

## 6. THE OFFICE OF DEACON

"The king called for Jehoiada the chief (priest), and said unto him: "Why have you not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and Jerusalem the collection of the Congregation of Israel for the tabernacle?" -- Second Chronicles 24:2,6 *cf.* Exodus 20:12-16.

In 1645, the Westminster Assembly and also the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland adopted in its *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*:<sup>1</sup> "The Officers which Christ hath appointed for the edification of His Church...are...Teachers and other Church-Governors and **Deacons**... The Scripture doth hold out Deacons as distinct Officers in the Church, whose Office is perpetual. To whose Office it belongs not to preach the Word or administer the Sacraments, but to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor (Philippians 1:1 and First Timothy 3:8-15 and Acts 6:1f)."

Here we shall successively discuss the following sections. (1) Everybody needs "diaconal" help. (2) The Diaconate and priestly service. (3) God is our great Deacon. (4) Man is essentially a priestly Deacon. (5) The Levitical priesthood and the Diaconate. (6) Jesus Christ our model Priest and Deacon. (7) The priesthood of all Christians. (8) The instituting of the Diaconate. (9) The duties and requirements of Deacons. (10) The relationship between the Diaconate and other bodies. (11) The function of the Diaconate today. (12) Were Early Christians and Deacons ever Communists? (13) Deacons at the Tables, the Love Feast, and the Lord's Supper. (14) Did "Deacons" Stephen and Philip ever "preach" or baptize? (15) Are "Deaconesses" indeed fully-fledged "Deacons"? (16) Final Conclusions about the Diaconate and its functions. (17) Endnotes. And lastly, (18) Select Bibliography.

### **EVERYBODY NEEDS "DIACONAL" HELP**

To be a "Deacon" in the Church of Jesus, means to be a "help." The world needs help. It still has at least seven million lepers. Each year about three hundred million people get malaria and at least three million die from it. Millions more are enslaved to dangerous drugs. One third of the human race has grossly inadequate housing (and sometimes none at all). And malnutrition rose from 40% of the world population just before the Second World War to more than 60% today.<sup>2</sup>

Christians too need help. Not only do they need spiritual sanctification,<sup>3</sup> but they often also need material support. For they too get sick,<sup>4</sup> widowed,<sup>5</sup> distressed through natural disasters such as floods and tornadoes,<sup>6</sup> dislocated by political upheavals such as civil or international wars,<sup>7</sup> and economically afflicted by depressions or droughts.<sup>8</sup>

But God gives help! For He is our great Helper<sup>9</sup> and "a very present help in trouble."<sup>10</sup> He is merciful and gracious,<sup>11</sup> of great kindness,<sup>12</sup> full of compassion and plenteous in grace,<sup>13</sup> overflowing in lovingkindness and tender in pity.<sup>14</sup> The Lord has instituted human Officers through whose actions He Himself helps mankind, so that it is as His Officers that they are to help their fellow man.<sup>15</sup> And He gives much of His help to man through the services of -- priestly Deacons.<sup>16</sup>

## THE DIACONATE AND PRIESTLY SERVICE

The Diaconate means priestly service. For the root meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words for "priest" and "deaconly service" and their related concepts, shed much light on our study.

The ancient Hebrew word *kooheen* or "priest" is uniformly translated by the Greek word *hiereus* in the third century B.C. Septuagint version of the Old Testament. Moreover, the same Greek word (or its cognates) is used throughout the New Testament -- regardless of whether it is describing the Adamitic priesthood, the Melchizedekic priesthood, the Levitical priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood, or the New Testament priesthood of all believers.<sup>17</sup>

The Hebrew word *'abodaah* or "work" corresponds to the idea expressed in the Greek word *diakonia* or "ministry." It is usually rendered in the Septuagint by the Greek words *ergasia* or *ergon* or *ergalia* ("work") -- or *douleia* ("slavery") or *latreia* ("services to God") or *leitourgia* ("temple service").<sup>18</sup>

The actual Greek word *diakonia* or "service" (and its cognates), however, is used more sparingly in the Septuagint.<sup>19</sup> Even in the New Testament, *diakonia* and its cognates are only rarely used to refer to the service of God during the Old Testament economy.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes the word is used to describe non-ecclesiastical services.<sup>21</sup> But its overwhelming usage is reserved to describe New Testament Gospel service in general<sup>22</sup> and the official work of ecclesiastical Deacons in particular.<sup>23</sup>

So though the word *diakonia* is not to be found in Scripture prior to the sixth century B.C.,<sup>24</sup> the idea of "service" is previously encountered through the medium of other key words -- such as "young man" thrice in Genesis and "servant" twice in Esther.<sup>25</sup> And the concept of "priesthood," in spite of its differing nature from age to age,<sup>26</sup> is as old as the Bible itself.<sup>27</sup>

A *hiereus* or a "priest" is one who brings (not necessarily bloody)<sup>28</sup> sacrifices or sacred presents into the worshipful service of God.<sup>29</sup> The affinity of *hiereus* to the concept behind the word *diakonia*, is immediately apparent. For *diakonia* too usually implies divine service by lovingly making haste to offer somebody a sacrificial meal.<sup>30</sup>

## GOD IS OUR GREAT DEACON

God Triune is our great Deacon. For the Triune God in general is the "overlapping" Prophet-Priest-King.<sup>31</sup> And the Holy Spirit in particular is our great Priest and diaconal Help.<sup>32</sup>

God is thrice holy, blessed and merciful.<sup>33</sup> The Father ministers to our natural needs in a diaconal fashion.<sup>34</sup> And the Son and God-man Jesus Christ is our great Deacon.<sup>35</sup> But it is the Office especially of the Holy Spirit to make us holy and to "help,"<sup>35</sup> us and consecrate us as living sacrifices and as a nation of priests in our reasonable service or *diakonia* to the glory of Jehovah.<sup>36</sup>

Accordingly, the work of Deacons today in providing needy Christians with water and food and clothing and shelter and health and rest and comfort and instruction, is not to be divorced from the Spirit's work in His Own universe. Spirit-filled Deacons<sup>37</sup> are the very agents of the Holy Spirit. For it is especially God the Holy Spirit who gives all of His creatures water and food; Who clothes the face of the Earth; Who gives health to all living beings; Who illuminates all men; Who sanctifies all believers; and Who perfects the entire cosmos.<sup>38</sup> And it is especially God the Holy Spirit Who hastens<sup>30</sup> to come to our aid and service,<sup>39</sup> and Who helps us by reminding us of the mercy of the Father in His Son Jesus Christ the Spirit-anointed One.<sup>40</sup>

This is why the (Spirit-filled) Deacon<sup>37</sup> is conscious of the spirit-ual nature of the essentially material blessings he is to dispense as he goes about his official diaconal work. For, as Roscam Abbing has pointed out, "the Deacon too serves God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Atoner, and God the Holy Spirit as Recreator" (of all material things too).<sup>41</sup> And God created and atoned and recreates all material things in a dichotomy-less and spirit-ual way.

This is why Kuyper too remarked that "a Deacon occupies an Office...given him by Christ just as important as that of Preacher or as that of Elder. To say that Deacons only labour in material things and are therefore inferior to Preachers and Elders who labour in spiritual things, is to adopt a false dichotomy.... The Diaconate is the Office of Christian love,<sup>42</sup> and...in Christ's Church the Diaconate must stand alongside the Presbyteriate and the (Preaching) Ministry in order to exhibit the official service of divine mercy."<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, as the great Reformed Theologian Totius wrote,<sup>44</sup> "the Deacon is the reflection of and the example to the whole Congregation of merciful loving service. The Preacher teaches, the Elder rules, but the Deacon serves" -- in every aspect of Christian need.

## **MAN IS ESSENTIALLY A PRIESTLY DEACON**

Now man is essentially a priestly Deacon.<sup>45</sup> For God's Spirit, having care-fully manufactured our cosmos in six days and all very good,<sup>46</sup> rested in man as His Own care-ful image -- and breathed into him the spirit or breath of life.<sup>47</sup>

Reflecting the Prophethood-Priesthood-Kingship of the Triune God Himself, man too is essentially a prophet-priest-king.<sup>48</sup> For man was to name the animals as a knowing prophet; to keep the garden as a care-ful priest; and to rule over the earth as a mighty king.<sup>49</sup>

These triune aspects of prophethood and priesthood and kingship overlap one another in man -- as they do in God too.<sup>50</sup> But in this paper, we will focus our attention only on man's priestly or keep-ing or care-ful or dia-conal function.<sup>51</sup>

Before the fall, Adam was to serve God as a holy priest in an unbloody way.<sup>52</sup> Adam was to minister diaconally to Eve in all that he did for her benefit.<sup>53</sup> And Eve was to be his "dia-conal" help.<sup>54</sup> For God "created men, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endowed with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness -- after His Own image -- having the Law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it.... Which, while they kept (it), they were happy in their communion with God."<sup>55</sup>

Together anointed as "charismatic priests,"<sup>56</sup> Adam and Eve were prayerfully to extend their charitable<sup>57</sup> or loving care of the garden -- until they had turned the entire creation into their priestly domain in the service of Jehovah.<sup>58</sup> Even if sin had never occurred, however, they would probably have brought their (unbloody) sacrificial gifts to God every sabbath day.<sup>59</sup> And, as Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray remarked, it was especially through a life of active prayer that our first parents were to have subdued the Earth.<sup>60</sup>

Right after the fall, with the results of man's human sin now stamped on his Universe, the increasing diaconal needs of sinful man would ultimately require human action against diseases and national disasters -- thus necessitating hospitals and tornado watches *etc.*<sup>61</sup> Yet the great Priest and Deacon Jesus Christ the Second Adam was even then immediately promised. He would ultimately come and "charitably"<sup>57</sup> or "cari-tative-ly"<sup>57</sup> reconcile (or re-store) and ad-vance (or de-velop) and con-secrate (or con-summate) the whole cosmos<sup>62</sup> -- through the sacrifice of Himself according to His humanity, as a bloody offering to God for the sins of His Own people.<sup>63</sup>

This future work of Christ's atonement was prefigured even in the garden of Eden by the animal "coats of skins" with which God Himself clothed our first parents in their naked guilt, after promising to Himself become the Seed of the woman and thus the Second Adam to save His people from their sins.<sup>63</sup> And this was further symbolized and sealed by the Pre-Israelitic sabbath sacrifices of the priestly "Deacons" Abel<sup>64</sup> and Noah<sup>65</sup> and Job<sup>66</sup> -- and especially by the great priest Melchizedek who gave bread and wine to Abraham and blessed him and received the tithes from him.<sup>67</sup>

Subsequently, after the later Patriarchs (such as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph) themselves performed their priestly duties of sacrifices and prayer and dedication and tithing,<sup>68</sup> God instituted the (temporary) Levitical priesthood.<sup>69</sup> This latter priesthood was fulfilled in the death on Calvary of Jesus Christ the Priest after the order of Melchizedek -- to which death the Levitical priesthood pointed forward.<sup>70</sup>

Thus did Christ re-store the Edenic priesthood, and thus does He also per-fect it.<sup>62</sup> And He perfects it through the operation of His Holy Spirit in the hearts of all Christians in their present and everlasting Office of the priesthood of all believers.<sup>71</sup>

Temporarily encouraged by the priestly concern of the Apostles,<sup>72</sup> and since then more lastingly encouraged by the priestly concern of the Deacons<sup>73</sup> -- in our own New Testament times we Christians as God's true chosen people now undergo further development as a kingdom of priests.<sup>74</sup> And we will also continue to do so here on Earth in the future,<sup>75</sup> and -- after our short post-mortal absence from the Earth as priests in Heaven until the final judgment -- in priestly service on the renewed Earth too, finally and for ever.<sup>76</sup>

As Kotzé remarks: "Sin has been taken away by the perfect sacrifice of Christ. And in Him every believer is restored to his original priestly office."<sup>77</sup>

For, as Kuyper<sup>78</sup> proved, Adam "was a sinless priest who was to bring sinless sacrifices. But when he fell, this changed.... As soon as he fell and thus became desecrated as a priest, the Mediator acted as a priest in his place.... But inasmuch as the priesthood is grounded in man's creation and destination in Eden before there was any question of sin, and inasmuch as that

original priesthood simply consisted in the complete dedication of our entire persons and our whole lives and all our abilities to the glory of God -- it will be recognized immediately that our task as priests has in no way been terminated by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for our sin... For we should dedicate ourselves to Him, with our whole being!"

We are suggesting, then, that the whole of the history of man and of his priesthood is like a tree. God the Holy Spirit is the Ground which supports the tree; the original human priest Adam is the main-root; the later Old Testament Levites and Aaronites are the side-roots; Christ is the trunk fulfilling those Levitical and Aaronitical side-roots and advancing the Adamitic and Melchizedekic main-root; the Apostles are the limbs or the boughs; the Deacons are the branches and the twigs; and the individual Christians in the priesthood of all believers are the fruitful "leaves of the tree, for the healing of the nations."<sup>79</sup>

## THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD AND THE DIACONATE

The Levitical priesthood and the Diaconate show both similarities and dissimilarities. On the one hand, the Adamitic-Melchizedekic priesthood of all believers<sup>80</sup> -- in terms of which the patriarchs themselves were priests<sup>81</sup> -- continued even down to the end of the Old Testament economy. It did this quite in spite of the instituting of the Levitical priesthood. For even Levitically-served Israel was a nation of priests or a priesthood of all believers.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, we can almost say that the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament reflect the full triune office of all believers -- inasmuch as they consist of the priestly writings of Moses, the kingly books of Samuel through Chronicles, and the prophetic utterances of Isaiah through Malachi.<sup>83</sup>

On the other hand, however, from Sinai through Calvary the Israelitic "nation of priests" channeled their sacrifices to God indirectly -- through the hereditary and ultimately hierarchical structure of the representative separate priestly office of the Levites.<sup>84</sup> And, just as the Pre-Mosaic circumcision underwent changes of character during the Mosaic period (without losing any of its Pre-Mosaic continuity down through Calvary and *via* Baptism for ever therebeyond),<sup>85</sup> so too did the Pre-Levitical priesthood now undergo modification -- until its reconstitution and further development and advancement<sup>86</sup> in the New Testament Diaconate after Calvary.

The similarities between the Old Testament Levitical priesthood and the New Testament Diaconate are roughly commensurate with the similarities between the priesthood in all ages of the world's history. For the essential elements of priesthood have always been: appointment by anointment for the collection and dedication of tithes and offerings to God;<sup>87</sup> faithful obedience in worship and in prayer;<sup>88</sup> merciful help to others;<sup>89</sup> and testimony both by instructional precept and personal example (as functionaries at funerals *etc.*).<sup>90</sup>

The dissimilarities between the Old Testament Levitical priesthood and the New Testament Diaconate, are at least sevenfold. We now consider this.

First, there is the obvious distinction between the bloodiness of most of the Levitical (as well as of the post-fall Pre-Levitical) sacrifices on the one hand -- and the bloodlessness of all of the New Testament "diaconal" (as well as of the Old Testament pre-fall) sacrifices on the other hand.<sup>91</sup>

Second, there is the distinction between the direct and non-hereditary and non-tribal and non-hierarchical nature of the Pre-Levitical and also of the Post-Calvary priesthood of all believers and its New Testament Diaconate on the one hand, and the indirect and hereditary and tribal and ultimately hierarchical Levitical priesthood on the other.<sup>92</sup> This is important.

Third, there is the distinction between the increasingly nation-bound and rite-bound nature of the Levitical priesthood on the one hand, and the more internationalizing and less localizing nature of the New Testament priesthood of all believers and its Diaconate on the other hand.<sup>93</sup> That too is important.

Fourth, the Levitical priesthood had a more externalistic character. But the New Testament priesthood was more internalized.<sup>94</sup>

Fifth, it should be remembered that the Levitical priesthood also prefigured Calvary. Whereas the New Testament priesthood does not.<sup>95</sup>

Sixth, the Levitical priesthood was more a device to represent and at least temporarily to replace the universal priesthood of the people of Israel, than it was an incentive to each individual Israelite to exercise that priesthood himself. While the New Testament Diaconate operates precisely to programme all believers to exercise their own continuing priesthood.<sup>96</sup>

And last, the Levitical priesthood was a temporary institution acting as a schoolmaster to bring God's immature Old Testament people to Christ. Whereas all the members of the New Testament priesthood of all believers are all permanent Officers in Christ's Church both here and now on Earth, and for all eternity hereafter both in Heaven above and on the renewed Earth yet to come.<sup>97</sup>

The temporary features peculiar to the Levitical system are fulfilled in Christ's atonement which they prefigured -- and are totally foreign either to the Pre-Sinaitic and alternatively to the Post-Calvary periods of the enduring human priesthood. They are of no concern to us in this paper. Such features would include: priestly revelations through the *Urim* and the *Thummim*;<sup>98</sup> religious rituals performed in distinctive priestly clothes;<sup>99</sup> priestly preparation of the animal sacrifices brought to God by others;<sup>100</sup> the priestly preparation of sweet-smelling incense and the burning thereof in the tabernacle;<sup>101</sup> and only the priests' singing in temple choirs.<sup>102</sup>

Those permanent features of the Levitical system which represent a development of the Pre-Levitical priesthood and an anticipation of the Post-Calvary priesthood of all believers in general and of the New Testament Deacons in particular, however, are germane to this paper. It is to such features that we now give consideration.

The priests collected and received money for the tabernacle and food and other gifts for God's people from the Congregation,<sup>103</sup> and they even distributed such food to the needy from the tabernacle and its altar.<sup>104</sup> They blessed their co-religionists, and prayed on their behalf.<sup>105</sup> They provided for the material needs of other Ministers of Jehovah.<sup>106</sup> They adjudicated in controversies between brethren, compassionately "imprisoning" corrigible offenders or otherwise protecting the unjustly accused.<sup>107</sup>

They cared for the sanctuary and its grounds as a whole and kept it clean, and looked after and repaired its furnishings (such as its drapes, its sacramental utensils, its musical instruments, its walls, and its roof).<sup>108</sup> They assisted in the general worship of God<sup>109</sup> by supervising the treasury,<sup>110</sup> by serving as doorkeepers of the sanctuary<sup>111</sup> and by functioning as heralds announcing the commencement of religious activities.<sup>112</sup> And they mercifully promoted the general health and welfare of God's people by encouraging them to eat better food and practise better hygiene and receive a better education -- while care-fully monitoring their infectious diseases and decontaminating their housing and supervising their long-range socio-economic practices.<sup>113</sup>

"And the king called for Jehoiada the chief (priest). And said to him: 'Why have you not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection... of the congregation of Israel for the tabernacle?'"<sup>87</sup>

Already at the end of the sixth century B.C. in Esther's time, we encounter the Office of ministering "Servant" or *Diakonos* (according to the Septuagint version of the Old Testament at the beginning of the third century B.C.).<sup>114</sup> And ever since the time of Esther, God's people have been "sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor."<sup>115</sup>

Again, throughout the last six centuries before the advent of Christ, the Levitical or the "diaconal" *Chazzaniym* or "Servants" of the exilic and post-exilic Synagogues announced the commencement and termination of the sabbath by blowing on trumpets. They also took care of buildings dedicated to the worship of God. They mercifully assisted at funerals. And they promoted the education of the poor and the needy.<sup>116</sup>

"The *Parnasim*" of the Synagogue, claimed Dabney,<sup>117</sup> corresponded to "the Deacons or Waiting-men."<sup>118</sup> Special Synagogue Officers collected alms for the poor and needy, both during divine worship and at other times in the homes of the members of the Synagogue.<sup>119</sup> These Officers also supervised the gifts brought by all of the members to the temple treasury each day and especially each week on the sabbath -- compare the "widow's mite."<sup>120</sup> And the Officers also handled the daily and weekly redistribution of these gifts to the poor among their brethren.<sup>121</sup>

It needs to be realized, then, that even under the Mosaic system God the great Deacon continued to dispense His mercy to those in material need. For then too He demanded: respect for the poor and the afflicted; sustenance for full-time Ministers serving in the Congregation of Israel; and food and clothing for widows and orphans and slaves and resident aliens in need.<sup>122</sup> Agricultural practices were to make provision for the feeding of impoverished fellow covenanters and proximate strangers.<sup>123</sup>

All distress sales of the land (or of expected future crops on the land) of fellow-believers and resident-proselytes, were to revert to their families twice every century. The receiving of usury by creditors from such debtors, was strictly taboo.<sup>124</sup> Creditors were to release all their slave-debtors every seven years, and then help them get economically re-established.<sup>125</sup> Pledges of debtors' clothing were to be returned to them each night out of sheer compassion.<sup>126</sup> Millstones vital for the preparation of food were never to be taken as collateral.<sup>127</sup> And last, every three years the entire tithe of God's people was to be placed at the disposal of needy widows, orphans, Ministers and temporary sojourners.<sup>128</sup>

Dare our New Testament Church and its Diaconate, living as they do in times of greater religious illumination and far more economic prosperity, ever attempt anything less than the above? Not likely!

## **JESUS CHRIST IS OUR MODEL PRIEST AND DEACON**

Jesus is our model Priest and Deacon. The Saviour is simultaneously and overlappingly our great Prophet-Priest-King.<sup>129</sup> Focussing here only on His Priesthood, we need to see that He was a human priest not only while on Calvary,<sup>130</sup> but also lifelong before Calvary<sup>131</sup> and everlastingly after Calvary too.<sup>132</sup> And at all three times, He not only restores the Adamic priesthood of all believers,<sup>133</sup> but also advances it to the highest heavens.<sup>134</sup>

Moreover, just as we distinguished between the temporary and the permanent elements of the Levitical priesthood which Christ fulfilled, we must here too distinguish Christ's own irrepeatable Calvary work for us as our Saviour from His object lessons of mercy for us as our Example. For there are lessons which He would have us to perform (by His grace as we are enabled).<sup>135</sup>

In this paper on the function of the Diaconate, we shall restrict our analysis of Christ's work to those object lessons He gave us as examples to follow. We now look at such.

Already in Old Testament times, David prophesied that when Messiah came, He would (among other things) "judge the poor of the people, ...save the children of the needy, ...deliver the needy when he cries out -- the poor also, and him that has no helper"<sup>136</sup> or Deacon!<sup>1</sup> And Isaiah foretold that the coming Saviour would judge the poor with righteousness and reprove for the meek with equity.<sup>137</sup>

Then, the deaf would hear and the blind would see and the meek and the poor would rejoice.<sup>138</sup> The lame would leap up and the dumb would sing.<sup>139</sup> God's people would be comforted with the good tidings of peace and prosperity.<sup>140</sup> And prisoners would be set at liberty -- even in the jails of the Gentiles!<sup>141</sup>

All who thirsted and who came to Christ would receive water.<sup>142</sup> The hungry would be fed, the poor would be sheltered, the naked would be clothed, the sick would be healed, the oppressed would be liberated, and the afflicted would be alleviated.<sup>143</sup>

Indeed, shortly after Christ's baptismal anointment as our great Prophet-Priest-King, He announced Himself to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind -- to set at liberty them that are bruised, [and] to preach the acceptable year of the Lord!"<sup>144</sup>

Thus did Christ inaugurate the great and acceptable year of the jubilee,<sup>145</sup> proclaiming "liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof."<sup>146</sup> For, as Peter later explained to Cornelius: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power. He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed."<sup>147</sup>



For the Savior came not to be deaconed unto, but to 'deacon.'<sup>148</sup> And He became a "Deacon" to confirm the promises made to the fathers.<sup>149</sup>

As our great Deacon and Priest after the order of Melchizedek, Jesus fed the multitudes and gave them water.<sup>150</sup> And He also gave them bread and wine (both as food and refreshment, and sacramentally)<sup>151</sup> -- even as the great priest Melchizedek had given bread and wine to Abraham.<sup>152</sup> And Jesus also healed the sick (such as the lame and the lepers and the blind and the deaf and the dumb and the insane).<sup>153</sup>

Christ's good deeds were always selective and never of equal universal benefit to everybody -- simply because they were deeds of mercy (and mercy is always selective).<sup>154</sup> Thus, Christ Himself provided tax money only for His Disciples<sup>155</sup> -- even while still enjoining the greedy young ruler to give everything he had to the poor.<sup>156</sup> No wonder His Disciples "were beyond measure astonished, saying, 'He has done all things well! He makes both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak!'"<sup>157</sup>

For through the work of Jesus, "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me" -- the Saviour selectively explained.<sup>158</sup>

Thus did Christ complete His Pre-Calvary work as a Priest and a Deacon. On Calvary itself, by fulfilling the Levitical priesthood in His Own great work of atonement,<sup>159</sup> our Lord also restored His elect to the Edenic priesthood which Adam exercised before the fall.<sup>160</sup> And after Calvary -- when He rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and (as man) sat down at the right hand of God the Father -- as our Second Adam He advanced that priesthood on our behalf to its utmost potential.<sup>161</sup>

In this way, Christ our great Priest and Deacon did good to all -- but especially to the household of faith.<sup>162</sup> And He would have us too do likewise. For He told and tells His Disciples as well: to clothe the needy;<sup>163</sup> to give water to His brethren in His Name;<sup>164</sup> to be compassionate priests or "good Samaritans" and to care for the injured (which the Levite and the Israelitic priest in the story should have done but did not do);<sup>165</sup> and to deacon to Him Himself, by feeding and giving drink and lodgings and clothes and friendship not to all men indiscriminately but to His brethren -- even when they are sick; even when they are strangers; or even when they are in prison.<sup>166</sup>

## **THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL CHRISTIANS**

The priesthood of all believers should come to expression not only in Protestant attacks on prelacy and the papacy, but especially in Protestants practising their own unavoidable Office of priesthood -- the priesthood of all believers.<sup>167</sup> Through His Church on Earth,<sup>168</sup> the risen Christ now exercises His continuing Priesthood from Heaven.<sup>169</sup> For all believers are prophets and priests and kings -- by faith in Christ and baptism into His name.<sup>170</sup> And all believers share in Christ's own baptismal anointing.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, Christ's Church is indeed the true Zion, which had fulfilled and come in the place of the Old Testament people of God.<sup>172</sup>

As a result of Christ's anointment as our great High Priest and His proclamation of our jubilee of liberation,<sup>173</sup> we are and should now be called "the Priests of the Lord" and "the Ministers of our God."<sup>174</sup> Through the success of Christian missionary work as a fruit of the Great Commission,<sup>175</sup> God's name "shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering" -- promised the Lord of hosts.<sup>176</sup> Having "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" as their great "High Priest over the House of God," and having their "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"<sup>177</sup> -- Christians know that they are now "a holy priesthood"<sup>178</sup> and "a royal priesthood"<sup>179</sup> and "kings and priests unto God"<sup>180</sup> and long-reigning "priests of God and Christ."<sup>181</sup> And, as priests, they know that they are to pray without ceasing<sup>182</sup> and to offer up their petitions like incense unto God.<sup>183</sup>

But being a priestly Christian, means being compassionate. For "whosoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him -- how does the love of God dwell in him?"<sup>184</sup>

As priests, all Christians know from the book of James that God gives to all men generously.<sup>185</sup> They know that they too are to look after the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world.<sup>186</sup> They are to usher even tattered paupers into the best seats in church.<sup>187</sup> They are to show mercy to naked and hungry brethren and to give them the food and clothing and warmth they need.<sup>188</sup> They are further to work for socio-economic righteousness.<sup>189</sup> And they are to assist the afflicted and the sick.<sup>190</sup>

As priests, all Christians are to heed the voice of Paul admonishing the Galatians: "Let us remember the poor!... Let us bear one another's orders!... Let those taught by teachers of the Word, give to them all good things!... Let us not be weary of doing good!... Let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith!"<sup>195</sup> And, Paul added in his epistle to the Ephesians, let us "give to him who needs!"<sup>196</sup>

As priests, all Christians know from the book of Hebrews that they are to be merciful and loving to their fellow Christians, and that God will reward them for so doing.<sup>197</sup> They know they are to "let brotherly love continue."<sup>198</sup> Thus, they are not to be "forgetful to entertain strangers," but to be hospitable even to newcomers -- as Abraham 'diaconally' was.<sup>199</sup> They are to "remember them that are in bonds" -- even as their great High Priest Jesus Christ told them to visit their brethren when in prison.<sup>200</sup>

They are to sympathize with the sick and with those "who suffer adversity, as being yourselves in the body."<sup>201</sup> They are to comfort the lonely, knowing that the Lord is their (deacon-ly) Helper, and that He will never leave nor forsake them.<sup>202</sup> And while henceforth spurning the now-fulfilled animal sacrifices of the Israelitic tabernacle, they are to keep on going to the altar of Calvary and to keep on offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually in the name of Jesus -- knowing that God is well pleased with sacrifices such as our thanksgiving and our good deeds and our sharing with the needy.<sup>203</sup>

For to be a nation of priests,<sup>204</sup> means to be a nation of servants.<sup>205</sup> "If any man serve Me -- him will My Father honour," said Jesus.<sup>206</sup> "Whosoever will be great among you," He told His Disciples, "let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister -- and to give His life a ransom for many."<sup>207</sup>

Our great Deacon-Priest is now in Heaven, but He will yet come back to our Earth.<sup>208</sup> And when He does, as kings and priests we too shall reign on the Earth with Him -- and serve Him as His servants unto the health of all the nations, for ever.<sup>209</sup>

Let us here and now on Earth, then, "show hospitality to one another without grudging." And let us serve God and minister or 'deacon' to one another "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."<sup>210</sup>

For the Christian idea of the priesthood of all believers is, as Lightfoot correctly remarked, "the restitution of this immediate (Pre-Levitical) and direct relation with God which was partly suspended but not abolished by the appointment of a sacerdotal tribe. The Levitical priesthood, like the Mosaic Law, had served its temporary purpose. The period of childhood has passed, and the Church of God was now arrived at mature age. The covenant people (themselves now) resumed their sacerdotal functions.

"But the privileges of the covenant were no longer confined to the limits of a single nation. Every member of the human family was potentially a member of the Church -- and, as such, a priest of God.... This conception of the Christian Church has been mainly instrumental in the emancipation of the degraded and oppressed.... Consciously or unconsciously, the idea of an universal priesthood, of the religious equality of all men...has worked and is working untold blessings in political institutions and in social life."<sup>211</sup>

## THE INSTITUTING OF THE DIACONATE

The instituting of the Diaconate was, of course, never intended to replace the universal priesthood (and actual priestly functioning) of all believers. To the contrary, the Diaconate was instituted precisely to stimulate all believers to realize their own maximum priestly potential to be merciful.

For this reason, Christ appointed and trained a number of His very best Disciples to be His official Apostles.<sup>212</sup> These were themselves to serve Him as exemplary prophet-priest-kings.<sup>213</sup> And it was also their solemn task to train other specially-gifted Christians to become either prophetic Preachers or priestly Deacons or kingly Elders.<sup>214</sup> The three special Offices were and are co-equal and co-ordinate and not subservient and subordinate to one another.<sup>215</sup> Each of these specially-gifted Christians, in terms of his own special office, was and is to serve God by helping to train all believers under his care or to influence them to be better prophet-priest-kings in their general Office of all Christians too.<sup>216</sup>

All three special Offices were and are to encourage all believers to be better Christians in everything they do. But especially the priestly Deacons were and are to train all congregational members under their influence to exercise particularly the priestly aspect of their own general Office of all Christians as effectively as possible.<sup>217</sup>

Although "for dispensing social charities, it became necessary to appoint special Officers" -- Lightfoot correctly remarks that in both the primitive and the modern Church "the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people are never regarded as transferred or even

delegated to these Officers.<sup>218</sup> It is true that the special Office of Deacon developed out of the general Office of priestly service of all Christians, just as the special Levitical priesthood grew out of the general priesthood of all believers too<sup>219</sup> -- so that not just the Special Officers of the Church but all sincere members of the people of God should "deacon" or "minister to"<sup>220</sup> their afflicted co-religionists. Yet not only all believers, but especially those in the special priestly Office should do so -- rather than (like the Levite and the priest in our Saviour's illustration) to leave the afflicted brother to the indeed tender mercies of an alien Samaritan.<sup>221</sup>

Yet the New Testament Deacons are not hereditary, hierarchical and almost-substitutionary Officers as the Levites were.<sup>222</sup> For the Diaconate, while indeed an extension of the social Office of waiter or servant,<sup>223</sup> is at the same time also an intensified expression of the Pre-Levitical and Post-Calvary priesthood of all believers<sup>224</sup> and a stimulus to rather than a substitute of the general priestly Office of all Christians.

The need of this intensification of the priestly aspect of the general Office of all believers (*via* the instrumentality of the Apostles) into the special Office of Deacon, becomes apparent when we consider the first six chapters of the book of Acts. We now look at this.

In Acts chapter one, Christ reminded the Apostles once again of their Great Commission.<sup>225</sup> Part of that Great Commission was for them to "deacon" to those afflicted by maladies, to give drink to the thirsty, and to take care of the sick.<sup>226</sup> So, after Christ's ascension back to Heaven, for ten days the Apostles together with all of the Disciples<sup>227</sup> meditated in priestly prayer as to how that Great Commission would be executed.<sup>228</sup>

In Acts chapter two, on the day of Pentecost all of the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>229</sup> Peter powerfully preached the Gospel; about three thousand new converts were made; and those converts thereafter continued in the apostolic fellowship and in the breaking of bread and in priestly prayer.<sup>230</sup> Many sold some of their own possessions and gave the proceeds to their needy brethren, while sharing with them the use of most of their unsold possessions.<sup>231</sup> And the whole Christian community worshipped together and ate their food from house to house with joy and gladness.<sup>232</sup>

In Acts chapter three, Peter and John (in the name of Jesus) were able to heal a needy crippled beggar.<sup>233</sup> Thereupon the beggar stopped begging, became a believer, praised the Lord, and doubtless joined the Christian Church.<sup>234</sup>

In Acts chapter four, the adult male membership alone of the Jerusalem church had grown to fully five thousand<sup>235</sup> (so that the total membership amounted to perhaps some twenty thousand souls).<sup>236</sup> Doubtless there were in that huge Congregation many poor persons who needed support (such as widows above sixty years of age incapable of any longer earning their own living).<sup>237</sup> Persecuted by their unbelieving relatives and the antichristian leaders of the temple and the Synagogues,<sup>238</sup> many of these struggling Christians needed the assistance of the Christian community itself.

Consequently, all of the Christians loaned the use of many of their own goods to one another and especially to those believers in need.<sup>239</sup> And as many as actually owned lands and houses (other than their own dwellings),<sup>240</sup> sold them -- and themselves brought the money and

laid it at the Apostles' feet<sup>241</sup> while the Congregation was assembled in a large upper room in a Jerusalem doomed to be destroyed with all its houses and lands and possessions within that very generation.<sup>242</sup>

The church's members had laid their monetary gifts at the feet of the Apostles (and possibly on the communion table out of gratitude for receiving the Lord's Supper).<sup>243</sup> Then, "distribution (of that money) was made unto every (Christian) man according as he had need."<sup>244</sup>

Obviously the Apostles themselves decided who was to receive anything and how much each recipient would be allocated -- though aged widows and other disabled Christians undoubtedly received priority consideration.<sup>245</sup> We are not told that the Apostles themselves actually collected these monies, though it is certain that they supervised their collection.<sup>246</sup> Yet the actual distribution of the goods allocated by the Apostles, was probably conducted not by the Apostles themselves nor even by the Elders<sup>247</sup> (or the "old men")<sup>248</sup> but by the "young men"<sup>249</sup> (or 'the Deacons') mentioned just a few verses later in the very next chapter.<sup>250</sup>

In Acts chapter five, two church members (Ananias and his wife Sapphira) came into the Christian assembly and offered the Apostles only part of the money realized from the sale of one of their properties.<sup>251</sup> When questioned by the Apostle Peter about the amount of money (which obviously seemed small compared to the market value of the property concerned), Ananias and Sapphira, in order to try to protect themselves from apostolic censure, falsely claimed that they had indeed handed over the full amount of the sale (even though, of course, their entire gift was purely voluntary and they had been under no obligation at all to hand anything over to the Apostles).<sup>252</sup> For this lie, however -- for claiming the handed over part was the whole amount -- the two were struck dead by the Holy Ghost<sup>253</sup> and were buried by "the young men."<sup>254</sup>

Now these "young men," we are told, first sat<sup>255</sup> near the Apostles during the assembly of the Congregation (in the upper room). Then they clothed Ananias' corpse<sup>256</sup> and carried him outside and buried him,<sup>257</sup> and later stood near the door<sup>258</sup> of the Congregation's meeting place.<sup>259</sup> Their functioning as funds-distributors<sup>260</sup> and doorkeepers<sup>258</sup> and funeral officers<sup>257</sup> is perhaps very significant. For these "young men" were thus performing the duties of the Old Testament Levites<sup>261</sup> or the *Chazzaniym*<sup>262</sup> or the *Parnasiym*.<sup>263</sup>

Indeed, the "young men" may even then have been rather naturally functioning as ordained (Hebrew-speaking) New Testament Deacons -- and even then have been helping especially the Hebrew-speaking Christian widows of the Congregation.<sup>264</sup> At any rate, it seems clear enough that "the young men"<sup>254</sup> were helping the Apostles (or 'deaconing')<sup>265</sup> -- in the receiving and in the redistribution<sup>266</sup> of the monetary gifts of the Congregation to those members who were deemed to be in need of financial assistance.<sup>267</sup> So that even if "the young men"<sup>254</sup> were themselves not yet "Deacons" -- it does seem almost certain they were indeed their immediate predecessors.<sup>268</sup>

In Acts chapter six, we read of the official installation<sup>269</sup> of the first Greek-named<sup>270</sup> Deacons<sup>271</sup> to minister to the needy Greek-speaking widows<sup>272</sup> of the large Christian Congregation in Jerusalem. This passage is so important to our subject, that we shall give it a rather detailed treatment.

There were two different linguistic groups within that Congregation -- *viz.* Hebrew-speaking and Greek-speaking<sup>273</sup> Ex-Judaistic Christians. The approximately twenty thousand members<sup>274</sup> had now multiplied even further.<sup>275</sup> So too had the number of believers in distress -- especially aged widows in need.<sup>276</sup>

Apparently, some kind of machinery had already<sup>277</sup> been set up by the Apostles<sup>278</sup> (and their "young men" assistants)<sup>279</sup> to help particularly the needy Christian widows on a daily basis especially by providing them with food.<sup>280</sup> Yet the (Hebrew-speaking?)<sup>281</sup> "young men," presumably in their commendable zeal to minister to their own needy Hebrew-speaking Christian widows,<sup>282</sup> had apparently (though no doubt inadvertently or at least not maliciously) begun to neglect or to overlook<sup>283</sup> the needy Greek-speaking Christian widows in the Congregation's<sup>284</sup> daily ministry of mercy to all its needy members.<sup>285</sup>

As a result of this neglect of their widows, the Greek-speaking Christians as a whole began to grumble against the Hebrew-speaking Christians as a whole -- within the same Congregation.<sup>286</sup> Ethnic factionalism threatened to disrupt the unity of Christ's Church. The Apostles had their hands full, and could not themselves handle the situation -- nor could the (Hebrew-speaking?)<sup>281</sup> "young men" who had been assisting the Apostles in this matter.<sup>284</sup>

Obviously, more "young men"<sup>250</sup> were needed to "serve tables"<sup>287</sup> (or to serve as 'waiters' at the widows' tables)<sup>288</sup> or at the 'love feasts'<sup>289</sup> or possibly even at the communion tables<sup>290</sup> -- and thus to provide especially for the needy Greek-speaking widows "in their daily ministrations."<sup>291</sup> So the Apostles -- who were in any case predestined to disappear from permanent ecclesiastical office<sup>292</sup> after delegating their prophetic-priestly-kingly functions respectively to permanent prophetic Preachers and priestly Deacons and kingly Elders<sup>293</sup> -- called a congregational meeting to solve the problem of the neglected needy Greek-speaking Christian widows.<sup>294</sup>

At the congregational meeting, the already-overburdened<sup>295</sup> Apostles explained that their own work in the ministry of the Word could not be allowed to suffer.<sup>296</sup> This, they felt, would indeed happen if they themselves took on the additional supervision of the ministry of the tables in respect of the needy Greek-speaking Christian widows.<sup>297</sup> And this was, after all, not really a prophetic-apostolic matter,<sup>298</sup> but a priestly-diaconal matter.<sup>299</sup>

Let the Congregation itself then choose a specified number<sup>300</sup> of qualified men to officially "deacon" the tables of the Greek-speaking Christian widows!<sup>301</sup> And let them thus rectify the neglect and promote the further unfolding in the Church of the priestly-diaconal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.<sup>302</sup>

When this had been done, the electees -- all of whom were Greek-speakers, and all of whom were chosen by the whole Congregation -- were installed in the Office of priestly Deacon by the laying on of hands.<sup>303</sup> "And the Word of God increased; and the number of the Disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly"<sup>304</sup> (from twenty thousand or so to perhaps thirty thousand plus).<sup>305</sup> For the faithful work of the new Greek-speaking Deacons in ministering to the needy Greek-speaking Christian widows<sup>306</sup> (in addition to the continuing faithful work of the previous Hebrew-speaking 'Deacons' in ministering to the needy Hebrew-speaking Christian widows) gave great impetus to the further and rapid expansion of the Christian Faith.<sup>307</sup>

Hereafter, even a great number of Judaistic priests were probably convicted -- through their own lack of priestly compassion toward their own needy people.<sup>308</sup> For when those priests saw the ever-improving priestly-diaconal compassion of the Christian-priestly Deacons toward their own needy Christians<sup>309</sup> -- they repented of their own loveless neglect of their brethren, and themselves joined the Christian Church!<sup>310</sup>

As Ignatius remarked just after the completion of the inscripturation of the New Testament: "Deacons are not just those who serve food and drink, but Ministers of the Church of God!"<sup>311</sup> And, as Postma declares, "the Deacon represents the priestly office of Christ!"<sup>312</sup>

After the institution of the New Testament Diaconate in the Christian Congregation at Jerusalem as the mother church of Christianity<sup>313</sup> -- together with the expansion of Christianity itself we detect evidences of the establishment and operation of the Diaconate in the churches of Judea and Samaria and Syria<sup>314</sup> -- and we find definite mention of the Diaconal Office in the Congregations in Turkey,<sup>315</sup> in Macedonia or Northern Greece,<sup>316</sup> in Achaia or Southern Greece,<sup>317</sup> and in Italy (even at the environs of Rome).<sup>318</sup> Truly, the Office of Deacon indeed seemed to be every bit just as important to congregational life everywhere -- as did the companion special Offices of Preacher and Elder!

No wonder, then, that the Reformed Theologian Totius remarked: "The body of Christ as revealed in the local Congregation not only has a head (the Preacher) which thinks; and a hand (the Elder) which rules; but it also has a heart (the Deacon) which loves.... It is with our head and hand and heart that our inner life expresses itself. Thus, through its head (the Preacher), its hand (the Elder), and its heart (the Deacon) -- as organs installed in the body for that purpose -- the Congregation exhibits its intellectual energy, its power to rule, and its vital love.

"Moreover, the most glorious interaction obtains among the three organs and the body itself. For example, the heart needs the body -- but the body too needs the heart just as much. The Deacon needs the Congregation -- but the Congregation needs the Deacon too. If the Congregation has no love, the Deacon will not be able to exhibit love. And conversely too, if there is no Diaconate, the Congregation then lacks its actual instrument of love."<sup>319</sup>

## **THE DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF DEACONS**

The duties and requirements<sup>320</sup> of Deacons flow rather automatically from the institution of the Office as described above in the first six chapters of the book of Acts. For as Macpherson remarks: "That passage in the Acts which records the institution of the office, already determines the duties devolving on those who fill that Office. They are there described under the general designation (of) a Diaconate, ministry, or service of tables.

"Undoubtedly the idea present is that of tables on which food was laid (Acts 6:1-2).... In the Church of the early centuries, alms were commonly brought by the Christian people to their assemblies -- in the shape of actual gifts in bread and wine, which were collected for immediate distribution among the poor.... If however aid was given in the form of money (Acts 4:34 to 5:6), it would clearly belong to the Deacons to expend this....

"The Deacons seem from the first to have acted under the guidance and according to the counsel of the spiritual Office-bearers of the Church (that is, the apostolic Preachers and/or the Elders). According to Acts 11:20-30, the alms of the churches were carried by the Apostles to the Elders of the Congregation at Jerusalem, under whom the Deacons would act as distributors. In a broad and general way, the functions of those men referred to in Acts chapters five and six were concerned with the outward affairs of the Christian community -- which in their days happened to be the diligent collection and faithful distribution of alms to the poor."<sup>321</sup>

It should not be thought, however, that Deacons are only to give priestly aid to the needy in the Congregation. For the first Greek-speaking Deacons in general and Deacons Stephen and Philip in particular also powerfully testified to unbelievers too -- exhorting them to believe.<sup>322</sup> Yet the priestly ministry of material mercy rather than that of prophetic testimony, is really the essential focus of the Diaconate.<sup>323</sup>

Similarly, it should not be thought that Elders are only to rule over the Christian Church. For it was indeed the Elders of the Christian Congregation in Jerusalem (rather than the Deacons) who received (but did not collect)<sup>324</sup> the first material gift sent from Christians in Antioch for the relief of the famine-threatened Christians in Jerusalem -- which gift was then doubtless handed over by the Elders to the Deacons for the latter to distribute.<sup>325</sup> Nor should it be thought that Preachers are only to preach. For those in the Ministry of the Word<sup>326</sup> were the ones who "fulfilled" the above-mentioned priestly ministry (or *Diakonia*) of the Antiochian Christians, by taking the gift from Antioch to Jerusalem.<sup>327</sup>

But in spite of this overlap of the functions of the three special Offices, it can hardly be denied that each has its own peculiar focus too. For prophetic Preachers are essentially expected to preach the Word; kingly Elders are essentially expected to rule the Congregation; and priestly Deacons are essentially expected to serve the material needs of the people of God.<sup>328</sup> Indeed, the very word "Deacon" essentially implies material service (or *Diakonia*).<sup>329</sup>

To understand the duties of the Deacon, it is necessary to consider the requirements of that Office. Indeed, the duties and the requirements each presuppose one another. What, then, are the duties and the requirements of the Diaconate -- as the New Testament projection and advancement of the permanent elements in the Old Testament priestly Office?

The Office of Deacon is centrally concerned with encouraging all Christians to help procure the total material needs of sorely afflicted members of the Congregation. And to do their work properly, Deacons must be able to encourage giving and to recognize needs and to distribute help.

Let us then briefly analyze these Scriptural requirements of those to be elected to the diaconal Office. Then let us discuss the duties of Deacons.

First, in order to encourage other Christians to help their afflicted brethren, the Deacons must themselves be concerned about the needy. Only God can fill people with His Spirit and give them such a concern. That is why Deacons are to be men "full of the Holy Spirit."<sup>330</sup> For the Spirit has an intense priestly concern for (especially the material)<sup>39</sup> welfare of His Own people -- and particularly for their poor.<sup>331</sup>



Second, in order to get the ear and the support of the Christian community for diaconal action, the Deacons need to be well-thought-of<sup>332</sup> "men of honest report."<sup>333</sup> This would probably include the other requirements of being "grave" or (dignified), "not-double-tongued" or untruthful, and "not-given-to-much-wine" (but being sober).<sup>334</sup>

Third, seeing that the Deacons handle money and other church funds, it is absolutely essential that they also have personal reputations of scrupulous honesty in financial matters -- and that they "be not greedy of filthy lucre"<sup>335</sup> (or not be preoccupied with personal sordid gain).<sup>336</sup> For the Christian community which provides the Deacons with the funds for the execution of Christ's continuing work here on Earth, must know that its Officers will never embezzle or even unwisely administer the Congregation's tithes.<sup>337</sup>

Fourth, the Deacons must have an irreproachable family life.<sup>338</sup> Ministering as they will be to widows and orphans,<sup>339</sup> it is essential that their own homes be stable and happy. Hence, they are to have been legitimately married but once.<sup>340</sup> They are to rule their children and their houses well.<sup>338</sup> And their wives -- or the other suitable Christian women who sometimes help them in their diaconal work among widows and orphans<sup>341</sup> -- are also to be serious, and not given to gossip. They are to be sober, and faithful in all things.<sup>342</sup>

Fifth, Deacons are to be blameless or irrefutable in purity of doctrine.<sup>343</sup> This is why they are first "to be proved" (or to be examined)<sup>344</sup> before they are appointed<sup>345</sup> (or ordained and installed) in the diaconal Office by the laying on of hands.<sup>346</sup> It will not do to have compassionate Deacons inadvertently spreading false doctrine, while commendably helping afflicted Christians.<sup>347</sup> Nor can they effectively function as Deacons, unless they understand the doctrine of the requirements of their Office.<sup>348</sup> Both their pre-ordination and their post-ordination faithfulness in doctrine<sup>343</sup> is a necessary requirement, should they (with or without the Elders) assist in the distribution of the bread and the wine from the Lord's table of the sacramental "mysteries of the faith"<sup>349</sup> (or from the Christian 'love feast' which then perhaps sometimes accompanied it).<sup>350</sup> And especially as they distribute food and/or monies (together with their doctrinal testimony and words of encouragement)<sup>351</sup> to the impoverished and desperately needy members of Christ's body.<sup>352</sup>

Sixth, Deacons need to be "full of wisdom"<sup>353</sup> -- in order to know whom they should help and whom they should not help in the execution of the duties of their Diaconal Office. Examined and grounded in the doctrine as to the requirements of the Diaconate,<sup>344</sup> however, the priestly Deacons will know from the Old Testament that the priests were to encourage God's people to provide for the total support of their Ministers (and their Ministers' dependents) -- and, where needed, also for the necessary support of faithful widows, orphans, transient visitors, resident aliens, the underprivileged, prisoners, and God's people in general.<sup>354</sup> And from the New Testament, the Deacons will know that they are to encourage God's people to help provide for the same categories of needy persons<sup>355</sup> (thus, not for all Christian widows, but only for those that are needy "widows indeed").<sup>356</sup>

Seventh, with the same "wisdom"<sup>353</sup> and doctrinal insight,<sup>344</sup> the Diaconate will know what the real needs are of those they should help. From the Old Testament, the Deacons will know that the priests then encouraged the Congregation to provide especially the food, clothing, shelter, health, comfort, education and worship facilities to their own needy people.<sup>357</sup> And from the New

Testament, the Deacons should know that they are now the special priests who are to help take care of the same basic needs of Christ's afflicted children.<sup>358</sup>

Last, Deacons should (especially on each Lord's day)<sup>359</sup> collect and later distribute<sup>360</sup> the gifts of God's people to those Christians who are in need. And this should be done: with simple generosity;<sup>361</sup> mercifully;<sup>362</sup> cheerfully;<sup>363</sup> unhypocritically;<sup>364</sup> with kindly affections;<sup>365</sup> with brotherly love;<sup>366</sup> courteously;<sup>367</sup> speedily;<sup>368</sup> spiritually;<sup>369</sup> ministerially, or in the Name of the Lord;<sup>370</sup> rejoicingly,<sup>371</sup> patiently;<sup>372</sup> prayerfully;<sup>373</sup> communicatively or sharingly;<sup>374</sup> only as needed;<sup>375</sup> only to the saints;<sup>376</sup> persistently;<sup>377</sup> with love even for unknown though believing strangers (or Christian aliens);<sup>378</sup> and, we may add, with a view to strengthening the distributee's faith and to achieving his speedy rehabilitation to the maximum possible degree of employment as a useful and productive member of society.<sup>379</sup> "For six days shalt thou labor!"<sup>380</sup>

Hence, as Macpherson remarks, the Diaconate is responsible for "the diligent collection and faithful distribution of alms to the poor (that is, to all who are in need).... Our Deacons also have to deal with the outward affairs of the Christian community -- which...consist chiefly in the collection and distribution of church funds for ministerial support, for missionary schemes, and for the maintenance of the church fabric."<sup>381</sup>

In all of this, however, the Deacon himself only represents the intensification of the priesthood of all believers. For He himself principally attempts to intensify that priestly concern for needy brethren, in all of the members of the Congregation.<sup>382</sup> And this he does in the Name of Jesus Christ his Saviour Who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, healed the sick, befriended strangers, uplifted the poor, educated the ignorant -- and Who did not come to be deaconed unto, but to deacon unto many!<sup>383</sup>

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DIACONATE AND OTHER BODIES**

The relationship between the Diaconate and other bodies, is the next question which almost automatically arises from the previous consideration. For not just Deacons but all Christians are to exercise priestly compassion. Indeed, it is precisely the function of the Deacons to get all Christians thus activated. But is the Diaconate also to activate the Session toward such endeavors? And what is the diaconal function in the Church at large? Should non-ecclesiastical and even Non-Christian private benevolences ever be involved in alleviating human needs? Should the State be involved in social security programs, *etc.*? And should the Diaconate itself attempt to minister comprehensively to all afflicted persons in the whole world?

What, then, are the limits of the responsibilities of the Diaconate toward the Session, the Church at large, the various non-ecclesiastical private benevolences, the State, and the World as a whole? Such limits are set exclusively by the Word of God.

Toward the Session, the Diaconate is subordinate in ultimate governmental control but coordinate in ultimate importance.<sup>384</sup> By this we mean that the work of the Diaconate is just as important as is the work of the Session, but that (just as the Session should ultimately submit to the Presbytery) the Diaconate should ultimately submit to the Session (as too should every other Congregational organization).<sup>385</sup>

Certainly, however, the Diaconate is "sovereign in its own sphere" of ministering mercy -- even over against the Session.<sup>386</sup> In fact, the Session should recognize that diaconal sovereignty -- and willingly listen to and be guided by the Diaconate's advice in such matters. For only if the Session and the Diaconate each respects the other's competency in its own respective field, can the Church's work effectively be executed.<sup>387</sup>

Toward the Church at large, the Diaconate is to act as both an agent and a stimulus. All Christians at some time or another really need Christian dayschools for their children and Christian hospitals for themselves. Too, the Christian community as a whole needs Christian old age homes and Christian industrial schools for the blind and the deaf -- and Christian asylums for the psychotically disturbed, *etc.*

If these institutions are not to be erected and maintained by the Diaconate of the institutional Church, they should certainly be established and controlled (at least in respect of Christian beneficiaries) by free Christian-social organizations<sup>388</sup> or by the Christian community in general and operated on a Christian basis and (chiefly if not exclusively) for the benefit of Christian people and subject to Christian control (in which the Church's Diaconate should play a leading rôle).<sup>389</sup>

It is true that a local Diaconate can hardly operate some of these much-demanding enterprises of mercy. But when organized with other local Diaconates into regional and national Diaconates<sup>390</sup> (corresponding to the Elders' Presbyteries and General Assemblies),<sup>391</sup> the Diaconate can and does operate them.<sup>392</sup>

Toward non-ecclesiastical private benevolences (such as Non-Christian hospitals and drug rehabilitation centres and the Red Cross and labor bureaus and youth hostels and national parks and amusement facilities and sport arenas and recreation centers *etc.*), the Diaconate should adopt an attitude of grateful interest.<sup>393</sup> Yet there cannot be a wholesale diaconal endorsement of such institutions, to the neglect of its own Scripturally-required activities.

But still less should the Diaconate (especially in its regional or national structures) -- where necessary refuse itself to undertake some of these endeavours for the benefit of Christians and on a Christian basis. Especially in those times and in those places where the Church is functioning in a Pre-Christian or De-Christian-ized society controlled by Non-Christian religions such as Paganism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Socialism, or Humanism.<sup>394</sup> However, the Diaconate should realize that even the Humanists have every civic right to operate such institutions,<sup>395</sup> whenever they do not clash with the interests of public morality (as do the mushrooming abortion clinics of our own day and age).<sup>395</sup>

Toward the State, wherever the government does not promote the breach of any of God's Ten Commandments, the Diaconate should adopt an attitude of loyal obedience.<sup>396</sup> It is the primary function of the State to be God's non-ecclesiastical and 'civil' *Diakonos* or "Minister," by wielding the sword against the wicked in order to maintain law and order.<sup>397</sup>

The authorities are indeed to praise the good (or those that keep the Ten Commandments). So, then, the State should praise both the law-abiding ecclesiastical Diaconate and law-abiding non-ecclesiastical private benevolences for erecting and maintaining hospitals and schools and old age homes *etc.* -- rather than the State itself entering into those fields.<sup>399</sup> If it does, however,

and if people gratefully use such State-supplied facilities, they should be careful never to accept the situation as normal. To the contrary, they should all the more rather encourage the Diaconate and/or non-ecclesiastical private benevolences to re-exert their own God-given rôle within these spheres -- and ultimately themselves take over the operation of such institutions from the then *ultra vires* State.

Ideally, and in those rare instances today where a State or local authority is a Christian State or a Christian local authority -- that State or local authority may at least pass Biblical legislation on these matters, as did the Israelitic theocracy and as did the old New England governments. But most modern States and even local authorities are now Non-Christian -- if not Anti-Christian -- and strangers to the atmosphere of Christian-theocratic government.<sup>400</sup>

Toward the World -- the Diaconate has little obligation.<sup>401</sup> Because the Diaconate is an institution of mercy (or undeserved goodness), the World has no 'right' to diaconal benefits. It is true, of course, that all Christians are to do good to all people.<sup>402</sup> But the Diaconate's obligations to care for others, are limited to the confines of the Christian Church and the teachable "resident aliens" within that expanding community (and hence within the perimeter of the Church's increasing local or regional or national or international missionary outreach).<sup>403</sup>

The Diaconate always extends mercy only in the name of Christ. And it does so vocally -- loud and clear. It always encourages the recipient to turn (again) unto Christ, in gratitude for His help diaconally extended. And it always programs the recipient of the benefits rendered, to work constructively to the glory of God. Nobody -- not even a Christian in need -- has the 'right' to diaconal help. Such help is an act of mercy. It is all of grace, and of grace alone. Accordingly, there is no resemblance whatsoever between diaconal outreaches to needy Christians even on a world-wide scale -- and movements such as the Peace Corps or Unicef or Unesco or Euromark or the Red Crescent or Masonic charities or the Rotarians or *B<sup>e</sup>nai B<sup>e</sup>rith* or the Comecon.<sup>404</sup>

## THE FUNCTION OF THE DIACONATE TODAY

The function of the Diaconate today is to execute its unchanging basic mandate and also to minister to the peculiar needs of Christians living in contemporary society. Not all Christian 'wants' are Christian 'needs.' And no Christian has any 'right' to demand diaconal help. So the Diaconate itself and not the prospective recipient of the benefits is to decide when to help and what to do and how much help to give -- and subject to what conditions. And all four of these factors may differ from age to age, from place to place, and even from one Diaconate to another.

The underlying basic mandate of the Diaconate in all ages, is to care for Ministers and their families (including Preachers and all other full-time Church employees), and for all truly needy Christian widows and orphans and prisoners and strangers and visitors and underprivileged believers (in respect of food and clothing and shelter and health and comfort and education and the construction and upkeep and repair of the Congregation's buildings and worship facilities and funeral arrangements *etc.*).<sup>405</sup>

These basic needs of Christians in all ages necessitate the availability of Christian feeding programs for needy Christians (such as distressed and aged widows),<sup>406</sup> Christian hospitals,<sup>407</sup>

Christian orphanages,<sup>408</sup> Christian old age homes (for senile widows and others with no family to support them),<sup>409</sup> Christian day schools,<sup>410</sup> Christian funeral services,<sup>411</sup> Christian training schools (to equip the retarded and/or the blind or the deaf *etc.* for useful work),<sup>412</sup> Christian emergency shelters for temporarily roofless brethren (such as flood victims *etc.*),<sup>413</sup> and Christian hospitality toward prisoners in jail and relaxation centres for 'socially-imprisoned' non-prisoners (in Church building complexes or elsewhere).<sup>414</sup>

Diaconal projects for Christians living specifically in modern Western societies will be both local on the one hand and regional (or even national) on the other. In each case, the appropriate (local or regional or national) Diaconate will be the responsible body in charge of the operation concerned. Here below are some (new) applications of local diaconal functions within Western society in our day and age.

Congregational suppers<sup>415</sup> can be held, to which especially the poorer church members are to be invited.<sup>416</sup> Flowers can be sent by the Diaconate to the funerals of Congregation Members, and certainly the Deacons should visit widows right after the deaths of their husbands to ascertain whether they need food or financial help.<sup>417</sup> Possibly, get-well cards could be sent (though perhaps preferably by the Elders)<sup>418</sup> to congregational members in hospitals. And the Deacons should certainly check up later to see whether the patient is able to pay the bills.<sup>419</sup>

Moreover, Deacons and/or their wives or other entrusted Christian ladies<sup>420</sup> can certainly distribute congregational gifts to the needy Christians -- such as by providing lonely ex-patients with nourishing food while convalescing at home.<sup>421</sup> Serving as priestly doorkeepers and welcoming churchgoers at the steps of the sanctuary and ushering them to their seats and passing them the collection plates and consolidating and distributing the monies received, is almost axiomatic.<sup>422</sup> And assisting in mailing programs inviting folks to church functions, also seems to fall well within the scope of diaconal duties.<sup>423</sup> So too does teaching Sunday School lessons to Communicant Church Members, and to the children of the covenant.<sup>424</sup>

Last, diaconal projects of a regional or national nature for Christians living specifically in modern Western societies could (and should) include: regional and national diaconal conferences on matters of common concern;<sup>425</sup> and regional and national diaconal representation on the Presbytery's<sup>426</sup> and on the General Assembly's<sup>427</sup> committees concerned with diaconal matters. And especially on the Committee for Administration and its sub-committees on Stewardship, Insurance and Annuities, and the Board of Trustees.<sup>428</sup>

Further projects of the larger Diaconal Courts could include: metropolitan hostels for Christian youth from out-of-town;<sup>429</sup> Christian labor bureaus;<sup>430</sup> Christian care homes for unwed expectant mothers disowned by their parents;<sup>431</sup> Christian reformatories (for rehabilitating repentant non-capital criminals after their punishment by the State);<sup>432</sup> Christian Rehabilitation Centers for alcoholics and drug addicts;<sup>433</sup> Christian institutions to help christianize and rehabilitate desolated hippies and junkies;<sup>434</sup> and Christian family vacation resorts and rest homes.<sup>435</sup> They also include: Christian Arbitration Boards in the settlement of controversies between different categories of God's people;<sup>436</sup> Christian Financial Planning Boards for the relief of local, regional, national and international Christian missions;<sup>437</sup> Christian Missionary Relief Work (such as digging wells to provide Christians in the Sahara with water, and providing food and good seed and livestock and agronomists for Christians in areas stricken with one-time or repeated crop failures);<sup>437</sup> Christian

Marriage Guidance Bureaus;<sup>439</sup> Christian Nursing Homes;<sup>440</sup> Christian Health Food Depots;<sup>441</sup> Christian housing schemes;<sup>442</sup> Christian Hygiene Instruction Centers;<sup>443</sup> Christian Housing Financing Centres;<sup>444</sup> Christian Fundraising Clinics;<sup>445</sup> Christian Retirement Homes;<sup>446</sup> Christian Adoption Agencies;<sup>447</sup> Christian Mental Health Clinics;<sup>448</sup> and Christian Ecology Centers,<sup>449</sup> *etc.*

This list is not exhaustive. Nor are all of the above mandatory. Each Diaconate (local, regional and national) must decide for itself which of the above addresses Christian need in its own setting and circumstances. But in the light of the above, it can hardly be argued that the Diaconate has outlived its relevance.

## **WERE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND DEACONS EVER COMMUNISTS?**

To answer this question, we can do no better than to cite some excerpts from two of our other works<sup>450</sup> which deal with this important matter. We quote as follows:

"The Christian view of property must be anchored in the Triune God, in Whom the propriety of private property is immediately apparent. It is true that the (Divine Society of) Father, Son and Spirit jointly possess Their common attributes -- and, after its creation, the entire universe too. But it is equally true that Each has also eternally possessed private property which the Other Two do not possess.

Only the Father possesses paternity; only the Son possesses filiation; and only the Spirit possesses procession.... Each Person's private property is integrally connected to Each's distinguishable personality and total operations (both *ad intra* and *ad extra*). As Geesink remarked, property rights thus root in eternity, and precede all man-made laws....

"The position, then, is that man owns nothing *vis-a-vis* God -- but may own many things *vis-a-vis* his fellow men. For all men (as the image of the Triune God) have different personalities from one another (*cf.* the various Persons of the Triune God) -- which human personalities are strengthened by the private ownership of property....

"It is important to remember that God gave dominion to Adam as an individual even before the creation of Eve, and that even initially God revealed to man that private property was sacrosanct. Internally, the Law of God -- including the principle of the Commandment: 'You shall not steal' (which implies the existence of stealable property belonging to another) -- was stamped on Adam's heart.

"Externally, God revealed to the unfallen Adam that he may not steal from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which did not belong to him or to any other man but which was indeed God's Own 'private property' .... Adam would possess his own farming tools and Eve her own household implements (*vis-a-vis* one another), even irrespective of the fall. Just as each Person of the Triune God -- Whose image man is -- has His Own private property *vis-a-vis* the Others....

"It is true that, at the creation of Eve, Adam entered into a community of marriage with her -- which had property ramifications. But he entered into this community with one woman only, as too would his children. Their...property would have been limited to one man and one woman alone -- *vis-a-vis* all the other marriages and their properties....

"Precisely the 'dominion charter' of Genesis 1:26-28 presupposes that, as men separate from one another by multiplying and filling the Earth -- those who go and settle in the Old World will possess its land-mass *vis-a-vis* those who go and settle in the New World, and *vice-versa*. Even as those who settle in Europe will possess it -- *vis-a-vis* those who settle in Asia and Africa *etc.* and so on. Until every man possesses his own piece of ground, even as Adam would possess his own farming tools and Eve her own household implements (even *vis-a-vis* one another)....

Hence we are immediately told right after the fall that Abel brought 'his offering' of 'the firstlings of his flock' to the Lord -- his offering and his flock which he owned, over against Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground.... And Abraham later insisted that Hagar was his wife's slave, and not his own.... Indeed, right down through the Bible -- private property is presupposed and protected....

"Christ's advent brought about no change in all this. While warning against the misuse and idolization of private property, He Himself clearly stated: 'Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine Own?'

Jesus gave many parables, defending private property to the hilt -- such as the parables of the labourers hired at different times; of the two sons; the husbandmen; the talents; the lost sheep; the lost coin; and the unrighteous steward.<sup>451</sup> Hence, contracts of hire, while certainly entitling the hired labourer to receive his agreed pay in full -- do not entitle him to share in the benefits (and duties) of ownership. And the above, being some of the 'all things' which Christ taught His Disciples, are still to be taught today (by virtue of being included in His Great Commission).<sup>452</sup>

"Nor did the descent of God the Holy Spirit change this. The so-called 'community of property' of the early Christian Church was certainly not communistic. For it was not compulsory, and it only involved the sale of immovable property and the distribution of money to needy Christians alone and a mutual use of unsold goods which remained the property of the owner. Simon the tanner, Mary the mother of Mark, Lydia the purple-seller, and the tentmakers Priscilla and Aquila -- all lived in their own houses. And Paul, who lived in his own 'hired house' -- visited and wrote to the various 'house churches' (which met in privately owned edifices), while he defended the ownership rights both of himself and of others.<sup>453</sup>

"It is true that right after the death of Christ, the Christian owners in Jerusalem -- while retaining their own control over their own goods -- hospitably shared the use of their own things with other Christians. But not with the many Non-Christians in Jerusalem.<sup>454</sup>

"Yet the chief emphasis was not so much on Christian owners sharing the use of their property with other Christians, but rather on their (wholly voluntary and unobligatory) selling of 'their possessions and goods'<sup>455</sup> -- and then using the money thus obtained to help benefit their needy Christian brethren.<sup>456</sup> Such sales were chiefly in respect of non-residential redundant immovable property which would in any case be lost within that very generation during the Roman destruction

of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as the Jerusalem Disciples had been warned by Jesus Himself.<sup>457</sup> So, 'as many (of the Jerusalem Christians) who were possessors of land and houses, sold them.'<sup>458</sup>

"Outside the doomed Jerusalem, however, the early Christians never followed this practice -- but continued to own all of their real estate for themselves.<sup>459</sup> And even inside the doomed Jerusalem, it is clear that each individual Christian family continued to live alone, and separately from other Christians -- 'from house to house' -- in its own family residence.<sup>460</sup>

"Not so much the goods themselves, then, but rather the money realized by their sale was given to needy Christians. The recipients were not given what they felt they wanted, but only what the Apostles knew they needed. Moreover, the recipients were probably themselves required to share much of what they received with other needy Christians too. Not all Christians had the same needs, and the distribution of the money by the Deacons was apostolically supervised and unequally disbursed. Hence, the sellers of the immovable property 'brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet -- and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.'<sup>461</sup>

"The whole action was a voluntary act not for the benefit of all humanity but only for the benefit of such local Christians as had individual needs. The measure was not ordered by any political body with monopoly enforcement powers against the contributors. No Non-Christians nor any Christians outside of Jerusalem were brought into this arrangement. Nor either were any non-needy Jerusalem Christians, or any needy Jerusalem Non-Christians.<sup>462</sup>

"We can accept that the Christian Jerusalem arrangement for the needy faithful was indeed blessed by God, and that it was not a failure (as some assume). Even though the richer Christians in Jerusalem may perhaps have 'overgiven' themselves and thus also played a role in their own later impoverishment,<sup>463</sup> so that they too subsequently had to receive Christian welfare from the younger churches on the foreign mission field.<sup>464</sup> As it was, even the action of Acts chapters two through five was apparently fairly short-lived. We are not told how long it lasted, nor in what manner it ended. We are already told in Acts chapter six, however, that some of the Christian widows were being neglected -- so that permanent Deacons had to be appointed to help them to help themselves.<sup>465</sup> And according to Acts chapter twelve, it is quite certain that Mark's mother never sold and still owned her large house even in Jerusalem.<sup>466</sup>

"The misguided attempts of both 'Christian Socialists' (*sic*) and Non-Christian Leftists to twist Acts chapters two through five and to try to make them teach compulsory liquidation of private property and equal redistribution of wealth (and sometimes even the practice of community of wives) at least among fellow Christians -- is indeed reprehensible. And when even real Christians unwittingly submit to such 'interpretations,' they simply play into the hands of Communists who pervert these chapters and misuse them as tools to try to promote their devilish dialogue and detente with Christians -- in order to try to destroy them."

Compare, for example, Gus Hall's article in *Political Affairs*,<sup>467</sup> official theoretical journal of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. (Comrade Gus, alias Arvo Halberg, was the General Secretary of the American Communist Party, and was nominated as the candidate of the C.P.U.S.A. in the 1976 election for the Presidency of the United States.)



"We repeat -- the 'common Christian ownership' of the early Church, is a fiction. There was indeed some common use of one another's property (excluding the residential use of private homes). And there was also much sale of 'doomed' immovable properties and distribution of the monies realized therefrom to needy Jerusalem Christians. But even this was confined exclusively to the doomed Jerusalem -- destined to be destroyed in A.D. 70, and announced to be doomed both in A.D. 33 and subsequently.<sup>468</sup> And even in that doomed city of Jerusalem, this economic arrangement was only temporary and set up on a completely voluntary basis. As such, it was no model for the Church outside of Jerusalem and Judea in the first century.<sup>459</sup> Nor is it a model for the Church Universal today, which is governed by the normative Biblical directives for individuals to possess their own private property and to use it in the expansion of God's Kingdom on the basis of their own personal response to the Eighth and Tenth Commandments!"<sup>469</sup> (On the word "equality" in the *KJV* translation of Second Corinthians 8:14, cf. notes 518-21 below.)

### **DEACONS AT THE TABLES, THE LOVE FEAST, AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Here we shall merely quote excerpts from the specialist writings of Du Toit, Koole, Postma, and Von Meyenfeldt. We shall weave them into a more or less chronological account of the development of the Passover feast and the *Qiddush* (or pre-sabbath) feast -- into the Lord's Supper and its originally concomitant love feast, with specific reference to the rôle of the Deacons in 'serving the tables.'

Koole observes that the Lord's Supper and the love feast, and the diaconal service of the tables, are all grounded in the Old Testament sabbath meals and Passover feasts (and their later developments in the Jewish practices of the first century A.D). "Judaism too," he writes,<sup>470</sup> "knew of religious meals.... (There were the pre-sabbath) feasts, to which relatives and friends were invited to enjoy an intimate festival -- and where folks were kept occupied with all kinds of subjects of a religious nature.

"And then, of course, there was also the annually recurring Passover.... At that time, the father of the house, or whoever had been requested to take the leadership -- lifted up the cup and expressed the thanksgiving.... After (eating the preliminary foods), the father of the house or the leader took the second cup (of wine).... After the washing of hands, the actual meal of the Passover lamb and the unleavened bread commenced.... At the end of the meal, people still remained at the table for some time. The ceremony then required that the third cup (of wine) be poured. This third cup had an exceptional significance; it was the 'cup of thanksgiving'.... Finally, the second part of the *Hallel* (Psalm 115 through 118) would then follow -- and the fellowship would be terminated with a fourth cup (of wine)....

"Originally, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as the Passover feast'.... He indeed instituted the Lord's Supper, and it was His wish that it would be kept thereafter -- from time to time -- continually....

"(In the maverick and carnal church at Corinth, it had gradually become) customary to observe a social feast which was called 'the Lord's Supper' -- but which, in the light of its manner

of observance, anything but deserved that name. Some would come and eat well, while they allowed others to go hungry. Such folk were not thinking of one another; and still less were they thinking of the Lord Christ -- but only of themselves....

"Now it is clear that this meal was connected with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This appears from the words of the institution which the Apostle quotes a little later (First Corinthians 11:20-23f). Yet the (love feast) meal and the Lord's Supper are not identical. For a table at which one person eats and drinks and another receives nothing, could never have been the Lord's Supper (or common meal) as such.

"Hence, this is discussing a normal social meal, which had some connection to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament could either precede or succeed the (love feast) meal. And the one name ('the time of the Lord's Supper') included both the Sacrament and the meal -- which we can indeed describe with the word *agapee* (or 'love feast')....

"This (love) feast, which was connected to the actual Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, had the exercise of communion as its purpose. For eating together brings folk closer together than conversation does. But above all, these feasts were also to care for the poor -- in that everybody according to his ability brought his gifts along, which were probably to a large extent goods *in natura* (or food). Because this purpose had been lost sight of -- and how easily dissatisfaction could arise, is shown by the example in Acts 6 -- the Apostle (Paul) severely reprimanded the Corinthians. With good reason he asked whether their practice could still truly be called 'the Lord's Supper.' And such misuse (of the Sacrament) was the reason why the 'love feast' was gradually separated from the Lord's Supper, and completely disappeared in later years."<sup>470</sup>

Von Meyenfeldt tells us more about this *agapee* or 'love feast,' especially as it related to the rôle played by the Deacons. "As regards the 'service of the tables,'" he writes,<sup>471</sup> according to most expositors "it had to do with the peculiar way in which the communion of the saints was then experienced. The first Christians were used to having their meals together (*cf.* Acts 2:46 and First Corinthians 11:20f). It was organized thus, (so) that the well-to-do would bring their gifts *in natura* (as food *etc.*).

"The gifts thus consisted of the food that was served. And in this way rich and poor ate together in simplicity of heart. In this sensitive way, the poor were thus received into fellowship. This is also very largely in agreement with the meaning of the Greek word *diakonia*, which is here used for 'the daily ministration' and which we also see used in its verbal form in the mention of the (duty to) 'serve tables.'

"Originally the *Diakonos* (or Deacon) was the table waiter who served the food. He supplied the guests with their means of life. Diaconal service is therefore first and foremost: table service. And here we have come to an important point. For in the Orient, mealtimes are a concentration point of social life.

"Indeed, one does not have to be in the Orient to see this. For I am thinking of what Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw, now deceased, once wrote: 'Primarily, eating together achieved fellowship. Eating together, to a certain extent, is always a matter of social life. We still use the expression 'to cut the tablecloth' -- to indicate the breaking off of fellowship. And we too find it

uncomfortable to eat with somebody with whom we do not feel any kind of fellowship at all. Conversely, a meal is still our best means of expressing and strengthening fellowship at feasts and on solemn occasions'....

"But the 'serving of the tables' is not possible unless the well-to-do give their gifts.... God is a Father of the orphans. Actually, He does not need the rich in order to take care of the poor. And if He condescends to use them, it is not so much for the sake of the poor as it is for the sake of the well-to-do -- in order to make them partakers of the communion of the saints.... After all, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle -- than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven. And only the offering up of the sacrifice of complete self-denial, permits the rich to shelter in the tent of the Lord."<sup>472</sup>

The above now needs to be brought into sharper focus with reference to the institution and function of the Diaconate. As Postma remarks,<sup>473</sup> we read of the Deacons "'serving the tables' (Acts 6:2). By this is meant the love-feasts of which Paul too speaks in First Corinthians 11. It was the custom in the first Christian Congregations to come together frequently and also to have a meal together. At that time, everyone brought food along, as he was able. The well-to-do brought the most; the less-well-to-do brought less; and the very poor brought little or perhaps nothing. But everybody ate together at the love-feast, and whatever was left over was subsequently divided among the poor by the Apostles. And this whole enterprise was called 'serving the tables.'"

One authority even goes so far as to regard 'serving the tables' not as a work of mercy at all, but as the 'love-feasts.'<sup>474</sup> Be that as it may, as Koole remarks of the institution of the Diaconate in Acts six -- "the appointment of the seven men to serve the tables is to be understood to mean that long tables were laid in specific houses, at which tables the needy were regularly fed."<sup>475</sup>

So, then, as H.D.A. du Toit correctly remarks,<sup>476</sup> "the Diaconal Office, as we still know it today, had its origin in Acts 6:1-6.... There (we find) mention of the service of the tables. Brothers and sisters of the same congregation ate at a common table on which out of love toward the Lord they had placed their thankofferings of food. The table at which rich and poor and learned and unlearned jointly sat, was regarded as the table of the Lord. At the end (of the common meal), His death was proclaimed -- and then all of the leftovers were brought to the dwellings of the needy (Christians)."

We should carefully note the function here of the New Testament Deacon against the background and as a progressive development of the similar function of the Old Testament Levite.<sup>477</sup> Probably, then, the rich Christians would lay their 'love-feast' food on the Lord's 'table.'<sup>478</sup> Next, the Deacons would redistribute it to their needy brethren.<sup>479</sup> And perhaps the rich Christians brought their food to the Congregation out of gratitude for (and immediately before or after) themselves receiving the Lord's Supper.<sup>480</sup>

Such 'love-feast giving' was both *in natura* (in the form of food and goods) and in the form of money.<sup>481</sup> A second source of income for the Church, was the sacrificial gifts brought to the Lord's table and/or to the *agapee* festivals.<sup>482</sup> And so it has been, down throughout the subsequent centuries.

The French Huguenots faithfully followed Calvin's Geneva model for the Diaconate, and their Deacons even performed auxiliary services in connection with the administration of the Sacraments. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, members often pushed pieces of money for the poor Christians under the table-napkins at the Lord's table during communion services.<sup>483</sup> The Deacons receive the communion elements from the Minister, and distribute them to the Members to this very day in the largest conservative Calvinistic Church in the world (the DRC of South Africa). And even in 1975, the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* stated<sup>484</sup> that "an offering for the poor or other sacred purpose is appropriate in connection with this (communion) service."<sup>485</sup>

## **DID "DEACONS" STEPHEN AND PHILIP EVER "PREACH" OR BAPTIZE?**

Van der Merwe<sup>486</sup> rightly declares that "there is a closer connection between the diaconal Office and the priestly Office than we have thus far been able to indicate" -- pointing out that "John Mark was certainly a *Chazzan* or *Hupeeretes* and probably a Deacon in the church of Antioch in Syria."<sup>487</sup> But then van der Merwe goes on to undermine the central function of the Diaconate<sup>488</sup> by claiming that "the Evangelist was a missionary Deacon."<sup>486</sup> For, he maintains, Deacons Stephen and Philip (and John Mark?<sup>489</sup> and Timothy and Erastus?<sup>490</sup>) were actually engaged in official "Gospel preaching." Consequently, van der Merwe concludes, the (diaconal) "Helpers" of First Corinthians 12:28 and the "Evangelists" of Ephesians 4:11 would then have been Deacons.

Indeed, Nöske too (*op. cit.*) is of this opinion. While correctly claiming that the central function of the Diaconate indeed consists of neighbourly help and brotherly help -- although we ourselves (F.N. Lee) would prefer to reverse this order (Galatians 6:10) -- Nöske also claims that the auxiliary functions of the Deacons consist of preaching; prayer, and edification of the Church.

We ourselves, however, believe that such "auxiliary functions" of the Deacons would tend to militate against the very reason for their institution (Acts 6:1-4). Stephen's and Philip's public Gospel proclamations were not delivered in their capacity as Deacons, but either in their continuing capacity as occupants of the general Office of all Christians or in their new capacity as post-diaconal subsequently-appointed Preacher-Evangelists.

Macpherson and Coppes share our view. Macpherson<sup>491</sup> states that "the work of...exhorting, in which Stephen laboured so successfully, was performed by him in his capacity as a gifted Christian man -- and not officially as a Deacon." Compare, similarly, Coppes<sup>492</sup> -- who states: "It does not appear that Stephen was involved as an 'official' Teacher in the Church.... Stephen was ordained as and functioned as a Deacon," and his "ordination was not...a recognition and approval and appointment as an authoritative (in the sense common to Teaching Elders) Teacher in the Church. Although an extraordinary Christian and Deacon, Stephen did not exceed the functioning as a Deacon. He stayed within his ordination, by preaching publicly (in street meetings) -- bearing witness (as all Christians were to do, Acts 1:8), to the grace of God."

We ourselves are largely in agreement with Coppes on the above point -- although we do not find any evidence that Stephen 'preached,' as Coppes claims in passing. We ourselves would prefer to say that he 'testified'. However, we think it even more probable that possibly Stephen

and probably Philip completed their Acts 6:6f service in the Diaconate and were subsequently appointed to the non-diaconal and different Office of Preacher-Evangelist before they started their 'proclamations' (which, at least in the case of Philip, were certainly "official" proclamations).<sup>493</sup>

We should note again, then, that Scripture does not say that Stephen "**preached**," but only that he "**spake**"<sup>494</sup> -- so that he may or may not have "preached" as an eloquent (and ex-diaconal?) "Preacher." But we are told that Philip later both preached and administered the Sacrament of Baptism independently of any other Officer. In contrast to the persecuted Christians in the Office of all believers who "gospelled the Word,"<sup>495</sup> the ex-Deacon and now-Preacher Philip (so it seems to us) both "preached"<sup>496</sup> to and baptized both Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch.<sup>497</sup>

Note that the King James Version of the English Bible most unfortunately mistranslates Acts 8:4's *euangelizomenoi* with the wrong word 'preached' in respect of the actions of the persecuted Christians in general.<sup>498</sup> Coppes<sup>499</sup> would therefore appear to be quite correct where he claims that "these men whom we call Deacons...could not...authoritatively teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments" -- provided, of course, that Philip had ceased to be a Deacon and already started to function as a Preacher-Evangelist before he certainly did both.

Even van der Merwe<sup>500</sup> leaves room for the idea of progression from the office of Deacon to the different (preaching and sacrament-administering) Office of Preacher-Evangelist. For he states that there "may be" a "connection between Evangelists and the Diaconal Office" -- in that those Deacons who have served well, may later be commissioned as Evangelists.

Indeed, on this thesis, First Timothy 3:13 could cogently mean that "they that have used the Office of Deacon well (may ultimately occupy or) acquire" the different Office of Elder -- or possibly also that of Preacher-Evangelist. Similarly, First Timothy 5:17 could cogently mean that those Ruling Elders who govern well, may ultimately "acquire" for themselves the different Office of Preaching Elder or Minister of "the Word and doctrine."

In either case, however, the new Office would be acquired or obtained (*peripoiountai*) -- and not "purchased."<sup>501</sup> And the new Office would then represent a *bathmon* or a "chronological" step forward -- rather than a "hierarchical" step upward<sup>502</sup> in the life of service of the gifted Christian.

For a Deacon who becomes an Elder does not thereby get promoted; nor does a Preacher who becomes a Deacon thereby get demoted. Such changes are purely functional. There are no indications whatsoever at First Timothy 3:13 of either increasing or decreasing personal spirituality with such changes in official duties. For the various special offices are co-ordinate and **not** sub-ordinate to one another.

As Macpherson<sup>503</sup> rightly claims: "Saul and Barnabas...were ordained by the laying on of hands ere they entered on their special labours as Missionaries to the Gentiles. The ordination was valid until the Office to which it gave admission, had been laid down. (Note the difference between this view and the hierarchical doctrine of the indelibility of holy orders)... As an ordained Officer-bearer of the Church, the position which the Deacon occupies is as distinctly ecclesiastical as is that of Elder or Minister (of the Word)."

Finally, we ourselves would only add that it is no disgrace for a Preacher to be honourably "de-preacher-ized" and to become a godly "layman" (nor for also an Elder to become honourably "de-elder-ized" and to become a godly Deacon). For even Saul and Barnabas completed their special task as duly commissioned "foreign Missionaries"<sup>504</sup> -- and then once more became just ordinary Apostles.<sup>505</sup> Accordingly, non-hierarchical and Bible-believing denominations make provision for such honorable relinquishing of the various special Offices by those who occupy them in the Church of our Lord.<sup>506</sup>

## ARE "DEACONESSES" INDEED FULLY-FLEDGED "DEACONS"?

Every person and human institution, of whatever age and sex, should serve God -- as His Minister or *Diakonos*.<sup>507</sup> Every Christian (at Baptism) was appointed to general ministry for the Lord. And all female Christians are indeed to be Christ's general prophetesses and priestesses and queens in all that they do.<sup>508</sup> But does this mean that also suitable women may be elected to the Office of Deacon?

Just think of the godly works of Sarah,<sup>509</sup> Rahab,<sup>510</sup> Ruth and Naomi,<sup>511</sup> Esther,<sup>512</sup> and Mary the mother of Jesus.<sup>513</sup> Consider too Mary Magdelene and Joanna and Susanna and the many other women who ministered to Jesus with their possessions and through their services.<sup>514</sup> Priscilla the tentmaker and Lydia the businesswoman greatly helped Paul and others Preachers.<sup>515</sup> And Timothy's mother and grandmother gave him his first groundings in the Holy Scriptures they themselves had so commendably absorbed.<sup>516</sup>

It is of course true, from Genesis to Revelation, that males only were ordained to the three special Offices. Yet but few males ever qualified to become prophetic Preachers (as distinct from unordained though gifted ladies like Deborah and Hulda who prophesied). Few males became priestly Deacons (as distinct from unordained though gifted Deaconesses like Phoebe and the sixty-year-old widows who often helped the ordained Diaconate). And few males became kingly Elders (as distinct from non-ecclesiastical queens like Athaliah and Candace). Yet, even in the Pre-Christian Synagogues, 'Deaconesses' seem to have functioned.<sup>517</sup>

These three special Church Offices of Preachers, Deacons and Elders seem to root in the triple work of the male Second Adam's Prophethood, Priesthood and Kingship. That in turn roots in the similar special Office of the 'first Adam' before Eve had been created. And that, in turn, roots in the Triune Office of Jehovah Himself -- Who created Adam as His Own image. He (not She) created!

"The Head of every man, is Christ; and the head of the woman, is the man; and the Head of Christ, is God.... A man...is the image and glory of God.... The woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."<sup>518</sup>

"I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man.... For Adam was first formed, then Eve."<sup>519</sup> "So God created man (Adam) as His Own image, as the image of God He created him; male (first) and female (second) He created."<sup>520</sup> "God said: 'It is not good that the man (Adam) should be alone. I will make him a help, meet for him"; human, like him."<sup>521</sup>

However, since Adam's fall, only a few of the many adult male believers have ever been qualified enough to meet the minimum Biblical requirements for Special Office in the Church of God.<sup>522</sup> It is a grave sin to ordain unqualified males to Special Office. But it only compounds the transgression by trying to ordain godly ladies to Special Church Offices open only to qualified adult males.

Although the Early Church indeed provided for the appointment of qualified Deaconesses, it never permitted the election of ladies as Deacons or Elders. Thus Scripture; the *Didachee*; First Clement; Cyprian; Ambrosiaster; *etc.* So too Luther, Calvin, Knox, and all consistently confessional Presbyterians. Cf. the 1560 *Scots Confession*:<sup>523</sup> "The Holy Ghost will not permit (women) to preach in the Congregation (or) to baptize." See too the *Westminster Confession*.<sup>524</sup>

Godly ladies should serve their Saviour as follows. First, they should serve Him in every legitimate way -- as too should godly men and godly children. Second, they should serve Him outside the Church (in the family and in business). Third, they should serve Him (full-time or part-time) in every legitimate church job for which they may be qualified (such as church secretary, treasurer, organist, or lyricist). And fourth, very mature Christian ladies with no family responsibilities are appointable to serve Him as full-time Church Deaconesses -- assisting the male Diaconate especially in matters difficult for the male Deacons themselves to attend to, such as the care of tiny orphans and the rehabilitation of street women and the intraining of Deaconesses.

All Old Testament and New Testament Elders (and Levites and Priests) were exclusively males. So too were all the New Testament Deacons ordained into that 'priestly' Office -- even though elected to care for neglected widows.<sup>525</sup> Yet even in those apostolic times, certain qualified Christian ladies helped those male Deacons -- in the ladies' own auxiliary ministry of 'Deaconesses'.<sup>526</sup>

And later, not only the male Deacons but so too the "women" who obviously helped them, were to be faithful in their tasks of caring for widows and orphans; of showing mercy to the sick; of providing hospitality; and of helping many.<sup>527</sup> Not 'Boards of Management' but Deacon(esse)s did this.

So Paul saw women as well established in the life of the Church.<sup>528</sup> The 111f A.D. Roman Pliny mentions female "*Ministrae*,"<sup>529</sup> the Latin equivalent of male *Diakono*i in the Church. The 113f A.D. Ignatius said: "Let...the widows...be like Judith...and like Anna."<sup>529</sup> The A.D. 120 Polycarp said:<sup>530</sup> "Our widows must be sober-minded..., making intercession...for all" and "knowing that they are God's altar."

The 194f A.D. Clement of Alexandria wrote in his *Stromata* that "we know of female Deacons."<sup>531</sup> And the 198f A.D. Tertullian describes women's organizations in the Church, which served other women and advised about marriages and child-rearing.<sup>532</sup>

But in his *On Baptism*, Tertullian bewails<sup>533</sup> the fact that "a viper of the 'Cainite' heresy...has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine.... That most monstrous creature...had no right to teach even sound doctrine (First Timothy 2:11f)." And in his

*Prescription against Heretics*, he wrote:<sup>534</sup> "The very women of these heretics...are bold enough to teach...; to undertake cures; it may even be to baptize. Their 'ordinations' are carelessly administered.... Today, he [she] is a Deacon[ess] who tomorrow is a Reader. Today, he [she] is a Presbyter who tomorrow [has]...the functions of Priesthood!"

The 220f A.D. Hippolytus says widows may be enrolled on the church lists, after a trial, as salaried administrators of prayer and welfare.<sup>535</sup> And the 250 A.D. Origen sees Phoebe in that light.<sup>536</sup> All Deaconesses work as the 'helpers' of the Deacons.

In the third century A.D., the *Didascalia Apostolorum* ordained:<sup>537</sup> "Bishop, appoint yourself workers of righteousness, helpers who cooperate with you!... You shall choose and appoint as Deacons on the one hand a man for the administration of many things..., on the other hand a woman for the ministry of women."

The 275 to 325f A.D.<sup>538</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions* say<sup>539</sup> Deaconesses were encouraged to look after ladies, but not allowed to officiate as Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. "Sometimes a Deacon, who is a man, cannot be sent to the women.... Therefore, send a woman, a Deaconess.... For we stand in need of a woman, a Deaconess, for many necessities."

Such women were then ordained into that office. "O Bishop, you shall lay your hands upon her in the presence of the Presbytery and of the Deacons and Deaconesses, and shall say: 'O Eternal God...Who replenished with the Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Anna and Hulda,'<sup>540</sup> Who did not disdain that Your Only-begotten Son should be born of a woman; Who also in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple ordained women to be keepers of Your holy gates<sup>541</sup> -- now also look down upon this servant of Yours who is to be ordained to the Office of a Deaconess, and grant her Your Holy Spirit and cleanse her from all filthiness of flesh and spirit so that she may worthily discharge the work which is committed to her to Your glory and to the praise of Your Christ" *etc.*

From the end of the fourth century A.D., tomb inscriptions tell their tale. "Here lies the slave and [celibate] bride of Christ, Sophia the Deacon (*hee Diakonos*), the second Phoebe."<sup>542</sup> And a sixth-century tombstone declares:<sup>543</sup> "Here lies the Deacon Maria...who...raised children, sheltered guests, washed the feet of the saints, and shared her bread with the needy."

From 445f A.D. onward, Theodoret of Cyrus mentions<sup>544</sup> the case of "a lady remarkable for her devotion and admitted to the order of Deaconess." Says Schaff in his *History of the Christian Church*:<sup>545</sup> "The Office of Deaconess...was necessary to the completion of the Diaconate...; originated in the apostolic age; continued in the Eastern Church down to the twentieth century.... Its functions were the care of the female poor, sick, and imprisoned; assisting in the baptism of adult women; and...the preparation of women for baptism by private instruction.... From regard to the apostolic precept in First Timothy 5:9, the Deaconesses were required to be sixty years of age (*cf.* Titus 3:3f)."

However, in 451 A.D., the General Church Council of Chalcedon reduced the Scriptural age of widows who become Deaconesses from sixty to forty. It decreed that "a woman shall not receive the laying on of hands as a Deaconess under forty years of age -- and then, only after searching examination."<sup>546</sup>



This led to further corruption of the Office. By the time of Chrysostom (393 to 460 A.D.), women Deaconesses were firmly entrenched. Commenting on First Timothy 3:10's 'Let them use the Office of a Deacon' and 'Even so must their wives be grave' – Chrysostom remarks:<sup>547</sup> "Some have thought that this is said of women generally. But it is not so.... He is speaking of those who hold the rank of Deaconesses."

Subsequently, as Schaff further remarked:<sup>548</sup> "The adoption of the care of the poor and sick by the State..., made female assistance [in the Church] less needful." As the totalitarianizing State became a channel of grace(?) -- the Church wilted.

Especially in the submersionistic East, the work of Deaconesses got out of hand. There, the 483-565 A.D. Emperor Justinian directed the Archbishop of Constantinople to appoint 40 women Deacons.<sup>549</sup> The 683-708 A.D. James of Edessa said Deaconesses could "sweep the sanctuary and light the sanctuary lamp" and even take "the Holy Sacrament from the tabernacle and distribute it."<sup>550</sup> The eighth-century *Barberini Greek Euchology* has the Archbishop say: "Lord, Master, You do not reject women...but admit them to the order of your Ministers."<sup>551</sup> And as the twelfth or thirteenth century's *Liber Patrum* declares:<sup>552</sup> "Deaconesses...should be chaste and modest and sixty years or older in age. They carry out the Sacrament of Baptism for women, because it is not fitting that the Priest should view the nudity of women." Too, Deaconesses took the Eucharist to women who could not attend church.<sup>553</sup>

Especially in the mediaeval Western Church, there was swift and successive reaction to all this. The 396 A.D. *Synod of Nimes* declared<sup>554</sup> women had "assumed for themselves the Ministry of the Levites..., against apostolic discipline and...unheard of until this time." The 441 A.D. *First Council of Orange* ordered:<sup>555</sup> "In no way whatsoever should Deaconesses ever be ordained." The 517 A.D. *Burgundian Council of Epaon* ruled:<sup>556</sup> "We abrogate totally within the entire kingdom the consecration of widows who are named Deaconesses." The 533 A.D. *Second Synod of Orleans* stated:<sup>557</sup> "To no woman must henceforth the *benedictio diaconalis* be given, because of the weakness of the sex." And, by way of later comment, according to Luther,<sup>558</sup> there should be no attempts to equate the "manly and divine priesthood" of special ecclesiastical Office with a "satanic superstitious female priesthood."

But Calvin resurrected this indeed needful office of Deaconess. By 1535, women were employed by his Church to nurse the sick and care for the poor and the widows and the orphans -- in the 'Great Hospital' of Geneva.<sup>559</sup>

In his *Commentary* on Acts six, Calvin insists:<sup>560</sup> "Luke is telling us here about the creation of Deacons.... Widows were [later] chosen for the 'Diaconate' of the Church [Romans 12:8b and First Timothy 5:9f].... So that Ministers [of the Word and Sacraments] may urge themselves on -- let them frequently remind themselves of this sentence (Acts 6:2 *cf.* 6:4) in which the Apostles testify that they must give up the care of the poor, since they have been called to the Office of Teaching!"

Yet, even if Priscilla were to have been a Deaconess -- or even a Deacon -- she was not allowed to teach publically. Calvin states<sup>561</sup> that her husband "Aquila, and Priscilla, are not devoted to themselves.... They give private and intimate instruction to an eloquent man

[Apollos] about the things which he is to present in public afterwards.... They are eager to help a man whom they see to be better equipped both with eloquence and the use of the Scripture -- on the condition that they themselves are to remain silent while he alone is to speak....

"Apollos was unusually modest. For he allowed himself to be taught and refined not only by a manual worker but also by a woman. For he [Apollos] was mighty in Scripture, and far superior to them.... Priscilla carried out this instruction privately within the walls of her own home -- so that she might not destroy the order prescribed by God and by nature."

In Romans 12:4-8, Calvin stresses<sup>562</sup> "how necessary it is for each individual to consider what is appropriate to his nature, capacity and calling.... Each should regulate himself according to the measure of his ability -- and not thrust himself into the duties which belong to others. No one should seek to have all things at one time, but should be content with his lot and willingly refrain from usurping the Offices of others....

"When Paul speaks here of 'givers' (*metadidontas*), he does not mean those who give their own possessions -- but technically the Deacons who are charged with the distribution of the public property of the church. When he speaks of 'those who show mercy' (*eleountas*), he means Widows and other Ministers who were appointed to take care of the sick according to the custom of the Ancient Church. The functions of providing what is necessary for the poor, and of devoting care to their attention -- are different."

In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin distinguishes<sup>563</sup> the male Deacons from the 'Widows' whom he elsewhere calls<sup>564</sup> not female 'Deacons' but, quite differently, 'Deaconesses.' Here he says that "the care of the poor was committed to Deacons, of whom two classes are mentioned....

"He that gives, let him do it with simplicity'; 'he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness' (Romans 12:8).... As it is certain that he is here speaking of public Offices of the Church, there must have been two distinct Classes....

"He [Paul] in the former clause [Romans 12:8a] designates Deacons who administered alms; in the latter [Romans 12:8b], those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and such. Such [devoted caretakers] were the 'Widows' -- of whom he {Paul} makes mention in the Epistle to Timothy (First Timothy 5:10). For there was no public Office which women could discharge -- save that of elevating themselves to the service of the poor.

"If we admit this -- and it certainly ought to be admitted -- there will be two classes of Administrators (*Diaconorum*)." Namely the 'Deacons' (or *Diaconi*) on the one hand, and the 'Deaconesses' (or *Diaconissai*) on the other.

"The one" [alias the 'Deacons'] will keep on "serving the Church by administering the affairs of the poor; the other [alias the 'Deaconesses'], by taking care of the poor themselves.... Scripture specially gives the name of 'Deacons' to those whom the Church appoints to dispense alms.... Their origin...and Office is described by Luke [in Acts 6:3]..., to elect seven men...to whom the Office might be committed. Such Deacons as the Apostolic Church had -- it behooves us to have after her example."

In Romans 16:1f, Calvin comments<sup>565</sup> that Paul "begins by commending Phoebe -- the bearer of this epistle. First, on account of her Office -- because she exercised a very honourable and Holy Ministry in the Church.... Paul therefore requests that she should be received in the Lord because she is a servant (a female *ministra*) of the Church at Cenchreae" -- though neither a Minister of the Word and Sacraments, nor an Elder, nor a male Deacon.

"It is fitting that we should...bestow particular love and honour upon those who exercise any public Office in the Church. But also, as she (Phoebe) has invariably shown kindness to all the brethren -- Paul now bids them in return [to] provide her [Phoebe] with help and assistance in the matters that concerned her.

"The character of the Ministry [of Phoebe] which he is discussing, is also described in First Timothy 5:10. The poor were supported out of the public funds of the Church, and were looked after by persons charged with that duty. For this last, Widows were chosen who -- since they were free from domestic duties and not hindered by children -- desired to dedicate themselves wholly to God for religious service. They were therefore received into this Office -- to which they were bound and under obligation.

"The Apostle therefore accuses them of breach of faith if, having taken on an Office, they later renounce it (First Timothy 5:11)... He forbids them to be chosen, if they are less than sixty years of age -- because he foresaw that a vow of perpetual celibacy was dangerous and indeed harmful below that age. At a time of increasing degeneracy in the Church [during the Middle Ages], this most holy Office -- which was of very great use to the Church -- became corrupted into the idle order of nuns."

Also First Corinthians 11 to 14 is of some importance here. Calvin comments:<sup>566</sup> "I take 'prophesying' to mean here, explaining the mysteries of God.... Paul is not discussing prayer in general here, but prayer in public worship.... All that Paul is after, is that it may be made clear that the man is in authority and that the woman is in subjection to him....

"It seems to be unnecessary for Paul to forbid a woman to prophesy bare-headed -- since in First Timothy 2:12 he debar women from speaking [*viz.* giving public addresses] in the church altogether.... They would have no right to prophesy.... The Apostle expects this unassuming conduct from women not only in the place where the whole Congregation is assembled -- but also in any of the more formal gatherings...such as sometimes meet in private houses.

"Paul is not dealing here with innocence and holiness, which women can have just as well as men, but about the pre-eminence which God has given to the man -- so that he might be superior to the woman.... Woman took her origin from the man.... Therefore she has a lower standing.... Woman has been created for the sake of the man, and therefore she is subject to him.... Paul looks higher, *viz.* to the eternal Law of God which has made the female sex subject to the authority of men. Therefore, all women are born to submit to the pre-eminence of the male sex....

"When women go so far as to presume to do what they like and, against the Law of both God and men, appropriate the sign of power for themselves -- they let the angels see how unseemly they are.... The Apostle...says that when women rise to a higher place than they are

entitled to -- all that their efforts amount to, is that they let the angels of Heaven know how presumptuous they are.

"Man has no life without the woman -- because that would mean a head cut off from the body. Nor has the woman any existence without the man -- for that would be a body without the head. Let the man therefore carry out his function as the head -- having supremacy over her! Let the woman perform her function as the body -- giving help to him! Let that be the rule not only for married people -- but also for the unmarried! For I am not concerned with marriage here, but with public obligations which also have a place in the lives of people who are not married.

"Let the man exercise his authority with moderation -- and not ill-treat the woman who has been given to him as his companion! Let the woman be content in her position of subjection -- and not feel indignant because she has to play second fiddle to the superior sex! Otherwise, they will both throw off the yoke of God Who has made those differences in their positions so that they might be beneficial to them.... When the man and woman cease fulfilling their obligations to each other -- they are rebelling against the authority of God."

A little later, at First Corinthians 12:28, Paul says: 'God has set some in the Church, first [as] Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers; after that [the performers of] miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments.' Calvin comments:<sup>567</sup> "The Apostle is detailing Offices here.... The word *antilempseis* (*i.e.* supports or helps)...refers to something which was both an Office and a gift..., or it has to do with the work of the Diaconate -- that is to say, the care of the poor. I prefer the second explanation....

"The Corinthian Church was also spoiled by...the chattering of women.... Paul accordingly forbid them to speak in public -- either by way of teaching, or prophesying.... Someone will say: 'What is there to prevent them teaching -- even although they are in subjection?' I reply that the task of teaching is one that belongs to someone with oversight -- and is for this reason inconsistent with being in subjection." Cf First Corinthians 11:3-10 and Ephesians 5:22f and Colossians 3:18 and First Timothy 2:11 to 3:4 and Titus 1:5f and First Peter 3:1-7.

"How unsuitable it would be for a woman who is in subjection to one of the Members [*viz.* her husband] -- to be in an authoritative position over the whole body!... The woman is in subjection. She is therefore debarred from having authority to teach in public.... Women in all ages have been excluded from the control of public affairs.... Common sense tells us that rule by women is improper.... Authority to teach is out of keeping with the woman's rôle. Because, if she does teach, she is set over all men -- whereas she should properly be under subjection."

Paul wrote also to 'all the saints...at Philippi with the Bishops and Deacons.' Calvin comments<sup>568</sup> that the word 'Deacons' (the masculine *Diakonois*) means "Administrators and Curators of the poor.... I understand it...as Stewards who superintended the distributing and receiving of alms." The word 'Deacons' is here the masculine *Diakonois* -- not the feminine *Diakonais* (Deaconesses).

Commenting on First Timothy 2:11f, Calvin explains<sup>569</sup> Paul prohibited Christian women "to speak in public..., by forbidding them to teach.... Paul is not taking from women their duty

to instruct their family, but is only excluding them from the Office of Teaching (*a Munere Docendi*) which God has committed exclusively to men.

"He goes on to mention something closely connected with the Office of Teaching -- viz. 'nor to have authority over a man.' The reason that women are prevented from teaching, is that it is not compatible with their status which is to be subject to men -- whereas to teach, implies superior authority and status.... Women...by nature -- that is, by the ordinary Law of God -- are born to obey. For all wise men have always rejected *gunaikokratian* -- the government by women -- as an unnatural monstrosity.... For a woman to usurp the right to teach -- would be a sort of mingling of Earth and Heaven. Thus he bids them be silent and abide within the limits of their sex.

"He gives two reasons why women should be subject to men -- that God imposed this as a Law from the beginning; and also that He inflicted it upon women by way of punishment.... Even if the human race had remained in its original integrity, the true order of nature prescribed by God lays it down that woman should be subject to man.... In the ruins that result from sin, there remain some remnants of the divine blessing. For it would not be right that woman should improve her position by her sin.

"The teaching of Moses is that woman was created later, to be a kind of appendage to the man -- on the express condition that she should be ready to obey him. Thus, since God did not create two 'heads' of equal standing but added to the man a lesser helpmate -- the Apostle is right to remind us of the order of their creating, in which God's eternal and inviolable appointment is clearly displayed.

"'And Adam was not beguiled!' He (Paul) is referring to the punishment inflicted upon the woman. 'Because you have obeyed the voice of the serpent, you shall be under the authority of your husband -- and your desire shall be to him' (Genesis 3:16).... Since she had seduced the man from God's Commandment -- it was fitting that she should be deprived of all her freedom and placed under the yoke.

"Moreover, the Apostle does not base his argument simply or merely on the cause of the transgression -- but on the sentence pronounced upon it, by God.... There is no reason why obedience should not have been her natural condition from the beginning -- while servitude was a later consequence resulting from her sin -- so that the subjection became less voluntary than it had been before.

"It could...reduce women to despair -- to hear the whole ruin of the human race imputed to them.... Thus Paul, seeking to comfort them, reminds them that although they suffer temporal punishment -- the hope of salvation remains to them.... They become accustomed to bearing with equanimity and calmness the necessity of being in servitude to their husbands.... They willingly submit to them, when they are reminded that obedience of this kind is both good for them and pleasing to God....

"Having just forbidden the Teaching Office to women -- he (Paul) now takes the opportunity to speak of that Office itself. His reason is, first, to make it clear that he had good reasons for excluding women from the exercise of such a demanding duty. Second, to avoid the

appearance of excluding only women and of being ready to admit all men indiscriminately. And thirdly, because it was right that he should warn Timothy and others how much care they should take in choosing Bishops. Thus the connection with the previous passage is...as if Paul had said that -- so far from women being fit to obtain that office -- not even men should be admitted to it without discrimination.

"Paul does not require of a Bishop that he should be without experience in the ordinary life of men, but rather that he should be a good and well-tested family man.... A man who does not know how to rule his own family, is unsuited to govern in the Church of God.... The man who here wins the Apostle's approval, is not the one who is clever and cunning in domestic matters -- but he who has learnt to rule his family with wholesome discipline....

"The Deacons, in like manner' (First Timothy 3:8).... It is certain that the Apostle is referring to men who hold public Office in the Church.... By Deacons, we are to understand those mentioned by Luke in Acts 6:3 -- Officers, that is, who are entrusted with the care of the poor.... He wants those who are chosen Deacons, to be men of experience whose integrity has been proved -- just as with the Bishops.... The appointment of Deacons should not be a rash and random choice of any who come to hand -- but men who have commended themselves by their past manner of life should be selected.

"Women in like manner' (First Timothy 3:11). He refers here to the wives of both Bishops and Deacons. For they must help their husbands in their Office.... Having mentioned women, he once again lays down for Deacons what he has already required of Bishops -- that each should be content with one wife; should set an example of chaste and honourable family life; and should keep their children and their whole household in a holy discipline (First Timothy 3:12).

"They that have served well as Deacons' (First Timothy 3:13). In view of the practice of choosing Presbyters from among the Deacons..., this passage has been taken to refer to a translation to a higher status -- as if the Apostle were calling those who had been faithful Deacons into Office as Presbyters. I for my part do not deny that the Diaconate may sometimes be the nursery from which Presbyters are chosen.... It [the work of a Deacon] is not a menial task, but a highly honourable Office. By so speaking -- he makes it clear how profitable it is for the Church to have this work done by carefully chosen men."

In his sermon on First Timothy three, Calvin adds:<sup>570</sup> "Paul has...precisely required these virtues in the Ministers. He adds, 'They must govern their own houses well and have their children subject with all reverence'.... A man may in no way be entertained to govern the flock of God, unless he can behave himself constantly.... A poor man living with his wife and children and servants, ought to be like a public governor in his house....

"He that will do his duty well, being a Shepherd of a Congregation, must be as it were a father of all the faithful. Now if a man cannot govern two or three children which are in his house...when they are his own children, yet cannot keep them in subjection..., how can he govern them that are far off?...

"How can he keep men in awe when his own wife will not be subject to him?... It be required in all Shepherds that they be well able, ruling, householders.... If I would show men and

women how they should govern themselves, if I would reprove their faults -- if my house be so far out of square that men may mock at it -- what case am I in?"

Commenting on First Timothy 5:9f, Calvin explains<sup>571</sup> the meaning of Paul's words 'Let not be enrolled as a Widow!' Here, Paul "lays down once again what 'Widows' should be received into the Church's care [in their special Church Office].... They must be sixty years old, for since they were to be supported at the public expense it was but right that they should have reached old age.... It was intolerable that they should dedicate themselves to the service of the Church if there still remained any likelihood of their being remarried.... They, on their side, should be employed in ministering to the poor -- as far as their health allowed. Thus, there was a mutual obligation between them and the Church....

"He does not want women under sixty to be received.... The fact that a woman has reached that age and has been content with one husband, may be taken as a sort of pledge of her continence and chastity.... The communities [of 'Widows'] were not intended for leisure or lazy inactivity, but to help the poor and sick -- until the women [*viz.* the 'Widows'] were worn out and could honourably rest in retirement. Thus, to have them prepared to perform such an Office, he [Paul] wants them to have had long experience of the duties that belong to it -- such as labour and diligence in bringing up children; hospitality; helping the poor; and other charitable works....

"God's Spirit, speaking through Paul, has laid it down that no woman of less than sixty is worthy of that order [of Widows].... Later [in 451 A.D.] they reduced the age at which virgins might take the veil [and be admitted into the order], to forty -- and later again to thirty -- till at last they began to accept all freely, without any age qualification.... No woman should be accepted -- whose age would ever lead her to desire marriage.... That women who were still young should be admitted into the order of Widows..., was a dangerous and harmful practice!"

In Calvin's sermon on First Timothy 5:9-14,<sup>572</sup> he "adds 'that no widow must be chosen but such as are threescore years old'.... When the widows are such, they must be received -- else not.... These widows had a Church Office, as we see from the last chapter to the Romans [16:1f], where he commends a widow [Phoebe] whom he calls 'Minister of the church of Cenchrea'....

"The widows served for the poor to see to them, and to furnish them with such necessities as are meet for women.... This Office was honourable, as all the Offices in God's House are holy.... When Saint Paul will not have widows chosen but of three score years, it is for this cause that considering they dedicated themselves to the service of the Church they renounced their families forever after.... He has shown us...that widows which have children must govern them and employ themselves therein...

"When Saint Paul speaks here of the election of widows, he shows us thereby what care we ought to have.... Why does Saint Paul so diligently exhort that no widows be chosen but such as may serve the Church of God and do their duty? Because they are to be set in public Office.... Where are nowadays the widows that should have this honourable Office?... It is to the end we should learn to keep such an Order in the Church....

"Mark it well, what Saint Paul sets down here! First of all, he will have no widows to be chosen nor received under threescore years at the least.... Paul shows that women cannot be fit

to serve God and the Church unless they have been good housewives in their houses, and have taken pains to nourish their children....

"Paul shows in plain words that they who were not thus exercised and proved long beforehand to do good to strangers, if they should be appointed for the Church -- would never be good to execute this public Office of seeing to the poor.... Let us mark...when we have to place any in any Office, that we must see what the Office requires.... For if we begin by the man and say 'Ho, he is a proper man; he will do wonders!' -- all that is but pomp; it is nothing but vanity! But if we enquire first of the Office..., then we work wisely....

"Let us learn (according to St. Paul's doctrine) that in choosing them that must be put in any Office of the Church of God, to consider especially what the Office requires.... When St. Paul commands Timothy to refuse younger widows, it is not to dishonour them...if they be not chosen to Office.... Paul's meaning...is not that younger widows shall not be put in Office because of their age, but to prevent offences that might arise.... 'Refuse the younger widows!'....

"Paul takes order that the young widows who are still marriageable, should marry.... Their housewifery will keep them at home. They must serve God therein.... Paul has given a very profitable precept in setting order that the younger widows should marry.... God dwells rather in those households, than in cloisters... God will reign in a little household...where the husband and the wife give themselves to do their duty."

Once more, in his *Institutes*, Calvin cites First Timothy 5:9-12. Here, he explains:<sup>573</sup> "Widows who dedicated themselves and their labours to the Church, at the same time come under an obligation of perpetual celibacy.... Because they could not perform their functions unless they had their time at their own command and were free from the nuptial tie.... Those widows who were admitted to a public Ministry came under an obligation of perpetual celibacy.... Marriage was altogether inconsistent with the function which they undertook. Hence, they bound themselves to celibacy only in so far as the nature of their function required....

"Deaconesses were appointed...to perform the public Ministry of the Church towards the poor.... They did not vow celibacy so that they might thereafter exhibit abstinence from marriage as a kind of worship rendered to God -- but only so that they might be freer from encumbrance in executing their Office.... It was unlawful to allow women to take a vow of continence before their sixtieth year, since the Apostle admits such only -- and enjoins the younger to marry and beget children. Therefore it is impossible on any ground to excuse the deduction first of twelve then of twenty and lastly of thirty years."

Paul commands Titus<sup>574</sup> to see to it that 'aged men be sober' -- and 'aged women likewise.... So that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be...keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.'

Calvin here comments<sup>575</sup> that "old women...are...to...train 'the young women' by their instruction in an honourable and modest way of life.... In reminding older women of their duties..., he want women...to regulate their households soberly and with moderation. He tells them...to be chaste and modest and subject to their husbands."



The 'aged women' here, remind one of the widows above sixty in First Timothy 5:9 whom Calvin said<sup>576</sup> were Deaconesses like Phoebe. In his sermon on Titus 2, Calvin says<sup>577</sup> "also the women have by and by their rôle and instruction.... For it is not meet for Christian women to prank up themselves.... That is a thing in no wise to be borne with among Christians....

"Likewise...the elder women...instruct the younger women in wisdom to love their husbands, to love their children, to be...tarrriers at home..., subject to their husbands'.... Paul will have young women to learn modesty.... The virtues that ought to be in women already stricken in years...is...'that they should love their husbands and their children, that they should be tarrriers at home; and that they should be quiet with their husbands'.... Men see that [many] wives which are fond of their husbands, [do nevertheless] disobey them...and leave their children and households alone.... They should tarry at home with their husbands in good unity!...

"I do not know what sort of vain bibblebabbles drive women out of their houses, and make them to rovc.... Since it is so -- let a woman believe she has profited in the Gospel, when she can occupy herself quietly at home in her own house and can keep herself at home diligently!"

Also First Peter 3:1-7 states: 'Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands..., while they behold you...whose adorning...be...a meek and quiet spirit.... In this way, in the old time also the holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him "lord".... Husbands, dwell with them knowledgeably, giving honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel!'

Comments Calvin:<sup>578</sup> "He proceeds now to...bid...wives to be subject to their husbands.... The spiritual adorning of women consists...of 'the incorruptness of a meek and quiet spirit'.... He mentions Sarah...because, as the mother of all the faithful, she is especially worthy of honour and imitation on the part of her sex.... She, according to the words of Moses, called her husband 'lord' (Genesis 18:12).... Peter means that Sarah usually spoke thus, because she knew that the command had been given her by the Lord to be subject to her husband. Peter adds that those who have imitated her fidelity, would be her daughters....

"The weakness of their sex makes women suspicious and timid.... Peter seems...as though he were saying, 'Submit willingly to the authority of your husbands!'.... Husbands ought to live with them knowledgeably, 'as with a weaker vessel'.... Peter does not unreasonably order women to be cared for and be honoured with a gentle treatment, because they are weak."

Finally, writing "about government by women," Calvin said:<sup>579</sup> "it is utterly at variance with the legitimate order of nature. It ought to be counted among the judgments with which God visits us.... A government of this kind seem to be nothing else than a mere abuse."

Calvin warned the Mompelgard Ministers:<sup>580</sup> "If the authorities try to establish the practice of baptism by women, this must be resisted -- even unto blood." Indeed, "the sin is the greater -- when it is plain that the rule delivered by Christ (Matthew 28:19 cf. Hebrews 5:4) is violated."<sup>581</sup>

Also Calvin's student John Knox condemned the "regime(nt) of women." Indeed, he held it to be "a deviation from the original and proper will of God -- to which the Gentile is not less bound than was the Jew."<sup>582</sup>

As the *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America (10-4 & 10-7) points out: "To the Office of Deacon...shall be chosen **men** (not women!) of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly (not sisterly!) spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.... It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint godly men and women of the Congregation to **assist** the Deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need."

It should all be anchored in the Ontological Trinity. The Father is certainly not the Son. Yet the Son is just as much God as is the Father. For Each is harmoniously bound together with the Other, in the love of their common Spirit.

So too, a womb-man is certainly not a man; yet a wo-man is just as hu-man as is a man. For each is harmoniously bound together with the other, in the love of their common hu-man-ity. Indeed, the all-male Tri-une God equally made man and wo-man (and their hu-man child). He made them all -- as His tri-une image; with a common hu-man-ity; despite their 'equally ultimate' essential differences. And just as the Father alone is the First Person in the Trinity, the Son and the Spirit are personally subordinate to the Father despite their ontological equality to Him.

Hence too, the local Session consists only of all-male Elders and the Preacher(s). Under it, resides the all-male Board of Deacons in the local Diaconate. And under it, resides the Deaconess or the all-female Council of Deaconesses in the local Auxiliary.

For God made the all-male Adam first, before Eve. Then, the all-male Priests. Then, their successors the all-male Deacons, even to tend to the needs of the all-female widows (Acts 6:1-7). And then Non-Diaconate Deaconesses to assist the all-male Deacons on the Diaconate.

Holy Scripture says this job of Deaconess involves the following. General assistance in congregational affairs and helping many in need (Romans 16:1f); providing comprehensive help (First Timothy 3:11); collaborating in promoting the Gospel (Philippians 4:3); teaching young women to be good homemakers (Titus 2:3f *cf.* First Timothy 5:9f); caring especially for needy widows and orphans (First Timothy 5:4f); performing a ministry of constant prayers (First Timothy 5:5); combatting frivolity, gossip, insobriety and unfaithfulness in women (First Timothy 3:11f); providing hospitality (Romans 12:13b); and performing good works such as washing or dressing sick patients, and/or providing shelter for needy believers such as strangers and widows and orphans *etc.* (First Timothy 5:5,10).

Prerequisites for the job of Deaconess include the following. Femaleness (First Timothy 3:11); maturity and experience (First Timothy 5:9-14); seriousness and faithfulness (First Timothy 3:11); sexagenarianhood, celibacy and no family responsibilities (First Timothy 5:9-15 *cf.* First Corinthians 7:24-30); and hospitableness, compassion, and diligence (First Timothy 3:10 *cf.* 5:10). Jobs suitable for Deaconesses include: evangelizing women (Clement of Alexandria); extending hospitality (Chrysostom); care of the poor and the sick (Calvin on Romans 12:8); and running retirement homes, relief agencies, organising weddings, directing convalescent care *etc.* -- all and only in the name of Christ.<sup>583</sup>

Even the majority of women who cannot meet these high requirements for the job of Deaconess, can still serve the Lord in at least two other ways. First, there is a need for Christian

ladies in Non-Deaconess church work (*e.g.* as church typistes, as social workers, Sunday-school teachers (solely for females where the pupils are mature); church newspaper editors; church workers in women's prisons; church musicians; *etc.*). Second, Christian ladies are urgently required in Non-Church work (*e.g.* as schoolteachers; court officials; and businesswomen *etc.*).

So there are still plenty of jobs for Christian women in the home and in business. Also in the Church. Even as sexagenarian Deaconesses, under the rule of all-male Deacons. But not as Preachers; nor as Elders; nor even as Deacons!

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE DIACONATE AND ITS FUNCTIONS

States Roscam Abbing: "God Himself is actually the great Deacon."<sup>584</sup> For the Bible's Triune Lord (as the 'overlapping' Prophet-Priest-King) -- and the Holy Spirit in particular -- is our great diaconal Helper.<sup>585</sup> Yet He has also instituted human Officers, through whose official actions He Himself helps mankind.<sup>586</sup> Much of His help He gives to man -- through the services of the priestly Deacons of His Church and in His name.

A 'priest' is one who, in the worshipful service of God, receives and distributes sacred presents. 'Deaconing' too usually implies divine service -- especially by lovingly hastening to offer somebody a sacrificial meal. For the Greek word *diakonia* or "service" seems to have the root-meaning of domestic service or 'waiterhood'.<sup>587</sup> Yet, in Holy Scripture, it overwhelmingly describes New Testament Gospel Service in general -- and the official work of ecclesiastical Deacons in particular.<sup>588</sup>

Reflecting the Prophethood-Priesthood-Kingship of the Triune God, man too is essentially a prophet-priest-king. The calling of unfallen man was: to name the animals, as a knowing prophet; to keep the garden, as a caring priest; and to rule over the Earth, as a mighty king.

So Adam was to serve God as a holy priest. He was to minister diaconally to Eve, in all that he did in God's name for her benefit.<sup>589</sup> Eve too was to be a 'diaconal' help to Adam.<sup>590</sup> Together anointed as priest and priestess, Adam and Eve were prayerfully to extend their charitable care over the garden -- until they had turned the entire creation into their priestly domain in Jehovah's service.<sup>591</sup>

Adam, said Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr.,<sup>592</sup> "was a sinless priest who was to bring sinless sacrifices. But when he fell, this changed.... As soon as he fell..., the Mediator acted as a priest in his place.... But the priesthood is grounded in man's creation and destination in Eden, before there was any question of sin.... That original priesthood simply consisted in the complete dedication of our entire persons and our whole lives and all our abilities to the glory of God.... Our task as priests has in no way been terminated by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for our sin.... For we should dedicate ourselves to Him with our whole existence."

The increasing diaconal needs of sinful man now require human action against diseases and disasters -- necessitating hospitals and cyclone shelters *etc.* Even right after the fall,<sup>593</sup> Christ the Second Adam was promised -- to come restore and advance the whole cosmos, through His Own sacrifice of Himself for the sins of His people. Then, after the later Patriarchs Abram and Isaac

and Jacob and Joseph themselves performed their priestly duties of sacrifice and prayers and tithing<sup>594</sup> -- God instituted the (temporary) Levitical priesthood.<sup>595</sup>

The history of man and his priesthood, is like a tree. God the Holy Spirit is the Ground. The original human priest Adam is the root. The later Old Testament Levites are its side-roots. Christ is the Melchizedekic trunk fulfilling those Levitical side-roots and advancing the tap-root. The Apostles are the boughs. The Deacons are the twigs. And the individual Christians in the priesthood of all believers are the fruitful "leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations."<sup>596</sup>

Under the Mosaic system, every three years the entire tithe was to be given to needy widows, orphans, Ministers, and sojourners.<sup>597</sup> The Levitical priesthood was temporary -- as regards its collection and distribution of goods and gifts, its janitorship, its educational work, its promotion of hygiene, and its combatting of infectious diseases *etc.*<sup>598</sup> Indeed, it is these permanent functions which by and large continue in the New Testament Diaconate.<sup>599</sup>

Throughout the last six centuries before Christ, the Levitical or "diaconal" *Chazzaniym* or "servants" of the exilic and post-exilic Synagoges -- announced the start of worship services; took care of holy buildings; assisted at funerals; and helped educate the poor.<sup>600</sup> The *Parnasiym* of the Synagogues corresponded to "the Deacons or waiting-men."<sup>601</sup> They collected alms for the poor both during divine worship and in the homes of the faithful, and they handled the daily and weekly redistribution of gifts.<sup>602</sup>

Now Jesus Himself is our great priestly Deacon. He not only died for the sins of His people. He also judged the poor; saved needy children; healed the blind and the deaf and the dumb and the lame; liberated those imprisoned by Satan; assuaged the thirsty with water; fed the hungry; sheltered the homeless; clothed the naked; and alleviated the afflicted.<sup>603</sup>

Christ teaches Christians, by virtue of their baptismal induction into the basic Office of the prophethood-priesthood-kinghood of all believers. To care for the fatherless; to welcome the pauper; to give warmth to the freezing; and to visit the sick.<sup>604</sup>

Lightfoot remarks<sup>605</sup> of the early Christian Deacons<sup>606</sup> that although "for dispensing social charities it became necessary to appoint special Officers..., the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people are never regarded as transferred or even delegated to these Officers." For the Diaconate, while an extension of the social office of 'waiter' or servant, is at the same time also an intensified expression of the Pre-Levitical and Post-Calvary priesthood of all believers -- and a stimulus to (rather than a substitute for) the general priestly office of all Christians.<sup>607</sup>

Now even the adult male membership of the Jerusalem church quickly grew to an *arithmos toon androon* of fully five thousand -- so that the total membership then amounted to perhaps around some twenty thousand men and women and children.<sup>608</sup> All were at least mildly persecuted by their Non-Christian Jewish neighbours, and subjected to some socio-economic disadvantages. Many needy persons there (such as widows above sixty incapable of any longer earning their own living) soon needed support.<sup>609</sup>

To help alleviate this situation, after the church's members laid their gifts at the feet of the Apostles, "distribution was made to every (Christian) person as he/she had need."<sup>610</sup> The

Apostles decided who was to receive anything; and, if anything, how much. But the actual distribution was soon to be made by the "young men" shortly to be elected as "Deacons."<sup>611</sup> These "young men" -- fund-distributors and door-keepers and funeral-helpers<sup>612</sup> -- were thus performing the duties of the Old Testament Levites or the *Chassaniym* and *Parnasiym*.

In Acts 6:1-6, we read of the installation of the first Greek-named Deacons to minister to the needy Greek-Christian widows. Because these widows had been neglected, the Greeks had begun to grumble against their fellow Christians who were Hebrews. Ethnic factionalism threatened to disrupt Christ's Church. More "young men"<sup>613</sup> were needed (as 'waiters') to "serve tables" and provide for specifically the Greek-Christian widows in their needs.<sup>614</sup>

The overburdened and temporary Apostles were soon to disappear from ecclesiastical Office. Before then, however, they would first delegate their prophetic-priestly-kingly functions respectively to permanent prophetic Preachers and priestly Deacons and kingly Elders. So now they called a meeting of the Congregation to solve the problems of the Greek-Christian widows. The Congregation itself then chose a specified number of qualified Greek-Christian men. And they were officially to 'deacon' the tables of those widows -- and to promote the priestly-diaconal ministry of Jesus Himself in His Church.

Those so elected by the Congregation, were then installed in the Office of priestly Deacon by the laying on of hands.<sup>615</sup> Then "the Word of God increased, and the numbers of the Disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly."<sup>616</sup> A great number of Judaistic priests were convicted and converted -- probably through their own lack of compassion toward their own needy people.<sup>617</sup> Yet when they saw the ever-improving priestly-diaconal compassion of the Christian-priestly Deacons toward their own needy Christians -- many Judaistic priests too joined the Christian Church.<sup>618</sup>

Macpherson remarks:<sup>619</sup> "That passage in the Acts which records the institution of the Office (of Deacon), already determines the duties devolving on those who fill that Office. They are there described under the general designation (of) a Diaconate, Ministry or Service, of Tables...on which food was laid<sup>620</sup> ....

"Alms were commonly brought by the Christian people to their assemblies, in the shape of actual gifts in bread and wine which were collected for immediate distributing among the poor.... If however aid was given in the form of money,<sup>621</sup> it would clearly belong to the Deacons to expend this.... The Deacons seem from the first to have acted under the guidance and according to the counsel of the spiritual Officebearers of the Church (that is the apostolic Preachers and/or the Ruling Elders).... The alms of the churches were carried by the Apostles to the Elders of the Congregation at Jerusalem, under whom the Deacons would act as distributors."<sup>622</sup>

After the institution of the Diaconate in the Christian Congregation at Jerusalem,<sup>623</sup> we detect some evidences of its probable establishment also in the churches of Judea and Samaria and Syria.<sup>624</sup> It is definitely mentioned in the congregations of Asia Minor;<sup>625</sup> of Northern Greece;<sup>626</sup> of Southern Greece;<sup>627</sup> and of Italy.<sup>628</sup>

As Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. says:<sup>629</sup> "A Deacon occupies an Office...given him by Christ -- just as important as that of Preacher or as that of Elder. To say that Deacons

only labour in material things and are therefore inferior to Preachers and Elders who labour in spiritual things, is to adopt a false dichotomy.... The Diaconate is the Office of Christian love.... The Diaconate must stand alongside the Presbyteriate and the (preaching) Ministry -- in order to exhibit the official service of divine mercy."

The Office of Deacon is concerned with encouraging all Christians to advance the material needs of sorely afflicted members of the Church. To do their work properly, Deacons must be able to encourage giving and to recognize needs and to distribute help. Here are the Scriptural prerequisites for those to be elected to the Diaconate (together with the duties of that Office).

A Candidate for Deacon is to be "full of the Holy Spirit" and full of intense priestly concern for especially the material welfare of God's people.<sup>630</sup> He must be of good reputation, dignified, truthful, and sober.<sup>631</sup> As a would-be money-handler, he must "be not greedy of filthy lucre"; and as a would-be visitor of widows and orphans, he must himself have an irreproachable marriage and family life.<sup>632</sup>

He must be pure in doctrine, and therefore must first be examined before appointment.<sup>633</sup> He must be "full of wisdom" -- in order to know whom he should and whom he should not help in his official duties.<sup>634</sup> And a Deacon should (especially on each Lord's Day) collect and later distribute the gifts of God's people to those Christians who are in need.<sup>635</sup>

The 1578 *Second Book of Discipline* of the Scottish Presbyterian Church succinctly states that the "Office and power (of the Deacons), is to receive and to distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods unto them to whom they are appointed."<sup>636</sup> The 1645 *Form of Church-Government* of the Westminster Assembly states that "the Scripture doth hold out Deacons as distinct Officers in the Church.... To whose Office it belongs...to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor."<sup>637</sup> The 1788 *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* adds: "To them (the Deacons) also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church."<sup>638</sup>

Macpherson's 1949 *Presbyterianism* holds<sup>639</sup> the Diaconate responsible for "the diligent collection and faithful distribution of alms to the poor.... Our Deacons have also to do with the outward affairs of the Christian community -- which...consist chiefly in the collection and distribution of Church funds for Ministerial support, for Missionary schemes, and for the maintenance of the Church fabric."

Toward the Church-at-large, the Diaconate acts as both agent and stimulus. All Christians at some time need Christian schools for their children and Christian hospitals for themselves and Christian old-age homes for those bereft of other support *etc.* The Diaconate should -- quite vocally -- always extend such works of mercy only in the name of Christ. It must always encourage the recipient of the benefit to turn to Christ alone, out of gratitude for His help diaconally extended -- and to manifest that gratitude solely to His glory.

More elaborately and recently, the Presbyterian Church in America has declared in 1975 that "the Office of Deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church. The Office is one of sympathy and service. After the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need."<sup>640</sup>

"It is the duty of the Deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the Members of the Church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the Congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the Congregation."<sup>641</sup>

"To the Office of Deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men (not women!) of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly (not sisterly!) spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment."<sup>642</sup> "It is desirable that the Session and the Board of Deacons meet in joint session once a quarter to confer on matters of common interest."<sup>643</sup>

"Deacons may properly be appointed by the higher Courts (of the Elders) to serve on committees, especially as treasurers. It is suitable also that they be appointed trustees of any fund held by any of the Church Courts. It may also be helpful for the Church Courts, when devising plans of church finance, to invite wise and consecrated Deacons to their councils."<sup>644</sup>

"The Deacons may, with much advantage, hold conferences from time to time for the discussion of the interests committed to them. Such conferences may include representatives of churches covering areas of smaller or larger extent."<sup>645</sup> "It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint godly men and women of the Congregation to **assist** the Deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need."<sup>646</sup>

To the above conclusions, we ourselves having nothing further to add. For we believe our own paper has merely set out the consistent implications of the historic Presbyterian concept of the function of the Diaconate.

Accordingly, we may safely close by saying that "the Lord is my Helper" or Deacon,<sup>2</sup> "and I will not fear what man shall do to me. .. For He has said, 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you!'... By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually.... And do not forget to do good and to share things! For with such sacrifices, God is well pleased!"<sup>647</sup>

## **ENDNOTES**

- 1) *Form of Church-Government, in Subordinate Standards...of the Free Church of Scotland*, 15 North Bank St., Edinburgh, 1933, pp. 304 & 308.
- 2) See *antilempsis* ("helps") in the original Greek at I Cor. 12:28. As Knight points out in the Presbyterian Church in America's 1977 *Handbook* p. 1608, "the reference to 'helps' (*antilempseis*) is probably to be related primarily to the Deacons whom we see in the 'seven' of Acts 6 performing helpful deeds in serving and caring for the widows." The very word *dia-koneoo* seems to imply 'calling (someone) in to help (somebody else)' -- even as Christ 'called in' the Holy Spirit as His "Deacon" in order 'to help' Him in His continuing official work on Earth after His ascension into Heaven (John 14:26 & 15:26 & 16:7-14 cf. Rom. 8:26f).

In Acts 6:1-6, the "Deacons" helped or assisted the Apostles in the *diakonia* or "service of the tables." The root-meaning of the word 'Deacon' is that of servant or helpful assistant -- and particularly a waiter who "helps to serve" food (*e.g.* the Greek of Luke 10:40 and John 2:5,9.*etc.*). Cf. too n. 30 below, and Von Meyenfeldt's *op. cit.*, pp. 11f.

- 3) I Thess. 4:3,8.    4) Jas. 5:14-15.    5) Acts 6:1f and I Tim. 5:3f.    6) Cf. Job 1:18-20.
- 7) Jas. 4:1-2.    8) Dt. 28:22f and Hag. 1:6f.    9) Ps. 54:4 cf. Heb. 13:6.
- 10) Ps. 46:1 & 60:4 & 94:17.    11) Ex. 34:6 cf. Nu. 14:18 and Dt. 5:10.    12) Neh. 9:17.
- 13) Ps. 86:15 & 145:8.    14) Ps. 103:4,13.    15) Ro. 13:1-7 and I Cor. 7:7-24 cf. Gen. 2:18f.
- 16) Acts 6:1-6 and I Tim. 3:8f.
- 17) *E.g.*, the Hebrew expression *mamlechet k'haniym* is rendered *basileion hierateuma* in the Greek Septuagint. Cf. the same Greek usage at I Pet. 2:9. And cf. the same concept referred to at I Pet. 2:5 and Heb. chs. 2 to 10 and Rev. 1:6 & 5:10 & 20:6 & 22:3-5.
- 18) *E.g.*, in Est. 6:3-5 LXX, where *hoi ek tees diakonias* translates the Heb. *na'areey ha-melech m<sup>e</sup>shaarthaayv* -- cf. *na'ar* etc. in Gen. 18 & 21, as detailed in n. 25 below. Cf. too the apocryphal I Macc. 11:58's "he sent him golden vessels to be served in," and the Pseudepigraphica 1:68 too.
- 19) Throughout, however, the LXX usage exactly corresponds to the New Testament Greek word *diakonia* as referring both to man's service of God under the Old Covenant (*cf.* n. 20 below) and to man's service of God under the New Covenant (*cf.* nn. 22 & 23 below). However, Beyer (*op. cit.* and *in loco*) maintains that the LXX does indeed use *diakoneoo* to refer to "service in the temple."
- 20) *Cf.*, however, Rom. 15:8's *diakonos* or "minister of the circumcision." Cf. too II Cor. 3:7-9's *diakonia* or "ministration of death" and "ministration of condemnation."
- 21) Matt. 22:13; Luke 10:40; John 2:5,9 & 12:2; Rom. 13:4,4 and II Cor. 11:15.
- 22) Matt. 20:26 & 23:11; Mark 9:35 & 10:43; Luke 12:37 & 17:8 & 22:26f; John 12:26; Acts 1:17,25 & 20:24 & 21:19 and Rom. 11:3 & 16:1 and I Cor. 3:5f & 6:4 & 11:15 & 12:5 & 16:15; II Cor. 4:1 & 5:18 & 6:3 & 11:8 & 11:15b and Eph. 4:12 and Col. 4:17 and I Tim. 1:12 and II Tim. 4:5 and Rev. 2:19.
- 23) Acts 6:1f,4 and Phil. 1:1 and I Tim. 3:8,10,12f. Yet *cf.* too the allusions to "semi-official" diaconal work in Acts 12:25 (*cf.* 11:26-30); Rom. 12:7 & 15:31; II Cor. 8:4,19f & 9:1,12f.
- 24) Est. 6:3 *cf.* n. 19 above.
- 25) *Cf.* the Hebrew word *m<sup>e</sup>la'koth* or "works" in Gen. 2:2-3 and Ex. 20:9-10 (translated in the LXX by *erga* or *ergaoo*). *Cf.* too n. 18 above, and note the use of *na'ar* and *na'areey*



(which -- cf. n. 19 above -- the LXX translates as *diakonia* in Est. 6:3-5), as early as in Gen. 18:7 and in Gen. 22:3-5 where the LXX's *pais* translates both the Hebrew words 'ebed and na'ar which are respectively rendered in the KJV by 'servant' and "young man." Cf. too nn. 1 & 19 above & 30 & 249 through 290 below.

26) Cf. nn. 52 through 79 below.

27) Gen. 14:18 cf. 2:15 & 4:3f. Cf. Schrenk's *op. cit.* (art. *hieros* etc.).

28) Gen. 4:3f & 14:18-20 cf. Heb. 7:1-4 & 13:15f cf. I Pet. 2:5,9.

29) Cf. *hiereus* and *hieros* in Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*.

30) Gen. 18:2-17, & esp. v. 3's & v. 5's servant (LXX *pais*, cf. n. 25 above); v. 5's bread; v. 7's calf, v. 7's young man (LXX *pais*, Heb. *na'ar*, cf. n. 25 above); and v. 17's Lord (cf. Heb. 13:2,6,10-13,15-16). Cf. too Gen. 14:18-24, & esp. v. 18's bread and wine and priest, and v. 24's eaten. Cf. too Gen. 8:20-21 & 4:3-4 & 3:21 with Lev. 2:1-10. According to Beyer (*op. cit.*, *in loco*), the word *diakonia* has the chief meaning of "to supervise a meal" (cf. Luke 8:3 & 10:40 & 17:8; and John 12:2 and Acts 6:2), and is the best word in the Bible's original languages to suggest the idea of "personal loving service." Its roots, *dia* and *koneoo*, suggest "to raise dust by making haste" -- by following "through (to serve) another." Thus Liddell and Scott's *op. cit.* at *dia* and *koneoo*. Cf. too n. 2 above.

31) Cf. too the "overlap" of Christ's Prophethood, Priesthood, and Kingship. See F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, at its nn. 47-49.

32) Cf. nn. 2 & 30 above. Cf. too Abbing's *op. cit.* p. 395: "We have seen that God Himself is actually the great Deacon."

33) Cf. the Hebrew, 'ashreey in Ps. 1:1, and see too Rev. 4:8. Cf. Abbing's *op. cit.* p. 359: "We have seen that God is thrice extra-merciful."

34) II Cor. 9:10 cf. Isa. 55:10f. Cf. Abbing's *op. cit.* pp. 395 & 406: "God the Father causes the sun to shine which not only scorches but which also and primarily arouses and protects life, by promoting the growth of plants and the feeding of man etc.... We have seen, first of all, that God is the great Deacon, as the Giver of the benefits of nature."

35) Rom. 15:8's "minister" translates the Greek *diakonos*. 36) Rom. 12:1f.

37) Acts 6:3-5,8f & 7:55 & 8:13-15,39 etc. and cf. Gal. 3:3-5 & 6:10.

38) Gen. 1:2,26 & 2:7 & 6:3 & 7:22 and Job 32:8 & 33:4 & 34:14f and Ps. 104:30 and Isa. 63:10,14.

39) Rom. 8:26. 40) John 14-16 cf. Gal. 3:3-5 & 6:10. 41) Abbing's *op. cit.*, p. 408.

42) Cf. n. 30 above. 43) A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Treatise for the Reform of the Churches*, p. 65.

- 44) Totius, as quoted in Booyesen's *op. cit.*, p. 42.      45) *Cf.* nn. 21-23 above.
- 46) Gen. 1:1-2 & 1:3-31 and Job 27:13. *Cf.* Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 9: "The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing by the Word of His power in the space of six days and all very good."
- 47) Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:7 and Job 33:4-6.
- 48) *Cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, esp. at its nn. 8-26.
- 49) *Ibid.*, at its nn. 27-30. On the meaning of priestly "carefulness," see esp. at n. 57 below.
- 50) *Cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office* at its nn. 12-15 on *perichoreesis*. and at its n. 26.
- 51) *Ibid.*, at its nn. 10,26,30f,35,51,53,76,97,100f,109,117f,125f,138f & 147. *Cf.* too nn. 2 & 30 etc.
- 52) Gen. 1:31 & 2:7 and Eccl. 7:29 and Eph. 4:24 *cf.* n. 28 above.
- 53) Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:24f *cf.* Heb. 6:7-10 (esp. v. 10's "ministered...minister" or *diakoneesantes...diakonountes*).
- 54) Gen. 2:18,20f *cf.* Heb. 6:7-10 and I Cor. 12:28 and Rom 16:1-2 and I Tim. 3:8-11. *Cf.* too nn. 2 & 30 above.
- 55) *Cf.* Westminster Confession of Faith, IV:2.
- 56) Note the interrelationship between *charisma* ("gift of grace"), *chriein* ("to graciously anoint"), *chrism* ("a gracious anointing"), and *Christ* (the gracious Anointed One).
- 57) *Cf.* Venter and Botha (*opera citata*) and their caritative concept, with n. 49 above.
- 58) Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:15. *Cf.* Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 20: "The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help (*cf.* n. 1 above); affording him communion with Himself; instituting the Sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience of which the tree of life was a pledge."  
*Cf.* Abbing's *op. cit.*, pp. 368f: "Adam delighted himself in the beautiful paradise.... Obviously there is a connection between Adam's spiritual joy in God and in his enjoyment of nature.... God the Father, the Creator, ostensibly creates enjoyable things -- obviously affording pleasure to man.... God's care of Adam is also Trinitarian.... Nature, the Edenic paradise, was a sacrament for Adam; that is to say...an illustration of the joyful salvation in Christ."

59) Cf. Martin Luther: "If Adam had stood in his innocency, yet should he have kept the seventh day holy.... He should have praised God, given thanks, and offered.... Adam was to gather with his descendants on the Sabbath at the tree of life, and when they had together eaten of the tree of life, to preach -- *i.e.* to proclaim God and His praises."

Cf. John Calvin, who insisted that the tree of life was a "sacrament" which God gave "to Adam and Eve as an earnest of immortality, so that they might feel confident of the promise as often as they ate of the fruit." God rested on His sabbath, "so that in all ages it might be sacred among men.... It is not credible that the observance of the sabbath was omitted when God revealed the rite of (supralapsarian unbloody as well as infralapsarian bloody)\* sacrifice to the holy Fathers (or the supralapsarian and infralapsarian patriarchs).\* But what in the depravity of human nature was altogether extinct among the heathen nations, and almost obsolete with the race of Abraham, God renewed in His law." Insertions marked with asterisks above\* are by Lee, not by Calvin.

Cf. too Bavinck who, referring to Gen. 4:3, has maintained that "sacrifice in the broader sense" of the word was "suited to man in the state of rectitude" as "prophet, priest and king." For he was then (in the state of rectitude before the fall) obliged to "glorify God's name and dedicate himself to God with all that he had." "In the Sabbath" he "received a special day for the service of God. And to this end he heeded special forms of culture.... There is nothing strange (in the idea) that sacrifice as well as prayer belonged thereto." All of the above collated in F.N. Lee's *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 77f.

60) Cf. Andrew Murray's *op. cit.*, pp. 132-135: "It is in very deed God's purpose that the fulfilment of His eternal purpose and the coming of His Kingdom should depend on those of His people who abiding in Christ are ready to take up their position in Him their Head -- the great Priest-King -- and in their prayers are bold enough to say what they will that their God should do. As image-bearer and representative of God on Earth, redeemed man has by his prayers to determine the history of this Earth. Man was created and has now again been redeemed to pray, and by his prayer to have dominion.... Lord Jesus! It is in Thee the Father has again crowned man with glory and honour, and opened the way for us to be what He would have us. O Lord, have and teach Thy believing disciples to go forth in their royal priesthood and in the power of prayer to which Thou hast given such wonderful promises to serve Thy Kingdom, to have rule over the nations, and make the name of God glorious in the Earth!"

Cf. too the *Heidelberg Catechism* (QQ. 12,17,31,33,53,55): "Is there any way by which we may escape that punishment (of the fall), and be again received into favour?" The Mediator must be God and man, so that He "might obtain for us and restore to us righteousness and life.... Each and all who believe, being members of Christ, are together partakers of Him and of all His riches and gifts." He is "called **Christ**, that is, 'anointed'" -- because "He has been anointed with the Holy Ghost to be...our only High Priest." Every child of God is "called a Christian" only because he is "a member of Christ by faith" in order that he may present himself in a priestly way as "a living thankoffering to Him."

Cf. too the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (QQ. 39 & 54): "It was requisite that the Mediator would be man, that He might advance our (human) nature.... Christ is exalted in His sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man He is advanced to the highest favour with God."

- 61) *Cf.* nn. 3-8 above. *Cf.* too F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office* at its n. 36: "Furthermore, the scope of this official work of man for God (after the fall) was now expanded into...priestly concern for human suffering (*e.g.*, by caring for the sick in hospitals) " *Cf.* too Abbing's *op. cit.* p. 542f): "And certainly the grocer, the shoemaker, and the engineer *etc.*, for example -- in their 'diaconal' service -- are engaged in assisting and fighting against the suffering of mankind (without which service men would have to suffer or even to die)."
- 62) Rom. 8:18-23.      63) Gen. 3:15,21.      64) Gen. 4:3-4.
- 65) Gen. 7:1-4,10 & 8:1 & 18:21a. Note that it is precisely the 'diaconal' Noachic covenant after the flood (Gen. 9:1-6,9f) which establishes both God's priestly concern for man's food (Gen. 9:3f *cf.* Acts 15:19) and the 'diaconal' rôle of the political government in certain extra-ecclesiastical matters (Gen. 9:5f *cf.* Rom. 13:14f).
- 66) Job 1:5; 31:33; 42:8. *Cf.* too the Pre-Levitical and Non-Israelitic priesthood of Jethro (Ex. 18:1-12) and of Balaam (Nu. 23:1f,29) *etc.*
- 67) Gen. 14:18-20 *cf.* Ps. 110:1 and Heb. 5:6,10 & 6:10 & 7:1-21 and chs. 9 to 10.
- 68) Gen. 12:7f & 13:4 & 14:20-22 & 15:2-18 & 17:3,18 & 18:2-8,22:32 & 20:17 & 22:5-13 & 25:21 & 26:5,25 & 28:1-4,18-22 & 31:44-54 & 33:20 & 35:1-14 & 39:21f & 41:16f,50 & 50:10,20f.
- 69) Ex. chs. 28f and Lev. chs. 8f.      70) Heb. 3:1-6 & 8:1-5 & 9:1-24.
- 71) Ex. 19:6 and I Pet. 2:5,9 and Rev. 1:6 *cf.* n. 74 below.
- 72) Acts 10:1f; Mark 16:15f; Acts 3:6f & 4:8f & 5:15f & 6:2f.
- 73) Acts 6:1-6; I Tim. 3:8f *cf.* 5:1f.      74) Isa. 61:6 *cf.* n. 71 above.      75) Rev. 20:6.
- 76) Rev. 5:10 & 22:2f and *cf.* nn. 71,74, & 75 above.
- 77) Kotzé's *op. cit.* p. 219 *cf.* Heb. 4:16 & 7:22-25 & 10:19f and Rom. 5:2 and I Pet. 3:18.
- 78) A. Kuyper Sr's *E Voto Dordraceno -- Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism* I:311-22.
- 79) *Cf.* Isa. 11:1f and Rom. 11:16 and Rev. 22:2 and Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 82f.
- 80) *Cf.* nn. 48f & 67f & 76 above.      81) *Cf.* nn. 64-68 above with Heb. 5:6 & 7:1f.
- 82) Ex. 19:6 & Deut. 33:2-4 *cf.* Isa. 61:6.      83) *Cf.* Luke 24:44.
- 84) Nu. 18:6-7 *cf.* Ex. 4:11-16 & 7:1-2 and Nu. 8:9-14 and Deut. 18:15-18.
- 85) John 7:22 and Gal. 3:6-17,27-29 & 6:16 and Col. 2:11f and Rev. 22:4.

- 86) Cf. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, QQ. 39 & 54, as quoted in n. 60 above.
- 87) F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, at its nn. 49-55; cf. n. 104 below. On Levites taking up collections, cf. II Chr. 24:2, 6 with Ex. 30:12-16.
- 88) Ne. 11:16f.
- 89) Nu. 18:6; Dt. 26:2-4 cf. 18:1-5 and Heb. 5:1 cf. nn. 1 & 54 above & 104 & 322 below.
- 90) Lev. 10:10 and II Chr. 17:8f & 19:8f and Mic. 3:11 and Ezra 7:11f and Mal. 2:7. Note, however, that -- unlike the prophets -- the priests did not usually initiate new words from God but merely reminded and taught God's people what He had previously revealed. The same would seem to apply to the New Testament Deacons too, insofar as it was (and may still be) their non-dominant ministry to teach God's people. Cf. too nn. 113 & 322-23 below. Cf. too Lev. 10:1-5 with Acts 5.5-10 & 6:1-7 (& 8:2-5?) and nn. 249-307 below.
- 91) Lev. 1-16; *per contra* Heb. chs. 5 to 10 & n. 73 above.
- 92) Ex. chs. 28f and chs. Lev. 8f and chs. Heb. 5 to 10; cf. n. 76 above.
- 93) Ex. 19:6 & Deut. 7:1f. *Per contra* Mk. 16:15 and Mt. 28:19f cf. n. 76 above.
- 94) Heb. chs. 8 to 9. 95) Col. 2:11f and Heb. 10:1f. *Per contra* Heb. 13:15f and Rev. 1:6.
- 96) Lev. 1:1f. *Per contra* Rev. 1:6 & 22:2f.
- 97) Cf. F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, at its nn. 63 & 114-19.
- 98) Nu. 21:21 and Dt. 33:8. 99) Ex. 28:1f. 100) Lev. 2:6f.
- 101) Ex. 30:33f and I Chr. 9:30. 102) I Chr. 9:24,33 & 15:16-22,24,27 and Ne. 11:22f, 28.
- 103) Ex. 20:38; Dt. 33:8-11; Judg. 17:5f; II Chr. 19:8; cf. n. 87 above.
- 104) Lev. 2:1 -3 & 5:13; Dt. 18:1-8; I Sam. 21:1-6; I Chr. 9:32. Kees van der Waal points out in his *Sola Scriptura* (Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1970, I:83), that after the Israelite had given his peace-offerings to the priest and the latter had waved or heaved only certain parts of the sacrificial animal before the Lord (Lev. 7:28-38), the rest of the parts of the sacrificial animal were consumed by the Israelite and the Levite themselves (cf. Lev. 19:6; Dt. 14:23,26; I Sam. 1:4). Particularly the first-fruits were eaten in or near the forecourts of the sanctuary. Jehovah was the invisible Guest Who on the basis of the atoning sacrifice gave table-fellowship to His people. And in this connection, we should again think of the Lord's Supper." Cf. n. 288 below. Cf. too Lev. 10.12-19, and various other places.
- 105) Lev. 9:23 and Nu. 6:23. 106) Dt. 18:1-8 cf. I Cor. 9:9-14 and I Tim. 5:17f.

- 107) Nu. 35:6; Dt. 17:9 & 21:5; Mal. 2:7 *cf.* Acts 6:1-6 & I Cor. 6:1*f.* *Cf.* too, on the care of prison(er)s, under n. 354 below. *Cf.* too n. 113 below.
- 108) Nu. 1:50-53 & chs. 3 to 4 & 10:1-10 & 18:2,4,6 and Ne. 11:6.
- 109) Nu. 8:6-24 and Ezra 8:20.      110) Dt. 26:2-4; I Chr. 26:20; Ezra 8.24-30.
- 111) I Chr. 9:14,21 & 15:23-24 and Ne. 7:1 & 11:18*f*,28 and Ezek. 44:1.
- 112) Nu. 10:8*f* and Josh. 6:4-16.
- 113) Lev. 11-15,25-27 *cf.* Dt. 24:8 and I Sam. 21:1-6 and II Chr. 17:8-11 *cf.* nn. 90 & 107 above.
- 114) LXX on Est. 6:3-5, *cf.* nn.19 & 22 above & 23 below (*q.v.*).
- 115) Est. 9:22 *cf.* last n. 114 above and Acts 6:1-6.
- 116) Lk. 4:20 *cf.* Koole's *op. cit.* pp. 63*f.*: "The Chief of the Synagogue was assisted by the 'Servant' (*cf.* the *Diakonos* in the Hellenic Greek of the increasingly Hellenized Jews of the last four centuries before the incarnation of Christ)... Outside of the exercises of worship (in the Synagogue), the 'Servant' supervised various activities later given to the custody of our beadles. He announced -- not by bell-ringing but by trumpet-blowing -- the Sabbath. He was responsible for seeing to it that the (Synagogue) building was kept clean. He was the legal messenger of the Jewish authorities. And he also functioned as undertaker and schoolmaster."  
*Cf.* too the duties of the Levites as mentioned in nn. 103*f* above. *Cf.* too van der Merwe's *op. cit.* p. 257 & n. 50: "The *Hupeeretes* (or "Minister" or *Diakonos*) or *Chazzan* was an executive Officer of the Synagogue.... The *Chazzan* was one of the Levites -- thus of the priestly group. He was an executive Officer who performed administrative and ceremonial and liturgical functions as an assistant to the Rabbi who...taught the people the Law (Ne. 8:8). *Cf.* J. Landman's *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, IX, KTAV Pubs., New York, 1969." *Cf.* too Plumpre in Smith's *Dictionary*, and C. Vitranga's *De Synagogo* III:2:4 p. 914 *sq.* & III:2:22 p. 1130 *sq.*
- 117) Dabney's *op. cit.* II:129.
- 118) By 'waiting men,' Dabney probably means waiters or servants or *diakonous*. *Cf.* nn. 1 & 30 above and Acts 4:37 & 5:6,10 & 6:1-3.
- 119) Mk. 12:41*f.* *Cf.* nn. 87 & 116 above and 314 below. Apparently, two Officers in particular received these gifts (thus H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 19).
- 120) Mk 12:41-44 and Lk. 21:1-4; *cf.* Koole's *op. cit.* p. 63: "There were so-called 'collectors of alms' who took up collections both in the worship service and at home -- a 'plate for the poor' for daily distribution, and a 'box for the poor' (or a 'treasury box') for weekly distribution."

- 121) Mk. 12:41*f* cf. Acts 6:1-6 and I Cor. 16:1-4*f*. Cf. too n. 116 above. Apparently, three Officers redistributed to the needy (thus H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 19). Cf. Schaff's *Deacon*, in Schaff-Herzog's *op. cit.* I:613: "Origin of the Diaconate. This is related in Acts 6.1-7. It had, like the Presbyterate, a precedent in the Jewish Synagogue, which usually employed three Officers for the care of the poor (see Lightfoot's *Hor. Heb.* at Acts 6:3)."
- 122) Ex. 22:23*f* & 23:6 and Dt. 10:17 & 16:9-14 & 27:19 and I Sam 21:1-6 *cf.* Isa. 1:17.
- 123) Lev. 19:9*f* and Dt. 23:24*f*. 124) Lev. 25:23,35*f*. 125) Ex. ch. 21 *cf.* Deut. ch.15.
- 126) Dt. 24:10*f*. 127) Dt. 21:6. 128) Dt. 14:28*f* & 26:12.
- 129) Cf. F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, at its nn. 47-49 & 65-68.
- 130) Heb. 7:26*f* & 9:11*f*. 131) Heb. 5:1-7 & 2:5-10. 132) Heb. 4:14 & 7:24*f*.
- 133) Heb. 2:5-10 & 6:6-9 and II Tim. 1:9*f*, *cf.* *Heidelberg Catechism* QQ. 12 & 17 as quoted in n. 60 above.
- 134) Heb. 4:9-11,14 & 7:26 and II Tim. 1:9*f* *cf.* *Westminster Larger Catechism* QQ. 39 & 54, as quoted in n. 60 above.
- 135) Rom. 15:1-8 and Heb. 5:9 & 7:27 & 9:26 & 10:10 and, *per contra*, Heb. 12:1-4 and Phil. 2:5-13 and I Pet. 2:19-23.
- 136) Ps. 72:4,12. 137) Isa. 11:4. 138) Isa. 29:18*f* *cf.* 35:5. 139) Isa. 35:6.
- 140) Isa. 40:1-11. 141) Isa. 46:2*f* and Mt. 25:36 and Acts 16:24-40.
- 142) Isa. 55:1 *cf.* John 4:7*f* and Mt.10:42. 143) Isa. 58:6-10.
- 144) Lk. 4:18*f*, 21 *cf.* Isa. 61:1*f*. 145) Lk. 4:19 and Isa. 61:2 & 63:4 and *cf.* n. 146 below.
- 146) Lev. 25:10, which is written on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia's Independence Hall (in the U.S.A.). Cf. too the 1776 inscriptions on the U.S. dollar bill. We mean *novus ordo seclorum*, or "a new order of ages (or years or generations)" -- and *annuit coeptis*, meaning "(God) has approved of (our) undertakings." *Annuit* is apparently derived from *ad-nuit* (as contracted), with the meaning of "to nod to" or "to smile on" and "to approve" Possibly it is also a verbal derivative from *annum* ("year"), so that it would then yield the meaning "the year has (arrived) for (the things which) have begun." Clearly, the influence of the Biblical idea of the jubilee year and of Christ's fulfilment thereof (Lev. 25 and Isa. 61 and Luke 4) on American history -- is obvious.
- 147) Acts 10:38. 148) Mt. 20:38. 149) Rom. 15:8 ("minister" is *diakonos*).
- 150) Mk. 6:37*f* and Mt. 10:42 and John 4:15. 151) John chs. 2 & 6 and Mt. ch. 26.

152) Gen. 14:18f and Mk. 8:2f & 7:37f. 153) Mk. chs. 1 to 4 & 9:19 and Lk. 5:17-26.  
154) Luke 4:18,25:27 *cf.* Coppes's *op. cit.* p. 143. 155) Mt. 17:24. 156) Mt. 19:21.  
157) Mk. 7:37. 158) Mt. 11:5.  
159) Mk. 9:31 & 10:45 & chs. 13 to 16. *Cf.* Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 42-44.  
160) Heb. 2:5-10 & esp. vv. 8f *cf.* Gen. 1:26-28 and Lk. 3:21,36 with 12:50 and Rom. 6:1-4 *etc. etc.*  
161) I Cor. 15:21f, 45-47 and Heb. 4:14f *etc.* 162) Gal. 6:10. 163) Mt. 5:40-42.  
164) Mt. 10:42 and Mk. 9:41. 165) Lk. 10:30. 166) Mt. 25:35,40.  
167) Heb. 9:10 & 10:10f & 13:15f *cf.* I Pet. 2:5,9.  
168) Eph. 1:22f and Col. 2:9,19 and I Cor. 12:6 & 12:27f. 169) Heb. 4:14 & 7:25.  
170) *Cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and The Triune Office*, at its nn. 50f. 171) *Ibid.* at nn. 52f.  
172) Rom. 11:17,26. 173) *Cf.* nn.144-46 above. 174) Isa. 61:1-6 *cf.* Luke 4:18f.  
175) Mt. 28:19 *cf.* Mk. 16:15f. 176) Mal. 1:11f. 177) Heb. 10:19-22. 178) I Pet. 2:5.  
179) I Pet. 2:9. 180) Rev. 1:6. 181) Rev. 20:6. 182) I Th. 5:17.  
183) Ps. 141:2 and Rev. 5:8 & 8:3f *cf.* 1:6. 184) I John 3:17. 185) Jas. 1:5.  
186) Jas. 1:27. 187) Jas. 2:2f. 188) Jas. 2:13-16. 189) Jas. 5:1-4. 190) Jas. 1:13-15.  
191) Rom. 12:1. 192) Rom. 12:3-6. 193) Rom. 12:15. 191) Rom. 12:1.  
192) Rom. 12:3-6 193) Rom. 12:15. 194) Rom. 12:10,20f. 195) Gal. 2:10 & 6:2,6,9f.  
196) Eph. 4:28. 197) Heb. 6:10. 198) Heb. 13:1. 199) Heb. 13:2 *cf.* n. 30 above.  
200) Heb. 13:3a and Mt. 25:36. 201) Heb. 13:3b. 202) Heb. 13:5f *cf.* n. 1 above.  
203) Heb. 13:9-16. 204) Ex. 19:6 and I Pet. 2:5,9. 205) *Cf.* Rom. 16:1f and Col. 1:7.  
206) John 12:26. 207) Mt. 20:26-28.  
208) Heb. 4:14 & 9:28 *etc.* in Heaven, and I John 3:1f on Earth. 209) Rev. 5:10 & 22:2f.  
210) I Pet. 4:9-11. 211) Lightfoot's *op. cit.* p. 183; *cf.* too nn. 77f above.



- 212) Mk. 6:7-13 & 8:14f and Lk. 9:1f and Eph. 2:20f *cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office* (at its n. 62) and Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 48f & 120f.
- 213) F.N. Lee's *ibid.* at its n. 70.
- 214) *Cf.* Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 77; Coppes's *op. cit.* p. 125; and F.N. Lee's *ibid.* nn. 72-76.
- 215) *Cf.* section 10 para. 3 below. *Cf.* too F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office* at its nn. 83-100 and its section 14 para. 2 and at its n. 77 on I Cor. 12:28 (*versus* Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 101 & 133); and *cf.* F.N. Lee's *ibid.* at p. 15 section 6 & p. 16 section 14 & p. 17 sections 18f.
- 216) Eph. 4:11.    217) Acts 6:1-6 *cf.* II Tim. 2:2.    218) Lightfoot: *op. cit.*, p. 184.
- 219) *Cf.* sections 4-5 above and n. 211 above.    220) *Cf.* II Cor. 11:15,23.    221) Lk. ch. 10.
- 222) *Cf.* nn. 14 & 92 above.    223) Est. 6:3 LXX and John 2:5,9 and Lk. 10:40.
- 224) Luke 12:37 & 22:26f.    225) Acts 1:5-8 *cf.* Mt. 28:19f.
- 226) Mk. 16:14-18 *cf.* Luke 10:17-20 & Heb. 2:3f & Acts 5-9.    227) Acts 1:14.
- 228) Acts 1:15,22,25 *cf.* 1:5-8.    229) Acts 2:1,4 *cf.* 1:21-24,26.    230) Acts 2:4,14, 2.
- 231) Acts 2:44f & *cf.* esp. our section *Were the Early Christians and Their Deacons ever 'Communists'?*
- 232) Acts 2:46 & 2:1 & 4:10 *cf.* Ps. 118:22-24. *Cf.* too F.N. Lee's *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 206 & 210.
- 233) Acts 3:1-7.    234) Acts 3:8-12 *cf.* 4:9-14,21-24f.    235) Acts 4:4.
- 236) Seeing the number of men (*arithmos toon androon*) was about five thousand, and assuming most of the men were married and that each had about three children in his family (*cf.* Acts 16:31f & Eph. 5:22 to 6:4), it would seem that there must even then have been approximately twenty thousand Christians in Jerusalem (*cf.* Ex. 12:37 and Mt. 15:38).
- 237) Acts 6:1-3 *cf.* I Tim. 3:8f & 5:3-9f. It should be noted that not all Christian widows received help (I Tim. 5:4,6,8,11-6), but only such as were "widows indeed" (Acts 6:1-2 *cf.* I Tim. 5:3,5,7,9-10,16b).  
Where Christian widows were young, they were to work for their own upkeep or were encouraged to remarry and were then to be supported by their new husbands and not by the church nor by unrelated Christians (I Tim. 5:6,11-15). Where Christian widows were old and unable to work for themselves, their children or their other close relatives were to take care of them (I Tim. 5:4). And where Christian widows stayed privately in the home of a (married or unmarried) faithful woman host -- I Tim. 5:16's Greek has *pistee* as the preferred reading, rather than the alternative *pistos ee pistee*.

That "faithful Christian woman host" of the Christian widows in her home was, with or without her husband's help, herself to "relieve" (1 Tim. 5:16 CKD *eparkeitoo*) or to take care of "her" Christian widows without charge to the church (I Tim. 5:16), though possibly in exchange for odd jobs required and expected to be rendered to the "faithful Christian woman host" by "her" Christian widows themselves (I Tim. 5:16 Aleph, AG, *eparkeisthoo*) to the extent to which such widows were capable of so doing (*cf.* nn. 379 & 380 below).

In all such cases, then, "let not the church be charged" or encumbered (*mee bareisthoo*), I Tim. 5:16. Only "widows that are widows indeed" or widows utterly devoid of any other means of support were (and should be) helped officially by the church (Acts 6:1-3). And, *mutatis mutandis*, the same applies in respect of any other (non-widow) category of needy Christians -- such as orphans, deafmutes, cripples and retards *etc.* *Cf.* nn. 356 & 379f below.

238) Mt. 10:21-23 & 19:29 & 24:10 & 25:35f and Mk. 10:29f & 13:12-20 and Acts 4:21,24,29 & 5:28,40 & 6:13 & 7:57f & 8:1f & 6:1f *cf.* I Tim. 5:3,5,8.

239) Acts 4:32 *cf.* n. 231 above.

240) Acts 2:46 *cf.* 4:34,37 & 5:4a. *Cf.* too esp. n. 231 above. 241) Acts 4:35,37.

242) They were probably assembled in the large house of John Mark's mother, Lk. 1:1f & 22:11f & 24:33f and Acts 1:1f,13-15 & 2:1f & 4:23f,35-37 & 5:2,6,9f & 6:1-6 & 12:5,12-16 & 15:4,37. At any rate, it made sense for the Disciples to liquidate as many of their fixed possessions as possible, before the wrath of God soon fell on all the land and buildings and unbelievers in Jerusalem even as the Lord Jesus had prophesied would happen (Mt. chs. 23f). *Cf.* too our section on *Were the Early Christians and their Deacons ever 'Communists'?*

243) *Cf.* nn. 287-91 & 349-52 below. 244) Acts 4:35. 245) *Cf.* Acts 6:1f.

246) Acts 4:35,37 *cf.* 5:2 & 6:2-4.

247) Possibly, if not probably, the Elders had already been appointed. For they are first mentioned in the book of Acts (11:30) in language which not only presupposes their prior appointment but also their "well-known-ness." We encounter the same phenomenon in the Old Testament too (Ex. 3:16f). And, just as we can trace "Pre-Exodus" roots to the "Exodus" Eldership (*cf.* the pre-Israelitic covenantal "Eldership" of Gen. 15:2f & 24:2 and the Non-Israelitic heathen Eldership of Gen. 50:7-8 & Nu. 22:4-7 contemporaneous with the origin of the nation of Israel -- we can similarly trace "Pre-Acts" roots of the New Testament "Acts 11:30" Eldership too (*cf.* Mt. 18:16f *cf.* Lk. 10:1f,17f *cf.* Nu. 11:11,16,4f & Ex. 18:12,21,25 & 3:16f *etc.* as above). *Cf.* too n. 250 below.

248) "Elder" translates the Hebrew *zaaqeen* ("bearded one") in Gen. 50:7 and Ex. 3:16 *etc.* and translates the Hebrew *ṣab* ("gray-headed") in Ezra 5:59 & 6:7-14 -- *cf.* the Greek *Presbuteros* ("Elder") in Mt. 15:2 & 28:2 and Acts 11:30 & 14:23 *etc.*, and the Greek *presbuteros* ("aged person") in Luke 15:25 and I Tim. 5:1-2 and I Pet. 5:5.

249) Acts 5:6,10 (*neooteroi...neooniskoi*), cf. nn. 250 & 254f below.

250) Cf. n. 249 above & Acts 6:1-6. Like the "Elder" or "old man" (cf. nn. 247f above), the "Deacon" or "young man" too seems to have "Pre-Exodus" ancestry in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 18:3 and nn. 2 & 30 above; Gen. 22:5 cf. Est. 6:3-5 LXX, and nn. 19 & 25 & 30 above), and a "Pre-Acts" ancestry in the New Testament (cf. nn. 21 & 22 above).

It appears almost certain that the Acts 6:1-6 Deacons were "young men" -- like the Acts 4:35 to 6:5f "young men" (or 'Deacons'). For the Acts 6:1-6 appointment of the seven Deacons with Greek names, took place around A.D. 33. One of those seven, Philip, later had four daughters who were still unmarried and living in his home in about A.D. 60 some twenty-seven years later (Acts 6:3-5 cf. 21:9f). This certainly indicates that Philip (like the rest of the "seven"?) was indeed a "young man" (cf. Acts 5:6-10) when appointed a Deacon in Acts 6:1-6. So too, the description of Deacon Stephen's actions perhaps also suggests the behavior of an energetic "young man" (Acts 6:5,8:10f & 7:2,58f).

Hence, the term "young man" in these passages may very well be a synonym for the term "Deacon" -- just as the term "Bishop" is certainly synonymous to the term "Elder" (Acts. 20:17,28 & Tit. 1:5-7), and just as the term "old man" in Scripture also often or even usually suggests an "Elder" (I Tim. 5:1,17,19 *etc.*).

Together, these two terms "old men" (or "fathers") and "young men" (or "sons") may well be the exact equivalent in these passages of the expression "Elders and Deacons" in passages such as Phil. 1:1 and I John 2:13f and I Tim. 5:1,3,5,9 & 3:8f and Acts 6:1 -6. In fact, the term "young man" almost seems to have the same root meaning of *diakonos* or "servant" as early as Abrahamic times. Cf. notes 19 & 22 & 25 above. Cf. too Harnack's *op. cit.*, which also identifies the "young men" of Acts 5 as Deacons.

251) Acts 5:1f.    252) Acts 5:2-4.    253) Acts 5:3-5,9-10.

254) Acts 5:6,10; and cf. our argument at nn. 249-50 above.    255) Acts 5:6.    256) Acts 5:6a.

257) Acts 5:6b. Cf. too n. 90 above.    258) Acts 5:6,9f.

259) Probably this was at John Mark's mother's house, cf. n. 242 above.

260) Cf. Acts 4:35-37 & 5:2-6f.    261) Cf. nn. 87 & 90 & 103-110 above.

262) Cf. notes 114-16 above.    263) Cf. nn. 117-18 above.

264) Thus Mosheim's *De Reb. Christ.* p. 114; and cf. too n. 250 above.

265) Cf. Acts 4:35-37 & 5:1-6,9f cf. 6:1-6.

266) Acts 4:35 & 5:9-10. Cf. Koole's *op. cit.* p. 97: "The seven men were appointed to serve the tables.... Originally, the Apostles directed the care of the poor. Of course, that does not mean that they (the Apostles) themselves served (the tables prior to Acts 6:1f). For perhaps the young men mentioned in the story of Ananias and Sapphira were already doing this. But (before Acts 6:1f), the distribution did indeed take place under their (apostolic) supervision."

*Cf.* too Dijk's *op. cit.* p. 241): "We do not accept the view of Brouwer and others that in Acts 6...the seven were certainly more than just helpers of the Apostles, like the *neooteroi* (or "young men") in Acts 5:6-10 who acted as such auxiliaries."

267) *Cf.* notes 237 & 265 above.

268) *Cf.* Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 93: "It seems very reasonable to regard the 'young men' spoken of in Acts 5 as forming an incipient guild.... The general designation here given them -- 'young men' -- corresponds well with that of 'helps' (as) the name given afterwards to the Office-bearers who discharged similar functions (I Cor. 12:28), and answers well by contrast to the name 'Elders' by which the Office-bearers charged with more distinctively spiritual functions were designated. If, then, we recognize in the 'young men' of Acts 5 the precursors of the seven (Deacons mentioned in Acts 6:1 -6); if we agree that they did before what afterwards the seven were specially elected to do -- we can regard the record of this formal institution of a Church Office for the care of the poor and for the discharge generally of duties that might be separated from the Ministry of the Word, as simply the adoption by the Church itself of the previous apostolic practice. The Apostles' assistants -- the 'young men' -- were now recognized by the Congregation, and to their number were (now in Acts 6) added the seven men who would carry with them into the Church Court the special confidence of an important section of the Church."

269) The installation of the seven Deacons mentioned in Acts 6, consisted of fully seven elements. 1) Nomination by the Congregation -- Acts 6:3's "you must look out," *episkepsasthe*. (2) The "screening" and approval of the Candidates by the Apostles -- Acts 6:3a *cf.* I Tim. 3:8-10a. (3) Election by the Congregation from all these apostolically-approved Candidates -- Acts 6:5's "and they chose," *exelexanto*. (4) The Congregation's bringing-in of the electees before the Apostles -- Acts 6:6's "they (the members of the Congregation) set," *esteesan*. (5) The appointment of the electees to their office by the Apostles -- Acts 6:3's "whom we may appoint," *hous katasteesomen*. (6) The installatory prayer by the Apostles -- Acts 6:6's "and when they had prayed," *kai proseuxamenoï*. And lastly (7) the solemn laying of the hands of the Apostles upon the appointees -- Acts 6:6's "they laid their hands on them," *epetheekan autois tas cheiras*.

270) All of the Deacons mentioned in Acts 6 have Greek names: Stephanos, Philippos, Prochoros, Nikanor, Timoon, Parmenas, and Nikolaos.

271) Some theologians doubt these installees (Acts 6:1-6) were Deacons. Thus, Ritschl and Bohmer claim they were Elders (but see my n. 247 above). Lang and Dollinger say they represented a "Root-Office" from which both the Elders and the Deacons developed. Dijk says the 'seven' were temporary official functionaries analogous to the official Apostles. And Zahn claims the seven were non-official temporary helpers of the Apostles -- as documented in Dijk, *op. cit.*, p. 240; or in Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 188. Yet to us it is clear that the historic Presbyterian and indeed the historic Christian view is correct -- which holds that the 'seven' were indeed Deacons, *cf.* nn. 250 & 269 above. For the installees (*cf.* n. 269 above) were appointed to the "ministry of the tables" (*diakonein trapezais*), which was just as much a specific official ministry as was the Apostles' own "Ministry of the Word" (*Diakonia tou Logou*).

Thus: Calvin's *Commentary on Acts 6:1*: "Luke is telling us here about the creation of Deacons"; Kuyper's *Treatise for the Reform of the Churches* p. 66; Lightfoot's *op. cit.* p. 188; Macpherson's *op. cit.* pp. 90f; Biesterveld's *Handbook* p. 37; P.A.E.S. Smitt's *The Organization of the Christian Church in Apostolic Times* p. 66; H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* pp. 16f; Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 127f; Koole's *op. cit.* p. 97; Von Meyenfeldt's *op. cit.* pp. 38f; Booyesen's *op. cit.* p. 42; Postma's *op. cit.* p. 20; Van der Merwe's *op. cit.* p. 258; Bouwman's *The Office of Deacon* p. 10 and *Reformed Church Law* I:83f; De Moor's *Development of the Diaconate*; Grosheide's *Acts* p. 199; and Hoek's *op. cit.*, p. 79.

272) Acts 6:1; *cf.* Macpherson's *op. cit.*, p. 91f: "We have in Acts 6 an account of the election of seven men to supply a want that had been made subject of complaint.... A complaint had been made to the Apostles by that portion of the membership of the church at Jerusalem which was not purely Hebrew -- the Greek or Hellenist section -- that the poor and widows and orphans belonging to the purely Hebrew membership, were being attended to better and were being more liberally aided than the similar classes among themselves. The Apostles listened to their complaint, found apparently that there was some ground for it, and suggested means for remedying the evil.... The members of the church, therefore, were called upon to elect of their own number seven men who would have the confidence of all for their uprightness and true Christian principle....

"The names of all the seven are given, and it is certainly striking to observe that all the(ir) names are Greek. When we put side by side these two facts, the complaint coming from the Greeks and the appointment of men all bearing Greek names as Office-bearers to endeavour to remove that which occasioned the complaint -- the conviction becomes very strong that these men for the most part at least not only bore Greek names (*cf.* n. 270 above), but belonged to the Greek section of the church at Jerusalem. This being so, it may further be concluded with good probability that the seven became members of a Board, as specially representing that portion of the church out of which they themselves sprang, and that their presence on the Board secured for it the confidence of the Greeks."

273) Hebrew-speakers -- Joses or Bar-Nabas, Ananias, and Sapphira (Acts 4:36 & 5:1). And Greek-speakers -- *cf.* n. 270 above (Acts 6:1).

274) *Cf.* nn. 235 & 236 above. 275) Acts 6:7. 276) *Cf.* nn. 237f above.

277) Acts 6:1 *cf.* 4:35-37 & 5:1-4. 278) Acts 6:2, 4 *cf.* n. 277 above. 279) Acts 5:6.

280) Acts 6:1, 3. 281) *Cf.* n. 273 above; in contrast to Acts 6:1, 5.

282) Acts 6:1. Significantly, the uncial manuscript D adds *en tee<sub>i</sub> diakonia<sub>i</sub> toon Hebraioon* or "in the service of the Hebrews" -- my emphasis, F.N. Lee.

283) Acts 6:1, *paretheorounto*. 284) Acts. 6:1a.

285) Acts 6:1b, *en tee<sub>i</sub> diakonia<sub>i</sub> tee<sub>i</sub> katheemerinee<sub>i</sub>*.

286) Acts 6:1, *egeneto gongusmos toon Hellenistoon pros tous Hebraious*.

- 287) Acts 6:2 *cf.* nn. 249-68 & esp. 271 above and 288-91 below.
- 288). *Cf.* nn. 1 & 30 & 250 & 261 & 287 above. *Cf.* too the Section on *Deacons at the Tables, the Love Feast, and the Lord's Supper* below.
- 289) Acts 6:2 *cf.* I Cor. 11:20-22 and II Pet. 2:13 and Prov. 9:1-5 and Jude 12 and Rev. 2:7,14, 20 & 3:20 and the list of texts in nn. 290 below & 30 above with Gen. 14:18*f.* *Cf.* too the Section on *Deacons at the Tables, the Love Feast, and the Lord's Supper* below.
- 290) Acts 6:2 *cf.* Mark 14:12-16 & 14:51; *cf.* n. 242 above and IPet. 5:13 with Acts 6:1-3 & 4:8*f.* *Cf.* too I Cor. 11:23*f.* & 16:1-3 & II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1,12*f.* & n. 30 above with Gen. 14:18*f.* *Cf.* too the Section on *Deacons at the Tables, the Love Feast, and the Lord's Supper* below.
- 291) *Cf.* n. 285 above & Acts 2:42,46 (with 20:6-8). However, for a defence of infrequent love feasts and/or of infrequent communion at the Lord's supper (and, even then, preferably on the Lord's day alone) rather than of frequent (weekly or even daily) communions -- *cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Covenantal Sabbath*, p. 222 fourth para. and p. 237 last para. through p. 238 at the end of the first para. (on I Cor. 11:20 & Rev. 1:10 which are the only two places in the whole of Scripture using the adjective *kuriakos* or "Lord's" or "pertaining to the Lord."). *Cf.* too n. 317 below.
- 292) *Cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, at its nn. 70-80.
- 293) *Ibid.*, at its nn. 78-106.    294) Acts 6:2.    295) Acts. 6:2-3; *cf.* chs. 1 to 5.
- 296) Acts 6:2.    297) Acts 6:1.    298) Acts 6:4 *cf.* Eph. 2:20*f.*
- 299) Acts 6:1-3 *cf.* nn. 103-13 & 122-28 above.    300) Acts 6:3.    301) Acts 6:1,3b.
- 302) F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*, at its nn. 47-107.
- 303) Acts 6:6, & *cf.* n. 269 above.    304) Acts 6:7.    305) *Cf.* nn. 235 & 236 with 304 above.
- 306) Acts 6:1,5*f.*    307) Acts 6:6-10, & esp. v. 7.    308) Luke ch. 10.
- 309) Acts 2:44,46 & 4:35-37 & 5:1-10 & 6:1-8.    310) Acts 6:7b.
- 311) Ignatius's *Epistle to the Trallians* (*cf.* Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 99).
- 312) Postma's *op. cit.* p. 22; *cf.* Kock's *op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 313) Acts 6:1-6 & possibly 23:17-18 *cf.* 5,6-10.
- 314) Acts 6:5 ("Stephen," "Philip," and "Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch") & 6:5-10,13 & 7:55*f.* 8:1-2,4-7,13 & 8:39*f.* (*cf.* 21:8*f.*) & 9:2,17-19,25,31*f.*36*f.*39,41 & 10.2 (*cf.* 8:40 & 21:8?) & 11:19-21,26,29 & 12:5,12,17,25 (*cf.* 11:29*f.*) & 13:1,5 ("and they had John Mark to

minister to them." Van der Merwe's *op. cit.* p. 257) calls John Mark a *Chazzan* or *Hupeeretes* (Helper), and posits the possibility of him even then having been a Deacon of Antioch (*cf.* nn. 2,30,116 & 119 above and *cf.* too Acts 6:1-3 & 11:29f & 12:12,25 & 13:1,5,13 & 15:35-41 and Col. 4:10 and Phm. 24 and II Tim. 4:11 and I Pet. 5:13 *cf.* Mark's Gospel "according to Peter's secretary Mark").

315) I Tim. 3:8f *cf.* I Cor. 16:1-3 & II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1,12f. Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 100 states: "In the Apostolic Age there clearly was an Office corresponding to that which is called the Deaconship in the Presbyterian Church.... They are spoken of as Deacons, in the church at Philippi (Phil. 1:1) and in the churches of Asia (Minor or Turkey) in which Timothy was specially interested (I Tim. 3:8-12)."

*Cf.* too Calvin's *Commentary on First Timothy* 3:8, p. 228: "The Deacons in like manner. The different interpretations need not occasion us any doubt. It is certain that the Apostle is referring to men who hold public office in the Church, and this refutes the view of those who think that by 'Deacons' he means domestic servants.... The conclusion is that by 'Deacons' we are to understand those mentioned by Luke in Acts 6:3 -- Officers, that is, who are entrusted with the care of the poor." *Cf.* too n. 314 above on John Mark, and Acts 13:5,13 & 15:37-39 & 16:1-5 & 19:1,22 & 20:4-7 (*cf.* n. 288-91 above) & 20:4,13,17f and I Cor. 16:1-3 ("as I have given order to the churches of Galatia") and *cf.* too n. 317 below.

316) Phil. 1:1 & 2:25,30 & 4:15-18 and Col. 1:7 and Phm. 23 *cf.* II Cor. 8:1-4 & 9:1,3,12f & *cf.* Acts 16:9f & 19:22 and II Thess. 1:1 & 3:6-15.

317) I Cor. 12:28 ("helps," *cf.* n. 2 above) & 13:3 & 16:1-3 and II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1,12f. *Cf.* Macpherson's *op. cit.* p.93 as quoted in n. 268 above. *Cf.* too Von Meyenfeldt's *op. cit.* p. 41: "Thus, according to the Scriptures, the task of the Deacons is especially directed to the communion of the saints. It is their official job to bring this communion (or fellowship) to expression. Hence it is that Paul calls a collection for a diaconal purpose, a collection 'for the saints' (Rom. 15:25 and I Cor. 16:1 and II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1)." *Cf.* too F.N. Lee's *Some Thoughts on Norm Lewis' Faith Promise Method' of Giving to Christian Missions*, pp. 3-10.

318) Rom. 1:7 & 12:7f,11,13 (*cf.* nn. 360-80 below) & 15:16f,25-31 & 16:1f ("servant" translates *diakonos* and "succourer" translates *prostatis*) *cf.* Acts 28:13f and Heb. 13:24 *cf.* too nn. 198-203 above. *Cf.* too Macpherson's *op. cit.*, p. 100.

319) Totius, as quoted in Booyesen's *op. cit.* pp. 42f.

320) For excellent treatments of the duties and requirements of the Diaconate, see Booyesen's *op. cit.* pp. 58-66 and Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 131f.

321) Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 94. *Cf.* too Von Meyenfeldt (as quoted in n. 317 above).

322) Acts 6:5,8-10 & 7:51,60 & 8:5-40 & 21:9f *cf.* too n. 90 above (*q.v.*). And also see below our section *Did "Deacons" Stephen and Philip ever "Preach"?*

- 323) Note that Acts 6:1-6 emphasizes the "Ministry of the tables" for the merciful benefit of needy Christian widows rather than the apostolic "Ministry of the Word" as the real focus of the function of the Diaconate. And note in I Tim. 3:8f that being "apt to teach" is not a requirement of the Diaconate, as it is of the Eldership (I Tim. 3:1f). Cf. too the "diaconal" Levites' emphasis on the Ministry of mercy rather than (though not to the exclusion of) the Ministry of teaching (but not of preaching). Cf. nn. 90 & 113 above.
- 324) Acts 11:29f.
- 325) Acts 11:26-30 & 12:25. Cf. too n. 313 above on "Deacon"(?) John Mark. Cf. too H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* pp. 16f, which claims that "the case of Acts 11:30 where the thankofferings were handed over to the Elders was exceptional, in that there was no mention of distribution but only of a transfer of the goods" -- while the distribution itself was no doubt undertaken by the Jerusalem Deacons among their own poor. Cf. too n. 321 above.
- 326) Lk. 1:2 and Acts 6:2,4 cf. I Tim. 5:17f.      327) Acts 11:26-30 & 12:25.
- 328) Cf. nn. 2,30 & 323 above.      329) Cf. nn. 21-23 above.
- 330) Acts 6:3,5,8 -- *pleereis Pneumatos Hagiou*.      331) Prov. 14:21,31 & 17:5 & 22:2.
- 332) Acts 6:3 -- *marturoumenous*.      333) Acts 6:3, KJV.
- 334) Cf. I Tim. 3:8's *semnous, mee ditogous, mee oinoi, polloi, prosechontas* -- meaning "not having overly (or *polloi*) much wine" or "not being occupied with or addicted to wine."
- 335) I Tim. 3:8 -- *mee aischrokerdeis*.      336) Cf. Coppes's *op. cit.* p. 132.
- 337) Cf. Gen. 14:18f and I Cor. 12:28 & 13:3 & II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1,12f.
- 338) I Tim. 3:12: "Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."
- 339) Acts 6:1-6 cf. Jas. 1:27 and Isa. 1:4,17 and Mt. 25:36.
- 340) I Tim. 3:12, *diakonoι estoosan mias gunaikos andres*. Cf. I Tim. 5:9"s "a widow...having been the wife of one man" (*cheera...henos andros gunee*).
- 341) I Tim. 3:8-11 & 5:10,16a (cf. v. 16's *pistee* in n. 237 above) and Rom. 16:1f and Phil 4:2f and Acts 6:1-6 & 9:36-39. Cf. too Macpherson's *op. cit.* pp. 96f and Booyesen's *op. cit.* p. 63 and De Jong's *op. cit.* pp. 97f and Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 135-37 and Hurley's *op. cit.* p. 116 and Van der Merwe's *op. cit.* pp. 245 & 265 which also mentions Tit. 2:3f in this connection.
- 342) I Tim. 3:11, *gunaikas hoosautees semnas, mee diabolous, neephalious, pistas en pasin*. Cf. too n. 341 above.



343) I Tim. 3:10 KJV's "Let these (that is, those nominated to be considered for election as Deacons) also first be proved." *Kai houtos de dokimazesthoosun prooton* seems to refer to a "proving worthy" to be able to serve as a Deacon, by means of passing a preparatory doctrinal test. For *dokimazoo* apparently refers to the candidate's "seeming callability" after asserting doctrinal (*dokimazesthoosan*) blamelessness. See too Liddell & Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* at *dokeoo* ("to seem good" or "to be decreed or enacted"); *dokimazoo* ("to assay, prove, test, ...examine, to approve"); *dokimasia* ("a proving, trial, test, examination"); *dokimastees* ("an examiner, prover"); *dokimee* ("a proof, test, trial, evidence"); *dokimion* ("a test, means of proving"); *dokimos* ("tried, essayed, genuine..., approved, esteemed"); cf. "doctor" (a taught or examined one).

Cf. too the connection between *dokeoo* and *dogma* or doctrine, as shown by L. Berkhof in his *History of Christian Doctrine*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1959, pp. 17f. He states that "the word 'dogma' is derived from the Greek *dokein*, which in the expression *dokein moi* meant not only 'it seems to me' or 'it pleases me' but also 'I have definitely determined something so that it is for me an established fact.' The last meaning gradually predominated, so that the word 'dogma' became the designation of a firm and especially a public resolution or decree.

"It was applied to the self-evident truths of science, to well-established and admittedly valid philosophical convictions, to government decrees, and to officially formulated religious tenets. The Bible used the word as a designation of government decrees in the Septuagint (Est. 3:9 and Dan. 2:13 & 6:8 and Luke 2:1 and Acts 17:7), of the ordinances of the Old Testament (Eph. 2:15 and Col. 2:14), and of the decisions of the Assembly of Jerusalem, Acts 16:4....

"Its use in Acts 16:4 has points of resemblance with its later usage in theology. The Jerusalem Assembly(s)...decision was occasioned by a doctrinal controversy, had doctrinal bearings, and was not merely a piece of advice but a positive injunction with ecclesiastical sanction.... A doctrine is the direct, often naive, expression of a religious truth.... A religious dogma...is a religious truth based on authority and officially formulated by some ecclesiastical assembly."

Note further that the candidates for Deacons must pass the doctrinal examination blamelessly or *anenkleetoi ontes* (I Tim. 3:10b) or without being callable-to-account or correctable (*an + en + kaleoo*), and that this is an intellectual rather than a merely moral requirement. Note that this "blameless"-ness on the part of the Deacons chosen to serve, apparently also refers to the "blameless" wisdom or ability to exercise frugal discretion and not to squander church funds (I Tim. 5:7's *unepileemptoi*) -- a "blameless"-ness which the "younger men" (I Tim. 5:1's *neoterous*) or 'Deacons?!' (cf. Acts 5:6's "young men" or *neoteroi*) should have in determining which of the Christian widows are "widows indeed" (I Tim. 5:3,5,16b) who need to be "taken into the number" (I Tim. 5:9) of those that the church itself should care for (I Tim. 5:3,5,16b) through its diaconal ministry (I Tim. 3:8f & 5:1f cf. Acts 6:1-5 & 4:35 to 5:6f). Cf. too nn. 349f & 353 below with 249f above.

344) I Tim. 3:9, *dokimazesthoosan*. Cf. n. 343 above with Booyesen's *op. cit.* p. 63: "The Greek word used here, means 'examine.' Dr. Hoek and others therefore understand by this 'examination' a deliberate investigation by the active Elders...which in practice boils down to a personal interview where the diaconal candidate is examined."

345) Acts 6:3, *cf.* n. 269 above.      346) Acts 6:6 *cf.* I Tim. 5:22 & 3:1,8.

347) The religion of the helper of widows and orphans, must be pure -- Jas. 1:27.

348) *Cf.* nn. 330 above through 380 below.

349) I Tim. 3:9's "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (*echontas to musteerion tes pisteoos en sune,deese,*) in the Greek; or *habentes mysterium fidei in conscientia pura* (thus the Latin Vulgate). The same Greek work *musteerion* is translated *sacramentum* in the Vulgate's rendition of Eph. 5:32. The *fides* or faith mentioned is doubtless the "*fides quae creditur*" or the objective system of doctrine of the "faith which is believed" -- and not the "*fides qua creditur*" or the subjective "faith by which it is believed." For otherwise, the word *echontas* or *habentes* would be tautological.

The word *sune,deese,* or *conscientia* is therefore referring primarily not to merely moral uprightness but rather to intellectual ability or *conscientia* -- *cf.* "science" or knowledge. Here again (*cf.* the end of n. 343 above), the requirement is thus intellectual rather than only moral. It is the verse's word "pure" rather than its word "conscience" which introduces the latter emphasis (and a necessary one). On possible diaconal involvement in assisting with the distribution of the "mystery" of the sacramental symbols and related matters, *cf.* nn. 289 & 290 above.

350) *Cf.* nn. 289-90 & 349 above.

351) Acts 6:1-3 *cf.* 4:35 & 5:2-6 and Mt. 10:42 & 25:40 and Mk. 9:41 and Heb. 6:10.

352) *Cf.* nn. 162-237 & 288-91 above.

353) Acts 6:3, *pleereis sophias* or "full...of wisdom." As to the diaconal requirement of "blameless" discretion in order to be able to know which persons were (or are) to be helped, *cf.* n. 356 below.

354) *Cf.* nn. 90 & 103-13 & 115-128 above. On Old-Testamentical and/or Levitical compassion toward prisoners, *cf.* n. 107 above and Nu. ch. 35 and Ps. 69:33 & 79:11 & 102:19f & 146:7 and II Kgs. 25:27-30 and Isa. 24:21f & 42:7,22 & 49:9 & 61:1-6 and Jer. 36:4f & 37:21 & 38:6-13 and Zech. 9:9-12.

355) For the New Testament Deacons are to administer the Congregation's care of Ministers of religion (Gal. 6:6 *cf.* I Cor. 9:7-14 & n. 317 above and I Tim. 3:8 & 5:17-18), and of needy (I John 3:17) -- and Christian (Gal. 6:10) persons such as: widows (Acts 6:1-3 *cf.* I Tim. 3:8f & 5:1,3, 5,7,9f); orphans (Jas. 1:27 *cf.* I Tim. 3:8,11 *cf.* 5:10 ("if she have brought up children")); resident aliens and temporary visitors (I Tim. 3:8,11 *cf.* 5:10 ("if she have lodged strangers") and nn. 341 above & 432 below and Heb. 13:2,6,16 and Rom. 12:13 *cf.* n. 378 below); underprivileged individuals (Gal. 6:2,9,10); and God's people in general (Gal. 6:10). On compassion toward prisoners, *cf.* Mt. 25:36-40 and Phil. 1:7, 3 & 4:10-18 and II Tim. 1:16f and Heb. 13:3,5,16 and the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* 10-7 as quoted in n. 459 below. And on funeral responsibilities, *cf.* n. 90 above.

356) Cf. n. 237 and the end of n. 343 above.      357) Cf. nn. 103-128 above.

358) For the New Testament Deacons are to provide needy Christians with food (Acts 6:1-3); clothing (Jas. 2:15f); shelter (Mt. 25:35,38 and I Tim. 3:8 cf. 5:3-16); health (I Tim. 1:21 & 3:8 & 5:10,23 cf. esp. n. 362 below and possibly also Timothy as interpreted below in our section of Stephen and Philip (*q.v.*); education (I Tim. 3:12; 5:3-7 & cf. Acts 6:1-3 with 9:36-41); and worship facilities and their maintenance (Acts 6:1-6 cf. 5:6-10 and nn. 115f & 250-70 above). Cf. too n. 381 below. On the general (diaconal) duty to comfort other Christians, cf. Gal. 6:9f and Col. 3:12-17 and I Th. 4:18.

359) I Cor. 12:28 (cf. n. 2 above) & 13:3 & 16:1-3 (cf. n. 317 above); II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1,12f and Rev. 1:10 (cf. n. 291 above). After the 1618-1619 Synod of Dordt, Voetius and others determined that collections for the poor would be taken up every Lord's day on the first day of the week (cf. H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 36).

360) Rom. 12:8 ("giveth") and cf. n. 361 below; Rom. 12:13 ("distributing") and cf. n. 374 below; cf. Acts 4:35 & 5:2-6 & 6:1-6. Cf. too n. 87 above.

361) Rom. 12:7f. "He that gives" or rather "he that distributes" (Greek *ho metadidous*) in Rom. 12:8, is in fact "ministering" or deaconing" (*en tee, diakonia<sub>i</sub>*) as described in Rom. 12:7; and he is to distribute "with simplicity" or "with simple generosity" (*en haploteet<sub>i</sub>*), cf. n. 360 above. Calvin insists (in his *Institutes* IV:3:8) that the nature of the "ministry" mentioned in Rom. 12:7a's "or ministry, let us wait on our ministry" (*eite diakonian, en tee, diakonia<sub>i</sub>*) -- has reference to the "care of the poor (Rom. 12:7 and I Cor. 12:28)." In the next section (*Institutes* IV:3:9), Calvin further elaborates that "the care of the poor was committed to Deacons.... He that giveth (or distributes), let him do it with simplicity'...(Rom. 12:8)...designates Deacons who administer alms..., serving the church by administering the affairs of the poor.... Scripture specially gives the name of 'Deacons' to those whom the Church appoints to dispense alms, constituting them as it were stewards of the public treasury of the poor. Their origin, institution, and office is described by Luke (Acts 6:3).... Such Deacons as the Apostolic Church had, it behooves us to have after her example."

362) Rom. 12:8, "he that sheweth mercy," *ho eleoon*. Calvin (*Institutes* IV:3:9) applies this phrase "to Deacons...who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick. Such were the widows of whom he (Paul) makes mention in the Epistle to Timothy -- I Tim. 5:10's "if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

"For there was no public Office which women could discharge, save that of devoting themselves to the service of the poor." Cf. perhaps Rom. 16:1f, where Phoebe is described as 'a servant (or a *diakonos*) of the church which is at Cenchrea' (F.N. Lee).

"If we admit this (and it certainly ought to be admitted)...., there will be...Deacons...serving the church...by taking care of the poor themselves.... Scripture specially gives the names of 'Deacons' to those whom the church appoints to...take care of the poor" and who have "devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick."

Greijdanus in his *Commentary on Romans* (12:8b) remarks that the words *ho eleoon* (or 'he that sheweth mercy') refer to "nursing the sick and taking care of the miserable and the

unfortunate" (emphases mine -- F.N. Lee). Some have even gone so far as to link this nursing of the sick of 'him who shows mercy' in Rom. 13:8b, to the erection of hospitals for those sick -- which they believe they detect in the "given to hospital-ity" in Rom. 12:13 (*cf.* n. 378 below).

Indeed, "Calvin's (own) view of the diaconal responsibility not only to 'give aid' in money and goods to the poor but more particularly to actually take care of...the sick' -- was of (great) importance for the (further) development of the Diaconate.... For, thenceforth, the Deacons would also take care of the sick. In the Congregation of Geneva, the *hospitaliers* -- as Calvin called them -- lived with their families in the hospital and performed useful service. Four times a year their work was investigated by a Council consisting of members of the Session and the Municipality" (thus H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 32).

We ourselves would only point out that although the Elders rather than the Deacons are to pray for the sick (Jas. 5:14f), the material care of the Christian sick is very definitely a function of the Diaconate (*cf.* nn. 407 & 417-19 below). Indeed, there can be no doubt that *eleoo* and *eleos* (as the root-words behind Rom. 12:8b's idea of *ho eleoon* or "him who shows mercy"), are consistently used in the New Testament to include material help to those suffering from painful sicknesses and sufferings (*e.g.* Mt. 5:7 & 9:27 & 15:22 & 17:15 & 20:30f and Mk. 10:47f and Lk. 10:37 & 16:24 & 17:13 & 18:38f *cf.* Hos. 14:4 LXX). *Cf.* too the relationship between the Levitical priesthood and the Diaconate in terms of Lev. chs. 13 to 14, and n. 113 above.

363) Rom. 12:8, "with cheerfulness," *en hilaroteti*.

364) Rom. 12:9, "without dissimulation," *anhupokritos*.

365) Rom. 12:10, "be kindly affectioned," *philosturgoi*.

366) Rom. 12:10, "with fraternal love," *teei philadelphiai*.

367) Rom. 12:10, "in honour preferring one another," *teei timeei alleelous proeegoumenoi*.

368) Rom. 12:11, "not slothful in business," *teei spoudee, mee okneeroi*.

369) Rom. 12:11, "fervent in spirit," *tooi Pneumati zeontes*.

370) Rom. 12:11, "serving the Lord," *tooi Kurioo, douleuontes*.

371) Rom. 12:12, "rejoicing in hope," *teei elpidi chairontes*.

372) Rom. 12:12, "patient in tribulation," *teei thlipsei hupomenontes*.

373) Rom. 12:12, "continuing instant in prayer," *teei proseucheei proskarterountes*.

374) Rom. 12:13, "distributing," *koinonountes*. *Cf.* the similar word *koinoonias* (translated by 'to communicate') in Heb. 13:16's 'do not forget to communicate (or "to share things").'

- 375) Rom. 12:13, "to the necessity," *tais chreiais*. Cf. I Tim. 5:3,5,9 16b -- *per contra*, I Tim. 5:4,6,1 1-16a.
- 376) Rom. 12:13, "to the...saints," *tais...toon hagioon*.
- 377) Rom. 12:13, "given," *diokontes* -- almost "persecuting" unknown Christian strangers with love. Compare with *diokontas* ("persecute") in the very next verse.
- 378) Rom. 12:13, "to hospitality" *philoxenian*, with *xenophilia* or "love of strangers" and not with *xenophobia* or "fear of foreigners." Cf. too I Tim. 3:2,8-11 cf. 5:10 (thus Calvin in n. 362 above) and Mt. 25:35 and Heb. 13:2 and III John 5 -- which all cumulatively seem to imply that the Diaconate should supervise the Congregation's care of its visiting speakers and other temporary Christian sojourners. Cf. n. 355 and elsewhere, and the end of n. 362 above.
- 379) Acts 6:1-6 & 9:36-39 with I Tim. 3:8-11 & 5:3-16 and I Th. 4:11f and II Th.3:6-15 and Eph. 4:28. Cf. too nn. 237 above and 380 below.
- 380) Ex. 20:9.
- 381) Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 94. As to Macpherson's later claim that the Diaconate is also responsible "for the maintenance of the church fabric" or the congregational buildings, cf. too n. 358 above.
- 382) Cf. nn. 63-89 & 103-28 & 212-358 above. 383) Cf. nn. 129-211 above.
- 384) Phil. 1:1 & 2:2f and I Tim. 3:1,8 cf. I Pet. 5:1-5 and Heb. 13:7,17,24. Cf. too F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office* at its nn.82-115 & 125f & 134 & 138-39 -- *per contra* Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 131 & 133.
- 385) I Pet. 5:1-5's "you younger" -- cf. Acts 6:1-3 & esp. 5:9-10 and Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 136: "In the *Second Book of Discipline* (of the Scottish Church in 1578)...the duties of Deacons were theoretically restricted to distribution. This was recognized in an 'Act of Assembly 1719' -- that Deacons as such shall have no decisive voice either in the calling of Ministers or in the exercise of church discipline.... The 'diaconal' court is not authorized to exercise any kind of spiritual rule, and has no power of discipline even over its own members.... Equally with the Session, it is under the immediate jurisdiction of the Presbytery -- this, however, being ordinarily restricted to the review and annual investigation of the records and accounts of the court."
- 386) Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 136: "As a congregational court, however, the Deacons' Court has a distinct jurisdiction upon which the Session cannot intrude." Cf. too H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 36: "After the well-known Synod of Dordt (1618-1619), the Diaconate in Holland was put on a healthy basis. Leaders such as Voetius and others drew up complete guidelines, so that its operation could develop scripturally. Every first day of the week, a collection for the poor was taken up. At baptisms and communions and wedding and burials, the needy were remembered and presents given."

"The number of the Deacons differed from one Congregation to another. In Amsterdam, there was once thirty-seven. The Diaconate was independent of the State and, please note, also of the Session. And it was well-organized. Committees were appointed to inspect the orphanages, old people's homes, and church schools. Twice weekly the Deacons met in the consistory (of the church building) -- in order to distribute alms, food, clothing, blankets, and coffins. There were years when the Diaconate (*Kerkraad*) of Amsterdam spent more than half a million guilders in this manner. Twelve Deaconesses assisted in visiting homes and in taking care of the orphans. This organization was a source of blessing for thousands. The Diaconate experienced a time of blossoming, and was an example for other churches." Cf. too n. 405 below.

387) Phil. 1:1 & 2:2. Cf. F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office*.

388) Postma's *op. cit.* p. 28: "It is not, first, the duty of the Diaconate to proceed to establish hospitals and foundations for all kinds of diseases and disabilities. Here the State and the Christian society also have their obligations. The task of the Deacon, however, is to influence the church members to establish such institutions." Monsma's *The Trial of Denominationalism* (in its last pages), and Calvin and the early Calvinists, did see it as a diaconal function to establish Christian hospitals -- and so did the Early Church and the Early-Medieval Church (cf. nn. 362 & 286 above & 406 below & cf. H.D.A. du Toit: *op. cit.*, pp. 25-29).

389) Cf. H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 89, and cf. n. 388 above.

390) A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Treatise for the Reform of the Churches*, p. 67.

391) Westminster Assembly's *Form of Church-Government* (1645), Scotland, sections 11f cf. Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order*, 10-5f.

392) Cf. Greyling's *op. cit.*, and cf. nn. 425f below.

393) Lk. 10:25-31 cf. n. 221 above. Note that the merciful "good Samaritan" was not a member of God's covenant people.

Cf. Coetzee's *The Relationship of the Diaconate to Other Bodies*, p. 80: "There is a much greater relationship between the Diaconate and the charitable bodies and organizations, than there is between the Diaconate and the State. Whereas the latter has to do with the law, both Diaconate and charitable organization stand on a basis of love. However, the difference (between the Diaconate and the charitable organization) is that the Diaconate is grounded in holy and saving love and represents an ecclesiastical Office -- whereas the charitable organization stands on the basis of general humanitarian love and is in no way related to Church Office. The relation of the two to one another is in the first instance dominated by the above difference; but in the second place and in practice it is also determined by the object of the care....

"As an expression of remnantal neighbourly love, the actions of the charitable organizations ought to be welcomed and encouraged by the Diaconate -- provided that they do not of course attempt to replace and to suppress the Diaconate.... Naturally, the ecclesiastical ministry of mercy will be limited chiefly to some or other form of poor

relief -- whereas charitable organizations extend themselves into all of the directions presently being travelled on by social workers. And in that regard, the care of the poor (although still extremely important) -- is only one kind of affording assistance alongside various other forms such as social organizations, recreational facilities, adult education, psychiatric and medical social work *etc.*"

394) *Idem*: "The Diaconate begins with the household of faith and, if it does its work well, the charitable organization will only cater to those (members of the Church) who have already drifted away from the flock and who for practical reasons cannot be cared for by the Diaconate.... (However,) with the increasing number of churchless people, it will become more and more difficult for the Diaconates to extend their care outside of denominational limits, and the operational area of particular charitable organizations will constantly grow unless the care and extending of assistance is willingly handed over to the State."

395) In such cases, not the Church's Diaconate but the State should move against such private non-benevolent "benovolences" (or rather malevolences). *Cf.* n. 400 below. However, the Church's Diaconate can and should certainly request the State to do so. *Cf.* *Westminster Confession of Faith* 23:1-4 & 31:5.

396) Rom. 13:1-7 and I Tim. 2:1-4 *cf.* nn. 395 above & 397 below.

397) Tit. 3:1-3*f* and I Pet. 2:13-17 *cf.* Gen. 9:1-7. 398) Rom. 13:3 *cf.* Mt. 19:17 and I Tim. 2:2.

399) *Cf.* Coetzee's *op. cit.* p. 77: "The task of the State is to make laws, to maintain righteousness, and to work out and apply a policy ensuring the highest degree of general prosperity.... To the extent that the State has anything to do with the care of the poor, it is to uphold the rights of the poor but not to show him mercy or give him charity." Where the latter happens, Socialism develops -- and so does statist absolutism. *Cf.* nn. 394 above and 401*f* below.

400) Thus Venter & Botha (*opera citata*). *Cf.* Ex. 20:1-17 and Dt. 5*f* and Rom. 13:1-7 and *cf.* nn. 122-28 & 395 above.

401) *Cf.* Postma's *op. cit.* p. 28: "It is not the task of the Deacon to engage himself in general with the problem of poverty. It is not his calling to crusade for better rates of pay and better working conditions. That is the task of the Christian State and the Christian community (as such)." *Per contra*, however, Schrotenboer (*cf.* nn. 522*f* below).

402) Rom. 12:17-25 and Gal. 6:10.

403) *Cf.* Gal. 6:10 and Lk. 9:41 and Heb. 6:10 and Mt. 10:42 & 25:34-40 (note in v. 40, not 'all men' but 'My brethren'). *Cf.* Kock's *op. cit.* p. 2. On the other hand, however, see too nn. 122-28 & 355 above.

404) *Cf.* nn. 383 & 400*f* above with Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 120, 122 & 141-46.

- 405) *Cf.* nn. 354*f* above. *Cf.* too H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* pp. 24*f*: "Originally only serving the tables, the Diaconate developed beautifully in the Early Church. Chiefly, the work was concentrated on the six 'works of love' mentioned in Matthew 25, namely: I visit (the sick and the poor), I give to drink, I feed, I liberate from debts and redeem the prisoners, I clothe and provide shelter, (and) I nurse the wounded. In addition, the Church added a seventh: I bury the dead. For this ecclesiastical practice, it is obvious how largely and seriously the task of the Deacons was regarded." *Cf.* too n. 386 above.
- 406) *Cf.* nn. 355-58 above. 407) Lev. chs. 13 to 14; *cf.* nn. 358, 362, 393*f* & 405 above.
- 408) *Cf.* nn. 355 & 358 & 392 & 405 above. 409) I Tim. 3:8 & 5:3, 5, 7, 9*f* *cf.* n. 405 above.
- 410) *Cf.* nn. 113 & 358 & 405 above. *Cf.* too A. Kuyper Sr's *Treatise on the Reform of the Churches* pp. 65-70; and also Macpherson's *op. cit.*, p. 102: "Deacons are required to give attention to the secular affairs of the Congregation, see to the collection for General and Congregational Schemes, and attend to the poor and to the education of the children of the poor."
- 411) Acts 6:1-3 *cf.* 5:6-10 & nn. 115*f* & 322 & 355 & 405*f* above.
- 412) *Cf.* Isa. 35:1-5 & 42:1-7 & 61:1-6 and nn. 129*f* above.
- 413) Mt. 25:35, 38 and Jas. 3:15*f* and I John 3:17 and Job 1-2 and Ps. ch. 46 & Isa. ch. 25. *Cf.* n. 355 above.
- 414) Isa. 32:18*f* & 35:9-16 & 57:15-21 *cf.* n. 355 above. On duties toward visiting sojourners and prisoners in general and especially toward Christian sojourners and Christian prisoners, *cf.* nn. 354*f* above. *Cf.* too I Tim. 3:8-11 *cf.* 5:10's "if she has lodged strangers, if she had washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted."
- 415) Acts 2:46 & 6:1-3 *cf.* n. 289 above.
- 416) Acts 6:1-3 *cf.* Jas. 1:27 & 3:15*f* and Mt. 22:1-10 & 25:35-40 and esp. Lk. 14:13*f*, 21.
- 417) Acts 5:6-10 *cf.* 6:1-3 and H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 93 and Coppes's *op. cit.* p. 146 and *cf.* nn. 355, 362 & 405 above.
- 418) Jas. 5:14-18 and n. 362 above. 419) Lev. chs. 13 to 14 and nn. 358, 362 & 405 above.
- 420) I Tim. 3:8*f* *cf.* nn. 340-42 above.
- 421) Acts 6:1-6 and I Tim. 3:8, 11 & 5:3, 5, 7, 9*f* *cf.* Coppes's *op. cit.* p. 147.
- 422) *Cf.* nn. 111 & 116-258 & 321 & 359-380 above. 423) *Cf.* nn. 112 & 116 above.
- 424) *Cf.* nn. 113 & 358 & 410 above.



- 425) Cf. Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* 10:6; cf. n. 458 below. Cf. too Coetzee's *op. cit.* p. 73, and n. 390 above.
- 426) Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* 10:5; cf. n. 457 below.
- 427) Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* 10:5; cf. Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 136: "In the Minutes of the Scottish Assembly of 1562 we find an entry that seems indifferently to require the presence of an Elder or a Deacon at a Synod meeting.... Again, in the Minutes of the Assembly of 1563, we find Deacons similarly joined with Ministers and Elders."
- 428) Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* 10:6; cf. II Chr. 19:8-11 and Presbyterian Church in America's *ibid.* 26-6f.
- 429) Cf. Rom. 16:1f,13 and II Tim. 1:2-6,16,18 and Phm. 4-7 and III John 5-8.
- 430) I Th. 4:11f cf. II Th. 3:6-15.
- 431) Isa. 49:15-23 and Ezek. 16:3-14 & 23:3f and Hos. chs. 1 to 3 & 11 & 14 and Heb. 13:4-6 cf. I Th. 4:3-8 and I Cor. 6:9-11 and Dt. 22:25 to 23:2.
- 432) I Cor. 6:10f and Eph. 4:24 cf. nn. 354 & 355 above. Cf. too A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Treatise for the Reform of the Churches* p. 65: "The care of orphans and widows, of the aged and the sick, of the blind and of idiots, of lunatics and the incurably ill -- yes, even of prisoners and also of transient strangers etc. -- is the responsibility of the Deacons."
- 433) I Cor. 6:10f and Gal. 5:20's "witchcraft" or *pharmakeia* probably involved the use of poisonous drugs; Gal. 5:21's "drunkenness"; and Gal. 5:16-24's hope for drunks and junkies.
- 434) Cf. nn. 406 & 409 & 429 & 431 & 433 above.
- 435) Cf. n. 414 above & Acts 2:44-36 & 6:1-3. 436) II Chr. 19:8-11 cf. I Cor. 6:2f.
- 437) Cf. n. 322 above and Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 94 as quoted in n. 381 above.
- 438) Dt. ch. 28f and Isa. ch. 35. 439) I Cor. ch. 7 cf. Von Meyenfeldt's *op. cit.* p. 49.
- 440) Isa. 60:4 & 65:20 and H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 89: "It is more the vocation and task of the Christian members of society to erect a Christian nursing home; the Church as an organism, thus. Paying patients will be admitted thereto, but the Diaconate can send needy patients there and pay for their being nursed out of church funds."
- 441) Lev. ch. 11f. 442) Lev. ch. 14 and Isa. 65:21f. 443) Lev. chs. 12 to 14.
- 444) Cf. nn. 124f above.

- 445) Acts 6:1-3 & 4:35 to 5:6 and I Tim. 3:8*f* and I Cor. 12:28 & 13:3 & 16:1-3 and II Cor. 8:4 & 9:1,12*f*.
- 446) *Cf.* nn. 409 & 412 & 414 above. 447) Gen. 17:12,23 and Ex. chs. 1 to 2 and I Sam. chs. 1 to 2 and Gal. 4:4-6.
- 448) I Sam. 18:10*f* & 19:9 and Dan. chs. 2 to 4 *etc.*
- 449) Ex. 23:25-33 and Lev. ch. 25 and Nu. 14*f*.
- 450) *Cf.* F.N. Lee's *Communist Eschatology*, pp. 660-63 & 1059*f*; and his *Remarks on the Common Christian Ownership of Acts Chapters Two Through Six*, pp. 1-3.
- 451) Mt. 20:1*f*,15 & 21:28*f* and Lk. 15:1*f* and 16:1*f*. 452) Matt. 28:19.
- 453) Acts 10:6 & 4:8,13 and Phm. 2-18 and I Th. 4:3,11-13,15*f* and II Th. 3:8,12,14 *cf.* I Tim. 3:4,12 & 6:17-19 and Jas. 1:9*f* and Eph. 4:28.
- 454) Acts 2:44-47 & 4:32-32 *cf.* Gal. 6:10 and I Tim. 5:8. 455) Acts 2:45 & 4:34*f* & 5:4.
- 456) *Cf.* n. 454 above.
- 457) Acts 6:14 *cf.* Matt. 23:33-38 & 24:1-2,15-20,28,34 with Dan. 9:26*f* & 11:30*f* & 12:1,11 and I Th. 2:14-16. Note too the writer of Acts 1:1*f* & 2:44*f* also wrote Luke 1:1*f* & 17:31-37 & 21:10*f*,19-24,34.
- 458) Acts 4:34, *cf.* verse 36 & 5:1,3.
- 459) *Cf.* Acts 9:11,43 & 10:2,6 & 20:20 & 21:8 and Rom. 16:5,10*f*, 23 and I Cor. 11:22 and I Tim. 3:4*f* & 5:8,13*f* and Tit.2:3-5 ("keepers at home") *etc.*
- 460) Acts 2:46; 6:1*f*; 8:1-3; 12:12. 461) Acts 4:34*f*. 462) Acts 5:4; *cf.* nn. 1-6 above.
- 463) *Cf.* II Cor. 8:3,13*f*.
- 464) Acts 11:27-30 & 24:17 and Rom. 15:25-28 and I Cor. 16:1-5 *cf.* II Cor. chs. 8 to 9.
- 465) Acts 6:1-7,14; *cf.* Phil. 1:1 and I Tim. 3:8-15 *cf.* 5:3-16 & 1:3 & 2:1,8 & 4:11-16.
- 466) Acts 12:12 *cf.* 1:13*f*. 467) June, 1964. 468) *Cf.* n. 457 above.
- 469) Ex. 20:15,17 and Eph. 4:28 and I Th. 4:11*f* and II Th. 3:6-12 and I Tim. 5:16.
- 470) Koole's *op. cit.*, pp. 96*f*. 471) Von Meyenfeldt's *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.
- 472) *Cf.* our argument at n. 317 above. 473) Postma's *op. cit.*, p. 19.

- 474) The authority is Prof. Dr. A. M. Brouwer (thus Dijk's *op. cit.*, p. 240).
- 475) Koole's *op. cit.* pp. 96f; *cf.* our argument at n. 266 above.
- 476) H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.* p. 17.
- 477) *Cf.* our argument at nn. 87 & 104 & 116-21 & 249-89 above.      478) Acts ch. 6.
- 479) *Cf.* Acts 4:35 & 5:2-6.
- 480) Mt. 26:2,17-29 *cf.* Luke 1:1f & 22:1-20,30 and Acts 1:1f & 2:42,46 & 6:1-4 with I Cor. 11:20-24.
- 481) Acts 4:34-37 & 5:1 -4 & 6:1 -3; *cf.* Abbing's *op. cit.* p. 564. *Cf.* too our argument at nn. 271 & 288-91 & 349 above.
- 482) H.D.A. du Toit's *op. cit.*, p. 23.      483) *Ibid.*, pp. 33,41.
- 484) Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order* 58-7 (p. 84, para. 4).
- 485) *Cf.* too our argument above at notes 271 & 287-89 & 349f.
- 486) Van der Merwe's *op. cit.* pp. 257f.      487) *Cf.* our argument above at n. 314.
- 488) Acts 6:1-4; *cf.* too our argument at n. 323 above.      489) Acts 13:1,5,13.
- 490) Acts 19:22.      491) Macpherson's *op. cit.* p. 96      492) Coppes's *op. cit.* pp. 128-30.
- 493) *Cf.* Acts 8:5,25,38,40 & 21:9f *cf.* I Tim. 3:13. *Cf.* too van der Merwe's statement at our n. 500 below.
- 494) Acts 6:10.      495) Acts 8:4, *euangelizomenoi ton Logon*; per contra *ekeerussen* in 8:5.
- 496) Acts 8:5, *ekeerussen*; per contra *euangelizomenoi* 8:4 in n. 495 above.
- 497) Acts 8:4f,12f,35,38.
- 498) *Cf.* F.N. Lee's *The Triune God and the Triune Office* at its n. 95, quoting Lloyd-Jones and Dunkerley with approval.
- 499) Coppes's *op. cit.*, p. 135.      500) *Cf.* our argument at n. 486 above.
- 501) Thus, erroneously, the KJV's "purchased" at I Tim. 3:13.
- 502) Thus, erroneously, the KJV's "degree" at I Tim. 3:13.
- 503) Macpherson's *op. cit.*, pp. 98f.      504) Acts 13:2.      505) Acts 14:14.

- 506) *E.g., cf. the Presbyterian Church in America's Book of Church Order, 25-6 & 39-3.*
- 507) Rom. 13:4 *cf. I Tim. 1:12*f* and I Pet. 4:10*f.**
- 508) Prov. 31 and I Cor. 7:3*f* & 10:31 and I Pet. 3:7.
- 509) I Pet. 3:6 *cf. Heb. 11:11.*      510) Josh. ch. 2 *cf. Heb. 11:31.*
- 511) Mt. ch. 1 *cf. Ruth chs. 1 to 4.*      512) Est. 4:14*f* & 5:21.
- 513) Lk. 2:34*f cf. John 8:18*f.**      514) Lk. 8:21 & 23:36*f.*      515) Acts 16:14*f* & 18:21.
- 516) II Tim. 1:5 & 3:14-17 *cf. I Tim. 2:15 and Tit. 2:4*f.**      517) Ex. 38:8 and the *Talmud.*
- 518) I Cor. 11:1-9.      519) I Tim. 2:12*f.*      520) Gen. 1:27.      521) Gen. 2:18.
- 522) See I Tim. 3:1-10 and II Tim. 2:2; *cf. F.N. Lee's The Ruling Eldership (with Particular Reference to the Rôle of Women).*
- 523) *Scots Confession, art. 22.*      524) *Westminster Confession 27:4, citing Heb. 5:4 (q.v.).*
- 525) Acts 6:1-8 *cf. I Tim. 3:8-12.*      526) Acts 9:36,39,41 *cf. 6:1-8 and Rom. 16:1*f.**
- 527) I Tim. 3:11 & 5:3-16 and Jas. 1:27 and Rom. 12:4-13 & 16:1*f.*
- 528) Rom. 16:1*f* and I Tim. 3:11 & 5:9*f.*      529) Pliny's *Epistle to Trajan, 10:96.*
- 529) Ignatius's *To the Philadelphians, ch. 4.*      530) Polycarp's *To the Philipppians, ch. 4.*
- 531) Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata III:6:53, diakonon gunaikoon or diaconissae primitiva.*  
"The Apostles...took their wives around...to be their fellow 'Deacon(esse)s.'"
- 532) *Cf. Tit. 2:3-5.*      533) Tertullian's *On Baptism, ch. 1.*
- 534) Tertullian's *Prescription against Heretics, ch. 41.*
- 535) Kleynhans's *Women and Office, 1983, p. 14 – cf. I Tim. 3:10*f* & 5:9 and Rom. 16:1*f.**
- 536) Origen's *Comm. on Rom. 16:1*f.**
- 537) E. Vööbus (ed.): *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac, Louvain, 1979, 2:156.*
- 538) *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978 rep., VII:388.*
- 539) *Apostolic Constitutions, II:4:26 & II:7:7 & III:2:15.*
- 540) Ex. 15:20 and Judg. 4:4 and Lk. 2:16 and II Kgs. 22:14.

- 541) Ex. 38:8f and I Sam. 2:22 cf. John 18:16f.
- 542) U.E. Eisen's *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville Mn., 2000, pp. 159.
- 543) *Ibid.*, pp. 164-67.
- 544) *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969 rep., III:14,100; and cf. N. Vyhmeister's *The Ministry of the Deaconess through History*, in *Ministry*, July 2008, p. 18
- 545) Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1971 rep., III:259f.
- 546) Council of Chalcedon, canons 15 & 50.    547) J. Chrysostom's *Homilies on Timothy* 3:11.
- 548) *Op. cit.*, III:261f.
- 549) Justinian's *Novellae* 3:1 & 6:6, and his *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, 3:20,21 & 43-45.
- 550) *Syrian Synodicon*, in 'James of Edessa.'
- 551) *Barberini Greek Euchology* 336; see [www.womenpriests.org/traditio/deac\\_grl.asp](http://www.womenpriests.org/traditio/deac_grl.asp).
- 552) *Liber Patrum*, ser. 2, fasc. 16, in *S. Congregatio pro Ecclesia Orientali*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Rome, 1930, 34.
- 553) M.P. Truesdell's *The Office of Deaconess*, in R.T. Nolan's *The Diaconate Today*, Corpus, Washington D.C., 1968, p. 150.
- 554) C.J. Hefele's *History of the Councils of the Church from the Original Documents*, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1871, 2:404.
- 555) *Ibid.*, 2:1:446, *Council of Orange*, canon 26.
- 556) *Council of Epaon*, canon 21 – in E.H. Landon's *Manual of the Councils of the Holy Catholic Church*, John Grant, Edinburgh, 1909, I:253.
- 557) Hefele's *op. cit.*, 4:187.
- 558) 1968 Report of the *Reformed Ecumenical Synod*, p. 152.
- 559) Kleynhans's *op. cit.*, p. 15.    560) J. Calvin's *Commentary on Acts* 6:1-7.
- 561) J. Calvin's *Commentary on Acts* 18:26.    562) J. Calvin's *Commentary on Rom.* 12:4-8.
- 563) J. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV:3:9.    564) *Institutes*, IV:13:19.

- 565) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on Rom. 16:1*f.*      566) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on I Cor. 11:4-12.
- 567) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on I Cor. 12:28 and 14:34-37.      568) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on Phil. 1:1.
- 569) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on I Tim. 2:11*f* & 3:1*f.*
- 570) J. Calvin: *Sermons upon the First Epistle to Timothy*, p. 282a lines 33-37 and b lines 1-4 & 16-19 and p. 283a lines 3-11 & 12-14 & 19-21 & 23-25 and b lines 27-33.
- 571) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on I Tim. 5:9-15.
- 572) Calvin's *Sermons upon the First Epistle to Timothy*, p. 474b lines 39-41, and 475a lines 7-16 & 21-23 & 30-36 and 475b lines 13-17 and 477a lines 5-8 & 19-24 and 479a lines 21-23 & 35-37 and 479b lines 25-29 and 483b lines 29-35 and 484b lines 2-10 & 12-16 & 30-34 & 37-38 & 42 and 485a lines 1-5 & 20-32 and 490 line 11 and 491a lines 16-19 & 26-28 and 493a lines 31-34 and 493b lines 23-25 & 29-34.
- 573) J. Calvin's *Institutes* IV:13:18.      574) Tit. 2:1-5.
- 575) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on Titus 2:3-5.      576) See at n. 573 above.
- 577) J. Calvin's *Sermons on the Epistle to Titus*, p. 1151b lines 16-20 & 41-42 and p. 1152a lines 1-2 & 5-7 and p. 1154 lines 25-29 and p. 1156b lines 29-31 and p. 1157a lines 34-40 and p. 1156b lines and p. 1158a lines 18-20 & 29-34 and p. 1160a lines 11-15 and p. 1160b lines 18-23.
- 578) J. Calvin's *Comm.* on I Pet. 3:1-7.      579) Calvin's *Letter to Bullinger*, 28th April 1554.
- 580) J. Calvin: *Corpus Reformatorum*, X:625.      581) Calvin's *Institutes* IV:15:22.
- 582) E. Percy: *John Knox*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1937, pp. 259-64.
- 583) Cf. F.N. Lee's *The Ruling Eldership, with Particular Reference to the Rôle of Women*.
- 584) R. Abbing's *Diaconia*, p. 395.      585) Ps. 54:4 and Heb. 13:6.
- 586) Rom. 13:1-7 and I Cor. 7:7-24.
- 587) Cf. the LXX at Est. 1:10 & 2:2 & 6:3 and Prov. 10:4*f* cf. Lk. 10:40 and John 2:5-9 *etc.*
- 588) See Acts 6:1-4 and Phil. 1:1 and I Tim. 3:8-12.      589) Gen. 1:26*f* & 2:24*f* and Heb. 6:7*f.*
- 590) Gen. 2:18*f* and I Cor. 11:3-8 and I Tim. 3:8*f.*      591) Gen. 2:15*f* cf. 1:26*f.*
- 592) A. Kuyper Sr.'s *E Voto Dordraceno*, I:311-22.      593) Gen. 3:15*f.*
- 594) Gen. chs. 12 to 50.      595) Ex. chs. 28*f* and Lev. 8*f.*

- 596) Cf. Isa. 11:1*f* and Rom. 11:16 and Rev. 22:2.      597) Dt. 14:28*f* & 26:12.
- 598) Ex. 30:7,12*f*; Lev. chs. 11 to 15 & 25 to 27; Num. 1:50*f* & chs. 3 to 4 & 8:6*f* & 10:1*f* & 18:2*f* & 35:6 and Dt. 17:9*f* & 18:1*f* & 21:5 & 24:8 & 26:2*f* & 33:8*f* and Josh. 6:4*f* and Judg. 17:5*f* and I Sam. 21:1*f* and I Chr. 9:14*f* & 15:23*f* & 26:20 and II Chr. 17:8*f* & 19:8 & 24:2*f* and Ezra 8:20*f* and Neh. 7:1*f* and Ezek. 44:1*f* and Mal. 1:6*f* & 2:1*f*,7.
- 599) I Cor. 6:1*f* cf. 12:28's "helps" and I Tim. 3:8*f*.
- 600) See Koole's *Liturgy and Office*, pp. 63*f*; van der Merwe's *Women in Ecclesiastical Office*, p. 257 & n. 50; and Vitringa's *De Synagogo*, III:2:4,22.
- 601) R. Dabney's *Discussions Evangelical*, II:129.      602) Mk. 12:41*f*.
- 603) Lev. 25:10 and Ps. 72:4*f* and Isa, 29:18*f* & 35:5*f* & 40:1*f* & 46:2*f* & 55:1 & 58:6*f* & 61:1*f* & 63:4 and Mt. 10:42 & 16:24*f* and Lk. 4:18*f* and John 4:7*f* etc.
- 604) Mt. 25:35*f* and Rom. 12:1-21 and Jas. 1:5,27 & 2:2*f*,13*f* & 5:1*f*,14*f*.
- 605) Lightfoot's *The Christian Ministry* pp. 183*f*, in his *Comm. on Phil.*      606) Cf. Phil. 1:1.
- 607) Cf. Lk. 12:37 & 22:26*f*.      608) Acts 4:4 cf. Mt. 15:38.      609) Acts 6:1*f* cf. I Tim. 5:3-9*f*.
- 610) Acts 4:35.      611) Acts 5:5,10 & 6:1-6.      612) Acts 4:35-37 & 5:2-10.
- 613) Cf. Acts 5:6-10.      614) Acts. 6:1*f*.      615) Acts 6:6.      616) Acts 6:7.
- 617) cf. Lk. 10:31*f*.      618) Acts 6:1-7.      619) J. Macpherson's *Presbyterianism*, p. 94.
- 620) Acts 6:1*f*.      621) Acts 4:34 to 5:6.      622) Acts 11:20-30.      623) Acts 6:1-7.
- 624) Acts 8:1*f* & 9:25,36*f*,41 & 10:2 & 11:29.      625) I Tim. 3:8*f* cf. 1:3.      626) Phil. 1:1.
- 627) I Cor. 1:2 cf. 12:8's "helps."      628) Rom. 1:7 & 12:7*f* & 16:1*f*.
- 629) A. Kuyper Sr's *Treatise for the Reform of the Churches*, p. 65.
- 630) Acts 6:3-8 cf. Prov. 14:21,31 & 17:5 & 22:2,22*f*.      631) Acts 6:3 cf. I Tim. 3:8*f*.
- 632) I Tim. 3:12 cf. Acts 6:1-6 and Jas. 1:27 and Isa. 1:4,17 and Mt. 25:36.
- 633) I Tim. 3:1,8-10 & 5:22 cf. Acts 6:3,6.
- 634) Acts. 6:3 cf. I Tim. 3:11 & 5:3,8*f*,11,16 and I Th. 2:9-12 & 4:11*f* and II Th. 3:6-15.
- 635) Acts 4:35*f* & 5:2-10 & 6:1-6 and Rom. 12:7*f*,13 and I Cor. 12:28 & 13:3 & 16:1-3.

636) The KJV's rendition of *isotees* as "equality" at II Cor. 8:14, is also sometimes employed by "Christian Communists" (*sic*) to try to teach what they call "the ethical requirement of richer Christians redistributing wealth equally among all other Christians, if not among all other men regardless of belief." However, "reciprocity" rather than "equality" would be a better translation here (thus Weymouth's version).

We ourselves would paraphrase the whole passage II Cor. 8:10-16 to read: "I, Paul, give my advice in this matter. For this is a matter of honour for you (Corinthian Christians) who have from as of last year not only previously begun to start undertaking (this cumulative collection), but also want to do so. Now, therefore, finish off even the undertaking, so that just as (there was) a previous intention to want to do so, there can similarly be a finishing-off (of the undertaking) too -- from out of what you actually have in hand (thus Hodge)!"

"For if there was a previous intention, it is to be accepted with gratitude commensurate to what a man actually has in hand (to give), and not commensurate to what a man does not actually possess (to give) -- lest other men should have ease (while) you (Corinthians have financial) tribulation (thus Calvin and Hodge). But (rather give) a fair proportion (thus Calvin and Hodge and Lee)! At the present time, let your (material) abundance (in Corinth) be imparted to augment their (material) want (in Jerusalem), in order that their (spiritual) abundance may be imparted to augment your (spiritual) want. Thus there should be (not an exactly-similar redistribution of wealth but) a reciprocal relief (to both Corinthians and Jerusalemites from material and spiritual destitution). As it is written (in Ex. 16:18), 'he that (had gathered) much (manna), had nothing left over; and he (that had gathered) little, had no lack.' Indeed, that desert episode, claim Calvin and Lee, does not teach egalitarianism.

"But thanks be to God, Who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you (Corinthians)." Cf. F.N. Lee's *Some Thoughts on Norm Lewis' 'Faith Promise Method' of Giving to Christian Missions*, pp. 7-10. The above-mentioned references to Calvin and Hodge and Lee are given in the next three footnotes (*q.v.*), which, however, should also be compared to the section above on Communism.

637) Cf. J. Calvin: *Commentary* on II Cor. 8:13f: "Both in poverty and wealth, it is a willing heart that pleases God -- since God does not wish us to be reduced to straits in order that others may be at ease through our liberality. This teaching is needed to refute fanatics who think that you have done nothing unless you strip yourself completely and put everything in a common fund. The only thing they achieve by this madness, is that nobody can give alms with a good conscience. Therefore we should carefully note Paul's *epieikeia*, his mildness and moderation in saying that our almsgiving pleases God, when we relieve the need of our brethren out of our abundance in such a way that the result is not that they are at ease and we in want, but rather that we give to them something commensurate with our own resources and that we give it with a willing heart."

Calvin compares *isotees* here in II. Cor. 8:13-14 with its usage in Col. 4:1, where the same writer Paul "certainly does not mean" that servants 'should be equal in condition and status' to their masters, but rather refers to 'the kindness and gentle forbearance that masters owe servants.'" Thus in II Cor. 8:15, "those who have riches, whether inherited or won by their own industry and labour, are to remember that what is left over is meant not for intemperance or luxury but for relieving the needs of the brethren.... Just as manna, which was hoarded to excess out of greed or lack of faith, immediately putrified --



so we should have no doubt that riches which are heaped up at the expense of our brethren are accursed and will soon perish and their owner will be ruined with them. So we are not to imagine that the way to grow rich is to make provision for our own distant future and defraud our poor brethren of the help that is their due.

"I acknowledge indeed that we are not bound to such an equality as would make it wrong for the rich to live more elegantly than the poor. But there must be such an equality that nobody starves and nobody hoards his abundance at another's expense. The poor man's omer will be coarse food and a frugal diet, and the rich man's a more abundant portion according to his circumstances, and yet in such a way that they should live temperately and not fail others."

638) Cf. C. Hodge's *Commentary* on II Cor. 8:11f: "Out of that which ye have, *ek tou echein*, according to your property.... The Apostle was not desirous to urge them either beyond their inclination, or beyond their regard to their resource.... The meaning there is, that Paul did not desire that the Corinthians should go beyond their ability in giving. For he had no wish that others should be enriched, and they impoverished.

"It is not obligatory on the rich to make themselves poor in order that the poor may be rich. That is not the rule.... A man's property is his own (Hodge's *Commentary* on II Cor. 3:14). It is in his own power to retain or to give away; and if he gives, it is his prerogative to decide whether it shall be much or little.... The equality therefore aimed at or intended, is not an equality as to the amount of property but equal relief from the burden of want.... That is, an equal relief from want or destitution."

639) Cf. F.N. Lee's *Some Thoughts on Norm Lewis' 'Faith Promise Method' of Giving to Christian Missions* pp. 9-11, at that article's footnotes 74 & 77 & 83: "Cf. Ex. 36:5f: 'And Moses gave commandment, and then caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it -- and too much'...II Cor. 8:15.... Which, explains v. 14, makes it clear that v. 14 is not referring to an equal redistribution of wealth even among fellow Christians alone....

"Note in Ex. 16:21, just referred to (in II Cor. 8:15) by Paul: (1) that each adult man among the people of God did not gather the same quantity of manna as did each other man, but that each man gathered 'according to his eating, an omer for every man' -- perhaps excluding the necessary provision for his wife (in this computation of exactly one omer) and probably excluding provision for his children and infants [cf. F.N. Lee's *Were Ye Baptized? (Acts 9:3) -- A Biblical Discussion Between Billy Baptist and Peter Presbyterian (Appendix XI: The Passover and the Lord's Supper Only for Teenagers and Adults)*, so that some men gathered 'more, some less' (Ex. 16:7); (2), that irrespective of whether each man gathered much or little, there were to be no leftovers, for each man was required to consume (together with his family) what he himself had gathered for his tent; and (3), that all unconsumed leftovers bred worms and stank, but were not redistributed by the gatherers to men of other tents before (or after) the food decomposed."

640) Dr. Paul Schrottenboer, General Secretary of the International Reformed Ecumenical Synod, took public issue against this (n. 401 above) statement of mine at the 1977 Pittsburgh Conference of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council -- just as he had

done immediately prior thereto in his extremely negative and unappreciative *Review of Coppes' "Who Will Lead Us? A Study in the Development of Biblical Offices, with Emphasis on the Diaconate"* (in Schrotenboer's own Reformed Ecumenical Synod Newsletter, Grand Rapids, October 4 1977, pp. 1307-08 & 1316).

Schrotenboer does not believe that diaconal help is fundamentally a matter of mercy shown by Deacons toward the (chiefly) Christian poor. Rather does he believe that all of the world's poor (irrespective of their religious convictions) have a right to receive massive material help of a diaconal character from all of the non-poor Christians, and specifically that the largely-non-Christian "have-not" Non-Western nations have a right to receive massive diaconal help and other economic aid from the 'wealthier' members of Western Christendom.

It is difficult to distinguish Schrotenboer's views on this particular matter from those of the World Council of Churches and even from those of self-confessed Christian Socialists (*sic*) on this subject, especially when he indicates that the 'diaconal' (?) help extended need not even be offered in the Name of Christ (in contrast to the Scriptural injunctions which require this in Mark 9:41 *etc.*). Indeed, it is difficult to see how Schrotenboer, with his views on this matter, can still consistently uphold the doctrine of limited atonement with its implicit teaching that God "wisely discerns" or "distinguishes" between the different conditions of one man and another. *Cf.* n. 523 below.

641) We must admit, however, that Schrotenboer, in spite of his unacceptable views set out in n. 640 above, has at least raised a very important issue. *Viz.*, does the relationship between the general office of all believers and the special office of the Deacon (as the agent of and the stimulus to all believers to "do good unto all men," Gal. 6:10a) -- then not imply that the Diaconate too is to do good unto all men? For if it is indeed the duty of all Christians to "do good unto all men" -- must it not necessarily and *a fortiori* also follow that this must even more so be the duty of the Diaconate too?

In answering this question, however, we should carefully note the following Scriptural considerations. A) Both the general office of all believers and the special office of Deacon are to function only in the Biblically-mandated way, as described in B)f below. B) Specifically the diaconal function of the Church is demarcated and limited by Scripture itself. For Acts 6:1f and I Tim. 3:8-12 *cf.* 5:3-16 exclude diaconal help to Non-Christian widows and to "young widows" even if they are Christian young widows -- and therefore, *a fortiori* according to Gal. 6:10b, especially if they are Non-Christian widows. *Cf.* II Th. 3:10, Knox's "the woman who refuses to work, must be left to starve." All of which severely limits the scope and the nature of the diaconal help permitted. C) Israelitic gleaning privileges were only intended for the use of poor Israelites and their proselytes and resident aliens as prospective proselytes, and not for non-resident poor Egyptians, Ammonites, and Amelekites *etc.* (Lev. 19:9f and Dt. 24:21f and Ruth). D) Unbelievers, but not fellow Israelites, could be charged interest on loans extended to them (Lev. 25:35f and Dt. 23:19f. E) True Christians are indeed to "do good unto all men" (Gal. 6:10a) -- namely in the course of God's providential guidance as they encounter their nearby neighbours, Luke 10. They are to do good to all specifically in the name of Christ (*cf.* Mk. 9.41) -- to do good first and foremost or "especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10b), and especially through the Church's Diaconate as the vehicle concentrating on helping specifically the (missionarily-expanding) Church (Acts 6:1f), eschatologically-oriented toward the ultimate realization of worldwide blessing by

the gradual christianization of all of the Earth's nations into the Kingdom of God (Mt. 28:19 and John 3:16f and Rev. 15:4 *etc.*).

There is indeed a "universalizing tendency" of the work of all truly Spirit-filled Deacons (Acts 6:3-7) to redound to the ultimate benefit of all men, simply because the Spirit Who fills them Himself cares for the whole universe and all its human and non-human contents (*cf.* note 38 above). But the Holy Spirit thus cares for His universe and its various contents in a distinguishing way from one non-human or human creature to the next (*cf.* nn. 34 & 40 & 237f above; *cf.* Lk. 4:18,25-27 & John 12:38-41 & 14:16f & 16:7-13 & Acts 13:46-52 and Rom. ch. 9 *etc.*).

Schrotenboer, however, tends to short-circuit this Scriptural approach. It is indeed difficult to see how he can avoid ultimately falling into Humanism. It is, of course, true that Christians should indeed have attitudes of positive benevolence toward all men (Mt. 5:43-48 & Rom. 12: 17-21) -- but, like God Himself, the exercise of that benevolence is subject to the exercise of a discerning love. To extend help to all men everywhere without strings attached -- is not really to help them in the long haul at all (nor even really to love them). Only when the correct Scriptural procedure is followed both by the Diaconate and by Christians at large in the service of the ministry of mercy, is the character of the alleviation offered truly help. *Cf.* too nn. 518f above.

636) *Second Book of Discipline*, VIII:3 (Scotland, 1578); *cf.* Macpherson's *op. cit.*, p. 97.

637) Westminster Assembly: *1645 Form of Church-Government*, section 7.

638) Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.: *Form of Government*, ch. VI.

639) J. Macpherson's *Presbyterianism*, p. 94.

640) Presbyterian Church in America. *Book of Church Order*, 10-1. 641) *Ibid.*, 10-2.

642) *Ibid.*, 10-3. 643) *Ibid.*, 10-4. 644) *Ibid.*, 10-5. 645) *Ibid.*, 10-6.

646) *Ibid.*, 10-7. 647) Heb. 13:6,5,15f.

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