



Let's Read *The Institutes* of the Christian Religion, Class 14

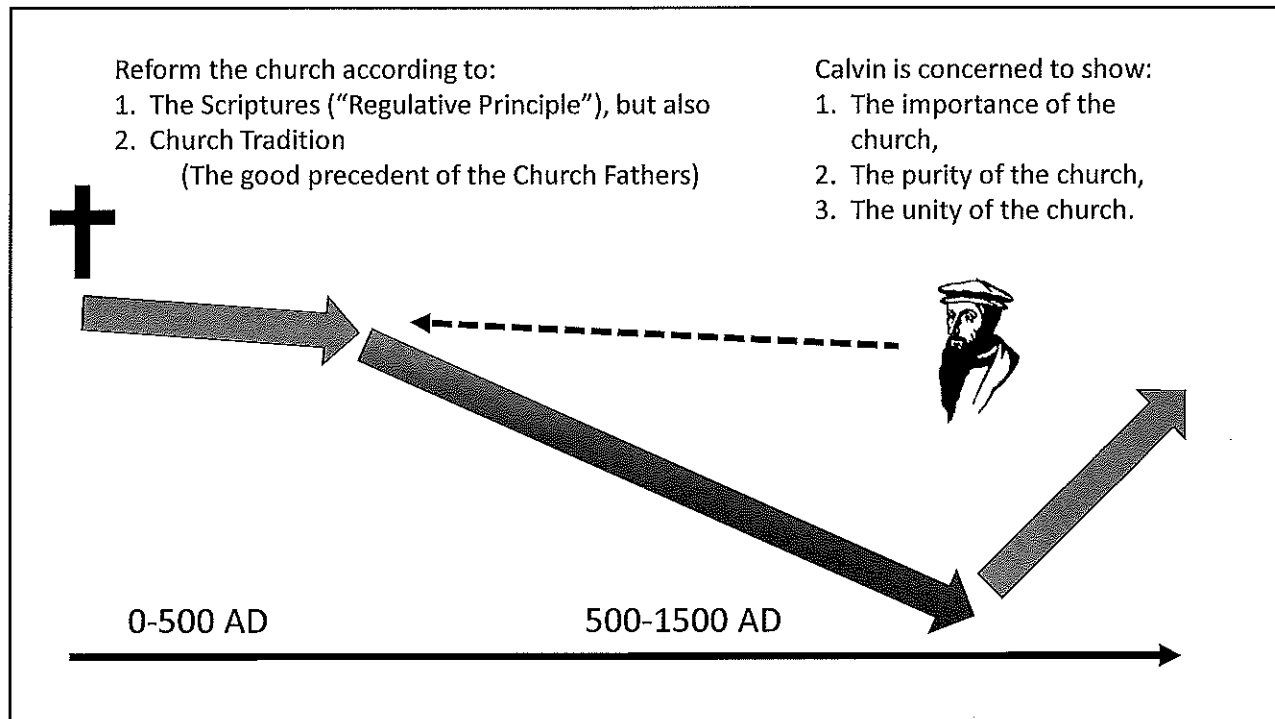
Book 4: The External Means Or Aids By Which God Invites Us Into The Society Of Christ And Holds Us Therein.

Chapters 3-4



Section Headings

- Of the teachers and ministers of the Church.
Their election and office.
- Of the state of the primitive Church,
and the mode of government in use before the papacy.



The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

1. The Head of the Church is Jesus Christ.
2. It is Christ working in the church through the ministry of mere men
 - A. to accommodate to us, train us in humility/obedience
 - B. to bind us to one another in mutual love/service
3. Categories of Offices
 - A. Temporary/extraordinary
 - 1) Apostles –
and still occasionally raises them up when the necessity of the times requires.
 Calvin commends Luther to his reader as a new apostle in this way
 at certain, epochal times in church history
 but not to allow for further Scriptural contributions.
 Nature of this office: the Great Commission (exclusively)

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

3. Categories of Offices

A. Temporary/extraordinary

1) Apostles

2) Prophets –

“those who excelled by special revelation” (gift of insight)

Rare in any era (vs. some Radicals boasting full, extraordinary gifts of rev.)

Includes both foretelling and forth-telling.

3) Evangelists – those who serve alongside the apostles

Peter/Mark

Paul/Timothy, Titus

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

3. Categories of Offices

A. Temporary/extraordinary

B. Permanent/ordinary

“Clergy” means “belonging to the Lord” and, therefore, to all in the church.

(Calvin does not look to abolish the clergy, he is looking to abolish the laity.)

(Same idea as Luther’s “priesthood of all believers”.)

1. Pastors/Bishops/Presbyters –

a) These are synonymous with parity

1) “lest anyone should arrogate to himself the sole bishopric of Christ”;

2) however, Calvin is flexible in situations of pragmatic necessity.

b) This office corresponds to that of the apostle (who knew no set limits),
but the pastor is bound/called to a particular church first.

b) He is to preach, administer the sacraments, exercise church discipline.

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

3. Categories of Offices

B. Permanent/ordinary

1. Pastors
2. Teachers –
 - a) This office corresponds to that of prophet.
(Calvin regards himself as holding both the offices of pastor/teacher even though he was never ordained throughout his career.)
 - b) The Reformed tradition has not kept this office.
3. Elders –
 - a) Primary responsibility – the spiritual welfare of the people and to exercise church discipline along with the pastors.
 - b) They should be chosen from among the people of the congregation (vs. the fact that elders in Calvin's day were chosen by the city govt.)

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

3. Categories of Offices

B. Permanent/ordinary

1. Pastors
2. Teachers
3. Elders
4. Deacons –
 - a) In the RC tradition, this office had deteriorated into a mere liturgical adjunct. That role is eliminated by Calvin's reformation of the liturgy and the office of Deacon is restored to its original, biblical function.

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

3. Categories of Offices

B. Permanent/ordinary

4. Deacons –

b) Two-fold responsibility

- 1) Financial – Collect and administer the church’s benevolence.
- 2) Caretakers/Welfare workers – this role/office open to women (rf. 1 Tim. 5:10)
 - a. Calvin assumes the “honored” widows put on Timothy’s list
 - i. were given the office of Deacon
 - ii. even though it seems evident (1 Tim. 5:16)
 1. that the “honored” widows on the role
 2. are the ones who may rightfully be taken care of by those who truly are Deacons.

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

3. Categories of Offices

B. Permanent/ordinary

4. Deacons –

b) Two-fold responsibility

- 1) Financial – Collect and administer the church’s benevolence.
- 2) Caretakers/Welfare workers – this role/office open to women (rf. 1 Tim. 5:10)
 - b. In Calvin’s Commentary on Rom. 16:1

Calvin assumes Phoebe is an ordained Deaconess because:

 - i. She is charged with delivering Paul’s letter and, therefore, acting as his ambassador,
 - ii. which is not in the exercise of being a caretaker/welfare worker.
 - c. In Acts 6:1-6
 - i. we have a depiction of the condition described in 1 Tim. 5:10
 - ii. but the duty of serving widows was not given to other widows but to men.

The Legitimate Offices and Officers of the Church

4. Calling and Ordination

A. Calling

1. Inward Call of the Minister – the Holy Spirit
2. Outward Call of the Minister – Confirmation by appointing ministers and the congregation

B. Ordination

1. The laying on of hands for the blessing and consecration (set aside for special work).
2. The ordained “is no longer his own, but is bound in service to God and the Church”.
3. Deacons, also, are to receive this ordination.
4. And, although Calvin cites 2 Tim. 1:6,
 - a) he does not assign to ordination a conferring of spiritual authority
 - b) Which assuredly must be in view as it pertains to the giving of the office of elders to others.



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