



## Between cathedral and monastery: Creating balance between a pastor's personal faith and public role Part 1: revisiting the *munus triplex*

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### Abstract

The journey to ordination begins with justification, in which the disciple experiences faith, hope and love amid the Triune God. What follows is a process by which the Christian disciple learns what it means to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, who is prophet, priest, and king. Christ's on-going ministry has relevance to the church because in Christ's exaltation and Christ's spiritual presence in the church, Christ continues to lead the church as king, priest, and prophet. The church is called to embody and enact the real presence of Christ in its midst and the ordained leader has a significant role to play in helping the church to do this.

### Keywords

*Ordained ministry; munus triplex; prophet; priest; king*

## Introduction

There can be little doubt that ordained persons, pastors, and ministers, find themselves under all sorts of new pressures, and struggle with a sense of identity and purpose as they confront what it means to live out their call in a society that seldom understands the concept. The notion of call has become something almost unique to pastors, but this was certainly not

always the case. Richard Christopherson<sup>1</sup> quotes Robert Bellah, *et al.*, who contend that the idea of calling

... has become harder and harder to understand as our society has become more complex and utilitarian and expressive individualism more dominant ... They conclude that while “the idea of calling has become attenuated and the largely private ‘job’ and ‘career’ have taken its place, something of the notion of calling lingers on, not necessarily opposed to, but in addition to, job and career.”<sup>2</sup>

Christopherson argues that the call is how clergy measure their sense of contentment, the symbol by which they determine their location within the life of their community. The call, vocation, and altruism are, “understood as central elements of the cultural context in which ministry takes place.”<sup>3</sup>

In this article, which is the part first part of a two-part article, we shall see that the journey to ordination begins with justification, in which the disciple experiences faith, hope and love amid the Triune God. What follows is a process by which the Christian disciple learns what it means to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, who is prophet, priest, and king. We shall see that Christ’s on-going ministry has relevance to the church because in Christ’s exaltation and Christ’s spiritual presence in the church, Christ continues to lead the church as king, priest and prophet. The church is called to live out the real presence of Christ in its midst and the ordained leader has a significant role to play in helping the church to do this.

During these two articles, I shall argue that the Christian pastor begins the journey towards ordination and service as a disciple who is called into ordained ministry as prophet, priest, and royal servant to follow Christ, our prophet, priest, and king. In doing so, I shall demonstrate the vital link that should exist between the pastor’s journey of justification and transformation into the likeness of Christ as a disciple of Christ and the

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1 The central thesis of his article is that “the discovery and development of vocation are critical for modern clergy, not only because the legitimacy of their work rests on traditional claims to selflessness and divine direction, but also because their own identity and personal worth are defined by the call” (219).

2 Richard Christopherson, “Calling and Career in Christian Ministry,” *Review of Religious Research* 35, no. 3 (March 1994): 220.

3 Christopherson, “Calling and Career in Christian Ministry,” 222.

pastor's public role. I shall contend that when there is unbearable and unsustainable tension between a pastor's own spiritual journey and the pastor's public role, a pastor might well be heading towards a breakdown of some sort. I shall seek to discover, within a particular framework of spirituality and ministry, if there is something that will assist in discovering how to create a balance between the pastor's own faith experience and the pastor's public role in the congregational setting.

## **A shift in the approach to theological training**

During the Middle Ages, theological training was located within the monasteries. Young men who wanted to enter Christian ministry entered a monastery where they engaged in the disciplined prayer life of the monks and then studied in that environment. The young men did not necessarily become monks, but they learned from the monks, not only academic subjects, but also the rule, what it meant to live the disciplined life. As theological training shifted from the monastery to the cathedral and then to the academy, the link between training and spiritual formation became more attenuated.

Today, as Western Christians, we live in a time when ministerial training and personal spirituality are often seen as distinct facets of what it takes to be a Christian pastor. Seldom in certain Christian faith traditions would an ordaining authority examine a person, who presents him/herself for ministry, in depth about their own spirituality. Although the link between academic study and spiritual disciplines is being investigated in many Protestant and Reformed theological training institutions in the West, until quite recently there would seldom have been a systematic program of spiritual formation linked to educational training for ministry since spirituality and spiritual formation were often regarded as private matters.

## **Coming to faith: Justification**

In most cases, the move to the ordained ministry of word and sacrament begins with some sort of conversion experience. For Reformed people, this is the process of justification according to which "human beings can do nothing – not even create faith or turn to God – to be justified. God

initiates justification precisely because human beings cannot.”<sup>4</sup> Even the human response to the grace of God, namely faith, is itself a gift of God. Without a detailed examination of exactly what constitutes justification and how it takes place, I would contend that usually the journey towards the ordained ministry of word and sacrament begins when a person is, in this Reformed sense, justified before God. Depending on your understanding of this mysterious and hidden process, this might be seen to take place at baptism, or might be seen to be an event either after, or preceding, baptism. Mark Douglas points out:

Scholars have remained perpetually puzzled in attempting to describe how justification and sanctification happen. As C.S Lewis noted ... “The central Christian belief is that Christ’s death has somehow put us right with God and given us a new start.” Theories as to how it did this are another matter.<sup>5</sup>

Michael Welker writes about this miracle by which “people are won over to the Christian faith through the subtle, often ‘hidden’ presence of the Resurrected in the power of the Spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

Being justified depends on several factors: the sanctifying work of Christ; the grace of God, the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit; faith, hope and love. A thorough soteriological exposition goes beyond the scope of this article, but it would be safe to say that justification is defined as an experience of faith, hope, and love amid the Triune God.

## The *munus triplex* of Christ

Thus, a person becomes a disciple of Christ, a Christ follower, a Christian, by being justified, an experience of faith, hope and love mediated through the Divine Trinity. The person then begins a journey, the journey of discipleship, learning what it means to be a Christ follower. In fact, as McGrath explains, for Calvin the main issue is not justification or sanctification, but the way

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4 Mark Douglas, *Confessing Christ in the Twenty First Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 112.

5 Ibid., 104.

6 Michael Welker, *God the Revealed: Christology*, trans. Douglas W Stott (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 210.

in which the person is incorporated into Christ and the consequences both individually and corporately of that incorporation. Hence, if we follow Calvin’s argument, justification and sanctification, the process of discipleship and spiritual formation are means by which the individual comes to experience the threefold office of Christ: the disciple of Christ learns and comes to know and experience Christ as prophet, priest, and king. Calvin was not the first person to refer to, or emphasize the *munus triplex* as pertaining to Christ, but he was certainly responsible for giving shape and form to this understanding of the role of Christ and for bringing it into sharper focus. While the threefold office is essentially Christocentric, it does not refer to Christ alone, but must be understood within the context of a fully developed Trinitarian matrix.

Wainwright points out that the order of prophet-priest-king most closely corresponds to Christ’s chronological revelation: prophet relates to Christ’s earthly ministry; priest relates to his suffering and death on the cross while king relates to his exaltation after his resurrection. However, as Wainwright argues, and this is of vital importance for this present work, we must emphasize that the role of Christ as prophet, priest, and king relates to the entirety of Jesus’ work and ministry – both during his incarnation and now as the exalted one. Wainwright points out five different ways in which the *munus triplex* has been used in the history of the Christian Church: a Christological use (pertaining to the identity and dignity of Christ), a baptismal use (pertaining to the identity and dignity of the person who is anointed at baptism with the Holy Spirit), a soteriological use (salvation entails being incorporated into Christ and sharing his nature, a ministerial use (in the Roman Catholic tradition), and an ecclesiological use (every Christian, and therefore, the Church, seen as living out the *munus triplex* as a result of their baptism into Christ).<sup>7</sup> It would not be correct to assume that the *munus triplex*, the three-fold office simply described the work of Christ on earth or that it describes his work as the ascended one. Neither would it be correct to assume that the prophetic-priestly-kingly work of Christ is descriptive only of the work of Christ and has nothing to do with the work of the Christian pastor who acts in Christ’s name. It must also be

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7 Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI/London, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 100–17.

stressed that the *munus triplex* does not apply only to pastors. As Dreyer points out, “[i]n the German and Latin texts of the Heidelberg Catechism the terminology as we use it (“office” or “priesthood”) does not appear.”<sup>8</sup> He does on to make the point that both Christ and the Christian are called and anointed by the Holy Spirit, which means that the Christian testifies that:

- “as prophet I am called to witness;
- as priest I am called to give myself as a living sacrifice
- to God;
- as king I am called to conquer in freedom and good
- conscience all evil.”<sup>9</sup>

Welker, quoting Schlink, makes it clear that there needs to be congruity and continuity between Jesus’ earthly ministry and his ministry as the ascended one:

Hence Jesus exercised the prophetic office in his identity as the earthly Jesus through his proclamation, and as the exalted through his apostolic sending and, in an ongoing fashion, through the gospel itself. He exercises his priestly office as the earthly Jesus in his self-surrender to death, and as the exalted through his intercession with God on behalf of his followers. Nor was it through his installation to dominion as the exalted that his royal office came about since it was already obtained during the dominion of the earthly Jesus over the powers of nature and forces of darkness.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, one must draw the lines between the role of Christ as prophet, priest, and king and that of the pastor as prophet, priest, and royal servant.

<sup>8</sup> W. A Dreyer, “The priesthood of believers: The forgotten legacy of the reformation.” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* Vol 76, no.4, a6021 (2020): 3–4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>10</sup> Welker, *God the Revealed*, 214.

## Christ the Prophet

In correctly understanding the prophetic role of Christ we must go back to the Old Testament prophets who were the ones who brought the Word of God to the people of God and helped people to make sense of the chaos that was taking place all around them. Burger writes that “[t]he prophet is the one who helped people in times of turmoil and chaos to understand what is happening around them – usually to place the events of history in perspective with the greater framework of the reality of God and God’s involvement in our history.”<sup>11</sup> Prophets, as opposed to priests, stood outside the system and, as Brueggemann points out, they exercised “prophetic imagination” whereby it is “the vocation of the prophet to keep alive the ministry of imagination to keep on conjuring and proposing futures alternative to the single one that the king wants to urge as the only thinkable one.”<sup>12</sup> The prophets are essentially counter-cultural and subversive voices who seek to undermine and destabilize the dominant narrative and to create an alternative to that dominant narrative. So, when the dominant narrative is one of empire and strength, the prophets are the ones who draw attention to the kingship of Yahweh. When the nation is in exile and the dominant narrative is punishment, the prophets are the ones who speak comfort to the afflicted in the name of Yahweh. It was Von Rad who was one of the first to point out that “[t]he [prophetic] promises are acts of powerful social criticism. They intend to evoke and nurture alternative imagination and to counter the absolutist claims of the status quo; that is, the promises are bold, subversive political utterances designed to delegitimize the common sense world of plausibility sponsored by the dominant ideology.”<sup>13</sup> Brueggemann essentially picks this thread up and takes it further. The role of the Old Testament prophet is not simply to delegitimize the dominant narrative employed by the power elites, but it is to create an alternative future: “The task of prophetic ministry is to

<sup>11</sup> Coenie Burger, “Die Predikantsamp. Deel 5: Kan die Drie-Ampleer ons help om ‘n Bybelse fokus aan die predikantsamp te gee?” *NGTT* 45, no. 3/4 (2004): 541. Translated by Peter Langerman

<sup>12</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Gerard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2 (New York, NY/ Evanston, IL: Harper and Row, 1965), 83.

nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and a perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.”<sup>14</sup>

According to the *Institutes*, the role of the prophet was so that God “never left his people destitute of useful doctrine, such as might suffice for salvation.”<sup>15</sup> For Calvin, the prophetic role of Christ relates to his role as a teacher of doctrine, according to which “Christ is both like the Old Testament prophets, in that he is anointed by the Holy Spirit to teach the people saving knowledge of God, and unlike those prophets, in that after him the office of prophet is “closed” becoming his in power and perpetuity.”<sup>16</sup> Oscar Cullman puts it this way: “He comes endowed with unique eschatological authority. His call to repentance is final and requires final decision. This gives his preaching a final absolute character such as the preaching of the ancient prophets did not have.”<sup>17</sup> But this does not mean that the message of the gospel remains fixed in stone. Rather it is Christ’s on-going “prophetic anointing by the Holy Spirit as such that by its power the gospel can ever be made new.”<sup>18</sup> For Calvin, the chief task of the prophet was to interpret the Law. Christ taught people how to live a life pleasing to God and how he was to make such a life possible thereby making it clear how God’s truth was to be manifest in the world though God’s people. “Calvin calls Christ God’s ‘ambassador’ and ‘interpreter’ for he would make God’s ways plain to God’s chosen, illuminating both God’s gracious initiative in himself toward God’s Church and God’s requirements of the Church in response.”<sup>19</sup> Cullman points out that the role of the eschatological prophet in first century Judaism was that, “[h]e preaches, reveals the final mysteries, and above all restores revelation as god had given it in the law of Moses . . . and his proclamation announces the very end of the age.”<sup>20</sup> Christ’s role as

14 Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 3.

15 John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2005), 456.

16 Robert J. Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004), 66.

17 Oscar Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (London, UK: SCM Press Ltd, 1977), 43.

18 Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*, 66.

19 Stephen Edmondson, *Calvin’s Christology* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 2004), 154.

20 Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 22.

prophet is to help us understand who God is and what is God's will for the lives of God's followers. First, in his role as prophet, Jesus is the one who reveals God to us: this is the work of his incarnation (including his passion and resurrection), and this is his work as the exalted one. He is the one who draws people to the Father. Second, Jesus is the prophet who teaches his people the truth: the truth about themselves, about God, about the world. And third, Jesus is the prophet who leads his people to discern the coming of the rule and reign of God. In all three of these functions as prophet, the exalted Christ is still the one who is revealing God to people, teaching people and leading people into the rule and reign of God. In his own ministry, Jesus makes it clear that he is not just another prophet, but that he is the very *dabar* (word, action, and event) of God in the world: “Jesus is the word, act, event of God made flesh. He is the personal address of God to humanity, coming to manifold expression in his individual sayings … his significant deeds (healing, forgiving, eating with sinners) and the events of his life and death.”<sup>21</sup>

## Christ the great High Priest

Priests in the Old Testament had several duties and functions. In the first place, they were an “integral part of the institutional worshipping life of Israel. [And] they were the community builders as well as the wardens of the traditions and identity of the nation. . . . They were also the mediators between God and the community”<sup>22</sup> Brueggemann calls them “the legitimators, enactors, and guarantors of God’s holy presence in the community.”<sup>23</sup> Secondly, they had to do with the worshipful service of the community and they played an important pastoral role in the care for the community in that they “stood by people in times of trouble and gave practical advice and counsel to people in living their everyday lives.”<sup>24</sup>

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21 Wainwright, *For Our Salvation*, 123.

22 Burger, “Die Predikantsamp,” 542.

23 Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 664.

24 Burger, Die Predikantsamp, 542.

Finally, they played an important teaching role in reminding people of what God had said in the past and applying that to the present situation.<sup>25</sup>

Edmonson, explaining the Christology of Calvin in this regard writes:

Christ, therefore, suffered in our place, taking the punishment and wrath that we deserved upon himself, objectively expiating our sin; but he also addressed the fear of God that barred our access to this renewed relationship, drawing near to us when we could not draw near to God and taking away god's wrath, the very cause of our fear.<sup>26</sup>

Christ's role as priest, then, is not only to take human sin upon himself, but it is also to deal with the fear of the wrath of God by taking that wrath upon himself. It was necessary for Christ to undertake this two-part role since these were not outcomes that human beings could accomplish for themselves. Wainwright writes that “[t]he vicariousness of Christ's self-offering is unmistakable: he did for humankind what we could not do for ourselves. Yet, its intention is inclusive in scope: its purpose is to sanctify us, so that we may follow our Forerunner into the presence of the Father.”<sup>27</sup> In the New Testament, this aspect of the ministry of Christ is picked up, expanded, and explained, particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews. The upshot of this in Hebrews is to emphasize the continuity between the priestly ministry of Christ in his incarnation and the continued ministry of Christ as priest in his exaltation. “The living Christ who intercedes for us now can only do so because he is the same Christ who was on earth, was man, was tempted in all respects as we are.”<sup>28</sup> It is important to appreciate that in emphasizing this priestly role of Christ, that we stress the continuity between Christ's priestly role in his earthly life and in his continued role

25 So important did Calvin consider this aspect of Christ's ministry that in earlier versions of the *Institutes* he listed it first, as did Barth. For Calvin, the primacy of Christ's priestly ministry was necessary because all the other ministries of Christ flow from this one. In Calvin's understanding of the priestly role of Christ as Great High Priest, Christ offers of himself as a pure and holy sacrifice to appease the wrath and anger of God against humanity because of sin. He writes in his commentary on the letter to the Hebrews, “The priestly office belongs to Christ alone because by the sacrifice of his death he blotted out our own guilt and made satisfaction for our sins.”

26 Edmondson, *Calvin's Christology*, 91.

27 Wainwright, *For Our Salvation*, 139.

28 Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 102.

as the one exalted to the right hand of the Father. Jesus, in his earthly ministry, is shown praying on many occasions. Jesus prayed at his baptism (Lk 3:21); he withdrew on many occasions for prayer during his ministry in Galilee (Mk 1:35 and Lk 5:16); he spent entire nights in prayer (Lk 6:12); and according to Luke 11:1, it was the example of Jesus' prayer life that causes his disciples to ask him to teach them to pray. Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for the Church in John 17 has come to be called the "High Priestly Prayer." Hebrews makes it clear that Christ's intercessory role as great high priest continues in his role as ascended one.

## Christ the great Davidic King

Burger points out that the institution of the monarchy in Israel was a complicated and involved process which developed much later than the offices of prophet and priest. After examining some of that history, he concludes by saying,

In the Old Testament, the king was God's servant, someone who had, before God, no higher status than any other member of the community. The king had a task to perform better – more faithful, more effective – functioning of the faith community. The king was a manager, an organizer, an administrator, and a strategist who was charged with leading the faith community in such a way that more of God's glory and mercy could be seen in their lives.<sup>29</sup>

Brueggemann links the role of the king with the establishment of justice, care for the marginalized and oppressed: "Here the mandate is made even more specific concerning economic justice and the cruciality of care for the alien, orphan and widow. The tradition affirms that through his human agency, Yahweh's sovereign will for well-being in the world, with concrete socioeconomic, political dimensions can be implemented and established."<sup>30</sup> As we come to Christ's role as king, Berkouwer asks whether we can speak of Jesus' role in this sense prior to his exaltation: "Is it not more correct to relate the prophetic and priestly offices to his humiliation

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29 Burger, "Die Predikantsamp," 543.

30 Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 614.

and the kingly office to the exaltation?”<sup>31</sup> He comes to the conclusion that it is possible to speak of the kingly role of Christ prior to his exaltation so long as we come to understand kingship in a new way, and that is only possible if we do not isolate his kingship from his office as both prophet and priest. The kingship of Christ is revealed through sacrifice and surrender to the will of the Father. When this office is applied to Christ, we see that he is a king who is completely different to any earthly king. He is the one who holds all power and authority, and he is the one who is worthy of all our praise and honour. Yet, Christ is also the fulfilment of the Old Testament expectation of the one who rules for the benefit of others. “He loves the Law and he loves people; he wants to, and can, bring the glory of God into the lives of people.”<sup>32</sup> The view of Christ as king is based on the model of the Davidic king, according to which “Christ, as king, is the one who unites the Church to God even as he gathers God’s chosen to himself, and out of this union he bestows God’s blessing on God’s Church.”<sup>33</sup> Yet the kingdom over which Christ has been anointed king is, according to Calvin, a spiritual kingdom, completely different from all the other kingdoms that exist. It is a spiritual kingdom that “raises us even to eternal life,”<sup>34</sup> in which we are forever assured of God’s presence with us so that we are undeterred by “toil, hunger, cold, contempt, disgrace and other annoyances.”<sup>35</sup> It is a kingdom in which God “arms and equips us with his power, adorns us with splendour and magnificence, enriches us with his wealth … so that we can contend intrepidly with the devil, sin, and death.”<sup>36</sup>

The one event that shows clearly and definitively that Christ is king over all prior to his ascension and exaltation is in his resurrection from the dead. The Easter event, therefore, became the pivotal turning point in history and it reveals God’s ultimate purpose to end the dominion of sin and evil in the world. “The resurrection means that the tide of eschatological conflict has

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31 G.C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 73.

32 Burger, “Die Predikantsamp,” 544.

33 Edmondson, *Calvin’s Christology*, 115.

34 Calvin, *Institutes*, 460.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

turned decisively, and the foes of God’s kingdom are in retreat.”<sup>37</sup> The kingly role of Christ has vital significance for our understanding both of Christian discipleship and for those who are called to serve Christ as pastors in the church. For disciples, the kingly role of Christ means that Christ truly is the head of the church. As we read in Colossians 1:18, where Christ’s headship of the church is linked directly to his resurrection from the dead: “He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.” For those who are called to be pastors, it means that Christ is the one who calls and appoints people to that office, as we read in Ephesians, where it is clear that it is Christ himself who appoints people to offices within the church for the benefit of the body: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his 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 measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11-13).<sup>38</sup>

## The significance of Christ’s on-going ministry

If we accept the *munus triplex* of Christ as correctly helping us to understand the ministry of Christ during his incarnation, his passion, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, we need to ask what significance this has for the Christian church and for the Christian disciple. Turning first to the kingly role of Christ, we need to look at the early church where the ascension of Jesus had everything to do with Jesus going to the place of ultimate authority, the right hand of the Father and his role as Lord of all and Head of the church, endued with all power and authority. In a modern world in which people are rightly suspicious of the words “king,” “power,” and “authority” to ascribe these words to Christ seems to accord imperial power to the ministry of the ascended, exalted Christ to help hedge the power of the rich and powerful. However, what must never be forgotten was that it was people who were persecuted and marginalized that used this language about Christ to help them to live in a violent and

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37 Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*, 118.”

38 New International Version of the Bible (NIV) (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica, 2011).

dangerous world. Believers who feared for their lives needed to know that there was someone who was there to help them. In addition, it must never be forgotten that the kingdom of Christ is a place where true leaders are servants to God and to one another. Following Christ as king means that followers learn to become servants of Christ and of one another.<sup>39</sup> One of the most important features of the kingly role of Christ has to do with Christ's ongoing incarnation, and it is this understanding of the ongoing incarnation that has profound implications for the role of the church generally and that of pastors specifically. The early church held that it was in his body that Jesus rose from the dead and that it was in his body that he ascended to the right hand of the Father. It is the presence of Christ: his bodily presence in his exaltation at the right hand of the Father and his spiritual presence within the church that drives the understanding of the calling of the church to re-present Christ and incarnate the gospel in their own culture. This is what Nelus Niemandt calls a "missional-incarnational lifestyle," something which is of vital importance as we return to consider the ministry as essentially incarnational. He describes what he is suggesting this way:

It implies Presence – to become part of the fabric of a community and to engage in the humanity of it all. Proximity assumes not only presence, but also genuine availability – spontaneity as well as regularity in the communities the church inhabits. Powerlessness means servanthood and humility in the relationship with the world. It is a kenotic lifestyle where baptism and the Lord's Supper remind us that Christian life is shaped by the identification with the death of Christ. At the heart of incarnation is "suffering alongside"...The fourth element is proclamation. An incarnational approach requires

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39 As helpful as this understanding of the kingly role of Christ may have been for first century Christians, what does this mean for Christians living today? In the first place, to follow Christ as king means to accept that Christ is the living, resurrected one. Second, it means that Jesus is king and head, not only of the church, but also of the entire world. Third, it means that Jesus is the victor over all the forces of sin, evil, and death. As a result, disciples are called to be faithful servants of the great king of the world and the head of the church.

that we will be willing to share the Gospel story with those within our world.<sup>40</sup>

Turning to the priestly role of Christ, the early church took great comfort from the fact that there was a mediator representing them at the right hand of the Father. The challenge is that Christians' lives are lived on earth and Christians would prefer someone who was with them rather than one who was far away in heaven representing them. The solution was that for the early church to see that heaven and earth were not separated from one another, but intrinsically linked. Heaven and earth touched and interacted with one another in a dynamic synergy: what happens on earth affects heaven and what happens in heaven affects the earth. This contingent reality is most clearly seen in the worship service and particularly the celebration of the Eucharist.

Calvin also recognized this and emphasized the implications for stressing the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Smit writes, "In the strongest possible terms, Calvin draws the implications of this unity with Christ in the Supper for our mutual unity. In fact, because of what happens in the sacrament, we can no longer love Christ without loving our brethren and we can no longer harm our brethren without also harming Christ."<sup>41</sup> Recognizing the priestly role of Christ means that Christians accept that Christ is their teacher, and that Christ is the one who continues to reveal the love of God for each person.

Finally, the prophetic role of Christ means that the church is called to preach the gospel through an exposition of the Word of God and application of that Word to the context of the faith community. Also, the prophetic ministry of Christ within the church calls the church to recognize where Christ is at work within that faith community and within the world and to see the possibilities that are released through the presence of Christ. This might be called the expression of hope through prophetic imagination: recognizing that although we may not always see what God is doing, that God is always

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40 C.J.P. Nelus Niemand, "Trends in Missional Ecclesiology." *HTS Teologiese Studies* 68, no. 1. [Online]. [Accessed: 11 September 2016]. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ez.sun.ac.za/10.4102/hts.v68i1.1198>.

41 D.J. Smit, "Calvin on the Sacraments and Church Unity." *Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 44(2010). [Online]. [Accessed: 11 September 2016]. doi:10.4102/ids.v44i0.192.

at work and that we must be open to the call of the Spirit to participate in what God is doing.

## Conclusion

In conclusion to the first part of this two-part article we must acknowledge the extra-ordinary challenges faced by ordained persons in this stage of late-modernity and the collapse of Christendom. In a world where, increasingly, the issues of faith are reduced to periphery in the lives of many people, ordained persons find themselves battling to understand how they position themselves in the world. Ordained persons are disciples who have begun the journey to ordination with justification, in which they experience faith, hope, and love in the midst of the Triune God. As disciples who continue in this journey, the Christian disciple learns what it means to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, who is prophet, priest, and king. We have seen further that Christ's on-going ministry has relevance to the church because both in Christ's exaltation and Christ's spiritual presence in the church, Christ continues to lead the church as king, priest and prophet. The church is called to live out the real presence of Christ in its midst and the ordained leader has a significant role to play in helping the church to do this.

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