

All models for the ordained ministry—pastor, servant, Good Samaritan—must be judged by the capacity of the leader to elicit such a response from the people being led. This is the nature of charismatic organizations and the manner in which they validate leadership. To fulfill such a high office without fault must be the goal of clergy and requires the support of the whole Church. Thus will we truly BE the Church in unity and in mission for the Savior.

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## The Authors Respond

We are grateful to the diverse group of respondents for their insights and thoughtful contributions on clergy / lay ministry relationships and the Good Samaritan metaphor. Each has long been deeply engaged in church life. Their critiques and comments help to expand and clarify our ideas about healthful and unhealthful ministry relationships within the church. Many thanks.

It is a sobering fact that, in many respects, the experiences of the three ordained respondents, and Sister Fischler, a long time clergy spouse, match what we have observed and experienced in ministry relationships between laity and ordained. Indeed, the Alban Institute study, cited by Brother Hunter, quoted a research project of the Fuller Institute for Church Growth. Their research found that of the pastors surveyed:

80% believe their pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families;  
75% reported a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry;

50% felt unable to meet the demands of the job; and

50% had considered leaving the ministry within the last three months.

Furthermore, in North America our Moravian denomination, like many others, continues to report annual decreases in membership. Not only is there a clergy shortage but also new laity are not replacing those who leave. Clearly, the current relationship between clergy and their congregations is not working, and as the Alban study concludes: “major changes in our assumptions, behaviors and the system” is needed.

After carefully reading and rereading the responses we are more convinced than ever that a significant part of the problem lies with our root metaphors of shepherd and servant. These metaphors are by their very nature hierarchical and imply, as Brother Eichman observed, the ordained minister’s primary job is “taking care of the Church” rather than assisting “lay people for ministry as they are em-

powered by the Holy Spirit” which Sister Fischler stated.

Shepherd and servant metaphors encourage the laity to expect that ministry will be directed to and for them. A shepherd leads them and a servant serves them. In both, passivity by the laity is implicitly encouraged rather than a shared ministry of equals. This is the “dark side” of the shepherd and servant metaphors, which we believe is contributing to the statistics cited above.

We also agree with the respondents that replacing servant and shepherd metaphor with the Good Samaritan will not provide a perfect, complete cure to the problem. As Sister Israel rightly concludes: “metaphors by their very nature, present a limited picture.” “Tensions exist in metaphors.”

Every metaphor has a side that illuminates what it refers to, and a contrasting side that distorts, or hides the referent. What is hidden in the servant and shepherd metaphors, and highlighted in the Good Samaritan metaphor, is the priesthood of all believers. Minister as Good Samaritan is needed now as a corrective to the over identification of the shepherd and servant metaphor for the ordained minister.

It is time we practice what Alexandre Faivre, in *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* (Paulist Press 1990) declares: there is “no trace of the notion of lay as distinct from the ordained in the New Testament, no Biblical ordering of the church into clergy or laity.” All are given gifts by the Spirit for building up the Body. No gift is better than another.

We disagree with Brother Sommer’s distinction between servant, shepherd and Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan parable is the

“style of relationship” Jesus gives in response to the question: “Who is my neighbor?” and implicitly, how are we to love one another? The strength of the metaphor is it gives us an example of mutual, connectional power in relationship rather than positional (hierarchical) power. Connectional power issues invitations, offers cooperation in life giving ways. The sum of the connectional power in relationships is greater than its parts. Positional power is zero sum, one party agins power only at the expense of the other, so that the sum of the two remains the same. No new power is added.

Furthermore, unlike a shepherd or a servant, the Good Samaritan isn’t deemed to be responsible for the “health, success, and growth” of the victim. What is extremely important about this metaphor is that any one of us can be the Good Samaritan and any one of us in need of being “built up in love” as Brother Eichman argues. No one is permanently cast in a servant, shepherd, consumer, or client role. It is a concrete example, given by Jesus, about building and nurturing community and how to be a “servant community ministering to a broken and sinful world.”

Lastly, as Brother Hunter has observed, a new metaphor can “become a reality only with intentional, conscientious effort on the part of the pastor and laity.” Habits of church life are deeply embedded and the laity’s habit of being a passive, receiving client of the pastor can be a hard habit to break. Yet Sister Fischler reminds us “lack of lay ministry limits and denies the joy God gives for a call answered.” How ordained and lay people view one another, one another’s roles, and their own roles, affects how we cooperate with and facilitate the life God intends for all. Community care is the task of all God’s people. We are all called to be Good Samaritans.