

06 The Officers of the Church

The church has begun through the work of God's redemption after the fall. She might have looked different from time to time, but she has always had structure. It was the patriarchal sacrificial system in the Old Testament; in the New Testament one finds the coming of the Holy Spirit after the cross of Jesus Christ. The church had been there before the Pentecost. Stephen mentioned the wilderness church in his speech before he was martyred. But it was through Jesus's death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost that the church has become more specific and her structure more diverse.

1. Organic church, institutional church

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11)

2. Extraordinary Officers

Extraordinary Officers were only found during the apostolic era. They were chosen in the beginning from nations by our Lord Jesus Christ, given power to perform miracles, and established the one body together. Endowed with miraculous gifts, they formed the structural core for the establishment of the historical church. Calvin stated that the first three of the five offices mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 belong to the Extraordinary Officers.

1) Apostle

Strictly speaking, apostleship includes not only the Twelve and Paul, but also certain individuals with the apostolic gifts and graces who supported Paul's ministry (Acts 14:4, 1 Cor. 9:5-6, 2 Cor. 8:23, Gal. 1:19). The Apostles had the special task of establishing the foundation of the church. They were sent to the world to establish churches. No one has inherited the apostolic office because there are no more witnesses of Christ's resurrection or ones who received the special power as the Apostles.

2) Prophet

There are records of prophets even in the New Testament (Acts 11:28, 13:1-2, 1 Cor. 12:10, 13:2, Eph. 2:20, 3:5, 1 Tim. 1:18, Rev. 11:6). These prophets likely had the gift of speaking for building up the church and were instrumental in revealing mysteries at times. The prophetic office has come to an end as the fullness of the gospel has been revealed.

3) Evangelist

The evangelists too are mentioned alongside apostles and prophets (Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11, 2 Tim. 4:5). Philip, Mark, Timothy, Titus belonged to this category. Calvin assumed that the seventy disciples after the Twelve were evangelists. Records on evangelist are limited; they accompanied and supported the apostles and at times were sent by them on special missions.

3. Ordinary Officers

1) Pastor

- Preacher who exposit and proclaims the Word
- Unworthy servant who administers the sacraments instituted by the Lord
- Partaker in sharing the gospel which is the good news of salvation
- Ambassador of God who is sent for the church
- Steward who shepherds the Lord's flock

2) Elder

- Qualifications for elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7)
- Duties of elder
 - Officer chosen by the Holy Spirit for dignified and useful office
 - Exemplary shepherd and overseer of the flock

- Faithful steward over the household of Christ

- Teacher who encourages and teaches the Word well

- The attitude of the members (obedience and respect)

3) Ordained Deacon

- Qualifications for ordained deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13)
- Officer who does not rule but serve
- Entrusted with the work in helping the poor and the needy
- Manager of church finance and properties

4. Interim Officers

1) Gwon-sa (권사)

The officer who visits the members of the church under the guidance of the session and takes care of the sick, the weak, and ones experiencing hardship.

- Women in the Early Church (Phoebe, Priscilla, Dorcas, and many others; 10 out of 27 in Rom. 16:27 were women)

2) Jeon-do-sa (전도사)

3) Other officers who serve the church

5. The implications of the office

1) The office of the church does not mean power.

2) The office of the church is not a rank.

3) The office of the church is a place of service.

4) The office of the church is a functional distinction.

5) The office of the church is about the headship of the Lord.

6) The office of the church and its authority comes from the Word.

6. The calling of the officer

The officer has both internal and external calling.

1) Internal calling

It refers to the special calling from God. It is not by a sort of special revelation but consists in providential indications including (1) one's love for God and desire to be used for Him, (2) one's spiritual, intellectual, and moral qualifications for the office, (3) one's conviction and experience of God's calling.

2) External calling

It refers to the calling that comes through the church. A calling by the saints of the church. *The laity even participated in the election of apostle. (Acts 1:15-26)