areas of the church into a tripartite division: bishop, presbyter, deacon. By the fourth century these three had taken on roles which we might describe as that of district pastor, local pastor, and assistant pastor. At the same time a whole brood of lower level assistantships had been spawned within the church, forming a virtual *cursus*

*honorum* (a path of advancement through the ranks, as was common in political life). In the mid-third century church at Rome there were 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 subdeacons, 42 acolytes, 52 exorcists, lectors, and porters (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.43.11). Periodic expansions and contractions took place throughout the medieval period until the Reformation caused in the Protestant church a renewed unity of *das Amt* under the title of pastor or minister. Only the second-half of the present century has seen a new differentiation of titles to parallel a new and growing specialization.

## II. New Testament Qualifications and Selection of Clergy

The early clergy obviously modeled themselves and their ministry to a great extent on Christ and his apostles. They also had the Old Testament priests and prophets to use as additional role models. Jesus taught and gathered disciples as a contemporary rabbi did; he knew and taught scriptures like a scribe (but with authority!); he preached repentance and forgiveness as a prophet. He modeled as well as taught.

As we showed above, the Christian church did have clear moral as well as intellectual requirements for its early clergy. In our study of training of the clergy, let us first look at the New Testament terminology used in the selection of clergy.

Matthias was chosen (τῶν συνελθόντων, Acts 1:21) to take the place of Judas in the apostolic ministry (τὸν τόπον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης καὶ ἀποστολῆς, v.25). The method of selection involved the naming of qualified candidates (eyewitnesses from the beginning), prayer, and the casting of lots. In Act 6 the apostles told the Christians to choose (ἐπισκέψασθε, v.3) men to oversee the food distribution. This time the qualifications included being full of the Spirit and wisdom (v.3). When leaving the congregations formed on his first missionary journey, Paul is said to have appointed elders (χειροτονήσαντες πρεσβυτέρους, Acts 14:23) in each church, with prayer and fasting. As we saw above, in the pastorals mention is made of first testing (δοκιμαζέσθωσαν) those who are to be deacons (1 Tim. 3:10), giving leadership to reliable men qualified to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2), and in each city having Titus appoint elders (καταστήσης πρεσβυτέρους, 1:5) with the proper qualifications for ministry. While verbs of teaching and training are to be found, they rarely are used of teaching leaders as a separate group.

The impression one gets is that leaders were recognized, then chosen and appointed, not trained. One's past life (especially since becoming a Christian), one's moral blamelessness, one's intellectual grasp of Scripture and its doctrine—all of these had a bearing on one's selection and appointment. But in general, the church seems to have chosen men who were qualified to lead rather than choosing people to be trained as leaders.

There is evidence of some training of leaders, however. John Mark may well have been a trainee on Paul's first and Barnabas' second journey. Silas and Timothy accompanied Paul on his second journey. By the third journey we hear of Luke, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus as well (Acts 20:4). It is hard to avoid the conclusion that some if not all of these men were receiving on-the-job training or serving as pastoral interns under the supervision of the apostle. Paul mentions laying hands on Timothy, giving him a "pattern of sound teaching," and encourages him to continue in what he has learned (2 Tim. 1:6,13; 3:15). The model seems to be that of Jesus' preaching trips in the company of his disciples, especially the twelve. This is the only New Testament "school of the prophets" one can discern from the canon.

## III. The Second Century: Local Teachers/Itinerant Trainers

What was church leadership like in the early second century? The picture conjured up to my mind by the sources is of local congregations being led by leaders chosen from among their own elders. They were also visited by itinerant preachers. These may often have been well-known bishops, pillars of the church in that particular province, making the rounds of the provincial congregations to settle disputes and to provide a cohesiveness among the churches. At times itinerant preachers came from even further away. Many were lis-

tened to with special respect since they were students of the apostles themselves. An especially bright and Spirit-filled younger man might at times be selected to join a preacher or bishop on his circuit serving as a pastoral apprentice. Otherwise, the local bishop and elders would sit at the feet of these itinerants and learn as much as they could during their visit and then continue to serve their fellow Christians with the Word.

Support for this picture comes from the second-century Syrian work called the *Didache* or *The Teaching*. Chapters 6-10 appear to be an instruction book to guide the local elders and bishops in how to properly baptize and celebrate Holy Communion. Specific prayers and rites are spelled out in considerable detail with the afterthought, "but permit the prophets to give thanks as they see fit" (10:7). Additional instruction is then given for discerning an orthodox itinerant: "Welcome whoever comes and teaches all the aforementioned things to you; but if a teacher himself turns aside and teaches another *didache* which undermines the aforesaid teachings, do not listen to him" (11:1,2). Additional admonitions are given to receive "every apostle coming to you" as long as he stays no more than two days and requests no money but only bread and lodging (11:3-6). The conduct of these traveling prophets and apostles must also match their teaching and thereby affirm their honesty. Chapter 13:1-4 is especially instructive:

Every true prophet wishing to settle among you deserves his food. Likewise a true teacher, like a workman, deserves his food. Therefore, take every first fruit—the produce of your wine press, your threshing floor and of your cattle and sheep—and give it to the prophets, for they are your high priests. But if you have no prophet, give to the poor.

Again we have different titles—prophet and teacher—but they seem to overlap in practice. It is also conceivable to the author of the tract that a local congregation has neither, i.e., no professional clergyman who needs their support. They may well have only local elders who perform the duties of the public ministry in their free time while still earning their own keep with their normal occupations. And, of importance to our study, they function with their own informally-gained theological knowledge and training. This understanding is confirmed by chapter 15:

Appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are unassuming and not greedy . . . and have been proved. For they also are performing for you the work of prophets and teachers . . . ; they are to be honored among you along with the prophets and teachers (1-2).

One surmises, lacking further evidence, that this was the normal situation in most places throughout most of the century. The Christian message was taught within families and within congregations. Catechetical instruction as given to converts by the elders and bishops (who were not always, physically "elders," cf. Ignatius, *ad Magnes.* 3:1). The bishops also administered baptism and communion (Ignatius, *ad Smyr.* 8.2), but it seems that little further formal training was provided for them in carrying out their duties. Having heard the testimony *in extenso* of the *Didache*, one can see this pattern beneath other shorter references. For example, Eusebius says of Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, that he learned the Scriptures from the disciples of the disciples "whenever they came" (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39). Furthermore, the fourth-century historian implies that Papias has limited biblical and theological knowledge. He refers to him as a "man of small intelligence," citing his millennial beliefs as proof (3.39). Yet it is clear from the citations he gives that Papias was literate and acquainted with a variety of Christian authors and works. Justin describes congregational life as being supervised by a president or presider (*ὁ προεστώς*), who led the worship, kept the treasury, and taught the people (1 *Apol.* 65-67). Irenaeus tells how the supervision of the church was handed down from bishop to bishop in order to preserve the apostolic teaching, mentioning how Polycarp and others learned from and conversed with the apostles and their disciples (*Contra Haer.* 3.1-3). The many works of Tertullian often comment on or criticize the clergy, but he says little about their training. I have been able to find no mention of any organized or lengthy instruction or theological training for the clergy at any level. At the same time, one should not minimize the theological acumen and scriptural proficiency of the early clergy, especially the bishops of the

larger cities who often were chosen from a group of well-educated candidates. The 65-year-old Polycrates of Ephesus (died c.196) said that he had read through the entire Scriptures and thus felt confident to stand up to the strong-arm tactics of Victor of Rome (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24). Hippolytus also was well-educated and stressed the duty of daily teaching of the people (*Apost. Trad.* 39). But in his surviving works one finds no specific mention of training for the clergy.

#### IV. The Third Century: The Rise of the Expert Teacher

As the second and third century church became less and less Jewish and more and more hellenized, we might expect that Hellenism would also influence the church's concept of the clergy and its education. The hellenistic world as such offered no universal pagan model of education. There were elementary schools for males in many areas, especially for the upper classes. The Greek tradition stressed physical training at the gymnasia as well as the learning of Homer. Roman traditions stressed basic literacy and grammar. In addition there were Roman schools of rhetoric somewhat equivalent to secondary schools, but these were attended only by the elite and were not always very formal affairs. Many wealthy young males, such as Cicero's son Marcus, traveled abroad to Athens or Tarsus or Alexandria to study philosophy and the other advanced "arts" under famous teachers. This, however, was limited to a very few.

Graeco-Roman pagan religion also had no equivalent to the sabbath schools of the synagogue or its teachers. It had no body of knowledge and no moral instruction to be inculcated into its adherents. Their priests and priestesses were rarely professionals. With the exception of the Vestal Virgins, the cults of Isis and Aesculapius, and a few others, pagan priesthoods were normally honorary positions involving the carrying out of rituals at the regular festivals and public ceremonies.

The Graeco-Roman philosopher, on the other hand, did teach, sometimes as an itinerant, and did seek to model his teaching with his life. Jesus himself would not have needed to model his ministry on peripatetic Cynic teachers, as is theorized in many recent studies. Yet, as Christianity became more gentile, the similarities in goals and lifestyle between Christian teachers and pagan philosophers became apparent. The second-century satirist Lucian, in his parody *The Passing of Peregrinus*, tells how the charlatan Peregrinus learned Christian lore from the priests and scribes in Palestine and became "prophet, cult-leader (*θιασάρχης*), synagogue leader and everything all by himself. He interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many" (11). When he was imprisoned, his Christian followers visited him calling him "the new Socrates" and eventually he was freed by a governor of Syria who was "fond of philosophy" (*ἀνδρὸς φιλοσοφία χείροντος*, 14). When he was hauled before a court again, the people shouted that he was "the one and only philosopher;... the one and only rival of Diogenes and Crates" (15). The approach of many of the second and third-century Christian apologists also shows that the public identified Christianity as a philosophy as much as they saw it as a competitor of traditional pagan religions. Christian teachers were thus seen as filling the role which the philosopher-teacher played.

The growth of heresies also had its influence on Christian teachers. As theological speculation in the form of docetism, gnosticism, Montanism, and Marcionism (among others) increased, the church had a new need for educated, authoritative teachers. As the temporal distance between the living Christians and the apostles grew, learned men were required to verify which teaching truly did go back to Christ himself. Thus the theological expert was born, receiving his advanced training by the traditional pagan method of traveling to study under a famous teacher.

This development can be seen in the life of the great Origen. He received his basic Christian education from his father who "required him to learn passages by heart" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.2). By the age of 17, when all the local catechists had fled during the persecutions, he was asked by numerous pagans to give them their elementary instruction in the faith. Later his position as chief catechist for Alexandria was made official by Bishop Demetrius (6.3). Meanwhile he continued his secular study under the philosopher Ammonius Saccus. To further his Christian education he then went abroad, spending time in Rome with Hippolytus, in Athens, in

Asia Minor, and in Palestine. There, at Caesarea, "he gave public lectures to the church on biblical exegesis, at the invitation of the bishops of the province, though not yet ordained to the presbyterate" (6.19). The bishops of Jerusalem and Caesarea were attacked for allowing this to happen. They defended themselves by saying that "in cases where persons are found duly qualified to assist the clergy, they may be called upon by the holy bishops to preach to the laity." They even gave historical examples to support their position (quoted by Eusebius, 6.19). During the last 18 years of his life, spent in Caesarea, Origen in turn attracted many budding theologians, such as Gregory the Wonderworker and his brother Athenodorus, the future bishop of Pontus; these young men came from Asia Minor and spent five years studying with the master (Gregory, *Panegy. Orig.*, and Eusebius, *Hist.Eccl.* 6.30). Thus it is not surprising to read in Origen's homilies on Leviticus that a "priest is to be learned" (*Lev. Hom.* 6.3 and 6).

We have other examples of this "junior-year-abroad" method of advanced theological training. The soon-to-be-heretic Arius studied with Lucian of Antioch at Nicomedia (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.5.1-2). Jerome, during his first trip East to dabble in monasticism, also spent time studying with leading theologians of the East, such as Apollinaris and Gregory Nazianzus.

While this trend did grow during the third and fourth century, it never became the norm. Most clergy were still trained somewhat haphazardly on a local level. And many leading figures never traveled abroad to get advanced training. Note Cyprian, the outstanding bishop of Carthage. His advanced degrees all came in the pagan system. When he was converted c.245, he soon found himself a priest, and within four years a bishop! Others such as Synesius of Cyrene, Paulinus of Nola, and Augustine of Hippo found themselves being ordained as priests and/or made bishops almost against their will and with no particular additional training considered necessary. The early church obviously had no accreditation system in place.

## V. The Fourth Century: A *Cursus* of Apprenticeship

The first systematic training program comes into view in the fourth century. By this time the *cursus honorum* mentioned earlier had developed within the clergy. Though it may have varied somewhat from province to province, its outline is clear. A young Christian would volunteer, be encouraged, or be selected to serve the church as an acolyte or in some other low-level office. Over time and according to his abilities, he would then advance up the ladder from lector to exorcist, subdeacon, deacon, presbyter, and eventually even to bishop or archbishop. Though it was not a military system that required going through every rank (though note that our *ordination* comes from the Latin *ordo* meaning *rank*), the possible stages of advancement were clear. By the early fourth century choosing a bishop directly from the laity was strongly discouraged. The Council of Sardica (343) decreed that a bishop should be chosen from among those who "have fulfilled the ministry of reader, deacon and presbyter, in order that, passing by promotion through the several grades, he may advance to the height of the episcopate" (*Canon* 10). This was to prevent some "rich man, professional advocate or ex-official" from being chosen (exactly what happened later in the case of Synesius and Paulinus mentioned above). In addition, it is stated that the candidate should have served at each stage "for no brief time" to ensure that his character and demeanor was being adequately tested along the way. Note that the word and office of presbyter has by this time become the equivalent of what we know as priest or pastor.

In order to assure the spiritual and physical maturity of the office-holders, age requirements were introduced. The Council of Neocaesarea (held sometime between 314 and 319) set a minimum age of 30 for the presbyterate (*Can.* 11). According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Silvester of Rome (314-335) set up even more elaborate rules, giving a minimum age of 30 for lectors, and minimum lengths of service of 30 days for exorcists, 5 years for acolytes, 5 years for subdeacons, 5 years for "custodians of the martyrs," 7 years for deacons, and 3 years for priests. Though this probably reflects a situation in Rome several decades later, it can still be interpreted as requiring 1 month as exorcist, 5 years as either acolyte, subdeacon, or custodian of the martyrs, then allowing one to become deacon at 35, priest at 42 and bishop at 45. Thus training would take place "in-house" as one served in a lower position under the supervision of the higher clergy. Thus the Council of Nicaea listed baptism and blamelessness as the only two qualifications for ordination, though they do mention an

examination (*Can.* 19). Because of the on-the-job training, there was no need to be more specific. By the end of the fourth century, with more and more children being raised in the church, this system of selecting and educating the clergy from youth became more prevalent. Siricius of Rome writing in 387 to the Spanish bishop Himerius of Terragona puts it this way:

Whoever from infancy vows to serve the Church should be baptized before puberty and given a share in the ministry of the lectors. If he lives honorably from adolescence to the age of thirty and is content with one wife (one received as a virgin through the priest with the normal blessing), he should be made an acolyte and a subdeacon. If thereafter he maintains his continence, he should receive the rank of deacon. If then he performs his ministry commendably for at least 5 years, he should appropriately be granted the priesthood. Finally, after 10 more years, he may rise to the bishop's chair, if during this entire period he remains upright in life and faith. (Ep. 1,13).

Note the stress on chastity and faithful service. The mere fact of his faithfully serving is assumed to have taught him the skills he will need to do his job and to advance to a higher level. At the same time, the councils devoted more and more of their canons to questions of discipline for immoral clergy. The heart and will rather than the intellect are the areas of most concern. Jerome for example stresses the necessity for a cleric to constantly read Scripture, but again the reason is not to obtain theological knowledge but to keep the mind and soul pure (Ep. 52.7). It is, of course, always assumed that the clergy will have an adequate knowledge of the faith and Scripture, but rarely, even in the midst of the christological and trinitarian controversies, is theological acumen and training stressed. Gregory Nazianzen is the exception when, in his second oration, he stresses the necessity of a thorough knowledge of Scripture and especially christology (*Orat. 2 = De Fuga*, 96-98).

By the fifth century, this new *cursum* had become the norm. The only problem was finding enough young men to follow the clerical life. Zosimus of Rome (417-418) reduced the minimum ages for clerical offices to 21 for subdeacons, 25 for deacons, 30 for presbyters. Gelasius (d.496) sought to make the requirements stricter (cf. *Canons of 494*) but had to relax the criteria again because of a severe clergy shortage. The tension between thorough on-the-job training lasting a decade or more and the need for workers would continue to drive the requirements throughout the coming centuries.

## VI. The Fifth and Sixth Centuries: The Monastic Contribution

The early impulse for some Christians to live as anchorites and hermits was soon far outpaced by those who wished to live a simple but communal existence. This allowed for common worship and training, both of which involved the teaching of Scripture. It is only natural, therefore, that the monastery became a theological training ground to some extent. Initially, however, the lay monks were separated by a formidable divide from the clergy who led the "church in the world." How early did that start to change? Charles Kannengiesser has recently made a strong case for Athanasius having learned the fine points of his trinitarian doctrine from the monk Anthony.<sup>1</sup> And not only Anthony, Shenoute, and Pachomius, but even the more eccentric pillar-sitter Symeon Stylites (d. 459) appears to have been an accomplished theologian, despite his lack of a library. Among others, Leo I sought his opinion on christological matters.

The divide between monk and cleric was bridged by Basil, whose own life combined the two and whose monastic rule included not only service to the poor and disciplined labor, but also encouraged monks to become priests and even bishops. While the Origenist controversy brought about renewed tensions for a period, the rapprochement endured, and Basil's vision became the lasting norm in Eastern Christian monasticism. In Italy, Martin of Tours also saw no conflict in being monk and bishop, and so the monk-becomes-priest scenario

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<sup>1</sup> In a paper given in May 1995, at the North American Patristics Society's annual meeting.

became common also in the West. Meanwhile the fourth-century bishop Eusebius of Vercelli organized his local clergy along monastic lines. Augustine likewise organized a monastic lifestyle for the clergy who served with him, and bishops in Tours and Arles made similar arrangements for their clergy. Thus we have the opposite also happening, cleric-becomes-monk. While in these latter cases, common worship and encouragement were important motivations, the opportunity for increased training was also a likely reason in at least some cases.

Monasteries provided a *cursus honorum* parallel to that of the clergy; in its most basic form it consisted of novitiate, monk, and abbot. Theological training was often a vital element in this progression, although its formality varied greatly in the early days. Since the monasteries often had larger numbers of trainees than were to be found in the average local clerical system, it is to be expected that its system might have taken on more definitive shape earlier than that of the secular clergy. While this is difficult to document in the first half millennium of the church's existence, the record of the early Middle Ages speaks for itself. Nearly all the outstanding theologians and clergy were monastically trained.

One man with a vision for quality theological training was the 6th-century Italian Christian Cassiodorus. In his *Institutions*, he describes his attempt in the mid-530s A.D. to found a Christian university and seminary in Rome:

I and the most holy Agapetus, bishop of the city of Rome, worked hard to collect subscriptions in order to have Christian rather than secular schools receive professors in the city of Rome, just as the custom is said to have existed for a long time at Alexandria and is said even now to be zealously cultivated by the Syrians in Nisibis... that thereby the soul might obtain salvation and the tongue of the faithful might be adorned with a holy and completely faultless eloquence (Cassiodorus, *Institut.*, pref.).

Because of the political upheavals in Italy, his attempts failed. Instead he founded a monastery at Vivarium centered on a library of Christian classics and their study. With the turmoil of barbarian invasions all around, monasteries became and remained the only safe havens of organized theological training.

## VII. Conclusion

As we have seen, a number of trends in theological training of clergy can be discerned in the early church. These, however, are trends that overlaid one another rather than replaced each other. At first, theological training of the clergy was mostly an informal affair, being gained directly from the study of Scripture in personal and congregational settings, as well as from on-the-job experience. Parish leaders would avail themselves of the wisdom of itinerant apostles and preachers whenever possible. With the death of those leaders who had had direct contact with the Apostles or with their disciples, the importance of those who had a thorough understanding of the written Scriptures increased. Those who shared this knowledge became known as the experts, and people traveled from far off to learn from them. Meanwhile the clergy themselves became more differentiated internally and began rising through a set series of ranks, allowing for a more regularized system of experiential training. Monasticism contributed the final piece to the system, a residential environment in which formal study could take place and flourish.

While I believe what I have just described did in fact take place, it can often be discerned only between the lines of the sources. The fact remains that in the early treatises on the clergy almost no mention is made of the necessity, much less the means, of theological training.<sup>2</sup> It is the upright moral character, the total devotion

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<sup>2</sup> A good example of this is Chrysostom's *Six Books on the Priesthood* which recently reappeared in English translation (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996). Chrysostom's book is cast as an early work in which he tells why he fled after hearing that his local congregation had decided to ordain him as a priest. He discusses his own unworthiness for this high calling and his lack of spiritual gifts. "I am afraid that if I receive the flock of Christ plump and well-fed and then damage it through ineptitude I may provoke against me God who so loved it that he gave himself for its salvation and redemption" (p.60). John further says that he was unqualified because he had spent his life "in the vanity of secular studies" (p.66). A priest must be pure (p.70), not a novice (p.67),

to Christ and the church, and the time-tested Christian lifestyle of the candidate which are constantly stressed. Even after the church was ravaged by Donatism and Arianism, Monophysitism and Nestorianism, little ink was spent on how to ensure the doctrinal adequacy of future church leaders. One conclusion would be that the church had not learned from its early history and that this resulted in the theological malaise of the medieval church. Another view might claim that early Christians had a more immediate view of the Holy Spirit's presence and work. They followed the lead of the disciples choosing the first deacons; they simply looked for men "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3) or "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (v.5). No matter which side a person chooses, it is difficult to see how early church history can fairly be used to crown one type of theological training program as more biblical than the others. Our own synodical system, beginning with men recommended by their congregations, and then training them theologically and practically in classroom and congregation, has evolved over the past century and continues to be fine-tuned. It should be viewed as a fine Christian program not because it follows some divinely established curriculum or theological tradition, but because it continues to successfully raise up new generations of pastors to carry out the biblical functions of the public ministry.

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free from the entanglements of greed, pride, and self-seeking (pp.77-8), not overly ascetic (p.83), but no mention is made of a course of formal training before or after ordination. He also describes how advancement in clerical office is voted on by laity and clergy during a public festival and is often accompanied by bitter contention over the candidates (p.89).