

— A THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL GUIDE —
FOR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

The Christian Ministry

— ♦ —
ITS MYSTERY, MEANING,
MODELS, MESSAGE, AND MORE



— ♦ —
Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar
Pastor Emeritus, Th.B., A.B., D.D

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

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DEDICATION

To our Holy Triune Lord God —

*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit —
whose mystery is the ground of all true ministry,
and whose grace is the only power by which it is sustained.*

To every faithful pastor, elder, deacon, and lay leader

*who has served Christ's Church without recognition,
in obscure places and difficult seasons,
knowing that the Chief Shepherd sees what is done in secret.*

To my beloved wife Estrella —

*who has been my companion through every season of ministry,
whose quiet faithfulness has modeled the servant-heart
that these pages commend.*

*To our daughter and our son,
now dwelling in the United States and Canada,
carrying with them the faith once delivered,
and proving that the covenant of God spans every ocean.*

*And to all the members of
Holistic Enhancement for Lay Leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.),
under the faithful leadership of Pastor Riley Legarde —
faithful servants who have understood that ministry is not a career
but a calling, and not a performance but a life.*

Soli Deo gloria.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	7
Preface	11
Introduction: Two Thousand Years and Still Marching	15
Chapter 1: The Mystery	23
Chapter 2: The Meaning	33
Chapter 3: The Mysticality	43
Chapter 4: The Models	53
Chapter 5: The Ministers	63
Chapter 6: The Mission	73
Chapter 7: The Message	83
Chapter 8: The Musts	93
Chapter 9: The Motives	103
Chapter 10: The Motivation	113
Chapter 11: The Means	123
Chapter 12: The Mandates	133
Chapter 13: The Manifestation	143
Chapter 14: The Merits	153
Chapter 15: The Morality	163
Chapter 16: The Menace	173
Conclusion: The Church Still Marching	183
Index of Scripture Citations	191
Subject Index	197
About the Author	203

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Dr. Oscar Cullmann, whose Christocentric vision of biblical history undergirds the organizing logic of this work — the conviction that Christ is the center of all true ministry.

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To my beloved wife Estrella, and to our children now serving God on two continents: this work is yours as much as mine.

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

— Romans 11:33

Soli Deo gloria.

Preface

The Christian ministry is, at its core, neither a profession nor an institution. It is a life — the life of Jesus Christ Himself, expressed through the imperfect but Spirit-indwelt lives of those whom He has called, equipped, and sent into the world. Every genuine act of Christian ministry — every sermon faithfully preached, every sick person visited, every grieving soul accompanied, every young disciple patiently instructed — is, in the deepest sense, a continuation of the ministry that the Son of God began in Galilee two thousand years ago.

"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'"

— John 20:21

This book was written not for the seminary classroom alone, though it is hoped that students of theology will find it useful. It was written for the pastor in a small congregation who wonders, some Monday mornings, whether what he does matters. It was written for the deacon who is quietly and faithfully serving the physical needs of her community without recognition. It was written for the elder who is wrestling with how to shepherd a flock being pulled in a dozen directions by the currents of a rapidly changing world.

It was written, above all, for every Christian — lay or ordained, experienced or newly converted — who wants to understand what the Church of Jesus Christ is for, what it is called to do, and how it is empowered to do it.

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

— Acts 20:24

The structure of this book follows a series of sixteen M-chapters — each addressing a different dimension of the Christian ministry, from its Mystery and Meaning to its Menace. This structure insists that Christian ministry has both a theological foundation and a practical expression, both an interior dynamic and an outward form, both a call to holiness and an engagement with the world.

May every reader of these pages be stirred to a deeper faithfulness in whatever sphere of ministry God has assigned to her — and may the ministry of Christ's Church be the means by which God continues to gather His elect from every tribe and tongue and nation, until the great day when faith gives way to sight.

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Introduction

Two Thousand Years and Still Marching

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

— Matthew 28:18–20

For nearly two thousand years, the Christian ministry has been entrusted by Christ to His apostles, and through them to every generation of disciples who has followed. It is the oldest continuously operating enterprise in human history — older than any existing nation-state, older than any surviving institution of higher learning.

This Great Commission, delivered by the Risen Christ to a small group of Galilean fishermen and former tax collectors, has been the constituting charter of the Christian Church in every century and every culture since. It has been carried out by martyrs in the Roman Colosseum and by missionaries in the jungles of the Philippines. It has been proclaimed by towering intellects like Augustine and Calvin and by humble lay evangelists whose names were never written in any book of church history.

The Christian ministry surpasses all other religious systems not because its adherents are morally superior but because its content is categorically different. The founders of the world's other great religions were human beings who articulated religious insights and then died. The founder of the Christian ministry is the Risen Lord, who declared "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25) and demonstrated the truth of that declaration by walking out of His own tomb on the third day.

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

— John 11:25–26

It is important to distinguish between Christianity and what might be called Christianity. The suffix ‘-ism’ belongs to the world of ideologies and systems. The suffixes ‘-ian’ and ‘-ity’ point to something different: a way of life, a pattern of existence, a participation in a community defined by its relationship to a living Person. One cannot be a Christian in the biblical sense while being indifferent to the risen Christ.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

— Galatians 2:20

The chapters that follow explore the Christian ministry in its multiple dimensions — theological, pastoral, practical, and eschatological. They offer a panoramic view of what the Church of Jesus Christ is and does, grounded in the conviction that the ministry of Christ’s people is nothing less than the continuation of His own ministry in the world, carried forward in the power of the same Spirit who anointed Him at the Jordan and raised Him from the dead.

CHAPTER 1

The Mystery

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

— 1 Timothy 3:16

Christianity is, at its core, a mystery — and this is not a deficiency but a distinction. The Greek word *mysterion*, as Paul uses it, does not mean a puzzle awaiting a solution or a riddle designed to exclude the uninitiated. It means a divine secret that has been deliberately concealed until the appointed time for its disclosure, and that, once revealed, cannot be fully comprehended by the natural human intellect. It can be received by faith; it can be marveled at; it can transform those who embrace it — but it cannot be reduced to a formula or fully contained within any human theological system.

The mystery of godliness — the *mysterion* of *eusebeia* — is the mystery at the heart of the Christian ministry. It is the mystery of the Incarnation: the eternal God chose to enter His own creation in the person of His Son, born of a virgin, laid in a manger, subject to hunger and fatigue and grief, and ultimately crucified between two criminals on a rubbish heap outside the walls of Jerusalem.

Nicodemus, one of the most learned religious scholars of his day, came to Jesus by night to inquire about the spiritual rebirth that Jesus had been proclaiming. The Lord's response confounded him: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). The new birth at the foundation of all genuine Christian experience is as mysterious and sovereign as the wind.

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

— John 3:7–8

The Latin root of the word mystery — *mus*, meaning silence — points to the appropriate human response before the divine mystery: a reverential silence, an acknowledgment that we stand before something that exceeds our categories, that refuses to be domesticated by our theologies. The Hebrew concept of *olam* — the eternal, the hidden — carries a similar resonance: God's purposes are unfolding in ways that we see only partially, as in a mirror dimly (1 Cor. 13:12).

This does not mean that the Christian ministry is irrational or anti-intellectual. The God who is mystery is also the God who has spoken — who has communicated His purposes in the Scriptures, who has made Himself known in the person of His Son. But the ultimate ground of Christian ministry is not human intelligence or institutional competence; it is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, who blows where He wills and cannot be managed by any human strategy.

"...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you."

— Ephesians 1:17–18

This is the mystery that sustains the Christian ministry across all the centuries of its existence. Because the ultimate outcome of the Christian ministry is in the hands of the God who raises the dead, the minister is freed from the crushing responsibility of producing results by her own effort. She is called to be faithful — to preach the Word, to administer the sacraments, to pray, to serve, to love — and to leave the fruit in the hands of the One who alone can give it.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."

— 1 Corinthians 3:6–7

Reflection Questions — Chapter 1

- 1.** In what ways has the “mystery” of Christian ministry been a source of comfort or frustration in your own experience? How does the sovereignty of the Spirit over the outcome of ministry change the way you evaluate your own faithfulness?
- 2.** The word *mysterion* describes something that was hidden and is now revealed. What dimensions of the Christian mystery have become most real and transforming in your own life? What remains most opaque?
- 3.** The minister is called to faithfulness, not success. How do you hold that truth in tension with the legitimate desire to see fruit from your labors? Where do you need to release control and trust the One who gives the growth?

CHAPTER 2

The Meaning

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

— Ephesians 2:10

If the mystery of Christian ministry points to its divine origin and sovereign dynamic, the meaning of Christian ministry points to its content and purpose: it is the life and works of Christ Jesus expressed in and through the lives of His ministers and the members of His Church. The Christian minister is not someone who talks about Jesus; she is someone in whom Jesus lives and through whom Jesus works.

"To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

— Colossians 1:27

Paul's staggering claim — "Christ in you, the hope of glory" — is not addressed to an elite spiritual class but to ordinary members of an ordinary local congregation. The indwelling presence of Christ is not the exception in Christian experience but its defining characteristic. It is what makes Christian ministry Christian rather than merely religious.

This meaning, however, is not yet perfectly expressed in any individual Christian life. The Christian minister is, simultaneously, a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and a sinner in the process of being sanctified. She has been justified — declared righteous by God on the basis of Christ's imputed righteousness — but she has not yet been glorified. The gap between what she is in Christ and what she is in her

daily experience is the space in which the sanctifying work of the Spirit operates throughout her earthly life.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

The trajectory of this meaning stretches from regeneration to glorification. It begins when the Spirit gives life to the spiritually dead sinner; it will be completed when Christ returns and transforms the bodies of His people into conformity with His glorious resurrection body. Between these two points, the Christian life is a pilgrimage, a process of progressive sanctification, a journey toward the perfection that will be fully realized only at the Parousia.

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

— Philippians 3:20–21

The meaning of Christian ministry, in summary, is this: it is the expression, through imperfect human instruments, of the perfect life of Christ — a life that begins in the new birth, is sustained by the indwelling Spirit, and will be consummated in the beatific vision of the glorified Son of God. Everything the Church does — preaching, teaching, healing, serving, worshiping, discipling — is a participation in this one great work of God in history.

"...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

— Hebrews 12:2

Reflection Questions — Chapter 2

1. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). What does it mean for your daily ministry that the risen Christ actually dwells within you by His Spirit? How does that reality change the way you approach your work?
2. The author describes the Christian minister as simultaneously a new creation and a sinner in the process of being sanctified. How do you hold these two truths together without falling into either complacency or despair?
3. Ministry is ultimately a participation in Christ’s own work — not the performance of religious duties but the expression of His life through ours. What would change in your practice of ministry if you truly internalized this conviction?

CHAPTER 3

The Mysticality

"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

— Romans 8:16

The word mystical has been much abused in both popular and academic usage — associated in popular thought with the occult and spiritism, and in academic thought with experiences of religious ecstasy that stand apart from the rational and doctrinal core of the Christian faith. Neither usage captures what the Christian tradition means by the mystical dimension of the Christian life.

Christian mysticism, rightly understood, refers to the direct experience of the presence of God — mediated through the indwelling Holy Spirit, grounded in the objective realities of the Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, and expressed in the ordinary disciplines of prayer, Scripture reading, worship, and service.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

— John 14:6

Jesus's declaration in John 14:6 is the definitive statement of Christian mysticism: the only way to the direct experience of the living God is through the Son. The Christian mystic does not seek an undifferentiated union with the divine; she seeks personal fellowship with the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit — the Trinitarian shape of all genuine Christian experience.

"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

— Romans 8:9–11

The Spirit who indwells the believer is “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead” — the same divine power that overcame death at the resurrection is at work within the believer, transforming her from the inside out. This is the mysticity of the Christian ministry: not an escape from the world but an engagement with it from a renewed center.

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

— Ephesians 4:30

The pastoral implication is significant: because Christian ministry is grounded in the mysticity of the Spirit’s indwelling presence, it cannot be reduced to technique, management, or institutional competence. The minister who neglects the inner life of prayer and Scripture will find that her ministry lacks the divine energy that alone can produce eternal fruit. “Apart from me,” Jesus warned, “you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

— Galatians 5:22–23

Reflection Questions — Chapter 3

1. How does the author’s definition of Christian mysticism differ from the popular associations of the word? What is the Trinitarian shape of genuine Christian spiritual experience?
2. What specific disciplines sustain the inner life of prayer and Scripture that the author describes as non-negotiable for fruitful

ministry? Which of these disciplines is most underdeveloped in your own life?

- 3.** Jesus said “Apart from me, you can do nothing”. What specific evidence of that truth have you experienced in your own ministry — seasons when activity was high but fruit was absent, or vice versa?

CHAPTER 4

The Models

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

— 1 Corinthians 11:1

Every discipline has its models — exemplars whose lives and practice embody the ideals of the field in a way that can be imitated, studied, and appropriated by those who follow. The Christian ministry is no exception. It has, in fact, the most demanding model conceivable: the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is not merely the ideal Christian minister but the one in whom all ministry finds its origin, its pattern, and its goal.

Jesus Christ — The Chief Shepherd

Paul's call to "follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) establishes the principle: all human models in the Christian ministry are derivative. They are models only insofar as they themselves reflect the model of Christ. The model that Christ provides is not primarily a model of public ministry but a model of servant-hearted obedience to the Father. He "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

— John 13:14–15

The most defining moment in the life of the supreme model of Christian ministry was not a moment of public triumph but an act of private degradation: kneeling on the floor of an upper room to wash the

feet of His disciples. This pattern of servant leadership is the antidote to the hiring mentality that has too often disfigured the Christian ministry. The Good Shepherd “lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Every genuine minister of Christ is called to this same disposition.

"...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

— Hebrews 12:2

The Apostles Peter and Paul

Within the New Testament, the apostles Peter and Paul serve as the primary human models. Peter's ministry was primarily to the Jewish people and the Jerusalem church (Acts 2–12); Paul's ministry was primarily to the Gentile world (Acts 13–28). Paul's summary of his own ministry in Acts 20:24 captures the essential quality of the apostolic model: a life held loosely, oriented entirely toward the completion of the God-given task, and sustained by a grace that was not his own.

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

— Acts 20:24

According to church tradition, all of the twelve apostles — with the exception of John, who was exiled to Patmos and died in old age — were martyred for their faith. They preached Christ with a boldness that could only be explained by the reality of the Resurrection they proclaimed, and they died with a courage that could only be explained by a hope that extended beyond death.

"And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."

— Revelation 12:11

Reflection Questions — Chapter 4

1. What specific qualities of Christ's servant-leadership — displayed in the foot-washing of John 13 — most challenge your own approach to ministry leadership? What would it cost you to embrace them more fully?
2. Paul describes his ministry as a race to be finished and a life held loosely (Acts 20:24). What things in your ministry do you hold too tightly? What would it look like to hold them more loosely, in dependence on the God who assigned the task?
3. The apostolic model includes martyrdom — the willingness to give one's life for the sake of the testimony. What does that ultimate form of servant-leadership say to those of us who are not facing physical persecution? What is its equivalent in ordinary ministry life?

CHAPTER 5

The Ministers

"He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

— Ephesians 4:11–12

The Christian ministry is not the exclusive province of a professional clergy. It is, in the broadest sense, the vocation of every member of the Body of Christ. The Reformation's recovery of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was not a rejection of ordained ministry but an affirmation that all of God's people are called to serve, each according to the gifts and calling God has assigned.

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

— 1 Peter 2:9

The Chief Shepherd — Christ Himself

The primary minister of the Christian Church is the Lord Christ Jesus Himself, the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13:20). All human ministers are under-shepherds — stewards entrusted with the care of a flock that belongs ultimately to Another. The minister who forgets that the sheep are Christ's sheep is already on the road toward the hireling mentality that Jesus condemned.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

— John 10:11

Elders and Deacons

The New Testament describes two primary offices in the local church: elders (presbyteroi or episkopoi) and deacons (diakonoi). The qualifications for both offices, set out in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, are overwhelmingly matters of character rather than competence. God is less interested in impressive credentials than in the fruit of the Spirit expressed in the ordinary relationships of family, friendship, and community.

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach."

— 1 Timothy 3:1–2

Elders serve the congregation in teaching and preaching, in pastoral care and governing. Deacons attend to the practical and material needs of the congregation. The office of deacon was established in Acts 6 so that the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Both offices are equally essential: a church that honors spiritual ministry while neglecting practical care has divided what God joined together.

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

— Ephesians 4:11–12

Reflection Questions — Chapter 5

1. What is the significance of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers for the way you understand your own calling? How does it both liberate and challenge you?
2. The qualifications for eldership in 1 Timothy 3 are predominantly matters of character rather than competence or charisma. How does this emphasis challenge the way most churches select their leaders?

- 3.** How does your local church embody the complementary offices of elder and deacon? Are both the spiritual and practical dimensions of ministry being honored and resourced adequately?

CHAPTER 6

The Mission

"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."

— Matthew 28:19

The mission of the Christian Church is not self-generated; it is received. It is given by the Risen Lord in the Great Commission and empowered by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The mission of the Church is, at its most basic, the mission of God Himself — the mission Dei — extended through the agency of Christ's people in the world.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

— Acts 1:8

A. The Evangelistic Dimension

The immediate mission of the Church is, first, evangelistic: to call sinners to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is not merely one component of the Church's message but its irreducible core. Without the gospel, there is no Church; without its proclamation, there is no genuine Christian mission.

B. The Edifying Dimension

Second, the mission is edifying: to build up believers in their knowledge of Christ, their practical holiness, and their capacity for service. The Great Commission does not merely call for decisions; it calls for disciples

— people who are taught to observe all that Christ commanded. Making disciples is a long, patient, relational process that requires the sustained ministry of teaching, fellowship, prayer, and mutual accountability that can only happen in the context of a committed local church community.

"The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people."

— Titus 3:8

C. The Doxological Dimension

Third, the mission is doxological: to glorify God in every dimension of human life and community. Paul's summary in 1 Corinthians 10:31 — "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" — establishes the totalizing scope of the Christian mission. The Christian who has understood her mission is a missionary in every context she inhabits.

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

— 1 Corinthians 10:31

Reflection Questions — Chapter 6

1. The author identifies three dimensions of the Church's mission: evangelistic, edifying, and doxological. Which dimension is most emphasized in your own congregation? Which is most neglected?
2. How is your local congregation specifically obeying the Great Commission at the local (Jerusalem), regional (Judea and Samaria), and global (ends of the earth) levels?
3. What would it mean for your daily work and ordinary life to become more explicitly a participation in the mission of God?

CHAPTER 7

The Message

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."

— Romans 1:16

The message of the Christian ministry is not a human invention; it is a divine disclosure. It has been revealed by God and entrusted to the Church as a sacred deposit to be guarded, proclaimed, and transmitted intact to every subsequent generation. Paul's comprehensive summary in Acts 20 identifies three inseparable components.

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God... for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."

— Acts 20:24, 27

A. The Gospel of Grace

The gospel of grace is the irreducible core: the announcement, grounded in the atoning death and justifying resurrection of Jesus Christ, that God forgives sinners — not on the basis of their merit, but on the basis of Christ's perfect obedience and substitutionary sacrifice, received through faith alone.

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."

— 1 Corinthians 15:3–5

B. The Kingdom of God

The proclamation of the Kingdom of God situates the gospel within the larger framework of God's purposes for all of creation. The Kingdom is not merely a spiritual state of personal peace; it is the comprehensive reign of Christ over all things — a proclamation that calls Christians to engage with the world in its politics, economics, and cultural forms.

C. The Whole Counsel of God

The whole counsel of God — the full range of biblical teaching — provides the Church with the theological resources needed to navigate every situation. A church that neglects any of these three dimensions will become unbalanced. The triad of evangelization, edification, and exaltation held together produces a church that is simultaneously outward-facing, inward-growing, and God-honoring.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

— 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Reflection Questions — Chapter 7

1. What does it mean to guard and transmit the gospel as a sacred deposit? What are the specific threats to that deposit in your cultural context?
2. How does an adequate understanding of the Kingdom of God expand your vision of what the Church's message is for? In what ways does your congregation engage with the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of the Kingdom?
3. Paul did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). What parts of the biblical message are most tempting to minimize or avoid in your preaching and teaching? Why?

CHAPTER 8

The Musts

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

— 2 Timothy 2:15

Every discipline has its non-negotiables. The Christian ministry is no exception. Three disciplines stand out as indispensable: Hermeneutics and Homiletics, Apologetics and Polemics, and Pastoral Theology.

Hermeneutics and Homiletics

Hermeneutics is the discipline of biblical interpretation — the art and science of discerning the meaning of the biblical text in its original context, and applying that meaning faithfully to the contemporary situation. It is the indispensable foundation of all Christian teaching and preaching.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

— 2 Timothy 2:15

Paul's charge to Timothy — to "rightly handle the word of truth" — uses a metaphor from tent-making: cut the fabric straight, along the grain, so the pieces fit together correctly. Wrongly handled Scripture produces defective doctrine and, ultimately, a defective church. Homiletics — the art of preaching — is hermeneutics made public: the bridge between the ancient text and the contemporary congregation.

Apologetics and Polemics

Apologetics is the discipline of giving a reasoned account of the Christian faith to those who question or oppose it. Peter's charge is comprehensive: "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet. 3:15). Polemics — arguing against false teaching within the Church — is a less comfortable but equally necessary component of the minister's calling.

"...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

— 1 Peter 3:15

Pastoral Theology

Pastoral theology encompasses the practical disciplines of soul care: the faithful administration of the sacraments, the practice of biblical counseling, the exercise of church discipline, and the formation of disciples. In baptism, God seals His covenant promise to the believer; in the Lord's Supper, He renews that covenant and nourishes faith.

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

— Matthew 26:26–28

Nouthetic counseling — counseling grounded in the authoritative sufficiency of Scripture — applies the truth of God's Word to the particular struggles of particular people. The foundation of this ministry is 2 Timothy 3:16–17: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Reflection Questions — Chapter 8

- 1.** In what ways does your current approach to biblical interpretation reflect the discipline of hermeneutics? What specific steps could you take to deepen your skill in “rightly handling the word of truth”?
- 2.** Peter calls for apologetics done with “gentleness and respect”. How do you maintain that tone when engaging people who are hostile to the Christian faith? Where do you find it most difficult?
- 3.** The author connects the administration of the sacraments with pastoral theology. How does your own participation in baptism and the Lord’s Supper shape your understanding of what God is doing in and through the ministry of the Church?

CHAPTER 9

The Motives

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

— Galatians 6:10

Behind every human action lies a motive — a driving purpose that gives the action its character and determines its ultimate significance. Christian ministry is no exception. The same outward action — preaching a sermon, visiting a sick person, distributing food — can proceed from entirely different motives, and that difference is not morally insignificant.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

— 1 Corinthians 13:1

The foundational motive of all genuine Christian ministry is love — the agape of the New Testament, the self-giving love that is, as Paul insists, the *sine qua non* of every spiritual gift. Without love, the most impressive ministerial accomplishments are, in Paul's arresting image, the noise of a gong and the clanging of a cymbal. This love is not primarily an emotion but an orientation of the will — a decision to seek the good of the other, to serve without regard for personal advantage.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

— Galatians 6:9–10

The motive of love finds its specific expression in the care for the vulnerable — the sick, the elderly, the poor, the widowed, the orphaned. Paul's reminder of Jesus's words — "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) — points to a pattern of generosity that characterized the earliest Christian communities. The Jerusalem church described in Acts 4:32–35 practiced a form of communal sharing — not coercive state socialism but the voluntary generosity of a community bound together by love.

"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common."

— Acts 4:32

The retired pastor and the elderly church member who served faithfully for decades without recognition deserve the care and material support of the community they served. The church that provides for its aging and infirm members is embodying the covenant faithfulness of the God who promised to be the Father of His people through all the generations of their lives.

Reflection Questions — Chapter 9

1. Paul says that ministry without love is noise, not music. Where in your own ministry have you detected the presence of motives other than love — ambition, self-protection, reputation management? What is the remedy?
2. The care for the vulnerable is presented as a concrete expression of love. How does your local congregation specifically care for the elderly, infirm, poor, and marginalized in its community?
3. The early church in Jerusalem held its possessions in common, not by compulsion but by love. What would a contemporary, Spirit-formed generosity look like in your specific community?

CHAPTER 10

The Motivation

"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died."

— 2 Corinthians 5:14

While the motives of Christian ministry describe its driving concerns, the motivation describes the energy that sustains it over the long haul. Motives answer “Why do we serve?”; motivation answers “What keeps us serving when the work is hard, the results are slow, and the personal cost is high?”

"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

— 2 Corinthians 5:14–15

The answer Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 5:14 is one of the most powerful in the entire New Testament: “the love of Christ controls us.” The Greek word *sunechei* means to hold together, to compress, to constrain — the image of a force that holds something firmly in a particular direction. The love that Christ demonstrated in His death is an ongoing motivating power that holds the Christian minister to her course even when every natural motive for continuing has been exhausted.

"Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble."

— Psalm 119:165

The motivation of holiness is equally essential. The psalmist’s testimony points to one of the most counter-intuitive features of the

Christian life: the person who loves God's law experiences a peace and stability that makes her virtually unshakable. She is "not offended" — she does not become a stumbling block to others, because she is not constantly tripping over her own grievances, insecurities, and wounded pride.

And the motivation of hope — the confident expectation of Christ's return and the consummation of His kingdom — sustains the Christian minister through long seasons when fruit is not visible and when opposition seems overwhelming.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

— Hebrews 12:1–2

Reflection Questions — Chapter 10

1. The author identifies three motivations: the love of Christ, the pursuit of holiness, and the hope of Christ's return. Which of these most consistently sustains you in your ministry? Which do you most need to cultivate?
2. Paul says the love of Christ "controls" or "compels" us — the Greek word suggests a force that holds something on course. When has the love of Christ kept you faithful in ministry when your own natural energy was exhausted?
3. The motivation of hope means living with an active orientation toward the return of Christ. How does that eschatological hope practically shape your priorities, your patience, and your perseverance?

CHAPTER 11

The Means

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

— Philippians 4:13

The means by which Christian ministry is carried out are not natural resources but supernatural gifts. They are not the products of human ingenuity, institutional investment, or strategic planning alone; they are the provisions of the God who calls and equips those whom He sends. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," declares the Lord (Zech. 4:6).

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

— Romans 8:1–2

The primary means of Christian ministry is grace — multifaceted and inexhaustible. It is the grace of justification, the grace of sanctification, the grace of giftedness, and the grace of perseverance. Paul's distinction between grace and mercy is pastorally significant: grace gives us what we do not deserve; mercy withholds what we do deserve.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

— Ephesians 2:8–9

We are saved not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy (Titus 3:5). The minister who has

understood this distinction will be simultaneously humble before God and compassionate toward the people she serves.

"...he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

— Titus 3:5

The practical means of ministry include the ordinary disciplines of the Christian life: regular engagement with the Scriptures, disciplined prayer, faithful participation in corporate worship, and the deliberate practice of love toward neighbor and enemy alike. These are not techniques for producing spiritual results; they are channels through which the grace and power of God flow into the minister's life and, through her, into the lives of those she serves.

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."

— 1 Corinthians 15:10

Reflection Questions — Chapter 11

1. What is the difference between grace and mercy? How does understanding both shape the way you relate to God and to the people you serve?
2. The author lists Scripture, prayer, corporate worship, and love as the ordinary channels of grace. Which of these is most consistently practiced in your own life? Which is most neglected?
3. Paul says "I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God" (1 Cor. 15:10). How do you hold together genuine human effort and complete dependence on divine grace in your ministry?

CHAPTER 12

The Mandates

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

— Micah 6:8

A mandate is a command that carries the authority of the one who issues it — an obligation that cannot be set aside on the grounds of inconvenience or institutional inertia. The Christian ministry operates under several such mandates, each carrying the authority of the Risen Lord.

The Cultural Mandate

"And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

— Genesis 1:28

The cultural mandate has not been revoked by the fall. Christians are called to be faithful stewards of the created order: responsible environmentalists, good neighbors, engaged citizens, and careful craftsmen in whatever work God has assigned to them.

The Evangelistic Mandate

The evangelistic mandate — the Great Commission of Matthew 28 — calls the Church to make disciples of all nations. This is the vocation of every member of the Body of Christ.

The Diaconal Mandate

The diaconal mandate calls the Church to care for the poor, the sick, the orphaned, and the widowed. A church that proclaims the gospel without caring for the poor has separated two things that the Lord joined together. Jesus defined His own mission in terms of Isaiah 61:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

— Luke 4:18

The Worship Mandate

The worship mandate calls the Church to gather regularly for the public praise of God — to hear His Word read and preached, to sing, to pray, to receive the sacraments, and to offer the sacrifice of praise that is the primary business of the redeemed community. The Lord's Day worship is not one option among many; it is the weekly renewal of the covenant community's identity.

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!"

— Psalm 95:6

Reflection Questions — Chapter 12

1. How does understanding the cultural mandate change the way you think about your daily work, your civic responsibilities, and your stewardship of the created world?
2. Which of the four mandates — cultural, evangelistic, diaconal, worship — is most emphasized in your local church? Which is most neglected? What would balance look like?
3. Jesus defined His own mission in terms of Isaiah 61: proclaiming good news to the poor and release to the captives. How does your congregation embody this diaconal dimension of the Lord's mission?

CHAPTER 13

The Manifestation

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

— Matthew 5:16

The Christian ministry is not ultimately a matter of words alone. It is a matter of visible, tangible, observable reality — the lived demonstration, in the daily existence of Christ's people, that the gospel they proclaim is true.

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

— Matthew 5:13–16

Good works are the manifestation of the Christian life — not its cause, but its necessary and inevitable expression. Paul is explicit in Ephesians 2:8–10: salvation is by grace through faith, not by works; but the people thus saved have been “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” The good works are the fruit by which the tree is known.

This manifestation takes form in the ordinary decisions of daily life: the businessperson who refuses to falsify accounts, the employee who serves with diligence even when no one is watching, the parent who models patience and integrity in the home. These are not spectacular acts of heroism; they are the salt and light that Jesus described — the quiet, persistent, transforming presence of people renewed by the Spirit.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."

— Colossians 1:15

Paul writes in Colossians 1:15 that Christ “is the image of the invisible God.” When Christians bear the image of Christ — when their lives display His love, patience, integrity, and compassion — they make visible to the watching world something of the character of the invisible God. This is the most powerful apologetic available to the Church: not a philosophical argument but a transformed life.

"...that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life."

— Philippians 2:15–16

Reflection Questions — Chapter 13

1. The author argues that transformed lives are the most powerful apologetic available to the Church. Can you identify specific examples — from your own experience or from history — where a Christian’s visible life had more impact than any argument?
2. In what areas of your daily life is the salt losing its saltiness — where there is minimal visible difference between your behavior and that of the people around you who do not know Christ?
3. Good works are “prepared beforehand” by God for us to walk in (Eph. 2:10). How does understanding good works as divine assignments rather than human achievements change the way you approach them?

CHAPTER 14

The Merits

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

— 2 Timothy 4:7

The Christian ministry is not performed for reward — yet it is rewarded. This reflects the character of the God who is both utterly gracious and meticulously just. The rewards of faithful Christian ministry are not wages of merit earned in the strict theological sense; they are the expression of God's overflowing generosity toward faithful stewards of what He entrusted to them.

"If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward."

— 1 Corinthians 3:14

The New Testament describes the Bema — the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10) — at which the works of every believer will be evaluated. This is not the Great White Throne judgment of eternal destiny; it is the evaluation of the quality of the Christian's work within the framework of a salvation already secured. The fire of that judgment will reveal what was done in dependence on God's grace, for God's glory, and what was done for personal advantage.

The New Testament speaks of five specific crowns: the Crown of Glory (1 Pet. 5:4), promised to faithful pastors and elders; the Crown of Life (Jas. 1:12), promised to those who endure trial and martyrdom; the Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19), promised to those who have brought others to faith; the Incorruptible Crown (1 Cor. 9:25–27), promised to those who exercised rigorous self-discipline; and the Crown of

Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), promised to those who have lived in the expectant hope of Christ's return.

"And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

— 1 Peter 5:4

The minister who serves without recognition, whose faithful decades of pastoral care will never be the subject of a biography — she can know that nothing done in dependence on Christ, for the love of His people and the glory of His name, will be forgotten by the One who sees in secret and rewards openly (Matt. 6:4).

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

— 2 Timothy 4:7–8

Reflection Questions — Chapter 14

1. The Bema judgment evaluates the quality of Christian work, not its quantity. What criteria does the author identify for work that will “survive the fire” of that judgment?
2. Which of the five crowns most directly corresponds to the specific ministry to which you are called? How does the prospect of that crown sustain you in the present?
3. God “rewards openly” what is done in secret (Matt. 6:4). How does this promise practically shape your attitude toward service that goes unrecognized?

CHAPTER 15

The Morality

"You shall be holy, for I am holy."

— 1 Peter 1:16

The morality of the Christian ministry is not an external code of conduct imposed from without; it is the organic expression of a renewed nature transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Christian is not moral because she follows a set of rules, but because she has been united to Christ, who is the embodiment of God's moral character — "the image of the invisible God" — and who is, by His Spirit, replicating that image in the lives of all who belong to Him.

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

— Matthew 7:12

The positive form of the Golden Rule — "Do to others what you would have them do to you" — distinguishes Christian ethics from every merely negative ethical system, including the negative formulation attributed to Confucius: "Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." The difference is significant: the negative formulation calls for restraint from harm; the positive formulation calls for active, initiative-taking love. It is the ethics of the Good Samaritan.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

— Philippians 2:5–8

The moral vision of the Christian ministry is grounded in the doctrine of the Image of God. Human beings are made in the image of God, bearing His rationality, His moral awareness, His relational nature, and His capacity for creativity and stewardship. The fall has marred but not destroyed this image; in Christ, through the renewing work of the Spirit, the image is being restored and will ultimately be perfected.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

— Genesis 1:27

The morality of Christian ministry is not achieved by human effort alone; it is the fruit of the Spirit — the supernatural product of a life yielded to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). The minister who attempts to be holy by willpower alone will exhaust herself; the minister who submits daily to the Spirit's transforming work will find that "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

Reflection Questions — Chapter 15

1. How does the author's distinction between a negative and positive formulation of the Golden Rule illuminate the difference between a merely rule-following morality and a genuinely Christ-shaped one?
2. The Image of God in humanity has been marred by the fall but is being renewed by the Spirit. What specific evidence of that renewal do you see in your own life? What evidence of the fall's damage remains most persistent?
3. Holiness is the fruit of the Spirit, not the product of willpower. What would it mean to more consistently "keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25) in the area of your Christian life where you most struggle with moral failure?

CHAPTER 16

The Menace

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

— 1 Peter 5:8

The Christian ministry does not operate in a neutral environment. It faces opposition — organized, persistent, and spiritually hostile opposition — from forces that are not merely social or intellectual but demonic. Behind the visible challenges that the Church encounters in every generation lies an invisible adversary who is both personally malevolent and strategically patient.

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world."

— 1 Peter 5:8–9

Materialism

The first and most pervasive menace to the Christian ministry in the contemporary world is Materialism — the philosophical assumption that only physical matter is real, and the practical orientation of relentlessly prioritizing wealth, comfort, and status over the values of the Kingdom of God.

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

— 1 Timothy 6:9–10

Modernism

The second great menace is Modernism — the comprehensive worldview shaped by the Enlightenment's displacement of divine revelation with human reason as the ultimate arbiter of truth. In its contemporary expressions — Agnosticism, Relativism, and the New Age Movement — it continues to pose a profound challenge to the Church's confidence in the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

— 2 Corinthians 10:4–5

Moral Corruption

The third menace is moral corruption — the gradual erosion of the Church's distinctive ethical character as she accommodates herself to the moral norms of the surrounding culture. The antidote to moral corruption is not moralism but the Spirit-enabled renewal of the inner life.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

— Romans 12:1–2

Reflection Questions — Chapter 16

1. Which of the three menaces — Materialism, Modernism, or Moral Corruption — poses the greatest threat to the specific ministry context you inhabit? What does a faithful response look like?

2. The author frames Modernism as a philosophical worldview, not merely a cultural mood. How does understanding its intellectual roots help you engage it more effectively?
3. The antidote to Moral Corruption is not moralism but the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2). What specific practices of mind-renewal are most effective in your own struggle against cultural accommodation?

Conclusion

The Church Still Marching

"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

— Matthew 16:18

In conclusion, the Christian ministry will ever be here — not because of the strength or faithfulness of its human practitioners, but because of the unbreakable promise of the One who declared: “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The gates of hell are a defensive metaphor: the powers of death, doing their utmost to contain and hold back the advance of the Kingdom. They will not succeed.

The Church that carries out the Christian ministry described in these chapters is not a perfect institution. It is a community of sinners in the process of being saved — imperfect in its doctrine, imperfect in its practice, imperfect in its love — but animated by a perfect Savior, guided by an infallible Word, and empowered by an omnipotent Spirit.

The seven local churches of Asia Minor addressed in the book of Revelation represent, in their combination of strengths and failures, the whole Church of Jesus Christ in every age and every culture. Each received a specific diagnosis and a specific exhortation from the Risen Lord; each was called to repentance and renewal. The message to these ancient congregations is the message to every congregation today: hold fast to the truth, love one another, endure with patience, and keep the flame of first love burning.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."

— Revelation 22:17

The Church is the salt of the earth and the light of the world — the only institution in human society that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not yet its members, the only community whose ultimate hope is not for its own perpetuation but for the coming of the Kingdom of God in all its fullness.

May the ministers of Christ's Church — pastors and elders, deacons and lay workers, evangelists and teachers, parents and neighbors, all who have been called to bear witness to the grace of God in Christ — receive from these pages a fresh vision of the high and holy calling they have received. And may the God of all grace, who called them to His eternal glory in Christ, himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish them for every good work to which He has appointed them.

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

— 1 Peter 5:10

Soli Deo gloria.

To God alone be the glory.

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Index of Scripture Citations

The following index lists all Scripture passages cited or expounded in this work, organized by biblical book in canonical order and cross-referenced to the relevant chapter.

Genesis	1:27	<i>Chapter 15</i>
Genesis	1:28	<i>Chapter 12</i>
Psalms	95:6	<i>Chapter 12</i>
Psalms	119:165	<i>Chapter 10</i>
Micah	6:8	<i>Chapter 12 (epigraph)</i>
Matthew	5:13–16	<i>Chapters 13, Conclusion</i>
Matthew	7:12	<i>Chapter 15</i>
Matthew	16:18	<i>Conclusion</i>
Matthew	20:28	<i>Chapter 4</i>
Matthew	26:26–28	<i>Chapter 8</i>
Matthew	28:18–20	<i>Introduction; Chapter 6</i>
Luke	4:18	<i>Chapter 12</i>
John	3:7–8	<i>Chapter 1</i>
John	10:11	<i>Chapter 5</i>
John	11:25–26	<i>Introduction</i>
John	13:14–15	<i>Chapter 4</i>
John	14:6	<i>Chapter 3</i>
John	20:21	<i>Preface</i>
Acts	1:8	<i>Chapter 6</i>
Acts	4:32	<i>Chapter 9</i>
Acts	20:24	<i>Chapters 4, 7; Preface</i>
Acts	20:27	<i>Chapter 7</i>
Romans	1:16	<i>Chapter 7 (epigraph)</i>
Romans	8:1–2	<i>Chapter 11</i>

Romans	8:9–11	<i>Chapter 3</i>
Romans	8:16	<i>Chapter 3 (epigraph)</i>
Romans	12:1–2	<i>Chapter 16</i>
Romans	11:33	<i>Acknowledgments</i>
1 Corinthians	3:6–7	<i>Chapter 1</i>
1 Corinthians	9:25–27	<i>Chapter 14</i>
1 Corinthians	10:31	<i>Chapter 6</i>
1 Corinthians	11:1	<i>Chapter 4 (epigraph)</i>
1 Corinthians	13:1	<i>Chapter 9</i>
1 Corinthians	15:3–5	<i>Chapter 7</i>
1 Corinthians	15:10	<i>Chapter 11</i>
2 Corinthians	5:14–15	<i>Chapter 10</i>
2 Corinthians	5:17	<i>Chapter 2</i>
2 Corinthians	10:4–5	<i>Chapter 16</i>
Galatians	2:20	<i>Introduction</i>
Galatians	5:22–23	<i>Chapter 3</i>
Galatians	6:9–10	<i>Chapter 9</i>
Ephesians	1:17–18	<i>Chapter 1</i>
Ephesians	2:8–9	<i>Chapter 11</i>
Ephesians	2:10	<i>Chapter 2 (epigraph)</i>
Ephesians	4:11–12	<i>Chapter 5</i>
Ephesians	4:30	<i>Chapter 3</i>
Philippians	2:5–8	<i>Chapter 15</i>
Philippians	2:15–16	<i>Chapter 13</i>
Philippians	3:20–21	<i>Chapter 2</i>
Philippians	4:13	<i>Chapter 11 (epigraph)</i>
Colossians	1:15	<i>Chapter 13</i>
Colossians	1:27	<i>Chapter 2</i>
1 Timothy	3:1–2	<i>Chapter 5</i>
1 Timothy	3:16	<i>Chapter 1</i>
1 Timothy	6:9–10	<i>Chapter 16</i>
2 Timothy	2:15	<i>Chapter 8 (epigraph)</i>
2 Timothy	3:16–17	<i>Chapters 7, 8</i>
2 Timothy	4:7–8	<i>Chapter 14</i>
Titus	3:8	<i>Chapter 6</i>
Titus	3:5	<i>Chapter 11</i>
Hebrews	12:1–2	<i>Chapter 10</i>
Hebrews	12:2	<i>Chapters 2, 4</i>

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE CITATIONS

Hebrews	13:20	<i>Chapter 5</i>
James	1:12	<i>Chapter 14</i>
1 Peter	1:16	<i>Chapter 15 (epigraph)</i>
1 Peter	2:9	<i>Chapter 5</i>
1 Peter	3:15	<i>Chapter 8</i>
1 Peter	5:4	<i>Chapter 14</i>
1 Peter	5:8–9	<i>Chapter 16 (epigraph)</i>
1 Peter	5:10	<i>Conclusion</i>
Revelation	12:11	<i>Chapter 4</i>
Revelation	22:17	<i>Conclusion</i>

Subject Index

The following index lists major theological themes, persons, and concepts discussed in this volume.

Agnosticism	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace — Modernism)</i>
Apologetics and Polemics	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Baptism, Sacrament of	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Bema Seat (Judgment Seat of Christ)	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Christology	<i>Introduction; Chapters 1, 4</i>
Crown of Glory	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Crown of Life	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Crown of Rejoicing	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Crown of Righteousness	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Crown, Incorruptible	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Cultural Mandate	<i>Chapter 12 (Mandates)</i>
Deacons, Office of	<i>Chapter 5 (Ministers)</i>
Discipleship	<i>Chapters 6, 12</i>
Elders, Office of	<i>Chapter 5 (Ministers)</i>
Evangelism / Evangelization	<i>Chapters 6, 12</i>
Golden Rule, Christian vs. Confucian	<i>Chapter 15 (Morality)</i>
Good Works	<i>Chapters 13, 15</i>
Grace, Doctrine of	<i>Chapters 2, 11</i>
Great Commission	<i>Introduction; Chapter 6 (Mission)</i>
Hermeneutics and Homiletics	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Hireling, Warning Against	<i>Chapters 4, 5</i>
Holiness	<i>Chapters 10, 15</i>
Holy Spirit, Indwelling Work of	<i>Chapters 1, 3, 11</i>
Image of God (Imago Dei)	<i>Chapters 2, 15</i>
Incarnation	<i>Introduction; Chapter 1 (Mystery)</i>
Justification	<i>Chapters 2, 11</i>

Kingdom of God	<i>Chapters 6, 7</i>
Lord's Supper	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Materialism	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace)</i>
Means of Grace	<i>Chapter 11 (Means)</i>
Modernism	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace)</i>
Moral Corruption	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace)</i>
Mystery (Mysterion)	<i>Chapter 1</i>
Mysticality	<i>Chapter 3</i>
New Age Movement	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace)</i>
Nouthetic Counseling	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Pastoral Theology	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Priesthood of All Believers	<i>Chapter 5 (Ministers)</i>
Regeneration	<i>Chapters 2, 3</i>
Relativism	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace)</i>
Resurrection of Christ	<i>Introduction; Chapters 1, 2</i>
Rewards, Eschatological	<i>Chapter 14 (Merits)</i>
Sacraments	<i>Chapter 8 (Musts)</i>
Sanctification	<i>Chapters 2, 11, 15</i>
Satan / Devil	<i>Chapter 16 (Menace)</i>
Servant Leadership	<i>Chapters 4, 5</i>
Trinity, Holy	<i>Chapters 1, 3</i>
Worship, Corporate	<i>Chapter 12 (Mandates)</i>

About the Author

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar is a Pastor Emeritus who holds the degrees of Th.B. (Bachelor of Theology), A.B. (Bachelor of Arts), and D.D. (Doctor of Divinity). He has devoted his life and ministry to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the theological formation of God's people across multiple decades of pastoral and academic service.

Dr. Niangar resides in Bacolod City, Philippines, together with his beloved wife Estrella, whose faithful companionship has been a constant source of strength through every season of ministry. Their daughter and son now reside in the United States and Canada respectively, where they continue to carry forward the legacy of faith first kindled in a Filipino home and a Filipino church.

He served for many years in partnership with the members of Holistic Enhancement for Lay Leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.), a ministry organization under the leadership of Pastor Riley Legarde, committed to equipping the whole people of God for faithful service in church and society.

The Christian Ministry is the seventh volume in the Niangar Theological Library, a series published by Crossway that represents the accumulated fruit of Dr. Niangar's pastoral and theological ministry. The previous volumes in the series are:

Spiritual Unity and Personal Diversity in Christ

Why God Did Decree and Allow Evil to Exist

What the Christian Church Should Be

The Reformed Theological Paradigm

The Holy Loving Triune Lord God

God's Grandest Scheme of Salvation

The Christian Ministry

His theological formation reflects sustained engagement with the whole of the Reformed and evangelical tradition — from the Church Fathers through the magisterial Reformers to the modern Reformed theologians. Among those whose thought has most shaped his own are Abraham Kuyper, Louis Berkhof, Benjamin B. Warfield, Oscar Cullmann, Herman Dooyeweerd, Karl Barth, Paul Jewett, R.C. Sproul, and Ravi Zacharias.

The Christian Ministry represents Dr. Niangar's most sustained engagement with the practical and pastoral dimensions of the theological convictions explored in the preceding volumes. It is his conviction that theology that does not find its way into the life and practice of the Church is incomplete — and that the ministry of Christ's people is the divinely appointed means by which the gospel of grace is proclaimed, embodied, and transmitted to every generation until the Lord returns.

Soli Deo gloria.