

All of these images deal with the essential task of building community: to create, nurture and equip a community to be a servant community ministering to the broken, sinful world.

I applaud our sisters' call for "community care." This indeed is what the church must first be about. Each one, pastor and church member, brings his/her gifts for the sake of community so that the community may fulfill its mission. They need each other. They must minister to one another before and while they minister to the world.

I am not sure there is an adequate metaphor to convey all of this. Perhaps as others respond to Margaret and Maggie we will come up with something that will better express the ideal of mutual ministry. I like their sentence which reads, "We are all part of a community on the path to healing." We need to be healed, and that happens best, perhaps only, in community where love is the constant and dependable factor.

Maryanne Fischler

As the wife of a clergyman who has served for eighteen years in a variety of church settings, my overall response to this enlightening article is simply, "Amen, Sisters, preach on!" My experiences have convinced me of the need for the church to embrace the model the authors describe for ordained ministry. I am convinced that the future health of the church will be based on equipping lay people for ministry as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We all are probing the marvelous, glorious mystery of God and God's unfathomable love for humankind. It is an endless earthly quest, and we need all the help we can get along the way. The mystery we explore is full of the wonder of incarnation and relationships: the wonder incarnate in Jesus Christ as well as in other human beings.

Community happens and deepens as we risk exploring the wonder of one another and release the gifts God has imparted for healing and equipping for ministry. In this community, perhaps, the roles of shepherd or servant or Good Samaritan are not always assumed by the pastor, but are subject to interchange and switching as we build one another up in love.

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The authors point out that the pastor as shepherd model makes *doing* more important than *being*, with the success of the pastor's work measured in the number of visits, programs, or other quantifiable factors. In the years of my husband's life in the pastorate, I have seen what the authors refer to as the "shadow side" of this model. Most of the clergy I know work very long hours, but the work of the church never ends. The poor (and the sick, shut-in, and troubled) we always have with us. How sad it is when members of

congregations complain about ministry work that does not get done. If the field has not been fully tilled, the best thing for a lay person to do is to stop complaining and join the team pulling the plow!

To say that the pastor as shepherd model encourages over functioning of pastor and under functioning of lay people is certainly borne out in my experience and in that of my family. It saddens me to see the marriages of clergy colleagues threatened by the long hours of work. It took my husband and I years to realize that putting our family life first did not mean that we were slighting the work of the church. We saw that a strong family life strengthened us in our ability to serve the families of our congregations.

The authors point out the negative implications of the hierarchical view of the traditional models. If only the paid pastor is seen as capable of ministry, lay people feel not only unequipped but unaccountable for the ministry of their church. I have always taken a very active role in the churches my husband has served, and more than once I have had lay people tell me, "With you being so active, it is like having two ministers instead of one." While I have always accepted that comment as the compliment it was intended to be, I have also been troubled to hear it. Within myself, I have always thought, "How unfortunate that a church of three hundred souls has only two ministers, rather than the three hundred it should have. How impoverished the church is if that is true!"

Just as the authors point out, the negative aspects of the traditional models for ministry that, while based on Scripture, were never intended to set aside one class of Christians as

ministers, we would do well to understand that the parable of the Good Samaritan is not perfect as a complete model either. While it is true that the story portrays a lay person doing the work that the priests did not, it is also true that the Samaritan worked alone and did not teach or equip others. In fact, it can become troublesome when one gets into the details. After all, what did the Samaritan do when he brought the injured man to the innkeeper? He paid him to take the follow-up ministry off his hands!

There is probably no one biblical passage or story that contains a complete model for ministry. A number of metaphors and didactic instructions (for instance, Paul's contention in Ephesians 4 that pastors, among others, have been given for the equipping of the saints) need to be brought to bear as we construct our theology of ministry.

The ministry of the laity proposed in this article is one that my husband and I have sought to teach to our congregations for some time. My approach to the educational process is somewhat pragmatic. The question that I have posed to other lay people is, "What happens if we fail to implement this biblical mandate?" We will see burned-out clergy, a phenomenon that I think is spreading in many of the mainline denominations, as well as clergy families in trouble. We will see congregations that have, through lack of lay ministry, limited their size, their outreach, and their ability to be viable in mission. But most important, we will see individual lay persons who have denied themselves the joy that comes from a call answered, individuals empowered, and a mission fulfilled.

Finally, let me briefly suggest some priorities if we are to implement this approach. First it is important to train every member in witness. A minister, lay or otherwise, must be able to share her or his faith. Second, every member should be involved in a small group. We can hardly expect lay ministers to be empowered for the life of discipleship to which Christ has called them on the strength of one hour a week spent in worship. Lastly, churches must be more realistic about the number of staff people they employ. One clergy person can hardly be expected to equip three hundred people for ministry. Education, missions, outreach, pastoral care, and the myriad other avenues of ministry to which our churches are called deserve the best equipped lay people that we can become, and that means hiring enough clergy/educators/equippers to

do the job well. They are not to do all the ministry, but to teach us and equip us to do it.

Lay people need to remember Matthew 25. The King does not commend the sheep by saying, "I was hungry and you sent your pastor to feed me. I was in prison, and you sent a staff person to see me. I was thirsty, and you sent a paid servant to bring me water." We are all ministers, and ministry is the mission of every one of us. Thank God we have clergy to equip us to do it and the Holy Spirit to call and empower us. May our lives be transformed as we hear and answer that call.

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Robert Hunter

In their article "The Good Samaritan as a Metaphor for Ministry," authors Maggie Wellert and Margaret Leinbach discuss two traditional models for ministry: the pastor as Shepherd and the pastor as Servant. Then they introduce a new metaphor for ministry modeled on the Good Samaritan.

The model of pastor as shepherd implies that shepherds lead their sheep and thus must go ahead of them, looking out for their welfare. The concept of pastor as servant implies that utmost importance is placed on service to others and self-sacrifice. The authors allude to the problems these two models have created when carried too far. The darker side of these metaphors, abuse of power and/or the "over-functioning by the pastor and under-function-

ing by the laity" is noted. The idea of pastor as Good Samaritan implies a pastor who empowers the priesthood of all believers, or ministry to/from all, emphasizing that the heart and soul of ministry are relationships based on love.

The possibility of a new metaphor for the pastor, that of Good Samaritan, could become a reality but only with intentional, conscientious effort on the part of the pastor and the laity. Many sources today relate the growing importance of the laity in the church of tomorrow. The priesthood of all believers ideally would lead to "life-giving power — reciprocal and equally shared."¹⁴