

## COURSE GUIDE

### CRS251 PASTORAL THEOLOGY

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## **MODULE 1 NOTION AND NATURE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY**

Unit 1	General Notion of Pastoral Theology
Unit 2	Method in Pastoral Theology
Unit 3	The Nature of Pastoral Ministry
Unit 4	The Pastoral Minister: Vocation and Role
Unit 5	The Pastoral Minister as Leader

### **UNIT 1 GENERAL NOTION OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY**

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1.0	Introduction
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3.1	Definition of Pastoral Theology
3.2	The Necessity of Pastoral Theology
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#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

You are about to be introduced to a branch of Christian Theology that is called Pastoral Theology. It is taken for granted that you are generally familiar with other branches of theology. As a result, this course will presume your knowledge of these branches of theology. Having studied other courses of theology, however, your natural question could be: of what use or relevance are these courses? Or rather, what do I need all these academic studies for? It is at this point that pastoral theology comes to your rescue. In this unit, therefore, you will be introduced to the general notion of pastoral theology, in a way that will enable you to understand its definition, necessity and goal.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

- It is hoped that at the end of this unit, you will be able to: Define pastoral theology
- Appreciate the need for pastoral theology

- Identify the goals of pastoral theology

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Definition of Pastoral Theology**

Pastoral Theology can be defined as a practical theological discipline which focuses on the ministry or care of souls. As practical theology, pastoral theology systematically puts into practical effect or use, knowledge about God gained from the scriptures and other theological disciplines. In order to do this effectively, pastoral theology reflects on the scriptures and theology in the light of ministry or care of souls. In other words, the pastoral theologian orders theology towards the concrete task of pasturing or ministering to people as a leader in the Christian assembly, with the ultimate end of saving souls. The pastoral theologian has the task of structuring a Christian assembly in such a way that ministry can be carried out effectively.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

- i. What does pastoral theology focus on?
- ii. What does pastoral theology put into practical effect or use?
- iii. What does the pastoral theologian do in a Christian assembly in order to carry out ministry effectively?

#### **3.2 The Necessity of Pastoral Theology**

The need for pastoral theology is derived from the natural human need for God. Whenever and wherever people hunger and thirst for God, they also do hunger and thirst for someone to lead them to God. Pastoral theology scientifically and systematically orders the process through which people are led to God. There are many reasons why people are drawn to God. Some simply want God to supply their needs, heal them, or work some miracles in their favour. Some are drawn to worship God, and to receive the sacraments, while others want to acquire a deeper knowledge about God. Some want to hear the word of God speak to them in a particular situation in their lives. There are people who seek an intimate spiritual relationship with God or to deepen their faith while some may have personal problems or doubts about God, which they may wish to clarify. There are some who may have had certain spiritual gifts or experiences, and want to have more. Still, there are those who need God's guidance, counsel or discerning light in their daily lives and experiences. All these people need a pastoral guide who can minister to them, making present or mediating to them the word of God in their concrete life situation. This is the specific task of the practitioner of pastoral theology.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. What do people who hunger and thirst for God stand in need of?
- ii. Which branch of theology scientifically and systematically orders the process through which people are led to God?
- iii. How does a pastoral guide minister to those in need of God?

### **3.3 The Goal of Pastoral Theology**

From all the above, it may be possible for you to readily identify the goal of pastoral theology as effective pastoral ministry in theory and practice. Pastoral ministry is ordered towards the salvation of souls. In order to achieve this goal, pastoral theology theoretically works out the principles of pastoral action, identifying the relevant pastoral ministers, pastoral agents and pastoral activities that would orient the practitioner towards a successful ministry. Pastoral theology thus aims at seeking out the best way possible to render service to those who need God, whether it is in teaching, preaching, administration, worship, singing, praying, counselling, sacramental life or spiritual life. Pastoral theology trains the pastoral minister to read the signs of the times, and apply the scriptures and theology to the different or particular life situation encountered in the practice of ministry. In this regard, pastoral theology employs the elements and fruits of social analysis in order to understand the dynamics and needs of the society in which ministry is being carried out. In this way, pastoral theology adapts theology to the special needs of every age, people and culture, so that its specific goal of pastoral ministry may be effectively attained.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- i. What is the goal of pastoral theology?
- ii. Towards what is pastoral ministry ordered?
- iii. What signs does pastoral theology train the minister to read?
- iv. Why does pastoral theology employ the elements and fruits of social analysis?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit you have been introduced to the general notion of pastoral theology. In this regard, there was a discussion of its definition, its necessity, and its goal. All these should enable you to have a general idea of what pastoral theology is all about.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major lessons you have learnt in this unit:

Pastoral theology is defined as a practical theological discipline which focuses on the ministry or care of souls.

Pastoral theology reflects on the scriptures and theology in the light of ministry or care of souls.

The pastoral theologian has the task of structuring a Christian assembly in such a way that ministry can be carried out effectively.

Pastoral theology scientifically and systematically orders the process through which people are led to God.

People seek God for many reasons, and need a pastoral guide who can bring the word of God to bear on their concrete life situations.

Pastoral theology trains the minister to read the signs of the times, and apply the scriptures and theology to the practice of ministry.

## 6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

In what direction does Pastoral theology order the scriptures and theology?  
Identify five areas of service which pastoral theology aims at providing to those who need God.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Bernier, P. (1992) *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral*

*Approach*, Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications. Ekot, B. (2005) *The Church of Ministers*, Uyo: Last Century Press.

Oden, T. C. (1983) *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*, San

Francisco: Harper & Row.

O'Meara, T. F. (1983) *Theology of Ministry*, New York: Paulist Press. Pfliegler, M. (1966) *A Handbook of Pastoral Theology*, Cork: TheMercier Press.



## **UNIT 2      METHOD IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY**

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- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Scriptural Approach
  - 3.2 Ecclesial Tradition Approach
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  - 3.4 Contextual Approach
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, you were introduced to the general notion of pastoral theology. In this unit, you will be introduced to the method of doing pastoral theology. This will be of interest to you, because you will come to understand the basic process used to attain the goal of pastoral ministry by pastoral theologians. In this regard you will be exposed to the four-fold method: the scriptural approach, the ecclesial tradition approach, the use of reason and the contextual approach. These approaches are normative for any theological study, and since pastoral theology is theology, the four-fold method applies to it too.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the scriptural approach to pastoral theology
- Explain the ecclesial tradition approach to pastoral theology
- Explain how reason is used in pastoral theology
- Explain the contextual approach to pastoral theology.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Scriptural Approach**

Every theological study must have the scriptures as its foundation. This is also true of pastoral theology. Pastoral theology uses the scriptures as its authoritative source for pastoral guidance. Through the scriptures, the pastoral theologian learns to approach pastoral ministry and pastoral care according to God's revelation. God's care of the chosen people Israel in the Old Testament, especially through designated religious leaders such as the priests and the prophets, becomes a model by which pastoral ministry is structured. Similarly, Jesus' ministry, and the pastoral teaching and practice of the early church as recorded in the New Testament, become all-time models for approaching pastoral ministry.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

- i. How is the Old Testament a model for pastoral ministry?
- ii. How is the New Testament a model for pastoral ministry?

#### **3.2 Ecclesial Tradition Approach**

Every Christian Church, community, denomination or assembly would naturally or inevitably develop its own distinctive ecclesial tradition of ministry. Such a tradition forms part and parcel of its reason for existence, and shapes or colours its approach to the interpretation of scripture, and therefore, to its conception of a theology of pastoral ministry. Pastoral theology, to be complete, must, therefore, necessarily draw from the tradition of ministry which is established in specific Christian churches and communities.

This approach is specifically important on account of the fact that pastoral theology is practical and contextual in nature. It means, therefore, that the pastoral theologian who wishes to practice ministry within a particular ecclesial tradition must learn about or be sensitive to the already established tradition of ministry in that specific Christian community where pastoral ministry is to be carried out, and structure his or her approach to pastoral care accordingly. The Roman Catholic ecclesial tradition, for example, draws heavily on the church's age old patristic and medieval traditions as a guide to pastoral ministry, besides the sacred scriptures. It also draws on official church pastoral and liturgical decrees, instructions, declarations, social teachings, and the Code of Canon Law. Therefore, one who is to engage in pastoral ministry within the Roman Catholic ecclesial tradition must of necessity be conversant with these sources. Other Christian churches and communities would have similar sources and traditions which provide living contexts for the exercise of pastoral ministry. It is well to appraise the richness

inherent in the diversity of these traditions in Christendom, and use the richness for building up the Christian faith. In this study however, efforts will be made at providing an ecumenical approach to pastoral ministry. This means that the study will not focus directly on the approach to ministry of any particular ecclesial tradition. Only areas of common interest to the generality of ecclesial traditions will be treated.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Why is it inevitable that ecclesial traditions would shape and colour pastoral ministry?
- ii. Why should a pastoral theologian learn about or be sensitive to the approach to ministry within an ecclesial tradition?

### 3.3 Use of Reason

Besides the scripture and ecclesial tradition, pastoral theology applies reason, in order to enable the pastoral theologian think constructively, rigorously and consistently in exercising pastoral ministry. Through the use of logic, one learns to reason cogently. Different theories of existence, knowledge, thinking, perception, insight and understanding are also helpful in positively shaping the pastoral theologian's intellectual worldview, and in increasing his or her capacity for systematic reflection. Since theology as an academic discipline is regarded as faith seeking understanding, the application of an informed reason by pastoral theologians for understanding scripture and ecclesial tradition, is inevitable. Furthermore, in applying reason as an approach to doing pastoral theology, the theological writings of scholars on pastoral ministry are employed. Such writings often reflect time-tested pastoral wisdom based on the use of scriptures, reason, and experience. The use of reason ensures that pastoral theology is systematically organized into an internally consistent and sustained reflection on specific and relevant themes.

The use of reason in pastoral theology is not intended to deprive it of its faith content, or reduce its content to only what is reasonable. Rather, reason is used to illuminate those aspects of faith which pastoral theology teaches. Furthermore, through the use of reason, pastoral theology undertakes discernment in the use of the multiplicity of diverse theologies, pastoral responses, and pastoral approaches in existence. These diverse theologies, responses and approaches, which may oftentimes differ according to religious backgrounds and socio-cultural contexts, sometimes have to be brought to bear on new and different pastoral circumstances, totally alien to the original ones. Thus, what is judged as helpful in one pastoral situation may be judged as completely unhelpful in another. It could occur therefore, that the pastoral theologian or pastoral minister may, through the use of

reason, have to think out an appropriate pastoral response to a certain concrete pastoral situation.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- i. Why does pastoral theology apply reason in its methodology beside the scripture and ecclesial tradition?
- ii. Why are the writings of scholars taken account of in pastoral theology?

#### 3.4 Contextual approach

Through the use of the contextual approach, pastoral theology seeks, in the exercise of ministry, to be critically aware of ever changing cultural situations, social contexts, political ambient, as well as the theologian's own lived personal experiences and the lived personal experiences of others. The contextual approach is important on account of the fact that even the scriptures were written from the perspective of the Judeo-Hellenistic socio-cultural context, and scholars do theologize from their own individual contexts. These contexts make it possible for writers to address issues about God in relation to concrete or particular life situations. One cannot, therefore, discard or do away with context. By being critically aware of the modern context of pastoral ministry, the pastoral theologian aims at applying the scriptures and theology to issues of current concerns, relating thus the fruits of biblical and theological reflections to ministry in today's diverse contexts.

In order to gainfully engage the contextual approach, pastoral theology pays great attention to the local environment where ministry is exercised, in relation to areas such as belief system, language, education, health, economics, cultural dynamics, symbols, authority, and socio-political realities. It then would guide pastoral ministry towards making a response to these contextual realities. In its response, pastoral theology could accept, reject, correct or challenge these contextual realities and their effects in the light of the scriptures, ecclesial tradition and reason. The pastoral theologian's response may also be geared towards creating awareness, conscientization, providing one form of pastoral assistance or another, and helping the people to help themselves. The primary aim of pastoral theology in doing this would be to exercise ministry, and not philanthropy or for any material gain.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

- i. What does pastoral theology seek to be critically aware of in the contextual approach?
- ii. Why is the contextual approach important?

iii. How does pastoral theology respond to contextual realities?

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

You have been introduced to four approaches used in pastoral theology. The scriptural approach is based on the use of the bible for a theology of ministry. The ecclesial tradition approach draws on elements from the tradition of a particular Church or Christian community. The approach using reason refers to applying reason to pastoral theology for a constructive, systematic and discerning pastoral response to issues of ministry. The contextual approach takes the socio-cultural context or environment of ministry into consideration in issues of pastoral ministry.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The following are the major lessons you have learnt in this unit:

Pastoral theology uses the scriptures as its authoritative source for pastoral guidance.

Through the scriptures the pastoral theologian learns to approach pastoral ministry and pastoral care according to God's revelation.

Pastoral theology must necessarily draw from the tradition of ministry which is established in specific Christian churches and communities.

Since theology as an academic discipline is regarded as faith seeking understanding, the application of an informed reason by pastoral theologians for understanding scripture and ecclesial tradition, is inevitable.

Through the use of the contextual approach, pastoral theology seeks, in the exercise of ministry, to be critically aware of ever changing cultural situations, social contexts, political ambient, as well as the theologian's own lived personal experiences and the lived personal experiences of others.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Identify some biblical models for pastoral ministry in the Old and New Testaments.
2. How does pastoral theology gainfully engage the contextual approach?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Bernier, P. (1992) *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral*

*Approach*, Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications. Ekot, B. (2005) *The Church of Ministers*, Uyo: Last Century Press.

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Francisco: Harper & Row.

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## **UNIT 3 THE NATURE OF PASTORAL MINISTRY**

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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  - 3.2 Aspects of pastoral ministry
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

You are already aware that the goal of pastoral theology is effectiveness in pastoral ministry. Pastoral ministry is essentially different from other kinds of activities and services which one may engage in. On this account, this unit will introduce you to the specific nature of pastoral ministry, to enable you to distinguish properly between pastoral ministry and other services, such as a philanthropic service, given the fact that some aspects of pastoral ministry may be identical with the services of philanthropists.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to: Identify the nature of pastoral ministry. Specify some aspects of pastoral ministry.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Nature of Pastoral Ministry**

The goal of pastoral ministry is to minister as Jesus Christ did, since Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd of the Christian community, and the ultimate model of ministry. What Jesus Christ did during his earthly life, what he commanded, and what is believed he could have done if he were in the world today are generally considered as guiding principles of pastoral ministry.

Since Jesus Christ came to serve and not be served, pastoral ministry has service (diakonia) as its primary target. Service of God and neighbour is the bedrock of all pastoral ministries. Pastoral ministry is therefore,

not targeted at financial gain, even if a certain financial remuneration may be part of it. Such financial remuneration where applicable, should usually be aimed at meeting the ordinary running cost of providing pastoral ministry. Ideally, however, pastoral ministry is provided free, while a general system for the upkeep of the pastoral ministers may be worked out by the Christian community.

Pastoral ministry therefore, takes place in the context of a Christian community, as part of the community service towards the promotion of the kingdom of God. Since it involves a community, every exercise of pastoral ministry is public, not private action. One should be accountable to the Christian community for the pastoral ministry exercised within it. No baptized person is excluded from pastoral ministry, except in certain specified cases where distinctions are made in some ecclesial communities. Thus baptism into a Christian community is considered as affording a Christian the opportunity to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ by promoting the kingdom of God. Ministry is therefore, the vocation, privilege and responsibility of all baptized Christians.

All the members of an ecclesial community, however, cannot be engaged in one and the same ministry. Participation in ministry should be seen as an activity of the Holy Spirit, who shares the gifts of ministry according to God's will, in consonance with the needs of the Christian community. Therefore, different ecclesial communities reserve the right to draw guidelines, based on their history and tradition, and in line with the teaching of the scriptures, on the modalities for an orderly participation in ministry.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. What is the goal of pastoral ministry?
- ii. Identify the bedrock of all pastoral ministry
- iii. In what context does pastoral ministry take place?
- iv. Pastoral ministry is not a private action. What is it instead?
- v. Whose are the vocation, privilege and responsibility of ministry?

### **3.2 Aspects of Pastoral Ministry**

Pastoral ministry entails many things. This is because the gospel of Jesus Christ must address all human needs. Pastoral ministry therefore addresses the needs of a worshipping Christian community in many areas such as leadership in liturgy or worship, celebration and administration of the sacraments, preaching, teaching, singing, praying, planning and execution of evangelical and missionary programs, organization of groups and associations, bible-study, Church support

and funding, Church projects and general Church administration or management.

Pastoral ministry must also attend to wider community challenges in areas such as individual/group counselling, healthcare, politics, inter-religious dialogue, ecumenism, education, justice and peace, respect for life, family life, morality, liberation, and human development.

Furthermore, pastoral ministry engages in the pastoral care of a range of people in need in the church and society such as orphans, children, youth, singles, engaged couples, the married, the elderly, the sick, the dying, the bereaved, refugees, immigrants, widows, subjugated women, oppressed workers, alcohol and drug addicts, the homeless, the poor, the unemployed, the physically challenged, people living with HIV/AIDS, prisoners, students, the depressed, the lonely and the unloved. Through pastoral ministry, which should be distinguished in this case from philanthropy, this range of people benefit from the pastoral care of the Christian community, which is inspired by the example of Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to participate in God's plan of salvation for the world.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Why does pastoral ministry entail many things?
- ii. Name five needs of the worshipping Christian community addressed by pastoral ministry?
- iii. Identify five among the wider community challenges which pastoral ministry must attend to.
- iv. Pastoral ministry engages in pastoral care for a range of people in need in the church and society. Mention ten of them.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you learnt that by its specific nature, pastoral ministry refers to pastoral service, which is at once service of God and neighbour. Such service takes place in the context of a Christian community. You also learnt about aspects of pastoral ministry which involves addressing the needs of a worshipping community, the wider community, and a range of people in need in the church and society.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

What Jesus Christ did during his earthly life, what he commanded, and what is believed he could have done if he were in the world

today are generally considered as guiding principles of pastoral ministry.

Ministry is the vocation, privilege and responsibility of all baptized Christians.

Pastoral ministry addresses the needs of a worshipping Christian community. Pastoral ministry must also attend to wider community challenges. Pastoral ministry engages in the pastoral care of a range of people in need in the church and society.

## **6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss the issue of financial remunerations in pastoral ministry.
2. How is pastoral ministry distinguished from philanthropy?

## **7.0 REFERENCE AND FURTHER READING**

Bernier, P. (1992) *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral*

*Approach*, Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications. Ekot, B. (2005) *The Church of Ministers*, Uyo: Last Century Press.

Oden, T. C. (1983) *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*, San Francisco: Harper & Row.

O'Meara, T. F. (1983) *Theology of Ministry*, New York: Paulist Press. Pfliegler, M. (1966) *A Handbook of Pastoral Theology*, Cork: The Mercier Press.

## **UNIT 4 THE PASTORAL MINISTER: VOCATION AND ROLE**

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- 3.0 Main Content
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- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

From your knowledge of the nature of pastoral ministry, it is now clear to you that pastoral ministry cannot be effectively carried out without a pastoral minister. The pastoral minister is one who brings to practical reality what is theoretically proposed in pastoral theology. Thus, without the activities of the pastoral minister, pastoral theology would remain as a speculative discipline. On account of this, in this unit you will be introduced to the vocation and role of the pastoral minister.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the pastoral minister as one who is called and chosen to serve.
- Understand the importance of the role of the pastoral minister.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Pastoral Minister as One Called**

Pastoral ministry is engaged in only by those baptized Christians who feel called to participate in its realization, and are accepted for such ministry within the Christian community. The pastoral minister is, therefore, one who responds positively to a call or vocation from God, and who is authorized or commissioned by an ecclesial community to engage in pastoral assignment or pastoral service. The call to pastoral ministry could come to an individual as an inner longing or yearning, probably from childhood, or following upon prayer, reflection, a

commitment, an experience, or flowing out of one's natural endowment or one's charismatic gift. It could also come from an external suggestion from friends, family members, or people in authority. Although God also can and does providentially and mysteriously call people to ministry in dramatically mystical ways, an individual's claim to a special divine revelation in a call to ministry should be handled with extreme care, prudence and good judgment. This is in view of the high possibility of deceptive influences which could be inherent in such claims and experiences.

One who feels called to engage in a certain pastoral ministry should earnestly search his or her inward self, considering his or her gifts, skills, capabilities, limitations, attitudes, tendencies, experiences, possibilities and personal life-style, in order to discern whether or not these are in consonance with the demands of the specific ministry to which one feels called. It may also be the responsibility of others especially those entrusted by an ecclesial community to admit one into a specific ministry, to discern one's call or vocation to engage in the ministry. Such discernment is often carried out, following commonly approved criteria, and with faith in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pastoral ministers who have been called and chosen for pastoral ministry could after a suitable period of training or formation, be ordained, installed, commissioned, inaugurated, passed out, promoted, co-opted, appointed, professed, missioned, registered or simply asked to begin such a ministry publicly or privately by a competent authority, in line with ecclesial custom and tradition. In this way, it is the ecclesial community that formally calls one into ministry, and takes responsibility for the ministry.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Who is it that ultimately calls the pastoral minister to service?
- ii. Why does one need extreme care, prudence and good judgment when dealing with a claim to a special divine revelation in a call?
- iii. What is the role of the ecclesial community in calling one into ministry?

### 3.2 The Role of the Pastoral Minister

Pastoral ministry includes men and women who are called and equipped to serve in different capacities as pastoral ministers, as found in the early Church. The pastoral minister is thus primarily accountable, in good conscience, to God, and so tries to be honest with himself or herself and with others in exercising pastoral ministry. It is also the duty of the minister to be accountable to the ecclesial community in and through which pastoral ministry is carried out.

To effectively engage in pastoral ministry, the pastoral minister should be mature in personality and age in relation to the assigned ministry, have a deep faith, have personal gifts and talents for the ministry, be adequately trained, be imbued with pastoral zeal, be of exemplary conduct, have the capacity to communicate well, and be genuinely open to people, issues, events and places. It is these qualities that would enable the pastoral minister effectively perform his or her specific role in pastoral ministry.

A pastoral minister may be engaged in ministry full-time or part-time. One engaged full-time in ministry is usually completely at the disposition of an ecclesial community, either for a specific ministry or for diverse ministries. A typical full-time ministry is the ordained ministry. Traditionally, the ordained minister, also called a cleric, is one who is called to witness to Christ in a state of life which leaves a permanent mark on the minister. The ordained ministry thus has its special character and nature, which sets one apart for participation full-time in pastoral ministry. While baptism confers on every Christian the privilege of ministry in general, ordination, which is effected through the laying on of hands (See Num 27:18-23; Acts 6:1-6; 2 Tim 1:6) and prayer, confers on a baptized Christian, the privilege of an ordained ministry.

It is important to specify that ordination means different things to different Christian Churches. For some, ordination is seen as a sacrament (Holy Orders), administered to deacons, priests and bishops in view of their different roles in ministry. Their principal role as ordained ministers centres on service at liturgical worship (ministry of the word and sacrament), and general pastoral administration. There are Churches, however, that view ordination basically as a formal authorization necessary for public ministry. Such ministry revolves principally around preaching the word and leading in prayer. It is not surprising therefore, that in Christianity the ordained minister has come to be identified with many pastoral roles. These pastoral roles are defined in names and titles such as Pastor, Parson, Elder, Curate, Preacher, Priest, Deacon, Minister, Evangelist, Clergy, Anointed Man of God, Reverend and Chaplain. Their engagement in full-time ministry ensures that pastoral ministry is carried out as an on-going process, taking into account the self-sacrifice that ministering to souls demands.

One should note, however, that not all who engage in full-time ministry are ordained ministers. There are many non-ordained or lay ministers who with full dedication and much self-sacrifice, give their energy, talent and time to full-time ministry for the salvation of souls. Their pastoral services are of equal importance as that of the ordained ministers, as pastoral theology does not regard any pastoral ministry as being of less importance than others.

Those who engage in part-time pastoral ministry, sometimes called an apostolate, may

be involved in certain specific ministries within and on behalf of an ecclesial community, probably during their spare time, or under arrangement. Like those engaged in full-time ministry, the importance of their role in pastoral ministry cannot be downplayed or minimized. Such ministers, whether they engage in pastoral visitation, prayer, reading the word of God, Eucharistic ministry, fellowship ministry, services to the sick, ministry to the elderly and the poor, ministry to the oppressed, hospitality, singing, teaching, counselling etc., are participating equally in the ministry of Christ.

Pastoral ministers, whether ordained or non-ordained, full time or part-time, must be aware of the importance of ministry for building up their faith and that of others. They should therefore, seek opportunities to grow in their faith, become better equipped for their ministry through continuing education, embrace a deeper life of prayer, and develop good and wholesome public and private relationships.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3.2

- i. To whom is the pastoral minister primarily accountable?
- ii. What is the role of the ordained ministry according to its special character and nature
- iii. By what names and titles are the pastoral roles of ordained ministers identified?

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From this unit you have learnt that pastoral ministers are not mere job seekers, but people who have responded to a divine call for service. Before they undertake ministry, there has to be discernment on whether or not they possess the qualities necessary for ministry. After a period of preparation, they are inaugurated to begin their ministry. Each minister has specific roles to play whether ordained or non-ordained, in full time ministry or part time.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

The pastoral minister is one who responds positively to a call or vocation from God.

The pastoral minister is one who is authorized or commissioned by an ecclesial community to engage in pastoral assignment or pastoral service.

One who feels called to engage in a certain pastoral ministry should earnestly search his or her inward self, considering his or her gifts, skills, capabilities, limitations, attitudes, tendencies, experiences, possibilities and personal life-style, in order to discern whether or not these are in consonance with the demands of the specific ministry to which he or she feels called.

The pastoral minister is primarily accountable, in good conscience, to God, and so tries to be honest with himself or herself and with others in exercising pastoral ministry. It is also the duty of the minister to be accountable to the ecclesial community in and through which pastoral ministry is carried out.

One should note that not all who engage in full-time ministry are ordained ministers. There are many non-ordained or lay ministers who with full dedication and much self-sacrifice, give their energy, talent and time to full-time ministry for the salvation of souls.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the major ways through which one is likely to feel called by God to engage in ministry?
2. Identify some of the areas one should consider while trying to discern his or her suitability for a specific pastoral ministry.
3. Identify some of the pastoral ministry engaged in by part-time Ministers.

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## UNIT 5 THE PASTORAL MINISTER AS LEADER

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Pastoral leadership as service
  - 3.2 Pastoral leadership as empowerment
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

By now you should be aware that every pastoral minister is a leader by virtue of his or her ministry. Pastoral ministry therefore involves pastoral leadership. What really does pastoral leadership entail? How different is pastoral leadership from other models of leadership? In this unit, you will be exposed to two important models of pastoral leadership: pastoral leadership as service and pastoral leadership as empowerment.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the importance of service in pastoral leadership.
- Explain how pastoral leadership can be used to empower others for pastoral service

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Pastoral Leadership as Service

In the secular society, leadership is easily conceived of as a means of making one's authority or power felt by others. One who is a leader would, therefore, be perceived as one who holds an enormous power, while others remain subordinate to him or her. This model of leadership has no place in Christian pastoral leadership. Here the pastoral leader is, like Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:1-18). Like Peter, he or she is called to tend and feed the sheep that Jesus left behind (John 21:15-19). To do this demands an attitude of humble service. Thus, following after the example of Jesus the Lord, and teacher, the pastoral leader washes the feet of others (John

13:12-17) as a servant leader. This makes the pastoral leader become self-sacrificing and self-emptying like Jesus (Phil 2:5-8). Therefore, the pastoral minister as leader is not engaged in ministry for material or political gains, but for self-emptying service.

In concrete terms, as a pastoral leader, the pastoral minister responds to the needs of others in any situation, and is always ready to enter into the lives of others, in order to understand their wants, sense their loneliness, share their hopes, feel their fears, be aware of their love, and know their oppressions. By setting aside personal comfort and preferences and placing the other first, with a willingness to change the world of the other for the better, the pastoral minister becomes a self-sacrificing leader, one truly at the service of the others.

Thus whether in preaching the word, teaching, counselling, prayer, working for justice and peace, or in the administration of the sacraments, the pastoral leader, by placing the pastoral needs of the other first, exercises a decisive influence on the thoughts and actions of the other. The human experience and spiritual riches of the pastoral leader are used to inspire the other, stir the mind and heart of the other, and encourage him or her to believe in himself or herself. They serve to link the other with God. In doing this, the pastoral leader shares the best of himself or herself, making it possible for the followers to be able to discern what they need to follow and imbibe in their lives.

Good pastoral leadership, therefore, does not emphasize the importance or otherwise of the position the leader occupies. Neither does it focus on rank. Rather, it concentrates on the service role that the leader has to play within the ecclesial community, in the wider society, or to those in special need. It does not arrogate to itself privileges, personal advantages, material benefits and status. Rather, it seeks for every opportunity to provide needed encouragement, consolation, insight, discernment and positive challenge. It eschews selfish interests but promotes the love of God and neighbor as the primary motivation for ministry. Only by following the way of authentic and selfless service in Christian love can pastoral leadership lead to an efficient pastoral ministry, whereby needy souls are brought to salvation in Christ.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. What is the model of leadership that the pastoral leader should emulate from Jesus?
- ii. The pastoral minister does not engage in ministry for material or political gains, but for what?
- iii. What can pastoral leadership achieve through authentic and selfless service?

### 3.2 Pastoral Leadership as Empowerment

The pastoral leader is one who is sent to engage in pastoral ministry by an ecclesial community. This is in keeping with the mission of Jesus “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21). By sending his disciples on mission, Jesus Christ empowered them to act in his name and so continue to do the work of salvation that he had begun on earth. The pastoral leader shares in this apostolic mission precisely because pastoral ministry is a participation in the mission of Jesus. Consequently, pastoral ministers must provide an enabling environment for other pastoral ministers to emerge, and for pastoral leadership qualities to develop, in order that the mission of Jesus may be carried on “to the end of the age” (cf. Matt 28:18-20).

Good pastoral leadership identifies and nurtures peoples’ potentialities. It encourages, empowers, motivates and challenges all the baptized to participate in pastoral ministry of any kind. In doing this, the pastoral minister, at all times, generates and encourages team work, provides a clearly defined, focused and goal-oriented leadership. This means that the pastoral leader has the ability to trust others, communicate effectively, supervise others without being overly domineering, and listen attentively to others. The pastoral leader must have a good inter- personal relationship with others, delegate appropriately, manage time well, be open to learning, receive and give feedback well, dialogue, be sensitive to the needs of others and motivate others to effective participation in pastoral ministry.

Through affirmation of others, pastoral leadership empowers them to greater service, with the result that everyone becomes a minister unto others in a spirit of mutual love and fellowship. The effect of an empowering leadership is that it keeps the Christian community united. Through it members are eager to spend time together, attend meetings willingly, resolve conflicts amicably, share their resources lovingly, and participate actively and joyfully in every project or activity aimed at promoting the kingdom of God on earth. An empowering pastoral leadership leads to good and spirit-filled worship or liturgical sessions; it leads to good organization of every activity, and good collaboration in ministry, whereby the foot does not say: “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body”, or the ear, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body” (1 Cor. 12:15-16). Rather, everyone in the Christian community is empowered to contribute to the up-building of the community according to one’s calling or vocation, according to one’s ability, and with whatever one’s gifts or endowments are.

Where unity and collaboration in ministry with one mind and heart (Acts 4:32) is lacking in a Christian community, much attention must be paid to the minister’s style of pastoral leadership. In this regard, the minister should beware of exercising ministry using only autocratic means without also applying democratic

principles. He or she should avoid using only a task-oriented approach, without a complementary attention paid to participation, good relationships and sensitivity to human feelings. The leader should also avoid using only threats, favoritism, clique mentality, punishment or rewards as the basis of his or her pastoral leadership, but rather make efforts at promoting greater sense of mutual or corporate ownership of the community, mutual dialogue, mutual understanding, mutual care, mutual love and mutual sense of responsibility.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. How did Jesus Christ empower his disciples?
- ii. Why should pastoral ministers provide an enabling environment for other pastoral ministers to emerge?
- iii. What are the effects of empowerment in pastoral leadership?

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From all the above, it should be clear to you that one of the major issues that pastoral theology deals with is pastoral leadership. Pastoral leadership has to do with caring for or looking after the flock that Jesus left behind. The most important way of doing this is serving as Jesus did. But anybody appointed to pastoral leadership should not seek to do it alone. He or she should rather seek to collaborate with others by empowering them to participate actively in ministry through the example of good leadership.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

The pastoral leader is, like Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep. Like Peter, he or she is called to tend and feed the sheep that Jesus left behind. To do this demands an attitude of humble service.

As pastoral leader, the pastoral minister responds to the needs of others in any situation, and is always ready to enter into the lives of others in order to understand their wants, sense their loneliness, share their hopes, feel their fears, be aware of their love, and know their oppressions.

Good pastoral leadership does not emphasize the importance or otherwise of the position the leader occupies. Neither does it focus on rank. Rather, it concentrates on the service role that the leader has to play within the ecclesial community, in the wider society, or to those in special need.

Good pastoral leadership identifies and nurtures peoples' potentialities. It encourages, empowers, motivates and challenges all the baptized to participate in pastoral ministry of any kind.

Where unity and collaboration in ministry with one mind and heart is lacking in a Christian community, much attention must be paid to the minister's style of pastoral leadership.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. In concrete terms, how does the pastoral leader serve the needs of the other?
2. Identify some of the qualities that a pastoral minister needs to possess in order to encourage and challenge all the baptized to participate in pastoral ministry of any kind.
3. What should a pastoral leader do when unity and collaboration are lacking in the Christian community?

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## MODULE 2            BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

- Unit 1            Priestly Ministry in the Old Testament
- Unit 2            Prophetic Ministry in the Old Testament
- Unit 3            The Ministry of Jesus
- Unit 4            Apostolic Ministry in the New Testament
- Unit 5            Aspects of Christian Ministry in the New Testament

### UNIT 1            PRIESTLY MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Nature of Priesthood in Israelite Religion
  - 3.2 Pastoral roles of Israelite priests
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous module you were introduced to the notion and nature of pastoral theology. In this second module, you are going to study the biblical foundations for pastoral theology. This is a reflection on those biblical texts that refer to religious ministry to the people of God. The reflection will cover both the Old and New Testaments. Research on ministry to the people of God in Israelite religion, as portrayed in the Old Testament, shows that in the Old Testament, two groups of people were principally engaged in religious ministry. These were the priests and the prophets. In the New Testament, Jesus was the model of ministry for his apostles, who brought further development to Christian ministry. Your study of all these will act as a foundation for understanding the principles of pastoral ministry today, which is the major concern of pastoral theology. To begin these reflections on the biblical foundations for pastoral ministry, this unit will study priestly ministry in the Old Testament, focusing on the nature of the priestly office, and the pastoral roles played by Israelite priests.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Explain the nature of the priesthood in Israelite religion. Describe who an Israelite priest was.

Explain the pastoral roles of Israelite priests.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Nature of Priesthood in Israelite Religion

Originally, when the Israelites were nomads, the priesthood did not exist as a separate office in their religion. Rather, during the time of the Patriarchs, whenever there was need for priestly ministry, such as the offering of sacrifice to God, it was the head of the family or the head of the tribe who performed priestly functions. Thus Abraham, though not a priest, was expected to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice to God (Gen 2:2), and Jacob offered a sacrifice on behalf of his family members (Gen 31:54; see also 46:1). Only foreign nations, such as Egypt (Gen 41:45; 47:22), Philistia (1 Sam 5:5; 6:2), Phoenicia (2 Kings 10:19; 11:18), Moab (Jer 48:7), Ammon (Jer 49:3) and Salem (Gen 14:18) had priests. The same term, kohen, was used to refer to priests everywhere, regardless of nation or language.

However, as a result of the development of social organization in Israel, the office of priesthood emerged, and some people devoted all or most of their time to being priests. This entailed a certain amount of professionalism; and so knowledge, skill, training and commitment were involved. Indeed, owing to the later complexity of Israelite priestly service, it resulted that a group of people called the Levites, of the tribe of Levi, the descendants of one of Jacob's sons, was set apart to carry out certain priestly functions on behalf of the people, while the descendants of Aaron were to focus on core priestly duties. This is reflected in Num 1:48-51:

The Lord had said to Moses: Only the tribe of Levi you shall not enrol, and you shall not take a census of them with the other Israelites. Rather you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the covenant, and over all its equipment, and over all that belongs to it: they are to carry the tabernacle and all its equipment, and they shall tend it, and shall camp around the tabernacle. When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.

and in Num 3: 5-10:

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, so that they may assist him. They shall perform duties for him and for the whole congregation in front of the tent of meeting, doing service of the tabernacle; they shall be in charge of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and attend to the duties for the Israelites as they do service at the tabernacle. You shall give the Levites to Aaron and his descendants; they are unreservedly given to him from among the Israelites. But you shall make a register of Aaron and his descendants; it is they who shall attend to the priesthood, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.

Although at certain times in Israelite history, non-Levitical priests emerged, such as Samuel who was an Ephraimite (1 Sam 1:1), and performed priestly duties (1 Sam 2:18; 7:9; 9:13; 10:8), a priest from the tribe of Levi was preferred. Thus Micah, an Ephraimite, who had appointed one of his sons as a priest, changed his mind when he met a Levite. According to Judges 17: 9-13:

Micah said to him: ‘From where do you come?’ He replied, ‘I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to live wherever I can find a place.’ Then Micah said to him, ‘Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a set of clothes, and your living.’ The Levite agreed to stay with the man; and the young man became to him like one of his sons. So Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then Micah said, ‘Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, because the Levite has become my priest.’

The entire tribe of Levi was, therefore, set apart to minister to the people of Israel as priests (Deut 17:9, 18; 18:1; 21:5). Theirs was ministry by hereditary because the priests were born into ministry. Yet one who was born into the Levitical priestly family had to be installed into a priestly office. This involved “the filling of his hands” (Exodus 32:29) at the beginning of his ministry, to inaugurate him into the ministry. Israelite priests could easily be identified, because once inaugurated, they served God and the people in various ways, carrying the Ark, and blessing the people (Deut 10:8). They served in sanctuaries, and performed certain priestly duties in the temple of Jerusalem. Israelite priests were anointed, and wore sacred vestments (see Exodus 29:1-9; 40:12-15; Lev 8:12). By virtue of their ministry they became sanctified, and they were to remain holy (Lev 21:6). They were forbidden many things in view of their priestly ministry (Lev 21:1-15). They had to purify themselves in special ways (Exodus 30:17-21; 40:31-32; Lev 8:6), and avoid any confusion between the sacred and the profane, through their dressing for ministry (Exodus 28:40-43). The priests were subordinate to the high priest, described in Lev 21:10 as one “exalted above his fellows”, and other priests shared in his anointing. Only the high priest could enter the holies of holies in the temple

once a year, for a special ministry to the people on the Day of Atonement for the people's sins.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Who performed priestly functions in Israel during the time of the Patriarchs?
- ii. Which Israelite tribe was set apart to carry out priestly functions?
- iii. What was the role of the descendants of Aaron?
- iv. How was Israelite priesthood passed on?

### 3.2 Pastoral Roles of Israelite Priests

The Israelite priest was expected to look after the sanctuary, administering the gifts brought there, and its temporal goods. The Priest stayed behind to take care of the sanctuary even if a tribe emigrated from the area. He received visitors to the sanctuary, and attended to their spiritual needs. Among the needs of the people was to consult God in their endeavours (Exodus 18:15), inquire of God if a mission would or would not be successful (Judges 18:5-6), and bring their quarrels before God (Exodus 18:19). Thus it was the duty of the priests to give oracles or speak on behalf of God. Moses was expected to converse face to face with God, but other priests would consult God using the ephod, and the Urim and Thummim.

It is not very clear what the ephod, the Urim and the Thummim were, and how they were used to consult God. Indications are, however, that the ephod was one of the priest's vestment (1 Sam 2:18; 22:18), worn around the waist (2 Sam 6:14) in the form of a loin cloth. It could also have been an outer clothing, worn over the priest's tunic and cloak (Exodus 29:5; Lev 8:7), woven out of golden and linen thread and coloured wools. The ephod could also have been a portable object of worship (Judges 17:5; 18:14, 17, 20; 1 Sam 2:28; 14:3).

The Urim and Thummim were sacred lots. Probably they were small pebbles, or dice, or little sticks (Hos 4:12), normally kept in the pocket of the ephod material. They were used to divine the will of God for the people (Deut 33:8). The method of divination is found in 1 Sam 14:41-42: God was expected to draw the lot, and so decide a case by choosing between Urim and Thummim. The answer could take a short or long time to come (1 Sam 14:18-19), or the oracle could refuse to answer (1 Sam 14:37; 28:6). The use of these objects however became lessened as Israel progressed in her history, and people began to consult God through the prophets (Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65).

The priests were also teachers, who instructed the people, especially on the law of God (torāh). According to Mal 2:7: “For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (See also Deut 31:9-13, 25-26; Hos 4:6). It was, therefore, part of the priest’s ministry to instruct the people on what God wanted or did not want (Lev 10:10-11; Ezek 22:26; 44:23). They taught the people morality and religion through their knowledge and their ability to interpret the law. This priestly role of teaching the law was later on taken over by the scribes.

A major ministerial role of Israelite priests was that of offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. Israelite priests offered sacrifices on the altar (1 Sam 2:28), and burnt incense and burnt offerings upon the altar (Deut 33:10). They offered or whole burnt offerings (1 Sam 7:9; Deut 33:10; Judg 13:16-23), as well as communion sacrifices (Lev 7:12-17), wherein the victim was shared between God, the priest and the person who offered the sacrifice (Lev 3:16-17; 7:28-34; 10:14-15). They also offered expiatory sacrifices for sin and reparation for sins committed (Lev 4:1-5:13; 5:14-19), and accepted vegetable offerings on behalf of the people (Lev 2:1-16).

In all these roles either as caretaker of the sanctuary, teacher of the law, giver of oracle or one who offered sacrifices to God, the main thrust of the Israelite priestly ministry was that of being mediator between the people and God, presenting their petitions, offerings and prayers to God, and telling the people God’s will. The pastoral ministry of the priest was, therefore, basically that of a mediator between God and the people.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Describe how the Israelite priest was expected to care for the sanctuary.
- ii. In what way did Israelite priests minister to the people as teachers?
- iii. What was the major thrust of an Israelite priest’s ministerial role?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The tribe of Levi was set apart and given the responsibility of exercising the ministry of priesthood in Israel. This office was passed on from generation to generation as a tribal heritage. Israelite priests were regarded as mediators between the people and God. Their major roles included: care of the sanctuary, giving of oracles, teaching the law, and offering sacrifices.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have learnt in this unit: Owing to the later complexity of Israelite priestly service the Levites

were set apart to carry out certain priestly functions.

The descendants of Aaron were to focus on core priestly duties. Israelite priests could easily be identified, because once inaugurated, they served God and the people in various ways, carrying the Ark, and blessing the people.

They served in sanctuaries, and performed certain priestly duties in the temple of Jerusalem. Israelite priests were anointed, and wore sacred vestments.

In their roles either as caretaker of the sanctuary, teacher of the law, giver of oracles or one who offered sacrifices to God, the main ministerial thrust of Israelite priests was that of being mediator between the people and God, presenting their petitions, offerings and prayers to God, and telling the people God's will.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What elements could be used to identify an Israelite priest?
2. Describe two among the ministerial roles of an Israelite priest.

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## UNIT 2      PROPHECIC MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Background to prophecy in Israelite religion
  - 3.2 Pastoral roles of Israelite prophets
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

You may be aware from your experience, that the word “prophet” suggests a variety of meanings in popular thinking. Primary among these meanings is that a prophet is regarded as one who is able to see into the future and accurately predict events and happenings. Thus it is sometimes assumed that Old Testament prophets primarily played the role of seers. This is the impression one gets, for example, from the figure of Samuel. Samuel was regarded as a “man of God” and a seer, who had extraordinary visual experiences apart from auditory ones. He was expected to describe events, past, present or future that were hidden from other people (1 Sam 9:8-26).

Although this role of seer was at a time associated with Old Testament prophets (See 1 Sam 9:9), their later and primary responsibility to the people lay not in seeing the future, but in serving as the conscience of the people. They were God’s spokespersons, as the meaning of the Greek word *prophêtês* (spokesperson) suggests. As God’s spokespersons they troubled the people of Israel, delivering God’s messages and stirring up the people’s consciences on crucial personal, social, political and religious issues. They constantly reminded the people about the word and the law of God. It is because they were God’s spokespersons that the prophets were regarded as ministers of God and ministers of the people. How did they fulfil this role as ministers of God and ministers of the people? In this unit you will be guided towards this understanding.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Discuss how Israelite prophets received their call.

Discuss the nature of ecstatic, cultic, court and classical prophets. Explain how Israelite prophets ministered through the spoken word. Discuss how the prophets dealt with religious and social issues. Discuss how the prophets brought hope to the people of Israel through their words.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Background to Prophecy in Israelite Religion

The Hebrew word for prophet, *nābî'* means, "one who is called", "one who is commissioned". The prophetic call or vocation was not received through hereditary. The call was felt by an individual as a powerful inner drive to speak on God's behalf. One who received the vocation to be a prophet had to abandon his job and engage in prophecy. Thus, an Israelite prophet was regarded as one called by God in a special way and sent on a full-time prophetic mission. This is clearly manifested in some of the call stories of the prophets. Samuel was specially called as a boy ministering under Eli (1 Sam 3:1-14). Amos declared to Amaziah: "I am no prophet nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'God, prophesy to my people Israel'" (Amos 7:14-15). Isaiah, a nobleman, described the nature of his call thus: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' And he said, 'Go and say to this people...'" (Isa 6: 8-9).

In other call stories, Jeremiah, a priest, was hesitant to answer the call, and so protested: "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy" (Jer 1:6). He, however, had to succumb to God's call when he heard the reply: "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord" (Jer 1:7-8). Similarly, Ezekiel, a priest, received a divine vision in which he was told: "Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God'. Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them" (Ezek 2:3-5). There were also prophetesses, such as Miriam (Exod 15:20) and Deborah (Judg 4:4).

In view of their conviction that they were called and commissioned by God to speak on his behalf, Israelite prophets considered that their words came from God, and not from themselves. They were ever conscious that their authority to minister to the people as prophets came from God. On account of this, they were careful, in

delivering their oracles, to introduce them with phrases such as: “Hear the word of the Lord” (Isa 1:10), and “Thus says the Lord” (Isa 66:1). They would also usually conclude their oracles with: “Says the Lord” (Jer 49:6).

Early Israelite prophecy was quite ecstatic in nature. Ecstasy is an experience of being overcome with such a powerful emotion that a person’s self control and reason is momentarily suspended. Ecstatic prophets were “seized” or “possessed” by God’s spirit which took full control of their persons, and it was in that state that they uttered their prophecy. They usually belonged to a roving band of prophets, such that if one member of the band was seized by an ecstatic experience, others, even non-prophets would be seized too (1 Sam 10:5-6; 19:18-24). It is notable that ecstasy could be induced by music and dancing (2 Kings 3:15).

Some prophets were attached to the king’s court as court prophets for political and professional purposes, while others were attached to the great sanctuaries of Israel such as in Bethel and Jerusalem. The court prophets were available to the king so that they would discern the will of God for him (1 Kings 22:5-6; 20:35-43). Those attached to sanctuaries served side by side with the priests in a joint ministry. These were known as cultic prophets. Cultic prophets were regarded as experts in prayer. They interceded with God for the people, bringing the people’s petitions before God (Hab 3:1-19). They also communicated God’s answer to the people’s prayers, to the people.

Israelite prophetic ministry attained greater prominence, however, with the classical or canonical prophets. These were the writing prophets. Their prophetic works or collections have come down to us, either written by themselves or by their disciples, sometimes many years after their death. The sixteen classical prophets are usually classified as major and minor. Four of them regarded as Major Prophets are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The remaining twelve, regarded as Minor Prophets are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Some of them prophesied before the Israelite Babylonian exile in 587-537 BC (pre-exilic), some during the exile (exilic), while some prophesied after the exile (post-exilic).

The classical prophets did not go into ecstasy. There is no indication, for example, that they were out of their minds, or in an abnormal state (See 2 Kings 9:11; Hos 9:7). Rather, they spoke as if they enjoyed a special relationship with God (See Amos 8:1-2). Yet in reality, these prophets did not necessarily have extraordinary sights and sounds. They were people with remarkable insights, who knew thoroughly the Israelite religious and legal traditions, and who were sufficiently indignant at the unfaithfulness, faithlessness, hopelessness, hypocrisy, manipulations, corruption and evil around them. They dared to speak out! They knew that all these would not go unpunished, and so they urged reform. They challenged the

people, encouraged them, consoled them, and expressed hope and promise to them, based on their sound knowledge of the word of God, the will of God, and on God's special inspiration. They spoke and wrote poetically and symbolically (1 Kings 22:11; Jer 28:12-16). Sometimes they were commanded to perform symbolic actions which had important pastoral meanings (Hos 1:2-9; Isa 8:1-4; 20:1-6; Jer

13:1-11; 16:1-13; Zech 6:9-15). Some of the prophets suffered enormously for the words that they were inspired to speak (Jer 20:7-10; Isa 50:4-6).

Little wonder then that many false prophets existed. Such were prophets who did not take time to study the law of God and understand God's will. They were uninspired prophets with lying lips, who spoke out of their convenience and for personal gains, not according to the challenging demands of the word and will of God. Ezekiel condemned such prophets in these words:

The word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are prophesying; say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: 'Hear the word of the Lord!' Thus says the Lord God, Alas for the senseless prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! Your prophets have been like jackals among ruins, O Israel...They have envisioned falsehood and lying divination; they say, 'Says the Lord,' when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they wait for the fulfilment of their word! Have you not seen a false vision or uttered a lying divination, when you have said, 'Says the Lord,' even though I did not speak? (Ezek 13:1-7; see also Ezek 13:8-23; Jer 5:31; 14:13-16; 23:9-40).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. What was the nature of the prophetic call, since it wasn't through hereditary?
- ii. How did Israelite prophets deliver their oracles in a way that showed that they were speaking God's word?
- iii. Who were the ecstatic prophets?
- iv. Name the sixteen classical prophets.

### 3.2 Pastoral Roles of Israelite Prophets

From the above, it should be clear to you that the prophets were among the religious leaders of the people in Israel. They served the people in a special way by ministering the word of God to them. They preached and taught the people the truth from the "words" (Amos 1:1; Hos 1:1) and "visions" (Isa 1:1; 2:1; Hab 1:1; Amos 9:1) which they had received. Thus they pronounced woes (Amos 5:18; Isa 5:20; Mic 2:1-5), threatened punishments (Jer 6:1-8, 22-26), and announced future disasters (1 Kings 21:19; Amos 4:1-3), but they also announced goodness

and blessings (Ezek 34:11-16). They addressed their words to individuals (Ezek 18:1-24), especially the king (1 Kings 20:13-15, 22, 28; Isa 7:1-25). However, most of their words were directed to groups and to the entire Israelite nation.

In their pastoral ministry, the prophets targeted unlawful and unwholesome religious practices (Amos 4:4-5), the people's abandonment of the law (Amos 2:4-5), and their abuse of religion (Amos 5:18-27). They reacted against religious syncretism and the worship of false gods (Hos 2:13; 4:10-13; 10:8; 13:2; Amos 7:9; Jer 7:16-20; 31-34). They attacked religious externalism, meaningless worship and hypocritical sacrifices devoid of love of God, obedience to God, justice and kindness to the people (Isa 1:11-17; Jer 6:20; 7:21-26; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-27; Mic 6:6-8). They condemned guilt-laden prayer: "When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood" (Isa 1:15).

The prophets also served as fierce social critics. Amos spoke against injustice, oppression and cheating, especially of the poor: "Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground....They hate the one who reprieves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth. Therefore because you trample the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine" (Amos 5:7, 10-11). Also, "Hear this you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, 'When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the Sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat? The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds" (Amos 8:4-7; also 3:9-4:3). Similarly, Jeremiah spoke out vehemently against unjust rulers: "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbours work for nothing, and does not give their wages....Are you king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him....But your eyes and heart are only on your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence" (Jer 22:13-17; See also Ezek 22:12-15; 29-31; Isa 3:13-15; 10:1-4).

The prophets therefore, called for reform, repentance and change: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the

orphan, plead for the widow” (Isa 1:16-17). They urged the people to repent and return to the Lord (Jer 3:22; Amos 4:6-12; Hos 14:1-9), assuring them of God’s constant love (Hos 11:1-11). They pleaded with God for mercy on behalf of the people (Jer 14:19-22). They envisaged renewal and a new beginning for Israel (Ezek 37:1-14; 34:22-32). They taught respect for the holy city, Jerusalem, as the universal centre of worship (Isa 2:2-3; Mic 4:2). They gave the people hope in God’s salvation, deliverance and fulfilment of promises (Amos 9:11-12; Isa 2:1-5; 11:1-16; Jer 28:2-4), and assured the people of the coming of a Davidic messiah who would bring about a new covenant between God and the people of Israel, institute authentic teaching and worship, and rule with justice (Jer 31:31-34; Isa 7:1-25; 11:1-16; Mic 5:2-4).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. To which category of people did the prophets address their words?
- ii. As ministers of religion, what did the prophets do about unwholesome religious practices?
- iii. How did the prophets react to the unjust social attitude towards the poor which was prevalent in their time?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have studied the background to Israelite prophecy. You learnt how Israelite prophets received their call to ministry. You also learnt about ecstatic prophets, court prophets, cult prophets, classical or canonical prophets, and false prophets. The pastoral role of the prophets as religious leaders in Israel was also explained.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

The call to prophesy was felt by an individual as a powerful inner drive to speak on God’s behalf. One who received the vocation to be a prophet had to abandon his daily job and engage full-time in prophecy.

In view of their conviction that they were called and commissioned by God to speak on his behalf, Israelite prophets considered that their words came from God, and not from themselves.

They preached and taught the people the truth from the “words” and “visions” which they had received. Thus they pronounced woes, threatened punishments, and

announced future disasters, but they also announced goodness and blessings.

The prophets targeted unlawful and unwholesome religious practices, and served as fierce social critics. On account of this they called for reform, repentance and change from the people.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Enumerate the functions of the classical prophets.
2. What did the prophets target in their pastoral ministry?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 3 THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Jesus' example of ministry
- 3.2 Jesus' teaching on ministry
- 4.0 Conclusion
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As you know, Jesus was sent into the world by the Father. He came into the world on a mission to save the world through his life, saving works, preaching, suffering, death and resurrection. By his example and teaching, Jesus left behind for his disciples a developed concept of ministry, and a model of ministry. In this unit, you will study how Jesus went about fulfilling his mission or ministry, and what he said to his disciples about ministry.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the nature and focus of Jesus' call to ministry.
- Identify some aspects of Jesus' example of ministry in Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem.
- Highlight some important characteristics of ministry, from Jesus' teaching on ministry.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Jesus' Example of Ministry

Unlike the Israelite priests who inherited ministry by birth, or the Israelite prophets who were called to ministry, the New Testament presents Jesus as one who pre-existed, and who was sent into the world by the Father specifically to minister to the religious and social needs of the people of his time. Jesus was therefore not just like any human person called to ministry, but a divine-man sent from heaven (John

12:44; 3:11-21). Indeed, his ministry was heralded before his birth. The account of his birth is narrated in Luke 1:26-38. In the account, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin named Mary. It was the angel who announced to Mary: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:30-33). Jesus was, therefore, even before his birth, identified as one who had a special relationship with God as Son of the Most High, and as a ruler whose kingdom will have no end. Jesus was to later set out to proclaim the coming of God’s kingdom, which he was inaugurating. He himself would also admit that he was a king, but his kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36-37).

It was precisely in the course of his proclamation of the kingdom of God, whose eternal ruler he is, that Jesus exercised his ministry in practice. For Mark, the opening statement of Jesus at the beginning of his mission was: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news” (Mark 1:15). Similarly, Matthew noted that the public ministry of Jesus began with the proclamation: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matt 4:17). Jesus’ ministry was thus about and for the kingdom of God. He invited all into the kingdom. In this kingdom, Jesus would rule in justice and love like God.

Luke narrates a three-stage programme of Jesus’ public ministry. He inaugurated or began his public ministry in Galilee (Luke 4:14-9:50). He continued his ministry while on his journey toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27). The last stage of Jesus’ ministry was carried out in Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-21:38). The entire ministry of Jesus reached its definitive climax with his passion, death and resurrection (Luke 22-24). Since other synoptic gospels agree with Luke largely, we shall describe Jesus’ ministry following Luke’s three-stage programme of his ministry.

Luke tells of the inauguration of the ministry of Jesus in his hometown, Nazareth of Galilee (Luke 4:16-30). Here, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2, a passage which captured the focus of Jesus’ ministry: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19). Through this passage, which Jesus affirmed as “fulfilled” (Luke 4:21), Jesus’ use of the passage of Isaiah made it clear that his ministry was one that would be spirit filled, and that like the prophets, he would focus on the proclamation of the good news of salvation to those who stood in need of God’s deliverance. In continuation of his Galilean ministry, Jesus called his disciples and eventually chose twelve apostles, those who would accompany and assist him in his ministry (Luke 5:1-6:16). He preached a sermon on the plain (Luke 6:17-49),

stressing his special love and regard for the poor: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled” (Luke 6:20-21), and teaching his hearers key attitudes necessary for participation in the kingdom of God, such as love for enemies (Luke 6:27-36) and not judging others (Luke 6:37-42). He cured the sick, raised the dead, and forgave sins, thus ministering God’s healing, compassion and power to individuals and large crowds of people (Luke 7:1-49). Jesus had a group of women who accompanied him and provided for him and his disciples in their ministry (Luke 8:1-3). He cast out demons, as part of his ministry of God’s victory over the kingdom of Satan (Luke 8:26-39). He sent out his twelve apostles on a mission to the villages, and gave them authority to participate first hand in his salvific ministry by doing all that he himself had done (Luke 9:1-6). He fed five thousand people at Bethsaida, in his ministry of care for the hungry (Luke 9:10-17). Jesus’ ministry on his way to Jerusalem begins with his mission of the seventy disciples, whom he sent out in pairs ahead of him, to proclaim the kingdom of God (Luke 10:1-12, 17-20). As they went on their way, he visited Martha and Mary, in what could be termed a pastoral home visitation (Luke 10:38-42). There, Jesus extolled the choice by Mary, who sat at his feet and listened to what he was saying. Jesus also accepted an invitation to visit and dine with a Pharisee, during which Jesus challenged the Pharisees and lawyers on their hypocrisy (Luke 11:37-54). Luke records a lot of the teachings of Jesus on a variety of issues as taking place during the journey to Jerusalem. He spoke plainly as well as in parables. He illustrated his teachings with stories and wise sayings. As he approached Jerusalem, Jesus showed the importance of ministry to little children, as he encouraged them to be brought to him, and blessed them (Luke 18:15-18). He also ministered to a lost one, Zacchaeus, a rich chief tax collector, eating and staying in his house, such that Zacchaeus repented and made restitution for his crimes, thus bringing God’s salvation to his house (Luke 19:1-10). The ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem began with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem sitting on a donkey, (Luke 19:28-40), after which Jesus cleansed the temple by driving out those who were doing business there (Luke 19:45). Rather than reject the temple and all it stood for, he insisted: “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer’; but you have made it a den of robbers” (Luke 19:46). He taught in the temple daily, to the admiration of all who heard him, but to the consternation of

the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people, who questioned his authority in doing what he did (Luke 20:1-8), and who kept looking for a way to kill him (Luke 19:47-48). Some of Jesus’ teaching and utterances in the temple are reported in Luke 20:9-21:37. Jesus’ ministry in the temple at Jerusalem showed his courage to minister in truth, just as the Israelite prophets. It also showed his respect and care for the house of God. Jesus’ public ministry ended with his ministerial activities in the temple. However, the climax of Jesus’ entire ministry was his passion, death and resurrection. Luke narrates that before his arrest, Jesus’ final act of ministry was his eating the Passover meal in the company of his disciples (Luke 22:1-38). It was

during that meal that Jesus performed a ministry of self-giving, as he served his own body and blood to his disciples (Luke 22:19-20), commanding them: “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Jesus’ later agony, arrest, suffering and death became a sign to his disciples and to all Christian ministers after them, that those who minister in truth will, like Jesus the master, experience the rejection, agony, suffering and even death. According to Jesus: “If they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” (Luke 23:31). Yet the disciples and all who minister in truth will experience the power of God, and be vindicated through the resurrection like Jesus was (Luke 24:1-49).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. What was the relationship that existed between Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God, and the exercise of his ministry?
- ii. From Jesus’ inaugural address in his hometown, what understanding could be gained about the ministry he was to engage in?
- iii. What did Jesus’ ministry in the temple at Jerusalem show?

### 3.2 Jesus’ Teaching on Ministry

From the teaching of Jesus on ministry in the gospels, one can learn about some important characteristics of ministry:

#### Ministry is a Call

Jesus called Peter and Andrew to ministry: “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people” (Matt 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10). And they left all and followed him (Matt 4:22; Mark 1:20; Luke 5:11). When God calls, one must answer in the affirmative. Even serious family considerations should not stop one from accepting the call. Thus, to the man who wanted to go and bury his father first before following Jesus, Jesus said: “Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:60; Matt 8:21-22). Furthermore, one who has answered the call to ministry should not look back, for: “No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). After calling his disciples, Jesus prepared them before sending them on mission (Luke 10:1-12).

#### Ministry is a Difficult Assignment

By sending his disciples into the world to proclaim the kingdom of God, Jesus was aware that he was giving them a difficult assignment. He left the disciples in no illusion that they would be hated and persecuted. If people hated and persecuted Jesus, the disciples too would suffer the same fate (John 15:18-21). They were not to expect honour and recognition even from their own people and families, for

“Prophets are not without honour except in their own country and in their own house” (Matt 13:57; also Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; John 4:44). Jesus therefore prepared their minds: “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves” (Matt 10:16). However, they should trust in the power of the Spirit to come to their aid: “When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who will speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matt 10:19-20). Since they would be hated and persecuted on account of the name of Jesus, they should use their commonsense: Apart from being “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt 10:16), they should learn to get themselves out of trouble. Thus, “When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next” (Matt 10:23). They should also be prayerful in the face of difficult assignments, especially in witnessing to God’s victory over Satan: “This kind can come out only through prayer” (Mark 9:29).

### Ministers should Trust in God’s Providence

In sending out the twelve on ministry, Jesus instructed them to carry out their ministry with trust in God’s providence. They should not place unnecessary burdens on people for their welfare: “Proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food” (Matt 10:7-9; also Mark 6:8-9). Jesus cautioned on the uncertainty surrounding his ministry: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58). He assured his disciples that those who freely welcomed and assisted them in their ministry would obtain a reward. Thus: “Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of them will lose their reward” (Matt 10:41-42).

### Ministers should be Forgiving

Jesus taught his disciples that they should seek to resolve conflicts amicably (Matt 18:15-20), and that they should be ministers of forgiveness from the heart. Thus one should forgive another, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times” (Matt 18:21-22; also, Luke 17:3-4). They should not nurse hatred and revenge in their heart against one another (Matt 5:43-48). By forgiving others, they also merited God’s forgiveness (Matt 6:14-15). As an example, Jesus forgave his executioners (Luke 23:34). Indeed, after his resurrection, Jesus affirmed that according to scriptures: “The Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to

be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:45-47). He therefore specially constituted his disciples as ministers of reconciliation. Having breathed on them, he said: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).

### Ministers should be Compassionate

Because God is compassionate towards the lowly and the weak, ministers should have the care of the sick, the poor and the needy at heart. Jesus healed so many people of their infirmities (Matt 4:23-24; 9:20-22, 27-31; Mark 7:31-37; Luke 13:10-17; John 5:5-9), cast out demons (Matt 8:16, 28-34; 12:22-24; Mark 1:21-28), fed the hungry (Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14), and took special care of the weak (Mark 9:36-37), precisely because of his compassion. For Jesus, whoever engages in a ministry of compassion towards another is doing so to him: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (See Matt 25:34-46). Jesus regarded himself as the good shepherd who knows and cares for all his sheep: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.....I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me” (John 10:11-15). Ministry means feeding Jesus’ lambs, and tending and feeding his sheep (John 21:15-17).

### Ministers should Seek out the Lost

Jesus considered himself as being sent to minister to sinners. When he was queried by the Pharisees on why he ate with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus replied: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners” (Matt 9:12-13; also Mark 2:17). Seeking out the lost one should be the special concern of ministers, just as a shepherd searches for one lost sheep (Matt 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-7).

## Ministers should be Servants

Jesus warned his disciples not to be engaged in disputes over who was the greatest among them. Rather, the greatest should be the servant and least of all, just as Jesus came to serve and offer himself in sacrifice: “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35; also Mark 10:42-45; Matt 18:1-5; Matt 20:25-28; Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-26). Jesus’ teaching on ministry as service was amply illustrated in his washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-20). He drew a message from his action for his disciples: “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:12-15).

## Ministers should make Other Disciples

Jesus authorized his disciples to go and preach: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21). They were commissioned to go and make other disciples by preaching, baptizing and teaching: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19-20; also Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47-48). Jesus prayed for his disciples and for those they would minister to, that they may be one (John 17:20-21). He further acknowledged the need to pray for more ministers to proclaim the kingdom of God. Thus, on seeing the crowds yearning for his ministry, he was compassionate towards them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. He said to the disciples: “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (Matt 9:37-38).

## Ministry Involves Women Too

Jesus’ ministry to the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42) showed Jesus’ regard for women and their role in witnessing to the kingdom of God. He patiently dialogued with her, and taught her until she acknowledged him as the messiah (John 4:7-26), and she even collaborated in Jesus’ ministry by witnessing to Jesus, and bringing her townspeople to have faith in Jesus (John 4:39).

## False Ministers Exist

Jesus did not give an impression that all ministers were true or authentic. Some were false. He therefore warned: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s

clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt 7:15). Also: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers’” (Matt 7:21-23).

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. In what manner should one whom God calls to ministry respond to the call?
- ii. Why should ministers be compassionate?
- iii. What message did Jesus draw for his disciples after washing their feet?
- iv. What relevance to ministry has Jesus’ eating with tax collectors and sinners?

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt from this unit that Jesus the pre-existent Son of God was sent into the world by the Father to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus called to himself a group of twelve disciples and by ministering in their presence in Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem, gave them an example in the ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of God. Certain characteristics of ministry drawn from the teaching and ministry of Jesus were also enumerated in the unit.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

Jesus was not just like any human person called to ministry, but a divine-man sent from heaven.

It was precisely in the course of his proclamation of the kingdom of God, whose eternal ruler he is, that Jesus exercised his ministry in practice.

Luke narrates a three-stage program of Jesus’ public ministry: Jesus inaugurated or began his public ministry in Galilee. He continued his ministry while on his journey toward Jerusalem. The third and last stage of Jesus’ ministry was carried out in Jerusalem. The entire ministry of Jesus reached its definitive climax with his passion, death and resurrection.

From the teaching of Jesus on ministry in the gospels, one can learn about some important characteristics of ministry.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify and summarize the three-stage programme of Jesus' ministry as narrated in Luke's gospel.
2. Discuss five out of the ten characteristics of ministry drawn from the teaching of Jesus on ministry which have been outlined in this unit.

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## **UNIT 4     APOSTOLIC MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Initial development of apostolic ministry
  - 3.2 Further development of apostolic ministry
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0     INTRODUCTION**

From the last unit, you have learnt how Jesus went about exercising his ministry, together with his disciples. Jesus' ministry was concentrated around Israelite territory. Only rarely did he leave Israelite territory. Yet after his resurrection, Jesus commanded his disciples to bring his good news to all the nations (Acts 1:8). As it turned out, bringing the good news to all the nations necessitated a certain level of organization and administration of the growing Christian community. How did the apostles, on whom the responsibility of continuing in the mission of Jesus lay, respond to the new realities and exigencies which they encountered? How did their understanding and practice of ministry develop, especially in the light of the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, through whom many gifts of ministry were being distributed to the apostolic collaborators? In this unit, you will be led to study how ministry initially and further became developed during the apostolic times as recorded in the New Testament, and what gifts of ministry the early leaders in the Church were endowed with.

### **2.0     OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the initial ministerial role of the apostles under the leadership of Peter.
- Discuss the development of the pastoral ministry in the early Christian community in relation to the apostles.
- Identify the different stages of the development of apostolic ministry in New Testament times.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Initial Development of the Apostolic Ministry

It was Peter who immediately took up the leadership of the Christian community after the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:15; 2:14, 37). Peter it was, whom Jesus had earlier promised: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Matt 16:18). Jesus had also specifically entrusted him with the care of the Christian community: “Feed my sheep” (John 21:17), in response to Peter’s admission that he loved Jesus more than the others (John 21:15-19). Under Peter’s leadership, the first recorded task of the early Christian community after the ascension of Jesus was to replace Judas (Acts 1: 15-20). The community had felt that the apostles had to be complete in number. However, unlike the call and direct choice method of Jesus (Luke 6:12-16; Mark 3:13-19), they devised a new approach to the replacement of an apostle: nomination, discernment/prayer, and casting lots. Their criterion for nomination was that one should have known Jesus, and witnessed the resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). Two names, Joseph and Matthias were put forward, and after earnest prayers for discernment, lots were cast, and the lot fell on Matthias, who joined the eleven apostles (Acts 1:23-26).

By this act, the early Christians indicated that they intended to keep the twelve apostles together as a unit. The group of twelve apostles was thus clearly seen as a separate and distinct group from other believers, and an arrangement could be made to replace any of them. It was important that one who replaced an apostle was one who knew Jesus. The early Christians were particularly concerned about continuing the ministry of Jesus. This goal was central to all the endeavours of the apostles and the early Church. So the apostles had to continue to stick together as a group in order to carry on Jesus’ ministry effectively.

As the early Christian community took off, Peter was its spokesperson. On behalf of the apostles and the other believers, he boldly addressed the crowd that wondered if the early Christians were filled with new wine on Pentecost day, witnessing to the crucified Jesus as both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:1-36). After his address, it is reported that those who heard him, “were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:37-38). Peter’s intervention on Pentecost day, with his direct call for baptism towards the forgiveness of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit set the tone for a very fruitful apostolic ministry, for it is reported that, “those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added” (Acts 2:41). The apostles provided spiritual leadership to the early Christian

community, and inspired its social unity. Thus, according to one of the summaries in the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). The primary focus of their initial ministry therefore revolved around teaching the Christian community about Jesus, fellowship (Greek: *koinônia*) to encourage mutual material/ spiritual sharing and thus bring about friendship and oneness in the group, breaking of bread in obedience to the command of Jesus to do that in his memory (See Luke 22:19), and prayers. Furthermore, “many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43; See Acts 3:1- 10; 5:12, 15-16). This initial apostolic ministry is reported to have been highly successful in general. There was a great sense of unity and togetherness, common sharing, daily breaking of bread, and prayers of praise in the Christian community, resulting in an increase of membership. Accordingly: All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time in the temple, they broke bread at home, and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:44-47; See also Acts 4:4; 4:32-47; 5:12-16). The initial apostolic ministry also focused heavily on boldly bearing public witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Apart from Peter’s address to the crowds on Pentecost day (Acts 2:14-36), Peter again bore witness to Jesus as the risen messiah, at Solomon’s Portico (Acts 3:11-26). This attracted the attention of the leaders of the temple, who in anger arrested Peter and John (Acts 4:1-3). Their arrest provided another occasion for Peter to courageously bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus before the entire Jewish rulers and elite in Jerusalem (Acts 4:5-12). Even after being ordered not to speak or teach any longer in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18), the apostles remained adamant and focused in their ministry. They retorted: “Whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20). After that, seeing that the apostolic ministry was being threatened, the entire Christian community joined in prayers for boldness in witnessing to Jesus (Acts 4:23-31). The initial apostolic ministry attained its climax with the further arrest and imprisonment of Peter and the other apostles (Acts 5:17-18). Yet, they miraculously escaped from prison and went into the temple to teach (Acts 5:19-25). From there they were brought back to the high priest, before whom Peter and the apostles again bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus, evoking Gamaliel’s wise counsel to the Jewish council that the apostles should be left alone to exercise their ministry, “because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God” (Acts 5:27-39). The apostles were then flogged, warned not to speak again in the name of Jesus, and let go. On their part, they were glad that as part of their ministry, they were considered worthy to suffer persecution on account of Jesus. So they continued in

their ministry of teaching and proclaiming

Jesus as the messiah both in the temple and in their homes (Acts 5:40-42).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Who was the leader of the apostolic ministry, and why did he become a leader?
- ii. How was the group of twelve apostles seen, in relation to the other believers?
- iii. Identify the primary focus of the initial ministry of the apostles.

### 3.2 Further Development of Apostolic Ministry

With the continuous increase in the number of Christians and the inclusion of the Hellenists in the Christian community, apostolic ministry suffered a setback. Less time was being devoted by the apostles to prayer and preaching, and the widows of the Hellenists were not getting food, thus disrupting the fellowship (*koinônia*) of the early Christian community (Acts 6:1-2). The apostles therefore asked that seven men be selected from the Christian community, to replace the apostles in serving food, so that the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and preaching (Acts 6:3-4). The seven men, though not named as apostles but servants or deacons (Greek: *diakonos*), were to collaborate with the apostles. They actually participated in apostolic ministry, but only in an aspect of the ministry formerly engaged in by the twelve apostles. To inaugurate them into their new office, the apostles “prayed and laid their hands on them” (Acts 6:6). The result of this delegation of apostolic ministry to the deacons was that, “The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). Obviously, the deacons eventually did not stop at serving food. They also shared in the apostolic ministry of preaching, even with the gift of signs and wonders. This was the case of Stephen, one of the deacons (Acts 6:8) who witnessed to Jesus, and was eventually arrested and stoned to death (Acts 6:8-7:60). It was also the case of Phillip, who exercised ministry in Samaria, and to the Ethiopian eunuch, preaching and baptizing in the process (Acts 8:4-16; 26-40). The office of deacon became a distinct ministry among the early Christians, mentioned in relation to the bishop or overseer (Phil 1:1), just as there was in Jewish synagogues a servant of the synagogue under the ruler of the synagogue (Greek: *archisynagogos*). Indeed, there were instructions concerning the qualities and roles of deacons in the Church (1 Tim 3:8-13). There is a slight indication that deaconesses may later have emerged from the early Christian community (Rom 16:1). If so, they too would have ministered to the Christian community as an extension of apostolic ministry. The apostolic ministers soon began to leave Jerusalem and exercise their ministry in other territories. All exercise of ministry was considered as part of the responsibility of the apostles. In their

desire for unity of fellowship, the entire apostolic group had to authenticate and supervise every ministry (See Gal 2:1-2). Thus Phillip, a deacon, preached in Samaria (Acts 8:4-13). And when the apostles at Jerusalem heard about it, they sent two apostles, Peter and John, to Samaria for further ministry. Peter and John confirmed the faith of the Samaritans who had already been baptized, by praying for them and laying hands on them, so that they would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). Peter also visited other places outside Jerusalem for ministry such as Lydda where he healed paralyzed Aeneas (Acts 9:32-35), and Joppa where he raised Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:36-43). But Peter's most remarkable ministry outside Jerusalem was to a Gentile, Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian cohort, in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-48). Responding to a vision, Peter went and witnessed to Cornelius and his Gentile household about the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 10:34-43). This resulted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit also on the uncircumcised Gentiles, prompting Peter to baptize them (Acts 10:44-48). Peter had to explain his ministry to the Gentiles to the critical apostles and other believers in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-17), with the result that ministry to the Gentiles was formally accepted: "And they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life'" (Acts 11:18). The interest of the apostles in, and supervision of any new mission or exercise of ministry was again manifested in the Antioch mission (Acts 11:19-30). Some people had evangelized Antioch, and when the Church in Jerusalem heard of it, they immediately sent Barnabas, a leading member of the Jerusalem Church (See Acts 4:36-37), to Antioch. Barnabas "exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion" (Acts 11:23). Interestingly, Barnabas was not an apostle, but already he was made to participate in the apostolic ministry as a teacher, "for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). He introduced Saul, later named Paul (Acts 13:9), a former persecutor of the Church now converted (Acts 9:1-30), to the community in Antioch, and together they ministered as teachers to the Church in Antioch for one year (Acts 11:25-26), and later returned to Jerusalem (Acts 12:25). Both Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were eventually commissioned formally to participate in the apostolic mission to teach the Gentiles (Acts 13:47; see also Gal 2:9), after fasting, prayer and laying of hands on them, consequent upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the Church in Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). Indeed, the two became addressed as apostles (Acts 14:6, 14), not in the sense of one of the twelve apostles, but in the sense of one who is specifically commissioned and sent on mission by the Church.

Apostolic ministry experienced further development as Paul and Barnabas spread the word of God in Gentile territories. They preached the word boldly in Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12), Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:13-52), Iconium (Acts 14:1-7), Lystra (Acts 14:8-19), Derbe (Acts 14:20-21), and back to Antioch in Syria through Lystra and Iconium (Acts 14:21-28). As Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch in Syria, strengthening and encouraging the Churches they had

established, they saw the need to appoint presbyters or elders (Greek: presbuteros) in each of the Churches, entrusting them to the Lord after prayer and fasting (Acts 14:22-23). By now, it does appear that the office of presbyter or elder had become normative in the early Christian community. This is in view of the fact that earlier on in Acts 11:30, there is mention of Barnabas and Saul (Paul) bringing relief from Antioch to the presbyters or elders in Judea (Jerusalem).

So the practice of appointing presbyters (elders) for each Church must have been a practice approved by the apostles in Jerusalem towards attaining more effective ministry and administration in the now widely spread Christian community. The office of presbyter (elder) was borrowed from Judaism, where in each synagogue, a zāqên (elder) was appointed to take charge of the day to day administration of the synagogue. For the Christian community, the apostles and the presbyters (elders) worked in close relationship with each other. Indeed, when Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem to discuss the problem of the admission of Gentiles to Christianity without circumcision which had engulfed the Church in Antioch (Acts 15:1-35), it was with the apostles and presbyters (elders), named together five times (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23), that the discussion was held and a decision reached. The presbyters (elders) were thus people who were appointed with apostolic authority as ministers in the Churches (Tit 1:5). Because they shared in apostolic ministry, they exercised pastoral administration over their Churches, taught and preached in them (1 Tim 5:17). They anointed and prayed over the sick for healing and forgiveness of sins (James 5:14-16). They were not expected to exercise their ministry for material gain, or lord it over their flock, but be examples to their flock (1 Pet 5:1-3), while the younger ones were exhorted to accept the ministerial authority of the presbyters/elders (1Pet 5:5; also Heb 13:17).

The presbyters (elders) were closely identified with the function of overseer or bishop (Greek: episkopos) of the Christian community. Paul, in addressing the presbyters (elders) of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-28), charged them: “Keep watch over yourselves and over the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son” (Acts 20:28). Yet the two ministerial offices of presbyter (elder) and overseer (episkopos) were held as separate, just as the office of deacon (diakonos) was held as separate from that of the overseer or bishop (Phil 1:1). It is not clear how the office of overseer (episkopos) developed, but it does appear that as more Christian Churches sprung up within a particular town, there was need for one of the presbyters (elders) who administered a Church in that town to act as an overseer (episkopos) for all the other presbyters (elders) and Churches within the town, and report to the apostles accordingly on their behalf. This seems to be the idea in Paul’s charge to Titus: “I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you....For a

bishop (episkopos), as God’s steward, must be blameless....” (Tit 1:5-9). Here, the presbyters (elders) to be appointed in every town were different from the ones appointed normally for each Church. Rather, they were to be appointed for each town (Tit 1:5). Thereafter, Paul enumerates their qualities and ministerial functions as bishops or overseers (episkopoi) in Titus 1:7-9. Similarly, the characteristics and ministerial roles of the overseers (episkopoi) are highlighted in 1 Tim 3:1-7.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Why did the apostles need seven deacons?
- ii. Whose responsibility was it to authenticate and supervise ministry in the early Christian community?
- iii. Who approved the practice of appointing presbyters (elders) for each Church, and why?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt apostolic ministry refers principally to the ministry exercised by the apostles themselves in the early Christian community, and to the ministry exercised by those ministers who were appointed or chosen and commissioned by the apostles or with their authority. You have also learnt how the apostles, on whom the responsibility of continuing in the mission of Jesus lay, responded to the new realities and exigencies of ministry which they encountered. Their understanding and practice of ministry progressively developed, especially in the light of the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, through whom many gifts of ministry were being distributed to the apostolic collaborators.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

It was Peter who immediately took up the leadership of the Christian community after the ascension of Jesus.

Under Peter’s leadership, the first recorded task of the early Christian community after the ascension of Jesus was to replace Judas.

The group of twelve apostles was clearly seen as a separate and distinct group from other believers, and an arrangement was made for their replacement. It was important that one who replaced an apostle knew Jesus.

The apostles provided spiritual leadership to the early Christian community, and inspired its social unity. Thus, according to one of the summaries in the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and

fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

The deacons eventually did not stop at serving food. They also shared in the apostolic ministry of preaching, even with the gift of signs and wonders.

The apostolic ministers soon began to leave Jerusalem and exercise their ministry in other territories. All exercise of ministry was considered as part of the responsibility of the apostles. In their desire for unity of fellowship, the entire apostolic group had to authenticate and supervise every ministry.

The practice of appointing presbyters (elders) for each Church must have been a practice approved by the apostles in Jerusalem towards attaining more effective ministry and administration in the now widely spread Christian community.

The presbyters (elders) were closely identified with the function of overseer or bishop (Greek: episkopos) of the Christian community.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How did Peter serve as spokesperson for the early Christian community?
2. Describe how the apostles bore public witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
3. State what you know about the office of presbyter (elder) in the New Testament.

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## UNIT 5 ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Ministry through Rendering Services
  - 3.2 Ministry through the Exercise of Charismatic Gifts (1)
  - 3.3 Ministry through the Exercise of Charismatic Gifts (2)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the previous unit you have learnt that apostolic ministry was a form of ministry carried out by the apostles and those appointed or chosen by them, ministering under their supervision. This ministry was not a previously thought-out activity, but became developed by the early Christian community in response to the new service and administrative needs of the Church. Apostolic ministry was not, however, the only form of ministry exercised by the early Christians. The Christian community witnessed a bubble of other kinds of ministries that did not require the kind of special appointment, choice or commissioning that apostolic ministries needed. They were simply regarded as gifts of God. To be sure, all forms of ministry, whether apostolic or otherwise, were regarded as gifts of God not for personal use, but intended for building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:11-12). Jesus called and chose the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12), and Paul regarded his becoming an apostle as a special gift of God (Gal 1:1). However, it was considered that for the edification of the Christian community, the Spirit specifically gave to each member of the Church the ability to participate in one form of ministry or another (1 Cor. 7:7; 12:4-7). In this unit, these other forms of ministry will be discussed. They are here classified as “ministry through rendering services”, and “ministry through exercise of charismatic gifts”.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Explain the nature and object of the ministerial services of prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers according to the New Testament.

Explain the nature and ministerial importance of the charismatic gifts of utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, in the early Christian community.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Ministry through Rendering Services

You may have noted that at its initial stage, ministry in the early Christian community revolved primarily around Peter and the other apostles. They considered it as their duty to continue the ministry of Jesus. It was Peter and the apostles who led the group, preached, taught, served the table, distributed items, healed, and were persecuted. As the Christian community grew in number and extended to other cities outside Jerusalem, there was need for a development in its organization, and so others were formally brought in to assist the apostles in their ministry as deacons (servants), presbyters (elders) and overseers (bishops). Within each particular Church, however, there developed the need for a variety of ministerial services, such that would sustain the Church and move it forward (1 Cor 12:5-7). Among these ministerial services were those of prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds) and teachers (Eph 4:11; also Rom 12:6-8). An individual could participate in more than one ministry, according to the gifts received. It is held that those who took up these ministries in the Churches did so in response to the gifts that God gave them in any of these areas, for the good of the entire Church. In the Church at Antioch, for example, there were prophets and teachers, who rendered services as prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1). Also, some prophets travelled from Jerusalem to Antioch, and ministered there (Acts 11:27-28; also Acts 21:10-14).

Paul recommended the gift of prophecy as one of the gifts the Christians in Corinth should strive after (1 Cor 14:1, 5). In line with the Old Testament concept of prophecy as one speaking courageously on behalf of God, he taught that, "Those who prophesy speak to other people for their up-building and encouragement and consolation....Those who prophesy build up the Church" (1 Cor 14:3-4). Since he viewed prophecy as the ministry of up-building, encouragement and consolation, Paul could say that, "If all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reproved by all and called to account by all. After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed, the person will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, 'God is really among you'" (1 Cor 14:24-25). Such prophets exercised their ministry in the Christian worship assembly, much like the Old Testament cult prophets. The early Christian community took the ministry of the prophets in the Church seriously (1 Tim 1:18-20; 4:14; Rev 22:6), and they are mentioned among the more important ministries (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10, 24). Indeed, the apostles were regarded as prophets too, and it was on the foundation of their faith that the entire Church was

built (Eph 2:19-22; 3:5). So also were some elders, such as Judas and Silas (Acts 15:22), regarded as prophets (Acts 15:32).

An evangelist was one who had the gift of proclaiming the gospel, or who ministered through preaching. In this regard, all the apostles were evangelists as well, since they all proclaimed the gospel. Others who rendered ministerial services as preachers may have got this title too for exercising this ministry. Two people are specifically called evangelists in the New Testament: Timothy, Paul's associate (2 Tim 4:5), and Philip the deacon (Acts 21:8).

A pastor or shepherd was one who had the gift of leadership. This was the service role played by the presbyters (elders) in the early Christian community, specifically the presbyters (elders) who were overseers (episkopoi). Paul admonished the pastors (shepherds) of the Church in Ephesus: "Keep watch over yourselves and over the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28). The same shepherd image is used to exhort the presbyters (elders) in 1 Pet 5:1-4, "to tend the flock of God" in their charge, and to "be examples to the flock". The apostles could equally be said to have been pastors (shepherds), since they rendered a service of leadership in the early Christian community.

Teaching was considered to be different from preaching. While a preacher gave words of exhortation, a teacher was one who exercised the gift of ministerial service of instructing others in the faith. This usually meant teaching another the scriptures, especially demonstrating from the scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. As Christianity developed and spread, there was a high need for teachers to teach the newcomers "sound doctrine" (Tit 1:9; 2:1; 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3) in the faith, especially the Gentiles who had no scriptural background like the Jews, but also the Jewish converts, who needed to know more about their new faith (Gal 1:6-9). Teachers are mentioned by Paul as important ministers in 1 Cor 12:28. Paul, though appointed an apostle, speaks of himself too as a teacher: "For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tim 2:7; also 2 Tim 3:10). He also urged Timothy, his close associate and an evangelist, to be persistent and patient in teaching sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:2-5).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Identify the four services which were rendered as ministry in the early Christian community.
- ii. How did Paul view prophecy as a ministry?
- iii. Why was there a high need for teachers as Christianity developed?

### 3.2 Ministry through the Exercise of Charismatic Gifts (1)

Paul identified the proper use of charismatic gifts as another way of exercising ministry in the Christian community (1 Cor 12:1-31). Writing to the Corinthian Church where some members of the Church had received certain charismatic gifts but were abusing them, thus bringing about divisions in the Church, Paul instructed them that those gifts were given to them by the same God through the one Spirit, for the good of the entire Church. Thus:

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses (1 Cor 12:7-11).

The nine charismatic gifts identified by Paul in the above passage are: utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, and discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. It should be noted that Paul did not intend to exhaustively mention all the charismatic gifts. Rather, he mentioned only a few as merely representative of the uncountable outpouring and endless manifestations of the Spirit, “who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses” (1 Cor 12:11). They are referred to as charismatic gifts in line with the etymology of the word “charismatic”. The word “charismatic” comes from the Greek word *charis*, which connotes divine grace, divine favour, divine free gift, and divine privilege. What comes as *charis* is therefore, *charisma* or *charismata* (pl.) in Greek, or in English, charismatic. A charismatic gift is, therefore, a free gift that comes from God as divine grace, divine favour or divine privilege. For Paul, no one is, therefore, entitled to charisma, since it comes as God’s free and spiritual gift. And God has given each person one charismatic gift or another. Paul does not, therefore, see any room for boasting about one’s charismatic gift, or for considering one charismatic gift to be more important than another, just as no part of the body is indispensable (1 Cor 12:12-26). Moreover, a charismatic gift is not meant for personal use (See Acts 8:18-24), but for ministry within the entire Christian community, towards building up the Church (1 Cor 12:7; 14:5, 12).

All the members of the Church should not, therefore, expect to have exactly the same charismatic gift, or expect to perform exactly the same ministry using the one charismatic gift. Paul had queried: “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Cor 12:29-30). In this way, Paul urged everyone in the Church to identify and appreciate his or her charismatic gift, and identify and

appreciate the charismatic gift of the other. However, all claims to charismatic or spiritual gifts should not be accepted at face value but adequately tested (1 John 4:1; 1 Thess 5:20).

How would one properly exercise ministry using these charismatic gifts without abusing them as the Corinthian Christian community did? Primarily, the gifts should be acknowledged and accepted with humility (James 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6). One who has received any of them should realize that it is given by God for building up the Church (1 Cor 14:26). The healings and miracles which were done through Peter, for instance, were such that many of those who saw them “turned to the Lord” or “believed in the Lord” (Acts 9:32-35; 36-42). Charismatic gifts should, therefore, be used in the context of the entire Christian community as the one body of Christ, where focus is on maintaining the indivisible unity of the body of Christ. Christ is the head of this body, while all the baptized in the Church are the different members of Christ’s body (1 Cor 12: 12-27), each one also having a ministry to be respected (1 Thess 12-13; 1 Cor 12:29-30), so as to bring about decency and proper order in the use of the charismatic gifts (1 Cor 14:37-40).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Name the nine charismatic gifts identified by Paul.
- ii. A charismatic gift is not meant for personal use. What is it meant for then?
- iii. What effect did the healings and miracles of Peter have on those who saw them?

### 3.3 Ministry through the Exercise of Charismatic Gifts (2)

One who has received the gift of the utterance of wisdom should realize that the wisdom referred to is the wisdom of God and not human wisdom (1 Cor 2:1-16). This wisdom of God is: Secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him’ – these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God (1 Cor 2:7-10).

The wisdom of God is oftentimes radically opposed to human wisdom. Indeed, it is in those very things that human wisdom sees as foolishness, that God’s wisdom is hidden. According to Paul:

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and

foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom (1 Cor 1:20-25; also 1:26-31).

One who ministers through the utterance of wisdom is, therefore, one who goes beyond human wisdom, calculations and logic, proclaiming instead the message of the cross, which is "foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18).

Similarly, the utterance of knowledge refers to one's sharing of an endowment of insight, idea, information and know-how, whose source is not human, and can be no other but God. Such knowledge is revealed knowledge, the kind that made Jesus exclaim: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will" (Luke 10:21; Matt 11:25-26). It is knowledge of the truth through the power of the Holy Spirit the great teacher who alone leads one to all truth (John 14:26). One endowed with such a charismatic gift ministers sound teaching to the Christian community (2 Tim 4:2-5). By the charismatic gift of faith, Paul intends not only faith enough to be baptized or saved, but in particular that special "faith, so as to remove mountains" (1 Cor 13:2; also Matt 17:20). This is not necessarily the faith of miracles, which will be discussed later, although it doesn't exclude it. It rather is a surge of deep faith in God, which can lead one to accomplish solely by faith an incredibly difficult or a near impossible task, despite all barriers. It is "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). It is the attitude of "never doubting" or being "double-minded and unstable in every way" (James 1:6-8). Such a strong faith is manifested in one's ability to survive under particularly harsh and tough conditions, let go of certain things, endure or accept certain difficult realities, scale through difficult trials and persecutions without shaking, or overcome certain breaking situations (See Heb 12:7-13; Rom 5:3-5; 8:35-39; 12:12-21; 2 Cor 12:10; Luke 21:12-19). It is the faith of one like Jesus, who was in agony in the garden, yet trusted still in the will of his Father, believing strongly that the will of God will eventually triumph and be the best (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). Jesus then became "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2-3) One who receives such a charismatic gift has had his or her faith tested and purified (James 1:2-4), and like Abraham (Heb 11:8-17), can minister as a model of faith for the Christian community.

Linked to the charismatic gift of faith are the gifts of healing and the working of miracles. In reality, these gifts, when they are authentic, are manifested without any special input of power from the minister. This means that in every case, it is not the one that has received the gift, who with personal power or piety heals or works miracles. It is rather God who decides according to his will, to heal a particular

person, or work a particular miracle through the power of the Holy Spirit, using the service of someone that he has freely chosen to give any of these gifts. Thus in Acts 3: 12, Peter rightly admonished those who were astonished at the healing of the cripple: “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?” Indeed, those who are ministers of healing and miracles should particularly beware of self conceit and self deceit (Matt 7:21-23). They should realize that God may also decide not to heal a particular person, or work a particular miracle (2 Cor 12:7-9), as life experience has always shown. There were times that Jesus refused to work miracles (Matt 12:38-38; 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-13; Luke 11:29; John 6:26-27). Notable is the fact that the expression gifts of healing is ended in the plural. This is probably because one who has a charismatic gift of healing may not be endowed with the gift of healing all illnesses. Different people are given gifts for the ministry of healing different kinds of spiritual, emotional/psychological and physical ailments. Much has already been said about the gift of prophecy (See 3.1 above). Paul, however, makes a comparison between prophecy and various kinds of tongues. According to him: Those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their up-building and encouragement and consolation. Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church. Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up (1 Cor 14:1-5). Whether speaking in various tongues is a charismatic gift that is understood in reference to speaking in languages that have never been learned (Acts 2:4-11; Mark 16:17), or to making mysterious, ecstatic, and incomprehensible utterances or sounds in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:2, 9-11, 14), Paul’s concern was that, “nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit” (1 Cor 14:2). He was also concerned that, “if in a tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air” (1 Cor 14:9). In this case, Paul was concerned about the ministerial value of speaking in various tongues.

In the experience of speaking in tongues on Pentecost day, it was very clear that when the early Christians exercised this charismatic gift of speaking in languages they had not previously learned, it was for the benefit of those who spoke and understood those languages naturally (Acts 2:6-11). The listeners understood that the early Christians were “speaking about God’s deeds of power” (Acts 2:12). The same could not be said about the charismatic gift of speaking in various tongues that was manifested in Corinth. Here the gift was directed towards personal prayer to God, not in normal, intelligible words, but in unintelligible speech (1 Cor 14:2, 14) which was not understood by anyone, even by the speaker. On this basis, Paul considered that merely speaking in various tongues was not in itself useful for

ministry. Thus he queried the Corinthians: “Now brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you in some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?” (1 Cor 14:6-7). Indeed, he ruled that, “Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers” (1 Cor 14:22). Stressing further that speaking in various tongues was not in itself useful for ministry, Paul reasoned: “If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind?” (1 Cor 14:23).

Paul was, however, not against the charismatic gift of speaking in tongues. Indeed he stated: “Do not forbid speaking in tongues” (1 Cor 14:39). He merely wished to put the gift in the perspective of ministry.

An act of ministry refers to what is of benefit to the entire Christian community, to build it up. But, “those who speak in a tongue build up themselves” (1 Cor 4:4). Therefore, Paul himself refused to speak in tongues, although he could speak in tongues better than all the Corinthian Christians: “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Cor 14:18-19). And concerning praying in tongues, he declared: “I will pray with the Spirit, but I will pray with my mind also. Otherwise, if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the ‘Amen’ to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up” (1 Cor 14:15-17).

However, speaking in various tongues could be beneficial to the Christian community, and become useful for ministry if “someone interprets” (1 Cor 14:5). To bring this about, Paul asked that those who received the gift of speaking in various tongues should also pray for the gift of interpretation of tongues: “Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret” (1 Cor 14:13). This means that one could have both the charismatic gift of speaking in various tongues and that of interpretation of tongues. The gift of interpretation of tongues could, however, be given to someone else, to interpret what a particular person said or prayed about in tongues (1 Cor 14:27). In such a case, Paul called for orderliness in ministering through speaking in various tongues and their interpretation (1 Cor 14:27). However, “if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God” (1 Cor 14:28).

To distinguish between false and authentic charismatic gifts, there was the charismatic gift of discernment of spirits. This ministry was especially important because in the early Church there arose many false ministers who posed as apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, miracle workers, etc., but were working for

themselves and not for the entire Christian community. They deceived the people, manipulated them and led them away from following the truth (2 Pet 2:1-3). Jesus had warned against such ministers: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt 7:15); “Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray” (Matt 24:11); “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matt 24: 24). Barnabas and Saul (Paul) had an encounter with a Jewish false prophet, Bar-Jesus or Elymas (Acts 13:6-12).

Paul was aware of the existence of false apostles: “For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor 11:13-15). Also, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim 4:1-2). Again, “I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and offences, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded” (Rom 16:17-18; See also 2 Pet 2:1-3).

It was necessary, therefore, that claims of having spiritual or charismatic gifts be tested (2 Thess 5:19-20), “to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Indeed, it was important that the early Christians “must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph 4:14). Thus Paul advised those with the gift of prophecy to discern or weigh the words being spoken by another prophet (1 Cor 14:29).

There was no systematic listing of the criteria for discernment. However, in discernment, one who in words and deeds truly confessed Jesus as Lord was not likely to be false (Rom 10:9; Phil 2:11; Col 2:6; 1 John 4:2-3). One with a genuine gift of utterance of knowledge would not be engaged in idolatry, or allow his or her knowledge to be a source of destruction for others (1 Cor 8:10-11). One with a genuine gift of preaching the word would not preach himself or herself, but Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:5). A genuine teacher would teach sound doctrine, and with integrity (Tit 2:7-8), unlike one who taught what was not right to teach, and even do so for material gains (Tit 1:10-16). Those engaged in any kind of ministry would respect and esteem very highly in love those in charge of them in the Lord, whose duty it was to admonish them (2 Thess 5:12-13). Above all, the most important criterion for discernment of spirits was one possessing the gift of love. Without love that is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not arrogant or rude,

etc., (1 Cor 13:4-7), all claims to charismatic gifts come to nothing. Thus, “If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Cor 13:1-2).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- i. How can one minister through the utterance of wisdom?
- ii. Who is it that decides whether or not to heal someone, or work miracles?
- iii. What was Paul’s concern about speaking in various tongues, in relation to ministry?
- iv. Why was it necessary that claims of having charismatic gifts be tested?

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Besides apostolic ministry which was developed in the early Christian community that you studied about in the previous unit, you learnt in this unit about other forms of ministry that were developed in the early Christian community. They were classified here as “ministry through rendering services” (prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers), and “ministry through exercise of charismatic gifts” (utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues). It was stressed that it was for the edification and up-building of the Christian community that the Spirit specifically gave to each member of the Church the ability to participate in these forms of ministry.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

Within each particular Church, there developed the need for a variety of ministerial services, such that would sustain the Church and move it forward.

Among these ministerial services were those of prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds) and teachers.

The early Christian community took the ministry of prophecy in the Church seriously. Indeed, the apostles were regarded as prophets too, and it was on the foundation of their faith that the entire Church was built.

As Christianity developed and spread, there was a high need for teachers to teach the newcomers “sound doctrine” in the faith, especially the Gentiles who had no scriptural background like the Jews, but also the Jewish converts, who needed to know more about their new faith. The nine charismatic gifts identified by Paul are: utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. It should be noted that Paul did not intend to exhaustively mention all the charismatic gifts. Rather, he mentioned only a few as merely representative of the uncountable outpouring and endless manifestations of the Spirit, “who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses” (1 Cor 12:11). A charismatic gift was not meant for personal use, but for ministry within the entire Christian community, towards building up the Church.

All the members of the Church were not expected to have exactly the same charismatic gift, or expect to perform exactly the same ministry using the one charismatic gift.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. How did the ministry of prophecy help in building up the Church?
2. Explain the charismatic gift of faith.
3. How did Paul assess the ministerial value of the charismatic gift of speaking in various tongues?

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **MODULE 3 ISSUES IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY**

Unit 1	Ministering through Word, Prayer and Sacrament
Unit 2	Pastoral Administration
Unit 3	Pastoral Counselling
Unit 4	Crisis Ministry
Unit 5	Ministry to the Wider Society

### **UNIT 1 MINISTERING THROUGH WORD, PRAYER AND SACRAMENT**

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
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#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The last module focused on the biblical background to pastoral ministry. In this module, attention will be paid to the theory and practice of pastoral theology. These include ministry through word, prayer and sacrament; pastoral administration; pastoral counselling; crisis ministry and ministry to the wider community. From your biblical study of apostolic ministry in the last module, you learnt that the early Christians “devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). The ministry of the apostles summarized in this passage can be put into today’s theological terminology as ministry through word, prayer and sacrament. These three elements serve as the distinguishing marks of an authentic Christian community. Service of the word, prayer and sacrament serve as occasions for bringing about and celebrating unity and fellowship in the Christian community. In this unit you will be introduced to the theory and practice of ministering through the word, prayer and sacrament.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Acquire certain knowledge and skills in preaching the word of God effectively.
- Understand what prayer is, and how to lead the Christian community in prayer.
- Appreciate the importance of the sacraments and how to administer them.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Ministry through the Word**

The pastoral ministry of the word has many dimensions to it. It is clearly the most popular form of ministry. Apart from preaching, it includes teaching, catechesis (the process of bringing people to faith by instruction), and all forms of communication of the word of God such as in writing, drama, music, conversations, dialogue, group discussions, workshops and seminars. Different settings whether formal or informal like churches, worship sessions, crusades, the classroom, market places, public gatherings of any sort, and private homes can be used for ministry through the word. Similarly, different media such as speech, Internet, radio, television, video, telephone, newspapers, magazines, tracts, fliers, and books can be used in disseminating the word of God whether orally or in writing, naturally or electronically. This course will not go into the study of all these forms, settings and media of ministry through the word. Rather, it will focus its attention on preaching, which appears to be one of the most important dimensions of word ministry. However, you should realize that this course cannot offer you all that you need to know about preaching. This is the task of the course on homiletics, a branch of pastoral theology, which deals principally and fully with preaching. It is hoped in any case, that some of the theoretical principles and practical skills of preaching which you will learn from this unit will assist you to structure your ministry of the word, even when using its other forms besides preaching.

Preaching is the act of public proclamation of the good news of salvation. The word “preach” is derived from the Latin word *predicare* (to announce, declare). The Christian ministry of preaching has its basis and foundation in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus spent most of his ministry in preaching or proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. He also commissioned his apostles to continue his mission of preaching, an act which they carried out faithfully. The early or initial preaching of the apostles is usually termed the *kerygma*. This is in reference to the fact that the content of the earlier preaching of the apostles focused on the proclamation of an event, that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), and he who was crucified and died, was now risen, and became the universal Lord (*kyrios*) and judge, bringing

salvation to all.

Today preaching has gone beyond the initial proclamation or kerygma. It is basically a homily (Latin: homilia), or a sermon, addressed to believers in order to nurture their faith in Jesus Christ, and make them become better witnesses to him. Through preaching, the truth of the good news of Christ is exposed and clarified. It is also a means by which the scriptures are interpreted to meet the needs of the time, and speak to people in their life situation. Thus preaching underscores the prophetic dimension of ministry today, whereby the minister addresses God's eternal word to the contemporary situation. Like the Old Testament prophet, today's preacher of the word not only seeks to encourage, build up faith, inspire confidence, console, but to also teach, correct, challenge, and awaken consciences.

Good preaching therefore should be multidimensional in form and content. It should be thoroughly pastoral in tone addressing socio-religious realities, but based on a sound knowledge and application of scripture, doctrine and moral. Preaching should address the heart of the individual hearer as a person, stimulate his or her mind to a deep reflection, and stir him or her to action. It should always draw out a clear, direct and unequivocal message from God to the hearer. In a preaching, the listener should be able to hear God speaking to him or her in the depths of his or her heart. However, without the good life example of the preacher, preaching is emptied of its vigour and power, and becomes a mere exercise in rhetoric or speech making, since the personality of the preacher exhibited both on the pulpit and outside the pulpit can add much value to or subtract from the effectiveness and coherence which good preaching demands.

A preparation for preaching is a life-long task. The preacher's entire background of life experience, biblical and theological study, social involvement and activities, reading and interest in current affairs, personality and character development, ongoing study and formation, efforts to live an authentic Christian life, even casual conversations and inter-personal interactions, all remotely prepare a preacher for the task of ministering through the word at any given time. For the immediate preparation to preach, however, the preacher needs first of all to take time to pray for God's guidance, wisdom and knowledge. This is important, because the preacher is not preparing to preach his or her own word, but the word of God. Despite one's intellectual abilities, professionalism and life experiences, it is only the Holy Spirit that can inspire one to preach and touch people's heart.

Having prayed for God's assistance, the preacher should next get prepared for preaching by reading the biblical passage out of which preaching is to be done. Sometimes the biblical passage is already given in a Church's outline of readings for the year, period or occasion. At other times the preacher has to provide the passage. The passage or passages should be read slowly and meditatively, and a

theme which is relevant to the pastoral needs of the preacher's audience brought out for further reflection. It is better to develop one's preaching along one major theme, and not many themes, especially if the themes are unconnected. Preaching on one theme ensures depth and progression of ideas, while preaching on a diversity of themes can lead to a disjointed preaching, whereby no one message really sinks in. The preacher should also beware of preparing to merely run a verse by verse commentary on an entire passage, unless one clear theme runs through the passage. Next, the preacher should read the biblical contexts or passages before and after the chosen biblical passage, as well as other biblical passages that make reference to the chosen theme. The use of a biblical concordance would be very helpful here. Then the preacher should consult relevant reference materials such as biblical commentaries, dictionaries and other theological commentaries on the passage(s) and theme, and make skeletal notes that would be used to compose the homily. Furthermore, the preacher should be attentive to special occasions. If the preaching will be given on a special occasion such as a Christmas day, Easter day, Harvest day, a Saint's day, an Ordination day or a New Year day, then the preacher should also consult helpful reference materials in those areas. He or she should cross-check secular or social information, facts and figures that will be used in the preaching.

Having prepared himself or herself thus far, the preacher should compose the homily. It is always good to have a written homily, or at least jot down some points, although it is never good to deliver a homily as a paper. Others may preach better without any written text in front of them, except perhaps the biblical passage. In this case, the preacher still has to mentally compose the text of his or her preaching. The composition should begin with an introduction, which highlights the theme of the preaching and the pastoral problem or issue that the preaching will address. Then it should go on to the main exposition of the biblical passage in line with the chosen theme. The fruits of the preacher's biblical and theological preparation should be brought to bear. The third and last part of the composition should be the application of the biblical passage to the life situation and social realities of the listeners. Here, using the word of God, the preacher gives a pastoral response to the pastoral problem or issue at stake in the Christian community or the wider society.

In delivering the homily, the preacher should be ever conscious of preaching, not a personal or private word, but the word of God. In this case, the preacher is, like the Old Testament and early Christian prophets, speaking on behalf of God. Hence truth must not be compromised, no matter what. The audience should be able to perceive in themselves that the preacher is speaking the truth, and that the preaching is being inspired by God. Thus every effort should be made by the preacher to resist the temptation of putting himself or herself at the centre stage of

the preaching, and not Jesus Christ. When a preacher is personally convinced of, and thrilled about the truth and importance of the message he or she is preaching, there is less likelihood that the preaching will be boring and dull. This is because the preacher, in his or her delivery, will seek to convince or persuade the hearers to also believe like him or her. To accomplish this, the preacher needs to be trusting, compassionate and loving towards the hearers, with the sole intention of changing the lives of the listeners for the better, through the word of God. The preacher can also use illustrations such as appropriate and relevant stories, proverbs, songs, citations, gestures and humour to drive home the message. It is through the inner zeal to persuade that the power in preaching comes out, leading to personal responsiveness to the word of God, and the resolve to act accordingly.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Identify the different forms of ministering through the word.
- ii. What was the content of the kerygma?
- iii. Why is it important for a preacher to preach on one theme?

### 3.2 Ministry through Prayer

Just as the priests and prophets of the Old Testament did, one of the most important aspects of Christian ministry is ministry through prayer. In prayer one communicates intimately with God, talking with God and having a personal encounter with God as with an ever present friend. In prayer one learns to let go, trust God, and be guided by the will of God through the Holy Spirit. Prayer, therefore, lies at the heart of the Christian religion. It is also the substance of all Christian worship, since all acts of worship – scripture reading, supplications, celebration of the sacraments, singing, offerings, pious acts, clapping and dancing, preaching, etc., are directed towards union with God. Every pastoral act of ministry is also done in the context of prayer, for prayer must permeate all forms of ministry, if it is to have spiritual meaning, and be related to the divine.

One who ministers through prayer must be one who is personally very prayerful. Specifically, the minister leads the Christian community in prayer, teaches about prayer, actively prays for others in their needs, and relates prayer to the events of daily life. In this way, the minister makes it possible for each and every individual member of the Christian community to develop an intimacy with God, experience the presence of God, learn how to pray, and seek to pray with and for others.

Prayer should be based on the example of Jesus. The daily activity of Jesus was closely bound up with personal prayer. He often withdrew to pray in a lonely place (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16), on the hills (Luke 6:12), early in the morning (Mark 1:35), or all through the night (Luke 6:12). He prayed when he was under agony, yet he

asked that the will of the Father be done (Luke 22:42; also Jon 6:38; Heb 10:9). He taught his disciples how to pray, by acknowledging God's fatherly authority and transcendence through praise, asking for the coming of the kingdom of God and the will of God, making a petition for daily needs, asking for forgiveness of sins and pledging to forgive others, and praying for deliverance from temptation and evil (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). Jesus offered to the Father, praise and thanksgiving (Matt 11:25-27; John 11:41). In his prayer to the Father, he addressed him with the Aramaic expression of familiarity and intimacy, abba (Mark 14:36; see also Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). He prayed to the Father for his disciples and those who would come to believe in him through the disciples (John 17:1-26). His greatest and final prayer and act of thanksgiving to the Father was offered during the last supper before his passion, death and resurrection, when he took bread and wine, gave thanks (Greek: eucharistein) to God, and commanded his disciples to do the same in his memory (Luke 22:14-20; see also 1 Cor 11:23-30).

In his many teaching on prayer, Jesus emphasized that prayer should be in secret (Matt 6:5-6), meaning by that, even if prayer is communal, the individual should make it of the heart, without any attempt to impress anyone. It should be in his name (John 14:13; 16:23). Prayer does not need many words (Matt 6:7), rather, one should pray always, and not give up (Luke 18:1; see also 1 Thess 5:17). One should pray with persistence (Luke 11:5-8) and expectant faith (Mark 11:24), having kept God's words or commandments (John 15:7; See also Col 3:16). One should also pray not to enter into trial and temptation (Matt 26:41; Luke 22:40).

Ministry through prayer can take different forms. It can be a blessing, whereby one pronounces a blessing on a person (Gen 9:26-27; Luke 24:28; Rom 12:14), people (1 Kings 8:14, 55; Luke 24:50), a household (2 Sam 6:20) an object such as food (Matt 14:19; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:7; 14:22; Luke 9:16), or the name of God (1 Pet 1:3-9), and acknowledges God's blessing (Eph 1:3-14; 2 Cor 1:3-7). It can take the form of adoration, accompanied by a gesture such as prostrating of oneself (Rev 4:9-11; 5:11-14; 7:11-12). Prayer can also take the form of supplication. A prayer of supplication asks God for something. If what is being asked for is for the personal needs of the one praying, it is called "prayer of petition" (Matt 6:9-13; 7:7-11; Rom 15:30; Phil 4:19; Col 4:12), but if the prayer is for the needs of someone else, the prayer is called "prayer of intercession" (Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1; 1 Tim 2:5-8). In his ministry, Jesus interceded often for others (Luke 22:31-32; John 17:20-21; Luke 23:24). Indeed, he continues to intercede on our behalf (1 John 2:1; Heb 7:7; Rom 8:24), just as the Holy Spirit intercedes (Rom 8:26-27). Meanwhile, the individual Christian can also intercede for others (Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1; 1 John 5:16). Classified as prayer of intercession is prayer of deliverance from the powers of evil (Matt 6:13), and prayer for miracles and healing (Mark 16:17-18) on behalf of those in special need. Prayer takes the form of thanksgiving when it focuses on thanking God for favours received (1 Thess 5:17-18; Col 3:17; 4:2; Eph 5:20; Rev

19:5-7). It becomes prayer of praise when the prayer of thanksgiving becomes a hymn in praise of God (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). Fasting is also a form of prayer (Matt 9:29), especially when it is not done in order to attract the attention of people (Matt 6:16-18). One can also pray with the scriptures by using the book of psalms which was the Israelite book of prayer, by repeating the words of any of the other prayer found in the scriptures (Gen 24:12-14; 32:10-13; 1 Kings 3:6-9; Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4), or doing meditation or prayerful reflection on a biblical passage of one's choice.

One who ministers through prayer should be attentive to the tradition of prayer in the particular ecclesial community in which one is exercising ministry. This is because there are some ecclesial communities that sometimes pray through approved prayer books, or make use of specific prayer texts for certain liturgical celebrations, while others do not. Depending on ecclesial communities, the mode of prayer can be formal or informal (spontaneous), public or private, vocal or mental (including meditation and contemplation), liturgical (official) or devotional (facultative), according to occasions. Prayer posture also differ, whether sitting, standing (Mark 11:25), or kneeling (Acts 21:5).

During worship or liturgical activities, there may be certain formal, liturgical prayers which are said vocally only by authorized persons. The members of the congregation may also have their part of formal prayers within the liturgy. Some ecclesial communities lay guidelines for public, vocal prayer of intercessions, especially by groups, so that there may be order (1 Cor 14:26-33). Generally, however, private prayer is to be encouraged, whether individually or in small groups such as a family. An individual or group may freely choose a desired form and mode of prayer which is relevant to their particular spiritual needs.

The content of prayer, especially of prayer of intercession, is varied. In the scriptures, individuals and groups prayed for various needs or intentions such as: a safe journey (Rom 1:10), deliverance from enemies (Rom 15:31), spiritual strength (Eph 3:14-17), spiritual benefits (Eph 6:18-20; Phil 1:4, 9-12), peace (1 Tim 2:1-4), and the sick (James 5:14-16). One who prays should be ready to accept God's will in faith and obedience to God, when this becomes clear (Luke 22:42; 2 Cor 12:7-9).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Why is prayer the substance of all worship?
- ii. Why should one who ministers through prayer be attentive to the tradition of prayer in an ecclesial community?

### 3.3 Ministry through Sacraments

The English word “sacrament” is from the Latin word *sacramentum* (set apart), which in turn is a rendering of the Greek word *mysterion* (secret, mystery). It is a post-New Testament word introduced by Tertulian (d. ca. 220 AD), when speaking about one’s initiation into Christianity through baptism. In today’s theological usage, sacraments refer to tangible symbols or signs, which are used to express heavenly realities or mysteries (secrets). They are powerful signs of God’s presence in history in our lives. Theologians distinguish sacraments from other acts of worship, such as prayer. There have been differences over the centuries as to how many sacraments there are.

While some Christian traditions identify seven sacraments (Baptism for rebirth into Christ, Eucharist for participation in the Lord’s Supper’s divine food of the body and blood of Christ, Confirmation for the reception of the Holy Spirit and strengthening of faith, Sacrament of Reconciliation for forgiveness of sins and spiritual healing, Matrimony for union of man and woman in marriage, Holy Orders for conferment of power of ministry and governance, and Anointing of the Sick for strengthening of the sick and physical healing), some other Christian traditions identify two (Baptism and Eucharist), and some others still only one (Baptism). Some Christian traditions do not use the term “sacrament” at all, but use alternative words such as “ministry” or “service” to describe what other Christian traditions call sacrament.

There are also differences over how certain sacraments should be administered, and who is considered eligible for the reception of such sacraments. For instance, while some Christian traditions administer baptism only by immersion, and only to adults, some others would administer baptism both by immersion and through pouring water on the head of the recipient, and would include infants in baptism. In some Christian traditions, it is only the ordained ministers or priests that can legitimately celebrate and administer sacraments, but the non-ordained or laity can administer certain sacraments such as baptism, under particular grave conditions of necessity. One who ministers through sacraments would do well; therefore, to seek to understand the specific teaching and practice on sacraments in the ecclesial community in which sacramental ministry is being carried out. For our purposes in this study, we shall discuss the pastoral ministry of two sacraments, baptism and Eucharist.

The sacrament of baptism serves as a sign of spiritual rebirth and renewal (John 3:5; Tit 3:5), and as a definitive act of acceptance of Jesus Christ, which makes the recipient become a Christian (Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 12:13). It is, therefore, a sacrament of initiation into new life in Christ, symbolic of one’s turning away from sin and the renunciation of the devil, and enabling one to participate too in the salvific benefits of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:3; Col

1:12; I Cor 6:11). Although Jesus is said to have baptized (John 3:22), he did not actually do so himself (John 4:2). Jesus, rather, authorized the disciples to baptize: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19). Faithful to Jesus’ injunction, the apostolic ministers administered water baptism as part of their ministry (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-16; 9:18; 10:47-48).

Baptism is not a private act. It involves the whole Christian community, for the newly baptized is brought into unity with the entire community of Christ. Therefore baptism is celebrated publicly, and only rarely celebrated privately. The minister of baptism should thus keep a permanent book of record of all baptisms that are celebrated in a Church, and issue a certificate of baptism to the newly baptized.

The ministry of the Eucharist (Greek: eucharistia – thanksgiving) is the ministry of breaking of bread in the context of Christian fellowship or communion (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11). It is a commemoration of The Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:20). The Eucharistic tradition of breaking bread as an aspect of ministry follows after the act of thanksgiving which Jesus performed during the last supper. According to the scriptures, Jesus “took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes’. Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me’” (Luke 22:17-19; also, Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; John 6:41-58). This Eucharistic tradition was faithfully handed on (2 Thess 2:15), as the early Christian community daily broke bread (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11), such that at a much later generation, Paul could say:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me’. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (1 Cor 11:23-26).

Paul also gave instructions concerning correct and worthy participation in the Eucharist, in a way that would prevent abuses (1 Cor 10:16-17, 21; 11:17-22, 27-34).

Different ecclesial communities have different guidelines for ministry through the Eucharist. In some, only a validly ordained minister can celebrate the Eucharist and administer it. There may be other Eucharistic ministers trained and

appointed to assist in one form of Eucharistic ministry or another. There are also differences in emphasis in the theology of the Eucharist. Thus while in some ecclesial communities, the Eucharistic particles of bread and wine are believed to be body and blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16), in some others, the Eucharist is simply a memorial meal. One who ministers through the Eucharist should, therefore, study and understand the Eucharistic theology and ministerial practice of Eucharistic ministry in the particular ecclesial community.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- i. What sign does the sacrament of baptism portray?
- ii. Since different ecclesial communities have different guidelines concerning the Eucharist, what should one who ministers through the Eucharist do?

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From all the above, you have been introduced to the theology and practice of pastoral ministry through the word, prayer and sacrament. It is important to emphasize here again that what you have learnt on this in this study is only an introduction. You still have to develop your knowledge in these areas within the specific context of an ecclesial community, if and when you are to participate in pastoral ministry in an ecclesial community.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

Apart from preaching, ministry through the word includes teaching, catechesis (the process of bringing people to faith by instruction), and all forms of communication of the word of God such as in writing, drama, music, conversations, dialogue, group discussions, workshops and seminars.

The Christian ministry of preaching has its basis and foundation in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus spent most of his ministry in preaching or proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. He also commissioned his apostles to continue his mission of preaching, an act which they carried out faithfully.

In prayer one communicates intimately with God, talking with God and having a personal encounter with God as with an ever present friend. In prayer one learns to let go, trust God, and be guided by the will of God through the Holy Spirit. Prayer, therefore, lies at the heart of the Christian religion.

One who ministers through prayer must be one who is personally very prayerful. Specifically, the minister leads the Christian community in prayer, teaches about prayer, actively prays for others in their needs, and relates prayer to the events of daily life. In this way, the minister makes it possible for each and every individual member of the Christian community to develop an intimacy with God, experience the presence of God, learn how to pray, and seek to pray with and for others.

In today's theological usage, sacraments refer to tangible symbols or signs, which are used to express heavenly realities or mysteries (secrets). They are powerful signs of God's presence in history in our lives.

One who ministers through sacraments would do well to seek to understand the specific teaching and practice on sacraments in the ecclesial community in which sacramental ministry is being carried out.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the three steps in the composition of a homily.
2. Outline Jesus' teaching on prayer.
3. How can you trace the Christian tradition of the Eucharist to Jesus Christ?

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## **UNIT 2 PASTORAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Pastoral administration of a Church
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Pastoral administration is considered as a ministry on its own in the New Testament (1 Cor 12:28). Thus, in some ecclesial communities where the administration of a Church is not part and parcel of the function of an ordained minister, there is usually someone whose specific ministry is the pastoral administration of the Church. Besides, even in situations where an ordained minister exercises also power of governance or administration, there may be other non-ordained collaborators. In this unit, you will be introduced to some rudiments of pastoral administration. A full treatment is, however, to be awaited in the course on Church Management.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the general principles of pastoral administration
- Define Personnel Administration.
- Discuss the Administration of temporal or material goods of the Church.
- Discuss Program planning.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Pastoral Administration of a Church**

Pastoral administration involves the day-to-day running or ordering of a unit of pastoral ministry. This means that one can use the term in reference to any pastoral assignment or ministry. Thus one can talk about the pastoral administration of a choir, a group in the church, or a pastoral office. In this context, however, the term is being used to refer to the pastoral administration of a pastoral unit called the Church.

The word “Church” is used here in reference to a specific Christian community which assembles under one roof. It is not being used in reference to, for example, one founding a Church. The focus here is not on how to found and run an ecclesial community or Church. Therefore, a Church in this unit is used to describe a self-contained local Christian community with an independent administrative structure commonly called a parish, but is dependent upon, and part of a larger administrative structure which is commonly called a diocese. Some ecclesial communities do not use the word “Church” to refer to such an entity, but similar appellations such as “chapel” and “hall”, “assembly”. A Church or parish may have other Church communities administratively attached to it, as outstations. Different dioceses make up an ecclesial community, which is also referred to as Church.

Excluding the exercise of liturgical ministry, the pastoral administration of a Church involves three basic areas: personnel administration, the administration of temporal or material goods, and program planning. In personnel administration, the pastoral administrator seeks to collaborate with other members of the pastoral team for the duration of their assignment or ministry. Usually, members of a pastoral team have a term of office. The pastoral team may be people assigned to the pastoral minister from the Bishop, Superior, Coordinator, General Overseer or Superintendent, to assist him or her. They may be people he or she came to meet in the Church already exercising pastoral responsibilities, or they may be people that he or she may have to appoint. For instance, the pastoral administrator may have a close collaborator such as a principal assistant. Other pastoral collaborators or co-workers could be the directors, coordinators, leaders, presidents and chairpersons of the different arms of administration and of pastoral roles such as those of the word ministry, evangelical ministry, prayer ministry, finance team, singing, youth, men and women. It is advisable to design an organogram or organizational chart for the Church. This clarifies the structure of authority, and enables all to know to whom they are responsible, and to whom they are answerable.

By exercising good management or leadership styles and skills, the pastoral administrator seeks to collaborate with these people, working with them as a team, being genuinely interested in bringing the best out of their areas of responsibility. The pastoral administrator has to coordinate all the activities of the Church by guiding, directing, monitoring, and controlling all the activities of the Church personnel. He or she should delegate as often as necessary, and positively motivate the personnel by being attentive to their pastoral, career, social and personal needs, so as to help them to keep alive and achieve the goal of ministry. The administrator does these, being fully aware of the organizational goals of the entire ecclesial community, the demands of the board of trustees or central administration of the Church, and in line with the policies and guidelines of the specific Church community being administered.

Pastoral administration of personnel may include also the management of office and

house staff, such as secretaries, managers or directors of different Church projects, security men, drivers, cooks and stewards, in a way that their services would be harnessed towards the effective running of the Church. The personnel of the Church should be assisted in every way to make their ministries and services smooth and effective, for each person's role would definitely affect the running of the entire Church. Where salaries are paid, efforts should be made to pay them justly and promptly. Moreover, the administrator should see to the welfare of the collaborators according to Church principles and directives. Good personnel administration through effective planning, directing, coordination, evaluation, reporting and communication leads to good teamwork, and a sense of common ownership of the Church and of its activities.

The pastoral administration of the temporal or material goods of the Church has to do with the administration of the physical plants and finances of the Church. These are the Church's assets and liabilities, including the land on which the Church is built, the buildings on the Church premises and others under the administration of the Church. It also includes equipment and cash. A yearly or periodic inventory of Church property should be made, and these properties adequately monitored in their use and maintenance. Church insurance policies and pension schemes, bank accounts, investments, wills/bequests, endowment funds and projects should also be closely monitored, and expert assistance sought where necessary. The use of modern information storage and retrieval system can be of immense help in record keeping and tracking. The pastoral administrator represents the Church in all juridical transactions of the Church. However, the Church should have its legal adviser or lawyer to assist the Church in all legal matters.

The pastoral administrator should ensure that Church funds are very well accounted for. Good accountability has to do with transparency. At the beginning of the fiscal year, a budget should be drawn up based on realistic expectations of income, and a record of expenditure kept, based on the norms approved for expenditures. At determined periods during the year, a financial report should be given. At the end of the fiscal year, the Church account should be audited by external auditors, and a full financial account and financial report presented to the Church. Adequate financial returns should also be made to the appropriate quarters.

In program planning, the pastoral administrator of a Church sets about mapping out the day to day pastoral programs of the Church. This can be done on a short term, medium term or long term basis. For greater effectiveness and to ensure maximum collaboration by the Church members in the pastoral plan of the Church, the pastoral administrator needs a council, such as a Church executive council, a Church council, or a parish pastoral council. It would be the responsibility of the council, making use of its standing and ad hoc committees, to deliberate on, make decisions about, and carry out specific tasks on behalf of the Church. They would gather information

and data, and correlate them towards effective planning. They would authorize certain persons to engage in certain activities, certain activities to be held, and certain expenditures to be made. Such a council would plan the budget and fundraising activities of the Church through its finance committee, resolve conflicts in the Church through its reconciliation committee, maintain order and discipline in the Church through its disciplinary committee, and seek to improve the quality of worship in the Church through its worship committee.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Mention the three areas of pastoral administration.
- ii. What is the usefulness of a Church or parish pastoral council?

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From the above, you have been introduced to some of the dynamics of the pastoral administration of a Church. Through the unit you have been able to understand some general principles that can help you to appreciate the different dimensions of the pastoral administration of a Church, such as personnel administration, administration of the temporal or material goods of the Church, and programme planning.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

- In personnel administration, the pastoral administrator seeks to collaborate with other members of the pastoral team.
- The pastoral administration of the temporal or material goods of the Church has to do with the administration of the physical plants and finances of the Church.
- The pastoral administrator should ensure that Church funds are very well accounted for. Good accountability has to do with transparency.

In programme planning, the pastoral administrator of a Church sets about mapping out the day to day pastoral programmes of the Church. This can be done on a short term, medium term or long term basis.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. In what ways can a pastoral administrator collaborate with the pastoral team?
2. How should the pastoral administrator ensure that Church funds are

accounted for?

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## **UNIT 3 PASTORAL COUNSELLING**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Qualities of a pastoral counsellor
  - 3.2 Some guidelines for pastoral counselling
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

One of the most engaging activities of pastoral ministers is pastoral counselling. Pastoral counselling is a form of pastoral care. It is a Christian ministry or service, as distinct from the professional activity of a psychological counsellor or a psychotherapist. The pastoral counsellor exercises ministry in the context of salvation of souls, charging no fees for the ministry. Apart from those who pay visits to him or her for counselling, opportunities for engaging in pastoral counselling are everywhere available to the pastoral counsellor: at Church meetings, in market places, at the confessional, while walking down the street, on a beach, or in a public transport. Indeed, anywhere members of a Christian community are found, someone is likely to request for counselling from the pastoral counsellor. Opportunities for pastoral counselling can also be created by a pastoral counsellor through home visitation (Acts 5:42). On account of its specialized nature, the pastoral counsellor should be one who is adequately interested in, and prepared to engage in pastoral counselling. In this unit you will come to know some of the qualities expected of a pastoral counsellor, and learn some guidelines for effective pastoral counselling.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Identify the qualities of a good pastoral counsellor. Evaluate the guidelines for effective pastoral counselling.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Qualities of a Pastoral Counsellor

Pastoral counselling goes beyond merely giving one advice or making suggestions. It is a dialogue between the pastoral counsellor and a counselee, during which the pastoral counsellor strives to help the counselee to understand his or her situation better, so that he or she may be able to solve his or her problems. The pastoral counsellor can offer advice and spiritual and emotional support if the problem cannot be solved. To be able to engage in pastoral counselling effectively, the pastoral counsellor should be:

##### Empathetic

This is the ability “to be with” the other, and understand his or her inner world, with the eyes of the other. The pastoral counsellor should be aware of the counselee’s feelings, whether expressed or not, so as to be able to offer timely and needed assistance, encouragement, prayer, hope, companionship and hearing.

##### Genuine

This is the ability to demonstrate sincerity, openness and spontaneity. The pastoral counsellor should be at home with his or her feelings, and not play roles so as to be acceptable to others. By being natural and frank, the pastoral counsellor is able to arouse confidence in the other.

##### Respectful

This is the ability to appreciate the other by valuing him or her as an individual with human dignity and personal worth. The pastoral counsellor must be one who is seen to be respectful enough to allow the counselee to develop his or her own potentials. The counsellor cannot take decisions for the counselee, but act as a facilitator, pointing the way, so that the counselee can find adequate solutions to his or her problems.

##### Warm

This is the ability to radiate welcome for the other, interest in the other, care of the other, and happiness with the other. The pastoral counsellor should be able to do this verbally or non-verbally through gestures, posture, tone of voice, physical touch or facial expression.



## Listening

This is the ability to be attentive to the other's verbal and non-verbal communication. The pastoral minister should be able to understand what is being said, and what is not being said. He or she should be able to interpret body language, gestures, tone of voice. Having understood the counselee, the pastoral minister should be able to reflect the content and process of dialogue back to the counselee, check the perception of the counselee, and summarize discussions.

## Influencing

This is the ability to influence the counselee to change the way he or she thinks, acts or relates with people. One can influence another by giving information, instructing, reassuring, confronting, suggesting, leading and giving advice.

## Discerning

This is the ability to know and accept one's abilities and inabilities. When he or she is discerning, the pastoral counsellor is wise enough to know when to refer counsees to more competent persons. The pastoral counsellor can also help the counselee to face the reality of his or her situation, and not engage in day dreaming or wishful thinking. In such a situation, the pastoral counsellor should be able to give the counselee some positive strategies such as reflections on scriptural passages, which would enable the counselee cope with guilt, threat, fear or hurt. The futility of repression, rationalization, projection and other forms of defence mechanisms would be realistically pointed out.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. What does being empathetic mean?
- ii. How should a pastoral counsellor listen to the counselee?

## 3.2 Some Guidelines for Pastoral Counselling

What kinds of people need pastoral care through pastoral counselling? Really, it is everybody. We all need one pastoral counselling at one time or another. However, experience has shown that among those who seek appointment with or who knock in desperation at the door of pastoral counsellors are those who are having difficulty in passing through the different developmental stages of life, such as children, adolescence, middle adults and the aging. Pastoral counselling is also sought by young people preparing themselves for marriage, engaged couples, young and old couples, single parents, the divorced, and singles.

Oppressed and suppressed women, people having difficulties in their marital life, people in search of the fruit of the womb, the minorities, students, immigrants, refugees, prisoners, the unemployed and the handicapped all ask for counselling. So also do the poor, the sick, the lonely, the anxious, the depressed, the grieved, the alienated, the stressed, the fearsome, the angry, the guilt laden, those plagued by evil forces, alcoholics, drug dependents and the aggressive. Not left out are those who have been sexually abused, sex addicts, homosexuals, lesbians, those having suicide tendencies, victims of human trafficking, and those who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Obviously, the demands are many, and many pastoral counsellors do encounter certain difficulties handling the large number of requests for counselling. Oftentimes the counsees also ask for special prayers, and have to repeat their visit to the pastoral counsellor over a period of time. There may be cases of unreasonable demands for attention, and the pastoral counsellor would have to struggle to manage his or her time between attending to persons and other pressing engagements. The following guidelines on the exercise of certain counselling skills: asking questions, giving information, giving instruction, giving reassurance, confronting, leading, and giving advice (See Vaughan, R. (1987) *Basic Skills for Christian Counsellors: An Introduction for Pastoral Ministers*, New York: Paulist Press), might help the pastoral counsellor to acquire some skills that would assist him or her to be more effective and focused in pastoral counselling.

#### Guidelines for asking questions

1. Ask one question at a time. When you bombard people with several questions, they are unable to remember all of them and usually answer only one. By the time they have answered the one, they have forgotten the others.
2. Keep your questions short and to the point. Long, vague questions tend to confuse people.
3. In formulating the question, be sure to take into consideration the person's education; use words he or she can understand.
4. Avoid asking a "why" question, such as "Why did you do that?" People can take a "why" question as a reprehension and get defensive. Ask "How," "Where" and "What" questions.
5. Avoid using questions to give advice, such as "Don't you think you ought to call your mother?" If you think you need to offer advice, give it directly.
6. Be careful about asking leading questions. The skilful use of a series of questions can lead counsees to your conclusions, often without their really accepting those conclusions. Leading questions can be a way of imposing your solution to a problem on the counselee.

### Guidelines for giving information

1. Be sure that the information you give is correct. If you are not sure or do not know the information then asked the person to return while you look it up.
2. Do not give information as factual that is simply your opinion.
3. Information should be worded in such a way that it is easily understood. Many people do not understand theological language.
4. Timing is important. Information should be given when the counselee needs information and is ready to accept it, which means that you may have to prepare the ground before you give the information.
5. Be aware that some information can have an emotional impact on a person. After giving the information, you need to discuss with the person the impact that the information is having.
6. Overloading the counselee with too much information can be confusing. Give information in small doses.
7. Do not shy away from giving unpleasant information simply because you find it hard to give this information.

### Guidelines on giving instruction

1. Fit the instruction to the person. Give the instruction in language that the person can easily understand. Make it simple.
2. Once you have given the instruction, check to see if the person understands it. Often it helps to get the person to summarize what you have said.
3. Try not to be dogmatic. It is best to avoid such statements as, "You should do this". Rather say, "I think it would help you to take the following steps".
4. Point out reasons for following the instructions.

### Guidelines for giving reassurance

1. Before giving reassurance, make sure it is well founded. Giving unfounded reassurance can cause counselees to question whether you understand how they feel and what they are talking about.
2. Give reassurance only after you think you have a good estimate of the person's strengths and weaknesses and the demands of the situation.
3. Be confident in giving reassurance. Half-hearted or uncertain reassurance can undermine the counselee's self-confidence.

4. Use reassurance sparingly – only when you think it is really needed and is likely to be effective.

#### Guidelines for confronting

1. Confront only when you are genuinely concerned and care about the person.
2. Never use confrontation when you are frustrated or angry.
3. Confront only when you are convinced that you understand the person and the problem.
4. Rarely use confrontation at the first meeting with the person.  
Wait until you have established good rapport.
5. When confronting, use “I” rather than “you” statements. Say “I think that you may be distorting the facts”, rather than “You are distorting the facts”. “You” statements are accusatory.
6. As much as possible, confront with facts and not opinions or inferences.
7. Make sure the person is ready to hear the confrontation. Lead into the confrontation.
8. Use confrontation sparingly – only when you think it could make a significant difference in the counselee’s behaviour or way of thinking.

#### Guidelines for leading

1. In using this skill, realize that you are taking over the direction the counselling will take. The solution is yours, not the counselee’s.
2. Use leading as a means of refocusing the dialogue only when the topic under discussion has been exhausted and there is a value to return to a topic formerly discussed. Do not refocus when you are discussing another topic with the counselee.
3. When you use leading, keep clearly in mind where you want to lead the counselee.
4. Allow the counselee freedom to follow your lead.
5. After a counselling session, ask yourself whether you were leading the counselee. In your desire to find a quick solution, you may have led the counselee without realizing it.

#### Guidelines for giving advice

1. Give advice only when you are convinced that the persons cannot make a decision and/or act on their own.
2. Be sure that you fully understand the counselee’s situation before you offer any kind of advice.

3. Give the advice in such a way as to leave room for the person to accept or reject the advice.
4. When you give advice, realize that advice can make people dependent on you and less likely on their own resources.
5. Realize that you may be blamed if the advice does not work out.
6. Also realize that people can be hurt by advice, even when the advice is well-founded.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. What happens when the counsellor bombards the counselee with too many questions?
- ii. What is the importance of timing when giving information to the counselee?
- iii. Should a pastoral counsellor insist that a counselee accepts his or her advice?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Pastoral counselling is a very vast area of study that needs much more attention than has been given to it in this unit, but in this unit you have been sufficiently introduced to the qualities that are expected of a pastoral counsellor, and to some basic skills necessary in carrying out an effective dialogue.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

It is a dialogue between the pastoral counsellor and a counselee, during which the pastoral counsellor strives to help the counselee to understand his or her situation better, so that he or she may be able to solve his or her problems.

The pastoral counsellor should be aware of the counselee's feelings, whether expressed or not, so as to be able to offer timely and needed assistance, encouragement, prayer, hope, companionship and hearing.

The pastoral counsellor must be one who is seen to be respectful enough to allow the counselee to develop his or her own potentials. The counsellor cannot take decisions for the counselee, but act as a facilitator, pointing the way, so that the counselee can find adequate solutions to his or her problems.

He or she should be able to interpret body language, gestures, tone of voice. Having understood the counselee, the pastoral minister should be able to reflect the content and process of dialogue back to the counselee, check the perception of the counselee, and summarize discussions.

Be aware that some information can have an emotional impact on a person. After giving the information, you need to discuss with the person the impact that the information is having.

Give the advice in such a way as to leave room for the person to accept or reject the advice.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain three out of the seven enumerated qualities of a pastoral counsellor.
2. Identify the different kinds of people who seek help and pastoral care through pastoral counselling.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## UNIT 4      CRISIS MINISTRY

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Characteristics of a crisis
  - 3.2 Pastoral crisis intervention for those living with HIV/AIDS
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Many of the problems brought to a pastoral minister are of a crisis nature, whereby the person is in deep distress following upon a sudden traumatic stress. It could be a woman whose husband has suddenly died in the middle of the night with no one to help. It could be one who is alarmed to suddenly learn after a medical test that he or she is HIV positive. It could also be a student who has just received the news that he or she has failed in his or her examinations again. It could also be a young girl thrown out of the family for being pregnant outside wedlock. How can a pastoral minister handle such crisis situations? In this unit, you will be helped to understand the nature or characteristics of a crisis situation, and guided on how to offer pastoral crisis intervention to people living with HIV/AIDS.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to: Discuss the characteristics of a crisis. Explain how to approach a crisis situation. Develop a pastoral strategy for crisis intervention on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Characteristics of a Crisis

It is sometimes quite easy to discern or diagnose whether one is in a crisis or not. To do this, the minister should help the person to explore his or her feelings more fully, and begin to look for clues to why the

person feels the way he or she does. Normally one is in crisis because one's self identity, self esteem and self coherence are threatened or suddenly cut off. The person may also suddenly realize that his or her life dreams, ambitions and ideals are being lost. The crisis may also expose the person's poor self image and guilt-laden conscience. The fear of exposure, rejection, and condemnation become overwhelming. He or she asks questions like: "What will people say?" "How will I cope?" "Why me?" "What have I done wrong?" This brings about a sharp emotional pain. Thus two people may experience an event, but while one is in crisis, the other is not, depending on their interpretation of the event in relation to themselves. Some people may be able to cope with a crisis situation with calmness and grace, as a result of the person's early training, and learned coping methods arising from a deep faith in God, or having faced similar situations in life. Thus, the crisis is within the individual and not in what happened to the individual. The person is in crisis in view of the sudden realization of his or her vulnerability.

If one is diagnosed to be in a crisis, it is better to identify what kind of crisis? Does the person in distress sound like he or she is entertaining suicidal thoughts? What are the outward effects of the crisis? Crisis tends to impair one's clear thinking, making one unable to be in touch with one's self. It may make one become irritable, agitated, restless, impulsive, quarrelsome, confused, unable to concentrate, withdrawn, and sleepless. The person is usually very anxious, and unless the anxiety is calmed down through a problem solving approach, he or she may become apprehensive, desperate, wallow in self-pity, regrets and guilt, develop panic, give up further efforts, and quickly descend into helplessness, hopelessness and depression. In a state of depression, the person constantly cries, wears sadness all over him or her, is easily tired or worn out, is dejected, pessimistic, always thinks negatively, is always angry-looking, is difficult to please, develops a pattern of eating, sleeping and relating with people different from what he or she previously had, and the person's physical outlook shows signs of depreciation. Some of those in a state of depression find it extremely difficult to open up to any one. They tend to give the impression that they are in control of their feelings, and are handling their situation well. Yet such people may be actually developing serious ailments such as high blood pressure, which are terminal in nature.

Some people in crisis usually wonder and question if God truly exists, and if God exists, why does God allow them to suffer, and why does God not intervene miraculously in their crisis. They wonder why God allows evil to triumph, and allow them to become objects of mockery. They do not see any value in their suffering. Usually it is better for the pastoral minister to have personal contact with one in crisis, and through pastoral counselling, help to restore the person's self image and self

confidence. The person's strengths should be given greater prominence than his or her weaknesses. The minister must be able to listen empathetically to the counselee. Usually, when one dialogues about one's problem with another, one is able to see the problem from another point of view. So going through the process of counselling might in itself become a source of relief and a means of healing. The pastoral minister is expected to discuss the person's problem in relation to God. There should be follow-ups in the form of home visitation, involvement of family members and special friends. Referral for professional assistance and help to get there may also be necessary.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3.1

- i. What are the factors that can make one person cope with crisis and another not?
- ii. How do some people who are in crisis generally react towards God?

### 3.2 Pastoral Crisis Intervention for Those Living with HIV/ AIDS

You are probably aware of the fact that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is one of the worst human crises of our time. Thanks to the timely intervention of many charitable organizations and the Church around the world, some of those living with HIV/AIDS are already receiving much needed attention and care. A number of such people have also returned to God in Christian dignity, having been given all spiritual assistance. These strides notwithstanding, there is still much more that the Church can do. Indeed, there are some who contend that the Church is not doing enough for people living with HIV/AIDS. By this, such critics infer that if Jesus had been in the world today, Jesus would have done much more to alleviate the pains and suffering of those living with HIV/AIDS, than what is currently being done by many of his followers, who are supposed to be his witnesses. Sadly too, some Christians are absolutely oblivious of the ravages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and so live their lives in complete ignorance of the dangers posed by the much talked about HIV/AIDS, and of their responsibilities in ensuring that the epidemic is not spread further, and that those ill with HIV/AIDS need assistance, not stigmatization.

Many experts have written much about HIV/AIDS. There have also been many expositions on the various aspects of HIV/AIDS, ranging from epidemiology to prevalence, incidence, manifestations, prevention and management. For the purpose of this course, the summary of Dr. B. Azide on HIV/AIDS (See Azide, B. (2001) "Pastoral Care of Persons Living With HIV/AIDS" in Pastoral Care of HIV/AIDS, Abuja, Gaudium et Spes Institute, 5-18) suffices: According to her,

HIV/AIDS, though caused by a virus, is simply a nutritional disease that manifests itself by varying degrees of common household ailments such as: Fever, Diarrhoea, Cough, Oral Thrush, Skin Rashes, Sores and Ulcers, Weight Loss, Change in Mental State. However, just because it is often associated with sexual behaviour, victims tend to be secretive about this disease, in the same way they do about other sexually transmitted diseases such as Gonorrhoea and syphilis. Furthermore, since HIV/AIDS is presently known as being incurable and expensive to control, it has quickly assumed the dimension of a psychological disease with a strong stigma attached to it. It evokes deep negative feelings in the affected persons, such as: initial denial, fear of imminent death, shame, anger, confusion, emptiness, low self esteem, depression, isolation, vengefulness and resentment, social instability due to possible loss of job or a fall in business, worries about impending financial impoverishment and about one's future, family and significant others. In the same way, when family members get to know about it, they go through similar emotions. These are manifested by: denial as long as possible, secrecy about the conditions of the sick members, family visits to "men of God", and tours of miracle centres, traditional medicine healing homes and juju men and women, and spiritual homes in the hope of a miraculous cure, desperation at finding a cure, and lament over the huge amount of money wasted. Finally and sadly, the sick person is isolated and abandoned to a miserable and lonely life and death.

Pastoral intervention for people living with HIV/AIDS is part and parcel of Christian ministry of care for the sick, which is carried out in imitation and continuation of Jesus' love and care for the sick. That Jesus healed the sick and performed miracles is a fact very well documented in the New Testament. Indeed, the New Testament records a total of thirty- six miracles of Jesus. It is also recorded that Jesus promised the disciples, that "these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18; cf. also Luke 10:19). Jesus himself had sent the seventy-two disciples on mission with the instruction: "whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you...cure the sick who are there" (Luke 10:8-9); and to the twelve: "cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons" (Matt 10:8). One of Jesus' most significant healing acts was that of a leper, as recorded in Mark 1:40-45. Just as it is currently being suffered by some persons living with HIV/AIDS, the leper was regarded in Jewish society as an untouchable, and was literally left to die in isolation and without care. In imitation of Jesus, and in continuation of his ministry to the sick, the apostles prayed for healing, signs and wonders to accompany their ministry (Acts 4:29-30), and obviously God answered their prayers (Acts 5:12-16; also Mark 6:12).

From the above, it has emerged that Jesus had a deep compassion for the sick, such that he cared for them. He cared for and touched the sick, even the leper. It is Jesus' care for the sick that brings about healing to the sick, and gives the sick confidence once more, that he or she is not rejected, abandoned or isolated. The sick can therefore, give praise to God, and in this way bring more people to Jesus.

With regard to the care of persons living with HIV/AIDS, Azide recommends that in view of the crisis-laden and terminal nature of the ailment, great care should be taken to accompany one who has been tested positive to HIV/AIDS through the different stages of the ailment as it progresses. Accordingly pastoral intervention in this sense should be holistic, involving specifically: counselling, praying for the sick, home visitation, physical or bodily care of the sick person, material support, providing essential drugs for the treatment of opportunistic infections, administration of the sacrament, e.g. anointing of the sick, and referral for the treatment of tuberculosis or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Counselling in this context has four main goals namely: to restore the person's self confidence; to give spiritual support to the sick person; to give physical and social support not only to the sick, but also to the immediate members of the family and any significant others; to prevent further transmission of the infection to others by promoting the virtue of abstinence or keeping to one partner. Others that may also need counselling in relation to HIV/AIDS may include: the health workers at risk, blood donors, and people worried that they may be infected and volunteer group members. Such counselling empowers individuals to take voluntary decisions without being forced, equips the individual with enough information, so that help could be accepted willingly, allows better interaction between the client and the service provider, and enables the client to feel free to share his/her fears about his/her future and survival with the care provider

The pastoral minister should enlist the help of supporters such as volunteers and support groups. The members of volunteer and support groups, if many, could be divided into groups not larger than fifteen for greater effectiveness. A conscious effort should be made to ensure that each group has, if possible, related professionals, such as: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, clinical psychologists, social workers, and teachers. The quality of care of the sick in the community rests on these, because of their principal role in the actual seeking out and caring for the sick in crisis.

Effective pastoral crisis intervention for people living with HIV/AIDS can achieve the following for the individual and the society:

a. Help those living positively with HIV/AIDS to come out of their crisis, maintain a positive attitude towards God, towards others and towards themselves. They do not blame others, and are not feeling guilty or ashamed. They adhere to medical

care quickly when infections appear, eat well, with meals rich in proteins, carbohydrate and vitamins, keep fit with moderate exercise and enough sleep, and avoid alcohol and smoking.

b. Dissipate fears about working and socializing with persons living with HIV/AIDS.

c. Educate people on the common symptoms of AIDS and how to treat them correctly. Such things like diarrhoea, fever, weight

loss, oral thrush and even sores can be treated easily when people know what to do.

d. Conscientize the members of a Christian community on the different ways they could contribute towards assisting the sick.

e. Acquaint people with the simple precautions one should take when caring for HIV/AIDS patients, such as: generous use of disinfectants, use of gloves and avoidance of direct contact with body fluid especially on open wounds, and use of clear language and encouraging words to the sick at all times.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

i. What kind of negative feelings does HIV/AIDS evoke in the affected persons?

ii. Specifically, what does pastoral crisis intervention for people living with HIV/AIDS involve?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been helped to become more aware of the importance of identifying crisis situations in pastoral ministry, and of taking quick and efficient steps towards solving the problem. The specific example of pastoral crisis intervention on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS can be of immense help to you, in learning how to shape your attitude to pastoral ministry when you find yourself having to handle a similar crisis.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

Normally one is in crisis because one's self identity, self esteem and self coherence are threatened or suddenly cut off. The person may also suddenly realize that his or her life dreams, ambitions and ideals are being lost.

Crisis tends to impair one's clear thinking, making one unable to be in touch with one's self. It may make one become irritable, agitated, restless, impulsive, quarrelsome, confused, unable to concentrate, withdrawn, and sleepless. The person is usually very

anxious, and unless the anxiety is calmed down through a problem solving approach, he or she may become apprehensive, desperate, wallow in self-pity, regrets and guilt, develop panic, give up further efforts, and quickly descend into helplessness, hopelessness and depression.

Some of those in a state of depression find it extremely difficult to open up to any one. They tend to give the impression that they are in control of their feelings, and are handling their situation well. Yet such people may be actually developing serious ailments such as high blood pressure, which are terminal in nature.

Some people in crisis usually wonder and question if God truly exists, and if God exists, why does God allow them to suffer, and why does God not intervene miraculously in their crisis. They wonder why God allows evil to triumph, and allow them to become objects of mockery. They do not see any value in their suffering.

Pastoral intervention for people living with HIV/AIDS is part and parcel of Christian ministry of care for the sick, which is carried out in imitation and continuation of Jesus' love and care for the sick.

Realization that one is HIV positive evokes deep negative feelings in the affected person, such as: initial denial, fear of imminent death, shame, anger, confusion, emptiness, low self esteem, depression, isolation, vengefulness and resentment, social instability due to possible loss of job or a fall in business, worries about impending financial impoverishment and about one's future, family and significant others.

In view of the crisis-laden and terminal nature of the ailment, great care should be taken to accompany one who has been tested positive to HIV/AIDS, through the different stages of the ailment as it progresses.

Pastoral intervention in this sense should be holistic, involving specifically: counselling, praying for the sick, home visitation, physical or bodily care of the sick person, material support, providing essential drugs for the treatment of opportunistic infections, administration of the sacrament, e.g. anointing of the sick, and referral for the treatment of tuberculosis or other sexually transmitted diseases.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How does one who is depressed on account of a crisis tend to act?
2. How should counselling be used to assist those affected by HIV/ AIDS?

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## UNIT 5      MINISTRY TO THE WIDER SOCIETY

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Christianity and Society
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pastoral ministry is not concerned only with ministry to the ecclesial community or ministry to the special needs of some people within the ecclesial community. Pastoral ministry also has a wider dimension, which involves the witness of the Christian community in the secular world. The Church must evangelize the world, permeating it with Christian values, for the salvation of the whole human race. Here the pastoral minister is not seeking to convert the world to Christianity, but to read the signs of the times, and in the light of the scriptures and theology, interpret these signs in a way that is relevant and helpful to all peoples in every generation. The relationship between the Christian message and society is, therefore, the concern of this unit.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Appreciate the necessity of pastoral ministry to the wider society.
- Identify the different areas of need for pastoral ministry to the wider society.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Christianity and Society

Despite living in an age of scientific developments, high technological achievements, globalization and economic progress, many people are still searching for the ultimate meaning of life. Human beings are asking philosophical questions, such as: “What is existence?” “Where are we heading to?” “What happens after this life?” Secularism, materialism and consumerism have not aided people to discover the true meaning of life. Rather, after endless acquisitions, many have found

meaninglessness and emptiness in life. Even the most advanced among the world's economies has not been able to completely fulfil the human yearnings for lasting peace, love, joy and unity. Many are still in search of these values, in spite of the huge successes recorded in the sciences. The reason for all these is not far-fetched. Modern secular society does not try to correlate faith in God with scientific progress. Rather, God is being gradually removed from secular consciousness. Some people have more faith in scientific endeavours than in God. Indeed, God is treated as if he were an enemy of science, or an obstacle to its development.

As a result of the influence of secularism therefore, faith in God is fast corroding, especially in the more technologically advanced societies. Atheism is becoming more and more fashionable, human freedom is being abused, many people have lost touch with their conscience, while many nations and peoples speak and act without the fear of God. Thus, the sense of sin and shame in relation to evil is becoming no longer existent. Little wonder then, that despite its technological advancement, the world is witnessing more wars, terrorism, suicide, suicide bombings, violence, nuclear threats, and every manner of civil unrest. We have religious intolerance, intertribal conflicts, unending labour union strikes, tribalism and racism. The media is awash daily with bad news of human murders, genocides, bombings, kidnappings, assassinations, and other crimes and man-made calamities.

One would have expected the world to be a better place to live in, but there exists in every corner of the world unemployment, slavery, drug trafficking, drug abuse, fakery of drugs, prostitution, women trafficking, child trafficking, child abuse, refugees, cultism, election malpractices, bribery and corruption. Never before has the world witnessed such a high rate of disregard for socio-ethical issues. Human rights to life from conception to natural death, decent housing, food, clothing, association, religion, family life, privacy and freedom are being daily abused by different political authorities. People are unjustly imprisoned and denied legal assistance, so also do we have police brutality, armed robbery, currency trafficking, pornography and Internet criminality. The environment too is being degraded daily with ecological disasters and abuses such as oil spillages, air and water pollution, and deforestation.

In the meantime, some countries groan under heavy international debts. In all these, the gap between the rich and poor nations continues to widen. Many countries lack infrastructure and facilities such as constant electricity, good roads, potable drinking water, adequate housing, basic healthcare, effective transport system, efficient communications network, and mechanized agriculture. Thus many people continue to suffer daily from deprivations, hunger, malnutrition, disease, flood, drought and famine.

In the face of all these social malaise, should pastoral ministers simply urge their flock to pray hard and leave the rest to God? Or should the people simply shout “Alleluia” and believe that all is well? Rather than do just this, pastoral ministers should realize that they have a responsibility to minister also to the wider society, beyond the confines of their Churches or ecclesial communities. Pastoral ministry has to include the hopes and aspirations, yearnings and fears of the time. It must be exercised in the context of the socio-political and economic realities of the people. This is because God is interested in human welfare and in the human environment. God is a God of justice, peace and equity (Amos 5:24-27). God is God of the poor and the oppressed (Ps 9:13, 19; Ezek 22:29), and the poor and the lowly find joy in God (Isa 29:19). Indeed, Jesus came to preach the good news to the poor. Accordingly, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19). He called the poor “blessed” (Matt 5:3; Luke 6:20). The poor here includes all those who are voiceless, oppressed and unjustly treated by the society, and not only the materially poor. It is on behalf of this category of voiceless and subdued people that the Old Testament prophets challenged the rich, the oppressors, and ruling authorities of the time to seek justice (Amos 2:7; 4:1; 5:11; Isa 5:8). Jesus too became the voice of the voiceless, condemning the greed and insensitivity of the rich, the oppressors and the ruling elite.

The pastoral minister must, therefore, in imitation of the Old Testament prophets, and following in the footsteps of Jesus, challenge injustice, and seek to speak on behalf God and in favour of the oppressed. This involves ministry to the wider society, by seeking respect for human rights, and proclaiming an end to criminality, corruption and murder. The pastoral minister has to proclaim love of neighbour, mutual sharing and mutual forgiveness among peoples. The goods of the earth and the environment should be used and treated with respect for the creator and sustainer of all things. The pastoral minister must not stay aloof from the evil happenings in the world. Besides praying for a change, the minister must be actively involved in transforming the world for the better, according to the mind of Christ, who gave up his life in order to save the world from the power of evil. This may also mean organizing material assistance such as food (Matt 14:16) and clothing, and other assistance such as legal aid for those who are in need (Matt 25:31-46). It may mean participating in peaceful demonstrations aimed at drawing the attention of relevant authorities to the necessity of checking or correcting certain ills, or in solidarity with a good cause. It may

necessitate offering advice, serving on a particular panel or commission, paying solidarity visits or refusing to pay such visits. However, it is the responsibility of the pastoral minister to let the people know the will of God in social and other issues that affect the lives of the people. In doing all these, the pastoral minister should realize that whatever he or she does, or does not do to the least of God's children, that is being done or not being done for Jesus (Matt 25:31-46).

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Why are people still in search of certain life values, in spite of the huge successes recorded in the sciences?
- ii. In what context must pastoral ministry be exercised?

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From the above, you have learnt that it is part and parcel of pastoral ministry that the pastoral minister is of service to the wider society. This service consists principally in being the voice of the voiceless, the poor and the oppressed. The social concerns of people do have a hearing before God, and if the pastoral minister is one who speaks and acts on behalf of God, then he or she cannot be quiet in the face of criminality, human rights abuses, poverty, environmental and human degradation, injustice and oppression.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this unit:

Despite living in an age of scientific developments, high technological achievements, globalization and economic progress, many people are still searching for the ultimate meaning of life.

One would have expected the world to be a better place to live in, but there exists in every corner of the world unemployment, slavery, drug trafficking, drug abuse, fakery of drugs, prostitution, women trafficking, child trafficking, child abuse, refugees, cultism, election malpractices, bribery and corruption. Never before has the world witnessed such a high rate of disregard for socio-ethical issues.

Pastoral ministry has to include the hopes and aspirations, yearnings and fears of the time. It must be exercised in the context of the socio-political and economic realities of the people. This is because God is interested in human welfare and in the human environment.

The pastoral minister must, therefore, in imitation of the Old Testament prophets, and following in the footsteps of Jesus, challenge injustice, and seek to speak on behalf God and in favour of the oppressed.

The pastoral minister must not stay aloof from the evil happenings in the world. Besides prayer for a change, the minister must be actively involved in transforming the world for the better, according to the mind of Christ, who gave up his life in order to save the world from the power of evil.

The pastoral minister should realize that whatever he or she does, or does not do to the least of God's children, that is being done or not being done for Jesus (Matt 25:31-46).

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Identify some of the evils in society which pastoral ministry should pay attention to.
2. How is God a God of the poor?

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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