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A Comparison between the Diaconates of Lutheran Church—Canada and the New Testament

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1999 Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) established its office of deacon. Is LCC's conception of this office consistent with the New Testament evidence? To answer this question, the following approach is taken. The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter examines the development of the LCC diaconate and establishes points of comparison with the New Testament. The second chapter examines the διακον- word-group and is a foundation for the exegesis of later chapters. Chapters three through five examine Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-6 and Romans 16:1 and establish a definition of the New Testament deacon based on those passages. The diaconates of the New Testament and LCC are then compared in a concluding section. Although some differences are noted and examined, this thesis shows that the two diaconates are consistent with each other, and any differences are insignificant.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABC District	Alberta-British Columbia District (either of Lutheran Church—Canada or the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod).
ACNT	Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
BL:G	Biblical Languages: Greek
BSac	*Bibliotheca sacra*
CBCNEB	Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CHIQ	*Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*
CLS	Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, Alberta
ConCNS	Concordia Commentary (new series)
Concordia	Either Concordia College (Edmonton) or Concordia University College of Alberta.[1]
ConCOS	Concordia Commentary (old series)
CPH	Concordia Publishing House
CTCR	Commission on Theology and Church Relations.[2]
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
CUCA	Concordia University College of Alberta
DCE	Director of Christian Education
DCO	Director of Christian Outreach
DFLM	Director of Family Life Ministry
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Backgrounds*
DPS	Director of Parish Services
eBDAG	Walter Bauer, et al. *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Electronic edition.
EC	Epworth Commentaries
EDNT	*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*
eL&N	Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. Electronic edition.
ESV	English Standard Version
eTDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Electronic edition.
FRC	The Family, Religion, and Culture
FundJ	*Fundamentalist Journal*
GNB	Good News Bible
Hrmn	Hermeneia
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching

[1] This refers to the same school at different points in its history. Other schools named Concordia will be listed as "Concordia, name of location." For example: "Concordia, Ann Arbor." In the bibliography, in order to distinguish between this school and Concordia Publishing House (normally abbreviated "Concordia") the acronym "CPH" will be used.

[2] It will be specified whether this is the CTCR of the LCMS or LCC.

ICC	International Critical Commentary
ICCONT	International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBV	*Journal of Beliefs and Values*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KJV	King James Version
LCC	Lutheran Church—Canada
LCMS	Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod[3]
LFHCC	Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church
LHHC	Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians
LHIMS	Lutheran Historical Institute Monograph Series
Lga	*Logia*
LSJ	Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon with Revised Supplement.* Revised by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. 9th edition.
LXX	The Septuagint
ManSask District	Manitoba and Saskatchewan District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTC	New Testament in Context
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PrNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
PRS	Premier Reference Series
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
TBS	The Biblical Seminar
TCL	*The Canadian Lutheran*

[3] This became the official name of the church body in 1947; however, the name of this group had some connection with "Missouri" even prior to this point. Cf. Mary Todd, *Authority Vested: A Story of Identity and Change in the LCMS* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 141. This church body is referred to as both LCMS and "Missouri Synod" interchangeably in this paper.

THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TPINTC	TPI New Testament Commentaries
UBS^4	Barbara Aland et al. *The Greek New Testament.* 4th ed.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
ZGRS	Zondervan Greek Reference Series
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

INTRODUCTION

During its national convention, in the spring of 1999, Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) instituted its office of deacon. Six years earlier, the church body's president struck a task force to examine the issues surrounding such an office. This task force completed a twenty-four page study document which included considerations from scripture, history and the Lutheran Confessions. One of the goals of the task force was to recommend principles for the formation of an LCC diaconate which were in keeping with the New Testament evidence. This was a key detail because LCC holds that the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are of highest authority when it comes to making decisions about its teaching and practice. While the task force's recommendations were accepted and the LCC diaconate was based upon them, did the church succeed in creating a scripturally consistent modern diaconate?

This study will show that the diaconate of Lutheran Church—Canada is consistent with that of the New Testament and does not differ from it in any significant way. This will be shown by a comparison of the modern LCC diaconate with the diaconate presented in the New Testament. This comparison will show some slight differences between the two; however, these are mainly due to a separation of years and culture and the greater length of time which the LCC diaconate has had to develop. At its core nothing in LCC's diaconate is in direct opposition to that found in the New Testament.

This study's goal is to compare LCC's modern practice with scriptural practice, in keeping with LCC's view of scripture as the highest authority. For this reason neither Patristic evidence nor the Lutheran Confessions will be included in this examination.

While LCC places some authority on the Lutheran Confessions, it is only of a secondary nature and while Patristic sources are useful for an historical understanding of Christianity, they hold no authority for LCC. It would be appropriate to include an examination of Old Testament evidence in this study; however, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, there are no passages which are directly relevant and so this study is limited to New Testament sources only.

This study is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter contains a thorough study of LCC's office of deacon. This includes a detailed outline of the historical development of LCC's office of deacon both prior to the institution of the Task Force for the Study of Diaconal Ministry in 1993 and after it. The chapter also incorporates details of that task force's report which included both a scriptural and historical assessment of the diaconate. This chapter will provide the details of LCC's office of deacon with which to compare the New Testament evidence.

The rest of the chapters are devoted to an analysis of the New Testament evidence in order to discover as much as possible about the diaconate of that time period. The second chapter focuses on the Greek words διακονέω, διακονία and διάκονος. The English word "deacon" is derived from the Greek noun διάκονος, and a study of this word and its cognates is necessary in order to establish appropriate ranges of meaning. This is done by examining the use of the words in Greek literature, the Septuagint (LXX) and the New Testament. A comparison between the διακον- group of words and others of similar semantic domains is also made in order to gain further insight. These details are used to assist in the exegesis of New Testament passages in later chapters.

The third chapter is an analysis of the two clearest references to deacons in the New Testament: Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The context of these two chapters dictates that each is an example of the specialized use of the term διάκονος. Each passage also includes a reference to the ἐπίσκοπος, which is an important supervisory leadership position in the New Testament. Due to the fact that this study is first and foremost concerned with the diaconate, the position of ἐπίσκοπος is examined primarily in relation to the diaconate and not in a broader sense. The goal of this chapter is to glean as much information as possible from the above two passages concerning the New Testament diaconate. This is done through careful consideration of the historical, cultural, and literary contexts in addition to a thorough analysis of grammatical and syntactical features of terms. The details gleaned from the study of these two passages are then summarized in a working definition of the New Testament diaconate. This definition is used to aid in the evaluation and exegesis of further passages which may refer to the New Testament diaconate, but which are not as clear as these first two.

One of the key aspects of the role of deacon which will be established in Chapters 2 and 3 is that the deacon is a secondary role which is subordinate to a primary leadership role. With this in mind, the fourth chapter evaluates Acts 6:1-6. This passage describes the institution of the Seven, a group of assistants to the Twelve in the Jerusalem church. Although this passage does not use the term διάκονος, it describes the institution of a secondary leadership position, which is why it is included in this study. Acts 6 also uses both διακονέω and διακονία to describes the kind of duties which these seven men were

to perform. Based on an analysis of the passage, I conclude that Acts 6 provides the model from which the New Testament diaconate was formed.

The fifth chapter is an evaluation of six individuals who are described with the noun διάκονος. These people are Paul, Apollos, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras and Phoebe. Each of these people has the potential to be considered a New Testament deacon and whether or not they actually belong to this category is evaluated based on the working definition of deacon which was created in Chapter 3 and modified in Chapter 4. This analysis shows that Phoebe is the only one who satisfactorily fits the established criteria. When Paul calls her a διάκονος of the church of Cenchrea she is set apart from the men who are never so explicitly tied to a single location. The local nature of the position is another key aspect of the New Testament diaconate. The information which the New Testament shares concerning Phoebe is then used to add more detail to the definition of the New Testament deacon.

In the concluding section of this study, the information collected through each of the second, third, fourth and fifth chapters is compared with the information reported in the first chapter. A few differences are also noted, and although they are ultimately found to be insignificant, they do have some implications for how the New Testament diaconate should be applied to modern church settings. These implications are also discussed in the concluding section. This comparison ultimately shows that LCC's diaconate is consistent with that of the New Testament with any differences being insignificant.

CHAPTER 1: THE DIACONATE OF LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA

Introduction

Before any comparison between the New Testament diaconate and that of LCC can be made, it is important to know how LCC understands the office of deacon. Lutheran Church—Canada's diaconate did not come about by a simple process nor by a short one. It was one hundred twenty-five years after the first Lutheran Teachers[1] and fifty years after the first congregational workers[2] began serving in Canada that the official diaconate was formed. This history shows that long before a convention created the LCC diaconate, it existed in an unofficial way. In order to fully understand the LCC diaconate, this history must be known.

Along with this history, it is also necessary to understand the actual administrative process which made the LCC diaconate official. An important part of this administrative process was the study of scripture. Although LCC also considered both historical and confessional factors relating to the formation of a diaconate, the scriptural component of their study was the most influential given the fact that it had the lengthiest discussion. This chapter includes an explanation of LCC's scriptural study as well as the administrative process behind the study. Because the details of both the history and the administrative process are so great, the chapter itself will contain the essential information while additional details are provided in two appendices.

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[1] Note that the term "Lutheran Teacher" is meant to denote those individuals who have been trained and certified by the LCMS (or LCC) to serve in their Lutheran schools. See Appendix A for more details.

[2] For a full explanation of what is meant by the term "congregational worker" as well as all other worker designations see Appendix A.

Historical Development of the Deacon in Lutheran Church—Canada

Although those who are now known as deacons were once lacking an official title or designation, they have always been a part of the history of LCC. An overview of the history of congregational workers and school teachers in LCC, including the time when LCC was part of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), provides important context for the institution of this office in LCC in 1999.

Historical Beginnings of Lutheran Teachers and Congregational Workers

The church body which would eventually become LCC first appeared in Canada in 1854[3] when Reverend Adam Ernst of the Missouri Synod made contact with Canadian Lutherans at the invitation of a group of settlers in Rainham Township[4] in Southern Ontario. German Lutherans from nearby Middleton Township[5] also made contact with Ernst. About one year later, both of these congregations had their own Missouri Synod pastors.[6] From these two initial contacts, more congregations were formed throughout Ontario. In 1879 a Canada District of the Missouri Synod was formed which had fourteen pastors serving in Ontario.[7] As the west opened, the Missouri Synod also spread to that part of the country, and by 1914 the Missouri Synod was the second largest Lutheran church body in western Canada.[8]

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[3] Although Lutherans had a presence in Canada prior to this, some of whom would later become part of the Missouri Synod, it is in 1854 that the first Missouri Synod missionary arrived in Canada. Norman J. Threinen, *A Religious-Cultural Mosaic: A History of Lutherans in Canada* (LHIMS 1; Vulcan, AB: Today's Reformation Press, 2006), 46.

[4] Now called Fisherville.

[5] Now called Rhineland, near Delhi.

[6] Norman J. Threinen, *Like a Mustard Seed: A Centennial History of the Ontario District of LCC (Missouri Synod)* (Kitchener: Ontario District, 1989), 7.

[7] N. Threinen, *Mosaic*, 65.

[8] Ibid., 94.

Beginnings of the Lutheran Teacher

While the earliest church professionals in Canada were pastors, the Missouri Synod's strong emphasis on parochial schools meant that Lutheran Teachers were not long in joining them. The first Lutheran Teachers arrived in Canada in 1874.[9] Although most early teachers were men, women also had a role to play in the parochial schools which grew as time went on. In the early days, women sometimes assisted the pastor (who often doubled as the school teacher) with classroom duties or acted as a substitute teacher.[10] It is difficult to determine when women became official teachers in the Lutheran schools in Canada because many teachers are listed only by their initials in the early records.[11] In any case, by the 1950s and 1960s, female teachers were quite common in Canada.

Beginnings of the Congregational Worker

Prior to about 1950, it appears that the only professional church workers in the Missouri Synod within Canada were pastors and teachers, with the majority of teachers being male. In the 1950s, this began to change. With the baby boom came a growing population of children and youth who needed to be taught the Gospel and mentored in their faith. Churches responded by hiring both male and female congregational workers of various

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[9] Ontario District LCMS, *Grace and Blessing: A History of the Ontario District of the LCMS* (Elmira: LCMS, 1954), 52 and N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed*, 18.

[10] Cf. Norman J. Threinen, *Like a Leaven: A History of the ABC District of LCC* (Edmonton: ABC District, 1994), 31-32 and Ontario District LCMS, *Grace and Blessing*, 54, 63. It was very common for schools to be taught by pastors until the school was large enough to support a teacher.

[11] Interestingly, in the Missouri Synod, women were involved in the parochial schools from the beginning, although initially in small numbers. By 1923 women made up about 18% of the teachers. It was not until 1926, however, that the Synod made provisions for these women to be trained at synodical schools both in the United States and in Canada. August C. Stellhorn, *Schools of the LCMS* (Saint Louis: CPH, 1963), 424-425. Todd also notes that in the early days, the matters of women teaching older boys and religion classes were in question and male teachers were favoured. Todd, *Authority Vested*, 110.

kinds to assist them and their pastors in this task.[12] These workers included Deaconesses, Parish Workers, Lay Workers, Youth Staffers, Lay Practitioners and eventually the first Director of Christian Education (DCE) in 1973.[13] In the 1980s even more "kinds" of congregational workers arrived in Canada. These included the Parish Assistant and the Director of Christian Outreach (DCO). With the exception of Lay Practitioners, each of these titles represents a certification available through either the LCMS, one of its post-secondary schools, or a post-secondary school of another Lutheran church body.[14] Although the Synod may have kept records of those who had completed these various training programs, none of these congregational workers were rostered[15] or members of Synod[16] prior to 1983.[17] The fact that, across Canada, churches were using men and

[12] Griffin makes the connection between the baby boom and the increasing popularity of the DCE in the American LCMS churches. Dale E. Griffin, "The Birth of a Profession," *CHIQ* 68 (1995): 135. Although Canadian LCMS congregations did not begin hiring DCEs until much later, the same trend of hiring additional staff to serve children and youth can be seen in the Canadian churches during this same time period.

[13] N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 163.

[14] For a fuller explanation concerning these various positions and others mentioned later see Appendix A.

[15] To be "rostered" is to be added to the official list of trained and certified workers maintained by the Synod from which congregations are encouraged to hire their staff. Those on the roster are also members of Synod and may be eligible to act as either advisory or voting delegates at conventions. Initially this roster only included pastors and teachers. In 1983, the LCMS added those DCEs who were not teacher-certified to the roster as well. Griffin, "Birth of a Profession," 142. The DCEs and teachers fell under the heading "Ministers of Religion–Commissioned" which was separate from "Minsters of Religion–Ordained" which included only pastors. For several conventions following 1983, the roster of "Ministers of Religion–Commissioned" grew to included Deaconesses (1989), DCOs (1992), Lay Ministers (1995) Parish Assistants (1998) and later Directors of Family Life Ministry and Directors of Parish Music. See: LCMS, Department of General Services, Office of Rosters and Statistics, *The Lutheran Annual 2003 of the LCMS* (Saint Louis: CPH, 2002), 428 and Constitution Article V B in LCMS, *Handbook: Constitution Bylaws Articles of Incorporation* (Saint Louis: LCMS, 2007), 12-13. Cited 15 December 2010. Online: http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CCM/2007Handbook%201-20.pdf.

[16] Members of Synod are those who have signed the constitution of the Synod to which they wish to belong (either LCMS or later, LCC) and by doing so declare themselves to be in agreement with this document and related bylaws and willing to adhere to them. Initially, congregations, pastors and teachers were the only members of Synod.

[17] The one exception was any DCE who was also certified as a Lutheran Teacher, since the Lutheran Teacher was a rostered position. Initially, in order to train as a DCE, students also had to train as teachers.

women of various training in addition to their pastors to carry on the work of the congregations speaks to the need for these kinds of workers within the church body.

The Church Identifies a Growing Need

To this point, all those who received official training to become either Lutheran Teachers or one of the various designations of congregational workers had to obtain their training in the United States. At its 1980 convention, the Alberta British Columbia (ABC) District[18] of the Missouri Synod passed a resolution entitled "To develop training programs for creative roles of ministry" which identified the need for both Lutheran Teachers and congregational workers within the Canadian church and also expressed the need for training in these positions to be available in Canada.[19] This resolution shows that there was both a desire to provide the church with more congregational workers and a desire to make training accessible in a Canadian context.

The vehicle through which Canadian training programs could be provided was Concordia University College of Alberta (Concordia) in Edmonton.[20] The school was founded in 1921 by the LCMS with the express purpose providing a means by which Lutheran men could begin their pastoral training within Canada.[21] In 1978 the school's administration was given over to the ABC and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (ManSask)

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[18] Lutheran Church—Canada, both now and when it was part of the LCMS, is divided into large districts. Today they are known as the Alberta-British Columbia, Central (formerly the Manitoba and Saskatchewan) and East (formerly Ontario) Districts.

[19] Resolution R-80-03-02 in ABC District of the LCMS, *38th Convention of the ABC District of the LCMS: Proceedings* (Edmonton: ABC District of the LCMS, 1980), 8-9.

[20] This was known as Concordia College until 1995. Andreas Schwabe, "Concordia at Seventy-Five" *TCL* 11, no. 8 (1996): 8.

[21] Ibid., 6.

Districts of the LCMS in Canada[22] and by 1987, it was accredited to offer three-year bachelor's degrees.[23]

Despite its now broader focus, Concordia still very much had the training of church workers in mind. At the individual conventions of the ABC and ManSask Districts in 1982, Concordia made the following statement in its report:

> During the next two years it is hoped that Concordia will begin to offer additional church-work programs, possibly including areas such as parish assistant, director of Christian education, and Christian elementary education. A major emphasis of all such programs, including the current pre-ministerial program will be preparing young men and women for service on a full-time or part-time basis for our church's congregations here in Canada.[24]

Concordia supported the idea of providing training for congregational workers in Canada and was already actively working on the idea. That the convention delegates were also in favour of this is evident from a resolution entitled, "To Encourage the Training of Church Workers for a Variety of Ministries at Concordia College, Edmonton" which was adopted by the ManSask District Convention in the same year.[25] That there was a need for the training of congregational workers in the first place is evident not only from these reports

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[22] Resolution 78-21 in ABC District of the LCMS, *37th Convention of the ABC District of the LCMS: Proceedings* (Edmonton: ABC District of the LCMS, 1978), n.p.

[23] Richard Kraemer, "Concordia's Historical Roots: From the Reformation to the Present," in *Pathways of Grace and Knowledge: The Christian Presence in Academia* (ed. Neil Querengesser; Edmonton: CUCA, 1996), 14.

[24] ABC District of the LCMS, *39th Convention of the ABC District of the LCMS: Workbook* (Edmonton: ABC District of the LCMS, 1982), 64. The Report to the ManSask District was identical. ManSask District of the LCMS, *38th Regular Convention of the ManSask District of the LCMS: Workbook* (Regina: ManSask District of the LCMS, 1982), 93-96.

[25] Resolution 82-09-03 in ManSask District of the LCMS, *38th Regular Convention of the ManSask District of the LCMS: Proceedings* (Regina: ManSask District of the LCMS, 1982), 55-56. The ABC District had a nearly identical resolution ready to present but it was not brought to the floor. Resolution 82-04-04 in ABC District of the LCMS, *39th Convention of the ABC District of the LCMS: Proceedings* (Edmonton: ABC District of the LCMS, 1982), R-27.

and resolutions[26] but also from the increasing number of congregations which employed people to serve them in these capacities with or without any kind of certification.

In the years immediately following the 1982 conventions, Concordia worked to develop both a congregational worker and a Lutheran Teacher certification program, but neither was immediately implemented.[27] It was not until 1989 that the Board for Professional Education Services of the newly formed LCC[28] approved a certification program for Lutheran Teachers at Concordia.[29] The program was completed outside of the setting of the education degree required by the provincial government and could be completed by both school teachers and pre-school teachers. School teachers who completed the program would become rostered and pre-school teachers would be considered "certified" but not rostered.[30]

In the same year (1989), Concordia hired Jeannette Lietzau to be its first Director of Church Work Programs.[31] This, along with a resolution to the 1990 LCC Convention, shows that both the church body and Concordia were committed to providing a training

[26] Especially interesting is the following in the 1982 convention report of the Department of Youth Ministry of the ABC District: "Several congregations employ full-time staff in youth ministry or Christian education." ABC District of the LCMS, *39th Convention: Workbook*, 54.

[27] In 1982 Concordia struck a committee "to study the needs of the church for professional workers and to propose a program which Concordia College, Edmonton, could offer in response to the church." Judy Bauer et al., "Proposal for a Coordinator of Parish Ministries Program at Concordia College, Edmonton, Alberta" (Edmonton: Concordia College, June, 1982), 1. While it gave a report recommending the implementation of a "Coordinator of Parish Ministries" program, it was not implemented at that time due to budgetary constraints. Orville Walz, letter to Rudy Block, 10 June 1985 (private collection).

[28] Lutheran Church—Canada became an independent church body in 1988. It adopted all doctrinal documents and positions from the LCMS as they existed at that time. From that time forward, all LCC decisions were made apart from the LCMS.

[29] Orville Walz, "LC-C Teacher Education Programs," *TCL* 4, no. 6 (1989): 4.

[30] Ibid. LCC still does not roster pre-school teachers. It is not clear what was intended by "certifying" these pre-school teachers. It likely meant that their coursework would be acknowledged but no extra privileges or designations would be granted.

[31] LCC, *Second Convention, LCC: Workbook* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1990), F.66.

program for congregational workers as well.[32] After much work, Concordia began offering its Director of Parish Services (DPS) program in the 1993-1994 academic year. The course calendar for that year outlines the program as follows:

> Students who wish to serve in a team ministry within a congregational setting will complete a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Religious Studies and a minor in Parish Services. In addition to the degree, certification courses will be offered which include practical experience and a one year internship.[33]

This program was similar in scope to that of DCE training programs in the United States. It is important to note that although this program was endorsed by the church, its graduates would not be rostered and were not eligible to become members of Synod until after the formation of the diaconate in 1999.[34]

Official Beginnings of a Canadian Diaconate

As the first DPS interns and candidates[35] were being placed, LCC was making significant changes in its understanding of congregational workers. In late 1993, then LCC President Edwin Lehman appointed a task force to study diaconal ministry. This task force was to be responsible to the president of Synod who would bring its findings to both the

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[32] Resolution: 90:2.11 resolves "that the Lutheran Church—Canada, in Convention June 7-11, 1990 in Winnipeg encourage Concordia College to develop, in accordance with the governing Handbook Bylaws, church work programs in addition to the pastoral and teacher church work programs already in existence." LCC, *Second Convention, LCC: Proceedings* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1990), 56-57.

[33] Concordia College, *Concordia College, Edmonton Calendar 1993-1994* (Edmonton: Concordia College, 1993), 28.

[34] The Task Force for the Study of Diaconal Ministry noted that at the time of their work, only Lutheran Teachers and DCEs were rostered in addition to pastors. Roger Winger et al., "A Proposal for the Ecclesiastical Administration of a Diaconal Ministry in LCC," in "Report of the Task Force to Study Diaconal Ministry," in *Fourth Convention, LCC: Workbook* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1996), G.79. This is in keeping with the norms of the LCMS at the time when LCC become independent of them.

[35] This term refers to newly certified graduates who are eligible for placement in congregations (or schools, in the case of teachers).

Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR)[36] and the Council of Presidents.[37] The report and recommendations of this task force were to be finalized by September 1, 1995, presumably so that the findings would be ready to present at the LCC Convention in the spring of 1996.[38]

The task force was made up of six people: one district president, one parish pastor, one "other" church worker, one "CTCR/seminary representative,"[39] and two lay people.[40] The group had five mandates which it was to fulfil on behalf of the church:

a. To study the desirability of establishing a diaconate within Lutheran Church—Canada, in the light of the Synod's present and future needs.
b. *To determine the scriptural/confessional implications of a diaconate*,[41] with special attention to the relationship of the diaconate both to the ordained public ministry and to the laity of the church.
c. *To define the office of diaconate in a manner consistent with Scripture* and the confessions, as well as the historical and ecumenical understanding of the office.
d. To determine the feasibility of establishing such an office, and to set forth the steps that would need to be taken to do so.
e. If deemed feasible, to determine, in preliminary form only:
   - The criteria and qualifications for the diaconate
   - The status of the diaconate within the structure of LCC (roster/how ordered, etc.)

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[36] The CTCR assists the church body and its president "in matters of theology and church relations;…in the area of fraternal organizations and cults;…in the area of doctrinal review." LCC Bylaws Section II D 3 2.107 in LCC, *2008 Handbook of LCC* (ed. Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure; Winnipeg: LCC), 28.

[37] The Council of Presidents is made up of the LCC president as well as the president of each of LCC's three districts.

[38] Edwin Lehman, "Mandate to the Task Force on the Diaconal Ministry LCC" in "Report of the Task Force to Study Diaconal Ministry" in *Fourth Convention, LCC: Workbook* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1996), G.61.

[39] Ibid. From this wording, it is unclear whether the representative was to be from either of these two entities or an individual who could represent both. In the end, the person chosen to fill this role was a member of both groups. Roger Winger et al., "Report of the Task Force to Study Diaconal Ministry," in *Fourth Convention, LCC: Workbook* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1996), G.58.

[40] Lehman, "Mandate," G.61. It seems apparent, though not certain, that the CTCR/Seminary position on the task force was meant to be its resident scholar. This position was filled by John Stephenson, professor of historical theology at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario. In addition to him, two pastors also sat on the task force, Roger Winger and James Fritsche, both of whom would also have had some training in New Testament exegesis. Cf. Winger et al., "Report," G. 58.

[41] The meaning of "scriptural/confessional" will be explained below.

- Requirements and standards for admission to the diaconate.[42]

In the process of fulfilling its mandates, this group was also to consult with personnel of the LCMS, representatives of other Lutheran church bodies, and representatives from Concordia.[43]

Each of these mandates is important, and the findings of the task force concerning them had a major impact on how the diaconate of LCC was eventually formed and understood. It is especially significant to note, however, two particular phrases: "To determine the scriptural/confessional implications of a diaconate" and "To define the office of diaconate in a manner consistent with Scripture." Within each of these phrases, the words "scriptural…implications" and "consistent with Scripture" are important. This task force was not seeking to create recommendations for a modern diaconate which would be *identical* to that of scripture but rather, they were to explore the implications of what scripture said concerning deacons and create recommendations *consistent* with them. Another way of stating this is that the task force was charged with making recommendations which were *not in opposition* to the principles of scripture on the subject. This detail of the mandate will become important later when comparisons are made between the findings of this task force and the evidence of the New Testament.

At its first meeting in February of 1994, the group determined, based on its mandates, three areas which it would need to study. These were: "An historical review of the diaconate; the scriptural/confessional implications of a diaconate (Lutheran dogmatics), with an emphasis on the role of the diaconate relative to both clergy and

[42] Lehman, "Mandate," G.61. Emphasis mine.
[43] Ibid.

laity; and how this relates to Lutheran Church—Canada in terms of ecclesiastical administration."[44] In keeping with these goals, two study papers were prepared by individual members of the task force and discussed, revised and adopted by the task force as a whole. They are entitled: "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives on the [Re]Establishment of the Diaconate in Lutheran Church—Canada" and "A Proposal for the Ecclesiastical Administration of a Diaconal Ministry in Lutheran Church—Canada."[45] Based on the findings of these two documents, the task force concluded that LCC should officially establish a diaconate and give its members rostered status.[46] By being rostered, these people would come under the administration of the Synod.[47] It was further recommended that the matter of voting rights at conventions be examined in more detail with the hope that deacons could also be granted the right to vote.[48] This was a significant recommendation, as it would require a re-evaluation of the Synod's policy of equal representation of clergy and lay voting delegates at conventions.[49] The task force also recommended that those already serving as "non-ordained[50] professional church

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[44] Winger et al., "Report," G.58.

[45] Ibid., G.59. These two documents outline how LCC ultimately would understand the diaconate and will be discussed in the next section. Note that "[Re]Establishment" is the way the title appears in the report and does not reflect a change in the text as square brackets normally do. Hereafter these two documents will be referred to as "Scriptural, Dogmatic and Historical Perspectives" and "Ecclesiastical Administration" respectively.

[46] The implications of being rostered and also a member of Synod have been previously explained on page 8, footnotes 15 and 16.

[47] This rostering also carried with it the implication that deacons held an office of leadership with a certain amount of authority. It also carried an implied distinction from the laity, although deacons were not considered to be part of the clergy.

[48] Winger et al., "Report," G.59.

[49] For further discussion on this issue, see Appendix B.

[50] In LCC, clergy are set apart for service through the rite of "ordination" and deacons are set apart for service by a rite known as "consecration." Although these rites are similar, ordination includes the laying on of hands as well as vows concerning preaching and the administration of the sacraments. Both rites include vows concerning the acceptance of scripture, the ecumenical creeds, and the Confessions. Cf. Commission on Worship of the LCMS, *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* (Saint Louis: CPH, 2006), 160-168, 218-221.

workers"[51] should be added to the diaconate based on years of experience and previous training.[52] The task of delineating specific educational requirements for new members to the diaconate was delegated to "appropriate synodical entities."[53]

The 1996 LCC convention delegates commended the report and recommendations for "further study and response."[54] Over the three years which followed, the circuits[55] of LCC examined the documents and recommendations of the task force in preparation to take further action at the 1999 convention. Based on this discussion, LCC's Board of Directors submitted an overture to the 1999 convention which resulted in a convention resolution to establish a diaconate in LCC.[56] Delegates passed the resolution and LCC's diaconate was born. This new office would include all professional church workers, with the exception of pastors, who had been officially trained for their tasks such as Lutheran Teachers, DCEs, DPSs, Parish Assistants, and DCOs, among others. Notably, it did not include Lay Practitioners, as these individuals had not received any official training. At the same convention, delegates defeated a separate resolution which would have given deacons rostered status.[57] Deacons were both rostered and made members of Synod at the 2002 convention;[58] however, the role of deacon still does not bring voting privileges.[59]

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[51] This is the task force's phrase to describe the various congregational workers who had official certifications and training. It notably excluded Lay Practitioners.

[52] Guidelines for how this might be done were set out in Winger et al., "Ecclesiastical Administration," G.80.

[53] Winger et al., "Report," G.59.

[54] Resolution 96.2.03A in LCC, *Fourth Convention, LCC: Proceedings* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1996), 57-58.

[55] Each of LCC's districts is divided into a number of smaller geographical areas called circuits. At the circuit level, clergy and laity are able to engage in discussion in a small group setting.

[56] Resolution 99.2.01 in LCC, *Fifth Convention, LCC: Proceedings* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1999), 46-47.

[57] Resolution 99.3.06 in ibid., 52.

[58] Resolution 02.3.02 in LCC, *Sixth Convention, LCC: Proceedings* (Winnipeg: LCC, 2002), 54.

Scriptural and Historical Support for the Lutheran Church—Canada Diaconate

In order to compare the LCC diaconate with that of the New Testament, it is necessary to review how LCC interprets the New Testament in relation to the diaconate. This information is primarily found in the 1996 study document "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives" as submitted by the Task Force for the Study of Diaconal Ministry. Other documents which describe the official doctrinal position of LCC will also be used where necessary.

Before beginning this review, it is important to understand LCC's position on the authority of scripture as well as the other documents to which it subscribes. Since its beginning, including the time when it was part of the LCMS, LCC has held that the Old and New Testaments are "the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice."[60] Lutheran Church—Canada also accepts the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed as well as "the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord"[61] as "a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God."[62] All of these documents have been collected in *The Book of Concord* and are often referred to as "the Confessions." From time to time, LCC (and the LCMS before them) adopts, in

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[59] For the full text of these resolutions, further information on the process by which the office of deacon was established within LCC, and information on issues surrounding voting rights see Appendix B.

[60] LCC Constitution Article II 1 in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 9.

[61] The *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* is also included in the accepted documents. It was at one time printed as an appendix to the *Smalcald Articles* and this is probably the reason why it is not explicitly listed here. See: Willard D. Allbeck, *Studies in the Lutheran Confessions* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 210. Recent editions of *The Book of Concord* list it as a separate document following the *Smalcald Articles*. Cf. Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (2nd ed.; Saint Louis: CPH, 2006).

[62] LCC Constitution Article II 2 in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 9.

convention, other documents which are thought to be correct expositions of scripture and the Confessions. These other documents do not have the same authority as scripture and the Confessions, but they are useful for study purposes and some of these documents also played a role in LCC's study of the office of deacon.

In order to find support for a modern diaconate, LCC had to study models of ministry which were both geographically centered (similar to a congregation or parish) and on-going. Ministry positions which were itinerant or which disappeared with the apostolic age were not applicable to the discussion. Accordingly, the study document begins by listing nine potential New Testament offices, based on several passages of scripture,[63] and then pares the list down until only two offices are left. The nine offices are: apostle (ἀπόστολος), prophet (προφήτης), teacher (διδάσκαλος), evangelist (εὐαγγελιστής), pastor (ποιμήν), bishop (ἐπίσκοπος), elder/presbyter (πρεσβύτερος), deacon (διάκονος), and widow (χήρα).[64] This list of nine is quickly reduced to seven as the widow is said to be something "which belongs in a category of its own" and the offices of presbyter and bishop are equated based on Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5 and 7.[65]

The document goes on to note that the offices of apostle, prophet and teacher are connected to each other, although not necessarily synonymous. Each of them refers to those who "proclaim the word of God" either because of their eye-witness testimony (apostles), through messages given to them by God (prophet) or by expounding on the

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[63] These verses are 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1, 8-13; 5:9; Titus 1:5; and Philippians 1:1.

[64] Roger Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives on the [Re]Establishment of the Diaconate in LCC," in "Report of the Task Force to Study Diaconal Ministry," in *Fourth Convention, LCC: Workbook* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1996), G.64. I have added the Greek words for easy comparison later.

[65] Ibid.

written word available to them (teacher).[66] It is also noted, based on 1 Timothy 2:7 that these three "offices" could be simultaneously held by the same man.[67] The offices of prophet and apostle are said to be temporary offices and along with the office of teacher, were not linked to a particular location, but "their authority extended over the whole Church."[68] This made these three offices distinct from those of presbyter-bishop and deacon which were apparently more geographically centered.

Even if the offices of apostle, prophet and teacher are eliminated as distinct offices and are viewed as functions of individuals holding other offices, there still remains four offices from the original nine suggested. It appears as though the reader is meant to infer that the offices of evangelist and pastor are linked to the office of presbyter-bishop. A link between the office of pastor and that of the bishop is made by noting that the activities of the bishops in Acts 20 are described with the verb ποιμαίνειν, which has the same root as "pastor" (ποιμήν). Also, the document attempts to link the office of evangelist and presbyter-bishop with the statement "Timothy's office of evangelist (II Tim 5:4 [*sic.* 4:5]) involved his membership in the presbyteral college in which capacity he was entrusted with the supervision of other presbyters."[69] While these links may indeed be valid, the document is not explicit about them and the reader is left wondering whether or not the document's author intended to make both pastor and evangelist part of the office of presbyter-bishop. Assuming that these links are intended

[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., G.65.
[69] Ibid.

by the document, the only remaining offices from the original list of nine are the offices of presbyter-bishop and deacon.

Of these two remaining offices, the deacon is said to be "fully distinct from all the foregoing offices…[and] is nowhere treated independently but always in relation to the office of presbyter-bishop."[70] By mentioning the deacon as "fully distinct" the document is perhaps further asserting a link between all the other offices (except that of widow) with the presbyter-bishop. The fact that the office of deacon is noted to always be mentioned in relation to that of presbyter-bishop is significant. This could indicate that the deacon cannot exist without the presbyter-bishop or at the least that the two offices are very closely linked. These possibilities will be discussed in detail in later sections.[71]

The document thus concludes that the offices of "presbyter-bishop" and deacon are the only ones which were "established for the ongoing governance, nurture and wellbeing of the Church."[72] Another significant conclusion it draws is that

> The offices of presbyter (=bishop) and deacon differed from the trio of original offices [apostle, prophet, teacher] in the twofold respect of their being filled by the Lord through a mediate call and of the restriction of the direct sphere of authority to the confines of a local church.[73]

While the three "original offices" tied in nicely with the office of presbyter-bishop, and perhaps also the deacon, they were not meant to be synonymous: apostles, prophets, and teachers are called directly by God to serve the whole church, while the presbyter-bishops and deacons are called by God through the church to serve in a specific geographical

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[70] Ibid.
[71] See especially Chapter 3.
[72] Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.65.
[73] Ibid.

area.[74] This observation is mirrored in the practice of LCC: pastors and deacons serve congregations (a "geographic area") who have extended them a call (invitation to serve) through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (God).

The document next examines the present-day office of pastor within LCC and how this fits into the New Testament's offices. LCC holds that the office of pastor was instituted by Jesus when he called the twelve apostles. It is suggested that the apostles were also, in a sense, presbyter-bishops because Peter (1 Peter 5:1[75]) and the apostle John (2 John 1; 3 John 1) explicitly link themselves with this office and Paul implies that he also held it (a combination of 1 Timothy 1:18[76] and 4:14).[77] On the same topic Walther states, "the divine institution of the holy ministry is evident from the fact that the holy apostles place themselves on an equal footing with the servants of the church who were called mediately as their co-laborers in the ministry."[78] This interpretation is also

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[74] This is a significant point which will be discussed throughout the paper.

[75] The document reads 1 Peter 5:2, but notes that it is the word συμπρεσβύτερος which establishes this connection between Peter and the office of presbyter-bishop. This word is actually found in 1 Peter 5:1 and so the appearance of 5:2 is likely a typing error in the document.

[76] The document text actually reads 1 Timothy 1:6, and notes that in this verse Paul ordains Timothy. The actual text of this verse, however, does not describe this scenario. It is likely a typing error and 1 Timothy 1:18 seems to fit the substance of what 1:6 was supposed to have said.

[77] Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.66. Timothy is said to be ordained both by Paul himself and also by the group of presbyters. This is most easily reconciled if Paul was in fact one of those presbyters. These observations about Peter, John, and Paul only hold true if the letters mentioned were actually written by these men. Authorship of all three groups of letters is disputed and non-traditional authorship calls this assertion into question.

[78] C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* (Kirche und Amt): *Witnesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry* (trans. J. T. Mueller; Saint Louis: CPH, 1987), 178. In addition to the texts concerning Peter and John, Walther cites Colossians 4:7, Philippians 2:25 and the combined testimony of 1 Corinthians 1:1 and 4:1. Walther's *Theses on the Holy Ministry* were accepted by the Missouri Synod in 1851 and are considered to be a correct interpretation of both Holy Scripture and the Confessions although they are not in themselves normative. CTCR of the LCMS, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature* (Saint Louis: LCMS, 1981), 45. That they were also accepted by LCC is confirmed by resolutions passed at LCC conventions in both 1990 and 1999. See: Resolution 90:1.02 in LCC, *Second Convention: Proceedings*, 37-38; Resolution 99.1.03A in LCC, *Fifth Convention: Proceedings*, 42; and Overture 1.03 in LCC, *Fifth Convention, LCC: Workbook* (Winnipeg: LCC, 1999), F2.

supported by information in *The Book of Concord*.[79] With the office of pastor being linked to the office of presbyter-bishop and the office of presbyter-bishop also being linked to the office of apostle, which was instituted by Jesus, LCC is able to say that the office of pastor was therefore instituted by Jesus when he called the twelve apostles.

The office of deacon, in contrast, is not viewed as being directly instituted by Jesus while he was on earth,[80] but rather something that he did through the church, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, after his ascension into heaven.[81] The document "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives" cites Acts 6:1-7, Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as support for the office of deacon being established by the New Testament church. Although the document discusses and acknowledges that opinions are divided as to whether the Seven in Acts 6 represent the first deacons, it notes, "The call of the Seven in all likelihood supplied if not the actual source, at any rate the model for the creation of the diaconate."[82] The document then points to the evidence presented in Philippians and 1 Timothy as suggesting that the offices of presbyter-bishop and deacon were closely related, with the office of deacon being linked to presbyter-bishop in some kind of subordinate way.[83] For this reason, LCC accepts that the office of deacon flows out of the

[79] "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives" cites several references to *The Book of Concord*. The most significant one concerning the office of pastor being related to the call of the apostles is found in *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, section 10. It states, "...the office of the ministry [pastor] proceeds from the general call of the apostles..." McCain, *Lutheran Confessions*, 295. Cf. Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.67.

[80] While the office of deacon was not instituted by Jesus, the concept of Christians as servants was. For a discussion of this idea of general Christian service and its cultural implications, see page 48.

[81] Ibid., G.72.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

office of pastor.[84] This in no way demeans the importance of this secondary office. Walther states,

> Every other public office in the church [such as the deacon] is part of the ministry of the Word or an auxiliary office that supports the ministry…Therefore, the offices of Christian day school teachers, almoners, sextons, precentors at pubic worship, and others are all to be regarded as ecclesiastical and sacred, for they take over a part of the one ministry of the Word and support the pastoral office.[85]

Those who suggest that the office of deacon is not important or is somehow less worthy than that of the office of pastor do not properly understand LCC's position on this.

Although the office of deacon is a dignified office,[86] it is still under the supervision of the office of pastor. The document *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature*, written by the CTCR of the LCMS notes the following, "Functions of the office of the public ministry [pastor] that are performed by others remain the responsibility of the office of public ministry and must be supervised by it."[87] It is for this reason that the Task Force for the Study of Diaconal Ministry noted that deacons serving in a local parish fall under the spiritual oversight of the local called pastor. In effect, these

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[84] Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 177, 289-290. It is important to note that this was not a perspective developed while LCC was studying the office of deacon in the 1990s. The idea that auxiliary offices flow from the office of pastor and are subordinate to it has long been held in the LCMS and LCC. Since the diaconate was comprised of these "auxiliary roles," it fit into their previous model nicely.

[85] Ibid., 289-290. An almoner is one who is in charge of dispensing money or food given for the aid of the poor. Sextons are those who assisted in a congregation by performing such duties as ringing the bells, digging graves and cleaning altar linens. Precentors are responsible for choral music within the congregation. See related entries in: F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 44, 1492, 1318 respectively.

[86] The document "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives" appeals to Collins's study (discussed in Chapter 2) on the meaning of the διακον- word-group when it establishes that the office of deacon is a dignified one. Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.70.

[87] CTCR of the LCMS, *Nomenclature*, 41.

deacons are doing the work for which that pastor is normally responsible (whether or not he has the necessary gifts to carry it out) and thus he supervises them accordingly.[88]

As the document moves from the evidence of the New Testament to that of church history, it makes two additional points which are worth noting. First, although no specific "office of deacon" was in existence in LCC at the time of the study, there was already "a *de facto* diaconate…alive and at work"[89] within the church. It also stated,

> In acting to revive the official diaconate, the pastors and people of Lutheran Church—Canada would signify their esteem for those now working in auxiliary offices; they would make provision for the trans-parochial pastoral care and supervision of these workers; and they would make it possible for these men and women to participate in the decision-making and governance of the Synod.[90]

These statements point out that the diaconate was essentially already in place within the church and that by making this office official, both the church and those who were serving it would benefit.

The second point which the document is careful to make is that the office of deacon is one which is open to women. Both when the document was written and currently, LCC holds that the office of pastor is one which should only be filled by men; however, women are able to be part of auxiliary offices in various ways and have been in these roles from very early in LCC's history. In order to maintain its stance that scripture is the highest authority, LCC needed to show that the New Testament allows for the possibility of female deacons and that their presence in an LCC diaconate would not be only a matter of tradition. Two pieces of evidence are important in this discussion. First,

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[88] Winger et al., "Ecclesiastical Administration," G.80. This also includes those deacons who serve as Lutheran Teachers at a Lutheran school since these schools are normally run by individual congregations which are served by pastors. Even those schools which are run by groups of congregations have some kind of pastoral oversight.

[89] Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.73.

[90] Ibid.

Romans 16:1 uses the word διάκονος to describe a woman, Phoebe.[91] "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives" points out, "The wide range of meanings found among the various New Testament uses of *diakonos* render it impossible for us to know for sure whether the Phoebe mentioned in Rom. 16:1 was simply an emissary of the church in Cenchrea or actually a deacon serving as an assistant to its bishop."[92] Also, it points to the disputed interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:11 which mentions γυναῖκας ("women" or "wives") when describing the qualifications for deacons. It is unclear whether this refers to female deacons or the wives of the male deacons.[93] The document states,

> Mindfulness of the widespread seclusion of women in the first century (which would render female deacons indispensable agents of male pastors) and of the unlikelihood of deacons' wives being singled out for apostolic scrutiny while bishops' wives are overlooked tips the balance in favour of supposing that in these verses St. Paul addresses the desired personal qualities of women deacons.[94]

This, coupled with the fact that the early church appears to have had female deacons, shows that there is no evidence to suggest that women should be excluded from serving in this capacity.[95]

Practical Considerations for the Lutheran Church—Canada Diaconate

Qualifications for Deacons in Lutheran Church—Canada

The second document which accompanied the report of the task force provided a detailed outline as to what would qualify people to be deacons within the church as well as what

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[91] Phoebe and Romans 16:1-2 will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
[92] Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.73.
[93] This verse will be examined in detail in Chapter 3.
[94] Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.73.
[95] Ibid., G.73-G.74.

tasks these people would be eligible to perform. In order to serve as a deacon in LCC, individuals must undergo proper training. Although the task force did not outline the specifics of that training, they offered several suggestions which have been implemented by the church.[96] For those who train in Canada for the office of deacon, the normal course of study includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies from Concordia University College of Alberta. In addition to the Religion Major, there are certain courses in certification which must be taken, but the required courses and the length of degree vary depending on whether the student intends to become a Lutheran Teacher or a DPS.[97] Director of Parish Services students are also expected to complete a year-long internship once their degree is concluded.[98] Colloquy programs are available in both professions for those who have previously completed degrees. These programs include a core of theological and certification courses as well as oral examinations and, for DPS students, a possible internship placement.[99] If students have a desire to earn certification as a DCE, DCO or another such program offered through the LCMS Concordia University system, they may do so and still be accepted to the diaconate of LCC.[100]

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[96] The Task Force on the Study of Diaconal Ministry noted that the specifics of diaconal educational requirements would need to be devised by the Board for Higher Education of LCC; however the task force's recommendation states: "Certification would require as a minimum a bachelor's degree, and, if necessary, any additional courses pertinent to the particular specialty. A core theological component would be common to all. In addition, an internship in an appropriate congregation or institutional setting would be required." Winger et al., "Ecclesiastical Administration," G.80.

[97] Those students wishing to become Lutheran Teachers are required to earn a three-year Bachelor of Arts, plus the usual education after-degree while those studying to be DPSs are required to earn a four-year Bachelor of Arts with an applied emphasis. See: CUCA, *2010-2011 Calendar* (Edmonton: CUCA, 2010), 77-78.

[98] Ibid., 77.

[99] Ibid., 77-78.

[100] LCC Bylaws Section V A 5.01 b.1.ii in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 46. Cf. CUCA, *2010-2011 Calendar*, 79.

Education, however, is not the only requirement for certification, and completion of the necessary education does not always mean that individuals are received as deacons. Candidates must also be deemed suitable for the office and be recommended to it by either the educational institution from which they have graduated or by the Diaconal Colloquy Committee which evaluated them.[101] At Concordia, in order for DPS students to be recommended to the office of deacon, they must complete all academic requirements with a minimum average grade of 2.3 out of 4.0. They also must successfully complete a series of four interviews designed to help them be placed successfully. The first of these interviews assesses the suitability of the candidate for the position through detailed questions about the student's faith, doctrinal knowledge, personal character, lifestyle choices and ministry experience. Students must also submit three letters of reference, one of which must come from their pastor.[102] Those who graduate from other programs in the LCMS will undergo screening processes unique to their school.

Upon the successful completion of the program of their choice, and receiving a recommendation to the office, candidates for the office of deacon are assigned a congregation or school in which to begin their service. This placement is made by the Council of Presidents, acting as the Board of Assignments, in consultation with the placement officer of the student's educational institution.[103] Once a student accepts this position and makes the necessary applications, he or she will be consecrated and added to

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[101] LCC Bylaws Section V A 5.25 a.2 in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 48.

[102] All information regarding the Concordia DPS recommendation process is from Concordia's Director of Church Work Programs: Paul Schoepp, email to author, 15 December 2010. Those who wish to become Lutheran Teacher undergo a similar process. Schoepp, email to author, 18 December 2010.

[103] LCC Bylaws Section V A 5.11 in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 47.

the deacon's roster.[104] New deacons are normally officially received into membership through the signing of the synodical constitution the next time either their district or the Synod meets for convention.[105]

Conditions of Membership in Lutheran Church—Canada

Once a deacon becomes a member of Synod he or she must also adhere to certain conditions of membership in order to maintain that standing. All members of LCC, including pastors, deacons and congregations, voluntarily subject themselves to the following as stated in Article VI of the LCC Constitution:

1. Acceptance of the confessional basis of Article II.[106]
2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as:
   a. serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by pastors;
   b. taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession;
   c. participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities.
3. Regular call of pastors and deacons and regular election of lay delegates by the congregations, as [*sic*.] also the blamelessness of the life of such.
4. Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymn books, and catechisms in church and school.
5. Service of congregations by pastors who are members of Lutheran Church–Canada.[107]

Essentially these points state that members must live blameless lifestyles[108] and uphold the teachings of the Synod. In addition to these matters of doctrine and lifestyle, members are expected to promote and support the Synod in all it does.[109] Those who do not adhere

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[104] LCC Bylaws Section V B 5.25 in ibid., 48. The candidates do not normally decline these initial placements and a person cannot be added to the roster unless he or she first accepts a position.

[105] LCC Bylaws Section I B 1.11 and 1.13 in ibid., 16.

[106] See previous discussion of this Article on pages 17-18.

[107] LCC Constitution Article VI in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 10.

[108] The significance of this point will be discussed in Chapter 3.

[109] The Bylaws of Synod state: "Every pastor and every deacon shall, in accordance with his vocation, his ability, and the means at his command, diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the

to these conditions, and, "after previous futile admonition," refuse to bring themselves back into compliance will be expelled from the Synod.[110]

Activities of Deacons in Lutheran Church—Canada

Aside from discussing what qualifies a person to serve as a deacon, the Task Force for the Study of Diaconal Ministry also suggested some areas in which deacons were eligible to serve. This was important for the task force to consider because without clarification, confusion may arise. For example, if a specific understanding of what duties a deacon is able to perform is not stated, some deacons may be given duties beyond what is intended for the office, and others may be unnecessarily restricted. Also, unless a proper distinction between deacon and pastor is made, a confusion of roles may result which may lead to power struggles in a congregation and an atmosphere of conflict rather than Christian unity.

As previously discussed, LCC teaches that the office of deacon flows out of the office of pastor and is thus under the supervision of the local pastor. Despite this close connection between the offices and the fact that all activities of the deacon may also be carried out by the pastor, deacons may not assume all aspects of the pastoral office. The document *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature* states,

> Functions that are essentially exercises of the ministry of Word and sacrament should be performed by those who hold the office of the public ministry. Thus, preaching in the worship service, leading in public prayer, celebration of the

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Synod by word, deed, and adequate financial support." See LCC Bylaws Section I B 1.17 a in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 17.

[110] LCC Constitution Article XIII in ibid., 13-14. This is a serious offence and expulsion is neither to be given nor taken lightly. Cf. Matthew 18:15-17.

> Sacrament of the Altar, baptisms, wedding and funeral services should be carried out by those who hold the office of public ministry.[111]

These functions of the pastoral office are not normally open to deacons; however, this same document goes on to note that in certain circumstances, deacons may fulfil some of the duties normally only performed by those in the pastoral office, so long as there are not other reasons why they should not assume such duties. It states:

> However, in exceptional circumstances or in emergencies (as when a pastor is incapacitated), members of the auxiliary offices or other qualified individuals may temporarily be called upon to perform, under proper supervision, functions that are otherwise performed by the pastor and that are not for other reasons precluded (e.g., women teachers or deaconesses preaching in the public service).[112]

It is important to note that this does not effectively create two classes of deacons. Male deacons who, in times of emergency, fulfil some of the duties normally assigned to the pastoral office are not qualified to do so because they are deacons. Rather, these men are qualified, just as any other layman might be qualified, because they are well-versed in scripture and are leaders within the congregation.[113]

Apart from these above-mentioned activities which are specific to the office of pastor alone, there are several other functions of the pastoral office which all deacons are eligible to perform. After a study of scripture and church history, the task force suggested five areas in which deacons may serve.[114] The first area is described as an "office of love." This is described as deacons "[spearheading] common efforts of one or more

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[111] CTCR of the LCMS, *Nomenclature*, 35.

[112] Ibid. Since LCC does not ordain women to the office of pastor, a female deacon should not assume any of the duties which are specifically assigned only to the pastoral office.

[113] Ibid., 37-38.

[114] These are outlined in Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.76-G.77.

congregations to give concrete expression to the love that flows from faith."[115] The kinds of activities described here encompass various charitable works, social work and healthcare. Although this is primarily based on observations of the historical diaconate, the task force does link this to the Seven in Acts 6.[116]

A second area where deacons may serve is in pastoral care. In this area, a female deacon might be better suited to serve some of the congregation's women than would a male pastor, depending on situation and circumstance. This is one of the ways in which the women of the diaconate are invaluable. The document also states,

> Bearers of the diaconal office may extend pastoral care in such a way that the unity and cohesion of the Church is promoted and the laity receive assistance to fulfil their calling as this has been described by St. Peter: 'Always be prepared to make a defence to any one [*sic.*] who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.' (I Pet. 3:15 RSV).[117]

Under this category, the task force also included the idea of female theologians contributing to scholarly research, writing, and teaching.

The third area of diaconal service is in the area of catechesis. This area is not meant to include instruction through preaching, but rather the work of Lutheran Teachers as they teach the Word of God in the classroom.[118] It also may encompass the activities of congregational workers as they teach in various non-preaching capacities within the congregation.[119]

The final two areas where deacons may serve are in church administration and the position of church musician. No qualifications or restrictions are mentioned in the

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[115] Ibid., G.76.
[116] Cf. ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., G.77.
[119] The exact words used are "the instruction of the baptized" and it specifically notes that Teachers and DCEs fulfill this role. Cf. Winger et al., "Ecclesiastical Administration," G.79.

document in relation to these two areas.[120] These five areas of service provide many different avenues by which men and women of various gifts can serve their Lord under the title of "Deacon." Generally speaking, these recommendations accurately reflect the kind of work carried out by deacons in LCC today.[121]

Key Points of Comparison

Based on the information in this study, LCC's diaconate can be summarized as follows: First, the office of deacon was instituted by LCC based on a scriptural and historical understanding of similar positions, as well as on a perceived need in the modern church. Second, the office of deacon is a dignified and respectable one. This is implied by the fact that LCC added deacons to its roster of workers, made them members of Synod, and instituted a careful selection and training process for them. Third, deacons are primarily intended to serve in a local congregational or school setting. Fourth, the office of deacon is subordinate to the office of pastor and is under pastoral supervision. Fifth, while all diaconal duties flow from the office of pastor, deacons are not eligible to preach or administer the sacraments which are duties of the pastoral office alone. Sixth, in order to be added to the roster of deacons in LCC, a person must undergo the prescribed scholarly and practical training, be recommended to the office and receive and accept a call to serve. Seventh, a person's recommendation to the office of deacon is based on his or her knowledge of theology, appropriate practical skills, Christian character and blameless lifestyle. Eighth, deacons in LCC may be either men or women.

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[120] Winger et al., "Scriptural, Dogmatic, and Historical Perspectives," G.77.

[121] It is interesting, given the high authority of scripture in LCC, that these five areas of service are not linked with scripture more often. This may be somewhat related to the fact that ascertaining actual duties of New Testament deacons is very difficult. See discussions in Chapters 3-5.

Throughout this examination of LCC's diaconate, the primary authority of scripture has been apparent. It is this high level of scriptural authority which makes our examination of LCC's diaconate in light of the New Testament evidence so meaningful: in order to stand up to its own scrutiny, LCC's diaconate must be firmly grounded in scripture and in no way be in opposition to it. The remainder of this study will therefore be focused on the New Testament's evidence concerning a first-century diaconate. The above eight summary points of LCC's diaconate provide some important direction for this New Testament study. Although all information concerning the New Testament diaconate must be considered, this summary shows that particular attention should be paid to how the New Testament diaconate was instituted; the geographical span of service (single location or wider scope); the level of respect afforded to the position; the relationship between the New Testament deacon and other leadership positions in the New Testament church; the duties of the New Testament deacon and how they compare with those of other leadership positions; the qualifications for becoming a New Testament deacon; and whether or not the New Testament diaconate was limited to a specific gender. While the New Testament may not directly address all of these points, they provide an important guide for the study of the New Testament diaconate.

CHAPTER 2: A STUDY OF THE ΔΙΑΚΟΝ– FAMILY OF WORDS

Introduction

The English word "deacon" is derived from the Greek word διάκονος and so it is appropriate that this study of the New Testament diaconate should begin with a study of this word and its cognates as well as a comparison of these words with others having similar semantic domains. Included in this chapter will be a brief examination of the meanings and usages of the διακον- family of words in secular Greek literature and the Septuagint (LXX), as well as a more thorough survey of its use in the New Testament. These examinations will assist in establishing how this word family is meant to be understood within the New Testament context. This word study will also aid in the exegesis of passages in chapters which follow.

It is important to note that this chapter is solely an overview of the ranges of meaning for the διακον- family and does not show definitively how διακονία, διάκονος, or διακονέω should be understood in every occurrence in the New Testament. Fee notes,

> In exegesis it is especially important to remember that *words function in a context.* Therefore, although any given word may have a broad or narrow *range of meaning,* the aim of word study in exegesis is to try to understand as precisely as possible what the author was trying to convey by his use of *this* word in this context. Thus, for example, you cannot legitimately do a word study of σάρξ [or διακονία, διάκονος and διακονέω]; you can only do a word study of σάρξ [or διακονία, διάκονος and διακονέω] in 1 Cor. 5:5 or in 2 Cor. 15:16 and so on.[1]

Therefore, this chapter cannot conclude with any assurance what this family of words means in a particular verse or draw any conclusions about the New Testament diaconate. This will be attempted in later chapters for specific passages, with conclusions at the end. Here, the various ranges of meaning will be established in general, with particular

[1] Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis* (3rd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 79. Emphasis his.

attention paid to the function of the word-group within the New Testament as a means of laying a foundation for further study.

Secular Greek Literature

It is difficult to comprehend what something *is* unless a person first knows where that thing *comes from*. For this reason, it is necessary to have a good understanding of how the διακον- word-group was used in Greek literature predating the New Testament, before its usage in the New Testament can be fully understood.[2] The church used this group of words for its own purposes, and deeper insight into the various uses in the New Testament can be gleaned if it can be established whether these Christian uses are the same as, different from, or somewhere in between when compared with those of earlier Greek writers. Accordingly, this first section will focus on the use of the διακον- word-group in secular Greek literature written before, or roughly contemporary with, the New Testament.

Appearance and Frequency

The three forms of the διακον- word-group which also appear in the New Testament first appear in Greek literature in Herodotus around the fifth century B.C.E.[3] According to W.

[2] There are those who disagree with this line of reasoning. Skemp states, "Though the word διακονεῖν is Greek, there is little help to be gained from a study of its usage and that of its cognates in the classical period when our task is to elucidate its meaning in the Christian Church." J. B. Skemp, "Service to the Needy in the Greco-Roman World," in *Service in Christ: Essays Presented to Karl Barth on his 80th Birthday* (ed. James I. McCord and T. H. L. Parker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 17. While it is difficult to understand the rationale behind such a statement, his opinion is duly noted.

[3] C. E. B. Cranfield, "Diakonia in the New Testament," in *Service in Christ: Essays Presented to Karl Barth on his 80th Birthday* (ed. James I. McCord and T. H. L. Parker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 37, footnote 1 and John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 73.

Bauer et al., other early occurrences are found in Sophocles and Thucydides, the writers of tragedy, and inscriptions from the third century B.C.E.[4] The evidence shows that, with the exception of Josephus and Christian literature, the word-group is not common in the known literature, inscriptions and papyri; however, neither is it exceptionally rare.[5]

Range of Meaning

A study of the different lexicons and theological dictionaries suggests that the most basic and general meaning for each of the διακον- words is the idea of serving. The verb διακονέω in its most basic form means "to serve"; the noun διακονία means "service"; and the noun διάκονος means "servant."[6]

While the majority of scholars consider such translations to be valid, not all agree. John Collins has written a very detailed study on the διακον- word-group in which he takes exception to this traditional interpretation and suggests that a better way to understand this word-group is with the idea of "go-between" in mind.[7] He says that while the idea of "service" is part of the idea of "go-between," "service" does not encompass all the ideas that "go-between" does. Thus a translation of "service" may "misrepresent the

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[4] Walter Bauer, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Electronic ed.; Version 3.0g, 2000-2007), 229-230. He cites *Inscriptiones Graecae* XII/5, 600, 14.

[5] Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "διακονέω, διακονία, κτλ," *eTDNT* 2:82; eBDAG, 229 and Collins, *Diakonia*, 73, 336.

[6] This is generally stated in each of the following: Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon with Revised Supplement* (rev. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 398; Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:82, 87-88, 91; Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (Electronic ed.; Version 3.0g, 2000-2007), 2:59; eBDAG, 229-231; Klaus Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545 and A. Weiser, "διακονέω; διακονία, κτλ," *EDNT* 302-3.

[7] Collins, *Diakonia*, 89.

nature of a function in question."[8] Collins further nuances his position by breaking the occurrences of the words into three separate categories: message,[9] agency,[10] and "attendance upon a person or in a household."[11] Applying this concept to 1 Corinthians 3:5, where Paul and Apollos are called διάκονοι through whom the Corinthians believed, Collins suggests that these men should be understood as "spokesmen" for God..

Collins makes an interesting point with these observations, but I think that he makes too much of this distinction. It is debatable whether or not there is such a strong difference between the idea of "servant" and "go-between." On further reading, it is apparent that Collins' choice of such a term is actually serving a specific purpose: in making the assertion that "go-between" is the best way to understand the words, Collins emphasizes that, in his estimation, the word-group does not carry a lowly or menial meaning. In his appendix he summarizes his position by saying, "The words speak of a mode of activity rather than of the status of the person performing the activity. Thus they are not expressing notions of lowliness or servitude."[12] A "go-between" perhaps does not have the same potentially negative connotation as "servant" does and this lowly connotation is what Collins seeks to avoid. On the other hand, a "go-between" is always doing an activity at the request of another and thus is always a "servant," no matter how dignified.

Collins appears to be reacting to a tendency to over-emphasize an idea of lowliness in relation to this word-group when the context of usage does not warrant it.

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[8] Ibid., 89.
[9] Including the concepts of mediation and being a courier. Ibid., 335.
[10] Including the concepts of mediation or being an agent. Ibid.
[11] Including the concepts of performing a task, or acting as an attendant. Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

His point is well taken. Based on a study of social considerations which will be discussed below, however, the idea of humility or lowliness may often still be associated with the actions described by the word-group. The interpreter must look to the context in which these words are used before making a final decision concerning the degree of lowliness intended by them in a given text. In my opinion, Collins has not provided satisfactory evidence as to why basic translations of "servant," "service," or "serving," should be avoided as long as a thorough consideration of context is also made.

Apart from these basic translations, the words are also rendered in other ways in the secular Greek literature. The meanings for the verb διακονέω include: minister; do service; serve; "to render a service"; "minister to one's own needs, serve oneself" (middle voice); "to be served" and "to be supplied" (in the passive voice).[13] This literature often uses the word-group in the sense of "to wait at table,"[14] a meaning which is derived from the contexts in which the word-group is primarily used.[15] The words are used in relation to food, eating and mealtimes in both domestic and cultic settings.[16] Collins also points out that these words are used in reference to those who carry messages and those who act

[13] LSJ, 398. They also mention the usage "to be a deacon" but this is in reference specifically to Christian literature and will be discussed later.

[14] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:84; eL&N, 2:59; eBDAG, 229; Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT*, 302 and Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545.

[15] Collins notes that this is the "most common single reference" and it accounts for about one quarter of all occurrences. When other usages "referring to menial attendance on a person or around a household" are added, the number increases to half the known instances. Collins, *Diakonia*, 75. Although it may be true that the διακον- words do not always refer to menial tasks, Collins' own analysis shows that at least half of the occurrences do point to this.

[16] It is important to note that when used in a cultic setting the idea of meal service is still at the forefront. According to Beyer, "…we can see that the διάκονος might have a cultic function. But it is a long way from this pagan conception of the deacon to the Christian." Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:92. Christian use of the terms goes beyond meal-related activities and so it does not seem advisable to directly link their use in reference to New Testament religious leadership with Greco-Roman cultic use.

as agents of another in addition to uses which refer to attending to the needs of others.[17] All these meanings encompass a wide sense of the idea of "service."

Honour and Shame in Greco-Roman Society

Despite Collins' assertion that at times these terms are not used in the Greek literature to denote servitude in a traditional sense, the idea of servitude and being at the command of another is a frequent connotation of this word-group even when one is acting as an agent or messenger. In order to recognize the fuller social implications of this idea of service in the Greco-Roman world, it is important to have an understanding of the cultural values of honour and shame which were common throughout the ancient Mediterranean world.

> Malina and Neyrey define honour as:
>
> the positive value of a person in his or her own eyes plus the positive appreciation of the person in the eyes of his or her social group. In this perspective, honor is a claim to positive worth along with the social acknowledgement of that worth by others.[18]

It is important to note, however, that honour could only be attributed to a person by others and likewise shame was also doled out by one's peers. With the exception of attributed honour (given by virtue of one's family's social status), all honour, and also shame, was acquired by acts that a person did which were witnessed by the public.[19] Honour could be gained through some positive contribution to the state, or through

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[17] For a summary of these ideas see: Collins, *Diakonia*, 335. For more detailed development of the ideas of messenger and agent see: Collins, *Diakonia,* 77-149.

[18] Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 25-26.

[19] Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 20.

successful participation in the activity of challenge and riposte.[20] The significance of these activities, which could cause an individual to either gain or lose honour, become even more apparent when it is realized that the Mediterranean culture perceived that a limited amount of honour was available to share and every man wanted as much as possible for himself.[21]

The use of the phrase "every man" when referring to acquiring maximum honour is deliberate: women were not thought to have or acquire honour in the same way as men did. For men, to be without honour was to have shame. This was something to be avoided.[22] Women, on the other hand, were deemed "shameful" by a patriarchally-derived social definition. Their "honour" came in their proper embodiment of that shame. According to Malina and Neyrey, "Shame in this context refers to a woman's sensitivity about what others think, say and do with regard to her worth."[23] Another way to characterize it is that a woman must have a sense of "modesty, shyness or deference."[24] The woman was also expected to preserve her chastity. If a woman did not have this sense of shame, she was considered shameless. This was what she sought to avoid. When

[20] Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," 34-35. Challenge and riposte activities involved one man issuing some sort of challenge (verbal, symbolic or physical) to another man of similar status. If the challenge was accepted, competition ensued and the winner would acquire more honour for himself. The loser, by contrast, lost honour. Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," 20-21. For a discussion of potential challenge-riposte activities between social un-equals see: Zeba Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *JBL* 128 (2009): 599-604. Cited 15 December 2010. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca /ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=108&sid=ac7e6544-7bdc-4b39-9b70-56d95dc71c3%40sessionmgr113 &vid=10.

[21] Ibid., 593.

[22] Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame," 41.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," 21.

a woman under a man's care became shameless, that man would also be shamed. In this way, women were a potential liability to men who wished to maintain high honour.[25]

This idea of honour and shame may have played a role in Paul's list of qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Those possessing such qualities, both men and women, would have had honourable reputations not only among the Christians, but also among the greater community. Men who properly manage their households and women who are sober-minded and dignified are in keeping with expectations of their genders within the honour-shame system, and give early Christianity a good reputation in the larger society.[26]

According to Neyrey and Stewart, "Classicists declare 'honor' to be the most important value in the ancient world."[27] It is important to note, however, that not all groups or subgroups in the culture had the same definition of what was shameful and what was honourable.[28] The Jews, for example, had some different ideas than their Gentile neighbours about how one achieved greater honour and what might constitute shameful behaviour.[29] Any study which uses honour and shame to understand a text must also keep these cultural variations in mind.[30]

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[25] Ibid. Crook presents the alternative idea that women were more involved in the activities of challenge-riposte than perhaps previously thought. She contrasts what "should have been" with "what actually happened." See: Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status," 604-609.

[26] See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of this passage.

[27] Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart, eds., *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008), 85.

[28] Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame," 26-27.

[29] Contrary to the Greek understanding of service, the Jews found no shame in serving another person, especially when that person was a great master or God. Interestingly, the LXX often uses the δουλ- family to describe this kind of service, which carries the idea of slavery. Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:83. See below for discussion of the δουλ- family and its relation to the διακον- group.

[30] At times, the early Christians challenged or reversed the prevailing cultural values of the Greco-Roman society in which they lived. I will demonstrate this below.

Honour and Shame Applied to the διακον- Group

Although different ideas existed about what was honourable, it is generally agreed that being a servant was not a particularly honourable position and it was something to be avoided if possible. This fact further calls into question Collins' previously noted conclusion that there was no lowly status associated with these words. Beyer notes "In Greek eyes serving is not very dignified. Ruling and not serving is proper to a man."[31] One of the only kinds of dignified service in the Greco-Roman world is service to the state.[32] Beyer says,

> ...the statesman rules as διάκονος τῆς πόλεως, not for the sake of ruling nor for the sake of his own desires, but for the sake of the service laid upon him, which consists supremely in the education of good citizens.] [*sic.*] Even this service, however, is determined by the self-understanding of the ego as a microcosm. Thus, even though it demands certain renunciations, it does not entail any true self-emptying for the sake of others.[33]

This was not a self-sacrificing service, but one through which a person gained honour for himself. This is in direct contrast to the service understood in parts of the New Testament.

It can thus be seen that in most instances in the Greco-Roman world, serving was an activity which brought a measure of shame, or at least a lowering of status, rather than honour. It is also evident that often in the Greek literature the διακον- group of words

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[31] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:82. He makes reference to Plato, *Gorgias*, 491e and 492b. Cf. Alexandros K. Papaderos, "Liturgical Diakonia: Biblical and Theological View of Diakonia," *Mid-Stream* 18 (1979): 134. Hess notes that subjecting oneself to another was not considered honourable and that a free Greek man should aspire to develop his personality. Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545.

[32] Cranfield, "Diakonia," 37; Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545 and Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:82. Beyer makes reference to Demosthenes of Athens 50, 2 and Plato of Athens' *Leges* 955cd. This service to the state would have been honourable only for men, who lived in the public sphere. For women, however, it would have been shameless to even attempt it for their domain was the private world of the home. Cranfield notes that service to the gods was also considered dignified. Cranfield, "Diakonia," 37; Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545 and Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:82.

[33] Ibid.

describes a kind of menial service which no man would aspire to. Even if, at times, the context of use of the διακον- word-group does not describe the lowliest of servants the very fact that the servant or "go-between" was working at the command of another suggests that the servant would acquire for himself less honour than the one he served. It is not so much the words themselves which carry this idea, but the social implications of the actions they describe. When the New Testament uses the words in relation to the Christian church and those who serve in it, a lowly humble service does appear to be primary. It will be important to bear these social implications in mind while examining the uses of the word-group in the New Testament, as well as the context in which the words are used.

The Septuagint

Before moving to the New Testament, however, it is important to consider the usage of the διακον- family of words in the Septuagint (LXX) because it may reveal a Hellenized Jewish pattern which the Christian church adopted. In contrast, the absence of such a pattern may suggest that the Christian church created its own unique nuance for the words.

Appearance, Frequency, and Range of Meaning

The διακον- word-group occurs in the LXX a total five times with an additional two variant readings.[34] The verb διακονέω is never found in the LXX but it contains both

[34] These numbers are based on a search of LXX through Logos Bible Software's *Logos Morphological Septuagint*. The word group also occurs in other Jewish literature such as *The Testament of Solomon*, *Testament of Job*, *Testament of Judah*, Philo and Josephus. Διακονία also appears in

διακονία (as a variant in Esther 6:3, 5[35]) and διάκονος (four occurrences in Esther, two of which have variants readings of διακονία, and one occurrence in Proverbs 10:4). Beyer notes that rather than διακονέω, the LXX prefers the term δουλεύω or, in the "cultic sphere," λειτουργέω or λατρεύω.[36]

According to Hess, when the διακον- group is used in the LXX, it is not used in reference to the official acts of servants of the religious community.[37] This assertion is easily verified given that three of the four uses of the διακον- words in Esther read "οἱ διάκονοι τοῦ βασιλέως" and the fourth has the dative plural "τοῖς διακόνοις τοῦ βασιλέως."[38] The usage in Proverbs reads, "υἱὸς πεπαιδευμένος σοφὸς ἔσται, τῷ δὲ ἄφρονι διακόνῳ χρήσεται"[39] and also has no connection to cultic matters. It can thus be said that the New Testament nuance of the διακον- group with reference to service in the church cannot be linked to the LXX.

The New Testament

After gathering information about the use of the διακον- group of words in sources outside of the New Testament, this information can be used to help establish meaning for the various uses of the words in the New Testament itself. It will be shown that not all of the uses of the word-group in the New Testament are exactly consistent with the way the

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1 Maccabees as a variant in 11:58. eBDAG, 230 and Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545. Jewish literature beyond the LXX will not be examined in this chapter.

[35] eBDAG, 230.

[36] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:83.

[37] Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545.

[38] In English either "the servants of the king" or "to the servants of the king."

[39] In English, "A son who is educated will be wise and he will make use of the foolish servant." This appears in Proverbs 10:4; however, this particular portion of the verse does not have an equivalent in the Hebrew text and does not appear in English Bibles.

words were used in secular Greek literature or in the LXX. Nevertheless, the background information concerning how the words were generally used will help to illuminate the Christian usage and may help to explain why the Christian church chose to use this particular group of words in the ways that it did.

Appearance and Frequency

According to a search of *The Greek New Testament* using Logos Bible Software, the διακον- word-group appears in the New Testament one hundred times.[40] This word-group does not appear in the letters to the Thessalonians, Titus, James, 2 Peter, the Johannine letters, or Jude. In the Gospels, it appears between six and nine times per book as the verb διακονέω. Additionally, διάκονος appears in Matthew three times (20:26; 22:13; 23:11) and in Mark twice (9:35; 10:43) and διακονία appears once in Luke (10:40). In Acts, the verb appears twice (6:2; 19:22) and διακονία appears eight times. In the general letters, the word-group appears only in Hebrews (1:14 and twice in 6:10) and 1 Peter (1:12; 4:10, 11). Of these occurrences, all are the verb διακονέω except for the use of διακονία in Hebrews 1:14. The word διακονία also appears in Revelation 2:19. This accounts for forty-nine of the occurrences in the New Testament.[41]

The thirteen letters attributed to Paul contain the remaining fifty-one uses of the διακον- word-group. It is for this reason that Hess calls διάκονος a "predominantly

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[40] This search was conducted on the text of the UBS[4]. Some studies suggest slightly different numbers, but they are generally in the same range. I find the following uses: διακονέω – 37; διακονία – 34; διάκονος – 29. Cranfield finds: διακονέω – 37; διακονία – 34; διάκονος – 30. Cranfield, "Diakonia," 37, footnote 1. Hess finds: διακονέω – unspecified; διακονία – 34; διάκονος – 29. Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 546. Weiser finds: διακονέω – 36; διακονία – 33; διάκονος – 29. Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 302. In the analysis in this chapter, I use my own numbers.

[41] The word-group is also found in other early Christian literature including Justin, Tatian, Irenaeus (*Haereses*), and Hippolytus. eBDAG, 230.

Pauline concept."[42] Most of the occurrences in the Pauline corpus are either διάκονος (twenty-one) or διακονία (twenty-three). The verb διακονέω occurs only eight times: Romans 15:25; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 8:19, 20; 1 Timothy 3:10, 13; 2 Timothy 1:18; and Philemon 13. It is also interesting to note that the word-group appears twelve times in 1 and 2 Timothy and Ephesians, three letters whose Pauline authorship is often disputed.[43] It appears only three times in Ephesians (3:7; 4:12; 6:21) but nine times in the two letters to Timothy. These nine occurrences encompass three of the eight verbal occurrences in the Pauline corpus. Having said this, it is not immediately apparent that these disputed letters have set themselves apart in the number of times the word-group appears within them. The undisputed Pauline letter, 2 Corinthians, by far contains the most occurrences of the words (twenty), but 1 Thessalonians, also an authentic letter, does not use the word-group at all. Also, while there are comparatively few occurrences in Ephesians (three), 2 Timothy (three), and 1 Timothy (six), the undisputed books of Romans, Colossians[44] and 1 Corinthians also have relatively few occurrences with nine, five and three respectively.[45]

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[42] Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 546. Although not all of Paul's letters contain the διακον- word-group, the Pauline corpus still contains the greatest number of uses in the fewest number of pages. Also, it is important to note that although the Pauline letters use this concept more than the other letters in the New Testament or the Gospels, it does not necessarily mean that it is one of Paul's most dominant themes.

[43] The authorship of both 2 Thessalonians and Titus are also commonly disputed, but neither of these letters contains the words.

[44] Though the authorship of Colossians has at times been disputed, its pseudonymity would not sway the results of this analysis.

[45] This analysis is interesting but not necessarily useful. If an author were imitating Paul, it would not be surprising to find the διακον- words among the resulting works. The analysis would have been more significant if the διακον- words only appeared in disputed letters, suggesting that Paul himself did not use them. In the end, however, the presence of a word in disputed or non-disputed works cannot ultimately say anything about that letter's authenticity. See brief discussion of this in relation to 1 Timothy in Chapter 3.

This analysis reveals that the διακον- word-group is found in the majority of the New Testament books and appears in three different forms. While it is found most often in the Pauline corpus, it is by no means exclusively there, nor can it be said that the disputed Pauline letters set themselves apart in their use or lack of use of the words.

Range of Meaning

Included in the many New Testament occurrences of the words are instances when they are used in the basic Greek sense. The idea of "waiting at table" is found in passages such as John 2:5, 9; 12:2 and Luke 17:8. Other kinds of servants and serving are referred to in Matthew 22:13; Luke 10:40 and 12:37.[46] In these passages, the words are used in a similar manner to many of the occurrences in non-Christian Greek literature. While the idea of service is evident, the terms are not, in and of themselves, more specific than that. Louw and Nida note, "In rendering θεράπων, ὑπηρέτης, and διάκονος in the sense of 'servant,' it is important to avoid a term which would be too specific, for example, 'one who serves meals' or 'one who works around the house.' It may, in fact, be necessary to use an expression which means essentially 'helper.'"[47] This is to say that διάκονος and its cognates are not specific terms. The context in which the word is used is the only clue from which to base a very specific translation. If the context does not offer such a clue, then a more general translation such as "service," "servant" or "serving" is in order.

Although the words still retain the idea of "service," at times they are used to describe certain kinds of general service either by or within the Christian community.

[46] In Luke 10:40, it may be that Martha is serving food. The text does not specify. It does seem evident that she is involved in some manner of domestic service.

[47] eL&N, 1:459-460.

When used to describe service by the Christian community, the social implications surrounding the idea of "service" are decidedly different from the Greco-Roman ideas. There is no suggestion that this kind of service is menial or unfit for certain people to perform, as the Greco-Roman honour-shame concept might suggest. Instead, the servant is elevated to a position of honour.

This kind of ironic role-reversal is promoted by both Jesus and Paul. Second Corinthians 11:30 reads "If it is necessary to boast, then I will boast in the things concerning my weakness" and 2 Corinthians 12:10 reads "for whenever I am weak, then I am strong."[48] Also, in Matthew 20:26 Jesus says, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant."[49] This is the opposite of the Greek way of thinking[50] and it is through this different way of thinking that the διακον- word-group and the concept of serving becomes a positive thing among the early Christians.

When used in a Christian context, the διακον- words can mean a variety of things. At times, the words describe serving in Christian love using the gifts God has given[51] (1 Peter 4:10) and they are sometimes used in reference to a specific spiritual gift of serving (Romans 12:7), or the idea of serving in general (1 Corinthians 12:5).[52]

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[48] For other passages which relate to this irony of strength through weakness and boasting in weakness see Fred O. Francis and J. Paul Sampley, *Pauline Parallels* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 83-84, 210.

[49] ESV.

[50] It is also quite a contrast to the Jewish way of thinking as noted above. Jesus turned the Jewish idea of serving on its head when he declared that those who wished to be first should be the servant of all, not just the servants of great teachers and masters.

[51] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:86-7 and Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 547.

[52] Ibid. It may be possible to argue that 1 Corinthians 12:5 is referring to spiritual gifts; however, it is also possible to understand it as referring to serving in a more general sense.

Sometimes this idea of serving is translated as "ministry."[53] The idea of general Christian service also includes caring for the basic needs of others[54] (which may or may not include food) (Matthew 25:43-44; Luke 8:3 and Acts 6:2 among others) or other kinds of charitable acts such as the collection of money for the poor in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29; Romans 15:25).[55] In all of these cases, the servant's role is ironically elevated among the Christian community in opposition to the Greco-Roman cultural norms.

The context in which the word-group is used is key to seeing this slight shift in usage from other Greek literature. It has been demonstrated that when the word-group is used in a Christian context the position of servant is ironically elevated. Collins disagrees, finding no difference in the way the words are used in these two bodies of literature.[56] In one sense he is correct because the idea of "serving" or "go-between" is still present in Christian usage. The difference lies in the context in which the words are used.[57] An action which is seen by most to be of little worth, Jesus elevates to the highest worth. His followers then continue to promote a once-lowly thing as virtuous. This is not

[53] eL&N, 2:59 and Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 303. See also 1 Corinthians 12:5 in the NASB and NKJV.

[54] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:82, 87; eL&N, 2:59; eBDAG, 230; Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545 and Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 302.

[55] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:86, 88; eL&N, 2:59 and Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 303. It is in this instance that Collins' idea of "go-between" is clearly seen. In their action of serving other Christians, these men are acting as "go-betweens" for the people donating the funds and those who are in need of them. Significantly, they are still acting on behalf of others, and are thus still "servants" in a sense.

[56] Collins, *Diakonia*, 248. Collins has two major arguments in support of his position. First, he says that Jesus uses a simile to describe himself ("I am among you *as* the one who serves" Luke 22:27 ESV, emphasis mine) and thus is not actually suggesting that his disciples *become* servants, only that they be "*like*" them. Second, since the teaching about being "the servant of all" occurs in so many different contexts, it has an "uncertain home in the tradition." This is perhaps meant to imply that the text is unreliable and can give no definitive conclusions. See: Collins, *Diakonia*, 246-248. Collins allows for one exception to his findings and notes that the Christian idea of "deacon" is unique. Ibid., 335.

[57] It might be possible to argue that the meaning of the word itself has not changed; however, if the context of a word impacts its meaning, then a shift in usual context also represents a shift in meaning.

the same as the attitude which often surrounds these words in non-Christian contexts.[58] Knowledge of the prevailing Greco-Roman cultural norm helps us see that at times Christianity's teachings were a challenge of that norm.

Although Collins' arguments for a lack of distinction between Christian and non-Christian usage of the διακον- word-group is unconvincing, his idea that these words have been over-theologized is noteworthy.[59] Beyer suggests that through his teachings and life, Jesus made διακονεῖν "much more than a comprehensive term for any loving assistance rendered to the neighbour. It is understood as full and perfect sacrifice, as the offering of life which is the very essence of service, of being for others, whether in life or in death."[60] This statement packs perhaps too much meaning into the word without any consideration for the context in which it appears. While in some cases Beyer's observations may be valid, they should not immediately be applied to every Christian use of διακονεῖν. Although caution against over-theologizing must be taken, it is clear that at times in the New Testament the διακον- words are used in a different way than in the non-Christian contexts, with a different understanding of the social implications of being a servant.

The third way in which the New Testament uses this family of words is never found in non-Christian Greek literature. While these occurrences still contain an element of the general Greek idea of service, they refer to the official duties of a specific Christian leader, often called the "deacon." For example, the verb διακονέω can mean "to be a

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[58] For a good discussion of some of the weaknesses in Collins' arguments against a unique Christian use of the word-group, see: Andrew D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 233-247.

[59] Cf. Collins, *Diakonia*, 93-95.

[60] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:86.

deacon"[61] or "carry out official duties, minister, in cultic context."[62] Along the same lines, the noun διακονία is also understood to mean "office"[63] (Acts 1:17) and might be viewed as a "technical term for the work of proclaiming the gospel."[64] While it could be argued that this particular use of the words διακονία and διακονέω is at times ambiguous, the noun διάκονος is very clearly used with this sense.[65] The clearest usages with this sense are found in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8, 10, 12-13.

Although a translation of "deacon" is common in these instances, it is not always the most helpful way to render the word in English. W. Bauer et al. state: "the Eng. derivatives 'deacon' and 'deaconess' are technical terms, whose mng. varies in ecclesiastical history and are therefore inadequate for rendering NT usage of [διάκονος]."[66] This is a good point. Both throughout history and also within the Christian church today, the concepts of "deacon" and "deaconess" are by no means universal. Different churches have different understandings of what the terms mean. Having said this, a better single-word term which would have any significant meaning to the Christian community has not been coined. Unless otherwise specified, the term

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[61] eL&N, 2:59; Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:82 and LSJ, 398 (specifically in reference to 1 Timothy 3:10, 13).

[62] eBDAG, 229. (In reference to 1 Timothy 3:13.) Although at times the Greeks used this word in a cultic context, as noted above, it was in an entirely different set of circumstances, still connected with cultic meals. The Christian context is different, including a broader range of activities.

[63] Ibid., 230 and Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 545. This sense is also translated "ministry," but with the idea of a specific ministry, such as that of the apostles. It could also be understood as the "office of apostle."

[64] Ibid., 547. See also: Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 302.

[65] LSJ, 398; Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:89; eL&N, 2:59; Hess, "διακονέω," *NIDNTT* 546 and Weiser, "διακονέω," *EDNT* 303. The term διάκονος is masculine, although in at least one case in the New Testament is used to refer to a female (Romans 16:1). It is notable that by the fourth century C.E. a feminine version of the word διάκονος emerges. The word διακονισσα is found in the works *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* (fourth century) and *Codex Justinianus* (either fourth or sixth century) and the *Inscriptiones Graecae.* LSJ, 88 of supplement.

[66] eBDAG, 230-231.

"deacon" used hereafter will refer to an official leader within the New Testament church, without assigning to it any particular function or duties.

Whatever the particular functions of this office, the manner in which it is described lends itself to one more general observation: "deacon" never refers to the highest office in the Christian community. It would not be far reaching to ascribe to it some level of humility. Cranfield makes the observation, "It is not without significance that the technical term for functions in the Church which necessarily involve some measure of leadership has from the first been a word which signifies not pre-eminence or power, but simply humble service."[67] Although it has been noted that "humble service" is not built into the term itself but rather the context in which it is used, Cranfield still makes a good point. It would seem that this office of διάκονος is somewhat of a paradox, being both a leader in the community, while at the same time having the attitude and demeanor of a servant.[68]

Philippians and 1 Timothy make the idea of servant-yet-leader even clearer. It is significant that in both of these places, the διάκονος is mentioned together with the ἐπίσκοπος[69] and it seems as though these two positions are related in some way. The word ἐπίσκοπος appears to denote a leader of some sort. The word is usually rendered as either a guardian or overseer[70] and clearly designates one who is in charge of something. Given that these two terms seem to be used in coordination, it stands to reason that the

[67] Cranfield, "Diakonia," 38.

[68] Even Collins, who resists the idea that any meniality or humility should be built into the word, acknowledges that the Christian concept of the office of "deacon" describes one who acts as the agent of another, and not the one who is in charge. Collins, *Diakonia,* 236.

[69] 1 Timothy 3:8-13 is preceded by a parallel passage on the ἐπίσκοπος.

[70] eBDAG, 379. See also Beyer, "ἐπίσκοπος," *eTDNT* 2:609 and eL&N, 2:101.

διάκονος is in some way subordinate to the ἐπίσκοπος.[71] Based on this assessment it can be said that, in a sense, the διάκονοι are leaders with respect to the general congregation, but servants with respect to the ἐπίσκοποι.

Διάκονος as Distinct from Other Words of Service

It has been demonstrated that the word διάκονος and its cognates refer to various kinds of service within the Christian church, both generally and more specifically; however, it is notable that this is not the only Greek word which can refer to service or work of some kind. Beyer compares the verb διακονέω with the following: δουλεύω, θεραπεύω, λατρεύω, λειτουργέω, and ὑπηρετέω.[72] Although these terms and their cognates may share similar semantic ranges, each carries a unique nuance which sets it apart from the others.

The word δουλεύω and its cognates "describe the status of a slave or an attitude corresponding to that of a slave."[73] Louw and Nida do not show that these words overlap exactly with any of the semantic domains of the διακον- group of words. Although both groups have a "servant" sort of meaning, Louw and Nida make these comments about the δουλ- group: "to serve, normally in a humble manner and *in response to the demands or*

[71] Collver is in agreement with this assessment, although he suggests that διάκονοι are subordinate to ἐπίσκοποι because they are listed second. Albert B. Collver, III, "Deacons: Office of Service or Office of the Word?" *Lga* 16, no. 2 (2007): 31. Beyer agrees that the offices are closely related in some way and that the διάκονος is subordinate to the ἐπίσκοπος. He discusses this relationship more on the basis of early Christian literature and the way the two offices developed rather than how the New Testament uses the terms. Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:90, 92. Donfried, also appealing to the early church practice, links the two offices closely and suggests that they cannot be separated. Karl P. Donfried, "Ministry: Rethinking the Term Diakonia" in *CTQ* 56 (1992): 2.

[72] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:81.

[73] Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "δοῦλος, σύνδουλος, κτλ.," *eTDNT* 2:261.

commands of others."[74] In a similar vein, Rengstorf specifically says that this group of words is distinct from other service words because it is always in connection to serving as a slave. He notes, "Hence we have a service which is not a matter of choice for the one who renders it, which he has to perform whether he likes or not, because he is subject as a slave to an alien will, to the will of his owner."[75] This slave-master relationship is not present for the διακον- group of words in the New Testament.[76]

The word θεραπεύω and its cognates also have the meaning of service: either secular service, or service to a deity. These words also refer to acts of healing.[77] Beyer notes in his article about these words that in the New Testament, θεραπεύω is never used in the strictly secular sense of "serve" and it is only used once in reference to the service of cultic worship (Acts 17:25). The rest of the uses in the New Testament are to that of healing.[78] It is interesting that, although the Greek language contains a group of words that can legitimately refer to cultic service of a deity, the first-century Christian church chooses not to use it in reference to religious service.[79]

The word λατρεύω also has a specific cultic connection. While Strathmann points out that this word had some connection to service for pay,[80] in the New Testament, it is not used in this sense. W. Bauer et al. note: "in our lit. only of the carrying out of

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[74] eL&N, 1:460. Emphasis mine.

[75] Rengstorf, "δοῦλος," *eTDNT* 2:261.

[76] This is also supported by Beyer in his article on διάκονος. Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:81. It is interesting to note that in Patristic literature the δουλ- words are used in reference to ecclesiastical offices such as bishops and deacons. See: G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 384-385.

[77] eBDAG, 453; eL&N, 2:119 and Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "θεραπεία, θεραπεύω, κτλ," *eTDNT* 3:128.

[78] Ibid., 3:129-130.

[79] The Patristic writings also do not appear to use the words in this way. See: Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon,* 644-645.

[80] Hermann Strathmann, "λατρεύα, λατρεία," *eTDNT* 4:58-59.

religious duties, esp. of a cultic nature, by human beings."[81] Louw and Nida make the connection to acts of worship: "to perform religious rites, to worship, to venerate, worship."[82] Again, notice that the first-century Christian churches chose not to use this word-group to describe their official leaders or their duties.[83] Perhaps part of the reason for this is that the Christian ideas associated with the διακον- word-group go beyond service done during corporate worship.

The word λειτουργέω is a third word related to the διακον- word-group which has some relation to cultic service. W. Bauer et al. say it is used "almost exclusively of religious and ritual services both in a wider and a more restricted sense."[84] Once again, it is useful to compare the semantic domains in which Louw and Nida place it. Both λειτουργέω and λειτουργία are listed as meaning "to perform religious rites as part of one's religious duties or as the result of one's role."[85] Again, although this term is connected with religious service, it seems somewhat restricted to the performance of rites. The Christian use of the διακον- words does not refer to something so narrow.[86]

The final word-group which Beyer links to the διακον- group is ὑπηρετέω and its cognates. Louw and Nida place the διακον- and ὑπηρετ- word-groups in the exact same category when it comes to the "serving" aspect of the words. According to Louw

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[81] eBDAG, 586.

[82] eL&N, 1:532. They also make a specific note that these services are performed free of charge. Beyer, on the other hand distinguishes between the διακον- group and the λατρ- group based on money earned in λατρεύω. Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:81. Both of these views cannot be right and thus both become suspect until further convincing evidence is found.

[83] The patristic writings also do not used these words to describe the ecclesiastical offices or duties. See: Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon,* 792-794.

[84] eBDAG, 591.

[85] eL&N, 1:532.

[86] In the Patristic literature there is some use of the λειτουργ- words in relation to ecclesiastical offices. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon,* 795-796.

and Nida, this service is "of a humble or menial nature."[87] Rengstorf makes this interesting comparison of ὑπηρετέω, θεραπεύω and διακονέω:

> In the case of the διάκονος the accent is on the objective advantage his service brings to the one to whom it is rendered, while θεράπων characterises the servant as one who is dedicated with respect, willingness and zeal to his service on behalf of the other. The special feature of ὑπηρέτης, however, is that he willingly learns his task and goal from another who is over him in an organic order but without prejudice to his personal dignity and worth.[88]

Rengstorf's distinctions between these words are subtle.[89] Beyer echoes this sentiment when he observes that the ὑπηρετ- group and the διακον- group are the most similar of the words which we have examined here, but, "in διακονέω there is a stronger approximation to the concept of a service of love."[90] It may not be possible to pinpoint an exact difference between these two groups; however, the first-century Christians did not use them interchangeably. The διακον- group is preferred when referring to Christian leaders which seems to imply that the church saw a difference in the words.[91]

When set in contrast with these other words, the nuance of the διακον- group becomes clearer. It cannot be said with certainty that every time an author chose to use a word of the διακον- group he did so with the intention of portraying this specific nuance, nor can it be said that when an author chose to use a similar word which is not of the

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[87] eL&N, 1:459.

[88] Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "ὑπηρέτης, ὑπηρετέω," *eTDNT* 8:533.

[89] Rengstorf's assertion that the ὑπηρέτης is a willing servant although his "personal dignity and worth" is not affected by that service is interesting. Ibid. Given the cultural implications we have seen regarding "service" in general, it is difficult to see how a person's service activities could not have any effect on their personal lives. This may suggest that the distinction between the ὑπηρετ- group and the διακον- group is nearly non-existent.

[90] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:81. The question remains as to whether this "service of love" is actually built in to the word itself in all its uses, or if the context of the Christian use suggests this meaning to Beyer.

[91] In the Patristic literature, the word ὑπηρέτης is used to describe "deacons…members of minor orders…subdeacons, lectors, cantors, and deaconesses." Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon,* 1222. It seems that in later years any perceived difference between the terms may have lessened.

διακον- group he intended for this nuance to be absent. Despite this, some general observations come to mind. First of all, the διακον- group is not meant to portray a master-slave relationship between the one serving and the one being served; the service is done voluntarily. Secondly, the διακον- group does not seem to describe a service performed exclusively in a religious or cultic setting (although this kind of service is not excluded). Thirdly, the service described by the διακον- group is done with the intention of benefiting others and not oneself; however, there may still be some benefit to self. This is where the ironic role reversal taught by Jesus and Paul comes in. Those who serve will be elevated to a position of respect and perhaps even authority. As this idea of respect and authority is bestowed by virtue of a person's service, the service must remain first and foremost. This is the idea of *noblesse oblige:* those who have authority have a responsibility to serve. In connection with this, since generally speaking Greek and Roman society looked down upon acts of service, in the appropriate contexts the terms might suggest a kind of humble service. Both the lowering of status in the eyes of the greater community and the elevation of status in the eyes of the Christian community are seen at the same time.

Summary and Conclusions

This examination of the διακον- word-group in the New Testament shows that the Christian usage of the term is somewhat different from its usage in the rest of the Greek literature but that both a Christian and secular sense can be found in the New Testament. It is the context of usage which indicates how the term is best understood in each instance. When the terms are used in their Christian sense there are two possible

connotations: on one hand, the word-group refers to the service expected of all Christians, but on the other hand, there are a few distinct instances where this group of words appears to be referring to a specific leadership position within the church, held by individuals. This position appears to be subordinate to the office of ἐπίσκοπος and denotes one who is a leader but also a servant.

This word study also supports some aspects of LCC's office of deacon. First of all, the idea that διάκονος is a position under the authority of another supports LCC's position that deacons fall under the supervision of the office of pastor. Second, the idea that the διάκονος is a position worthy of respect and honour supports LCC's decision to place deacons on a roster and make them members of Synod. Both synodical membership and rostered status lend extra dignity and respect to the office of deacon in LCC. Further comparisons will be made as this study progresses, but the initial results show that LCC's diaconate has some close connections with that of the New Testament.

For the study which follows, passages which appear to refer to a particular position/office of deacon in the New Testament church will be examined. This will include any passage in which an individual is called "διάκονος," any passage which seems to clearly refer to "διάκονοι" as a specific and separate group, and appropriate passages which discuss an individual or individuals helping another church leader or leaders in the work of the church whether or not they are specifically called "διάκονοι."

CHAPTER 3: ΔΙΆΚΟΝΟΙ IN PHILIPPIANS 1:1 AND 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

Introduction

The New Testament contains two passages (Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13) which use the noun διάκονος in a way which clearly points to something more specific than a general kind of "servant." Philippians includes only a passing reference to "ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις" ("overseers[1] and deacons") in the letter's opening salutation. In contrast, 1 Timothy 3:8-11 lists several qualifications for διάκονοι and is preceded by a similar section on ἐπίσκοποι.

An examination of these two passages will be the basis upon which a working definition of the role of "deacon" according to the New Testament is built. In order to create this definition, two key questions must be considered. The first of these questions is: Do these passages refer to an "office" of deacon or something else? One of the difficulties in answering this question is the term "office" itself. The way in which this word is defined has an impact on whether or not the New Testament can be said to contain an "office" of deacon. Two related definitions of "office" in *The Oxford Modern English Dictionary* which are most suitable for this context are: "A position or place to which certain duties are attached, esp. one of a more or less public character" and "a

[1] Both ἐπίσκοπος and διάκονος are ecclesiastically "loaded" terms. Given that I have studied διάκονος in detail, I am convinced that a translation of "deacon" is appropriate to use here and in other places in this study. The way in which I intend the reader to understand my use of "deacon" in these instances has been outlined in Chapter 2. I consciously choose not to use a translation of "bishop" for ἐπίσκοπος in this study because the word "bishop" may bring things to mind which this study does not intend. The English word "bishop" often means a kind of overarching supervisory position encompassing multiple locations and it seems clear that in the context of the passages studied here that ἐπίσκοπος, like διάκονος, is referring to a local leader. In order to avoid confusion with later ecclesiological meanings, the word ἐπίσκοπος in this study will always be translated "overseer."

position of trust, authority, or service under constituted authority."[2] In order to determine whether Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 describe an office, the use of διάκονος in each passage will be considered in light of these two definitions.

The second question to be answered in this chapter is: What do these passages say about deacons in the New Testament? In order to answer this question, careful consideration of context, authorship, date, text (including variants), and social situation of the passages are important. After these two questions have been answered in relation to these texts, then a definition of New Testament deacons can be formulated. This definition will in turn be used in Chapters 4 and 5 to evaluate other New Testament passages which may or may not allude to this same position.

Philippians 1:1

Background

Authorship and Date

That Paul was the author of Philippians is nearly undisputed.[3] The letter itself claims to have been written by Paul (1:1) and the early church accepted it as such.[4] There is no compelling reason to think that it should be considered otherwise.

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[2] James A. H. Murray et al., *The Oxford English Dictionary* (vol. 7; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 80.

[3] Fred B. Craddock, *Philippians* (IBC; Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 4; Ben Witherington, III, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians* (NTC; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), 24; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 10; Bonnie Bowman Thurston and Judith M. Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon* (SP 10; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 28 and Marvin Richardson Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon* (ICCONT; Edinburgh: Clark, 1902), xxvi. Cited 28 January 2011. Online: http://ebooks.library.ualberta.ca /local/criticalexegetic00vincuoft. There are a few who have challenged this view. For discussion see:

There is considerably more debate about when Philippians was written, most of which is connected with the location from which it was sent. Because the letter suggests that Paul is in prison at the time of the writing (1:7, 13, 17) commentators seek to discover when and where he was imprisoned before deciding on a date for the letter.[5] Popular locations are Rome,[6] Caesarea,[7] Ephesus[8] or some other, unknown location.[9] In the absence of explicit textual evidence, all that can be said is that there are many possibilities but none is certain.[10] In light of this, a specific date of the letter's composition cannot be fixed. Possible dates range anywhere between the mid-50s and early 60s C.E.[11]

O'Brien, *Philippians,* 10; Thurston and Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon,* 28 and Vincent, *Philippians and Philemon,* xxvi. It has also been suggested that Philippians is either two or three separate, genuine letters, which were edited together at a later time. Cf. John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 33b; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 3, 8-9. There is no ancient evidence which depicts portions of Philippians as separate documents and the single extant letter is quite coherent and unified. For support for the unity of the letter see: Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 27-8; Thurston and Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon,* 33; Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (WEC; Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 14-16 and Kenneth Grayston, *The Letters of Paul to the Philippians and to the Thessalonians* (CBCNEB; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 4.

[4] This included Origen, Eusebius, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria. See: Thurston and Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon,* 28.

[5] Witherington suggests that Paul may not be in prison at all, but simply under house arrest. Witherington, *Friends and Finances,* 26. While this is possible, it does not make determining a location for the letter's writing any easier.

[6] The traditional site. Cf. D. A. Carson, and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 503.

[7] This possibility is mentioned by I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (EC; London: Epworth Press, 1991), xvix; Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 504-505 and Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 25-26. None of these authors are convinced that this location is probable.

[8] See Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 505-506.

[9] Acts has large gaps in the historical record and any number of imprisonments is possible based on 2 Corinthians 11:23 (that Paul has had "more imprisonments" than anyone else is implied). Cf. Grayston, *Philippians and Thessalonians,* 6.

[10] Grayston agrees that nothing can be known for sure, although he thinks Rome is the best contender. Ibid., 9.

[11] Carson and Moo suggest this range is as much as can be said about the date owing to the uncertain provenance of the letter. Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 507. Reumann suggests 45-55 C.E., although he thinks that the extant text of the letter was assembled from three separate letters in 90-100 C.E. Reumann, *Philippians,* 3. Witherington suggests a date of 58-62 C.E. Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 24.

Genre

With a date range established it is now important to briefly consider the genre of the document. The ancient letter had a particular format which Paul follows both here and in his other letters. Marshall notes, "Ancient letters can generally be divided up into a main part called the 'body' preceded by an introductory salutation and followed by closing greetings. It was not uncommon for the body to begin with a statement of the writer's prayers or good wishes for the readers."[12] It is this opening section of the letter which is most pertinent to this study because the reference to "ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις" is found in the introductory salutation.

What is interesting about the salutation of this letter, and others written by Paul, is that they are addressed to a group rather than an individual.[13] According to Witherington, this was uncommon in antiquity, where letters were not generally meant for public reception.[14] He notes that letters "were considered an inadequate, though necessary, substitute for a face-to-face oral communication."[15] Paul, however, uses his letters for a different purpose. Witherington goes on to say,

> Paul's letters are *group* communications, and even a more personal letter like Philemon is not a real exception since it is to be read in a house-church meeting. This means they include what Paul is willing for *all* the congregation to hear, or at least overhear if he is singling out a member or group in the congregation. Paul is using letters as a not entirely satisfactory surrogate for face-to-face conversation (see Rom. 15:14-33, 1 Cor. 4:14-21, 1 Thess. 2:17-3:13, Gal. 4:12-20).[16]

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[12] Marshall, *Philippians,* xxvii.

[13] Letters like 1 Timothy or Titus appear to be exceptions to this, as they are addressed to individuals. Witherington, however, notes that there is reason to believe that these letters were also intended to be heard by the assembly. Cf. Witherington, *Friendship and Finances*, 7.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

That Paul is addressing a group is quite evident from the opening greeting of Philippians which reads, "to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi" (1:1).

The Christians at Philippi

Philippi was located to the north of modern Greece, in the area once known as Macedonia[17] which was conquered by Philip II of Macedon in 356 B.C.E.[18] Macedonia was conquered by Rome in 168-167 B.C.E. and was divided into districts for Roman administration.[19] Philippi was made a Roman colony in 42 B.C.E.[20] Although the city was Roman, the inhabitants were of diverse backgrounds[21] which resulted in a syncretistic religious climate.[22]

Acts 16 records Paul's first visit to Philippi. He was accompanied by a group of his co-workers who included Silas, Luke[23] and possibly Timothy.[24] There they encountered a group of women who met on the Sabbath to pray. Among them was Lydia, a God-fearer, who was converted to Christianity and had her household baptised (Acts 16:14-15). While in Philippi, Paul and his companions also met a slave girl who was

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[17] Marshall, *Philippians,* xvii.

[18] O'Brien, *Philippians,* 3 and Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 25.

[19] O'Brien, *Philippians,* 3-4 and Fee, *Philippians*, 25.

[20] This meant that "veteran soldiers could settle [there] on demobilization and enjoy the privileges of self-government and freedom from taxation." Marshall, *Philippians,* xvii. Cf. O'Brien, *Philippians,* 4; Fee, *Philippians*, 25 and Acts 16:12.

[21] O'Brien, *Philippians,* 4.

[22] Ibid., 5. The Jewish population must have been small due to the fact that there was no synagogue which required only ten Jewish men to form. Marshall, *Philippians,* xvii; and O'Brien, *Philippians,* 5. Acts 16:13 and 16 describe women meeting at a "place of prayer" rather than a synagogue.

[23] Cf. ibid., 5-6 and Fee, *Philippians*, 27. The author of Acts (Luke) includes himself in the group at Philippi by the use of the first person plural pronoun, "we." See Chapter 4 for a brief discussion on the authorship of Acts.

[24] Timothy is said to be accompanying Paul in his travels and there is no indication that they separated when Paul set sail for Philippi (see: Acts 16:3-11). Cf. Craddock, *Philippians,* 11; O'Brien, *Philippians,* 6 and Fee, *Philippians*, 27.

possessed by a demon which enabled her to tell the future. Her owners were angry with Paul when he cast out the spirit as they were no longer able to make money off of her affliction (Acts 16:16-19). They had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown in prison (Acts 16:19-24), but as a result of this the jailer and his family were baptized (Acts 16:31-34). After this incident, Paul and Silas, and perhaps the rest of those who initially accompanied Paul to Philippi,[25] left for Thessalonica. It is estimated that these events took place sometime between 49 and 52 C.E.[26]

Translation and Interpretation

Philippians 1:1 can be translated as: "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi with the overseers and deacons."[27] This verse, together with Philippians 1:2, makes up the opening of the letter which consists of the names of its senders and recipients and a short greeting.[28] The letter opens "Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ." The two names in the nominative, "Paul and Timothy," are followed by a descriptive nominative phrase, "slaves of Christ Jesus." Some have suggested that the inclusion of Timothy here with Paul means that Timothy is the co-author of the letter; however, it seems more likely, given that the letter proceeds in

[25] At this point, the narrative again switches to the third person plural which most readily refers to Paul and Silas only. The others may or may not be with them. It seems most likely that Luke has stayed behind, or at least did not continue on the same route as Paul in his travels. C.f. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 8 and Fee, *Philippians*, 27.

[26] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 5. Advocating for 49 C.E. is Fee, *Philippians*, 26.

[27] My translation.

[28] Thurston and Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon*, 26. This designation, or some form of it, is generally agreed upon by scholars.

the first person singular, that Timothy is included here for another purpose,[29] possibly because he is well-known to the Philippian church.[30]

The co-senders are described by the phrase "δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησου" ("slaves of Christ Jesus"). This places Paul and Timothy on the same level and brings to mind their humility before Christ. Given that slavery was not an honourable position, an overall sense of humility is also felt.[31] It brings across the sense that Paul and Timothy were "totally at the disposal of their Master"[32] (Christ) and that they owed their allegiance to him.[33]

The next three phrases, all in the dative case, introduce the letter's recipients. The first two phrases, "πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ" ("To all the saints[34] in Christ Jesus") and "τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις" ("who are in Philippi"), show the location of the letter's recipients (the city of Philippi) and also that the whole community of believers were recipients of the letter. The second phrase stands in apposition to the first phrase and

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[29] On Timothy as co-sender, but not co-author see: Reumann, *Philippians,* 81 and Silva, *Philippians,* 39. On Paul's writing in the first person singular signifying his sole authorship see Marshall, *Philippians,* 2; Craddock, *Philippians,* 11; Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 30 and O'Brien, *Philippians,* 44. Some have suggested that if he is not the co-author, he might actually be Paul's amanuensis; however, there is no explicit evidence for this in the letter itself. Cf. Craddock, *Philippians,* 11; Marshall, *Philippians,* 2 and Ralph P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 55.

[30] Craddock, *Philippians,* 11; Marshall, *Philippians,* 2 and Martin, *Philippians,* 55.

[31] For a discussion of Roman ideas of honour and shame see Chapter 2.

[32] O'Brien, *Philippians,* 45.

[33] Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 30-31. Cf. Silva, *Philippians,* 40. Some have suggested that the term δοῦλοι here is meant to place these men on par with God's Old Testament servants, such as Moses and the prophets, who had dignity and were considered privileged to be God's instruments. Given the primarily Gentile population of the Christian community in Philippi, this Old Testament connection is unlikely. It is more likely that the Hellenistic connotations of this word were heard by the recipients, namely, the lowly status of slaves. Grayston discusses but does not support this Old Testament connection. Grayston, *Philippians and Thessalonians,* 11-12. Reumann appears to favour the connection with the Old Testament prophets, even though he acknowledges that the readers may have heard it differently. Reumann, *Philippians,* 82-83.

[34] The translation "saints" for the substantive "τοῖς ἁγίοις" is not in reference to those of particularly high morality, as if often thought of today in connection with the word, but rather, it refers to God's holy people. Cf. Fee, *Philippians,* 65 and Martin, *Philippians,* 57.

describes the same group of people. This phrase begins with the broad ("all the saints") and begins to narrow ("who are in Philippi"). The order of the phrases may also be significant. Given that the status of the recipients as saints comes before their geographic location, it may serve to emphasize their Christian identity as that the highest importance. It also brings to mind that there are "saints" in other places as well, and may serve to remind the readers that they are a part of a larger group.

The third phrase of the letter's opening is the one which is the most interesting for this study: "σὺν ἐπισκόποις[35] καὶ διακόνοις" ("with[36] the overseers and deacons"). Whether or not this phrase is original to the text is disputed. Some have questioned whether or not P^{46}, one of the oldest manuscripts of the Pauline letters, has enough space in its damaged section in which to include this phrase. Based on his analysis of that codex, Skeat concludes that although there is not enough room in the damaged text to fit the whole of the known text of Philippians, it is by no means clear that the omitted portion is the phrase "σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις."[37] He suggests a similarly plausible omission between the word πασίν at verse 3 and the same word at verse 4,

[35] A variant reading of "συνεπισκόποις," rather than "σὺν ἐπισκόποις" is found in verse 1 and can be translated "fellow-bishops." This reading appears to be theologically motivated, "reflecting the ecclesiology of a later time." Fee, *Philippians,* 60, footnote 8. Cf. O'Brien, *Philippians,* 43. The context of this letter and also Paul's other uses of this preposition in letter openings suggest that σύν should be read as a separate word.

[36] Although there has been some debate as to whether this preposition should be understood as inclusive (O'Brien, *Philippians,* 48; Fee, *Philippians,* 67 and Reumann, *Philippians,* 88) or exclusive (Thurston and Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon,* 46) a translation and interpretation which allows the overseers and deacons to be "a *distinguishable* part of the whole, but as *part of the whole*, not above or outside it" is most appropriate. Fee, *Philippians,* 67. Emphasis his.

[37] T. C. Skeat, "Did Paul Write to 'Bishops and Deacons' at Philippi? A Note on Philippians 1:1," *NovT* 37 (1995): 15. Cited 29 December 2010. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=22&sid=27adccc8-29c6-4074-ac97-3e432478a395%40sessionmgr10&vid=8.

noting that the scribe is prone to these sorts of errors in his text.[38] While Skeat does not draw a hard and fast conclusion either way, his point is only that the phrases have an equal likelihood of being omitted and therefore we should not immediately assume that the overseers and deacons are not original. The textual tradition then supports this phrase as part of the original text.

Others have suggested this phrase was a later addition to the text not because of flaws in the textual tradition, but because overseers (bishops) and deacons did not exist in the Christian church at that time. They think that since these offices were later developments, this phrase must have been added later.[39] It is true that there is more evidence for the offices of overseer and deacon in later centuries, but that does not necessarily mean that these words are later additions to the text.

It is to be expected that some kind of local leadership did exist in the Pauline churches at a very early time. Witherington suggests that when Paul or his representatives were away from a congregation for a long period, the local leadership was forced to develop itself. He notes, "It is not true to say that local leadership developed only after Paul died. More likely it developed, was nurtured, and became more and more fully functional the further the distance in time or space the apostle was from his converts."[40] Johnson also notes that this kind of leadership would not have required much time to develop, citing sociological studies which show that "without strong boundaries,

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Such an addition could have been made most easily if Philippians was originally more than one document which was edited into a single letter, but this has already been shown to be a less-than-satisfactory theory. O'Brien and Craddock discuss the theory that this phrase is a later addition, but neither supports it. O'Brien, *Philippians,* 50 and Craddock, *Philippians*, 13.

[40] Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 33. Fee advocates for the development of local leadership in all of the Pauline churches, not just the one at Philippi. Fee, *Philippians,* 67.

mechanism for decision making, and social control, survival beyond a few years is unlikely."[41] It would not have been necessary, nor is it likely, that Christians waited long periods of time before developing local leadership and so this is not a convincing argument to support the later addition of "ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις" to the text of Philippians 1.

Many agree that the terms themselves, apart from any ecclesiological meaning, were part of the language of the day.[42] If they were used to refer to positions which generally included oversight (ἐπίσκοπος) and service (διάκονος) then it is not so surprising to find them here, in reference to the leadership of the Philippian Christian community. This fact further shows that it is unlikely that the phrase "ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις" was a later addition to the text.

Does Philippians 1:1 Describe an "Office"?

How then should the above phrase be understood? Generally speaking, scholars agree that these two terms are in reference to church leaders who functioned as overseers and servants.[43] Fee goes as far as saying that the terms ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι can be understood as titles.[44] Others are comfortable using the term "office" in connection with

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[41] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AYB 35a; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 75. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* lxxxvii.

[42] Craddock notes, "The terms, now clerical, were in that culture rather common, referring to overseers or superintendents and servants or attendants. Deacon was a common term for servant and an overseer could be a state or local official or a leader of a religious guild." Craddock, *Philippians,* 13. In general agreement are: Martin, *Philippians,* 57-58; O'Brien, *Philippians,* 47; Reumann, *Philippians,* 87 and Beyer, "ἐπίσκοπος," *eTDNT* 2:610-612. Cf. Chapter 2 for a discussion of the commonality of the διακον- group of words in the known literature.

[43] Grayston, *Philippians and Thessalonians,* 13; Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 31 and Martin, *Philippians,* 57. None of these agree that a specific office is in mind.

[44] Fee, *Philippians,* 68.

these words, but none intend to equate the offices described here with later ecclesiastical offices.[45]

Based on the definition of office cited earlier, it is possible that in Philippians the phrase "ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις" is meant to be understood as referring to specific offices. An office is something of "public character," and Paul alludes to the public character of this position when he greets these two groups of leaders. In some ways, a leader, by definition, has a public, or at least group-oriented, position. Leaders also tend to have a certain amount of authority, which is another descriptor of "office" previously mentioned. Finally, at times an "office" can be understood as a position of "service" and the word διάκονος has the idea of service bound up within it. What are missing from Philippians 1:1 are the duties these deacons perform and information concerning under whose authority they fall. It can thus be said that Philippians neither completely affirms nor denies the possibility of an office of deacon in the New Testament.

Understanding ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι in Philippians 1:1

Beyond the fact that Philippians 1:1 depicts these deacons as leaders in the Philippian Christian community, possibly fulfilling an office, little else can be gleaned from the use of these words in this salutation. There is no real indication as to why Paul mentions the ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι here[46] or why he neglects to refer to them anywhere else in the letter; however, it is interesting that both the supervisor (overseers) and subordinate (deacons) local leaders are greeted by a superior (Paul) and subordinate (Timothy)

[45] Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians* (THNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 20; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 48; Silva, *Philippians*, 41 and, somewhat reluctantly, Marshall, *Philippians*, 4.

[46] Cf. Fee, *Philippians*, 69 and Witherington, *Friendship and Finances*, 33.

missionary. It may be that Paul wishes to honour or promote the leadership of these people in some way through a separate mention of them in the greeting.[47] Whatever the reason for this mention, it is significant that these two groups of leaders are mentioned together as this may suggest a relationship between the two positions. While the exact role of these overseers and deacons is somewhat mysterious, the titles themselves imply that the ἐπίσκοποι were the main leaders and the διάκονοι were in some kind of subordinate position.[48] At the very least, the fact that there are two separate titles suggests that these positions were different in nature.[49]

Summary of Philippians 1:1

In summary then, Philippians 1:1 shows that there were at least two kinds of leaders in the Philippian Christian community: the overseers and the deacons. There is reason to believe, based on the terms used, that the deacons may have been secondary leaders, subordinate to the overseers. It is also possible, based on the context of usage, that these terms may be referring to leadership offices; however, the evidence for this in Philippians is inconclusive. Philippians 1:1 has shown that even at this early stage in the development of Christianity, at least one group of Christians had created for themselves local leaders.

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[47] Several suggestions have been made as to why these leaders are mentioned here. While there may be reasonable possibilities, the brevity of the mention prohibits any concrete conclusions. Grayston suggests that these leaders have been instrumental in sending Paul a gift which Paul wishes to acknowledge: Grayston, *Philippians and Thessalonians,* 13. Fowl suggests that Paul both mentions these leaders and refers to himself as a slave in the same sentence in order to shame leaders who have come to think too much of themselves: Fowl, *Philippians,* 20. Fee suggests they may be mentioned in connection with leadership difficulties: Fee, *Philippians,* 69. Witherington, as one of several possibilities, suggests that Paul is encouraging these leaders to set a good example and assist in resolving conflict in the congregation: Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 31.

[48] Fee, *Philippians,* 69 and Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 33.

[49] Cf. Fee, *Philippians,* 69 and Witherington, *Friendship and Finances,* 33.

What was done in one community may well have been present elsewhere – at least in Pauline circles.

First Timothy 3:8-13

First Timothy 3:8-13 is the second text which clearly uses the noun διάκονος to refer to a specific group of people and very possibly to refer to an office in the early church. This text is half of a larger section which encompasses 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and discusses the qualifications for both overseers (ἐπίσκοποι) and deacons (διάκονοι). The section from verses 8-13 is of greatest interest for this study and so this is where the focus of the section will be; however, at times, it will be necessary to look back at previous verses for comparison and clarification.

Background

Pseudepigraphy[50] in the Greco-Roman World

A brief discussion of pseudepigraphy in the Greco-Roman world is necessary before considering the authorship of 1 Timothy.[51] There is no dispute that pseudepigraphy existed during the early centuries C.E. or that it was widespread. What is disputed is how

[50] This is meant to include works which were written by someone who deliberately attributed that work to another individual. This does not include those works which were written by one person and then, through some misinterpretation or misunderstanding of history, were attributed to another by someone other than the original author. Cf. Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 338 and Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL* 91 (1972): 4. Cited 5 March 2011. Online: http://web .ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=111&sid=271a5e26-6442-41ec -9095-a9b92f538d5%40sessionmgr110&vid=13. A similar distinction is found in Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PrNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 37-38, footnote 130 and E. Earl Ellis, "Pseudonymity and Canonicity of New Testament Documents" in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin* (ed. Michael J. Wilkins and Terence Paige; JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 212-213. As 1 Timothy explicitly claims to be written by Paul, it must be considered pseudonymous if indeed someone other than Paul is found to have written it.

[51] This will also be useful in considering other letters in later chapters

accepted pseudepigraphical writing was. The opinions range between pseudepigraphy being highly accepted, especially when it originated in a "school" environment,[52] to pseudepigraphy being consistently rejected whenever it was discovered.[53] Whatever the prevailing opinion was in the secular world, it can be consistently demonstrated that in Christian circles, when pseudonymous works were discovered, they were rejected, even when they had previously been accepted.[54]

It is most likely then, that if pseudonymous documents were admitted into the canon, they were not known to be pseudonymous. Further, if pseudonymous works were consistently rejected, anyone who wished to have his pseudonymous work become authoritative would have to write in such a way that the pseudonymity was

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[52] Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (TBS; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 18 and Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan; 4th ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 233. A "school" is meant to denote a group who followed a great teacher of some kind and who later, even after his death, continued to study his teachings. At times these groups may have written materials based on those teachings and attributed them to the original teacher. Some Greek philosophical schools are known to have done this. Cf. David G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 10. Although the idea of a "school" of Paul producing works in keeping with his teachings would have a certain attraction, the difficulty with this theory is that there is no explicit evidence for the existence of such a school, in relation to Paul or another apostle, or the acceptance of materials from such. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon,* 11 and Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 350.

[53] Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (HUT 22; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986), 10-11. Several authors cite the example of Galen, an ancient physician, who was outraged at the pseudonymous literature which imitated himself and Hippocrates. Cf. Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 338 and Metzger, "Literary Forgeries," 5-6.

[54] Frequently cited as an example is the Muratorian Canon which reports that the *Epistle to the Alexandrians* and the *Epistle to the Laodiceans* were both forged and thus excluded from that canon. Cf. O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 41 and Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 341. Donelson, who supports the pseudonymity of the Pastorals, nevertheless states, "No one ever seems to have accepted a document as religiously and philosophically prescriptive which was known to be forged. I do not know of a single example." Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy,* 11. Also supporting the general idea that pseudonymous literature was unacceptable in the eyes of the church is: Ellis, "Pseudonymity," 217-219. There are those who assert that the church was aware of and accepting of pseudepigraphy in at least some situations; however, I am not convinced by their arguments. Cf. Kiley, *Pseudepigraphy,* 20 and Metzger, "Literary Forgeries," 15.

undetectable.[55] In fact, Donelson notes in relation to the Pastorals, "[The author] is quite self-consciously employing pseudonymity in order to deceive and, because of the necessity of avoiding detection, he will use whatever effective means occur to him."[56] Included in these means are things like fabricating personal references and inconsequential notes in order to promote an atmosphere of reality.[57] If this is an accurate depiction of the lot of pseudonymous writers, then they would have to be very careful not to be too creative with their writing lest they stray too far from the ideas of the one whom they were imitating. This brings into question the argument that letters which differ too greatly from those deemed authentic must therefore be pseudonymous.[58] A letter which had too much creative material would run a high risk of being found pseudonymous and thus rejected. Though at times difficult to process, information surrounding pseudonymity in general is important to keep in mind when assessing the authorship of any of the Pauline letters.

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[55] Not all agree that pseudonymity was intended to be deliberately deceptive based on the principle that intellectual property was not viewed in the same light in the ancient world as it is today. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), lxxi. In contrast, Meade asserts that a sense of intellectual property had developed in Greek society as early as the sixth century B.C.E. and forgery detection was well developed by "the Christian era." Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon*, 4.

[56] Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy*, 24. Ellis agrees that pseudonymity cannot be conceived of as non-deceptive. Ellis, "Pseudonymity," 224. Donelson's claims make arguing against pseudonymity virtually impossible. According to his argument, there would be no way to distinguish between an authentic letter and a pseudonymous one whose author is employing every available deceptive tactic. His argument does not convince me of the pseudonymity of the pastorals but the lengths to which he suggests a pseudonymous writer would have to go have interesting implications which I discuss below.

[57] Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy*, 23-24.

[58] Generally, those who argue for a letter's pseudonymity based on perceived differences in style, theology or vocabulary from authentic letters, agree that a close disciple or "school" of the attributed author wrote the work. They also generally agree that pseudonymity was an accepted practice. As Ellis points out, they cannot have it "both ways." Ellis, "Pseudonymity," 224. Pseudonymous works cannot be innocent and acceptable and at the same time readily welcomed by the early church into the canon. As noted above, the evidence of the church fathers suggests that pseudonymity was unacceptable.

Authorship and Date

The authorship and date of 1 Timothy are much debated; however, some scholars do support Pauline authorship and an early date for the letter. First Timothy 1:1-2 states that the letter is from the Apostle Paul to Timothy and historically, this claim was accepted. In more recent centuries, however, some scholars, for various reasons, have come to support a date after Paul's lifetime which naturally means non-Pauline authorship.[59] With the principle that the letter is innocent until proven guilty, those who dispute Paul's authorship must bear the burden of proof.

In an attempt to produce this proof, some say that the internal evidence, usually used to promote authenticity, actually speaks against it. Many who argue against Pauline authorship suggest that differences in vocabulary, style and theology from the authentic Paulines mean that this letter must be pseudonymous.[60] Further, some suggest that the letter portrays a greater sense of institutionalization of the church which is more in keeping with a later date.[61] None of these necessarily mean that the letter is inauthentic. The differences in vocabulary could be due to the unique subject matter of this letter: different topics require different vocabulary.[62] Also, a comparison of style between this and "authentic" letters is somewhat subjective, and Paul may have altered his style for

[59] Some would say the letter is loosely connected to Paul through a Pauline school type of idea. See discussion of the "school" concept on page 72, especially footnote 52.

[60] Cf. J. L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles: I and II Timothy, Titus* (TPINTC; London: SCM Press, 1976), 18, 26 and Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro; Hrmn; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 2-4.

[61] Cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (SNTSMS 60; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 203-204.

[62] Johnson, *Timothy*, 69.

different occasions.[63] It may also be true that the kind of theology and teachings that Paul included in this letter were dictated by its occasion. If, as will be discussed below, this letter was written after Paul's release from a Roman imprisonment, then it was one Paul's last letters, perhaps dating ten or fifteen years after he first visited the Ephesians.[64] This length of time could explain why the organization of the Ephesian church seems so advanced.

Perhaps the most difficult internal issue to sort through concerning authorship and date of 1 Timothy is fitting the writing of the letter into the known events of Paul's life. It is not easy to place the composition of 1 Timothy within the framework of Acts; however, this is not an insurmountable obstacle to authenticity. Some suggest that 1 Timothy's composition belongs in one of the gaps in Acts' historical record[65] while others conclude that Paul wrote it after he was released from prison in Rome and continued his mission work.[66] Evidence for Paul's release and later second imprisonment

[63] Style was not necessarily dictated by conventions of the author, but rather the occasion of the letter. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 23. Another point which causes all conclusions based on vocabulary and style to be questioned is Paul's use of amanuenses. There is no way to know exactly how much an amanuensis may have shaped the letters of Paul and a different amanuensis may easily account for these apparent changes. Cf. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), cxxix; Johnson, *Timothy*, 58-59 and Gordon J. Bahr, "Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 477. Cited 7 January 2011. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=108&sid=7ae16bf9-7cad-41e6-9fa7-0e9cd10a4b80%40sessionmgr110&vid=5.

[64] If Paul's first stay in Ephesus dates to approximately 52-55 (Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 368), and he died under Nero somewhere between 64-67 (cf. Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 369, 572 and Eusebius 22), that leaves fifteen years at most and nine years at least between Paul's initial meeting with the Ephesians and this letter to Timothy.

[65] Towner notes that this solution is possible, but those who use it must be content with approximations, not exactitude. The more exact a person tries to be, the more difficulties are encountered. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 12, 22-23. Cf. Johnson, *Timothy*, 136-137.

[66] Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 8. Cf. 1 Clement 5 and Eusebius 22.

is vague, but nevertheless it is a possibility. Based on this evidence, it is not readily apparent that the difficulty of locating 1 Timothy in Acts necessitates inauthenticity.

External evidence further shows that authenticity for 1 Timothy is possible. The early church does not question the authorship of this book, but rather attributes it to Paul.[67] First Timothy is also cited as an authority by the church fathers in the early second century.[68] This, combined with the internal evidence, leaves the strong possibility that the letter is authentic.

In my opinion, the weight of the evidence points to Paul as the author of 1 Timothy. There is serious doubt in my mind as to whether the church would knowingly have accepted a pseudonymous book and the fact that it did accept 1 Timothy speaks strongly in favour of Paul as author.[69] Additionally, the witness of the early church, the plausible explanations for the perceived difficulties and internal evidence of the book itself speak to the strong possibility of authenticity.

If the author of this letter is Paul, then two date ranges are possible for its writing: the mid-50s or the mid-60s. If Paul wrote this letter before he was imprisoned in Rome then it perhaps occurred during the "gap" in Acts 20:2, making a date of about 55 C.E. a good possibility.[70] If, however, Paul wrote this letter after his release from a Roman

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[67] Towner notes that Irenaeus attributes 1 Timothy to "the apostle," presumably Paul. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 4. See: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,*Preface.1.

[68] There is evidence that Polycarp used 1 Timothy 6:7 and 10 in *Letter to the Philippians* 4:1. A comparison of the Greek texts of these two works shows remarkable similarities. Where the texts are not identical, synonyms are often used. Some use this as evidence that 1 Timothy and Polycarp's letter were written at the same time, but this is not convincing. Cf. Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles,* 43.

[69] If 1 Timothy does have differences in style, vocabulary or theology from the authentic letters of Paul, it is difficult to see how the early church would not have rejected it if indeed it was pseudonymous. These perceived difficulties, however, could have been overlooked if there was other strong evidence in favour of Paul as the author which we are not privy to today.

[70] See: Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 572.

imprisonment, then a date of around 65 or 66 is more likely, as according to Eusebius, Paul died around that time under Nero.[71] There is no definitive way to discern which of these two possibilities is more likely, since there is no explicit evidence to support one over the other within the text itself. These two possibilities are in keeping with the information that does exist in the text and also with early tradition.[72]

Ephesus

Just as authorship and date are important to the proper interpretation of 1 Timothy, so is an understanding of the city in which its recipients lived as it sheds light on how they may have interpreted Paul's words. The city of Ephesus was important and influential in the Roman Empire in the first century.[73] It was also home to the Temple of Artemis which attracted many pilgrims and was an important source of income.[74]

The Temple of Artemis and the city's religious syncretism caused difficulties for the Ephesian Christians. This is evident not only from observations about the religious tendencies of the city, but also from the events recorded about it in Acts. After baptising a

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[71] See: Ibid. Cf. Eusebius 22.

[72] For discussion of later dates, based on the assumption of a pseudonymous letter see Hanson, *Pastoral Letters*, 7-8. It is important to note, however, as do Carson and Moo, that "if we remove this letter from the lifetime of Paul, there is clearly nothing very definitive on which to fix our date. Everything then depends on our subjective estimate of the situation presupposed in the letter, and various second-century dates are suggested." Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 572.

[73] Second only to Rome and Alexandria, its estimated population in Paul's day is around 250,000, including a large number of Jews. Ben Witherington, III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John* (LHHC 1; Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 186. Johnson notes that the population was between 100,000 and 150,000 in the early empire, but does agree with the general size comparison between Ephesus, Alexandria and Rome. Johnson, *Timothy*, 142.

[74] This was especially true given that the city's harbour was silting was less useful as a seaport. Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John*, 187.

small group of Ephesian Christians,[75] Paul stayed among them for slightly more than two years and taught them first in their synagogue and later elsewhere (Acts 19:10). During this time, the number of conversions to Christianity was so great that the silversmiths were afraid that their idol-selling business would be harmed (Acts 19:21-41). The resulting riots indicate the importance of idol worship to the city's economy and show that both Jews and Gentiles were embracing this new religion.[76]

With such diversity in the assembly of believers and also the syncretistic tendencies in the community it is not surprising that 1 Timothy spends a large amount of time telling the Ephesian Christians how to deal with the false teachers in their midst.[77] It is speculated that some of these people were among the leadership[78] and this explains why Paul includes the section on ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι: at least some of the leadership would need to be replaced. It is with these two situations (a syncretistic city and a church experiencing false teachers) that 1 Timothy 3 must be read.

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[75] Acts 19:7 records twelve men. There may have also been an unknown number of women and children.

[76] Presumably Jewish conversions would have had no impact on the idol business; however, Gentile conversions would. Cf. Acts 19:10, 17.

[77] Cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 41; Oden, *Timothy and Titus,* 3; Gordon D. Fee, "Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, with Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of Ad Hoc Documents," *JETS* 28 (1985): 142. Cited 29 December 2010. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=22&sid=27adccc8-29c6-4074-ac97-3e432478a395%40sessionmgr10&vid=11; Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John,* 187 and Johnson, *Timothy,* 142. The possibility that a pseudonymous writer used Paul's name in order to combat these false teachings at a later time has been suggested. This situation would be in keeping with the idea that pseudonymous writers used the authority of another in order to further their own works. If the letter is inauthentic, this is possible; however, it is equally possible that such opposition arose in Paul's lifetime and that he addressed it himself.

[78] Cf. Acts 20:30; Fee, "Reflections," 143-4 and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* lxxx.

Interpretation

Context

The text of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 is only half of a larger unit beginning at 3:1 which discusses formal leadership by the ἐπίσκοποϛ and διάκονοϛ in the church at Ephesus. Verses 1-7 focus on the qualification of those who wish to be ἐπίσκοποι. The text notes that this position is a noble one and outlines requirements of good character, faith, public reputation and home leadership skills for those wishing to fill it. At verse 8, the focus shifts to the διάκονοϛ and the qualities needed for that position. While both of these sections are important for a general discussion of church leadership at Ephesus, for the purposes of this paper, the primary focus will be on verses 8-13.

Translation

> [8]Likewise, it is necessary for deacons to be dignified, not duplicitous, not in the habit of drinking too much wine, not greedy for money, [9]and to hold to the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. [10]First, they must be tested then let them serve if they are found to be blameless. [11]Likewise the women must be dignified, not slanderous, self controlled, and faithful in all things. [12]Deacons must be the husband of one wife, managing their children and own homes well, [13]for the ones who serve well earn a good standing and much confidence in their faith in Jesus Christ.[79]

Textual Analysis

This passage begins with the phrase "διακόνουϛ ὡσαύτωϛ" ("deacons likewise"). These words are followed by a series of qualifications in the accusative case, but no verb. This requires the reader to recall 3:2 and the words "δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον…εἶναι" ("It is necessary for an overseer to be"). These words introduced a series of accusative

[79] My translation.

qualifications related to the ἐπίσκοπος. Given the same accusative construction and the presence of ὡσαύτως, the infinitives "δεῖ…εἶναι" should be understood in verse 8 as well.[80] Thus, the section begins, "Likewise, it is necessary for deacons[81] to be…" The qualifications which follow in the accusative case are plural, in keeping with the plural subject, διακόνους.

Immediately following the opening phrase, one positive quality is listed and three negative ones are prohibited. First, a deacon is required to be σεμνούς, a person of "respect/honor" or who is "noble, dignified, serious."[82] According to Johnson, "in antiquity authority was positively correlated with dignity in bearing."[83] This might indicate that the deacon, as a leader in the Christian community, held a certain amount of authority. This is interesting to contemplate, but caution must be taken so that too much is not made of these words.[84] This requirement is similar to the requirement of κόσμιον which is made of the overseer in verse 2.[85]

The next qualification is listed in the negative: "μὴ διλόγους." This is the only place in the New Testament where this word is used and it is also infrequent in Greek

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[80] Cf. ibid., 197; Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 262 and Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John,* 241.

[81] Johnson suggests rendering διακόνους as "helper" to avoid any confusion with later ecclesiastical meaning. It is true that this potential blurring of meanings must be avoided here, but the translation of "helper" does not effectively bring out the sense that this word is being used as a title and not merely a descriptor. Johnson similarly translates ἐπίσκοπον in 8:1 as "supervisor." Johnson, *Timothy,* 226. Here the word will be rendered as deacon, but this is not meant to attach any particular job description to the word. My reasons for translating ἐπίσκοπος as "overseer" in connection with this text are the same as in Philippians 1:1. See page 59, footnote 1.

[82] eBDAG, 919.

[83] Johnson, *Timothy,* 227.

[84] For example, Oden is going too far when he suggests from this single word that "Paul referred not merely to grave demeanor but to a thoughtful, realistic outlook, a bold and caring perspective on the actual needs and challenges at hand." Oden, *Timothy and Titus,* 147. While these are certainly good qualities for a leader to have, there is no evidence that Paul meant this one word to carry so much meaning.

[85] The word κόσμιος means "respectable, honourable." eBDAG, 561. The words κόσμιος and σεμνός have similar semantic domains. eL&N, 1:747.

outside of the New Testament. Because of this, settling on an appropriate translation is somewhat difficult.[86] Suggestions include: "insincere"[87] "double-tongued,"[88] "duplicitous,"[89] "'repetitious,' 'gossips,' 'saying one thing and meaning another' or 'saying one thing to one person but another thing to another person.'"[90] In order to take in as much of the more literal "double-tongued" meaning as possible, the word "duplicitous" is perhaps the best choice.

A second prohibition is "μὴ οἴνῳ πολλῷ προσέχοντας" ("not in the habit of drinking too much wine"). The participle is from προσέχω meaning "to continue in close attention to someth., occupy oneself with, devote or apply oneself to."[91] The present tense of this verb carries an imperfective aspect which suggests that it is the ongoing, continuous habit of consuming extensive amounts of wine which Paul is forbidding.[92] This is something that would certainly get in the way of a person's ability to be an effective leader. A similar requirement is made of the overseers when they are forbidden to be πάροινον, which means "addicted to much wine."[93]

The third and final prohibition in this verse is "μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς." In the New Testament this word is found only here and in Titus 1:7. It can be rendered as "shamelessly greedy for money, avaricious, fond of dishonest gain."[94] It is perhaps significant that in 1 Timothy 6:9-10 Paul specifically speaks out against those who seek

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[86] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 199.
[87] eBDAG, 250 and Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 262.
[88] But cf. eBDAG, 250 and Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 262.
[89] Ibid., 263 and Johnson, *Timothy*, 227.
[90] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 199.
[91] eBDAG, 880.
[92] On imperfective aspect see Stanley Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; BL:G 2. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 20-21.
[93] eBDAG, 780.
[94] Ibid., 29.

to be rich, and in the section from 6:5-10 he speaks of opponents and false teachers who would seek to use their leadership position for financial gain. While this is quite possibly the reason that Paul is careful to require that deacons do not seek after money, Towner notes, "The reference is general enough to encompass most kinds of financial misjudgment and abuse."[95] A general translation of "not greedy for money" is preferred as it keeps possibilities open. Again there is a similar requirement for the overseers who must be ἀφιλάργυρον, which in English is rendered "not loving money, not greedy."[96]

Verse 9 once again makes positive statements concerning a deacon's qualifications: "ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδέσει" ("hold to the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience"). Again, the present participle carries an imperfect aspect implying a continuous habit. The verb ἔχω in this context carries the meaning of "of holding fast to matters of transcendent importance"[97] and is thus translated "hold to." Generally speaking, the phrase "τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως" is taken to refer to the Christian faith.[98] The term μυστήριον is understood as implying that the faith was once a mystery, but has been revealed to those who follow Christ.[99] Conversely, those who do not follow Christ do not know these mysteries.

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[95] Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 263.
[96] eBDAG, 157.
[97] Ibid., 421.
[98] Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles,* 80.
[99] Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John,* 241; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 200; Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 264; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles,* 80 and Gregory S. Magee, "Uncovering the 'Mystery' in 1 Timothy 3," *TJ* 29 (2008): 249. Cited 22 January 2011. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf viewer/pdfviewer?hid=15&sid=98a4b373-8c8f-41e5-8794-ebd47dfbcb0f%40sessionmgr13&vid=7. It is taking things too far when Hanson says, "So the word here [μυστήριον] probably means not only the Christian faith itself which the deacons are to preserve intact, but also the Christian sacraments, baptism and specially the eucharist, in which in early times deacons played a prominent part." Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters: Commentary on the First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 43. Hanson's late-dating of this text is evident when he discusses the early deacon's activities in relation to the Eucharist. The context of the text does not

The prepositional phrase "ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδέσει" is describing the state of the person who holds to that mystery of faith.[100] The word καθαρᾷ means "free from moral guilt, pure, free fr. sin"[101] and together the phrase can be translated, "with a pure conscience." This is not so much a requirement that the deacon be sinless,[102] but that they have been forgiven of their sin and are confident in that forgiveness.[103] This qualification is asserting the deacon's commitment to the faith. This is significant in light of the difficulties that the Christian community in Ephesus encountered with false teachers and it is not surprising that one of the things Paul highlights in a new leader is that their commitment to the faith is strong.

Verse 10 changes the dynamics of the passage slightly. Rather than another accusative qualification to go with the infinitive from 3:2, the mood shifts to two imperatives: δοκιμαζέσθωσαν and διακονείτωσαν. Towner suggests that this shift serves to bring emphasis to the testing which is commanded by the first imperative.[104]

The first phrase in the verse is a command to test potential deacons: "καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον" ("first they must be tested"). Although it has been

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immediately suggest that Paul has the sacraments in mind and it is more likely that he is pointing to the Christian faith in general. It is true that the activities of baptism and the Eucharist are part of that faith, but they should not be emphasized over any other part of the faith in this verse.

[100] On the use of ἐν in this way, see: eBDAG, 327.

[101] Ibid., 489.

[102] Although he is not explicit, it appears that Mounce would have the deacon be free from sin entirely when he says, "that knowledge [of the faith] must be accompanied with the appropriate behavior, in this case, a conscience that is clear from any stain of sin." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 200. This would seem an impossible task and a more nuanced understanding of the text is preferable.

[103] Friedrich Hauck, "καθαρός, καθαρίζω, κτλ," *eTDNT* 3:425.

[104] Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 264, footnote 21.

speculated that this test was a period of probation[105] or a comprehensive background check,[106] the text itself does not specify how this test was done.[107]

The second phrase, "εἶτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες," ("then let them serve if they are found to be blameless") describes the results of the testing. The adverb εἶτα shows that this command is meant to be carried out after the first one is completed. This is further supported by the use of πρῶτον in the first phrase: "First…then…" The imperative διακονείτωσαν has been variously translated as "serve"[108] or "serve as deacons."[109] While either of these is possible, and the latter is certainly implied by the context, a translation of "serve" avoids giving the impression that the text itself is explicit in saying "serve as deacons."

The command to let these people serve has conditions. The context in which this participle is used suggests that their initiation into service can only happen if they are found "blameless"[110] and have successfully passed their test. The whole phrase can be translated: "then let them serve if they are found to be blameless." A similar requirement of blamelessness is made of the overseers. The word used is ἀνεπίλημπτον and it means "above reproach."[111]

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[105] Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 148.

[106] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 201 and Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John*, 241.

[107] Johnson, *Timothy*, 228. It is equally unknown whether Timothy, the whole church, the ἐπίσκοποι from the previous section, or some other group was involved in implementing this testing. Lock and Mounce suggest that it was done by the opinion of the church: Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 40 and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 201. This is quite possible, but there is no way to know for sure.

[108] GNB.

[109] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202; ESV; KJV; NASB; NRSV and NIV.

[110] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202.

[111] eBDAG, 77.

Verse 11 begins as verse 8 did: accusative subject plus ὡσαύτως. Given this parallel construction, "δεῖ…εἶναι" should be implied here as at verse 8.[112] This time the subject is γυναῖκας, which can mean either women or wives, and this word causes the bulk of the debate surrounding this verse.

Scholars are divided as to whether these women are the wives of the deacons or women who are themselves church leaders. A very strong argument in favour of translating the word as "women" is the fact that this section begins, as the previous section did, with an accusative subject plus ὡσαύτως. In 3:8 this indicated a new category of leader, parallel to the ἐπίσκοπος; here it is doing the same thing, except the new category of leader is the "women."[113] This parallel structure suggests a new category of leader, and the translation "wife" does not fit this context.

The main argument in favour of a translation of "wives" is also quite strong: the resulting shift in topic from deacons (verse 10) to women (verse 11) and then back to deacons (verse 12) is awkward. If the women are the wives of the deacons, no shift in topic is needed.[114] This argument is important to consider, as the translation of "women" or "deaconess" may make the text somewhat disjointed.

Several other suggestions have been made in support of a translation of "wives." Some suggest that since γυνή is clearly used in verse 12 to refer to the deacon's wife

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[112] Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John,* 241; Jennifer H. Stiefel, "Women Deacons in 1 Timothy: A Linguistic and Literary Look at 'Women Likewise…' (1 Tim 3.11)," *NTS* 41 (1995): 447-8 and Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 266, footnote 28.

[113] Ibid.; Johnson, *Timothy,* 228 and Robert M. Lewis, "The 'Women' of 1 Timothy 3:11," *BSac* 136, no. 542 (1979): 168. Cited 22 January 2011. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=15&sid=98a4b373-8c8f-41e5-8794-ebd47dfbcb0f%40sessionmgr13&vid=11.

[114] Ibid., 171. Towner says that this is the most convincing argument for the translation "wives" but he himself is not convinced by it. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 265-66, footnote 28.

there is a greater chance that the same meaning is also intended in verse 11.[115] In verse 12, however, the context is clearly pointing to a wife while in verse 11 this is not so clear.[116] Additionally, some speak against a translation of "women" or "deaconesses" based on arguments which deny the existence of such a position at that time. These arguments include the idea that Paul does not go into enough detail on this "third office" of deaconess for it to exist.[117] While it is true that Paul does not spend much time discussing these women, the brevity of the discussion does not dismiss the possibility of the existence of the position.[118] Also, some have argued that elsewhere the New Testament never speaks of deaconesses in a clear manner, making their existence in 1 Timothy unlikely.[119] This argument from silence is not convincing and the use of διάκονος in conjunction with Phoebe in Romans 16:1 is very clearly a *possible* reference to the female deacon.[120] It has further been argued that Paul could have created a feminine form of διάκονος if he wanted to refer to a "deaconess" but the fact that this would have been unnecessary is evidenced by his use of the masculine noun in Romans 16:1 in conjunction with a feminine name. A final argument in favour of a translation of "wives" is that that there was already a specific leadership position for women in mind in

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[115] Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203.

[116] Cf. Johnson, *Timothy*, 228. If the two verses were parallel in construction, then this argument would hold more weight, but the context of usage is quite different.

[117] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203.

[118] Whether or not such a position existed is not dependent on the amount of information the texts gives, but on the context in which it is given. For example, the first half of this chapter was able to establish with reasonable certainty that a leadership position of deacon existed in the Philippian Christian community, which could potentially be called an office, with no additional information about the position besides the title.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Many suggest that Romans 16:1 leaves the possibility for a female deacon open. Cf. Johnson, *Timothy*, 229 and Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John*, 242. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of this verse.

1 Timothy, apart from any female deacon: the widow described in 1 Timothy 5:3-16.[121] Rather than discussing an order of widows, however, this passage seems to describe the appropriate means of evaluating which widows were eligible to receive help from the Christian community.[122] Even if it were a recognized leadership position, however, the possibility of a second position for women cannot be excluded.[123] So far, in my opinion, none of these arguments for a translation of "wives" have been convincing.

On the other side of the debate are those who would translate this word as either "women" or "deaconesses." While the intent of each translation is slightly different, both groups generally suggest that these women were involved in the leadership of the community in some capacity and so their arguments will be treated together.

In addition to the fact that these women are introduced to the reader in verse 11 in the same way that deacons are in verse 8, another important argument in favour of a translation of "women" is that these women are required to have many of the same characteristics as the male leaders. Johnson notes, "The characteristics sought in the *gynaikas* are strikingly similar to those desired in the male helper, with 'not be gossipers' matching 'not be duplicitous,' 'dignified' matching 'dignified,' and 'faithful in every respect' matching 'hold unto the mystery of faith.'"[124] By repeating these desirable characteristics, it does appear that Paul is outlining traits for a third category of worker, or possibly a female version of the διάκονος.[125]

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[121] Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 80 and Hanson, *Pastoral Letters*, 43.

[122] Cf. Fee, "Reflections," 144, 148.

[123] Clearly there was more than one role available for men (overseers and deacons at the least) and so there is a possibility that women could serve in multiple ways as well.

[124] Johnson, *Timothy*, 228-229. Cf. Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 40 and Oden, *Timothy and Titus*, 149.

[125] See pages 90-91 for further discussion of this possibility.

Other arguments which result in a translation of "women" or "deaconesses" are not so much arguments in favour of these translations as they are arguments against the translation of "wives." One of these is that there is no similar reference to the wife of the overseer in the previous section.[126] Why should the wife of the deacon have special qualifications while the wife of the overseer does not? A translation of "women" removes this difficulty. I do not find this to be a strong argument, as it is an argument from silence and it cannot be assumed that Paul would have addressed the same issues for both the overseers and deacons.[127]

Another argument against a translation of "wives" is the fact that there is no possessive pronoun or definite article which would link the deacons and the women.[128] Such a thing would have made the idea of "wives" more explicit. Although some have argued that Paul did not necessarily feel the need to specify this relationship and that it can be established without pronouns and articles,[129] it seems more likely that Paul would have added a pronoun or article to make "wives" explicit than make up a feminine form of the word διάκονος in order to make deaconesses explicit. At the very least, the absence of such a qualifier leaves the passage ambiguous.

There is no question that coming to a conclusion on this issue is difficult. Neither a translation of "wives" nor "women" can be made with full assurance.[130] Based on the

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[126] Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 266, footnote 28.

[127] It has been suggested that the deacon's wife needed to be scrutinized and the overseer's did not due to differing duties of the positions. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 204. This is unconvincing since this passage does not speak to duties at all but simply to characteristics.

[128] Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 266, footnote 28 and Stiefel, "Women Deacons," 446.

[129] Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 204.

[130] Cf. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles,* 58. Lewis also suggests that this could be understood as referring to "unmarried women." His arguments, however, create more problems than they give solutions. See: Lewis, "'Women' of 1 Timothy," 173-175.

evidence, however, a translation of "women" is better because it allows for possibilities to be left open.[131] These women, or some of them at least, may well also be the wives of deacons, and a translation of "women" allows for that possibility. It is, however, equally possible that that these women were leaders in the Christian community in a role parallel to that of the ἐπίσκοπος and the διάκονος.[132] Thus, verse 11 begins, "Likewise the women must be…"[133]

Following this introductory phrase is once again a series of accusative requirements: "σεμνάς, μὴ διαβόλους, νηφαλίους, πιστὰς ἐν πᾶσιν" ("dignified, not slanderous, self controlled, and faithful in all things"). As noted above, these are strikingly similar to previously mentioned requirements of the deacon. The requirement of σεμνάς is identical to deacons in verse 8: dignified.[134] Likewise, the prohibition of "μὴ διαβόλους" is very similar to the prohibition of "μὴ διλόγους" for the deacon in verse 8. In this case, the word means "slanderous, engage in slander."[135] These women are forbidden from engaging in slander as the deacons were forbidden from being duplicitous.

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[131] A translation of "deaconess" is not advisable since this implies that the text is explicit. It is likely that these women could legitimately be called "deaconesses," but it is more likely to cause confusion than clarification to use this term in a translation.

[132] It is evident that in the second and third centuries deaconesses served Christian women in ways which men could not. This included anointing for baptism, visiting and baptismal instruction. See: Jeannine E. Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries* (rev. ed.; Saint Louis: CPH, 1992), 41-42. These practical considerations may also loosely support the idea of women as leaders in the New Testament. It seems unlikely that rules of propriety would have been more relaxed at this earlier date and there would have been a need for women to serve other women in New Testament times as well.

[133] The addition of the article in the English translation, which is not present in the Greek, is done in order to convey the idea that this is addressing a specific group of women, rather than Christian women in general. Both ἐπίσκοπον (verse 2) and διακόνους (verse 8) are titles, referring to a specific group. The word "women" does not carry the sense of title with it in English and requires the addition of the article to convey that sense.

[134] See page 80 for discussion of this word.

[135] eBDAG, 226.

The third qualification for the women is νηφαλίους. This means that she is moderate in her consumption of alcohol or that she is "self-controlled."[136] This is the exact qualification given to overseers in verse 2[137] and is parallel to the prohibition given to deacons in verse 8: "μὴ οἴνῳ πολλῷ προσέχοντας" ("not in the habit of drinking too much wine")[138] and overseers in verse 3: "μὴ πάροινον" ("not a drunkard").[139] A translation of "self controlled" with the understanding that this encompasses both her alcohol consumption and the rest of her dealings, is best here.

The final requirement for the women is "πιστὰς ἐν πᾶσιν" ("faithful in all things"). While this could be referring to a general faithfulness and trustworthiness related to her tasks as a servant of the church,[140] it has also been suggested that this phrase is specifically referring to commitment to the Christian faith. This second idea would make the requirement somewhat parallel to the requirement that deacons "hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience."[141] Both of these possibilities remain open and one does not negate the other.

Verse 12 focuses back on the deacons, and away from the women. Curiously, this shift does not include another ὡσαύτως introduction, but simply begins with the command "διάκονοι ἔστωσαν" ("Deacons must be…"). Given the context of the passage, this lack of ὡσταύτως may in fact suggest that the topic has not completely

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[136] Ibid., 672; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 204 and Stiefel, "Women Deacons," 444.

[137] In verse 2 it is perhaps used in the sense of "level-headedness" rather than a prohibition against overuse of alcohol since the overseers are explicitly forbidden from overindulge in alcohol in verse 3 with the words "μὴ πάροινον."

[138] See page 81 for discussion of this in relation to deacons.

[139] eBDAG, 780.

[140] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 204. Towner suggests that this is a possibility that need not be seen as separate from the woman's faith. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 267.

[141] Stiefel, "Women Deacons," 444 and Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 267.

changed. If the shift in verse 8 is to deacons and in verse 12 the topic is still deacons, it may be correct to say that the women of verse 11 are somehow part of these deacons, or a subcategory of them. In any case, verse 12 focuses back on the men. There is a change in structure at this point, and rather than the implied infinitive plus accusative previously seen, there is a nominative subject plus an imperative verb. This may have the same emphatic purpose as the imperatives in verse 10.

The object of the imperative, "μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες," sparks almost as much debate as γυναῖκας does in verse 11. This phrase translates easily as "the husband of one wife" but the implications of the phrase are unclear.[142] It has been suggested that this is a prohibition of polygamy, but given that polygamy was not practiced in either the Jewish or Greco-Roman cultures of the time, this is unlikely.[143] It is also possible that this is excluding unmarried men from office; however, elsewhere Paul promotes celibacy[144] and so it seems unlikely that he would forbid celibate men from serving here.[145] This phrase could also be prohibiting re-marriage either after the death of a spouse or in the event of divorce.[146] While this is possible, widowed women were not forbidden to remarry[147] and so it would seem strange if widowed men were required to remain single. The prohibition of re-marriage after a divorce may be in mind here[148] but the immediate context of this passage does not commend this particular interpretation over another. A simple solution, yet unsatisfying to those who prefer concrete conclusions, is that this verse simply

[142] A similar phrase with similar debate is found at 3:2 in relation to the overseers.
[143] Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 250, footnote 42.
[144] 1 Corinthians 7:32-38.
[145] Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 250, footnote 42.
[146] Ibid., 251, footnote 42.
[147] 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 and Romans 7:1-3.
[148] Cf. Matthew 5:31-32.

requires deacons to be faithful in marriage which is "understood to be monogamous and acceptable in the eyes of the community."[149] While this is a fairly general conclusion, it is as specific an interpretation as possible without straying too far into speculation.

It is not just his marriage which the deacon must care for properly, but also his home and children: "τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων" ("managing his children and his own home well"). The verb προϊστάμενοι implies management and direction from one in a position of leadership.[150] In addition to his personal character, the deacon's home life, including his marriage, his children and any other members of the household must be well managed.[151] A similar requirement is made of the ἐπίσκοπος in verse 4 with the implication in verse 5 that those who cannot manage their own homes will be unable to manage the church or "household" of God. These requirements that Paul sets out for the deacon's family life are similar to the expected norms of the society of that day. Fathers, as the heads of households, had ultimate authority over their wives, children and slaves. In turn, children, wives and slaves owed respect and obedience to the head of the household or *paterfamilias*.[152] The way in which a man managed his family affected the way in which society viewed him. Only the man who managed his home and family well was fit for public office because it was thought that the same set of skills

[149] Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 250-251, footnote 42. Cf. Johnson, *Timothy,* 229. By "community" it is not just the Christian community that is meant, but also the outside world. The reasons why a respectable Greco-Roman marriage was necessary for these church leaders will be discussed further below.

[150] eBDAG, 870.

[151] Towner suggests that deacons may have been primarily those with large homes and slaves to manage. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 267. While this is possible, it is not necessary. What is important in his observation, however, is that those who did have large households to manage would need to manage all of it well, not just wife and children.

[152] Craig S. Keener, "Family and Household," *DNTB* 357-358 and Clarke, *Serve the Community,* 90-95.

were necessary for both roles.[153] It is certain that when Christian leaders managed their households well, they would be seen in a positive light not only by their fellow Christians, but also by the larger society. This issue once again brings to mind the concepts of honour and shame as discussed in Chapter 2. A man who managed his home well would earn honour in the eyes of society. If Christian leaders were men of high honour, this, in turn, would paint Christianity in a positive light.

Following the above admonition for proper home lives for deacons, verse 13 serves as a wrap-up to the section. It lists no further requirements, but rather discusses the results of faithful service. It begins with the phrase "οἱ γὰρ καλῶς διακονήσαντες." Again, as in verse 10, the verb διακονέω should not be translated "serve as a deacon" but simply "serve" resulting in a translation of "for the ones who serve well." This participle serves as the subject for the verb περιποιοῦνται meaning "to gain possession" of something for oneself.[154]

The first of two direct objects is "βαθμὸν…καλὸν," ("a good standing"). It has been suggested that this refers to a deacon who moves up the ranks to become an overseer[155] but this interpretation seems to be influenced by information about the later diaconate and not based on this text itself.[156] A more likely interpretation is that the

[153] Keener, "Family and Household," *DNTB* 357.
[154] eBDAG, 804.
[155] Both Witherington and Dibelius and Conzelmann note this possibility, but neither agrees it is the best interpretation. Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John*, 242-243 and Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58-59.
[156] Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

deacon who serves well has a "good rank" concerning his reputation within the Christian community.[157]

The second direct object is "πολλὴν παρρησίαν ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ ᾽Ιησοῦ" ("much confidence in their[158] faith in Jesus Christ"). The meaning of this phrase is somewhat unclear. It has been suggested that this relates to confidence in speaking about the Christian faith[159] or a strengthened relationship with Christ.[160] It could also mean that by serving well, the deacons are expressing their faith confidently.[161] While each of these is slightly different, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In the end, the idea seems to be that the faith of those who serve well is positively impacted because of that service. It is probably for this reason that this verse has been seen as an encouragement for those who serve as deacons, just as 3:1 encourages those wishing to serve as overseers.[162]

The Relationship between the Overseers and Deacons

Although this study has focused mostly on the portion of the text which discusses the deacon, there are some important pieces of information to be gleaned by a brief comparison with the preceding section on overseers (1 Timothy 3:1-7) to see what, if any, connection exists between the two positions.

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[157] Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John,* 242-243; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 58-59 and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

[158] The Greek text does not contain a possessive pronoun here. I have added one in order to make the English smoother. Another possible translation is "much confidence in the Christian faith"; however, I chose not to translate this way because I wanted to preserve the phrase "faith in Jesus Christ" from the text. Both translations convey a similar meaning.

[159] Hanson, *Pastoral Letters,* 44.

[160] Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 268 and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

[161] Johnson, *Timothy*, 230.

[162] Cf. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 267 and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

As has been noted throughout, there are several similarities between the overseer's and the deacon's requirements. Having said this, there are also many differences. Words such as σώφρονα ("prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled"); φιλόξενον ("hospitable"); διδακτικόν ("skilful in teaching"); μὴ πλήκτην (not a "pugnacious person, bully"); ἐπιεικῆ ("gentleness, graciousness, courtesy"); ἄμαχον ("peaceable"); and μὴ νεόφυτον (not "newly converted") are used to describe the overseer but are not used of the deacon.[163] Similarly, the overseer is never required to be tested and except for the prohibition of new converts, the state of his faith is never mentioned.[164] These differences show that these two positions are not interchangeable[165] and may suggest a greater amount of responsibility for the overseers. Whether or not the deacon is subordinate to the overseer is not explicitly discussed, although, as noted above in connection with Philippians 1:1, subordination is implied by the titles of the positions themselves.[166] Beyond these brief points the text says nothing concerning the relationship between the two kinds of leaders.

Does 1 Timothy 3 Describe Offices?

Although the text says little concerning the relationship between these two positions, it does have significant evidence in relation to the question of office. The important requirements of an office, as discussed earlier, are that it is of a "more or less" public

[163] eBDAG, 987, 1058, 240, 286, 371, 52, 669 respectively.
[164] Verse 10 and verse 11 speak to the faith of the deacon and the woman respectively.
[165] Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 196.
[166] Towner also suggests that the deacon is subordinate to the overseer but he makes this assertion based on word order and the fact that more attention is paid to the overseer. Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 261. Most do not agree that the text supports the deacon as a subordinate position. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 196 and Witherington, *Titus,1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John,* 240-241.

nature, that it has certain duties attached, and that it both has authority and falls under some kind of authority.[167] Each of these requirements can be found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The "more or less public character"[168] of these positions, and that particular duties were associated with them, can be inferred from the detailed list of character requirements for the overseers and deacons. The care with which these requirements are laid out suggests that these positions were performed on behalf of a group.[169] Also, the purpose of implementing character requirements for these positions is presumably so that only individuals who are well-suited to perform the associated duties are chosen to fill the positions.[170] The first two requirements of "office" are easily established.

The second two requirements (having authority and being under authority) are also readily apparent. As discussed under Philippians 1:1, both overseers and deacons, due to the fact that they are leaders in the Christian community, hold a measure of authority.[171] First Timothy also suggests that these leadership positions are under the direction or authority of another: Paul, and, by extension, his representatives.[172] Paul had previously spent a significant amount of time in Ephesus and seems to have maintained

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[167] See discussion on pages 59-60.

[168] Murray et al., *Oxford English Dictionary*, 80.

[169] Consider also 1 Timothy 3:7 which notes that an overseer must be well thought of by outsiders. This may suggest that the position had some degree of visibility in the larger community. Though it may not have been a position of a fully public nature, its visibility may not have been completely confined to the Christian community.

[170] Although it is not a very specific duty, 1 Timothy 3:5 notes that the overseers needed to be fit to care for (ἐπιμελήσεται) God's church (ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ). Although it is only a shadow of a "duty" it alludes to more. Given that the deacons are described in a parallel way to these overseers and associated with them both here and in Philippians 1:1 it is reasonable to assume that there were specific duties associated with them as well.

[171] See pages 68-69.

[172] MacDonald discusses Paul's "charismatic authority" in relation to the churches but is also careful to point out that he encourages congregations to think for themselves and "shares" his authority with others at times. Cf. MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 47, 51-52. While Paul may not have a dictatorial or hierarchical authority over the Ephesian church, nevertheless he does possess a measure of authority which enables him to make these recommendations about overseers and deacons in the first place.

close ties with the Christians there.[173] At the time of the writing of this letter, Timothy is in Ephesus as Paul's representative and Paul is exercising his authority to teach and admonish the Ephesian Christians through Timothy. Although this chain of authority is not formalized, it nevertheless appears to be there in some form.

The combined evidence of this four-point analysis (public character, associated duties, holding authority and being under authority) shows that it is not unreasonable to consider the positions of overseer and deacon in 1 Timothy as early Christian offices. It is important to note, however, that as the church developed in the second and third centuries, these offices would become more developed as well. Job descriptions which are here only implied then become explicit. Authority, which is here only suggested, is there formalized. While we may be justified in referring to overseers and deacons as New Testament offices, we must be careful to differentiate these New Testament offices from later offices with the same titles. It may be wise to think of the New Testament overseer and deacons as "proto-deacons" and "proto-overseers" when comparing them with the ecclesiastical offices of the second and third centuries.

Conclusions

Now that this examination of Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 is complete, a working definition of "deacon" can be determined. It has been established that the deacon, along with the overseer, is an example of an early Christian office, although one which is different from the offices of the second and third centuries with the same names.

[173] These ties are evident in the amount of contact that Paul maintained with the Ephesian Christians. Paul stayed in Ephesus for about two years when the Christian movement in that city was just beginning. Cf. Acts 19:8, 10. He also wrote a letter, Ephesians, to that community and sent Timothy, one of his close associates, to assist the Christians there as they struggled against false teachers.

Also, based on the character requirements and the context in which these positions were mentioned, additional pieces of information can be asserted about the New Testament deacon.

First of all, based on 1 Timothy 3:9, 11, it can be said that deacons are people of firm faith. The other character requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-12 also show that they are people of good character, who are positive role models in the way they run their families and households. Based on the fact that they are mentioned only in connection with specific Christian communities, it would seem that deacons serve the local congregation. No evidence suggests that the deacons described in these passages served in a wider capacity, although this may have been possible. The fact that διάκονος is mentioned in conjunction with another position, ἐπίσκοπος, but yet has its own set of requirements, suggests that it is a unique and separate position. The title διάκονος itself implies that it is a subordinate position. Finally, evidence from 1 Timothy 3:11 suggests that women are eligible to be included as part of the office of deacon or some subcategory of it.

It is evident, based on this examination of 1 Timothy and Philippians, that there are further parallels between the diaconate of LCC and that of the New Testament. The first parallel is found in the way in which deacons are selected. The education, interview and screening process for diaconal selection in LCC is designed to assess both the faith and character of diaconal candidates and this is consistent with the long list of qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3. One particular qualification listed there which has a strong similarity to the LCC requirements is found in 1 Timothy 3:12: “Deacons must be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own homes well.”

The resulting positive reputation in the eyes of the community is also the goal of the LCC requirement that deacons lead blameless lives.

A second parallel is seen in the potential inclusion of women in both the New Testament diaconate and LCC's. First Timothy 3:11 allows for the strong possibility that women were part of a similar office or perhaps even part of the office of deacon itself.

A third parallel between LCC and New Testament deacons which comes to light in this chapter was also briefly mentioned at the conclusion of Chapter 2: the subordinance of the position of deacon. Philippians and especially 1 Timothy further support such subordination and also serve to show that the διάκονος is a position meant to be distinct from and not interchangeable with the ἐπίσκοπος. This tends to support LCC's position that the office of pastor is distinct from that of the deacon and that there are aspects of the pastoral office which the deacon may not perform.

A final parallel between these two diaconates which comes to light in this chapter is that both New Testament and LCC deacons are primarily local servants. In LCC, deacons are connected to a congregation or school and in the New Testament deacons appear to be connected to a specific city. One difference between the LCC and New Testament diaconate also emerges: in LCC the possibility exists that a deacon could serve in an administrative position at a district or synodical level, or work with a service organization. Both of these are beyond a strictly local level and there is no parallel in the New Testament. The implications of this will be considered in the concluding section of this study.

Further details of this comparison will continue to be explored in later chapters. The working definition of deacon established in this chapter will be used to assist in the analysis of other passages to see if they also describe deacons. Where other deacons are found, this definition may be modified to reflect new information.

CHAPTER 4: THE IMPLICATIONS OF ACTS 6:1-6 FOR A NEW TESTAMENT DIACONATE.

Introduction

While Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 use the noun διάκονος in their description of New Testament deacons, other passages may in fact describe deacons or diaconal activities without specifically using that noun. Acts 6:1-6 is one such passage. These verses are a short narrative outlining a problem in the Jerusalem church: Hellenist (Ἑλληνιστής) widows are being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Seven men are therefore appointed to oversee this activity and ensure that no one is missed. Because Acts 6 only uses the verb διακονέω ("to serve") and the noun διακονία ("service"), some scholars are uncertain whether deacons are actually present here. A detailed examination of the passage, including comparisons with the working definition of deacon from Chapter 3, will allow for a clearer understanding of the implications of Acts 6 for church leadership and a New Testament office of deacon. Deacons or not, church leadership and the appointment of these assistants are central to this text.

Background

Authorship and Date

Traditionally, Luke is understood to be author of the two-volume work Luke-Acts.[1] According to the prologue to the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:1-4), which can also be applied to Acts, one of Luke's purposes is to write a history of what has happened in the church.

[1] The tradition which names Luke as the author of Luke-Acts is early and unchallenged until the late eighteenth century. Luke is a highly probable candidate and the reasons for challenging his authorship, in my opinion, are not convincing. Cf. Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 291, 296.

Although there are some sceptics who doubt his accuracy, Luke generally is thought to be as reliable as most ancient historians.[2]

While scholars are divided about when Luke wrote Acts,[3] the history which Acts records depicts events between Christ's ascension and about 62 C.E. The events of Acts 6:1-6 take place before the conversion of Paul and before the establishment of a distinct mission to the Gentiles. Paul's conversion probably took place within one or two years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ,[4] so it is safe to say that the events narrated in Acts 6:1-6 probably took place in the first half of the third decade C.E., within a few years of the beginning of the Christian church.

Geography and Culture

During this time, Palestine was part of the Roman Empire, and with Roman administration came Greek culture and language and the pressure to be Hellenized.[5] This was not well-received by all Jews and created tension between them and the Romans.[6] While the Jew did not always appreciate the Romans, the Empire had its benefits. There

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[2] Carson and Moo state, "Standards for historical writing in the ancient world were certainly not as uniformly insistent on factual accuracy as those in our day. Many writers who claimed the name 'historian' wrote more fiction than fact. But the best ancient historians were concerned with the facts and did not differ very much from the modern historian in this regard. Especially was this true for so-called 'scientific' histories, with which Acts favourably compares." Ibid., 317.

[3] Scholars generally date Acts between about 62 C.E. and 130 C.E. The earlier dates are more likely. For a detailed analysis of all major positions see: Ibid., 296-300.

[4] Howard Clark Kee et al., *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History* (2nd ed.; Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998), 33. Haenchen dates Paul's conversion to about 35 C.E. which may or may not fit within the suggested timeframe of Kee et al., depending on when the crucifixion is dated. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (trans. Bernard Noble, Gerald Shinn and R. McL. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 71.

[5] Kee et al., *Christianity*, 9 and Clifford H. Moore, "Life in the Roman Empire at the Beginning of the Christian Era," in *Prolegomena I: The Jewish, Gentile, and Christian Backgrounds* (ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake; vol. 1 of *The Acts of the Apostles*; Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1979), 221, 260.

[6] Kee et al., *Christianity*, 9.

was peace in the land and the road systems made travel easy and fast.[7] Not all Jews were at odds with the Empire and some were very much a part of its culture.[8]

At this time, the centre of Judaism, and also Christianity as far as can be discerned, was in Jerusalem. It is here that the events of Acts 6:1-6 take place. It is estimated that Jerusalem was a city of 60,000 or more inhabitants ranging from the very poor to the very rich.[9] The languages of Jerusalem were also varied and included Hebrew,[10] Aramaic[11] and Greek.[12]

Within this framework, the Christian church at Jerusalem grew and developed. Acts mentions church members selling land (Acts 4:36-37; 5:1), owning slaves (Acts 12:12-17), owning large homes (Acts 12:12) and giving banquets (Mark 2:15). The majority of members were likely lower-class craftsmen and merchants with a few wealthy members and a few who were part of the destitute, submerged class.[13] It is interesting that Acts does not highlight any class distinctions, which makes it difficult to say for certain who was part of the Christian community. It appears that in early Christianity class was de-emphasized and all were equally accepted.[14]

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[7] Moore, "Roman Empire," 228, 232.

[8] Tessa Rajak, "The Location of Cultures in Second Temple Palestine: The Evidence of Josephus," in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 4-5 and Kee et al,. *Christianity*, 11.

[9] David A. Fiensy, "The Composition of the Jerusalem Church," in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 214, 226.

[10] Anderson presents a picture of Jewish education at this time which suggests that most male Jews educated within this system would also have known Hebrew. William H. U. Anderson, "Jewish Education around the Time of the New Testament (100 B.C.E.-100 C.E.)," *JBV* 18 (1997): 217-226.

[11] Fiensy, "Jerusalem Church," 230.

[12] It is estimated that between 10-20% of the population of Jerusalem was Greek-speaking. Ibid., 231.

[13] Ibid., 226-230.

[14] Ibid., 229.

Based on the New Testament evidence, it is apparent that the earliest Christian community was entirely Jewish, although made up of those who spoke Aramaic (and Hebrew[15]) and those who spoke Greek.[16] It would seem, however, that the Aramaic-speaking group, sometimes known as the "Hebrews" (Ἑβραῖοι), was in the majority.[17] Acts 6:1-6 brings the issue of "Hebrews" and "Hellenists" to the forefront and much has been written concerning the identity of these two groups.

Scholars have answered this question one of two ways: either both the Hebrews and Hellenists were Jews, with the major difference between them being either language[18] or culture;[19] or that the Hebrews were Jews while the Hellenists were Gentiles.[20] There are well-reasoned arguments for both sides; however, the context tips probability in favour of a language-cultural barrier.[21]

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[15] If most Jewish males knew the Hebrew language, as discussed above, and most Christians at this time were also Jewish, it stands to reason that many Christian men knew Hebrew. Cf. Anderson, "Jewish Education," 218-19.

[16] Fiensy, "Jerusalem Church," 214.

[17] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1944), 241. This can also be inferred based on the number of people who spoke Greek in the city. Fiensy, "Jerusalem Church," 231.

[18] Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1979), 71; Robert H. Smith, *Acts* (ConCOS; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1970), 110; Brian Capper, "The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Goods," in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 353; Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 132; Lenski, *Acts*, 240-241; Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* (rev. and enl. ed.; AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1967), 57 and Everett Ferguson, "The Hellenists in the Book of Acts" *ResQ* 12 (1969): 204. Cited 2 December 2009. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdf?vid=34&hid=113&sid=9a3039c7-5421-4472-9c33-d474c107c5a7%40sessionmgr111.

[19] Capper, "Palestinian Cultural Context," 353; Munck, *Acts*, 302 and Ferguson, "The Hellenists," 177.

[20] Henry J. Cadbury, "The Hellenists," in *Additional Notes to the Commentary* (ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake; vol. 5 of *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury; Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1979), 69 and Joseph B. Tyson, "Acts 6:1-7 and Dietary Regulations in Early Christianity" *PRSt* 10 (1983): 159. Cited 2 December 2009. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=14&hid=7&sid=34f20905-d1fb-4af7-bbbc-bd9d5679b4f8%40sessionmgr114.

[21] The strongest argument against the idea of a Jewish/Gentile division is that thus far, the church appears to have been composed of Jews only. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB2/31; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 350 and Haenchen, *Acts*, 264, 266. Cf. Ferguson, "The Hellenists," 171 and

Among those who suggest a language or cultural barrier there are several divisions of opinion. Some suggest that both groups were bilingual but that each had a preference for either Greek or Aramaic.[22] Others suggest that the Hellenists spoke only Greek, while the Hebrews spoke both Greek and a Semitic language.[23] The cultural division is either understood as primary[24] or secondary to the division of language.[25] Exactly how this cultural and language division manifested itself is hard to know based on the information provided by the text, so it is best to simply understand that both were factors in this division to some degree.

Although there appears to be two "groups" of Christians in this passage, both Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37 portray the community of Christians living together and sharing all that they had. Communal living was not unheard of in this time and place and there is no real reason to doubt the book of Acts when it makes this claim.[26] Acts clearly intends the reader to place the early Christian community in this context and the events of Acts 6:1-6 should be understood in this light.

Munck, *Acts*, 57. Given the extreme difficulty that the church had in accepting Gentile converts, (see Acts 10-11) it seems that Gentiles are less likely to be a factor here. Ferguson also points out that the terms "Hellenist" and "Hebrew" do not always appear to be applied to language only and could also refer to a cultural division between these two groups of Jews. Ferguson, "The Hellenists," 163-4. Also, the fact that Saul/Paul is told he will be the instrument through whom the name of God will be carried to the Gentiles seems to suggest that prior to this, Gentiles were not part of the church. See Acts 9:15.

[22] Smith, *Acts*, 110.

[23] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 347.

[24] Munck, *Acts*, 302 and Ferguson, "The Hellenists," 177.

[25] Capper, "Palestinian Cultural Context," 353.

[26] Cf. ibid., 327.

Interpretation

Context

The events which immediately precede Acts 6:1-6 provide additional context for these verses. While the communal nature of the community and the fact that there were no needy among them is emphasized in Acts 4:32-37, a few incidents did disrupt their peaceful existence. Acts 4 portrays Peter and John being arrested and jailed overnight before being brought before the Jewish leaders and questioned. The two men were released without further punishment but were threatened and told not to teach about Jesus any longer (Acts 4:18-22). Despite this warning they did not stop proclaiming their message. Again, in Acts 5:17-18 the Jewish authorities arrested the apostles and put them in prison out of jealousy but an angel assisted the apostles in escaping during the night (Acts 5:17-19). When the escape was discovered, and after the apostles still refused to cease their teaching, the Jewish council became enraged and was ready to kill the men (Acts 5:33). The apostles were only saved by the counsel of Gamaliel, an honoured teacher, who informed the council that if the Christian movement was from God, it was unstoppable and if it was from men, it would eventually die out on its own (Acts 5:35-39). It is "in these days" when the events of Acts 6:1-6 occur.

Translation

> [1]Now in those days, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Greeks began grumbling about the Hebrews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily aid. [2]And the Twelve, after summoning the crowd of disciples, said, "It is not pleasing for us to leave the word of God to serve tables. [3]So, brothers, choose seven men from among you who have good reputations and

who are full of the spirit and wisdom, and we will appoint them over this task. [4]We, however, will continue in prayer and service of the word."

[5]And the whole group was pleased with this idea and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Phillip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte from Antioch. [6]These men stood before the apostles who, after praying, laid hands on them.[27]

Textual Analysis

The passage begins with the phrase "ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις" ("Now in those days"). This indicates a shift which alerts the reader that Luke is introducing a new incident. It points back to previous events as context for the events which are about to be related and ties them into the larger unit of the book. Lienhard notes that this phrase is distinctly Lucan.[28]

The opening phrase is followed by the genitive absolute "πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν" ("when the number of disciples was increasing") which provides information about the state of the Christian community at that point: it was increasing.[29] This is the first time Luke uses μαθητής (disciples) and it appears to be used in a general sense with reference to Christians, rather than any specific group among them.

The next phrase, "ἐγένετο γογγυσμὸς τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους," ("the Greeks began grumbling about the Hebrews"), introduces the major problem being addressed in this section: the dispute between the Hebrews and the Hellenists. The potential implications of "τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους" have already been discussed above. Given that the barrier between these groups was

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[27] My translation.

[28] Joseph T. Lienhard, "Acts 6:1-6: A Redactional View," *CBQ* 37 (1975): 230. Cited 2 December 2009. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=6&hid=113&sid=34f20905-d1fb-4af7-bbbc-d9d5679b4f8%40sessionmgr114. Cf. Luke 2:1.

[29] According to Fitzmyer, the use of the genitive absolute is characteristically Lucan. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 346.

probably a combination of language and culture, Mann has suggested a translation of "Hellenized Jews."[30] To actually translate this way suggests more certainty about the distinction between these two groups than there actually is. Even if it is not translated this way, however, it should probably be understood this way, given the evidence presented above.

The problem is further explained by the phrase "ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ αἱ χῆραι αὐτῶν" ("because their widows were being overlooked in the daily aid"). This phrase includes two New Testament *hapax legomena*: παρεθεωροῦντο ("overlook," "leave unnoticed," "neglect"[31]) and καθημερινῇ ("daily"[32]). These words are both used outside the New Testament, which helps us understand their meanings.[33]

Tyson suggests the imperfect tense of παρεθεωροῦντο implies habitual neglect rather than a one-time problem.[34] This is in keeping with uses of the imperfect tense and the imperfective aspect which it carries.[35] The use of the word καθημερινῇ also serves to show the ongoing problem: aid was distributed daily and the Hellenist widows were overlooked. Context would suggest that this neglect occurred over more than one day, further supporting the concept of habitual neglect. This is a significant problem and it is no wonder that it was brought to the attention of the Twelve.

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[30] C. S. Mann, appendix to *The Acts of the Apostles*, by Johannes Munck (rev. and enl. ed.; AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1967), 302.

[31] eBDAG, 763.

[32] Ibid., 491.

[33] See the corresponding eBDAG entries for specific evidence. Ibid., 491, 763.

[34] Tyson, "Dietary Regulations," 158.

[35] Cf. Porter, *Idioms*, 21, 29, 33-34. Wallace does not mention aspect, but brings out the same basic meaning of the imperfect. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 546-547.

This phrase also contains the first instance of the διακον- words in this passage. As the range of meaning for these words has been discussed in detail in Chapter 2 it will not be repeated here. Based on the context in which the word is used here, it is most likely that διακονίᾳ concerns the distribution of food.[36] It is also possible, however, that some other kind of assistance is meant and so, in order to preserve sense of the text as much as possible, a translation of "aid" is best.

Aid is in fact just what the widows needed. In a patriarchal society, women without husbands or other family would be at the mercy of handouts from the community.[37] Both Spencer and Krodel note that many Jews moved to Jerusalem in their older years so that they could be buried there. When the men died, women were left far from their families who would have supported them.[38] These Hellenist widows may have been dependent on aid from the Christian community for their survival and if they were overlooked as the aid was being distributed, these women would have suffered.

Verse 2 describes what the Twelve did once the problem of neglect was brought to their attention. The participle προσκαλεσάμενοι is adverbial. It describes the circumstances in which the speech of the Twelve was made.[39] The context dictates that it should be translated "after summoning" because the Twelve would likely want the whole group summoned and present while they were speaking. This is the only place in Acts

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[36] Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:84. Cf. eBDAG, 230.

[37] While Spencer takes issue with this description of widow, arguing that there may also have been wealthy and prominent widows, the vast majority were probably poor. Cf. F. Scott Spencer, "Neglected Widows in Acts 6:1-7," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 720. Cited 2 December 2009. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdf?vid=31&hid=113&sid=9a3039c7-5421-4472-9c33-d474c107c5a7%40sessionmgr111.

[38] Ibid., 728 and Krodel, *Acts*, 132.

[39] Cf. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 621-625.

where the Twelve are directly called "οἱ δώδεκα," although they are alluded to in other places.[40]

The following phrase describes who the Twelve summoned: "τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν" ("the crowd of disciples"). The word πλῆθος found here and in verse 5 is interesting. Most of the New Testament occurrences (thirty in total) of πλῆθος are in Luke (seven) and Acts (seventeen).[41] It is generally used to describe a crowd but has a wide range of nuances.[42] In Lucan material it sometimes (as is the case here) is used to contrast a larger group with a smaller one.[43] It may refer to the whole of a particular group which seems to be the case both times it is used in this passage.[44] Πλῆθος should be understood as referring to the whole of the Jewish Christian congregation.[45]

After the group is gathered, the Twelve speak. They begin by saying, "οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν" ("It is not pleasing"). Haenchen suggests that this phrase should be understood as referring to propriety "in the sight of God."[46] He does not go into detail about his choice; however, this is a reasonable assumption given the context of verses 2-

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[40] Haenchen, *Acts*, 262.

[41] Gerhard Delling, "πλῆθος, πληθύνω," *eTDNT* 6:278.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 6:279. Here the Twelve are the smaller group and the assembly of believers are the larger one.

[44] Ibid. and eBDAG, 825-6.

[45] Haenchen, *Acts*, 230. That this refers to the whole congregation is made clearer by the addition of μαθητῶν. In picturing who made up this group, Lenski brings up an important point. He says that those who attended this meeting were "of age" and that only the men did the selecting. He suggests that this is in keeping with the customs of the time and also the order of creation. Lenski, *Acts*, 242. Whatever the modern view on these issues might be, he is probably right that the decisions were made by the men. In fact, the Twelve address them as "brothers" which, although possibly could be more generic, probably was not, given the historical context.

[46] Haenchen, *Acts*, 262. The word ἀρεστός can also be translated as "desirable" (eBDAG, 130), "proper" (eL&N, 2:33), or acceptable, pleasing, satisfactory or approved (LSJ, 238). It may be that the Twelve thought that assisting these widows was below their station or less important than whatever work was associated with the "word of God"; however, as discussed below, this is not necessarily the case. Whatever their reasoning, the Twelve felt it would be inappropriate for them to assume this task.

4. Although this might be an underlying implication of the phrase, it should not be added to the translation itself, as it does not reflect the text.

Lenski translates the phrase "καταλείψαντας τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ" as "having forsaken the Work[47] of God" with the idea that the Twelve have already done this and are currently waiting on tables.[48] While this may be a possible rendering of the participle, it is not the most obvious way to translate it. Lenski is making the aorist participle do things it does not readily do, namely being very specific about when the word of God was forsaken.[49] The entire thought might be more simply translated, "It is not pleasing for us, after forsaking the word of God, to serve tables," with the idea that it would not be pleasing for these men to forsake the word of God and then subsequently serve tables.

It does not seem likely, therefore, that the apostles were currently in charge of distributing the aid, although no comment is made concerning how it was actually done. It is probable, as some have suggested, that the Hebrews were in charge of this in some manner since it is doubtful that the Hellenists would have neglected their own widows had they been involved.[50] Also, the complaint is said to be against the Hebrews

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[47] It is also interesting that Lenski uses "work" here rather than "word" which is clearly implied by the word λόγον. He does not explain his choice.

[48] Lenski, *Acts*, 241. See also Krodel, *Acts*, 133.

[49] Wallace states that aorist adverbial participles are generally antecedent to the action of the main verb, but does not comment on specifics of how far in advance this action may have taken place. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 624. Lenski has assumed that the action of "forsaking the word of God" is complete at the time of the writing while my alternate translation simply suggests that "forsaking the word of God" would have to come before the "serving of tables," which still represents antecedent action. There is no way to be certain of anything more specific than this given the context.

[50] Haenchen, *Acts*, 268 and Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 343. The Western text of Acts supports this idea with its addition in verse 1 of "ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῶν Ἑβραιων" ("in the service of the Hebrews"). The Western text of Acts is about 8.5% longer than the Alexandrian text and tends to smooth out difficulties and explain ambiguous things. Most scholars agree that it does not represent the original text. Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of The New Testament Writings* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 265-266.

specifically. As mentioned before, however, there is no explicit mention as to how the aid was being distributed, so this is all speculation.

The distribution of aid is described in this verse with the words "διακονεῖν τραπέζαις" ("to serve tables"). The word τραπέζαις is generally used to refer to a dining table with obvious connotations of meals or food[51] but there is also the possibility that this phrase refers to some kind of financial distribution since τραπέζαις can also refer to the kind of table used by a banker.[52] This is an interesting possibility and it may represent a secondary level of meaning for this phrase, but the clearest association for this verse is some kind of food-related issue.[53] The word διακονεῖν is the second διακον- word in this passage. As in verse 2, the idea of serving food (here at a table) is brought to mind. The use of διακονεῖν and τραπέζαις together with similar contexts makes a strong case for this interpretation.

Some have suggested that the contrast between "διακονεῖν τραπέζαις" and "τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ"[54] as well as the implications of "οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν" serves to show that the Twelve meant to make this new position lower than their own.[55] In contrast, Tyson suggests, "We should think of waiting on tables as a mode of service alternative to, not inferior to, preaching and praying. If Luke could think of Jesus in the role of one who waits on tables (Luke 22:27), it is not reasonable to think that he wished to present

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[51] Tyson, "Dietary Regulations," 154; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 348; Lienhard, "Acts 6:1-6," 233 and eBDAG, 230.

[52] Lienhard, "Acts 6:1-6," 233; Tyson, "Dietary Regulations," 154; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 348-349 and eBDAG, 230.

[53] Cf. Tyson, "Dietary Regulations," 154-155.

[54] Along with "διακονία τοῦ λόγου" from verse 4.

[55] Krodel, *Acts*, 133; Lenski, *Acts*, 243 and Spencer, "Neglected Widows," 730. Fitzmyer has rejected this idea completely. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 349.

the duties of the seven as menial."[56] It is important to consider, however, the difference between an inferior position and a subordinate one. The word "inferior" suggests something not just lower in rank, but something of less importance or quality. A subordinate position, however, is one of lower rank, under the authority of another, but not necessarily of less importance or quality. The text is not explicit, but the context suggests that a subordinate position of some sort, though not necessarily an inferior one, may have indeed been in mind.[57] The Twelve did not feel it would be appropriate for them to be doing this task of serving tables, but rather they should be devoting their time to other things, namely, the word of God. The tone of the verse might suggest that their position held more authority or responsibility than that of the table-server. Since the verses do not give much detail, however, it is best to hold this understanding with caution.

While verse 2 discusses how the Twelve cannot directly assume responsibility for this task of service, verse 3 proposes the solution. It begins "ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί" ("so, brothers, choose"). The word ἐπισκέψασθε means "to look at, examine, inspect."[58] In the context of this verse, it implies the idea of "select" or "choose" through the process of this examination.[59] The word ἀδελφοί is vocative, and addresses the crowd of believers assembled before the Twelve. The second person, plural, imperative of ἐπισκέψασθε is commanding the "brothers" to take action.

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[56] Tyson, "Dietary Regulations," 160.

[57] That this position was one of importance is shown by the care with which the Seven were selected and the criteria used to select them. This will be discussed further in verse 3.

[58] eBDAG, 378.

[59] Although this verb is related to the noun ἐπίσκοπος, a word which is at times used to describe a primary leader, the context here does not easily lend itself to a similar connotation for the verb ἐπισκέπτομαι.

The verse goes on to describe the kind of person that should be selected for this position: "ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἑπτά, πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης" ("seven men from among you who have good reputations and who are full of the spirit and wisdom"). The word ἀνήρ refers to the male almost exclusively.[60] At times it can refer to "humans" as opposed to "non-humans" (like animals or gods) but to say that this word easily refers to both men and women, and thus the Seven could theoretically have been women, is difficult to support. Even if it would have been socially acceptable for women to perform such a role in the community, it is still most likely that this word refers specifically to men.

These men also were to be μαρτυρουμένους. This is an adjectival participle referring to ἄνδρας. It refers to one with a good reputation, or one of whom people speak well.[61] The text is not specific as to who exactly was to speak well of these men. Certainly their fellow Christians would have been included, but there is a strong possibility, due to a lack of qualification, that these men were also to have a good reputation in the greater Jerusalem community.[62] Implications of a positive reputation in the greater community have been discussed in Chapter 3. These qualifications, along with the phrase "πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας" ("full of the spirit and wisdom"), show just how important this position was and how seriously it should be taken. Not just any men were to be appointed, but reputable, faithful individuals.

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[60] Cf. ibid., 70-80 and Albrecht Oepke, "ἀνήρ, ἀνδρίζομαι," *eTDNT* 1:360-363.

[61] eBDAG, 618.

[62] In both Luke and Acts, the author attempts to show that Christianity was an acceptable religion and that Christians were good citizens. Cf. Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 303-304. The portrayal of Christian leaders as having a good reputation in the community may be an example of one instance of this attempt.

These are similar to the requirements which Paul lays out for deacons in 1 Timothy. Although having a good reputation, being full of the spirit, or being wise does not directly correspond to the 1 Timothy requirements, they contain the same spirit. For example, in 1 Timothy, requirements such as being dignified, being sincere in speech, refraining from too much wine and having an upstanding marriage and family would certainly produce a man of "good reputation." Also, one who "holds the mystery of the faith in pure conscience" is a similar religious requirement to "being full of the spirit and of wisdom." In both texts, a positive, faith-filled role model is sought to do the job.

Once appropriate men are chosen, they will be appointed over the task of assisting the widows. The word καταστήσομεν means "to appoint someone over something."[63] In Acts 6 the appointment is over the χρεία, or need, (with "of the widows" implied). The word χρεία can be translated either as "need, lack, want" or "office, duty, service."[64] Whether it is translated in terms of a need to be filled ("we will appoint them over this need") or in terms of a specific office ("we will appoint them to this office") the same idea comes through: this is a task which needs to be fulfilled which these men will now handle.

Given that χρεία can be translated as "office," it is appropriate to examine this text more closely to see if other evidence of a New Testament office can be found within it. When the definition of office from Chapter 3 is applied here, it is evident that a sort of

[63] Ibid., 492.

[64] eBDAG, 1088. eBDAG favours the translation of "office" in this verse. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 263.

office is in mind.[65] This new position is certainly one performed on behalf of a group with duties attached (assisting the widows with the daily aid) and it can also be called a position of service under an authority (namely that of the Twelve). Both of these aspects were important in our previous discussions of "office"[66] and when they are combined with the additional detail that the word χρεία can be translated as "office," they show that the position described in Acts 6 fits the definition of office even better than Philippians 1 or 1 Timothy 3.[67]

With this position filled, the Twelve will be able to continue their work: "ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν" ("We, however, will continue in prayer and service of the word"). The word προσευχῇ, in its simplest sense, means "prayer"; however, some have tried to give it other meanings which go beyond the sense of what is being said here. For example, Fitzmyer suggests that it means the Christian liturgy or the "Jewish cultic prayers."[68] These suggestions may indeed be correct, but the fact remains that the text only says προσευχῇ and the translation should

[65] Some say this passage describes the office of deacon: Krodel, *Acts*, 132-3; Lenski, *Acts*, 243 and Oden, *Timothy and Titus,* 147. Johnson links those described in 1 Timothy and Acts without using the term "deacon." Johnson, *Timothy*, 227. Lienhard denies that this shows the institution of the office of deacon, yet agrees that it shows the institution of an office. Lienhard, "Acts 6:1-6," 236. Some people use the fact that Luke never directly calls these men "deacons" to say that they were not deacons. Haenchen, *Acts*, 265. Cf. Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 80 and Towner, *Timothy and Titus,* 261.

[66] See Chapter 3.

[67] The reasons that this position can so easily be called an "office" include the facts that the number of Christians was small, that all Christians resided in a small geographic area, and that ultimate authority still rested with the Twelve. When Christians were forced out of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1) their numbers increased and their lines of authority blurred. The organizational structure of the Twelve and the Seven could not keep up and so the office instituted in Acts 6 ceased to exist in its initial form. By the time of Philippians and 1 Timothy, perhaps twenty or thirty years later, the model for leadership, at least in the Pauline churches, consisted of a travelling missionary with some authority, along with an additional system of local leadership which may have varied from place to place.

[68] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 349.

reflect the text. Speculation as to a deeper meaning for the word is interesting, but ultimately, nothing concrete can be said except that the Twelve prayed.

The same kind of difficulty arises with the phrase "διακονία τοῦ λόγου" ("service of the word"). Haenchen suggests that "διακονία τοῦ λόγου" refers to the ministry of teaching.[69] Fitzmyer suggests it means "the proclamation of the Christian message."[70] Both of these are acceptable interpretations. This third use of the διακον- words carries a different nuance from the previous two instances. Here, there is a more spiritual sense to the word, especially since it is set in contrast to "διακονεῖν τραπέζαις" ("to serve tables"). The whole phrase, "διακονία τοῦ λόγου," is probably related to the "λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ" in verse 2 which the Twelve did not want to abandon and probably has a strong connection to the furthering of the Christian faith.

Now that the Twelve have laid out their proposal, the Christian community can respond to it. The opening phrase of this verse is "καὶ ἤρεσκεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους" and seems to be idiomatic. A wooden translation would read "and the word pleased before all the multitude." The sense is that the idea of choosing seven qualified men to serve tables was pleasing to the group. A more idiomatic English rendering would be "and the congregation was pleased with this idea." Seven men are chosen and the text names them specifically: "Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Phillip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte from Antioch." The fact that all seven are named may indicate that they are well known or that their role was so important that the author wanted them to be remembered. Only two of

[69] Haenchen, *Acts*, 263.
[70] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 349.

these seven are heard of again: Stephen and Philip.[71] It is interesting that Nicolaus is listed specifically as a proselyte from Antioch. This may imply that the other six men were born Jews which makes it more difficult to support the claim that the Hellenists (or the Seven) were Gentiles.

The fact that all of these are Greek names have led some to suggest that these men were all from among the Hellenists[72] and that they were the church leaders for the Hellenistic group, similar to the Twelve in relation to the Hebrews.[73] This interpretation is flawed. First, the use of Greek names alone is no indication that these men were all from the Hellenists. Many Hebrew Jews in Jerusalem had Greek names at that time.[74] Secondly, as noted above, this task appears to be subordinate to that of the Twelve in some way and so a position of equal authority over the Hellenists seems unlikely. Also, there is not a clear indication of a split in the community which would necessitate the Seven being primary leaders for one of the two groups.[75] Further, while it is possible that the Seven were being given the task of serving only the Hellenist widows, this is not

[71] Ibid., 350. Cf. Acts 6:8-7:60; 8:5-40; 21:8. Although this text presents the model from which later deacons are derived, it is unclear how closely connected the role of the Seven in Acts 6 was to that of the deacons portrayed in 1 Timothy and Philippians. Due to the uncertain connection and the fact that Philip and Stephen are never explicitly called διάκονοι, they will not be included in the study of specific individuals in Chapter 5.

[72] Capper, "Palestinian Cultural Context," 353 and Beyer, "διακονέω," *eTDNT* 2:90.

[73] Hengel, *Acts*, 74 and Capper, "Palestinian Cultural Context," 354.

[74] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 347; Lenski, *Acts*, 246; Smith, *Acts*, 111-112 and Munck, *Acts*, 57. In agreement that these seven men were not all from the Hellenists: Tyson, "Dietary Regulations," 159. Fitzmyer also agrees but says that most were probably Hellenists. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 350.

[75] Some have pointed to the stoning of Stephen and the persecution and scattering of Acts 8:1-3 as indications that the Hellenists were stirring up difficulties for the Christians with their zealous preaching, thus causing only the Hellenists to flee the city of Jerusalem. Schnelle, *New Testament*, 261; Hengel, *Acts*, 72-3; Capper, "Palestinian Cultural Context," 353-4 and Haenchen, *Acts*, 268. Acts 8:1 does note that the apostles were able to stay in Jerusalem, but that does not necessarily indicate all of the Hebrews.

explicit in the text and they could just as easily have been serving the widows of the whole Christian community.[76]

The final verse in this section outlines how these seven men were set apart for service.[77] The text reads that the men stood before the apostles who "ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας" ("laid hands on them"). The practice of laying on hands to establish a person in a position of authority is found in the Old Testament.[78] There is some question about who laid on hands: the apostles or the people of the church. Most believe it to be the apostles, but Ferguson suggests that it was the church.[79] His interpretation is partly based on the fact that there is no explicit change of subject in the middle of the sentence from "church" to "apostles." A closer look at the Greek sentence shows that it is slightly ambiguous. The first subject is the "the people of the church" (by inference, not explicitly) but the nearest referent to ἐπέθηκαν in the sentence is the apostles (as the object of the verb ἔστησαν).[80] In addition to this, in verse 3 the first person plural is used with the verb καταστήσομεν and it presumably refers to the Twelve. If the church was to select the men (ἐπισκέψασθε, a second person, plural imperative) and the Twelve were

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[76] Cf. Smith, *Acts*, 111-112; Munck, *Acts*, 56-7 and Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 345. One question to ask when considering this point is "who was serving the widows before this time?" Was it the Twelve who were neglecting the Hellenists? This does not seem likely. If there was another group doing this, then what was their role after the appointment of the Seven? There is no way to resolve this from the text.

[77] It could be argued that Acts 6:7 is a concluding statement concerning Acts 6:1-6. Even if this is the case, Acts 6:7 is still not directly related to the discussion of church leadership in verses 1-6 and is not included in this study.

[78] For example: Numbers 8:10; 27:18, 23. The laying on of hands also symbolizes a transfer of something from the one laying on the hands to the one on whom the hands are laid. Cf. Leviticus 1:4 and the transfer of sins from the person to the sacrificial animal.

[79] Everett Ferguson, "Laying on of Hands in Acts 6:6 and 13:3," *ResQ* 4 (1960): 250-251. Cited 2 December 2009. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdf?vid=17&hid=113&sid=9a3039c7-5421-4472-9c33-d474c107c5a7%40sessionmgr111.

[80] Cf. Lenski, *Acts*, 247 and Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 349. The Western text of Acts also supports this interpretation and it may be indicative of how the passage was understood in the early church. Cf. Lienhard, "Acts 6:1-6," 235-236.

going to appoint them, then this supports the "apostles" as the subject of ἐπέθηκαν.[81] The apostles were the ones who laid their hands on the seven men.

Another question regarding this verse concerns ordination. Was this in fact an ordination with the laying on of hands? An additional factor in this question is the word καταστήσομεν (verse 3) which could be translated as "ordain."[82] Both Krodel and Lenski agree that ordination should not be understood here.[83] The rite of ordination may be based on this text and others like it, but it is unlikely that the church, at this very early stage, had developed such a formal rite. The word καταστήσομεν more basically means "appoint" and nothing more should be read into the text.

Thus the problem of the widows who were being overlooked by those in charge of aid distribution was solved. The church appointed seven new leaders over that task specifically in order to allow the Twelve to continue in their work of furthering the Gospel.

Summary and Conclusions

This passage and the situation it portrays reveal several things about the early church and its leadership. First of all, it depicts the early Christian assembly creating a secondary position of leadership in order to meet the needs of the people at the time. The group's primary leadership, the Twelve, felt the addition of a secondary group was appropriate.

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[81] It is possible that the first person plural verb in verse 3 refers to the whole Christian assembly but this would suggest a shift in subject which is not explicit. Maintaining the same subject (the Twelve) is preferable. In verse 6, however, a shift in subject is easier to support.

[82] Sakae Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (ZGRS; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 106. It is perhaps significant that neither eBDAG nor *eTDNT* suggests "ordain" as a meaning for this word. Cf. eBDAG, 492 and Albrecht Oepke, "καθίστημι," *eTDNT* 3:444-446.

[83] Krodel, *Acts*, 134 and Lenski, *Acts*, 247.

The process by which the seven new leaders were selected reveals more: the new position was deemed to be an important one. The whole of the Christian assembly was involved in the selection and approval process and candidates had to meet specific qualifications of character ("good reputation") and of faith ("full of the spirit and wisdom"). Upon selection, the Seven were formally and publically declared to be leaders in the church, and were assigned a specific task. Such care and concern shows that both the task and those who fulfilled it were highly valued.

The manner in which the position is developed and discussed also suggests that it was in some way subordinate to the position of Apostle, although specifics cannot be discerned. It is important to note, however, that this probable subordination does not appear to portray the idea of lesser importance. As already noted, the care with which the men were selected and the process by which they were set apart for their task suggests that they held a position of importance in the community and they may legitimately be described as holding an office.

This passage demonstrates the New Testament church's authority to create official roles alongside that of the Twelve through which to carry on the work that needed to be done. It does not, however, explicitly refer to this new position as "deacon."

Whether or not these men can be called deacons depends on how that term is defined. If we make a brief comparison with the definition of deacon from Chapter 3 we can see that there are several similarities between the men of Acts 6 and the deacons portrayed in Philippians and 1 Timothy. Both groups are people of firm faith and good character. Both serve local communities, although in Acts 6 the community was not just

local, but contained most, if not all, of the Christians in existence at the time. Also, both positions were in some way subordinate to another position of higher authority. The one major difference between these groups is that while 1 Timothy leaves open the possibility of the inclusion of women, in Acts 6 only men are part of the office. According to this definition then, Acts 6 does describe deacons and not only that, but their very institution.

This conclusion, however, cannot be left without certain qualifications. While we, looking back, may legitimately call these the first deacons according to our own definitions, it is unlikely that the church at that point in time would have used that term to label these men. It is very likely, however, that in later years, after Christians were forced out of Jerusalem and took their message far and wide, the model found here (a secondary group assisting a primary group in some way) was carried on. This may be the impetus for the development of deacons in the Pauline churches twenty or thirty years later, which eventually developed into a more structured office that emerges in the centuries which followed.

This study of Acts 6 also reveals several similarities between its appointment of the Seven and the development of deacons in LCC. In the same way that the Christians in Acts 6 used the Seven to meet a need within their community, LCC used various groups of people to meet the needs of their congregations. Congregations used teachers, DCOs, Parish Assistants, DPSs as well as many others to help them in various ways for many years. Eventually, these people came to be known as deacons.

Another new piece of information gleaned from Acts 6 is that the Seven were formally and publically set apart for service. Lutheran Church—Canada's practice of

consecrating deacons can be seen as parallel to this. Although the service of consecration does not include the laying on of hands, it is not so much the method that is significant but the public and official nature of the act. In both cases the public act sets the individual apart for service.

Two additional pieces of information have parallels in both Acts 6 and LCC. They are the fact that both deacons in LCC and the Seven in Acts 6 have specific qualifications which they must meet; and the fact that deacons in LCC are under the supervision of a pastor and the Seven in Acts 6 were subordinate to the Twelve. These two parallels were also noted in connection with 1 Timothy and Philippians and the fact that Acts 6 mentions them again reinforces these similarities between LCC and the New Testament.

Now that it has been established that a diaconate existed in the New Testament and details of it have been gathered, the time has come to see if there are any named individuals who fit this model. This is the task in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: ARE SPECIFIC DEACONS NAMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Introduction

It has been established in Chapters 3 and 4 that there is evidence for a diaconate of sorts in the New Testament, the roots of which probably go back as far as the time immediately following the death and resurrection of Christ.[1] While the most explicit evidence for this is found in 1 Timothy 3 and Philippians 1, there may also be other places where this position is explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. By examining passages where the noun διάκονος is used in reference to a specific person, the identities of early deacons may be established.

The Pauline letters refer to six different people using the noun διάκονος: Paul (1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4, 11:23; Ephesians 3:7; and Colossians 1:23, 25), Apollos (1 Corinthians 3:5), Timothy (1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4), Tychicus (Colossians 4:7 and Ephesians 6:21), Epaphras (Colossians 1:7) and Phoebe (Romans 16:1). In order to ascertain which of these instances can be translated as "deacon" and which are simply referring to these people as general servants, the information which the New Testament shares concerning each of these individuals must be compared with the working definition of "deacon" which has been previously established.

According to the information gleaned from 1 Timothy, Philippians and Acts, it can be said that deacons: 1) are people of firm faith; 2) are people of good character; 3) serve the Christian community in a local congregation, but not the greater church; 4) are

[1] Cf. Chapter 4 on Acts 6:1-6.

secondary leaders, under some kind of supervisor; and 5) may be men or women. Given that each of these six people appears to be a member in good standing of the greater Christian community, and one who is in some kind of leadership role, it can be assumed that the faith and character of these people are not in question. The points which are most important to consider in this chapter are numbers three and four: the location of service and the level of leadership.[2]

If any of these six people can be identified as deacons then further information about the New Testament diaconate can be gleaned. By examining the role which any New Testament deacon played within his or her own community of Christians some tentative diaconal duties may be established. Also, the identification of local deacons will help establish how widespread such a position was. All of this information will be important in the comparison between the New Testament diaconate and that of LCC.

Part 1: Paul

Our examination of these six potential deacons begins with Paul. Paul is an itinerant preacher and missionary to the Gentiles. Acts first mentions him at the stoning of Stephen,[3] one of the Seven appointed in Acts 6, and at that time he actively persecuted the followers of Jesus. Acts 9 records Paul's encounter with the post-resurrection Christ while on his way to persecute Christians in Damascus. Through this experience, he was converted to Christianity and became an active Christian missionary.[4] Paul was an influential church leader, and thirteen letters in the New Testament are ascribed to him.

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[2] In the case of Phoebe, point five, that deacons may be men or women, is also important.
[3] Acts 7:58. At this time he is called Saul.
[4] Cf. Galatians 1:11-17.

Although the Pauline authorship of several of these letters is disputed, even those who question whether Paul wrote them most often attribute the letters to one of his faithful followers in later decades, thus maintaining a strong Pauline connection.[5]

Paul is referred to as one of two διάκονοι in 1 Corinthians 3:5: "τί οὖν ἐστιν Ἀπολλῶς; τί δέ ἐστιν Παῦλος; διάκονοι δι᾽ ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, καὶ ἑκάστῳ ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν" ("What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord granted to each one"). The passage is discussing apparent divisions in the Corinthian church between those who show their allegiance to different Christian leaders (like Paul, Apollos and Cephas). Paul encourages unity rather than jealousy and strife and goes on to say that while he planted the seeds of faith and Apollos watered them, the real credit for all of this activity should go to God. He places himself and Apollos on equal footing (the planter and the waterer are one) and says they are God's "fellow workers" or "co-workers" (συνεργοί, 1 Corinthians 3:9). By doing this, Paul effectively eliminates any hierarchy between them and reduces them both to the status of humble servants.

The idea that both Paul and Apollos are servants is significant. By using the word διάκονος here, Paul suggests that both he and Apollos are subject to God as their master.[6] The context of the passage also implies that rather than being servants of the church at Corinth, both of these men are servants of God.[7]

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[5] Although the Pauline authorship of some of the letters addressed in this chapter is disputed, the author will be referred to as "Paul" for the sake of ease. A lengthy discussion of authorship does not easily fit here.

[6] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 129 and Donald P. Ker, "Paul and Apollos-Colleagues or Rivals?" *JSNT* 77 (2000): 85. Cited 25 February

This verse is not the only time that the noun διάκονος is used in reference to Paul. He is also called διάκονος in 2 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4, 11:23; Ephesians 3:7; and Colossians 1:23, 25. In each of these verses Paul is said to be a servant either of God, or his message. Second Corinthians 3:6 describes Paul as "διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης" ("servants[8] of a new covenant") and 2 Corinthians 6:4 describes him as "θεοῦ διάκονοι" ("servants of God"). Second Corinthians 11:23 indirectly describes Paul as a servant of Christ as he contrasts himself with others: "διάκονοι Χριτσοῦ εἰσιν; … ὑπὲρ ἐγώ" ("Are they servants of Christ?…I am even more so"). Both Ephesians 3:7 and Colossians 1:23 describe Paul as a servant of the Gospel.[9] Colossians 1:25 is slightly different in its use of the word διάκονος, and uses it to describes Paul as a servant of "the church" with the context of ἐκκλησία suggesting not a local congregation but the whole company of Christian believers.[10] In an indirect sort of way, however, this can still be seen as Paul being in service to God and his message.

None of these verses depict Paul as a deacon and neither does any other information that the New Testament shares concerning him. He is a traveling missionary, not a local leader, and he is not subordinate to anyone other than God. The verses which

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[7] This idea is supported by many. Cf. Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians* (ConCNS; Saint Louis: CPH, 2000), 111; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), 126; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (trans. James W. Leitch; Hrmn; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 73, footnote 37 and Ker, "Paul and Apollos," 85.

[8] Both here and in 2 Corinthians 6:4, the text is written in the plural. This is possibly the epistolary plural. See page 131 for further discussion.

[9] Ephesians 3:6-7: "διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, οὗ ἐγενήθην διάκονος" ("through the Gospel, of which I [Paul] was made a servant"). Colossians 1:23: "τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου … οὗ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος" ("the hope of the Gospel…of which I, Paul, became a servant").

[10] Colossians 1:25: "ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὅ ἐστιν ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος" ("for the sake of his body, which is the church, of which I became a servant").

connect Paul and διάκονος serve to illustrate his service to God, Christianity and its message.

Part II: Paul's Associates

Apollos

While Paul may not fit the description of deacon, he uses the term διάκονος in reference to four of his associates who may be better candidates for this office. The first of these is Apollos who is introduced in Acts 18:24-19:1. These verses tell the reader that he was a Jew from Alexandria who was eloquent and knowledgeable in scripture (Acts 18:24) and who taught "accurately" about Jesus although he knew only "the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25). While proclaiming the word of God in the Ephesian synagogue, he encountered Priscilla and Aquila and they taught him more fully about Jesus (Acts 18:26). Eventually the Ephesian Christians encouraged Apollos in his desire to go to Achaia[11] to continue sharing the Gospel (Acts 18:27) and they sent him on his way with a letter of introduction from them. He was well received by the Corinthians and a great support to them because of his bold, effective way of speaking (Acts 18:27-28). His activities in Corinth, though positive, led to some division in that community and Paul addresses these divisions in a letter to that congregation.[12] Apollos also appears in Titus 3:13 where the letter's author encourages Titus to send Apollos "on his way" presumably from Crete.

[11] The province where Corinth is located.
[12] 1 Corinthians.

Apollos plays a major role in 1 Corinthians which discusses the problem of disunity in that Christian community and its relationship with both Paul and Apollos.[13] It is in 1 Corinthians 3:5 that Apollos is called διάκονος along with Paul. This verse has been examined above and the conclusions stand whether Paul or Apollos is in view: the noun places the two men subordinate to God and equal to each other.

In light of this interpretation, it is clear that Apollos is not a deacon. Apollos, like Paul, travelled to more than one community and acted as a missionary. He also does not appear to be subordinate to anyone and asserts his independence of Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:12 when he disagrees with Paul's strong suggestion that he visit Corinth. The two men seem to have the similar goal of spreading the Gospel, and sometimes work among the same people, but Apollos is not one of Paul's assistants,[14] nor do they intentionally work together. Rather than understanding Apollos as a deacon, 1 Corinthians 3:5 and other passages which mention him illustrate that he is a servant of God and a missionary to the Mediterranean world of his time.

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[13] It is possible, though not certain, that Apollos is directly causing some of this division. Fee asserts that Paul does not see Apollos as contributing to the conflict. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 130. Lockwood implies that there is no conflict, though he does not address the situation directly. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 113. Meeks implies that at least a little conflict exists stemming from the fact that Apollos is said to be "a man of rhetoric" (Acts 18:24) and yet Paul attempts to discredit rhetoric in his letter to the Corinthians. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (2nd ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 117. Ker goes as far as saying Paul deliberately sought to undermine Apollos. Ker, "Paul and Apollos," 96. Paul may place himself "ahead" of Apollos when he calls himself "the planter" and Apollos the (perhaps, by implication, secondary) "waterer" (1 Corinthians 3:6). First Corinthians 16:12 records Apollos' refusal to visit Corinth although Paul has encouraged him to make this trip. This may be seen as Paul deliberately painting Apollos in a negative light. It certainly emphasizes that Apollos does not take orders from Paul. A case can be made for conflict between the two, but how deep it went is uncertain.

[14] E. Earle Ellis, "Paul and his Co-workers" in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 5; repr. from *NTS* 17 (1970). Ker actually depicts the two men as rivals. Ker, "Paul and Apollos," 96-97. As previously noted, the level of conflict is unknown.

Timothy

Timothy is referred to as διάκονος in at least one, if not three separate passages: 1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6 and 6:4.[15] The passage in 1 Timothy reads: "Ταῦτα ὑποτιθέμενος τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καλὸς ἔσῃ διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ" ("If you make these things known to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus"). The vast majority of scholars translate διάκονος in this verse as "servant."[16] Notably, Johnson argues against translating the noun differently here than in 1 Timothy 3:8 and says,

> It is tempting to translate the word [διάκονος] with another term such as 'minister' in order to distinguish Paul's delegate from the local *diakonoi* discussed in 3:8-11. But I retain the term 'helper' precisely because it appears that Paul is making a point about the continuity between Timothy's defense of right teaching and that expected of the local helpers.[17]

I disagree with Johnson's assessment that the word should be translated (and thus understood) in the same way in both instances.[18] While Johnson's translation of "helper" might be wide enough to fit both occurrences, the context of use dictates that διάκονος is being used in different ways in each verse. In 1 Timothy 3:8, the context is of some kind of local leadership position while in 1 Timothy 4:6 Timothy is called a διάκονος of Christ, which is more in keeping with the usage of the term in 2 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4, and 11:23.

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[15] The passages in 2 Corinthians may not be referring to Timothy at all, but may be examples of the epistolary plural. See below for discussion.

[16] I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 549; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 249; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 303, footnote 5; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 88 and Witherington, *Titus, 1-2 Timothy*, 255. Knight suggests either "minster" or "servant." George W. Knight, III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 194.

[17] Johnson, *Timothy*, 243.

[18] Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 249.

It is possible that 2 Corinthians 3:6 and 6:4 also refer to Timothy as διάκονος. These passages have been previously discussed in their relationship to Paul and they translate "servants of a new covenant" and "servants of God" respectively. There is considerable debate as to whether Timothy can be included as a referent in these verses or whether the first person plural is being used by Paul as a literary device known as the "epistolary plural" where he only intends to refer to himself.[19] Epistolary plural or not, in each of these cases, the referent is described as a servant of God or of his message (the new covenant) and as discussed above in relation to Paul, neither verse depicts the referent as a deacon.

Another passage which uses one of the διακον- words to describe Timothy is Acts 19:22. This passage uses the verb διακονέω as a substantive participle to describe both Timothy and Erastus: "ἀποστείλας δὲ εἰς τὴν Μακεδονίαν δύο τῶν διακονούντων αὐτῷ, Τιμόθεον καὶ Ἔραστον, αὐτὸς ἐπέσχεν χρόνον εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν" ("And after sending into Macedonia two of those who served him, Timothy and Erastus,[20] he stayed for a time in Asia"). This is an interesting passage to consider in light of the fact that the participle διακονούντων is often translated as a noun. It is often

[19] Either stating or implying that Timothy is not a referent here due to the epistolary plural: Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32a; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 43, 103-104; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 139-140, 269-274, 470-472 and Martin, *Philippians,* 1-2. Lenski sees Paul and Timothy as co-authors and speaks about "his assistants" in relation to the two verses, although he does not name Timothy specifically. See: Lenski, *Corinthians,* 801, 919, 1063-1064.

[20] Erastus is not being considered as a potential deacon in this chapter because he is described with the participle of διακονέω rather than the noun διάκονος. Even if he were to be included, some of the same reasons which exclude Timothy from the diaconate also apply to Erastus. First, Erastus is a servant of Paul, not a local Christian community. Second, assuming he is the same Erastus mentioned in Romans 16:23 and 2 Timothy 4:20, he travels for missionary purposes both with Paul and at Paul's command. Third, Romans calls him the "city treasurer" and not a deacon of the church. For discussion as to whether the same Erastus is mentioned in Acts, Romans and 2 Timothy see: Smith, *Acts*, 290; Munck, *Acts*, 194; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 653 and Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 589.

rendered "helpers"[21] or "assistants"[22] which would also be acceptable translations for the noun διάκονος. In this passage, however, contrary to 1 Timothy 4:6[23] which uses the noun διάκονος for Timothy, he is portrayed, not as a servant of God or God's message, but as a servant or helper of Paul.[24]

These passages which describe Timothy by using the διακον- group of words do not readily suggest that Timothy should be considered a deacon. It is true that Timothy is in a sort of subordinate position to Paul, being one of his helpers or assistants; however, the fact that his service is connected to Paul and to Christ and not to a specific local group of Christians speaks against him being classified as deacon. It is also important to note that Timothy travelled. If he were a servant of Paul and a servant of Christ, yet he served only one local Christian community on Paul's behalf, then he could possibly be considered a deacon; but given that he went to several different communities,[25] either with Paul or as Paul's ambassador, he must be disqualified from this office. He should instead simply be considered a "servant of God."

Tychicus

Tychicus appears in five places in the New Testament and in each instance he is depicted as travelling either with Paul or at his command.[26] In Acts 20:4 Tychicus is mentioned as

[21] Smith, *Acts*, 289 and Munck, *Acts*, 194.
[22] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 645.
[23] And 2 Corinthians 3:6 and 6:2 if they are applicable.
[24] Cf. Ellis, "Co-workers," 4-5.
[25] These communities include Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), Berea (Acts 17:14), Corinth, (Acts 18:5; 1 Corinthians 4:17), Macedonia (Acts 19:22), Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:2) and possibly Philippi (Philippians 2:19).
[26] That these passages all refer to the same Tychicus is supported by Paul E. Deterding, *Colossians* (ConCNS; Saint Louis: CPH, 2003), 184; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (trans. William R.

one of two "Asians"[27] who were part of a larger group of men travelling with Paul between Greece and Troas. In 2 Timothy 4:12 he has been sent by Paul to Ephesus. In Titus 3:12 Paul writes that either Artemas, Tychicus or Timothy will be sent to Titus who is at Crete (Titus 1:5). In Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7 Tychicus is Paul's letter carrier[28] who will share news of Paul with the letters' recipients and also encourage them. All of these passages link Tychicus with the work of Paul.[29]

The two verses of greatest interest for this study are Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7 where Tychicus is called a διάκονος. Curiously, both verses are nearly identical: "Τυχικὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος [καὶ σύνδουλος][30] ἐν κυρίῳ" ("Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant [and fellow slave] in the Lord"). The incredible similarities between these two verses are most often explained in one of two ways: either the same author wrote both Colossians and Ephesians at very nearly the same time and thus was able to either remember or copy these words from one

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Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris; *Hrmn*; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 170-171; Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco: Word Books, 1982), 247; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 492; George Eldon Ladd, "Paul's Friends in Colossians 4:7-16," *RevExp* 70 (1973): 507. Cited 24 February 2011. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com .ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=111&sid=b239bc84-f455-47fe-b513-e8437e7e4b78%40sessionmgr114&vid=14 and Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians* (trans. Astrid B. Beck; AB 34b; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 476.

[27] This refers to the western part of modern-day Turkey. Carl G. Rasmussen, *Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible* (PRS; Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1989), 277.

[28] Deterding, *Colossians*, 184; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 246; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 491 and G. Stoeckhardt, *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians* (trans. Martin S. Sommer; Saint Louis: CPH, 1952), 25. Ladd notes that Tychicus was the letter carrier for Colossians, but does not comment on Ephesians. Ladd, "Paul's Friends," 507. Mitton suggests that Tychicus bore Colossians but thinks Ephesians is pseudonymous, perhaps even written by Tychicus. C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 230.

[29] Acts easily links Tychicus with Paul and his entourage. If Paul is understood as the author of both 2 Timothy and Titus, then Tychicus' connection with the apostle is made even stronger. The link is stronger still if Paul wrote both Colossians and Ephesians. The Pauline authorship of each of these letters is under much debate but even if they are found to be inauthentic, it would not negate Tychicus' Pauline connection.

[30] Found only in Colossians 4:7.

to the other,[31] or two different people wrote these letters at two different points in time, using one as a source for the other.[32] A third possibility is that this phrase is formulaic. This would make it easy to remember and so one author could easily have included the nearly identical words in two letters with little trouble. This also makes it possible that two different authors could have produced these verses with little need to reference one another's works. Whatever the reason for these similarities, the exact nature of how these letters were written does not affect the way in which the word διάκονος should be understood in these two passages.

It is evident, based on these nearly identical verses in Colossians and Ephesians that Tychicus is connected to Paul and takes orders from him in some form or another.[33] At the same time, however, Paul calls Tychicus "beloved brother" and "fellow slave in the Lord" which puts the two men on an equal playing field. The term "brother" brings to mind a close familial sort of relationship between the men as fellow Christians.[34] Also, Tychicus' inclusion as a "fellow" slave with Paul suggests that despite taking orders from him, the two men are doing the same work.[35] As slaves, Paul and Tychicus are also under the same master: the Lord.[36] This picture of Tychicus is similar to connections made between Paul, Timothy, and Apollos who are called servants of God, Christ, the Gospel and the new covenant.

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[31] Carson and Moo, *Introduction,* 520; Barth and Blanke, *Colossians,* 113-114; Deterding, *Colossians,* 13 and Stoeckhardt, *Ephesians,* 10.

[32] Citing the dependence of Ephesians on Colossians: Lincoln, *Ephesians,* lv.

[33] Ellis notes that Tychicus is one of five people who stand in explicit subordination to Paul. Ellis, "Co-workers," 4-5. That Tychicus is involved in subordinate tasks and that he is an assistant to Paul is disputed by Barth and Blanke, *Colossians,* 477 and Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon,* 171.

[34] Cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 89.

[35] Cf. O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 492 and Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon,* 171.

[36] Cf. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians,* 477 and Ladd, "Paul's Friends," 507-508.

When all of this information on Tychicus is evaluated, he, like Paul, Apollos and Timothy, does not fit the criteria of a deacon.[37] He does appear to be under Paul's leadership, and thus might be called a secondary leader; however, he is not a local leader, but a travelling missionary. The word διάκονος then describes Tychicus as a servant "in the Lord."

Epaphras

Epaphras is short for Epaphroditus, a name common in inscriptions and papyri.[38] Despite the commonality of the name, context suggests that the same Epaphras is mentioned twice in Colossians and also in Philemon.[39] In Colossians 4:12-13 he sends greetings to the Colossians and is called "one of them"[40] which may suggest that he was a native of Colossae.[41] These verses also note that Epaphras worked among the Christians at Laodicea and Hierapolis and it appears as though he founded the Christian community in that area.[42] Epaphras is also mentioned in Philemon 23 where he greets Philemon, who possibly lives in Colossae[43] and is noted as a fellow prisoner with Paul.

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[37] Some make this decision based on their conclusion that deacons did not yet exist. Cf. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 171; Bonnie Bowman Thurston, "Paul's Associates in Colossians 4:7-17," *ResQ* 41 (1999): 47. Cited 24 February 2011. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=111&sid=b239bc84-f455-47fe-b513-e8437e7e4b78%40sessionmgr114&vid=11 and Ladd, "Paul's Friends," 507-508. Others make this decision based on the context of usage which clearly does not support Tychicus as deacon. Cf. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 247.

[38] Ibid., 15.

[39] He is generally not identified with the Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25 and 4:18. Cf. Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 163 and O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon,* 15.

[40] Cf. Colossians 4:12.

[41] O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon,* 15.

[42] Deterding, *Colossians,* 30, 187; Ladd, "Paul's Friends," 510 and O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 255.

[43] Onesimus is said to be from Colossae (Colossians 4:9) and he is the slave of Philemon (Philemon 10-12). This seems to suggest that Philemon lived in Colossae.

Epaphras is called a διάκονος in Colossians 1:7. The verse reads "καθὼς ἐμάθετε ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συνδούλου ἡμῶν, ὅς ἐστιν πιστὸς ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν[44] διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ" ("just as you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-slave,[45] who is, on your behalf, a faithful servant of Christ"). The thing which they have learned from Epaphras is the Gospel of Christ (Colossians 1:5).

The use of the word διάκονος here is once again connected to Christ, as it was for Paul and Timothy. As previously noted, this seems to be a descriptor of where Epaphras' authority comes from or where he places his allegiance, rather than a job title. In fact, no one suggests that this word be translated as deacon[46] but instead it is rendered as "minister"[47] or "servant."[48]

Unlike the other men we have discussed, Epaphras seems to be confined to two geographical areas: the first is Colossae and surrounding territory and the second is

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[44] There is a textual variant here which reads either ὑμῶν ("your") or ἡμῶν ("our"). As Metzger points out, the textual evidence for ἡμῶν is older and better, but ὑμῶν is found in the majority of the readings. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 619. It is possible that the first person was introduced based on first person plural pronouns which both precede and follow it (verse 8). Cf. ibid., 620. Many commentators prefer the first person pronoun. Cf. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon,* 15-16; Barth and Blanke, *Colossians,* 165; Deterding, *Colossians,* 30 and Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon,* 23. In terms of interpretation, a translation of "your behalf" may confine Epaphras to the churches in the region of Colossae and suggests that he works for them directly. A translation of "our behalf" suggests that Epaphras is working on behalf of Paul and his entourage. The evidence does not present a clear choice. While ἡμῶν fits the context better, there is no ready explanation as to why this reading should have been changed to ὑμῶν. Even though the textual evidence for ὑμῶν is not as strong, it may present a more difficult reading, which is generally preferred. Based on this reasoning, I translate in the second person, while realizing that the first person may be equally possible.

[45] The word συνδούλου is also used of Tychicus (Colossians 4:7) and would seem to place Epaphras in a similar category: one of Paul's assistants.

[46] Diemer specifically says that Colossians 1:7 should not be translated as "deacon," although his definition of deacon is somewhat different than mine. Cf. Carl J. Diemer, Jr., "Deacons and Other Endangered Species: A Look at the Biblical Office of Deacon," *FundJ* 3 no. 3 (1984): 21.

[47] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon,* 22; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon,* 7; Diemer, "Endangered Species," 21; ESV; KJV; NIV and NRSV.

[48] NASB and Barth and Blanke, *Colossians,* 164.

wherever he is when Colossians and Ephesians are written, possibly in a Roman prison.[49] Exactly why he left Colossae is uncertain, although he may simply have been going to visit Paul, with the intention of returning to his work in Colossae, when he was imprisoned for some reason. Thompson specifically says Epaphras is "a local διάκονος in Colossae" although he is not explicit as to how διάκονος should be translated or understood.[50] Others note that Epaphras still feels a strong tie to the church at Colossae[51] and this may indicate that his absence was meant only to be temporary.

While Epaphras may indeed be confined to the local area around Colossae, he still fails to meet the criteria for a deacon. First, although he may in fact be confined to Colossae and area, he is described not as a διάκονος of the Christian community in that place, but as a "διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ": a servant of Christ. This attribution on its own may not be enough to disqualify him as a deacon; however, another important criterion for deacons is that they be in a subordinate position. Epaphras, by virtue of the fact that he probably founded the Colossian church, appears to be in a primary leadership role, rather than in an assisting role.[52] Although he appears to be working in cooperation with Paul, it is not apparent that he is working under Paul's authority.[53] He may be like Apollos, who works independently of Paul, yet sometimes in overlapping areas. Although

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[49] Cf. Philemon 23.

[50] James W. Thompson, "Ministry in the New Testament," *ResQ* 27 (1984): 155. Cited 25 February 2011. Online: http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid =111&sid=4b45cce6-44db-42fa-a114-0619279d1c12% 40sessionmgr110&vid=6.

[51] This is based on Colossians 4:12. Cf. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 22 and Thurston, "Paul's Associates," 50.

[52] Cf. Deterding, *Colossians*, 187-188; Thurston, "Paul's Associates," 50 and Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 164.

[53] In opposition to this view, Deterding sees Epaphras as working in Paul's stead in Colossae and area, thereby suggesting that Paul is overseeing Epaphras' work there. Deterding, *Colossians*, 187-188.

he is the closest thing to it which we have examined so far, Epaphras still cannot be considered a deacon.

Observations concerning Paul and his Associates

Despite the fact that Apollos, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras and Paul are not deacons, it can be said that the use of διάκονος in connection with these men is still meant to portray them as Christian leaders. Picking up on this, Ellis goes as far as saying that the term διάκονος describes a special class of worker engaged in both preaching and teaching.[54] In his understanding, this group includes those described in Philippians 1:1,[55] Phoebe, and those in Paul's "inner circle" such as Timothy and Tychicus.[56] While it is evident that διάκονος does, at times, refer to a special group of workers,[57] it is not at all evident that this usage is as all-encompassing as Ellis suggests[58] nor that it includes such a vast array of people. Clearly the use of διάκονος in reference to the five men already examined is different from its use in 1 Timothy 3 and Philippians 1:1.[59] Equally as clear, however, is the fact that these five men are also Christian leaders. This suggests that at this early stage in the development of Christianity the term διάκονος may have been used in reference to more than one kind of leadership (a flexible term) and that the context of usage dictates to which sort of leadership the term is referring.

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[54] Ellis, "Co-workers," 9-10.

[55] Notably, he does not mention 1 Timothy 3 in his analysis.

[56] Ellis, "Co-workers," 9-10.

[57] As established in Chapter 3.

[58] Cf. Fee who says of Ellis, "He tends to see the term as more specialized that the data warrant." Fee, *Corinthians,* 130.

[59] It is also different from the use of the term in Romans 16:1 which will be discussed in the next section.

Part III: Phoebe

Phoebe is mentioned only in Romans 16:1 where she is identified as being from Cenchrea, near Corinth.[60] Her name comes from Pagan mythology[61] which has led many to conclude, probably correctly, that she was a Gentile.[62] Romans 16:1 reads "Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὖσαν [καὶ][63] διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς" ("I introduce to you Phoebe, our sister, who is [also] a deacon of the church in Cenchrea"). This verse shows that Phoebe was a stranger to the Roman Christians. Paul commends her to them and asks them to welcome her while she is with them.[64] Many suggest, probably correctly, that Phoebe was the letter carrier[65] which explains the presence of this passage in the letter.

There is good reason to believe that this passage is meant to portray Phoebe as a deacon and several commentators translate it so.[66] Witherington and Dunn call her the

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[60] Although there are six possible places which use this name, the seaport of Corinth (located seven kilometres to the southeast of the city) was the most important and is probably the one to which Paul is referring. Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 730.

[61] Fitzmyer notes: "The name was of mythological origin, that of a Titaness, daughter of Heaven and Earth…wife of Coeus, and mother of Leto, grandmother of Apollo (Phoebus) and Artemis. The name means 'shining, beaming, bright'; it was commonly used in the Greco-Roman world of the time." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 729.

[62] Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 729; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans 9-16* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1979), 780; Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Hrmn; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 942-943; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38b; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 886 and Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 913. Witherington and Hyatt do not rule out the possibility that Phoebe was Jewish, noting that "Jews in the Diaspora often had non-Jewish names." Ben Witherington, III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 382. Jewett, however, points out that the archaeological excavations at Cenchrea have not revealed evidence of a Jewish presence during this time period which makes it very unlikely that Phoebe was a Jew. Jewett, *Romans*, 943.

[63] This word can be taken as part of the text although the manuscript evidence is uncertain. Its inclusion or exclusion will not greatly alter the meaning of the text. Cf. UBS^4, 2*.

[64] Cf. Romans 16:2. Paul has not visited this group of Christians; however, it appears as though he has met many individuals among them.

[65] Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 729; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 780; Jewett, *Romans*, 942-943; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 886 and Moo, *Romans*, 913.

[66] Translating as either "deacon" or "deaconess" are: Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 781; Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans*, 377; Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 885 and Moo, *Romans*, 912. Cf. Homily 30 in John

"first recorded 'deacon' in the history of Christianity"[67] and both Witherington and Cranfield directly link the use of διάκονος in this passage with its use in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8 and 12.[68]

Although there is much support for understanding Phoebe as a deacon, there are some who prefer a more middle-of-the-road approach and acknowledge that she may either be a deacon or a general servant in the Christian community.[69] Still others are adamant that she not be considered a deacon at all. Romaniuk says, "The term διάκονος is emphasized in such a general way as regards Phoebe that we should deny that in the early church Phoebe was something more than an ordinary lay-woman."[70] On the contrary, why would Paul use this term in a commendation of Phoebe unless he meant it

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Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans: Translated with Notes and Indices,* (LFHCC; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1848), 477. Most also note that there is a difference between Phoebe and the deacons and deaconesses of the second and third centuries. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 729; Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* 887 and Moo, *Romans,* 914. Significantly, Cranfield says διάκονος should be understood here "as referring to a definite office." Cranfield, *Romans 9-16,* 781. He does not define what he means by "office" but he does connect the role of deacon with service to the needy. Ibid.

[67] Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* 887. Cf. Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans,* 382.

[68] Cranfield, *Romans 9-16,* 781 and Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans,* 382. Even though Phoebe may be considered a deacon, it is probably going too far to translate διάκονος as "deaconess" since the Greek actually uses a masculine noun and "the specific order of women church workers called deaconesses did not exist for another three hundred years." Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans,* 382. Despite these comments, their own translation actually reads "deaconess." Whether this is a typing error or an oversight is unknown. See: Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans,* 377. It could be argued that, since a Greek feminine noun did not exist at this point in history, the masculine term can also be seen as the feminine "deaconess." The word "deaconess," however, brings to mind many ideas which may or may not be implied by Paul's use of διάκονος here. It is best to steer clear of this potential confusion and stick to "deacon" in translation.

[69] Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 729. Cranfield, although ultimately preferring the translation of "deacon," notes, "It is perhaps just conceivable that the word *διάκονος* should be understood here as a quite general reference to her service of the congregation." Cranfield, *Romans 9-16,* 781. Dunn also recognizes the possibility of a general reference, but concludes "deacon" is a better choice. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* 886-887.

[70] Kazimierz Romaniuk, "Was Phoebe in Romans 16,1 a Deaconess?" *ZNW* 81 (1990): 134. Cited 26 February 2011. Online: http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/PDF/1298775563330.pdf. At times it seems as though Romaniuk stumbles over the fact that Phoebe is a woman. He bases his broad understanding of διάκονος in relation to Phoebe on an equally broad understanding of ἀπόστολος in relation to Junia (Romans 16:7). His certainty that this broad application is appropriate in Junia's case is strengthened by her gender. Cf. Romaniuk, "Phoebe," 133. I cannot help but be left with the impression that had Phoebe and Junia been males, his interpretation may have been different.

to be understood as setting her apart from other lay-women? Also, the use of προστάτις (patron) in verse 2 clearly sets Phoebe apart from other Christians at Cenchrea.[71] While caution in calling Phoebe "deacon" is appreciated, the context dictates that she is surely more than a regular Cenchrean lay-woman.

The way in which Phoebe is connected to the Cenchrean church suggests that not only is she more than a lay-women, she actually is a deacon. When she is called "διάκονος *of the church* at Cenchrea" she is placed firmly in a local congregation.[72] While Epaphras was connected to the Christians in Colossae and area, he was called "a διάκονος of Christ" and so his service was linked to Christ, rather than to the specific people in Colossae. Phoebe's service on the other hand, is clearly connected to the congregation which makes it very possible that she should be considered a deacon.

The fact that Phoebe may be subordinate to another leader further strengthens the interpretation of Phoebe as a deacon. While Romans 16:1 does not explicitly say that Phoebe is under the direction of another leader, the context of the verse does not immediately refute this either. Despite this, Jewett suggests that Phoebe is actually the primary leader of the congregation, rather than an assisting leader. He explains his position by saying,

> Although earlier commentaries interpret the term διάκονος as a subordinate role, it now appears more likely that she functioned as the leader of the congregation. That διάκονος was an official title of leadership has been shown by Brockhaus and Holmberg, and is strongly indicated by earlier references in Rom 11:13; 12:7; and 13:4. In the light of its use in 1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6; 6:4; 11:15 and 23 to refer

[71] The implications of this word will be discussed below.

[72] Jewett agrees that she is a local leader. Jewett, *Romans,* 944-945. Fitzmyer also notes that ἐκκλησία is used here "only in the sense of a local congregation" and not the wider church as the term denotes elsewhere in the New Testament. Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 730. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* 887.

> to missionaries, including Paul himself, it is no longer plausible to limit her role to philanthropic activities.[73]

While it is correct that leadership is at times associated with διάκονος, the word is not necessarily meant to imply the highest leader of the church and this word alone cannot satisfactorily cast Phoebe as the church's main leader. Thus far, Romans 16:1 shows that Phoebe is well-qualified to be the only deacon in the New Testament who is explicitly called by that name.[74]

Further information concerning Phoebe and her role as deacon at Cenchrea can be found in Romans 16:2. The verse reads: "ἵνα αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως τῶν ἁγίων καὶ παραστῆτε αὐτῇ ἐν ᾧ ἂν ὑμῶν χρῄζῃ παράγματι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ προστάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ" ("so that you might welcome her in the Lord, in a way fitting of the saints, and that you might help her with any matter with which she might need your assistance, for she has been a patron[75] of many and myself also"). As noted above, Phoebe is going to Rome for some unknown reason and Paul is

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[73] Jewett, *Romans,* 944. Jewett's analysis is difficult to accept. It has already been shown that the use of the term διάκονος in 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 6:4; and 11:23 are used of missionaries, but in a very different sense than it is used here of Phoebe. Further, while 2 Corinthians 11:15 does indirectly refer to missionaries, it is not using διάκονος to describe their missionary activities, but rather to connect their false teachings with service (διάκονος) of Satan. Romans 13:4 is certainly connected with leaders, but it uses διάκονος in reference to governing authorities and the connection to Christian leadership is not clear. It is also difficult to see how Romans 11:13 and 12:7 apply in this discussion of διάκονος when these verses actually use the noun διακονία. In my opinion it is clear that the word διάκονος on its own cannot establish Phoebe as the main leader of this congregation.

[74] There may be other people named in the New Testament who could arguably be called deacons according to our five criteria; however, they are not called by the title "διάκονος." The title gives important weight to the conclusions in this chapter which those lacking it would not have.

[75] Some have suggested that προστάτις should be translated as "leader" or some similar word. In contrast to this, both Moo and Meeks support a translation of "patron" here. Moo, *Romans,* 916 and Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 60. They do not necessarily dispute that Phoebe may have been both a leader and a patron, they only question "leader" as the translation.

asking the Christians there to assist her in whatever way she may need.[76] An important detail that this verse gives us is that Phoebe was a patron of many and also of Paul. This detail is important in fully understanding her role among the Christians of Cenchrea.

The patronage system was a major part of life in the Greco-Roman world. Moxenes describes the patron-client relationship as:

> social relationships between individuals based on a strong element of inequality and difference in power. The basic structure of the relationship is an exchange of different and very unequal resources. A patron has social, economic, and political resources that are needed by a client. In return, a client can give expressions of loyalty and honor that are useful for the patron.[77]

Patronage could also occur between one person and a group (public patronage). In this case, the patron paid for a public building or banquet in exchange for "statues, inscriptions, and public office."[78] People could also be patrons of clubs or religious guilds of which they were members. In these cases, the patrons were often rewarded with leadership roles in the group.[79] It is significant that women were also known to be patrons of both individual men and women of lower status[80] as well as clubs.[81]

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[76] Some have suggested that Phoebe is travelling to Rome for some kind of lawsuit, owing to the fact that the word πράγματι can refer to such. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* 888, 889 and Moo, *Romans,* 915. While this remains possible, the context is uncertain. Many translations do not explicitly translate the word (ESV, NIV, GNB, NRSV) and others leave the translation general (KJV, NASB). Given that πράγματι is anarthrous, it seems doubtful that this word is referring to any specific situation. It is quite possible, however, that Phoebe had her own reasons for going to Rome apart from carrying Paul's letter. The fact that he asks the Christians there to help her suggests that she may be among them for awhile. Osiek and Balch suggest that she is travelling there on business, something which would be in keeping with her wealthy status. Cf. Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Family in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 98.

[77] Halvor Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts" in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 242.

[78] Osiek and Balch, *Family,* 50.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Cf. ibid., 52.

[81] Cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 24.

Despite the fact that there is a historical precedent for women patrons, scholars are divided over whether or not Phoebe should be considered one. Curiously, W. Bauer et al. suggest a translation of "patron or benefactor" for the term προστάτις, yet they also specifically state "the relationship suggested by the term [προστάτις] is not to be confused w. the Rom. patron-client system, which was of a different order and alien to Gk. tradition."[82] Contrary to this, DeSilva notes, "Both public benefactions and personal patronage are well-attested in both Greek and Roman cultures."[83] Given the great importance of the patronage system in Roman society, it is difficult to imagine how an association between it and the word προστάτις could have been avoided when the word was heard by Roman ears. It is because of this cultural factor that Witherington clearly links this term with the patron-client system.[84] Based on Paul's use of the term προστάτις, the historical data which support the possibility of female patrons, and a lack of textual evidence which would dictate otherwise, there is no reason to doubt that Phoebe was a patron.[85]

Phoebe's status as a patron sheds some light on who she was and what she did. In order to be a patron, Phoebe would have to be a woman of wealth and high social standing.[86] It is also likely that she was independent, given that she is not linked with a man.[87] In her role as patron Phoebe may have provided hospitality[88] or performed

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[82] eBDAG, 885.

[83] David A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 102.

[84] Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans,* 384.

[85] In agreement with Phoebe as patron are: Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 731; Jewett, *Romans,* 943; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16,* 783 and Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* 889.

[86] Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 60.

[87] Meeks notes that she was independent. Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 60. Although women were generally thought to be under the control of a male relative at all times, it seems that this may have been

charitable works[89] on behalf of individuals, such as Paul, who would be obligated to her as clients. It is also possible that Phoebe may have hosted Christian gatherings in her home.[90] Although specifics of Phoebe's activities cannot be known, all of these suggestions are within the realm of possibility.[91]

Although specifics of Phoebe's patronage to Paul are not known, that he took his role as her client seriously is evident in the way he mentions Phoebe to the Christians at Rome. An important part of the patron-client system is that the client reciprocates the patron's gifts through such things as loyalty or honour. When Paul introduced Phoebe to the Roman Christians in his letter, he was reciprocating her gifts to him. He used his own influence with these Christians in order to secure aid for Phoebe while she was among them. Bryan notes that this portion of the letter reads like a letter of commendation typical of the first century.[92] He further notes that Paul "recommended" Phoebe and asked the Romans to welcome her based on three (and possibly four) criteria:

> First, she is "our sister," which is to say that she is already a member of the family. Second, she is "deacon [*diakonos*] of the church at Cenchreae," the form

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more tradition than actual fact and at times women could break out of this system. Cf. ibid., 23 and Osiek and Balch, *Family,* 57.

[88] Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 195 and Osiek and Balch, *Family,* 33.

[89] Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans,* 383. Cf. Bo Reicke, "προΐστνμι," *eTDNT* 6:703.

[90] Winter, *Roman Wives,*195; Osiek and Balch, *Family,* 33 and Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in its Literary and Cultural Setting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 39. Cited 19 March 2011. Online: http://lib.myilibrary.com.ezproxy.aec.talonline.ca/Open.aspx?id=47245&loc=&srch=undefined&src=0. It is generally agreed that early Christians would have depended on their wealthy brethren to act as patrons by hosting the group in their homes. Stephanas (1 Corinthians 16:15-18) is often cited as an example. Meeks, *Urban Christians,* 78. Although in a non-Christian context patrons of groups were given special honours within that group, there is no explicit evidence of this in Christian circles in the New Testament. Cf. ibid., 81.

[91] Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 731. I think Jewett takes things too far when he suggests that Phoebe was underwriting Paul's proposed Spanish mission. Cf. Jewett, *Romans,* 947. There is no explicit evidence for this and while it may have been possible, it seems inadvisable to propose something so specific with so little evidence.

[92] Cf. Bryan, *Preface to Romans,* 33-34.

> of Paul's expression suggesting that he understands by *diakonos* here a particular office, commanding respect among Christians. Third, she is *prostatis* – that is, benefactor, or patron – "of many, and of myself."[93]

A possible fourth criterion is that those who were being recommended typically delivered their own letter of recommendation and there is reason to believe that Phoebe did this as well.[94] Each of the first three points of recommendation serves to elevate Phoebe in the eyes of the Romans. As a "sister," she is depicted as a member in good standing of the Christian community in her area. The term "saints" which Paul also uses in verse 2 reinforces her membership in the community. As a "deacon," Phoebe is portrayed in a position of Christian leadership which is to be respected and as a "patron," she is further cemented as a prominent member of the community who was worthy of their aid.

Though Phoebe is both "deacon" and "patron" the exact relationship between these two roles is unclear. There is no evidence to show that Phoebe had to be a patron in order to also be a deacon and it is not necessarily true that she was a deacon only because she was also a patron (although there is more evidence to support the latter).[95] Although a patron would no doubt have been influential in the Christian community, Phoebe's status as leader comes from the designation "διάκονος" more clearly than it does from that of "προστάτις." Having said this, there is nothing preventing her from being both deacon and patron and the two roles fit nicely together. It is possible that they were meant to go hand-in-hand.[96]

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[93] Ibid., 34.

[94] Ibid.

[95] That patrons were often given leadership roles in an organization they sponsored is true, but whether it always held true in Christian circles is unknown. See discussion page 145, footnote 90.

[96] Cf. Witherington and Hyatt, *Romans*, 383.

Conclusions

After examining the qualifications of six potential New Testament deacons, it is apparent that only one strong candidate emerges: Phoebe. While Paul and his associates who are linked with the term διάκονος can be considered important Christian leaders, they do not fit the five criteria for deacons gleaned from previous chapters.

Despite the fact that only one named deacon was found in the New Testament, the information that is provided for her serves to further contribute to our understanding of deacons in the New Testament. As noted above, Phoebe's role as a patron may somehow be connected to her role as deacon. This might suggest that deacons were people of influence or that they were wealthy, although this connection should be made with caution as the other texts concerning deacons do not list wealth or influence as necessary resources for deacons to possess. Another piece of information can be gleaned from the way in which Phoebe is recommended to the Romans. Paul tells them Phoebe is a διάκονος of the church at Cenchrea. This suggests that such positions were widely recognized and respected, even if they were not standardized among all Christian communities. Based on this, it can be said that the term διάκονος conveyed the idea of recognized and respected leadership in both Rome and Corinth in addition to the previously mentioned Philippi and Ephesus. The fact that Phoebe fits our criteria of deacon so well also serves to support the idea tentatively put forth based on 1 Timothy 3:11 that women may be a part of this office.

Based on these new pieces of information, our working definition of deacon may be slightly expanded. It is appropriate to say that New Testament deacons are: 1) people of firm faith; 2) people of good character; 3) in service to a local Christian congregation,

not the greater church; 4) respected secondary leaders under some kind of authority; 5) either men or women; and 6) at times people of some wealth or influence.

The additional information concerning New Testament deacons which was brought to light in this chapter brings to mind two important points in relation to the diaconate of LCC. The first of these is that Phoebe's inclusion in the New Testament diaconate, along with evidence from 1 Timothy 3:11, shows strong support for women being included in the diaconate. Lutheran Church—Canada's female deacons are well-supported here. The second point is related to Phoebe's status as patron. While it is unclear whether Phoebe's role as patron is explicitly connected to her role as deacon, it is clear that a similar role is not connected to the LCC diaconate. This difference and its implications need to be considered.

The role of patron was a central feature of Greco-Roman culture and while similar roles may exist in certain modern cultures, it has a much lower profile in Canadian culture. In fact, many would say that the idea that a person might be able to "buy" his or her way into a leadership role goes against Canadian values. Despite the fact that the Greco-Roman patronage system presents a polar opposite to Canadian culture, I do not think that the difference is of great significance for the diaconate of LCC. First of all, Phoebe's role of patron in Romans 16 is clearly used as a rhetorical device, and not necessarily to promote specific aspects of the role of deacon. Secondly, it is uncertain whether New Testament deacons had to also be patrons and so patronage may, in fact, have little to do with the New Testament diaconate. Thirdly, if New Testament deacons were not patrons nothing else we have learned about the position would change. This

suggests that even if patronage was linked to the New Testament diaconate, it did not have a large impact on it. These three reasons show that any difference between the diaconates of LCC and the New Testament based on the concept of patronage are of no great concern.

So far in our preliminary comparisons of these two diaconates it has been shown that they compare favourably with only minor, insignificant differences. All of the information collected in Chapters 2-5 can now be compared more fully with information presented in Chapter 1.

COMPARISON AND CONCLUSIONS

Now that our proposed study of the New Testament diaconate is complete and some preliminary conclusions have been drawn, it is possible to make a more detailed comparison between the office of deacon in the New Testament and that of LCC. After this final comparison is complete, some implications of the similarities and differences between these two diaconates can be explored.

The comparison of these two diaconates will be based on the list of comparison points complied in Chapter 1. The first of these points concerned the way in which each diaconate was instituted. The LCC diaconate was formally instituted as an office of the church based on a study of scripture and history as well as in answer to a perceived modern need. Congregations were hiring people to assist them and their pastors in caring for the spiritual needs of their children, youth and adults. Also, several training programs in Canada and the United States had been established with varying titles and LCC had a desire to formalize such positions under some kind of overarching classification. This became LCC's office of deacon.

The New Testament also reveals a small amount of information concerning the origins of the first-century diaconate. Although there is no information about how deacons came to be serving in Philippi, Ephesus, or Cenchrea, we do have information about a general origin of the New Testament diaconate. I have demonstrated in Chapter 4 that the model upon which the New Testament diaconate was based is found in Acts 6:1-6 and so this passage also sheds light on how the office was instituted. While there is no evidence of a lengthy study or discussion concerning this office, it seems likely that the

New Testament Christians did not enter into this model of assistant leadership without careful thought. Acts records that the assembly of Christians appointed the Seven on the advice of their primary leaders, the Twelve, in order to fulfill a group need. The Twelve did not think it appropriate that they themselves should abandon the word of God in order to serve the widows, and so they suggested that the community appoint seven men to that specific task. Both in the New Testament and in LCC it can be said that the office of deacon, or at least what would eventually become the office of deacon, was instituted because of the need in the Christian community to have a second group of workers to assist in filling a void.

A second point of comparison concerns the geographical settings in which deacons served. Were they local servants or travellers or both? Did they serve one group/congregation or many? In LCC, deacons are primarily intended to serve either in a local congregation or in a school setting, depending on their training. While it is possible for LCC's deacons to serve in other areas such as part of a service organization or in an administrative position at a district office, this is generally not the case. Similarly, as far as can be discerned, the kind of New Testament leader which we are calling "deacon" served one geographic location. Whether there were several smaller "congregations" or house churches within that one geographic location and whether a single deacon may have interacted with multiple such congregations is unknown. It can be said that the two offices are generally consistent.

Some differences between the New Testament and LCC do emerge at this point. There is no evidence that a New Testament deacon would have acted as a school teacher,

nor is there a parallel for deacons working in administrative-type positions. I suggest that both of these situations come about as a result of the greater length of time that LCC's diaconate has had to develop. Neither school teachers nor administrative positions such as those known in LCC today were issues during the time of the New Testament. Our differently developed society has left LCC with needs which are distinct from those of first-century Christians and so some aspects of the LCC diaconate will also be distinct. If the diaconate was developed in order to help the church meet its needs, and if the church has a need for some of its deacons to move beyond the local sphere, then this can still be viewed as consistent with the spirit of the New Testament diaconate. Even with these slight differences, LCC's diaconate is found to be consistent with the idea that deacons are local leaders.

A third point of comparison is the level of respect afforded to the office. The LCC office of deacon is one which carries dignity and respect. This is evident based on the fact that LCC maintains a deacons' roster, includes deacons as members of Synod, and continues to maintain a careful diaconal selection and training process. By creating the diaconate, LCC granted an extra level of dignity and respect to the various positions which make up the diaconate by giving them a legitimate status in the leadership and governance of the Synod. In the New Testament, it is also apparent that those who were deacons were respected and had dignity. In Philippians 1:1 the overseers and deacons are included as part of the letter's opening, possibly in order to show these local leaders respect. In 1 Timothy 3:8-13 Paul outlines in great detail the qualities that such people are to possess in order to be appointed to the office. It seems questionable whether he would

have gone to such lengths for a position of no great consequence. Also, Romans 16:1-2 describes Phoebe in ways which suggest she was highly respected. Paul uses her position as deacon as one means of recommending her to the Christians at Rome. If this designation did not carry with it some kind of weight, it seems unlikely that he would have mentioned it. Also, Paul describes Phoebe as a patron, a position which would also have granted her great respect and honour in that culture. If Phoebe's role as deacon is somehow connected to her role as patron, this grants the position of deacon even greater respect and dignity according to Greco-Roman reckoning. While in different ways and for different reasons, it is clear that in both the New Testament and LCC deacons hold positions of respect and dignity.

A fourth point of comparison is the relationship between the deacon and other leadership positions. In LCC the office of deacon is subordinate to the office of pastor and is under pastoral supervision. According to this model, unless there is an office of pastor there cannot be an office of deacon. There is a strikingly similar situation in the New Testament. In Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Acts 6:1-6 there are always two levels of leadership present and the deacon is subordinate to the primary leaders. In Romans 16:1-2 while no overseer is mentioned, it cannot be satisfactorily established that Phoebe is the primary leader of the Christian community at Cenchrea. Also, by definition, the διάκονος, be that person a household servant, a messenger or a deacon, is working at the command of another. The New Testament and LCC are the same in their placement of the deacon in a secondary leadership position, under the supervision of a primary position.

Having said this, a point of caution needs to be mentioned. Although the ἐπίσκοπος or overseer is here equated with the LCC office of pastor because they are both primary leaders, this is not meant to imply that the LCC pastor is necessarily derivative of the New Testament overseer. In order to make this point, a separate study of the ἐπίσκοπος and the pastor would need to be made. Here, they are generally found to be parallel only in that they both represent supervisory positions over two different eras of deacons.

A fifth point of comparison concerns the duties of the deacon in comparison with its supervisory position. In LCC all diaconal duties flow from the office of pastor; however, deacons are not eligible to preach or administer the sacraments as these two things are considered to be duties of the pastoral office alone. It is very difficult to make a detailed comparison between the New Testament and LCC on this point because the New Testament does not present any concrete evidence concerning the exact duties of the deacon. The Seven, in Acts 6:1-6, are presented as assisting in the distribution of aid for widows, but it is not at all apparent that this is the only function of the office as it began to develop. Also, Acts 6 serves primarily as a model for an assistant-type of position, not the final word on what such assistants were able to do. Additionally, Phoebe's role as patron may suggest that deacons used their wealth to provide things for the Christian community, but the extent to which her position as deacon is dependent upon her role as patron is in question. First Timothy 3 presents an even vaguer picture. While several qualifications of the deacon are mentioned, and while many try to discern diaconal duties based on these qualifications, I find this to be a somewhat futile task. There could have

been any number of reasons why such qualifications were highlighted and a connection with duties to be performed was not necessarily one of them. For example, although deacons were not to be greedy for money, this does not necessarily mean that they handled the group's finances. This is certainly a possibility, but not one which is I think is concrete enough upon which to base a comparison. It is equally possible that this qualification was in place because greedy leaders would give Christianity a bad reputation in the eyes of the greater community. Of course, it is also possible that this qualification is mentioned both because deacons handled financial matters and because of a desire that they have a good reputation in the community; however, there is not enough information to make any concrete conclusions.

While comments on the exact duties of the New Testament deacon are nearly impossible to make with any certainty, a couple of important things can still be said. First of all, given that the deacon is always paired with another position (usually the ἐπίσκοπος or overseer) whose title implies oversight, it can safely be said that these two positions were meant to be distinct. The differing qualifications listed for ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 also supports some distinction between the positions. Whether they are meant to be completely distinct positions with no overlapping duties is uncertain. What this shows, however, is that LCC's distinction between the duties of its deacons and those of its pastors is paralleled in the New Testament distinction between overseers and deacons.

A sixth point of comparison concerns the qualifications for becoming a deacon. Lutheran Church—Canada requires that deacons undergo scholarly and practical training,

be recommended to the office and also accept a call to serve before they are made deacons. A person's recommendation to the office of deacon is also contingent on his or her knowledge of theology, appropriate practical skills, Christian character and blameless lifestyle. While the New Testament speaks of no schooling for deacons there are some parallels for LCC's other requirements. In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul outlines several characteristics which deacons must possess. According to these verses, a deacon must be a person of firm faith. Lutheran Church—Canada is also concerned with the faith of their deacons. The concerns that deacons have knowledge of theology, possess Christian character and live a blameless lifestyle according to Christian principles are also all designed to get at the heart of an individual's faith.

First Timothy also speaks about the deacon's personal traits such as being dignified, able to properly manage his household, not being greedy for money, and not given to drunkenness. These give the deacon a positive reputation not just among the Christians he or she serves but also in the greater non-Christian community. This positive reputation of Christian leaders in turn gives Christianity itself a positive reputation. The fact that LCC requires their deacons to live a blameless lifestyle and also that they possess practical skills suited to the office are in keeping with these requirements of character in 1 Timothy.

One other parallel between 1 Timothy and LCC's process for diaconal selection can be made: 1 Timothy requires that deacons be tested before they can serve. While the exact nature of this test is unknown, a parallel can still be found in LCC. The deacons of LCC are required to undergo an extensive interview process and complete both academic

and practical requirements to a satisfactory level. It is only after an individual passes these "tests" that they are eligible to receive a call and become a deacon. This demonstrates that LCC's process for screening those who wish to belong to the office of deacon is in keeping with the New Testament's requirements of firm faith, good character, and the passing of a test.

A final point of comparison between these two offices of deacon concerns gender. According to LCC, the office of deacon may be filled by either a man or a woman. This is also the case in the New Testament. Based on the findings of this study, both 1 Timothy 3:11 and Romans 16:1 include women as part of the diaconate and thus, LCC's inclusion of women as part of this office is consistent with the New Testament.

This comparison shows that the model which the New Testament presents for the office of deacon is paralleled by LCC's office of deacon. It is important to note, however, that these two offices are not identical. The office of deacon in LCC is much more developed than what we can determine about the office of deacon in the New Testament period and so things such as schooling, interview processes, and synodical membership are not addressed by the New Testament. Also, the cultural differences between the ancient Christians and those of modern day LCC is vast. Whereas patrons may have been an important part of church life in the first century and may also have impacted the diaconate, this is not so important in Canada today. The idea that people might use their wealth and influence in order to gain a position or that one person might be the major financial backer of an LCC congregation is quite distasteful.

It is also important to note that we have the full extent of literature and practice concerning LCC's diaconate available for analysis. In the case of the New Testament, we are limited to whatever information the New Testament authors chose to include. Sadly, their information is sparse and at times vague. It is certain that we do not possess a full and complete picture of the diaconate in first-century Christianity. The early Christian diaconate does develop further between the second and fourth centuries; however, a discussion of such developments is beyond the scope of this study which was meant to focus on the New Testament alone.

This less-than-complete picture should not be cause for alarm nor should it cripple the modern LCC diaconate. In many ways it is a blessing. The information which the New Testament does provide is enough from which to glean a general model for the modern church. It provides insight into structure; it suggests qualifications; and it provides some history. All of the things which are known provide an important foundation. The things which are not known provide important freedom. The modern LCC is two thousand years removed from first-century Christianity in development and oceans apart in culture. The lack of information on some topics allows LCC to shape its diaconate into something that meets the needs of the twenty-first century Canadian church and yet still follow the model left for it by its first-century brothers and sisters.

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APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS OF DESIGNATIONS OF DEACONS AND CONGREGATIONAL WORKERS IN LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA

Lutheran Church—Canada has two basic kinds of deacons: Lutheran Teachers and congregational workers. Under the category of "congregational worker" many different titles are found. The term "congregational worker" is meant to denote any individual who serves a congregation (as opposed to a school) as an official member of the ministry staff, but who is not a clergyman. Several varieties of congregational workers are explained below. The titles given to these various workers are capitalized to show that they are official designations. The one exception is "Lay Practitioner," which is not an official synodical designation, but will still appear in capital letters as it refers to a specific group. This appendix provides a description and various other pieces of information concerning the variety of titles given the deacons which are found in Canada. They are listed alphabetically.

Deaconess

***Description*:** Deaconesses have a long history in the Lutheran church and came to North America from Europe in the mid-nineteenth century.[1] They acted as nurses and did works of charity. Today they also serve in congregations in various capacities such as visitation, evangelism, and parish education.

***Training*:** The LCMS began training deaconesses in 1921. In the early years women trained in motherhouses.[2] Today, there are training programs available at both the

[1] Cheryl D. Naumann, *In the Footsteps of Phoebe: A Complete History of the Deaconess Movement in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (Saint Louis: CPH, 2008), 5.

[2] Ibid., 36.

graduate and undergraduate levels through various schools in the LCMS Concordia University system, including both LCMS seminaries.[3] When the LCMS began a training program in its university system in 1980, students earned a Bachelor of Arts with a major in theology and a minor in church music, psychology or sociology. They also chose a concentration of "education, youth work, counselling, music, Hispanic American ministry, urban ministry or foreign languages."[4] An internship of one year was also required.[5]

***Presence in Canada*:** Deaconesses were most popular in Ontario, but records also show them serving in Alberta and British Columbia.[6] The first Canadian Deaconess who served in Canada was Jean Hoover, consecrated in 1955.[7] There are currently two Deaconesses serving in Canada.[8]

Other Notes: Deaconesses are a subcategory of congregational worker and are not simple a feminine designation of the masculine "deacon." While both terms are derived from the same Greek root, the LCC office of deacon and the Deaconess are not connected. Women who have trained in the LCMS as Deaconesses who serve in Canada are rostered as another "kind" of deacon, like the DPS or DCE. While this may seem somewhat confusing, it is important to note that the LCMS does not have a broad classification of worker called "deacon" and the LCMS Deaconess pre-dates the official LCC diaconate. The LCMS also has men who are called "Deacons"; however, they would also be

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[3] Ibid., 504-509.
[4] Ibid., 473.
[5] Ibid., 474.
[6] N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed,* 162-3 and N. Threinen, *Leaven,* 138, 142.
[7] N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed,* 162-3.
[8] LCC, *2010 Annual* (electronic ed.; Winnipeg: LCC, November 2010), 93.

considered just another sub-category of the office of deacon within Canada. Essentially, what is known in Canada as "deacon" is known in the LCMS as "Minister of Religion – Commissioned." This illustrates one of the difficulties of the terms "deacon" and "deaconess": not everyone who uses the terms is referring to the same thing, even within the Lutheran church.

Director of Christian Education (DCE)

Description: The DCE grew out of the position of Lutheran Teacher. Rather than serving a school, these Lutheran Teachers served congregations, assisting in the areas of parish education and often music. Eventually the DCE became a designation in its own right.[9]

***Training*:** Initially, DCE training was such that students had to become certified both as Lutheran Teachers and as DCEs. A separate DCE training program which did not include teacher certification began in 1969.[10] DCE students earn a Bachelor of Arts with major amounts of their courses focused on theology and parish education, including courses in youth, family, and children's ministry as well as counselling, church leadership, missions, music and evangelism. Field work and internships are also required.[11]

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[9] Griffin, "Birth of a Profession," 133-145.

[10] Ibid., 141.

[11] Cf. Concordia University, Chicago, "Director of Christian Education," n.p. [cited 29 March 2011]. Online: http://www.cuchicago.edu/academics/colleges/college-of-education/director-of-christian-education; Concordia University, Saint. Paul, "Director of Christian Education," n.p. [cited 18 December 2010]. Online: http://www.csp .edu/academiccatalog/Programs/UG/CVM/ct_Director_of_Christian_Education.html and Concordia University, Seward, "Director of Christian Education: Program Options," n.p. [cited 18 December 2010]. Online: http://www .cune.edu/academics/9464.

***Presence in Canada*:** The first DCE to serve in Canada was Mark Lobitz who arrived in 1973.[12] Records show that eleven DCEs came and went in the ABC District of LCC between 1973 and 1994, but it is not known if they also served in other districts.[13] Currently there are only two DCEs serving in Canada.[14] The Canadian DPS program has lessened the need to bring DCEs into Canada.

Director of Christian Outreach (DCO)

***Description*:** The DCO focuses on outreach and evangelism. A DCO may work in a congregation or in a mission context and works to "stimulate, mobilize and support outreach efforts and educate and train people in evangelism and mission."[15]

***Training*:** Currently training is provided only through Concordia, St. Paul, Minnesota. Students earn a Bachelor of Arts with courses focusing on theology, evangelism, missions and the like. Students earn a major in Christian outreach and follow either a parish/cross cultural, or Bible translation/literacy track.[16]

***Presence in Canada*:** The first DCO in Canada was Ralph Arndt and he began serving in 1985.[17] Currently there are two DCOs serving in Canada.[18]

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[12] Paul Schoepp and Thaddeus Warren, "Directors of Christian Education: Telling the Family History," in *Together: Preparing Christian Educators for the Future* (eds. Dean R. Hansen and Brent Alan Mai; Portland: Concordia University, Portland, 2011), 53.

[13] N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 189-209.

[14] Cf. LCC, *2010 Annual*, 90-91.

[15] Concordia University, Saint Paul, "Director of Christian Outreach (DCO) Program," n.p. [cited 18 December 2010]. Online: http://www.csp.edu/academiccatalog/Programs/UG/CVMct_Director_of_Christian _Outreach.html.

[16] Ibid.

[17] *The Lutheran Annual 1987* lists Ralph Arndt as the first DCO in Canada; however, the year in which he arrived is not clear. Cf. LCMS, Department of Personnel and Statistics, *The Lutheran Annual 1987 of the LCMS* (Saint Louis: CPH, 1986), 426. According to Arndt, he began serving in Canada in 1985. Ralph Arndt, email to author, 28 March 2011.

[18] Cf. LCC, *2010 Annual*, 89, 92.

Director of Family Life Ministry (DFLM)

***Description*:** The DFLM is trained specifically to work with families of the congregation and community, including social services organizations and hospitals.[19]

***Training*:** The program requires students to earn a Bachelor of Arts and includes courses in theology, psychology, sociology, law, and economics. Fieldwork and an internship are also required.[20]

***Presence in Canada*:** There is one DFLM in Canada; however, she is not currently serving a congregation.[21]

Director of Parish Services (DPS)

Description: The DPS is a broad spectrum congregational worker. They are trained to assist congregations in many areas including parish education, evangelism, visitation, youth and young adults.[22]

Training: The DPS is a uniquely Canadian training program offered only through Concordia, Edmonton. Those who wish to become certified as DPSs must earn a four-year Bachelor of Arts with a major in Religious Studies (with an "applied emphasis") and a minor in Parish Services. Fieldwork and a one-year internship are also required.[23]

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[19] Concordia University, Ann Arbor, *2010-2011 Academic Catalogue* (Ann Arbor: Concordia University, Ann Arbor, 2010), 71-72. Cited 18 December 2010. Online: http://www.cuaa.edu/CUAA/media/Class-Listing /CUAA_2010-2011-amic-Catalog.pdf.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Although Tina Etzl is listed as a DPS in *2010 Annual*, she received her training at Concordia, Ann Arbor and completed their DFLM program. Tina Etzl, email to author, 22 March 2011. Cf. LCC, *2010 Annual*, 93. Although the *2010 Annual* also lists Benjamin Burge as a DFLM, he no longer resides in Canada and so is not included in the number of DFLMs currently serving in Canada. Cf. LCC, *2010 Annual*, 87.

[22] CUCA, *2010-2011 Calendar*, 77.

[23] Ibid.

Those who already have a degree may take an alternative colloquy training program. The coursework for this alternative route is designed based on a student's prior experience.[24]

Presence in Canada: The first DPS candidates were placed in 1997.[25] According to the November 2010 edition of LCC's *Annual* there were twenty-seven rostered DPSs living in Canada with fifteen of them serving congregations at that point in time.[26]

Lay Practitioner[27]

***Description*:** Lay Practitioners are lay-people without any kind of official church-recognized training who use their gifts to serve congregations in the same capacity as officially trained congregational workers. These workers are not to be confused with the trained Lay Worker described below.

Training: Lay Practitioners may have various degrees and experiences, even those relating to church work, but by definition they have not completed a certification program approved by the church and are not included on any official roster.

***Presence in Canada*:** Because Lay Practitioners would appear on no roster of any kind, their existence is difficult to track. The hiring of Lay Practitioners is common in LCC today.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] "Placements," *TCL* 12, no. 1 (1997): 21.

[26] LCC, *2010 Annual,* 87-94. At the time of the writing of this thesis, these numbers are already inaccurate. I base this assertion on a personal knowledge of some of these deacons, whose statuses have changed since November, 2010. Having said this, the information provided in the *2010 Annual* still is close to the actual figures and might differ only by two or three people.

[27] I have adopted this term from Paul Schoepp (CUCA) who coined this term during his doctoral research on Lay Practitioners of DCE ministry in the LCMS.

Lay Worker

Description: These men and women served in various capacities including parish education, missions, youth, and as pastoral assistants.[28]

***Training*:** The title "Lay Worker" is not simply a title for a lay person who works in a congregation. Training was received through the two-year program of the Lay Training Institute in Milwaukee. Further details of the program and its years of existence are not known.

Presence in Canada: Graduates of this program first appeared in Canada in the 1960s and included many Canadians.[29]

Other Notes: N. Threinen makes the following observation about Lay Workers in the Ontario District, but it holds true for male Lay Workers in the rest of Canada as well:

> Graduates of the Institute usually functioned in a pastoral role under the supervision of an ordained pastor. As such they tended either to take the place of a pastor in communities which experienced difficulty getting and keeping a pastor or to serve as an additional pastoral person in a larger congregation which might subsequently call a second ordained pastor.[30]

At least three of the Canadian Lay Workers later became ordained pastors.[31] There were female Lay Workers in Canada as well, who served in other capacities. [32]

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[28] N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed,* 162; N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 141 and Norman J. Threinen, *A Sower Went Out: A History of the ManSask District of the LCC (Missouri Synod)* (Regina: ManSask, 1982), 132-3, 182.

[29] N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed,* 162; N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 141 and N. Threinen, *Sower,* 132, 182.

[30] N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed,* 162.

[31] N. Threinen, *Sower,* 176 and N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed,* 162.

[32] N. Threinen, *Sower,* 132, 182 and N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 162.

Lutheran Teacher

Description: It is important to note that when the title "Lutheran Teacher" is used in this document, it does not refer to school teachers who are members of a Lutheran congregation, but it specifically refers to those teachers who are members of LCC who have undergone official doctrinal training through an approved institution and who have been added to the church's official roster of teachers.

Training: Training for Lutheran Teachers in Canada is provided by Concordia. Students must complete designated courses in Religious Studies and Parish Services. These are normally taken at the undergraduate level before the government-required education after-degree. Students can also complete the Lutheran Teacher certification requirements by colloquy.[33]

Presence in Canada: The first Lutheran Teachers came to Canada in 1874 and they have had a strong presence ever since.[34]

Parish Assistant

***Description*:** Parish Assistants served in various areas in the congregation such as children, youth and administration.

***Training*:** The details of the Parish Assistant program are not known; however, it was an official program of study through the LCMS Concordia University system to prepare

[33] CUCA, *2010-2011 Calendar*, 77-78.
[34] Ontario District LCMS, *Grace and Blessing*, 52 and N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed*, 18.

women to serve in the parish. It was offered through Concordia, Ann Arbor[35] and possibly elsewhere.

***Presence in Canada*:** The first Parish Assistant to serve in Canada was Deb Pakrul who was placed in Fisherville, Ontario in 1982.[36] There is currently one Parish Assistant serving in Canada.[37]

Parish Worker

***Description*:** Among the known duties of the Parish Worker are "general parish work," nursery school, and music.[38]

***Training*:** Training appears to have been through the LCMS Concordia University system.[39]

***Presence in Canada*:** Many Parish Workers who served in Canada began their work in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. They served in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario.[40]

Other Notes: All the Parish Workers who served in Canada were women. It is uncertain whether there were also male Parish Workers elsewhere. Their listing in various editions of *The Lutheran Annual* under a special "Parish Worker" heading suggests that they were trained in an official synodical program and recognized as being specially qualified for their position.

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[35] Information obtained from Carol Nagel, the archivist of the East District of LCC. Carol Nagel, email to author, 8 April 2010.

[36] Information obtained from Carol Nagel, the archivist of the East District of LCC. Carol Nagel, emails to author, 5 April 2010 and 8 April 2010.

[37] LCC, *2010 Annual*, 93.

[38] N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed*, 163.

[39] N. Threinen notes that Inga Irvine was trained as a Parish Worker at Concordia College, but he does not specify to which Concordia College he is referring. N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 118.

[40] N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 118, 192, 196, 197, 204, 209; N. Threinen, *Mustard Seed*, 163 and Eric J. Baron, *Lutheran, St. Matthew, Stony Plain, Alberta: A Ninety Year History* (Edmonton: Universco Press, 1984), 97.

Teacher (See: Lutheran Teacher)

Youth Staffer

Description: Youth Staffers worked in a congregation, city or district for a minimal wage for one year to assist youth and leaders in building up youth programs.[41] It was a program initiated by the Board of Youth Ministry of the LCMS.[42] This was intended to be a short-term position and was never a rostered position.

Training: Participants had to be at least eighteen years old with at least one year of post-secondary education. They had to complete a correspondence course and participate in an intensive training event which lasted for ten days.[43] These training events also took place in Canada.

Presence in Canada: All three Canadian districts participated in the Youth Staffer program while it ran in the 1970s and 1980s. Youth Staffers were placed in the ABC District beginning in 1973,[44] in the ManSask District beginning in 1979,[45] and in the Ontario District beginning in 1983.[46]

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[41] N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 158.

[42] Muriel M. Threinen, "Toward Successful Youth Ministry: A Historical Journey to a Proposed Model for Youth Ministry in Lutheran Church—Canada" (master's thesis; CLS, May 2001), 66-7.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Records of service for ABC District Youth Staffers are found in: ABC District of the LCMS, *35th Convention of the ABC District of the LCMS: Workbook* (Edmonton: ABC District of the LCMS, 1974), 59; ABC District of the LCMS, *36th Convention of the ABC District of the LCMS: Workbook* (Edmonton, ABC District of the LCMS, 1976), 40 and N. Threinen, *Leaven*, 158.

[45] Records of service for ManSask District Youth Staffers are found in: N. Threinen, *Sower*, 159 and M. Threinen, "Youth Ministry," 71-2.

[46] Records of service for Ontario District Youth Staffers are found in: M. Threinen, "Youth Ministry," 73.

APPENDIX B: CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS PERTAINING TO THE CREATION OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON IN LUTHERAN CHURCH—CANADA

The Report of the Task Force to Study Diaconal Ministry was submitted to the 1996 LCC Convention and delegates passed the following resolution concerning it:

> To commend the report "To Study Diaconal Ministry" for further study and response (ref. Appendix 6)
>
> Whereas Lutheran Church—Canada recognizes with gratitude the time and effort expended by the Task Force "To Study Diaconal Ministry" in researching and preparing its report; and
>
> Whereas there is ample evidence that Lutheran Church—Canada would be greatly enriched by the work and witness of the diaconate; and
>
> Whereas it would be desirable that the church at large have an opportunity to study, react, and advise on this issue; therefore be it
>
> Resolved that the Report of the Task Force "To Study Diaconal Ministry" and supplementary materials be referred to Lutheran Church—Canada at the circuit level; and be it further
>
> Resolved that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations study this issue for theological consideration and documentation; and be it finally
>
> Resolved that these discussions and studies be completed within the next three years so that this issue can be voted upon at the next synodical convention in 1999.[1]

Over the next three years, the church body as a whole studied the document in preparation for the 1999 convention.

In response to the discussion, the Board of Directors of LCC submitted an overture to the 1999 convention which became the following convention resolution:

> To establish an Order of Diaconal Ministry (ref. Overture 2.01)
>
> Whereas the 1996 convention resolution 96.02-3A *To Study Diaconal Ministry* was referred to the circuits of Lutheran Church—Canada for study and response; and
>
> Whereas the Commission on Theology and Church Relations studied this document for theological consideration and documentation; and
>
> Whereas the task force to Synod recommends that one new office or order of diaconate be established which would encompass and include all the of categories of professional church workers, other than ordained minister of the Gospel, which now exist or may exist in Lutheran Church—Canada; and
>
> Whereas the historic usage and understanding of the diaconal ministry supports such designation of these categories of ministry; and

[1] Resolution 96.2.03A in LCC, *Fourth Convention: Proceedings,* 57-58. Note: Each LCC district is divided into smaller units known as circuits. These areas are usually small enough that the pastors, teachers, congregational workers and lay people can gather to study and make recommendations on matters such as this.

Whereas	the establishment of the diaconal ministry would assist in the national administration of certified church workers (teacher, director of Christian education, director of parish services, etc.); therefore be it
Resolved	that Lutheran Church—Canada in convention establish an order of diaconal ministry; and be it further
Resolved	that guidelines for the understanding of an order of diaconal ministry be drawn up for synodical and congregational usage; and be it finally
Resolved	that the faculty of Concordia University College of Alberta draw up the qualifying requirements for the diaconal ministry.[2]

This resolution was passed by delegates thereby creating the office of deacon in LCC.

At this same convention, the delegates defeated the following resolution which would have given all deacons rostered status:

To adopt [*sic*] the definition of membership in Lutheran Church—Canada (ref. Appendix 1; overture 3.13)

Whereas	the Christian congregation and the ordained ministry are instituted by our Lord; and
Whereas	teachers and other church workers hold positions which are auxiliary to the office of the ordained ministry; therefore be it
Resolved	that membership in Lutheran Church—Canada be held by congregations and ordained ministers of the Gospel; and be it further
Resolved	that teachers and other workers who have been certified by Synod be provided with rostered status.[3]

Rostered status and synodical membership for deacons became a reality in 2002 with changes to the *Handbook of Lutheran Church—Canada*.

The 2002 convention made several changes to the synodical constitution which resulted in a change of wording in the *Handbook of Lutheran Church—Canada*.[4] The handbook, in the membership section, was changed to read: "Membership in Lutheran Church—Canada is restricted to congregations, *pastors and deacons* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church who confess and accept the confessional basis of Article II."[5] This was a change from the previous wording which read "ministers of the Gospel, and teachers"

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[2] Resolution 99.2.01 in LCC, *Fifth Convention: Proceedings*, 46-47.
[3] Resolution 99.3.06 in ibid., 52.
[4] Resolution 02.3.02 in LCC, *Sixth Convention: Proceedings*, 54.
[5] LCC, *2002 Handbook of LCC* (ed. Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure; Winnipeg: LCC, 2002), 10. Emphasis mine.

with a footnote stating that "teachers" was "understood to include rostered Directors of Christian Education."[6]

The issue of voting rights, which the original task force had also recommended be given to deacons, is still an issue of debate. To give voting rights to deacons would mean upsetting the balance the Synod currently maintains by having an equal number of votes from member congregations and member pastors.[7] Voting deacons would ultimately place more "power" in the hands of trained workers than in the people they serve. This is a delicate and important issue not likely to be resolved any time soon. Currently deacons are advisory delegates to conventions with speaking privileges only. Because they are not considered to be part of the laity they cannot be a "lay delegate" at a convention, a role which includes voting privileges. Pastors serving in some unique situations also have this status.[8]

[6] LCC, *1999 Handbook of LCC* (ed. Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure; Winnipeg: LCC, 1999), 2 and footnote 1.

[7] LCC Bylaws Section II A 2.03 in LCC, *2008 Handbook*, 19.

[8] This would include pastors who serve in administrative or teaching positions rather than in a congregational setting or pastors who serve a congregation where they are not the sole pastor. When a congregation has two pastors only one may vote at a given convention.