



Among the 'doctrinal' ideas developed within the theology of the WCG, that could be numbered among things regarded as "doctrinal inbreeding", was the matter of our concept of Government within the Church. We developed an operational model that most refer to as 'hierarchal' that largely dictated how we regard and relate to our ministry, and by reflection, how we relate to one another. That model was not employed in our earlier years, but as the Church grew, challenges came to bear that made it seem necessary to 'protect the flock' by means of a formal political structure more authoritarian than the approach employed in the past. Why this matter remains relevant, even after the effective dissolution of that organization, is that so many groups who descended from it retain the same orientation to one degree or another.

In the book of Ephesians, chapter 4, we read of different kinds of 'leaders' that God has placed within His Church. These are in large part the base upon which we built our concept of government. But we never really asked ourselves how do these 'offices', if that's what they represent, differ from one another? It is something we should have considered, but to have done so at the time would've been rebuffed.

One thing for certain, these operations, do not differ from one another in the content of their theology. Each understands and represents the same exact teachings, so it isn't a matter of doctrinal difference. Then, what could it be? We presumed it meant ascending levels of 'Authority', and from there built a mental and operational structure that frustrated our growth dynamic as things played out. What we should have considered is the operation of each of these as differing **service functions**, not some chain-of-command authority structure operating in place of the operational model Christ placed in the Church.

Below is one question of several sent in by an affiliated pastor in another country, someone familiar with our positions, but not as fully informed in certain aspects. The **bold** lettering is his question, the lighter or italic is the reply.

3. In Ephesians 4:11-16, the Apostle Paul mentioned what we called the 5 fold ministry which Christ gave for the edification of His Body, the church. *Perhaps we should recognize these as separate and distinct operations within the Church. How they differ, we wouldn't expect to be doctrinal, but operational. Our question would be, "How do they differ?" Some would pose that they represent defined ranks of authority. That may be presumptuous, missing the point. Who or what are these ministries? See below. Are they needed in God's Church today? Absolutely. How can we identify them if they are needed today? Once people are brought into an awareness of God's Truth, more of the responsibility falls on the supposed 'lower end' functionaries: Pastors, to hold together and lead a flock, and teachers to bring His called-out ones to greater levels of understanding. As we see in verse 12, these 'levels' of operation are not for some to vaunt their positions for personal aggrandizement (a common carnal characteristic) but to bring the body of Christ to greater degrees of perfection and edification.*

*[Eph. 4:11] And he gave some, **apostles**; and some, **prophets**; and some, **evangelists**; and some, **pastors and teachers**; He gave some. The ability to be any of these is God-given. Unfortunately, too many are placed by carnal appointment, based more on a good-old-boy type network.*

***apostles**; Strong's #652: apostolos: a delegate or an ambassador of the gospel; messenger; one sent out. The presumption is often one sent directly and solely by God, thus placing that individual subject to no lesser authority. An apostle can also be **one sent out** by a congregation. If the 'lowly' office of deacon was known by and nominated by the congregation, then certainly the apostle would be someone well-known among them. Self-appointed apostles were the bane of the early Church. (see Rev. 2:2.) Apostles are always subject to congregational scrutiny, irrespective of their sponsor. (John 13:16) A principle that we disregarded. An apostle would be the emissary sent into 'virgin territory'. When we visualize an apostle as being 'in full charge' of everything overall, we effectively cancel his apostleship, making him a corporate administrator. Any Apostle of God is one sent out into the world, and who interacts primarily with totally new peoples, as did the apostle in this age at times. That is not to say an apostle would have no other function within the Church, but in fulfillment of that particular 'office', he operates primarily as an emissary (ambassador) sent to new people.*

prophets; #4396: prophetes: an inspired speaker, with implication of understanding Biblical prophecy sufficiently to be able to forcefully set forth the Truth and foretell future events. This particular category is suggestive of having unique practical understandings. But with it, posing a high risk of mis-statement, except for the degree of direct inspiration from God, which is often claimed, but not always present in abundance! All of these separate 'categories' of servant prophesy in the sense of proclaiming God's Truth. They would have no value in God's Church if they did not also accurately represent the Truth. But a prophet would correspond more to what we would regard a more 'scholarly, insightful type', having greater understanding, and with it, the ability to be somewhat intuitive in his thinking. (Note: the WCG of the 1970 and later timeframe declared that there were no prophets in the Church in this age. That, if actually true, effectively cancelled out one of the important services created by God. We need to understand the reason for this declaration. Such a position would help explain our doctrinal stagnancy.) Places such as 1st Cor 14:29-37 would complicate a chain-of-command authority structure in that it shows there could be and in fact were several prophets within one congregation.

evangelists; #2099: euaggelistes: a preacher of the gospel. Where this 'office' differs from pastor is that it suggests more of an 'at large' capacity, not someone exclusively involved with any particular local flock. A true evangelist, in conducting this function, would interact with the broader spectrum of called-out ones. His energy, knowledge base, and motivational ability would stir up the reticent among them. It is this motivational component that sets an evangelist apart from the average minister.

pastors #4166: poimen: a shepherd. One responsible for a local congregation, primarily, and more personally involved with the membership. The individual member would more closely identify personally with their pastor. What isn't explained to this point is that any of the above can also be pastors in their home areas. That of course would create certain complications if this verse merely represented a top-down, chain-of-command authority structure.

teachers; #1320: didaskalos: instructor; doctor; master; teacher. This is suggestive of a person with higher levels of training, and with didactic abilities appropriate for instructing members to a higher degree of understanding. Paul represents that any person who has been in the church for a long time "ought to be a teacher" (Heb. 5:12) if for no other reason than experience in the Truth.

Though quite similar, each of these 'titles' suggests a **nuance of function** differing from one another. To one degree or another, ALL of these, including members of the congregation, can and could 'prophesy'. (See 1st Cor. 14:24 & 31.) **NOTE:** These are not just ranks within a 'ministerial class'! For example, Paul chided the members for their failure to have attained 'teacher' capability after being so long in the Truth! (Heb. 5:12) We are all expected to attain sufficient understanding so that we can edify others in our fellowship sphere, at least on an interpersonal level. Also consider, depending on ones' service opportunities, any capable minister (servant) of God's people can function in **any one** of these, from time to time. The sad result of viewing these just as ranks is that God's Spirit operating in each individual can often be seriously restricted, and congregations are set up to fail by not developing, through exercise, their spiritual senses. (Heb. 5:14) Few things will diminish a congregation's vibrancy more effectively than that! Our ministers are supposed to help us grow, not suppress our potential.

[12] **For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** This specifically tells us what these are all for. Providing the Saints with something of real substance. Each of them are a ministry in some way. Minister, as Christ described the office, represents being a Servant to His people. These are **service functions** for the greater benefit of the membership.

[13] Till we all come in the **unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:** To replicate the character of Christ in each of us, not to provide a structure for a ranking system among a minister class.

[14] That we henceforth be **no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

[15] But speaking the truth in love, may **grow up into him** in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Our growth level is intended to be right up there just under Christ. WE are to be speaking the Truth.

[16] From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, **maketh increase** of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. In this statement there is a nuance of understanding that is often

missed due to the interposition in our minds of it being about ministerial ranks. **The BODY is to edify itself**, with these **five kinds of functionaries assisting them** in doing so. The entire Church is charged with the responsibility of overseeing and guarding the content of the Church's teachings. They were known to have been given the structural responsibility of being '**pillars and grounds of the Truth**'. (1st Tim. 3:15) They were also to scrutinize the message content of the elders, including any apostles, and their conduct, as we read of them so commendably doing in Revelation 2:2. In the modern era, that action would have been regarded as seriously inappropriate. It was a result of the organizational model we chose to adopt and employ that we failed in our responsibility and were self-overthrown. Then again, the membership was allowed no real choice in the matter. At least, not internally.

But, if that wasn't enough, we also created another 'office' **not** listed, that of super-apostle, one having authority over all other lower-level apostles (of which we in fact allowed none), as we also had no (accepted) prophets! We should have realized, if we didn't, that this declaration was to 'protect' the supremacy of our sole Apostle from any kind of internal challenge, even if only a perceived one. The early New Testament Church had at least seventeen named apostles concurrently, mentioned as such in its texts. Our generation would have experienced severe consternation to operate under such a situation as was common back then. But, once we understand the above 'offices' (servant functions) in their proper role-definition, such problems evaporate. This is the challenge of our time. To wash our minds of such created concepts with the pure Word.

What we haven't yet addressed is the question of **rank and authority**. Were each of these subject to the authority of the 'officeholder' above them? Were all sub-apostles strictly subject to the Chief Apostle (whom we deemed only later to have been Peter)? (Of course, we didn't have multiple apostles, did we?) Were each and every evangelist subject to the authority and directives of his respective prophet? What if there were multiple prophets? Subject to which one? And, if there needed to be a chief apostle, then wouldn't there also need to be a chief prophet to avoid contradicting directives that could lead to internal disputes? (But, we cancelled-out the office of prophet – not saying God did.) Was every pastor subject to his area evangelist and he in turn subject to his prophet? In practical fact, such a situation would have created organizational conflict, (can we say gridlock?), as all were under the direct supervision of and were accountable ultimately to the chief apostle. We should be able to see the contradictions our home-grown concepts created. But more importantly, by creating an office of chief apostle, we short-circuited the direct personal responsibility each one of us has to OUR true Apostle and High Priest, Jesus Christ, (Heb. 3:1) and to one another in our upholding God's Truth. It was alleged that our access to God's Spirit was a direct function of our loyalty to that chief apostle on earth, whom some referred to as 'God's Anointed'. This begs the obvious question of it being available to Saints of generations past. How did God ever get along before there was us?

Atop the list of deficiencies created by our later-adopted organizational model, is the obstruction of direct inspiration of any individual, minister or member. God effectively was hamstrung in His ability to give spiritual gifts ('Talents') to anyone without the approval of the ruling class operating within the Church. For Him to have done so, and for the authority structure NOT to have approved such 'gift' first, an obvious 'problem' would have existed: One where the ministry would have seen it their obligation to squelch such a gift, and if not squelchable, to disfellowship the individual. This caused a response where anyone so 'gifted' or who came to an understanding of a point of truth, not first sanctioned by the chief seat(s), suffered repression. It also placed God in the position of not being able to openly bless His own Church with individuals whom He chose to inspire, lest He put their salvation at risk, as most would succumb to the authorities in the Church that would 'come down' upon them, effectively making them 'unprofitable servants', by their not gainfully using those gifts! (See Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12: and 1st Cor. 12:) The net effect of this 'rank-obsessed' environment was the membership abandoning their responsibility before God, that of discerning and upholding God's Truth, leaving it solely to the 'ministry', and the loss of spiritual vibrancy among the membership, due to such sad dereliction. But it also left the individual member within the body dysfunctional, as typically he could not employ a personal 'Talent' should God choose to give him one.

RECAPITULATION:

So an **Apostle** is one sent out into 'new territory' to draw-in any that God may have in those places. His jurisdiction (not to suggest exclusive authority) is to 'work' the fields that are white unto harvest. His message while functioning in that capacity might be more 'basic', oriented to the uninformed, not necessarily adequate for the converted and better educated Church members. One thing we should understand about this function is that he remains subordinate to who sent him out. An 'ambassador' is not greater in authority than the governmental entity that sent him out to represent them.

A **Prophet** is an inspired preacher, with particular insight into subjects related to current events and bible prophesy. A true prophet would inject into the prophecy stream a correlation between practical fact and world conditions. One such is regarded as a person through whom God is directly working. (Jas. 5:10; Luke 11:49; Rev. 10:7) As in 1st Cor.14:29-37 we read of what was spoken of as a relatively normal situation, messages by two and more 'prophets' during a service. In this described situation, it involved possible multi-lingual presentations; that these local 'prophets' were self-controlled, (logical / sensible) and weren't necessarily officially 'ordained' by any authority structure. Verse 37 alludes to even a self-assessed situation!

An **Evangelist**, on the other hand, would inject into the ministerial services an energy and broader overview that would be more motivational in tone. Such would operate more in an 'at large' capacity, his 'field of endeavor', to motivate congregations near and far into having greater enthusiasm in reaching the world with the 'good news' of the coming Kingdom of God.

Any of the above would routinely serve in more of an 'at large' capacity, and any minister could at times function in any or all of these capacities. (see 1st Tim. 2:7 & 2nd Tim. 1:11) They do not represent 'authority positions' **over** any of their peers. They are answerable to those who sent them and whom they minister unto, those served being required always to 'search the scriptures whether these things be so'. It is the abrogation of this 'from below' monitoring activity that caused us to commit the greatest self-disservice. It left us vulnerable to apostasy when it was imposed. And in time, our 'house' imploded.

Now as we move to the **Pastor** function, we begin to encounter more of an **authority position**, though primarily a local one. Being entrusted with the oversight of a particular flock, he is more directly responsible for their care and in what they are being exposed to. He 'watches over the flock'. His is the level where interdiction against destructive elements would come into play. While he would serve them, the flock itself would and should monitor his services and messages, to assure he also remains on true course. Many flocks have been destroyed as a result of their failure to monitor their ministry, rather, knuckling under his impositions. Many examples of overbearing ministers have been documented down through history. Not the least of which is the Diotrephes situation in the Epistle of 3rd John. Here a local minister blocked access to 'his own' congregation. We aren't told why, other than his obsession with pre-eminent 'control'. John, acting in an apostolic or evangelistic role, for some reason, was a perceived threat to the man's preeminent prestige. It is incumbent on all members to assure that interaction with other congregations and at-large ministers is maintained, to keep the broader picture well in mind. Becoming 'too local', too internally focused, can also be detrimental to the health of a congregation.

The 'lowly' **Teacher** may be the most enigmatic of the five. Here we have a function that can be provided by any person in the Church. An apostle can be a teacher, as can the average member. This is a person who, by reason of longevity in the Church, or by having been exposed to the Church's teachings along with in-depth personal 'bereanizing' and extra studies, understands the Word sufficiently to be able to bring up the understanding level of fellow Saints. Time-in ought to provide some degree of competence in this function, as Paul explains in Hebrews 5:12. (Christ was a teacher also: John 3:2 & 13:13)

Perhaps it would be remiss to not mention one other obvious service function. Though not listed in either Ephesians 4 or 1st Corinthians 12, there is the office of **Deacon**. Though found only five times in the King

James Version, the Greek word 'diakoneo' occurs some thirty-seven times. 'Diakonia / diakonos' occurs another sixty-five times. It is more often translated minister, serve / servant, and administer. This 'office' is shown to be more of an assistant to another, such as serving the needs of the Saints (the congregation). It does not necessarily allude to anyone in a speaking capacity, though it could. Paul, when stating "I magnify my **office**", used the word 'diakonia' in Romans 11:13. This too would suggest our narrowly defined authority structure leaves much aside. It would more logically suggest that anyone can fulfill a **service function**. After all, it was the apostles who were serving tables, to the detriment of their other duties, that got their 'deacon' replacements nominated by the congregation. (Acts 6:2)

But all of these, working together, are **not** to establish an authority structure within the ministry to facilitate their consolidation of power, facilitating their 'overlording' of the membership, but to provide a growth environment in which all can better themselves in genuine and uninhibited service to others.

Now while the WCG touted the 'structure' that we came to employ as being 'of God' and based on this Ephesians 4 (and 1st Cor. 12:28) passage, we in fact ignored so many of the New Testament examples and situations. In practical fact, OUR concept of this structure was distinctly **UNLIKE** what Ephesians 4 describes. Our version allowed for one Apostle, and one only, where the early Church functioned with several (17 are named) all at one time. Though later alleging that Peter was chief among equals, there at least were other apostles, without detriment to the overall function of the emerging Church. With us, such a thing would not do! We could not tolerate there being more than just one apostle.

Then, when it came to Prophets, we alleged that there were no prophets in this era. None were allowed, and none were sought or encouraged. To do so would have caused a major conundrum internally, under the claim of 'disloyalty'. Under this proclamation, the Church was denied the benefit of such a service, and no possible 'successor' could be groomed. We didn't need a successor anyway, (we thought) as the end would come within the lifetime of that chief apostle that we had. We were assured that "he would live to lead us into the Kingdom of God". Gerald Waterhouse made this clear in his eleven 'around the world' evangelizing tours, emphatically declaring it as "an absolute"! (A transcript of one such message in 1980 is available. Contact www.goldensheaves.org).

Then the end did come, but not the end as we'd visualized it. The apostle died, but not before appointing a successor who had none of the qualifications an astute membership would have expected. Time proved the situation to be the disaster that it was. But at the time, we were hamstrung under the governmental concepts we had come to accept. We weren't ready for the challenge that came along!

The above referenced passage in 1st Corinthians 12 is interesting. It also provides a list, but one distinctly unlike Ephesians 4. The Corinthians passage lists a **first**, a **second** and a **third**. Would that suggest that there are no intermediate authority positions between these numbered ones? First is apostle, second is prophet, but third is teacher. (as we saw above, teacher could be anyone, even a regular member – even an apostle (1st Tim. 2:7)) Where in this tight 'chain' are evangelist and pastor? Where is deacon? And helps (assistants) are way down the list, and 'governments' (plural – indicating administrations – the word supposedly establishing the authority structure) is second from the bottom, below assistants and above only tongues speaker. But the obvious questions or objections to these as establishing an authority structure idea – ranks within the Church ministry – were not appreciated.

With apostle being first, (and we had only **one** of those), and prophet second, (and we had **none** of those), **our** authority structure, if that's what it is, would have consisted of sole-apostle presiding over a lower echelon of just teachers. Otherwise, we must conclude that documenting an 'authority structure' is not the underlying point of these passages at all!

But, in all of this, whether you ascribe to a formal authority structure or not, we are still ignoring the most important establishment in God's Church, its membership base. God specifically gave a function to the average converted member, one specifically stated in 1st Timothy 3:15. "**But if I tarry long, that thou**

mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” God ordained that the so called ‘bottom level’ of membership be the ones to monitor the conduct of their ministry. Paul, in writing to a young minister reminds him that his conduct must be respectful of their mandate. That he wasn’t to in any way operate aloof to them, nor deny them their God-ordained task, to be the stabilizing element within the Church.

Revelation 2:2-6 exposes this mandate in action. “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. ... But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” These were carefully examining the legitimacy of their brethren, even their apostles, and exposing the frauds. They had no qualms about examining the credentials even of their apostles, primarily through their doctrine and service examples, and publishing their findings. Though eventually slacking off in their zeal in doing so, they at least at the time hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which represented the echelon of administration that would eventually rise-up, creating a two-tier system that would effectively deny them their necessary function in the Church. That being: Upholders of the Truth!

We know the rest of the story!

Our effective structure and how it differed from the Biblical model:

- 1) The office of ‘chief-apostle’ (sometimes disguised under different names)
 - a) Not a biblically ordained office (Mt. 23:8)
 - b) God always works thru just one man idea was the premise that provided support for it
 - c) There were no other apostles as a result – couldn’t abide ‘competition’
 - d) The early Church had multiple apostles simultaneously – without a problem (17 are named)
 - e) Under our situation and way of thinking, it would’ve caused an extreme problem
- 2) There are no prophets in this age
 - a) This removed the possibility of there being any ‘competitor’ in the membership’s eyes
 - b) Was announced at a point in time of developing political crisis
 - c) This set-apart and amplified the esteem of “The Apostle”
 - d) This provided no possible successor being groomed for continuity should the Apostle leave the scene
 - e) Thus undercutting the ‘stature or credibility’ of any potential rival or honest scholar
 - f) Anyone exhibiting such stature was a candidate for suppression or expulsion
- 3) This left a huge gap in the mid-range of the authority structure
 - a) The Apostle presided directly over the evangelists and ministers (2nd and 3rd levels below)
 - b) There was no functional ‘chain-of-appeal’
 - c) All confidence must be placed in the one-man for spiritual directive
 - d) To judge him was tantamount to judging God
 - e) This bore no resemblance to the very structure we described for ourselves
- 4) Left the membership shorn of their God-given function to assess and critique actions and messages of ministry
 - a) Membership evaluated multiple apostles (Rev. 2:2) and made known their findings regarding their apostles.
 - b) The whole Church (congregations) were charged to be ‘pillars and grounds of the Truth’, (1st Tim. 3:15)
 - c) Congregations evangelized their surrounding areas (1st Thess. 1:8)
 - d) Membership nominated deacons (Acts 6:1-6)
 - e) Membership weighed-in on policy judgments (Acts 15:22)
- 5) Our structure left the membership dysfunctional with regard to developing their Talents
 - a) God would put the minister / member at risk should he / she exhibit fruits of such Talent
 - b) Suspicions of being ‘self-appointed’ would mark the member from service assignment
 - c) Resentment against such would cause deliberate suppression
 - d) Truly Talented would be disallowed growth opportunities within the organization
 - e) God could not use such an organization to the full
 - f) Congregations suffered due to stifled vibrancy that God’s Spirit would have generated



Do you believe there is an Ordained Ministry chosen by God?

1st Thessalonians 5:13 *“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”*

1. Do all of these true ‘ministers of God’ reside within only one organization?

- Is there but one true Church and does that mean that all others’ ministers are false?
- A majority were educated in the same institution & ordained by the same original organization!
- A great percentage, despite affiliation, hold the same identical or near-identical beliefs,
- Even internally within the same affiliation, ministers differ on some doctrinal points,
- May a minister ordained in one organization retain his credentials in transferring to another?
- May a true minister of God serve any of God’s people anywhere, any time, in any venue?

2. Are all ministers within any one organization automatically legitimate as a result of their ordination?

- Are any wrong individuals ever ordained into the ministry?
- Do true ministers ever turn and forsake their calling?
- What happens when they do? What if the membership realizes it first?

3. Who were the true ministers before any of the recently formed organizations existed?

- Many of the ministers we have now were ordained in an organization that went apostate!
- At what point in time did that organization’s legitimacy to ordain cease?

4. How are ministers ordained presently?

- Used to be ordained ‘a minister of Jesus Christ’
- Later changed to ordaining them ‘a minister of XYZ Church of God’
- This new arrangement rendered the ordination void should the minister leave the organization.
- What CoG’s presently ordain as in “a” above?

5. Was the early Church out of line in examining their ‘apostles’, finding and identifying some of them as false?

- By their fruits you shall know them suggests member evaluation is appropriate / mandated,
- The early Church examined its ‘apostles’ for genuineness. Rev. 2:2
- Who ordained the ones they found to be frauds?

6. What should the ministry do when their over-ministry ‘takes too much upon themselves’?

- Exhibiting an elevated ‘preeminent’ self-assessment?
- Assuming a ‘lord it over’ authoritarian posture, ignoring Luke 22:25-26
- Refusing accountability to the Church, (which is defined as what?)
- Does a ‘Korahite’ aversion factor into and stop appropriate interventions?

7. Have any ministers ever been ordained that shouldn’t have been?

- Need we even ask this question?
- Leadership has openly admitted such in the past.
- Are any service-capable individuals ever bypassed on the human level?
- Are any ‘favorites’ ever elevated who should not be?

8. Is a personal desire for becoming a minister in any way inappropriate?

- The desire to serve as a bishop: 1st Tim. 3:1 (the word is episkopos)
- The desire to serve: teach / witness / exhort / support / communicate: Mt. 20:26-27, Mal. 3:16
- Long time members are chided as they ought to be teachers: Heb. 5:12 - 14

9. Are there any prophets / apostles in God’s True Church today?

10. Will the ‘two witnesses’ come from within any of the current ‘splinter groups’?

11. What was the real issue with Korah and associates?

- a. “You take too much upon yourself” (Didn’t the GCE say that to Hulme and Kilough?)
- b. We obviously should have said that to Tkach! Why did we think it so wrong to do so?
- c. These Korahites were already esteemed individuals in the ‘ministry’ of their time.
- d. the difference was the desire to take over as opposed to correct course of the ministry

12. Are all ministers subordinate to their evangelists, and they to their prophets, and they to their apostle(s)?

- a. This is the deferential condition a chain-of-command situation creates.
- b. Are there levels of intermediaries between individual members and God?
- c. Recognizing such a structure can confound the appropriate Christian’s responsiveness.
- d. Any error anywhere in this ‘chain’ can derail or frustrate the decision-making process.

13. Was Diotrephes an illegitimate minister, or a legitimate minister with a problem? 3rd John 9

- a. Did John threaten to revoke his credentials? Did John even question his credentials?
- b. Diotrephes apparently didn’t see a bonafide apostle as having rank over himself.
- c. Did John leave it to the membership to see the obvious and act appropriately?
- d. Can whole organizations go Diotrephesian?

14. What makes a minister’s ordination legitimate?

- a. External qualifications: 1st Tim. 3:
- b. Internal qualifications: Heb. 5:2,
- c. Growth of the flock spiritually and enhancements in their service capabilities speaks volumes!
- d. Is the ‘ordaining entity’ the exclusive determining factor of establishing legitimacy?
- e. Ones’ true calling must be of God, not of men: Heb. 5:4

15. What conditions would render a minister’s ordination illegitimate?

- a. Interest in serving ones’ self at the expense of the flock: Mk. 10:42-44, Ezek 34: Jer. 23:
- b. An inappropriately elevated level of self esteem: Rom. 12:3
- c. Locked into an authority network that disregards or diminishes Christ’s supremacy,
- d. Can a legitimate minister ever fade and change into something else?

16. What accounts for our propensity to ‘split’ and ‘split’ and then ‘split the splits’?

- a. The greater percentage of our fracturing originated with the ‘ministerial’ echelon! (MR@12.10)
- b. Each claims legitimacy based on past connection with the WCG (HWA especially)
- c. Such would never happen if the membership was properly instructed in God’s way!

17. In all of the above, are we working from a correct definition of the term: Minister?

- a. The ‘office’ if we want to call it that, means Servant! Mt. 20:25-28 & 23:8
- b. Over-lording is specifically prohibited. Purposely rejecting the authoritarian setups of the world.
- c. The Church is a mutual support network, with the leadership as much brethren as any. Mt. 23:8
- d. Any and all preeminence is to be accorded to Christ. Mt. 23:8
- e. Any ‘honors’ given should reflect the work Christ is doing through him.

Regarding identifying with prominent ‘ministers’ to the exclusion of others, read 1st Corinthians chapters 1 thru 3. e.g. 3:1-7 *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”*