Any attempt to obtain clarity on the exact functioning of offices in the Early Church will have to cope with a limited supply of literature on the matter. The reason is not difficult to explain. We know that the Roman authorities repeatedly burned the books belonging to the Christian Church, and it is not too presumptuous to assume that very important information was undoubtedly consumed by the flames of the persecutors. But there is also another obvious explanation: One of the methods of the Roman persecutors to annihilate the Church was to concentrate their attention on the leaders of the Church. The clamour of the crowd: "Away with the atheists; search for Polycarp" was a clear example of the general pattern. The head of the bishop was regarded as a crown prize. It is comprehensible that the Christians would be extremely cautious to put any information in writing which might endanger the lives of their leaders in any way.

The fact that there is so little written about the office-bearers, increases the temptation to read into the writings one's own pre-established views, and this makes it almost impossible to ascertain without any doubt the exact particulars. It is quite conceivable that every school of thought will also have its own interpretation of the manuscripts. I would like to expound three very important points of view on the issue:

(a) The Catholic view is in accordance with their general attitude to the history of dogma. They are convinced that the Catholic Church has preserved the apostolic tradition to perfection. The government of the Church, according to their view, has always been basically the same as today.

(b) The Reformed theology has a very different point of view. According to them the apostles preached the Gospel from place to place and wherever their evangelism produced a viable congregation, they appointed presbyters/episkopoi and deacons to govern the local church. This body of office-bearers was called the Collegium of Presbyters, and it had authority as a corpus. But towards the end of the first century the Collegium of Presbyters was displaced by the Monarchical Episcopate. Ignatius of Antioch is generally accepted as one of the first propagators.
of this new system.

(c) There is a third point of view to which I would like to pay detailed attention — that of Adolph Harnack. According to Harnack the Early Church was “only an organization founded on the gift of the Spirit (charismata) bestowed on the Church by God, corresponding to the original peculiarity of the Christian community. The Apostolic age therefore transmitted a twofold organization to the communities. The one was based on the diakonia toû lógu, and was regarded as established directly by God; the other stood in the closest connection with the economy of the Church, above all with the offering of gifts, and so with the sacrificial service. In the first were men speaking the word of God, commissioned and endowed by God, and bestowed on Christendom, not on a particular community, who as apóstoloi, prophētai and didáskaloi had to spread the Gospel, that is to edify the Church of Christ. They were regarded as the real hegoumenoi in the communities, whose words given them by the Spirit all were to accept in faith. In the second were episkopoi and diakonoi, appointed by the individual congregation and endowed with the charisms of leading and helping, who had to receive and administer the gifts, to perform the sacrificial service (if there were no prophets present), and take charge of the affairs of the community. It lay in the nature of the case that as a rule the episkopoi, as independent officials, were chosen from among the elders, and might thus coincide with the chosen presbúteroi. But a very important development takes place in the second half of our epoch. The prophets and teachers — as the result of causes which followed the naturalising of the Churches in the world — fell more and more into the background, and their function, the solemn service of the word, began to pass over to the officials of the community, the bishops, who already played a great rôle in the public worship. At the same time, however, it appeared more and more fitting to entrust one official, as chief leader (superintendent of public worship), with the reception of gifts and their administration, together with the care of the unity of public worship; that is, to appoint one bishop instead of a number of bishops, leaving however, as before, the college of presbyters, as prohístamenoi tês ekklishias, a kind of senate of the community. “3) According to Harnack this change was a catastrophe. “Instead of enthusiastic independent Christians, we find a new literature of revelation, the New Testament, and Christian priests. When did these formations begin? How and by what influence was the living faith transformed into the creed to be believed, the surrender to Christ into a Philosophic Christology, the Holy Church into the corpus permixtum, the glowing hope of the Kingdom of heaven into a doctrine of immortality and deification, prophecy into a
learned exegesis and theological science, the bearers of the spirit into
clerics, the brethren into laity held in tutelage, miracles and healings into
nothing or into priestcraft, the fervent prayers into a solemn ritual, ren-
nunciation of the world into a jealous dominion over the world, the
"spirit" into constraint and law?

There can be no doubt about the answer: these formations are as
old in their origin as the detachment of the Gospel from the Jewish
Church. A religious faith which seeks to establish a communion of its own
in opposition to another, is compelled to borrow from that other what
it needs. The religion which is life and feeling of the heart cannot be
converted into a knowledge determining the motley multitude of men
without deferring to their wishes and opinions ... The Christian Church
and its doctrine were developed within the Roman world and Greek
culture in opposition to the Jewish Church."

Harnack based his view on the sentence in the apostolic teachings:
"But suffer the prophets to hold Eucharist as they will", and the
ensuing prescriptions. The most astonishing aspect of the arguments
of Harnack is that he is critical of any guidance of the Spirit in the
forming of the canon, even in the inspiration of Scripture itself, and of
any charismatic gifts bestowed on bishops elected by the community,
while he is so romantically obsessed by the Charismatikoi, although he
admits: "Now it certainly lies in the nature of enthusiasm, that it can
assume the most diverse forms of expression, and follow very different
impulses, and so far it frequently separates instead of uniting."

In my endeavour to assess the function and history of the offices,
I have decided on the following method: I have chosen the first professed
church historian, Eusebius, from whose writings I have constructed a
point of view from where I have ventured to interpret the writers of the
first and early second century. That this method is exposed to criticism
is understandable — but what method will not be?

Eusebius is very emphatic in stating that the apostles occupied a
unique place in the history of the Church. He links the apostles some-
what surprisingly with the evangelists in accomplishing a task which we
in our terminology would call missionary work: "At once, in accordance
with the divine Scriptures, the voice of its inspired evangelists and
Apostles 'went forth to the whole earth and their words to the end of the
world'. In every city and village arose churches crowded with thousands
of men, like a teeming threshing floor." Eusebius records that the
apostles had an arrangement of bringing the Gospel to the ends of the
world: "Thomas obtained by lot Parthia, Andrew Scythia, John Asia,
but Peter seems to have preached to the Jews of the Dispersion in
Pontus and Galatia and Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia, and at the end
he came to Rome and was crucified head downwards, for so he

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demanded to suffer."

The apostles did not settle in one place. "As soon as they had no more than laid the foundations of faith in some strange place, they appointed others as shepherds and committed to them the task of tending those who had been just brought in, but they themselves passed on again to other lands and peoples, helped by the grace and cooperation of God, seeing that many strange miracles of the divine Spirit were at that time still being wrought by them, so that whole crowds of men at the first hearing eagerly received in their souls the religion of the Creator of the universe."[8]

It is a key question: What was meant by these shepherds? Were they presbyters or bishops or Charismatics? It is extremely important to note that Clement of Rome gives a very candid answer to this question: "Our apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the title of bishop. For this cause, therefore, since they had received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who have been already mentioned, and afterwards added the codicil that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry."[9] This statement coincides with the information Eusebius had of Polycarp's ordination as bishop of Smyrna: "And Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles and conversed with many who had seen the Lord, but was also appointed bishop by apostles in Asia in the Church in Smyrna."[10] According to Eusebius it was the custom in the early Church to give the church-leaders of neighbouring congregations a share in the appointment of a bishop. "After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem which immediately followed, the story goes that those of the Apostles and of the disciples of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with those who were, humanly speaking, of the family of the Lord, for many of them were then still alive, and they all took council together as to whom they ought to adjudge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that Simeon the son of Clopas, whom the scripture of the Gospel also mentions, was worthy of the throne of the diocese."[11]

When Ignatius was on his way to Rome (and the martyr's death) he requested Polycarp by letter "to summon a godly council, and elect someone who is very dear to you and is zealous, who can be called God's courier; appoint him to go to Syria to glorify your zealous love to the glory of God."[12]

Eusebius clearly believed that the apostles appointed bishops in every congregation. His first source for this conviction was the Bible. "Luke also in the Acts gives a list of those known to him and mentions them by name. Thus Timothy is related to have been the first appointed bishop of the diocese of Ephesus, as was Titus of the churches in
Crete.' He mentions the fact that from the documents that had been investigated by him, it became clear to him that the bishops who served the Church of Jerusalem up to the siege of Jerusalem by Hadrian, were no less than fifteen in number, all being Jews. He also gives an accurate list of the bishops of Rome. He quotes the cases of Papias and Polycarp: "At this time there flourished in Asia Polycarp, the companion of the Apostles, who had been appointed to the bishopric of the church in Smyrna by the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Lord. Distinguished men at the same time were Papias, who was himself bishop of the diocese of Hierapolis, and Ignatius, still a name of note to most men, the second after Peter to succeed to the bishopric of Antioch."

These bishops served a very important purpose. They were trained by the apostles or their legal substitutes in the apostolic tradition, and it was their duty and honour to deliver this tradition unaltered to their congregations. "Yet Papias himself, according to the preface of his treatises, makes plain that he had in no way been a hearer and eyewitness of the sacred Apostles, but teaches that he had received the articles of the faith from those who had known them, for he speaks as follows: ‘And I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well, for of their truth I am confident.’"

This tradition was of the utmost importance to the early Church. Most of its members, recently broken away from heathen religions, and with the best intentions, still carried with them influences from those religions and cults with which they had grown up. The canon of the New Testament was still in its originating process. Erroneous doctrine, disunity and schism were increasing rapidly. The Regula Fidei was taking shape to give the Church an authoritative criterion by which to evaluate the authenticity of the preachers. As Harnack states: "...the decisive importance of this theology lies in the fact that, as a rule, it formed the boundary and the foundation — just as the words of the Lord himself — for those who in the following period endeavoured to ascertain original Christianity, because the Epistles attesting it stood in the canon of the New Testament." This urge to adhere to the original Gospel certainly was a major issue in the development of the offices of the Church.

To appreciate this we should consider the discord and disharmony that developed in the early church life, and the effect it had. "...until then the church remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin, for those who attempted to corrupt the healthful rule of the Saviour’s preaching, if they existed at all, lurked in obscure darkness. But when the sacred band of the Apostles and the generation of those to whom it had been
vouchsafed to hear with their own ears the divine wisdom had reached the several ends of their lives, then the federation of godless error took its beginning through the deceit of false teachers who, seeing that none of the Apostles still remained, barefacedly tried against the preaching of the truth the counter-proclamation of 'knowledge falsely so-called'.

Elsewhere he continues: "Like brilliant lamps the churches were now shining throughout the world, and faith in our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ was flourishing among mankind, when the devil who hates what is good, as the enemy of truth, ever most hostile to man's salvation, truned all his devices against the church. Formerly he had used persecutions from without as his weapon against her, but now that he was excluded from this he employed wicked men and sorcerers, like baleful weapons and ministers of destruction against the soul, and conducted his campaigns by other measures, plotting by every means that sorcerers and deceivers might assume the same name as our religion and at one time lead to the depth of destruction those of the faithful whom they caught." 21

Clement verifies the dismal picture of Eusebius: "Therefore it is right and holy, my brethren, for us to obey God rather than to follow those who in pride and unruliness are the instigators of an abominable jealousy. For we shall incur no common harm, but great danger, if we rashly yield ourselves to the purpose of men who rush into strife and sedition, to estrange us from what is right." 22 His advice to his readers is very instructive: "Moreover let us cleave to those whose peacefulness is based on piety and not to those whose wish for peace is hypocrisy." 23 And again: "For Christ is of those who are humble-minded, not of those who exalt themselves over His flock." 24 He mentions this discord as one of the reasons for his writing. "...we consider that our attention has been somewhat delayed in turning to the questions disputed among you, beloved, and especially the abominable and unholy sedition, alien and foreign to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-willed persons have made blaze up to such a frenzy that your name, venerable and famous, and worthy as it is of all men's love, has been much slandered." 25

It is clear from the preceding passage that the sedition was found among the office-bearers, and that rivalry and envy was at the root of it all. The Pastor Hermas is very explicit about that: "Now therefore I say unto you that are rulers of the Church, and that occupy the chief seats: be not ye like the sorcerers (pharmakoi). The sorcerers indeed carry their drugs in boxes, but ye carry your drug and your poison in your heart. Ye are case-hardened, and ye will not cleanse your hearts and mix your wisdom together in a clean heart, that ye may obtain mercy from the Great King. Look ye therefore, children, lest these divisions of yours
deprive you of your life. How is it that ye wish to instruct the elect of the Lord, while ye yourselves have no instruction? Instruct one another therefore, and have peace among yourselves, that I also may stand gladsome before the Father, and give an account concerning you all to the Lord. ‘26)

It is not difficult to indicate the poison against which Hermas was warning the office-bearers. Harnack has already pointed out that the bishop was mainly chosen from the Collegium of Presbyters. After the election there would naturally have been presbyters who felt disappointed and frustrated. Now they were expected to serve under the authority of the chosen bishop. If we keep in mind that one of the most important considerations in the election was the orthodoxy of the candidates, then it is evident that this disappointment could be a fertile mould to engender strife and schism.‘27)

It seems incredible that Harnack, who held such a high opinion of the Charismatikoi, working and speaking in the name of the Holy Spirit, did not, in his exposition, account for the power of the other spiritual forces which were at work, and also took possession of people. I refer to the evil forces of the Devil. History has given sufficient evidence on the success of the strategy of the Devil to recruit followers from the ranks of office-bearers of the Church.

In the light of all that has been said, I dare to plead for a new conception of Ignatius. Instead of accusing him of changing the structure of the offices, I would venture to suggest that he fought for the status of the ordained office-bearers. He stated that the opposition against the truth culminated in opposition against the bishop. “But mark those who have strange opinions concerning the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary they are to the mind of God … They then who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes … It is right to refrain from such men and not even speak to them in private or in public but to give heed to the prophets and especially to the Gospel … But flee from divisions as the beginning of evils. See that you all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows the Father, and the presbyter as if it were the Apostles. And reverence the deacons as the command of God. Let no one do any of the things appertaining to the Church without the bishop. Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints. Wherever the bishop appears let the congregation be present; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold an ‘agape’ without the bishop; but whatever he approve, this is also pleasing to God, that everything which you do may be secure and valid.’‘28)

This dictum also reveals his interpretation of the functions of the
various offices. According to Ignatius the bishop is the head of the congregation. The presbyters as a corpus are the governors of the flock. This government should always be in accordance with the bishop. “For Jesus Christ, our inseparable life is the will of the Father, even as the bishops, who have been appointed throughout the world, are by the will of Jesus Christ. Therefore it is fitting that you should live in harmony with the will of the bishop, as indeed you do. For your justly famous presbytery, worthy of God, is attuned to the bishop as the strings to the harp. Therefore by your concord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is being sung. Now do each of you join in this choir, that being harmoniously in concord you may receive the key of God in unison, and sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that he may both hear you and may recognise that you are members of his Son.”

But to illustrate the wide range of the functions of the bishop, I quote a fraternal word by Ignatius to his younger colleague, Polycarp. He admonished him to see to it that the deacons provided in the needs of the poor, because basically it was his responsibility. “Let not the widows be neglected. Be yourself their protector after the Lord.”

He was also encouraged to administer his pastoral duties with care: “Seek all by their name. Do not be haughty to slaves, either men or women; yet do not let them be puffed up, but let them rather endure slavery to the glory of God.”

On the other hand the bishop was restricted by his dependence on and adherence to the Lord. “…to Polycarp, who is bishop of the Church of the Smyrnaeans, or rather has for his bishop God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, abundant greetings. Welcoming your godly mind which is fixed as if on immovable rock, I glory exceedingly that it was granted me to see your blameless face … I exhort you to press forward on your course, in the grace wherewith you are endued, and to exhort all men to gain salvation. Vindicate your office with all diligence, both of the flesh and the spirit. Care for unity, for there is nothing better. Help all men, as the Lord also helps you; suffer all men in love, as you indeed do. Be diligent with unceasing prayer. Entreat for wisdom greater than you have, be watchful and keep the spirit from slumbering. Speak to each individually after the manner of God. ‘Bear the sicknesses’ of all as a perfect athlete. Where the toil is greatest, is the gain great … ‘Be prudent as the serpent’ in all things ‘and pure as the dove’ for ever. For this reason you consist of flesh and spirit, that you may deal tenderly with the things which appear visibly; but pray that the invisible things may be revealed to you, that you may lack nothing and abound in every charisma.”

Dix produces another witness for the early existence of the office of the bishop, viz. the architecture of the “title-churches”, which were
the spacious houses of the prosperous members of the congregation, made available for the purpose of common worship. "Fortunately the great Roman mansion of the period offered in its traditional lay-out certain arrangements not found in the tenements in which the mass of the population lived, which precisely suited the needs of the church ... The chair of the paterfamilias became the bishop’s throne; the heads of the families were replaced by the presbyters, and the clansmen by the laity. Virgins and widows and any others for whom it might be desirable to avoid the crowding in the atrium could be placed behind the screens of the alae. At the back near the door, where the clients and the slaves of the patrician house — attached to it but not of it — had once stood at its assemblies, were now to be found the catechumens and enquirers, attached to the church but not yet members of it. The place of the stone table was that of the Christian altar; the tank of the impluvium would serve for the solemn immersion of the baptism in the presence of the whole church. When the ‘candidates’ (= ‘clothed in white’) emerged, they could dry in one of the side rooms; and then, clothed in the white linen garments they received after baptism in token that they had entered the kingdom of God, they were led straight to the bishop to receive theunction of confirmation ... The dining room of the house (triclinium) which usually opened off the atrium could be used when needed for the Christian ‘love-feast’. "[34]

In conclusion, it appears that the bishop was the central figure in the congregation, moreover, he was the directive in all the activities of the church. But in all his duties he was assisted by the presbyters and thedeacons. If I was asked to indicate a modern structure that would, to my mind, define the position of the bishop in the early Church, I would not use any of the episcopal church-structures as an example. I would rather choose the practical position of a Dutch Reformed minister in a rural community as a model. What was the position of the presbyteroi? They had a joint function which Hamack typified as Senate to the bishop. I have already quoted the emphasis on unity with the bishop. What were the duties of a presbyter? Polycarp gives us a very elaborate description: "And let the presbyters also be compassionate, merciful to all, bringing back those that have wandered, caring for all the weak, neglecting neither widow, nor orphan nor poor, but ‘ever providing for that which is good before God and man’, refraining from all wrath, respect of persons, unjust judgment, being far from all love of money, not quickly believing evil of any, not hasty in judgment, knowing that ‘we all owe the debt of sin’."[35] He regrets the fact that Valens ‘...who was once made a presbyter among you, ... so little understands the place which was given to him. I advise, therefore, that you keep from avarice, and be pure and truthful. Keep yourselves from all evil. For how
may he who cannot attain self-control in these matters enjoin it on another?"  

There existed a very definite authority in the Church. Clement advised those who were the cause of sedition to "...submit to the presbyters, and receive the correction of repentance, bending the knees of your hearts." Elsewhere he writes "...let the flock of Christ have peace with the presbyters set over it." In the following passage Clement points to a definite distinction between the bishop and the presbyters: "Let us reverence the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us, let us respect those who rule us, let us honour the presbyters."  

What was the function of the deacons? It seems to me that the Early Church accepted Acts 6 as the Sitz im Leben of this office. The two main duties mentioned in Act 6, the auxiliary service in the Eucharist and the alimony to the poor, were basically the duties of the deacons. Eusebius mentions Nicolas as "...one of the deacons in the company of Stephen, who were appointed by the Apostles for the service of the poor." To prove that Acts 6 was the basis for the office of the deacons, I may mention that it was the custom in the Early Church for every congregation to have seven deacons, in the mould of Acts 6. The Concilium of Neo-Caesarea stipulated in Canon 15 that every congregation should have seven deacons.

But the office of the deacons shows a very distinctive development. The deacons gradually became more than just helpers of the poor. Ignatius calls them "...most dear to me, entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ." They were assistants of the bishop and took care of the finances of the Church. The financial affairs of every congregation were managed under three separate accounts: the maintenance of the liturgy, the support of the clerics and the alimentation of the poor. One of the sinful deviations of the Early Church, pointed out by the Pastor Hermas, is negligence by the deacons: "...they that have spots are the deacons that exercised their office ill, and plundered the livelihood of widows and orphans, and made gain for themselves from the ministrations which they had received to perform." In all probability the Teaching of the Apostles warned against the very same offence when it required that the deacons, like the bishops, should be "worthy of the Lord, meek men, and not lovers of money, and truthful and approved."  

Ignatius describes their duty as follows: "And they also who are deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ must be in every way pleasing to all men. For they are not the ministers of food and drink, but servants of the Church of God; they must therefore guard against blame as against fire." Polycarp describes their duties very much in accord-
ance with those of the presbyters. "Likewise must the deacons be blameless before his righteousness, as the servants of God and Christ and not man, not slanderers, not double-tongued, not lovers of money, temperate in all things, compassionate, careful, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the 'servant of all':"

In Chapter 19 of the Canones Apostolorum it was commended to the deacons that they should persist in good works by day and by night, not neglecting the poor and not making a fuss of the rich. They should know of those in affliction, and never send them away empty-handed. They should educate the rich to do good works remembering the words of the Lord: "For when I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat." In Chapter 20 the duties of the deacons are defined as follows: The deacons should be tried men in the Lord’s service. They should have reared children, have modest personalities, not be double-tongued, ill-tempered, over-awed by the rich or oppressive to the poor. They should be able to reprimand and encourage to do good works and educate the rich to give abundantly, while they themselves must set a good example in this matter.

The deacons should realize that it is the Lord himself who is the true origin of all charity. This accent is found in the prayer of Clement: "We beseech thee, Master, to be our 'help and succour'. Save those of us who are in affliction, have mercy on the lowly, raise the fallen, show thyself to those in need, heal the sick, turn again the wanderers of thy people, feed the hungry, ransom our prisoners, raise up the weak, comfort the faint-hearted; let all 'nations know thee, that thou art God alone'."

In addition the deacons rendered an important service during the divine service, both in the missa catechumenorum and in the missa fidelium. Not only did his liturgical duties include several prayers, but it was also his task to announce the time of departure of the enquirers and the catechumens. He summoned the congregation to the Eucharist, he announced the 'kiss of peace'; two deacons stood on either side of the altar to protect the wine from gnats, and one proclaimed the commencement of the holy communion and led the congregation in their prayers of thanksgiving. Finally he dismissed the congregation with the blessing: "Go in peace."

There is one particular aspect of the offices in the Early Church which calls for special attention, viz. the theological grounds. I have already referred to the fact that Acts 6 played an important rôle in the development of the office of the deacons. But the theology of the Early Church was, surprisingly enough, not based on any New Testament tradition. It would be expected that Clement, who saw Christ as the real Compassionate Servant, would draw the theological consequences,
and build a theology of the various offices on Christ the Servant par excellence. However, it was not the case. His writings on the offices were more of a reaction against the manner in which chosen presbyters and bishops were discharged in the Corinthian church, than any positive theological principle on the offices as such. In his condemnation of this practice he makes use of the following arguments:

(a) The bishops in every congregation were ordained in the successio apostolica. "The apostles preached from district to district, and from city to city, and they appointed their first converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of the future believers. And this was no new method ..." and then he quotes Is. 60:17, "I will establish their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith."

(b) The office-bearers concerned were dismissed in spite of good services rendered. "For we see that in spite of their good service you have removed some from the ministry which they fulfilled blamelessly."

(c) The cultic activities of the Church were based on the Old Testament and as such, the offices of the Church were also based on the god-appointed High Priest with the priests and Levites. "The Old Testament applied to Christ and his universal Church, has always remained the decisive document, and it was long ere Christian writings received the same authority, long ere individual doctrines and sayings of Apostolic writings obtained an influence on the formation of ecclesiastical doctrine."

(d) The Church should be well-organized, similar to an army and in the shape of a pyramid with the general, prefects, tribunes, centurions and ordinary ranks.

When we study the theology on which Ignatius built his views concerning the office-bearers we find that he had actually used the Trinity as a premise. By employing the eikon-theology (where everything on earth is a type of the heavenly, cf. Ex. 25:40), he saw the relationship of the various ranks in the church-offices as a type of the relationship between the Father, the Son, the Spirit and the Apostles.

At the conclusion of my investigation of this subject I retain a lasting impression that the Early Church, in its effort to propagate the message of the Gospel across the boundaries of culture and social structures, possessed a theological concept of the offices which was yet in the first stages of development. The result was that the church-offices during this period had more of a functional than a theological
foundation. What they urgently desired to put into practice in every congregation, was a realization of the basic creed of Christianity: CHRIST IS LORD!

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7) Eus. H.E. II, iii, 1 and 2.
8) Eus. H.E. III, i.
10) I Clem. XLIV, 1 and 2.
15) Eus. H.E. IV, v, 1, 2.
16) Eus. H.E. III, xiii, 1; xiv, 1; and V, vi, 1.
17) Eus. H.E. III, xxxvi, 1, 2.
19) Harnack, op. cit., 134.
21) Eus. H.E. IV, vii, 1, 2.
22) I Clem. XIV, 1, 2.
23) I Clem. XV, 1.
24) I Clem. XVI, 1.
27) Eusebius gives an example of this: H.E. IV, xxii, 5, 6.
28) Ign. ad Sm. VI, 2 — VIII, 2.
29) Ign. ad Eph. III, 2 — IV, 2.
30) Ign. ad Polyc. IV, 1.
31) Ign. ad Polyc. IV, 2, 3.
32) Ign. ad Polyc. Intr., I, II.
34) G. Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, 22–23.
35) Polyc. ad Philip. VI, 1.
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37) I Clem. LVII, 1.
38) I Clem. LIV, 2.
39) I Clem. XXI, 6.
42) Ign. ad Magn. VI, 1.
43) Bakhuizen van den Brink, op. cit., 74.
45) Did. XV, 1.
46) Ign. ad Trail. II, 3.
47) Polyc. ad Phil. V, 2.
48) I Clem. LIX, 4.
49) Const. Apost. VII and VIII.
50) I Clem. XLII, 4, 5.
51) I Clem. XLIV, 6.
53) I Clem. XL and XLI.
54) Harnack, op. cit., 53.
55) I Clem. XXXVII.
56) Ign. ad Magn. VI: ad Trall. II and III.