

Ordination in the King James Version of the Bible

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The question about whether or how it might be meaningful to talk about ordination from a biblical perspective requires that one address questions of definition and method. What exactly is ordination? Is it a biblical concept? What if what we call ordination in the church today is different from ordination as it was conceived or practiced in the Bible? Should we take our definitional cues from the Bible itself, or should we take what we “know” about ordination to the New Testament texts in order to see whether it is there?¹

Such questions raise the even more foundational issue of our understanding of leadership and office. Behind the words we may or may not use for ordination, or the practices we may employ in installing and formally recognizing congregational leaders, lie questions about how our “offices” or understandings of pastoral ministry compare with those in the New Testament and whether New Testament patterns of ministry should determine today’s church order. The latter question goes to the heart of the matter and represents a key issue in this book; the concept of ordination as a biblical and contemporary practice is but one small related issue.

Historically, the Mennonite church tradition has emphasized the priesthood of all believers while exhibiting some anticlericalism.² Some—especially those in the Old Mennonite tradition—have maintained that the biblical case for the rite of ordination is weak. In his study of “Mennonites and Ordination,”³ Weldon Schloneger quotes several twentieth-century Mennonites who commented on the New Testament foundation for the practice. For instance, Paul M. Miller noted that ordination in the New Testament did not follow any prescribed order and that there was not much precision about how the term is used.⁴ John Howard Yoder stated simply, “The New Testament is not clear about ordination.”⁵ In stronger words, Yoder

noted, “There [are] . . . no grounds for seeing in the New Testament usage a clear conception of ordination as applying to some Christians and not to others.”⁶ Orlando Wiebe wrote, “There appears to be reason to believe that no attempt was made by Christ nor by the apostles to declare a permanent form of ministerial appointment or service.”⁷ The Mennonite Church study on leadership and authority similarly concluded in its report to the 1979 Mennonite Church General Assembly that “the New Testament does not give us a definite and detailed concept of ordination.”⁸ On the other hand, Erland Waltner could say that “the practice of ordination to ministerial offices, while not prominent in the New Testament, *nevertheless has a clear biblical basis.*”⁹

So what *does* the Bible have to say about ordination? In this essay, I will make some general observations about the use of the word *ordain* in three English translations of the Bible—the King James Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the New International Version—and the words so translated in the original languages. Second, I will consider possible reasons behind the use of the word *ordain* in the King James Version in light of the seventeenth-century Church of England context. Finally, I will reflect briefly on some of the possible implications of the above for the church in the twenty-first century.

Biblical conceptions of ordination

One of the problems in considering a biblical perspective on ordination is the problem of determining what “ordination” is, biblically, in the first place. What Hebrew and Greek words mean “ordination”? The perhaps surprising answer is that actually none of them do—at least no technical term parallels the English technical term *ordination*.

In what follows I will lay out in some detail the biblical references to ordination and the words used in expressing it so that readers can study the evidence for themselves.¹⁰ The word *ordain*, or *ordination*, occurs 19 times in the King James Version of the Hebrew Bible, 28 times in the New Revised Standard Version (with few of these in common), and 29 times in the New International Version, with a great deal of overlap between the NRSV and NIV. Of the 19 occurrences in the King James Version, only 17 translate a Hebrew or Aramaic verb, the other two being “supplied” to suggest the sense of the Hebrew

text. These 17 translate 10 different Hebrew verbs and one Aramaic verb, most of which are common words meaning “to make” or “to do,” “to put,” or “to command.” The 16 occurrences of *ordain* in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible) translate 11 different Greek verbs in those verses where a Greek equivalent exists!

Num. 28:6	עָשָׂה, <i>śh</i> ; γίνωμαι, <i>ginomai</i>
1 Kings 12:32	עָשָׂה, <i>śh</i> ; ποιέω, <i>poieō</i>
2 Kings 23:5	נָתַן, <i>ntn</i> ; δίδωμι, <i>didōmi</i>
1 Chron. 9:22	יָסַד, <i>ysd</i> ; ἵστημι, <i>histēmi</i>
1 Chron. 17:9	יָשָׁם, <i>śym</i> ; τίθημι, <i>tithēmi</i>
2 Chron. 11:15	עָמַד, <i>md</i> ; καθίστημι, <i>kathistēmi</i>
2 Chron. 23:18	—; —
2 Chron. 29:27	—; —
Esther 9:27	קָמַם, <i>qum</i> ; ἵστημι, <i>histēmi</i>
Ps. 7:13	לָעַב, <i>p'l</i> ; —
Ps. 8:2	יָסַד, <i>ysd</i> ; καταρτίξω, <i>katartizō</i>
Ps. 8:3	כָּוֵן, <i>kūn</i> ; θεμελιόω, <i>themelioō</i>
Ps. 81:5	יָשָׁם, <i>śym</i> ; τίθημι, <i>tithēmi</i>
Ps. 132:17	עָרַב, <i>rk</i> ; ἑτοιμάζω, <i>hetoimazō</i>
Isa. 26:12	תָּשָׂה, <i>śpt</i> ; δίδωμι, <i>didōmi</i>
Isa. 30:33	עָרַב, <i>rk</i> ; ἀπαίτεω, <i>apaiteō</i>
Jer. 1:5	נָתַן, <i>ntn</i> ; τίθημι, <i>tithēmi</i>
Dan. 2:24	בָּנָה, <i>mbh</i> ; καθίστημι, <i>kathistēmi</i>
Hab. 1:12	יָשָׁם, <i>śym</i> ; τάσσω, <i>tassō</i>

When we look at *ordain* in the New Revised Standard and the New International Version, we see that most of the occurrences of the word in the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) are translated in the King James Version as *consecrate*. The word *ordain* is used by the NRSV and NIV in the following verses:

Exod. 28:41	אָלַם, <i>ml</i> ; ἐπιπέλημι, <i>empiplēmi</i>
Exod. 29:22	בָּלְאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Exod. 29:26	בָּלְאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Exod. 29:27	בָּלְאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Exod. 29:29	אָלַם, <i>ml</i> ; τελειόω, <i>teleioō</i>
Exod. 29:31	בָּלְאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Exod. 29:33	אָלַם, <i>ml</i> ; τελειόω, <i>teleioō</i>
Exod. 29:34	בָּלְאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Exod. 29:35	אָלַם, <i>ml</i> ; τελειόω, <i>teleioō</i>

Exod. 32:29	מִלֵּא, <i>ml'</i> ; πληροῶ, <i>plēroō</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “set apart”]
Lev. 7:37	מִלֵּאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Lev. 8:22	מִלֵּאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Lev. 8:28	מִלֵּאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Lev. 8:29	מִלֵּאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Lev. 8:31	מִלֵּאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Lev. 8:33	מִלֵּאִים, <i>ml'ym</i> ; τελείωσις, <i>teleiōsis</i>
Lev. 8:33	מִלֵּא, <i>ml'</i> ; τελειώω, <i>teleioō</i>
Lev. 16:32	מִלֵּא, <i>ml'</i> ; τελειώω, <i>teleioō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “consecrated”]
Lev. 21:10	מִלֵּא, <i>ml'</i> ; τελειώω, <i>teleioō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “consecrated”]
Num. 3:3	מִלֵּא, <i>ml'</i> ; τελειώω, <i>teleioō</i>
Num. 28:6	עָשָׂה, <i>'sb</i> ; γίνομαι, <i>ginomai</i>
2 Sam. 17:14	הָצַו, <i>ṣwh</i> ; ἐντέλλομαι, <i>entellomai</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “determined”]
1 Kings 1:36	אָמַר, <i>'mr</i> ; πιστώω, <i>pistoō</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “declare”]
2 Kings 19:25	עָשָׂה, <i>'sb</i> ; ἄγω, <i>agō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “determined”]
2 Kings 23:5	נָתַן, <i>ntn</i> ; δίδωμι, <i>didōmi</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “appointed”]
2 Chron. 2:4	—; — [No Hebrew or Greek word lies behind the NRSV's use of <i>ordained</i> here.] [NRSV only; NIV: “ordinance”]
2 Chron. 22:7	—; γίνωμαι, <i>ginomai</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “brought about”]
Ps. 8:2	יָסַד, <i>ysd</i> ; καταρτίζω, <i>katartizō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “founded”]
Ps. 65:9	כָּוַן, <i>kûn</i> ; ἐτοιμάζω, <i>hetoimazō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “prepared”]
Ps. 111:9	הָצַו, <i>ṣwh</i> ; ἐντέλλομαι, <i>entellomai</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “commanded”]
Ps. 133:3	הָצַו, <i>ṣwh</i> ; ἐντέλλομαι, <i>entellomai</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “bestows”]
Ps. 139:16	יָצַר, <i>ysr</i> ; πλάσσω, <i>plassō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “formed”]
Isa. 26:12	תָּפַח, <i>ṣpt</i> ; δίδωμι, <i>didōmi</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “establish”]
Isa. 37:24	עָשָׂה, <i>'sb</i> ; ποιέω, <i>poieō</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “determined”]
Isa. 48:5	הָצַו, <i>ṣwh</i> ; ἐντέλλομαι, <i>entellomai</i> [NIV only; NRSV: “commanded”]
Lam. 2:17	הָצַו, <i>ṣwh</i> ; ἐντέλλομαι, <i>entellomai</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “decreed”]
Lam. 3:37	הָצַו, <i>ṣwh</i> ; ἐντέλλομαι, <i>entellomai</i> [NRSV only; NIV: “decreed”]

Ezek. 28:13 תָּנַח, *ntn*; τίθημι, *tithēmi* [NIV only; NRSV: “placed”]
Hab. 1:12 דָּסָה, *ysd*; ἐλέγχω, *elenchō* [NIV only; NRSV: “established”]

We see here that a wide variety of Hebrew and Greek words lies behind the word *ordain* in the King James Version. The situation is not much different when we turn to the New Testament. If we exclude the uses of *ordain* in translating an inferior Greek text (2 Tim. 4:22 and Tit. 3:15), and the one place where it is “supplied,” with no Greek verb behind it (Rom. 7:10), we see that the 20 remaining occurrences of the word translate fully 13 different Greek verbs: γίνομαι (*ginomai*), διατάσσω (*diatassō*), καθίστημι (*kathistēmi*), κατασκευάζω (*kataskeuazō*), κρίνω (*krinō*), μετατίθημι (*metatithēmi*), ὀρίζω (*horizō*), ποιέω (*poieō*), προετοιμάζω (*proetoimazō*), προορίζω (*proorizō*), τάσσω (*tassō*), τίθημι (*tithēmi*), and χειροτονέω (*cheirotoneō*)! Such a variety of Greek words calls into question whether “ordination” was a New Testament concept at all.

The King James Version uses a form of *ordain* in the following verses:

- Mark 3:14 “And he [Jesus] *ordained* [ποιέω, *poieō*] twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.” [NRSV and NIV: “appointed”] ποιέω usually means “to make” or “to do.”
- John 15:16 “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and *ordained* [τίθημι, *tithēmi*] you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.” [NRSV and NIV: “appointed”] τίθημι usually means “to put” or “to place.”
- Acts 1:22 “. . . beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be *ordained* [γίνομαι, *ginomai*] to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” [NRSV and NIV: “become”] γίνομαι usually means “to happen” or “to become.”
- Acts 10:42 “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was *ordained* [ὀρίζω, *horizō*] of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.” [NRSV: “ordained”; NIV: “appointed”] ὀρίζω usually means “to define” or “to set limits to.”
- Acts 13:48 “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were *ordained* [τάσσω, *tassō*] to eternal life believed.” [NRSV:

- “ordained ; NIV: “appointed”] τάσσω usually means “to arrange” or “to put in place.”
- Acts 14:23 “And when they had *ordained* [χειροτονέω, *cheirotoneō*] them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” [NRSV and NIV: “appointed”] χειροτονέω usually means “to elect” or “to choose” and means literally, “to stretch out the hand,” whether in voting or in the laying on of hands.
- Acts 16:4 “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were *ordained* [κρίνω, *krinō*] of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.” [NRSV and NIV: “reached” (the decisions)] κρίνω usually means “to judge” or “to decide.”
- Acts 17:31 “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath *ordained* [ὁρίξω, *horizō*]; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” [NRSV and NIV: “appointed”] ὁρίξω usually means “to define” or “to set limits to.”
- [Rom. 7:10 “And the commandment, which *was ordained* [—] to life, I found *to be* unto death.” [NRSV: “promised ; and NIV: “intended”] No Greek verb lies behind the King James Version’s use of *ordained* in this verse.]
- Rom. 13:1 “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are *ordained* [τάσσω, *tassō*] of God.” [NRSV: “instituted”; and NIV: “established”] τάσσω usually means “to arrange” or “to put in place.”
- 1 Cor. 2:7 “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *ordained* [προορίζω, *proorizō*] before the world unto our glory.” [NRSV: “decreed ; and NIV: “destined”] προορίζω usually means “to decide beforehand.”
- 1 Cor. 7:17 “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so *ordain* I [διετάσσω, *diatassō*] that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” διετάσσω usually means “to arrange” or “to put in order.”
- Gal. 3:19 “Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because

- of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was ordained* [διτάσσω, *diatassō*] by angels in the hand of a mediator.” διτάσσω usually means “to arrange” or “to put in order.”
- Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath *before ordained* [προετοιμάζω, *proetoimazō*] a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and lie not*;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” προετοιμάζω usually means “to prepare beforehand.”
- [2 Tim. 4:22 (postscript)] “The second epistle unto Timotheus, *ordained* [χειροτονέω, *cheirotoneō*] the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.” χειροτονέω usually means “to elect” or “to choose” and means literally, “to stretch out the hand,” whether in voting or in the laying on of hands.]
- Titus 1:5 “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain* [καθίστημι, *kathistēmi*] elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” καθίστημι usually means “to take someone somewhere” or “to appoint.”
- [Titus 3:15 (postscript)] “It was written to Titus, *ordained* [χειροτονέω, *cheirotoneō*] the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia. χειροτονέω usually means “to elect” or “to choose” and means literally, “to stretch out the hand,” whether in voting or in the laying on of hands.]
- Heb. 5:1 “For every high priest taken from among men is *ordained* [καθίστημι, *kathistēmi*] for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. καθίστημι usually means “to take someone somewhere” or “to appoint.”
- Heb. 8:3 “For every high priest is *ordained* [καθίστημι, *kathistēmi*] to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. καθίστημι usually means “to take someone somewhere” or “to appoint.”
- Heb. 9:6 “Now when these things were thus *ordained* [κατασκευάζω, *kataskeuwazō*], the priests went always into the

first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*.
κατασκευάζω usually means “to prepare” or “to construct.”

Jude 4 “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old *ordained* [μετατίθημι, *metatithēmi*] to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. μετατίθημι usually means “to change someone’s [or one’s own] position,” whether literally/physically, as in “to transfer,” or metaphorically, as in “to change one’s mind.”

In contrast to the King James Version, the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version use the English word *ordain* to translate a narrower range of Hebrew and Greek words. *Ordain* in the NRSV translates only six different Hebrew words, and seven different Greek words. By far the Hebrew most often translated *ordain* in the NRSV is מָלַא, (*ml’*; or its nominal form), which means, “to fill.” One understanding of ordination was often expressed through the idiomatic phrase, “to fill the hand of” (see Exod. 28:41; 29:9, 29, 39; Lev. 8:33; 16:32; Num. 3:3; 1 Kings 13:33). When mention is made of the “ram of ordination,” the Hebrew phrase means literally, “ram of fillings.” However, in the Septuagint, the Greek word most often translated *ordain* or *ordination* is τελεῖω (teleioō; or its nominal form), and the equivalent phrase to the Hebrew Bible’s “ram of fillings” is “ram of τελεῖσις (*teleiōsis*),” or “ram of perfection.”

The interests of King James I and the Church of England

When King James I undertook to produce a unified translation of the Bible, he did so in the context of seventeenth-century England, with all the privileges of power and position at work in the nation and in the Church of England. While the King James Version was “new” in the sense that it did not exist before, the preface indicates that the purpose of the translators was not to create a new translation from scratch, but rather to revise the earlier translations in order to eliminate the alternatives and produce just one accepted standard version.¹¹ In practice, the King James Version was based primarily on the Tyndale and Geneva Bibles and the Rheims New Testament.¹² According to Jack Lewis, James wanted to produce a new translation so that the

whole church would be bound to “it alone, and [to] none other.” He wanted to adjudicate the various readings of the other versions in such a way that his version could “not justly . . . be excepted against.”¹³ His primary interest was to impose order and peace on a divided church.

Such implied interests in order and authority can hardly be missed in the first and next-to-last paragraphs of the preface:

Great and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us the people of England, when first he sent Your Majesty’s Royal Person to rule and reign over us. For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well upon our Sion, that upon the setting of that bright Occidental Star, Queen Elizabeth of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and that it should hardly be known, who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the Sun in his strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort; especially when we beheld the Government established in Your Highness, and Your hopeful Seed, by an undoubted Title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquility at home and abroad.

And now at last, by the mercy of God, and the continuance of our labors, it being brought unto such a conclusion, as that we have great hopes that the Church of England shall reap good fruit thereby; we hold it our duty to offer it to Your Majesty, not only as to our King and Sovereign, but as to the principal Mover and Author of the work: humbly craving of Your most Sacred Majesty, that since things of this quality have ever been subject to the censures of ill meaning and discontented persons, it may receive approbation and patronage from so learned and judicious a Prince as Your Highness is, whose allowance and acceptance of our labors shall more honor and encourage us, than all the calumniations and

hard interpretations of other men shall dismay us. So that if, on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instruments to make God's holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil; we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord; and sustained without, by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favor, which will ever give countenance to honest and Christian endeavours against bitter censures and uncharitable imputations.¹⁴

King James had a marked dislike, even hostility, toward the Geneva Bible with its marginal notes. James clearly wished to displace this Bible, with its implicit and explicit challenges to the "divine right of kings."¹⁵ In its place, James wanted with his version to "reinforce the image of the king as the political and spiritual leader of his people. The unity of king, Bible, and church would ensure the unity of the English people."¹⁶ Alister McGrath suggest that as it turned out, the most significant factor in the ultimate success of the King James Version "appears to have been the fact that it was associated with the authority of the monarch at a time when such authority was viewed positively."¹⁷

The implied interests in the position of the king and in properly authorized lines of accountability in the hierarchical church and government of England clearly visible above suggest that the word *ordain* may have been chosen to support the interests of hierarchy and office in that ecclesiastical and political context.

Analysis of the biblical and historical evidence

What does this brief survey of the biblical and historical evidence suggest? First, the sheer variety of words translated *ordain* or *ordination* in the King James Version underscores the fluidity of the concepts

and practices that lie behind what we have learned to call ordination. To ordain was to make or put or appoint or institute or decree or establish or choose or lay hands on or put in place—something like that. I suspect that John E. Toews is right when he says that “ordination for ministry through the laying on of hands as practiced in the church is without biblical foundation” and that “there is no biblical linkage of personal call to ministry and ordination through the laying on of hands, as often practised in the Protestant Church.”¹⁸

Second, the evidence could suggest that not only was there no common *practice* or *form* of ordination in the Bible but also that there was no common *conception* of ordination. Any defense of ordination must be made on theological, ecclesiological, and/or practical grounds, since no facile appeal to biblical precedent or to a New Testament theology of ordination stands up under scrutiny. Whether the modern practice of ordination cannot be aligned with Anabaptist-Mennonite theology insofar as it inevitably “sacerdotalizes” pastoral ministry, as Toews claims, is another matter.¹⁹

Third, the historical evidence may suggest that the defense of “office” (vs. functionalism) in the free church traditions has unwittingly perpetuated the political and theological interests of the Church of England by way of the King James Version even as its defenders were unaware of them. While political and theological interests are not inherently bad or to be avoided, they function most constructively when they are acknowledged and thus open to some scrutiny.

Finally, these observations demonstrate that any attempt to develop or articulate a biblical theology of ordination cannot proceed on the basis of any English translation of the text. Careful reference to the original languages is beneficial in most cases, but required by the evidence itself when dealing with “ordination.”

It is outside the scope of this essay to pursue one final historical question that deserves attention in its own right. One would expect that the use of the one word *ordain* to translate many varied Hebrew and Greek verbs and concepts influenced the polity and practical theology of English-speaking churches in the West from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. But did increased dependence upon the King James Version by a historically *German*-speaking people bring with it a changing view of ordination? It would not be surprising if it did.

Notes

¹This question is not intended to be rhetorical. The former procedure often lies implicitly behind the task of New Testament theology, sometimes with the assumption that New Testament theology and practice—once properly identified and understood—should simply be adopted by the modern church. The latter procedure *can* be an exercise in using the Bible to buttress whatever practice is current, or it can reflect the necessity of interpreting and reapplying biblical thought and practice for an ever-changing historical context.

²For a treatment of the history and nature of anticlericalism in one part of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, see the essay by Karl Koop, “Worldly Preachers and True Shepherds: Anabaptist Anticlericalism in the Lower Rhine,” pages 24-38 in this volume. While anticlericalism often accompanied an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, the latter does not necessarily entail the former.

³Weldon Schloneger, “Mennonites and Ordination,” May 12, 1980, Student Papers File, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

⁴Paul M. Miller, *Servant of God’s Servants* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964), 27.

⁵John H. Yoder, “The Fullness of Christ,” *Concern: Pamphlet Series for Christian Renewal* 17 (February 1969), 61.

⁶John H. Yoder, “The Fullness of Christ,” 61.

⁷Orlando Wiebe, “The Commissioning of Servants in the Church,” (paper presented at the Mennonite Brethren Churches study conference on The Ministry: Men and Media, Buhler, Kans., March 5-6, 1970), 9.

⁸*Leadership and Authority in the Church*, Mennonite Church General Assembly 1979 Study Report, 79.

⁹Everett J. Thomas, ed., *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership* (Newton, Kans., and Winnipeg, Man.: Faith & Life Press, 1996), 34; italics added.

¹⁰I would like to acknowledge and thank my former copastor, David E. Mishler, who collaborated with me on an earlier form of this essay.

¹¹On this point, see “Publication of the King James Bible (1611),” in *Christian History: The 100 Most Important Events in Church History*, Issue 28.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Jack P. Lewis, “Versions, English,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 6:823-24, 6:832-33.

¹⁴“Preface,” *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Oak Harbor, Wash.: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995).

¹⁵See Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), esp. 141. See also David Neff, “A Translation Fit for a King,” *Christianity Today* (October 22, 2001), 37-39, 75.

¹⁶McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 171.

¹⁷Ibid., 289.

¹⁸ John E. Toews, "Toward a Biblical Theology of Leadership Affirmation: Rethinking the Meaning of Ordination" (Benjamin Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., November 7, 2003), forthcoming in *Conrad Grebel Review*. I recommend Toews's provocative biblical, historical, and theological study of ordination as a means to further consideration of these issues.

¹⁹ Toews argues that how a church selects and affirms its leaders must ultimately be based on its particular ecclesiology. And an Anabaptist-Mennonite ecclesiology requires the desacramentalization of appointment to ministry, along with the eschewing of any notions of status and power, tax benefits, ordination for life, and/or distinctions between clergy and laity.

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The Heart of the Matter

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Telford PA 18969

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Copublished with Herald Press, Scottsdale PA 15683

Published in association with Institute of Mennonite Studies

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

3003 Benham Avenue

Elkhart IN 46517-1999

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2003026789

ISBN: 1-931038-22-8

Printed in the United States of America by Evangel Press, Nappanee, Indiana

Book and cover design by Gwen Miller

Cover graphic by David Fast

The paper used in this publication is recycled and meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Other versions cited include the King James Version (KJV), the New American Bible (NAB), and the New International Version (NIV).

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The heart of the matter : pastoral ministry in Anabaptist perspective /

Erick Sawatzky, editor.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 1-931038-22-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Anabaptists—Doctrines. 2. Pastoral theology—Anabaptists.

I. Sawatzky, Erick. II. Title.

BX4931.3.H43 2004

253'.088'2897—dc22

2003026789