

Every Believer is a Minister

Pastor Brent Knox, Minneapolis, MN



The Problem Stated

“I believe the spiritual reformation begun by Martin Luther’s Ninety-five Theses is a process which has continued through the present day. It has proceeded in phases. First was the realization of the direct approachability of God through our high priest, Jesus Christ. The Scriptures were placed back where they belonged, in the hands of believers, and translated to the common man [who] could read then with understanding. The decentralization of the Church was another phase, and the rediscovery of the Great Commission another.”

One of the few uncharted territories remaining in this spiritual reformation is mobilizing lay leaders for ministry. Although Luther steered us away from the centralized authority of the Church elite as the definers and owners of ministry, he was unable to complete that process to include the people in the pews. The church still makes a crippling distinction between the clergy and the laity, a distinction in which the clergy say, ‘We are the experts in ministry, trained in special schools called seminaries. Leave the ministry to us’, and the laity acquiesce and say, ‘Okay. Minister to me.’ To placate them the clergy involves the laity in committees, boards, and social functions, but gives them no real license to minister.”

—Robert E. Logan in “Beyond Church Growth”, pg. 161

The Problem Solved

A core value of Great Commission Churches: Every Believer is a Minister.

A Biblical Basis for “Every Believer a Minister”

“As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,’ and, ‘A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.’ They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:4-10)

Contrasts between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|------------|
| 1. | temple..... | temple |
| 2. | Stones of | stones |
| 3. | tribe of priests | of priests |

Duties of the new kingdom of priests. Hebrews 13:15-16

1. _____

2. Do (or, minister)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:1-8)

Lessons of Romans 12:1-8

1. An important and practical way of offering yourself to God is to use your _____ faithfully.

2. God has organized the church on the model of a _____

3. Honest and personal evaluation is _____

4. We are commanded to _____ our lives in the direction of our spiritual gift(s). Therefore, people should _____ their spiritual gift(s).

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Lessons of 1 Peter 4:10-11

1. Each believer has a _____. Implied: each believer has an _____ contribution to God’s work.

2. Each believer should use their gift(s)_____.

3. Spiritual gifts were given to _____.

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole

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measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Lessons of Ephesians 4:11-16

1. A main responsibility of leaders is to “_____” people for works of service—not to *do* the works of service.

“prepare” Gk. *katartismos* literally, “for the perfecting or equipping; complete furnishing”

How to “prepare” God’s people for works of service:

- a. _____ the Word fully and accurately. 2 Timothy 3:17
- b. _____ the church to allow people to easily serve in meaningful ways according to their spiritual gifts.
- c. _____ tasks to people.
- d. _____ and _____ people for their tasks.

2. The church builds if each part does its work.

Biblical Examples of Organizing God’s People to Do Ministry:

Acts 6:1-7

1. What was the problem?
2. What was the solution?
3. What were the results?

Exodus 18:13-27; Deuteronomy 1:9-18

1. What was the problem?

2. What was the solution?

3. What were the results?