

A FALSE DOCTRINE BASED ON TRUTH  
-by Don Earl Boatman

In recent years there has been a strong emphasis on the equipping ministry, the mutual ministry, otherwise known as the priesthood of believers. The Bible certainly teaches us that we are all priests, that everyone should minister and that the members should be trained to serve and to minister. Some teachers go beyond the Scriptures and give a false emphasis to this teaching.

The wrong emphasis built on these truths is damaging to the body of Christ. This wrong emphasis is reflected in such statements as these:

- A. "I will not call, this is the elders' job."
- B. "Everyone should minister; therefore, the Bible college is wrong in training preachers, missionaries and youth ministers."
- C. "Everyone should be equipped to serve using his own charisma and there should not be such a thing as a minister."
- D. "The church is not a New Testament church that has a pulpit minister. He does too much work and keeps others from working."
- E. "Everyone is a priest; therefore, there should not be a priest called a minister, preacher or pastor."
- F. "We should not have a time of decision in Christian Service camps because it will upset those who do not answer the call for the specialized leadership ministry and the mission field. Everyone is already called to full time service."

Some passages of Scripture are overlooked by these advocates.

In Exodus, God made a covenant with His people whom He freed from slavery. In Exodus 19:6, God said,

"and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." He called the people priests, but whole chapters are given over to the Levites to instruct them in their priestly work. A tribe was chosen to be priests, even though the whole nation was a priestly nation.

The language of Exodus 19:6 is repeated in the New Testament and applied to the people under the new covenant. Observe I Peter 2:5 and 9: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

"But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellence of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

The priesthood of believers is a relationship with God and does not negate certain people giving themselves full time to special priestly work. Jesus called men to preach. Paul recruited preachers and evangelists and commissioned them to do so. Paul was a foreign missionary. Timothy and Titus were preachers, evangelists, and shepherds of flocks. The New Testament also teaches that men are to be supported in the work of leadership in evangelism. Peter was a full-time evangelist who taught the priesthood of all believers.

World evangelism can never take place without men leading out to accomplish that purpose. (Romans 10:14,15) It seems very few present themselves as willing to go. The ones that do must be sent. Let us give some examples:

- A. He drives one or two hours a day to get to his job, where he works for eight hours a day and sometimes works overtime in order to support his family. He cannot go to Italy or Africa to be a missionary unless he quits his job and unless someone sends him. He is typical of thousands of other Christian people.

B. He has a full-time job and moonlights a second in order to support his family in an inflationary society. He is not fluent, he is not trained, he is not inclined to save enough money to ship his family to Taiwan, where he can search for a job adequate enough to support him, so he can be a witness. He is typical of many church people who are concerned about world evangelism, but who cannot commit all of their lifetime to it. Someone else will have to go and be supported in the work.

The world will not be evangelized unless we heed the Commission and Paul's admonition in Romans 10:13-15.

We are committed to the priesthood of believers, and we are also resolved to recruit men who will be supported in teaching the great Gospel truths to all men everywhere, just as Jesus and Paul did.

The unsaved are entitled to the privilege of being a part of a holy nation, a royal priesthood, God's own people, but we are convinced that they will not have a chance until dedicated people provide the leadership to accomplish that purpose.

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