LEADERSHIP, SPIRITUAL GIFTS, AND OFFICE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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1. Introduction

Harold W. Hoehner identified a common misconception among commentators: "Inexplicably, many commentators mix gift and office, yet they are not to be confused in the NT."[1] It is not too far of a stretch to extend Hoehner's observation to similarly characterize the relationship of leadership and offices in the NT.[2] Traditionally, leadership, offices, and spiritual gifts have either been used interchangeably without distinction or pitted against each other. The interplay of these three elements within NT ecclesiology has too often either been assumed based on our modern perception or completely undefined. Several questions need to be addressed: How are these interrelated, if at all? Are the NT passages concerned with form (e.g. the role or office) or function (e.g. the action or the behavior of an individual) – office or commission, or both? Are the distinctions solid lines or permeable concepts?

On opposing ends of the spectrum, two broad interpretations can be identified. On the one hand maximalists see an early introduction to formal offices[3], sometimes including apostolic succession as part of a very

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[1]   Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 539-540.

[2]   For example Robert Pierson equates leadership only as having authority in a larger denominational structure. It is intrinsically linked only to the pastoral position. Robert Pierson, *So You Want to Be a Leader: A Spiritual, Human Relations, and Promotional Approach to Church Leadership and Administration* (Ministry Releases vol. 7; Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996).

[3]   Morris argues from his perception of the Jewish historical background: "[E]lders were appointed from quite early times (Acts 11:30; 14:32), and, from the model of the Jewish synagogue, elders are to be expected even in very young churches." Leon Morris, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians: Introduction and Commentaries* (ed. Leon Morris; Tyndale New Testament Commentary; Leicester, England:

early structured church. On the other hand, minimalists consider the New Testament data to accurately reflect only the functionalistic aspect and gifts of a person without any formal directive. This position is often used by Protestants to counter the Roman Catholic view of offices and leadership. Leadership itself is difficult to define, as it never appears as a term in the New Testament nor the cognate "leader." What are the characteristics of leadership? And how can a good leader be recognized? Is the success of a leader defined or measured by the number of followers or by the orthodoxy of the followers? Or is leadership, as Walter C. Wright defines it, "a relationship in which one person seeks to influence the thoughts, behaviors, beliefs or values of another person".[4] In that case then, everyone would have some level of leadership responsibility as a Christian and a priest in God's church (Mat 28:19-21; 1Pet 2:9). In his aptly titled book *Every Believer a Minister,* founding his model on this idea, Rex Edwards builds his model of the modern church on this premise and views the role of modern pastors as a "a minster to ministers."[5]

This paper will examine the interplay of leadership, spiritual gifts, and offices throughout the New Testament canon by examining the most influential passages. This paper will follow a Biblical theological rather than a systematic theological approach in an effort to follow the trajectory of the first century developments and the contributions of each individual writer and epistle. Additionally, the paper will focus on the three sections that predominantly address this interplay: the Gospels, Acts, and the Pauline writings. In broad terms these three categories present a chronological progression in the stages of the early church. Within each category an attempt has been made to present the material in a chronological order as much as can be ascertained.

InterVarsity, 1984), 103. Others include Hans Lietzmann, "Zur Altchristlichen Verfassungsgeschichte," *Zeitschrift zur Alttestamentlichen Verfassungsgeschichte* 55(1914).

[4]   Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service* (Exeter: Paternoster, 2002), 2.

[5]   Rex D. Edwards, *Every Believer a Minister* (Ministry Releases vol. 5; Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 60. Ellen White concurs: "Christ intends that His ministers shall be educators of the church in gospel work." Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1898, 2010), 825.

2. Gospels

2.1. The Function and Form of the Twelve

The gospels present the ministry of Jesus as deeply engaged with human beings.[6] This is clearly visible in the close relationship with *his* disciples even though the narrative accounts don't always shed a favorable light on the disciples themselves. At the beginning of this interaction Jesus utters a seemingly unassuming: "Follow me!" (Matt 4:19-20) The calling of the disciples is never characterized as a calling based on specific qualities or talents that an individual possesses. In fact, "[t]he Synoptists agree in giving no reasons for this decision. Indeed, we cannot even speak of a specific decision in the strict sense, but only of the fact that Jesus called 'the twelve' to Himself and 'sent them out.'"[7] In fact, by taking a closer look at the personalities in the few passages available to us, it becomes clear that each individual was unique in his qualities and gifts.

Additionally, a twofold break with the historic setting puts Jesus already at odds with the prevalent paradigm of leadership. First, Jesus calls the fishermen rather than waiting for them to express their desire to follow him.[8] Secondly, already at this early stage, these followers, or later μαθηταί, are called with a specific task in mind—that of being "fishers of men." The μαθηταί are already foreshadowed as ἀπόστολοι at the outset of their calling.[9] In essence leadership is part and parcel of a follower.

The narrative of the Gospel of Matthew identifies the Twelve first as followers (Matt 4:19-20), then as the μαθηταί (Matt 5:1), and once as ἀπόστολοι (Matt 10:2). The writer of Matthew, as do the other gospel writers, employs the terminology based on the specific contextual information: The μαθητής is the learner, while the ἀπόστολοι is the one who is sent out (John 13:16). The preferred term for the Twelve in the gospels is the reoccurring use of μαθητής. These Twelve men are

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[6] "It is significant that his first recorded action is to gather a group of followers who will commit themselves to a total change of lifestyle which involves them in joining Jesus as his essential support group for the whole period of his pubic ministry." R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (ed. Gordon Fee; The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 145.

[7] Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "Apostolos," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)* (ed. Gerhard Kittel; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 2: 425.

[8] Martin Hengel, *The Charistmatic Leader and His Followers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), 42-57.

[9] "[T]he task to which he is calling them is described not primarily as one of learning from a teacher, but of active 'fishing.'" France, *Matthew*, 147.

primarily identified as "learners". The term ἀπόστολοι, on the other hand, is used mainly at the outset of the sending of the Twelve (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:14), the return after the sending (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10),[10] or as a definition of what it means to be sent out by the master (John 13:16). Only Luke shifts the terminology in the latter part of his gospel from the μαθηταὶ to the ἀπόστολοι in anticipation of the proceedings in the book of Acts (Luke 17:5; 22:14; 24:10). The intentional change in the terminology of the Twelve in the gospels is largely based on the function that Jesus' men are performing in that context rather than the form or office that they are filling at that moment. They are defined from one moment to the next by their action rather than their status.

However form or status is not completely denigrated in the gospels. Jesus extends the call to follow him to individuals (Mark 10:21; Luke 9:59) and the crowds (Matt 10:38; Mark 8:35; John 10:4.27) in addition to the Twelve. Additionally, individuals (Luke 10:39) and the crowds benefited from the public and sometimes private teaching of Jesus even to the point of receiving the same commission to proclaim the kingdom of God as laborers of God's vineyard (Luke 8:38.39; 10:1-2; ultimately even the gospel commission Matt 28:19-20)[11]. Yet none of these individuals, while fulfilling the same function as the Twelve, is labeled as μαθητὴς or ἀπόστολοι.[12] In relation to the larger group of followers and the undecided crowds, the disciples undoubtedly have a special standing in the mission and ministry of Jesus. As such they are twelve men

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[10] "Bei Matthäus und Markus tragen die Zwölf die Bezeichnung 'Apostel' nur im Zusammenhang einer zeitweiligen Aussendung. Ihre Funkion ist dort mit der Rückkehr zum Absender beendet. Also ist Apostel bei ihnen nur eine Funktions-, aber keine Amtsbezeichnung." "In Matthew and Mark the Twelve only carry the designation of 'apostle' in the context of a short-term commission. Their function has been completed at the return to the one who sent them. Therefore apostle is only a designation of functional not of office for them" (my translation). Eduard Lohse, "Ursprung und Prägung Des Christlichen Apostolats," 9, no. 4 (1953): 262.

[11] Notice also that several individuals, though they were not commissioned to proclaim the good news, considered it their privilege and responsibility to proclaim this (Mark 15:39; John 4:28.29).

[12] Rengstorf's argument of a pleonasm in Mark 10:2 and the resulting theory of three levels of progression of a believer are unconvincing in light of the entire gospel witness: "The μαθηταὶ are the larger fellowship because they are the more general group without which there can be neither ἀπόστολοι nor δώδεκα." Rengstorf, "Apostolos," *TDNT*, 1: 425.

representing the new covenant era as much as the twelve patriarchs, and twelve tribes typify the old covenant.[13]

2.2. Leadership in the Gospels

The topic of leadership is a minor topic in the gospels, but Jesus does address proper behavior for disciples and leaders throughout his ministry. Though the word itself is not present in the New Testament writings, principles of leadership can be derived from Jesus' teachings. The primary instruction for the disciples is of course the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). It is directed first of all to the disciples as a code of conduct (Matt 5:1-2). But Jesus goes beyond ethical and moral behavior to contrast a disciple's leadership with the leadership of the religious elite.

Jesus views a true disciple as one who will decidedly impact his or her surroundings (5:14) and transform his or her community (5:13) he or she will lead by means of the law (5:17) and by being exceedingly righteous (5:20). A righteous man or woman is then defined by a set of personal actions but also a set of actions based on abuse of power abuse of religious leaders (6:1-8) and occupying forces (5:39-41). This juxtaposition between the conduct and motives of leaders of the day and Jesus' values sets the tone for Jesus' speech on leadership (Mark 10:35-45). In this late speech Jesus reveals the opposing ideologies in stark contrast. He addresses the leaders of his days with as "who are considered to rule" (οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν) and "the great ones" (οἱ μεγάλοι) but juxtaposes their pompous demeanor with that of the "servant" (διάκονος) and "slave" (δοῦλος). And the two pejorative κατα- compound verbs are uprooted by two simple "to be" verbs. "[O]ppressive and uncontrolled exploitation of power"[14] is displaced by the self-identification with the lowest possible rank.[15]

The force of the statement is that leadership in the communities of followers of Jesus is not to be self-aggrandizing and self-serving; rather, it is to be characterized by service to the other members of the community and to the good of the community as a whole. Indeed, the leader should consider his or her role to be analogous to that of a slave

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[13] "They were clearly not the only disciples Jesus had, but they occupied a special place in the scheme of things." Robert M. Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," *JATS* 17, no. 2 (2006): 4.

[14] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner; New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 419.

[15] Other passages that illustrate this include: Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 9:33-37

belonging to the community. This model suggests that the leader's service should be centered on the needs of the community, not on her or his own.[16]

Jesus is the ultimate example of this. His incarnation, mission (Luke 19:10; John 13:1-17), and death as a ransom (Mark 10:45) are the perfect model to emulate and the complete opposite to the paradigm of the reigning leaders. In this sense Jesus employs another parable (John 10) to categorize himself, his followers, and his opposition (the elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and High Priests). Jesus is "the good shepherd" (John 10:11.14) who shepherds, leads, protects, defends, searches for his sheep (Luke 15:4-5) and even lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11.17), while the hireling abandons and the thief attempts to steel the sheep. At the end of the gospel Jesus extends this same leadership model expressed in the shepherd metaphor to the repentant Peter. Jesus commissions Peter to βόσκε (feed, John 21:15.17) and ποίμαινε (shepherd, John 21:16) the sheep by "caring for his flock the way he does, which implies utter self-sacrifice and potentially death (John 10:11, 15; 21:18-19)."[17] Peter in turn addresses the "fellow elders" with the same calling to ποιμάνατε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ (shepherd the flock of God among you, 1Pet 5:2). It is clear from the imperatives that neither Jesus nor Peter is referring to an office but to an action, i.e. the charge to lead the followers of Christ as he himself did (1Pet 5:3-5). Succession is then in terms of a Christ-like leadership not an office.

The idea of leadership as a servant needs further clarification. The term servant (διάκονος) is only used of literal servants (Matt 22:13; John 2:5.9) or as a leadership concept (Matt 20:26; 23:11; Mark 9:35; 10:43; John 12:26) with the synonyms slave (Matt 20:27; Mark 10:44), little child (Matt 18:4), and "the least" (Luke 9:48). In this sense the gospels do not address an office, but rather pick up on a cultural setting for a comparative metaphor. Jesus never refers to himself as a servant or slave, instead he repeatedly describes his actions as that of serving or ministering (διακονέω) both humanity in a general mission statement (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 12:37) and specifically serving his disciples (Luke 22:27). Jesus instructs his followers and specifically the Twelve to also serve

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[16]   Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (ed. Harold W. Attridge; Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 499. She continues to trace this motive throughout the Old Testament.

[17]   Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 2:1237.

(διακονέω) (Luke 22:26; John 12:26) but they are never reported to have done so. Instead the angels served Jesus (Matt 4:11; Mark 1:13) and various women repeatedly served Jesus (Matt 8:15; 27:55; Mark 1:31; 15:41; Luke 4:39; 8:3; 10:40; John 12:2).

Luke has the finest differentiation between the various terms. In order to avoid any confusion with the term διακονία, which will be reserved for his book of Acts, Luke never uses the word διάκονος. Instead Luke prefers the term δοῦλος where Matthew and Mark use the διάκονος. Luke uses the three cognate words (διάκονος, διακονέω, and διακονία) with care and precision and they are not to be viewed in a generic fashion. Therefore, Luke's fine nuancing of terminology makes his threefold mention of women ministering to Jesus – and the lack of the Twelve ministering – even stronger.[18] The women have become the model of ministry. This ministry cannot simply be diminished to common hospitality, as neither the angles' nor Jesus' διακονέω can be reduced to common politeness or proper social etiquette. As Myer, referring to Mark's mention of the women, states it: "[T]hese women now become the 'lifeline' of the discipleship narrative. . . They are the true disciples. . . This is the last – and, given the highly structured gender roles of the time, surely the most radical – example of Mark's narrative subversion of the canons of social orthodoxy."[19]

Interestingly, leadership in the gospels is never tied to a particular spiritual gift or an office. Instead it is awarded based on commission (Luke 9:1-2; 10:1; Matt 28:19-20) or the confession or practice of faith (Matt 16:18-19; 18:18-19). Neither is leadership nor an office given to any one individual. It is always the community at large. While there are grand statements of leadership given to the Twelve, it is the women on the sidelines that minister (διακονέω), anoint (John 12:3), remain with Jesus at the cross, and who are the first witnesses of his resurrection.[20]

In summary the gospels do not address the topic of spiritual gifts or make a correlation of spiritual gifts to leadership or office. Also, the

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18 See a brief discussion in I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 317.

19 C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 396-397; 280-281.

20 It is interesting to observe that the references to women begin with acts of service (service leadership) and end with their commission as witnesses to proclaim the good news of the resurrection (word leadership). The disciples on the other hand begin with the commission to preach the good news of the kingdom of God and end in a locked room, with a few words of restoration in Matthew, Luke, and John.

gospels are not concerned about offices or form but rather function, though some element of office cannot be denied (Matt 16:16-18; the possibility for seats of authority Mark 10:40). The emphasis in the gospels is on leadership style, often presented in contrast to a negative behavior of the religious or military leaders. Every disciple is called to lead as a servant, since it is the very essence of Christ's mission to humanity. This leadership is communal – based on and with the purpose to serve for the community – not individualistic, is driven by service driven rather than fixated on authority, is focused on soul-winning rather than upholding the establishment, is dedicated to healing rather than steeped in traditions.

3. Acts

3.1. Apostles

The term ἀπόστολος is central to the early part of the book of Acts. The word itself is reminiscent of the Lukan account of the commissioning of the Twelve where the term receives its meaning. The Twelve are first sent (ἀπέστειλεν Luke 9:2) before they return from their mission trip as apostles (ἀπόστολοι Luke 9:10). At the outset of the book of Acts the apostles are again commissioned: "you will be my witnesses (μάρτυρες) in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to end of the earth." (Acts 1:8) But interestingly a new term is introduced in Acts to relate to the sharing activity of Jesus' followers. Their action is now to witness not to preach (κηρύσσω, Mat 10:7) and they are now considered witnesses rather than the ones sent out. Even the message has changed. The paramount concept in the book of Acts is now the witness of God's past actions (e.g. 4:33; 26:16) and present actions (e.g. 10:42; 26:16) rather than the proximity of the kingdom of God (Mat 10:7) By employing the concept of the witnesses Luke accomplishes a twofold purpose: First, he provides a bridge between the conclusion of his gospel ("you are witnesses μάρτυρες of these things" Luke 24:48) and the beginning of the book of Acts, thereby redeeming the disciples and the socially unacceptable end of Jesus' life. Second, Luke can now differentiate between the two eras of the Christian experience of his lifetime: the earthly life and ministry of Jesus and the acts of the Holy Spirit in the early church. The "apostles" can therefore be an established and independent group from the remaining witnesses, a constant reminder of the direct impact of the life, ministry, and resurrection of Jesus, while the commission is carried forward by the all-encompassing term of "witnesses". These witnesses include the apostles themselves (Acts 1:8.22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39.41),

the prophets (10:43; Stephen (22:20); Paul (14:3; 22:15; 23:11; 26:16.22), Barnabas (14:3), and even God himself (7:44; 13:22; 15:8).[21] Surprisingly even the antagonists become witnesses to the truth (7:58; 22:5; 26:5). Additionally, by clearly identifying the Twelve as Apostles, the term "disciples" is not used specifically for the Twelve in Acts. Instead all of the followers of the Christian movement are now disciples. This includes the Twelve (9:1), the Jewish Christians (6:1), and the Gentile Christians (18:27). As a result of this twofold development, Acts replaces the "sending out" concept of the gospels with the "witnessing or testifying" concept of Acts.

To recap, the term "to send out" has been superseded by the idea of "witnessing or testifying" and the term "disciples" is no longer restricted to the Twelve but includes every follower. This opens the door for a restrictive use for the Twelve, they are now the apostles, the only ones who received that original commission of Jesus. Because of these shifts in the terminology after the ascension of Jesus, it might not be surprising to see the term apostle disappear from the book of Acts after chapter 15. Despite Paul possibly wanting to assign a broader understanding to the term apostles (1Cor 15:7; Rom 16:7), it came into disuse and the terms elders, overseers, and deacons became prominent.

Acts 1 limits the apostles to a group with stringent requirements (1:21.22) that can only be ratified by divine approval (1:24-26). By doing so a de facto office has been established. The apostles are by default the highest and only leaders in the early phases of the Christian movement and all who join – in Acts the term "disciple" is used generically for all followers of Christ – follow the "teachings of the apostles" (Acts 2:42) and bring their offerings to "the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:35.37; 5:2). As the narrative progresses and the community grows (6:1), the apostles increasingly collaborate with the church at large beginning with the election of the seven. The Twelve and "the full number of the disciples" (6:2) address the issue of difficulties in the daily distribution.[22] After Acts 11 the apostles are referred to only in conjunction with other groups. The

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[21] See Joachim Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern* (ed. Hans Urner; Theologische Arbeiten 33; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 68-69.

[22] "It is important to note that the congregation made the selection. The apostles assumed the leadership in making the proposal, but they left final approval of the plan and selection of the seven to congregational decision." John B. Polhill, *Acts* (ed. David S. Dockery; New American Commentary; Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2001), 26: 181.

watershed event for the launch of the Gentile mission (chapter 10) is presented before "the apostles and the brethern" (11:1) and the great council in Jerusalem does not lead to an independent decision of James or the apostles, it is instead always a council of "apostles and elders" (15:2.4.6.22.23; 16:4). It appears that, quite possibly for pragmatic reasons of church growth, the apostles focused on the teaching aspect of the young movement while church governance was a collaborative and consensual endeavor.

The relationship of the apostles and Paul has received plenty of contentious attention in scholarship. For some the book of Acts attempts to disbar Paul from authority within the church[23], for others the book shows the dependency of Paul upon the Jerusalem church.[24] Rhode argues instead, that Luke eloquently establishes the ministry of Paul as that of an equal to the apostles. While Luke only once assigns the term apostle to Paul (and Barnabas, 14:4), the story line of the book attempts to verify that Paul stands on an equal footing. Just like the apostles have a ministry (διακονία 1:17.25) so Paul has a ministry (διακονία 20:24; 21:19). Paul has an equal commission (9:15; 22:21; 26:17) and Paul is an equal witness of the risen Lord (22:14-15).[25] The difference between Paul and the apostles is not one of office, authority, or leadership, but instead one of missionary focus. Paul is the apostle and minister to the gentiles, while the Twelve remain in Jerusalem (8:1.14). The definition then of an apostle, whether one of the Twelve specifically or seen wider – including Paul and Barnabas – is:

> Für Lukas ist der Apostel der am Anfang der Kirche stehende und von Jesus selbst berufene ausgesandte Zeuge und Diener. Er ist Zeuge, indem er der werdenden Kirche mit dem vollständigen Zeugnis von Jesu Weg als dem abschließenden Willen Gottes dient, und er ist Diener, indem er in seinem eigenen Wirken die Selbsthingabe Jesus für die Kirche bezeugt.[26]

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[23]   E.g. Wilhelm Seufert, *Ursprung und Bedeutung Des Apostolats in der Christlichen Kirche der Ersten Zwei Jahrhunderte* (Leiden: Brill, 1887).

[24]   E.g. Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963).

[25]   Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 68.

[26]   "For Luke the apostle is the one who stands at the beginning of the church. He is the one who is called and sent out by Jesus himself as a witness and servant. He is the witness by serving the developing church with the complete testimony of the way of Jesus. This is the concluding volition of God. He is also servant by witnessing to the self-sacrifice of Jesus through his own ministry" (my translation).

3.2. Apostles

Surprisingly, the book of Acts makes no reference to any person being a deacon (διάκονος). The preferred terminology in Acts is that of service or ministry (διακονία). This ministry has a broad range of meanings: First, the apostles engage in διακονία (1:17.25; ministry of the word 6:4). Second, dispute arose because widows did not receive their daily διακονία (6:1). Third, all disciples engaged in διακονία to help the church in Jerusalem (11:29). Fourth, Paul was active in διακονία (12:25; 20:24; 21:19) as were Barnabas (12:25), Timothy and Erastus (19:22). On the basis of this assessment it is not possible to limit διακονία to waiting of tables (6:2) only. It encompasses all aspects of ministry. "A decisive point for understanding the concept is that early Christianity learned to regard and describe as διακονία all significant activity for the edification of the community."[27] The two basic categories of ministry of the word and ministry of service are all subsumed in the collective term διακονία. Luke illustrates this not only with his use of the word itself but the example of the seven elected men. Their primary assignment for which they are elected is resolving the conflict with the Hellenistic widows (6:1). But their ministry extends beyond this. Stephen is a spirit filled disputer (6:10) and miracle worker (6:8) just as Peter. Philip is missionary to Samaria and also miracle worker (8:5-6), baptizes the first gentile (8:38) and is an evangelist (21:8).

Johnston is correct in calling for a careful review of the election process of Acts 6:1-4 and points out four important steps in this process:

> First it should be noted that the laying on of hands did not bestow a spiritual gift; the Seven were already "full of the Spirit," and that was one of the reasons why they were chosen (6:3). . . Second, they were chosen by their peers. . . Third, their office was created for pragmatic reasons, to fill a need (*chreia*, 6:3). Fourth, they received the laying on of hands. . .[28]

The passage gives hints on the election process itself, but to what if any official office they were elected is not apparent in the text. Johnston presents three arguments why these seven should properly be titled "elder-deacons": First, the elders of Acts 11:30 show a similar act of

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Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern,* 69.

[27] Hermann W. Beyer, "Διακονέω, Διακονία, Διάκονος," *TDNT*, 2:87.

[28] Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 9.

compassion in times need. Second, the election process for the elders is equally community-representative (14:23) as that of the seven. Finally, the terminology in Acts 6:1-4 revolves around the serving (διακονέω 6:2).[29]

3.3. Overseers or Elders

Two terms are significant for the discussion of this heading: the ἐπίσκοπος (overseer) and the πρεσβύτερος (elder).[30] It is well established that these two terms are used interchangeably of the same Christian leader or office throughout the NT. Barth introduces a lengthy discussion of NT passages as well as Second Temple period material with the words: "Repeatedly the nouns 'shepherd,' 'bishop,' 'elder' and the verbs expressing the function of the first two, appear to be synonyms."[31] Nuances can be pointed out: On the one hand the ἐπίσκοπος identifies a functional use (i.e. the one who oversees) of Greco-Roman origin. On the other hand the πρεσβύτερος signifies a title of dignity (i.e revered age) of Jewish origin.[32]

The concept of the ἐπίσκοπος appears twice in the book of Acts. In a passage reminiscent of Peter's commission in John 21, Paul reminds the ἐπίσκοπος of their divine calling by the Holy Spirit and their sacred task to "pay attention to yourselves and the flock" and to "shepherd the church." With this endearing terminology he instills in the overseers the sacred function of shepherd in the order of Jesus. Here Paul implants in them that "die Sorge um die Seelen der Gläubigen im Vordergrund ihrer Tätigkeit gestanden habe."[33] This concern is also at the heart of the

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[29] Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 10-11.

[30] It is interesting to note, that the term ἐπίσκοπος never occurs in the plural in Acts, and the term πρεσβύτερος never occurs in the singular in Acts.

[31] Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6* (ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman; Anchor Bible; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 438-439."That 'elder' and 'bishop' were synonymous terms can be demonstrated from several New Testament passages. In Acts 20 the same people are called elders (*presbyteroi*) in verse 17 and *episkopoi* in verse 28. See also Titus 1:5-7, where Paul speaks of appointing elders and then immediately lists the qualifications of 'bishops,' and 1 Tim 3:1; 4:14; 5:17,19. The distinction between deacon and elder/bishop is hardened in the pastoral epistles, especially in 1 Tim 3:1-13." Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 11.

[32] See the BDAG *ad loc.* The BDAG advises against the translation of ἐπίσκοπος as bishop: "The ecclesiastical loanword 'bishop' is too technical and loaded with late historical baggage for precise signification of usage of ἐπίσκοπος".

[33] "the care of the souls of the believers was in the foreground of their service" (my translation). Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur*

cognate noun ἐπισκοπή in its use in Acts 1:20. The function of the twelfth apostle is described as and most likely refers to the concept of caring for the souls of the believers.

As in the gospels, the Jewish πρεσβύτεροι appear as the antagonists of the narrative persecuting the early believers at the beginning and the end of the book (4:5.8.23; 6:12; 22:5; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15). More significantly though, the πρεσβύτεροι of the Christian movement are filled with empathy (11:30) and collaborate with the apostles in the council (15:2.4.6.22.23; 16:4). They are the representatives of their community and act as ambassadors of the local churches to Jerusalem and *vice versa*. Suggestions have even been made that James functions as the head of this group of πρεσβύτεροι at the council as counterpart to the head of the apostles, Peter. Acts 21:18 could support this point, but it is not clear.[34]

In Acts 14:23 elders are elected. The context of this passage illuminates the difficulties that Paul and Barnabas were facing in the churches. They themselves could usually only stay for short timespans due to persecution and the church members needed strengthening and encouragement for their own tribulations (14:22). The purpose for electing elders (14:23) is a pragmatic solution to a difficult situation in the local congregation: The church members needed to be strengthened and supported even during the absence of the Paul and Barnabas. Questions about who appointed them and how this process was accomplished abound. If the antecedent of the participle χειροτονήσαντες is Paul and Barnabas then this rare word should be interpreted as "appoint, install."[35] But if the antecedent is the congregation, then it "means to raise one's hand in voting."[36] To resolve this issues the context needs to be evaluated. On the one hand, the preceding and antecedent participles all refer to the actions of Paul and Barnabas and one initially would expect χειροτονήσαντες to also imply Paul and Barnabas as subjects. On the other hand the only other usage of χειροτονέω in the NT (2Cor 8:19) clearly identifies the church as "voting by raising of hands". The analogous election account in Acts 6:1-4 would also support the entire community as subject of the action. The solution

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Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern, 71.

[34]   Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern,* 70-71. Contrary to Rohde, the textual evidence is not clear on this and it is only important if one perceives an adversative rather than a collaborative approach between apostles and elders.

[35]   See the BDAG ad loc. Because the apostles are the subject this action "does not involve the choice by the group."

[36]   Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 10.

might be found in verse 22. Here the two apostles encourage the congregation to endure tribulation as they have just recently undergone for "it is necessary *for us* to enter into the kingdom." The first person plural is inclusive to both parties, the apostles and the congregation. The apostles deliberately move from a teacher/student or apostle/disciple model to a co-sufferer and co-laborer model. It is therefore plausible to argue for a community-initiated appointment by means of raising of hands.

The election process of the elders incorporates the congregational involvement of Acts 6:1-4, the fasting and praying of Paul and Barnabas' community recognition (13:3), and imply the pragmatic function of service (14:22). No special requirements or spiritual gifts are listed for the office of elder[37], though the similarities with the election of the seven and the election of Paul and Barnabas imply that they were most likely spirit-filled individuals.

In summary, the book of Acts follows the developments of the early believers and showcases the mission and governance of the church. The apostles form the first unit with stringent requirements for inclusion. It is therefore unexpected that Paul and Barnabas are not only named but also shown to be apostles. This widening of the term will become clear when the term is applied to all the witnesses of the resurrection (1Cor 15:7) and to Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7).[38] The leadership style of the apostles encourages participation and election, continues to be mission and word focused (6:2), and develops into a collaborative rather than a hierarchical governance system.

The elders first appear in the local churches in Asia Minor in an effort to address the needs of the Jerusalem church. They soon participate in guiding the church alongside the apostles and now function as envoys between the local church and the church in Jerusalem. The seven elected men function in a similar way to the elders. In this sense there was only one elected office in the book of Acts.

At this early stage references to offices are still very much fluid and individuals can be characterizes under a variety of headings. For example, the Twelve can be identified under the heading of ἀπόστολοι (1:26), ἐπισκοπή (1:25), and engaging in διακονία (1:20). Similarly Phillip is designated as engaging in διακονία (6:1) and as evangelist (21:8).

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[37] Offices requirements are listed in 1 Timothy, but in Acts no requirements are listed.

[38] See the extended discussion below and Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (MN: Fortress, 2005).

Besides the discussion of offices and officers, the book of Acts points out several unofficial but influential leaders. They are mentioned because of their service to the community (Tabitha 9:36-39), offering of patronage (Lydia 16:14-15), and spirit-filled guidance (Ananias 22:12-13). All of their functions are analogous to those of the elected. Leadership can therefore exist even if an individual does not have an official title or office. And conversely, the election to an office recognizes that an individual has leadership gifts and has employed them.

4. Pauline Epistles

4.1. First Thessalonians 5:12-13

Paul's letter to the Thessalonians opens a view into some of the earliest organizational considerations. In the closing exhortations of the letter Paul admonishes the readers of his letter to "to know the ones who labor among you and who stand before you in the Lord and who admonish you." The three participles that describe the tasks of these leaders in the church are contingent on a single article and therefore indicate, "that it is one group of persons and not three that is in mind."[39] Lietzmann argues for the presence of established offices here and bases his reasoning on the use of προϊσταμένους, which also plays a prominent view in the Pastoral Epistles.[40] But F. F. Bruce counters this claim on the basis of two observations: First, "[f]rom its position as the second in a series of three participles, of which the first and third are not official designations, προϊσταμένους is plainly not an official designation."[41]Second, in contrast to Paul's use of nouns to describe the apostles and deacons (Phil1:1), the use of participles here instead of nouns stresses the action above the status. Third, the peculiar usage of εἰδέναι in this sentence reinforces the idea that leadership in the Christian community was in its infancy and the apostle had to admonish the congregation to "acknowledge" these individuals in their midst.[42]

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[39]   Morris, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians: Introduction and Commentaries*, 103.

[40]   Lietzmann, "Zur Altchristlichen Verfassungsgeschichte," 110.

[41]   F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Word Biblical Commentary 45; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 118.

[42]   The common translation of "treat with awe" would be the only instance of this usage. Morris, *Thessalonians*, 102. See an extended discussion in A. L. Moore, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (London: Nelson, 1969).

In this early mention of leadership within the church the primary focus is not on established offices, but on the voluntary involvement of church members using their spiritual gifts to lead the congregation in all aspects of the Christian life. Rohde summarizes:

> "Es geht an dieser Stelle... noch nicht um das Amt als Institution, sondern um die Pflichten von Personen und die dafür erforderlichen Gaben. . . Das aus 1. Thess. 5,12 zu erschliessende pluralistische Gemeindeamt der prohistamenoi hat also alle notwendigen Funktionen in sich vereint. . . also die Leitung der äußeren und inneren Gemeindeangelegenheiten einschließlich der seelsorgerlichen Tätigkeit, der Liebestätigkeit und der Leitung der Gemeindeversammlung."[43]

4.2. 1 Corinthians 12-14

In 1Corinthians 12 Paul identifies the various charisma as a direct gift not only of the Holy Spirit but the Trinity itself (1Cor 12:4-6).[44] The division into grace-gifts (χάρισμα), services (διακονία), and works (ἐνέργημα) is therefore only rhetorical. This threefold expression is analogous to the threefold persons of the Trinity and is employed to introduce the following list of particular gifts with an all-embracing framework. As has been observed in the book of Acts, διακονία in 1 Corinthians 12 is an all-

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[43]   "In this passage the focus. . . is not yet on the office as an institution, but rather on the duties of people and the gifts that were acquired for this task... The pluralistic church office of the prohistamenaoi, as 1 Thess 5:12 points out, has embraced all the necessary functions. This includes [dealing with] external and internal church affairs including acts of pastoral care, acts of love, and the leadership of the church worship." (my translation) Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 44. "The highest possible regard is due to such people, not because of their status but because of their work. In Christian ministry generally status depends on function and not vice versa. It was not important that those who served the church in various ways should be given distinctive titles, and even when they were given titles (like the ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι of Phil 1:1), these might differ from one place to another." Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 119.

[44]   David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert E. Stein; Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 576.

encompassing terminology for Christian service, ministry, and leadership.[45]

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul ties the spiritual phenomena to the imagery of the σῶμα Χριστου ◊for "the idea of incorporation into the body of Christ emphasizes the priority of Christology to ecclesiology."[46] He invokes this metaphor to substantiate four aspects of the spiritual phenomena: First, God is the giver of gifts. The phenomena are not anyone's personal achievement. They are divine manifestations in a person however big or small.[47] Second, the spiritual phenomena are distributed to the individual for the benefit of the entire church body (1Cor 12:18). The parable of the body illustrates the equality with which each gift or service should be valued. Third, both the list of gifts and the parable illustrate the value and necessity of a large diversity of gifts. This is large enough to exceed any singular list in the NT. Fourth, implied in the metaphor of the body and explicit in verses 27-31 is the directive for each individual to engage in his or her endowed gifts or risk personal and communal detriment. The Trinity works in every member of the body of Christ and has endowed each one (1Cor 12:11 ἰδίᾳˆ) with gifts, service, and works. This universality is insofar astonishing as it is indiscriminate towards all members.

The concluding verses of 1 Corinthians 12 constitute "an exegetical and lexicographical minefield."[48] The two questions that need to be addressed in light of this paper include: Does the list found in verse 28 describe a function or a form and do Paul's ordinal numbers denote a hierarchical view or marking of a check list? While it is impossible to be completely certain, several factors indicate that Paul stresses function[49]

[45] "[O]ne should not infer that the three figures do different things. . . Paul approaches these spiritual phenomena from three different perspectives." Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 576-577.

[46] Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 330.

[47] Paul's list of spiritual gifts contains a "mixture of what some might label 'natural' and 'supernatural' endowments, or 'spectacular' and 'more ordinary' gifts." But Paul makes no distinction between these. D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 37.

[48] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Comentary on the Greek Text* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1013. Thiselton has an expansive discussion examining the predominant solutions of several theologians and analyzing their arguments.

[49] Chevallier points out the functional use in Paul's list here and emphasizes that it doesn't matter who fulfills these roles since the emphasis is on God who gifts an individual. M.-A. Chevallier, *Esprit De Dieu, Paroles D'hommes* (Neuchatel, Switzerland: Delachaux, 1966), 148-150.

over form and emphasizes unity over hierarchy in these verses. First, Paul in this letter is primarily concerned in dealing with the local Corinthian church at hand, though the universal church is not completely out of the picture.[50] In this instance though Paul is not pleading for a unifying global church structure for the early church.[51] This is also apparent in the plural use of the personal pronoun *you* in verses 27 and 31 which frame this difficult passage. Additionally, the final verses are Paul's summary of the entire chapter: The Trinity endows everyone with gifts for the edification of the body. The immediate church setting of Corinth would have been the primary way his readers would have understood the imagery of the body. The reason for the ordinal numbers would then primarily be to reduce the importance of the *glossolalia*.[52] Second, the implicit idea of acting on one's spiritual gifts becomes a reality in the final verses of the chapter. This could resolve the problematic switch in Paul's writing between "abstract nouns denoting the various activities involved, while in other instances he appears to use adjectival titles for persons who perform specific functions or (some argue) offices"[53]. Third, the surrounding context emphasizes the principle of unity: *one* body (v. 12), *one* Christ (v. 12), *one* spirit (v. 13), and even pleads for an equal standing despite prevalent social and religious discrimination (v. 13). Even the immediately preceding verses speak to equality in suffering (v. 25-26) and caring especially for the underrated members of the body (v. 22-23). The equal pouring out of the gifts of the spirit is the ratification of this

[50] Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (ed. Leon Morris; Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 174.

[51] This is contrary to Harnack who proposes a distinction between charismatic global offices (apostle, prophet, and teacher) and administrative local offices that do not require a spiritual gift. Rohde rightfully opposes this: "In der Frühzeit des Urchristentums bestand dieser Unterschied jedoch nicht, sondern alle Dienste in Einzelgemeinde und Gesamtkirche zeigen hinsichtlich ihrer Teilhabe am urchristlichen Charisma keinen erkennbaren Unterschied." "In the early phase of the Christian church this distinction did not exist yet. Instead the services of the local community and global church exhibit no distinction in regard to their early church charisma." (My translation) Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 46.

[52] Knox notes Paul's reversal of the important gifts. The apostles seemingly despised (1Cor 4:9-13) are first and speaking of tongues is last. R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford: Claredon, 1950), 22; D. B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (London: Yale University Press, 1995).

[53] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1013.

principle (Acts 10:44-48), while the means of achieving this equality among the believers is on the basis of love (Romans 12:9.10; 1 Cor 13; Eph 4:16) That Paul would turn heel so quickly and issue a hierarchical list of offices does not seem consistent with the context. [54] Finally, the list of verse 28 is reminiscent of the list in verses 8-10. Only this time ordinal numbers replace the "to some. . . to others. . ." In this parallel, the individual who has received (v. 8-10) is now the one who is involved in ministry. This parallel structure is reinforced with the equivalent opening of ᾧ μὲν in verse 8 and οὓς μὲν in verse 27. This parallel is especially helpful for verse 27 where "contrastive δέ never appears and the construction appears to proceed differently. "[55]

Based on 1 Corinthians 12:28 and the church fathers Harnack proposes a distinction between charismatic global offices (apostle, prophet, and teacher) and administrative local offices that do not require a spiritual gift. Rohde rightfully opposes this: "Die Verschiedenheit der Dienste und Betätigungen wurde vom Geist nach einer bestimmten Ordnung gewirkt, d.h. für Paulus waren alle in der Kirche Tätigen auch Charismatiker. Paulus macht keinen direkten Unterschied zwischen charismatischen und nichtcharismatischen Tätigkeiten (vgl. Röm. 12,3-8, 1.Kor. 12,4-11; 12,28b)."[56]

To summarize, Paul employs among others the term διακονία as overarching expression to cover the individual gifts of both service oriented and word oriented gifts in the list of 1 Corinthians 12. Additionally, implicated in these spiritual gifts are leadership responsibilities, first within the body of Christ, then by extension also in the community. Also, the concept of offices seems not to be in view, but instead Paul stresses a functional assessment. "By placing apostleship among the charismata, Paul completes its 'democratization,' making it available to anyone to whom the Holy Spirit should choose to distribute

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[54] See also Fee who is a strong proponent of the egalitarian interpretation. Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009).

[55] Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1013.

[56] "The diversity of the services and activities was affected by Spirit according to a precise order. In essence for Paul everyone active in the church were also charistmatic. Paul makes no clear distinction between charismatic and non-charistmatic activities" (my translation). Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 45-46. In 1 Corinthians Paul even categorizes the term "apostle" as charismatic. This is not surprising given that Paul stresses the function over the office. For Paul many could function in an apostolic manner even if they were not part of the original twelve apostles (e.g. Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 15:7).

it."[57] Finally, various gifts of equal value are distributed to all members of the body of Christ. Ministry is equal among all believers. Even if one resolves the above statements differently to argue for established offices and hierarchy in verse 28, these need to be viewed in light of the statements of equality within the entire chapter.

4.3. Romans 16:1-7

The use of διάκονος in Romans 16:1 is very similar to Philippians 1:1. Both times the term is used as a title and both times it is used with an additional modifier, here: of the church at Cenchreae. The difference between the two passages is that διάκονος is here in the singular and that a masculine title or office is linked to a woman. It has been suggested that Phoebe served the church rather than holding an office. But this is unconvincing since the passage uses the noun διάκονος rather than the more popular διακονέω[58] or the collective term διακονία. Additionally the awkwardness of using the masculine διάκονος for a woman suggests that Paul understood her to hold that office. This lends supports to the reading of deaconesses in 1 Timothy 3:11. "[W]omen deacons were probably appointed early. . . [for] visitation, baptism, and other matters."[59] Additionally, she is designated as a προστάτις in Romans 16:2. This hapax legomena has most frequently been translated in Bible translations as patron or helper to Paul and the church. But this does not do justice to her standing in the church. Based on a detailed study of Septuagint references, practices and wording of the Synagogues in the first century, archeological evidence, and a study of cognate words, Darius Jankiewicz concludes that a

> careful reading of Romans 16:1-2, thus, offers us a new glance at this remarkable woman who appears to be a close associate of Paul in spreading the gospel of Christ; who served as a leader of her house church in Cenchrea; who, despite all the dangers associated with travel on Roman roads, accepted the task of carrying the message of salvation to the Roman church; and who was recognized by Paul and others as a Christian leader in her own right.[60]

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[57]   Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 6.

[58]   The gospel accounts repeatedly use the verb for women ministering.

[59]   Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (ed. Moises Silva; Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 787.

[60]   Darius Jankiewicz, "Phoebe: Was She an Early Christian Leader?," (forthcoming): 12.

Romans 16:7 is even more controversial. The Greek is ambiguous in clearly identifying Junia as woman or Junias as man. This stems from the accusative case that at first glance allows both a masculine or feminine nominative form. Several arguments point towards Junia being a woman.[61] First, it is not inconceivable that a woman should be named in Romans 16 as there are seven other women besides Junia. Second, the masculine version of the name is unknown in all of literature, while the feminine was a popular name in the Greco-Roman world. In a lengthy chapter of textual criticism and historical research examining various masculine options, including the possibility of an abbreviated name, Epp still finds no evidence and quotes Bernadette Brooten's conclusion, that "we do not have a single shred of evidence that the name *Junias* ever existed."[62] But Epp goes one step further by stating that "[e]ven if a dozen instances of the latter suddenly should turn up in first-century papyri, Junia would still be the most natural and compelling translation of Ἰουνιᾶν in Rom 16:7."[63] Third, most scholars up to the thirteenth century clearly identified Junia as a woman. This is especially true of the patristic fathers.[64] Epp shows that the transition from a feminine reading to a masculine reading didn't occur until Martin Luther in the German-speaking world and the early 20th century in the Greek text[65] and the English translations. Tracing commentaries Epp finds the same trajectory: "[T]o a large extent our modern lexica, grammars, and many commentaries, especially during the past century, have carried forward— indeed, have aided and abetted—the tradition of 'Junias,' masculine."[66] Recent commentaries therefore treat Andronicus and Junia much like Priscilla and Aquila. "The judgment of many that Andronicus and Junia were husband and wife is also probable."[67]

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[61]   See the extensive study by Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle.*

[62]   Epp, *Junia,* 44.

[63]   Ibid., 27. A substantial argument for Epp is his textual-critical study on prepositions and cases in connection with ἐπίσημοι in the available literature. The close link to a passage from Lucian confirms a personal and inclusive usage (69-78).

[64]   Epp traces the history of interpretation of this passage from the earliest to the latest theologians. In a summary of the patristic fathers he notes support for a feminine reading by "Origen, Ambrosiaster, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Theodoret, John Damascene, Peter Abelard, and Peter Lombard." Epp, *Junia,* 2.

[65]   Only in 1998 did the UBS and Nestle-Aland texts restore the earlier punctuation favoring the feminine view after roughly 70 years.

[66]   Epp, *Junia,* 41.

[67]   Schreiner, *Romans,* 795-796.

Also it is not immediately clear whether Andronicus and Junia were "highly valued by the apostles" or "highly valued among apostles". But here the assessment of the apostolic title is not as ambiguous[68]. The prepositional phrase does not allow much option. "The consensus view is that the phrase means 'distinguished among the apostles.'"[69] This consensus dates back to the church fathers. Morris cites Chrysostom's statement: "Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!" [70] The term apostle is not limited to the Twelve here, as Paul uses the term apostle for himself and for a larger crowd of witnesses of the resurrection (1Cor 15:7).

4.4. Ephesians 4:11

In Ephesians 4:11 Paul follows a similar discussion as in 1 Corinthians 12. The similarity between the two passages is overwhelming. Both mention worthy behavior of the elect (Eph 4:1; and implicit in 1Cor 12:1-3), the unity among the believers (Eph 4:3; 1Cor 12:13-14), the Trinity (Eph 4:4-6; 1Cor 12:4-6), everyone is recipient of a sovereignly apportioned gift from God (Eph 4:7; 1Cor 12:6.11)[71], the imagery of the body of Christ (Eph 4:4; 1Cor 12:12-26), numerous attestations of *one*ness (Eph 4:4-6; 1Cor 12: 9.12.13), and finally the list of functions or offices (Eph 4:11; 1Cor 12:28). With all these similarities it is no surprise that the same issues encountered in 1 Corinthians surface again: Is Paul addressing form or function in this list? And is Paul's list an indication of a hierarchy of offices?

Several arguments can be presented in favor of a functional use: First, in verse 11 Paul elaborates on verse 7 and answers the question: what grace (χάρις) has been given? The reiteration of δίδωμι in both verses and the emphatic use of αὐτὸς in verse 11 refer back to Christ in verse 7 illustrate this connection. Verse 7 is clearly a reference to all believers

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[68]   Denis Fortin, *Was Phoebe a Deacon, a Servant, or a Minister?* (2010 [cited 9/14 2012]); available from http://www.memorymeaningfaith.org/blog/2010/04/phoebe-deacon-servant-or-minister.html.

[69]   Schreiner, *Romans*, 796.

[70]   Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ed. D. A. Carson; Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 534.

[71]   In Ephesians 4:7 Paul uses the expression of grace (χάρις) which the believer receives. "It is a particular enablement given to each believer to empower them for ministry. It is very closely connected with χάρισμάτα, 'grace-gift,' which is used in the parallel passage on gifts (1 Cor 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31). Furthermore Paul places the terms side by side in two passages (1 Cor 1:4,7; Rom 12:6)." Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 6.

receiving grace-gifts and verse 11 would best render a list of possible though not exhaustive grace-gifts. The best translation of verse 11 would then stress an explicative understanding: "Paul states that each believer is given a gift according to the measure of the gift of Christ and that verse 11 explains it, 'namely, he gave some apostles,' and so forth."[72] Barth concurs: "[T]he authority of the 'shepherds' or 'teachers' was ascribed to a *charisma*. . . just as much as that of 'apostles' and 'prophets.'"[73] It is therefore not an office but a gift. Second, the grammatical structure of the "τοὺς μὲν. . ., τοὺς δὲ. . ., τοὺς δὲ. . ., τοὺς δὲ. . ., is to mark out distinctly different gifted people without implying a contrast" and the article τοὺς "is used as a demonstrative pronoun and can be translated "some."[74] Third, the close relationship to 1 Corinthians 12 could favor a gift-oriented interpretation. Hoehner therefore emphatically summarizes: "Paul is listing gifts and not offices."[75]

Yet, some counter arguments mitigate this view: First, the term shepherd (ποιμένας) is used only here as a noun for the ministry of humans. This noun is usually reserved for the ministry of Christ himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11.14; Heb 13:20; 1Pet 2:25). Second, the book of Acts has already presented us with officers in the church of Ephesus, namely the πρεσβύτεροι (Acts 20:17) and the ἐπίσκοπος (Acts 20:28). As mentioned above, the ἐπίσκοπος in Acts 20:28 are charged with a shepherding function (ποιμαίνω) for the flock. It is therefore more prudent to agree with Arnold: "Christ supplies the church with gifted men; he provides both charisma and office in an inseparable unity."[76] Here then, we have a transition in the development of the early church. The function focused approach up to this point, seems to give way to a balance between function and form, gift and office.

The expansion in Ephesians 4:11 of the shepherd and evangelist in comparison to 1 Corinthians 12:28, has often been considered the equivalent to the modern designation of pastor. But a new office of the pastor cannot be established here, since the task of shepherding has already been assigned to the elder (ἐπίσκοπος) in Acts 20:28. Additionally, the shepherds and evangelists should most likely be viewed as two separate groups. The singular article followed by two nouns of

[72]　Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 522.

[73]　Ibid., 540.

[74]　Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, 439.

[75]　Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 538.

[76]　Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 159.

classification has already been used by Paul in Ephesians 2:20, where apostles and prophets certainly designate two "groups more or less distinct. . . [but] treated as one for the purpose in hand."[77]

In summary, the dual references upon which Ephesians 4:11 draws (1 Cor 12:28 and Acts 20:28) allow the reader to see the gradual development in the early church from a predominantly function based approach to a model consisting both of function and form. This does not negate the possibility that a spiritually gifted believer can take up the function of shepherding (John 10) without the election to the office of an elder, but it does mean that an elder should fulfill the function of shepherding. Spiritual gifts are not limited to offices, but the office should reflect the necessary gift.

4.5. Philippians 1:1

In the first verse of Philippians Paul designates four people groups by titles. He begins by calling Timothy and himself "slaves" and the readers "saints" but adds a special designation for two particular groups among the saints: The overseers and the deacons. Paul's use of these terms is unique for a twofold reason: First, Paul uses two nouns that haven't occurred together before. A combination of "apostles and prophets" or "prophets and evangelists" would have resonated with previous verses. Second, in all the previous Pauline passages the context has been gifts related (1Cor 12; Eph 4). In this case though they are simply used as a title or designation of a group. The term δοῦλοι might include a functional connotation, but the ἅγιοι are clearly just a title especially with the markers πᾶσιν and Χριστῷ. Therefore the overseers and deacons are also used as a reference to a form, i.e. an office. "Already in this phrase there emerges a decisive point for our understanding of the office, namely, that the deacons are linked with the bishops and mentioned after them. At the time of this epistle there are thus two coordinated offices."[78] This seems to be the next step up from Ephesians in the progression from function to form.

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[77] A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Cambridge: Cambrige University Press, 1919), 787.

[78] Beyer, "Διακονέω, Διακονία, Διάκονος," *TDNT*, 2: 89.

4.5. First and 2 Timothy, and Titus

4.5.1. Elders and Deacons

The setting of the Pastoral Epistles is distinctly different than the previously examined Pauline passages. The church is now faced with an oppositional movement "from church leaders who had left the faith and were actively promoting the heresy."[79] The three pastoral letters are intended to encourage and support Timothy and Titus in dealing with this situation. Since the conflict originated with the counterpart to the heretics, (2) the lists primarily catalog outwardly visible personality traits. Neither inner qualities or motives nor responsibilities are listed. This is therefore not a complete list, but rather one adapted to the local setting. "The ad hoc nature of the list, rather, suggests that Paul is thinking that these are the *types* of qualities an overseer should have."[80] This is especially clear in the "husband of one wife" qualification. "Es geht um das grundsätzliche Verbot jeder Form von Polygamie – nicht nur der sukzessiven. . . sondern auch der gleichzeitig. . . praktizierenden."[81] (3) the three lists for the elder and deacon agree with each other in astonishing precision. Of sixteen identification markers for the elder (1Tim 3:1-7) only two that are missing in the deacons list (1Tim 3:8-13) are worth taking a closer look: The elder is expected to be "skilled in teaching" and "hospitable" (1Tim 3:2). The "teaching" deacon. But leadership concepts are also applied to the young, the old, the young widows, the old widows, the slaves and the masters. Paul applies the collective term διακονία to his own ministry (1Tim 1:12), to Timothy (2Tim 4:5) and to Mark (2Tim 4:11). Additionally, Paul shares much personal council with Timothy and Titus that include leadership pointers. These "secondary" leadership passages have in view the action of leading under specific circumstances. While offices and officers now exist in the church, this does not release the individual from the responsibility of leading a Christian life of exemplary living.

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[79] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (ed. et al. Bruce Metzger; Word Biblical Commentary 46; Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2000), lxxx.

[80] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159.

[81] "The issue here is the general prohibition to practice any form of polygamy-not only the successive. . . but also the simultaneous" (my translation). Jürgen Roloff, *Der Erste Brief an Timotheus* (ed. Josef Blank et al; Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 15; Zürich: Benziger, 1988), 156. See a extended discussion in Ekkehardt Mueller, *Husband of One Wife-1 Tim 3:2* (2005 [cited 9/12/2012); available from http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/husbandof%20one%20wife.pdf.

4.5.2. Two or Three Tiered?

Throughout history scholars have debated whether a two or three tiered church governance system best renders the NT and especially the information found in the Pastoral Epistles. Before assessing this some clarifications need to be made: First, the Pastoral Epistles only deal with two offices, the elder and the deacon. Scholars have tried to include a third level either of the apostle or apostle-disciple. But the books don't describe, defend or promote Paul's apostleship or Timothy or Titus' position. "Nowhere is Timothy included within the structure of the Ephesian church, and therefore he should not be viewed as a bishop over the church."[82] The two apostle-helpers are the envoys of the apostle Paul, carrying messages between the apostle and his church and assisting struggling churches in the absence of the apostle.[83] Second, the two offices (elder/deacon) are finely nuanced, though they agree in the vast majority of qualifications. The addition of a teaching ministry and hospitality separate the elder from the deacon. The deacon most likely engaged in more service-oriented ministry, though not necessarily exclusively. Three, based on the distinctions in the two offices many commentators therefore assume that the "word ministry" is superior to the "service ministry." Holtz instead proposes that the office of deacon is superior to that of the elder, based on more stringent qualification requirements (e.g. a time of probation).[84]

Instead, the Pastoral Epistles do not place any hierarchical order upon the two offices. Mounce is therefore correct in saying: "The Pastoral Epistles only show two offices in an undeveloped form (overseer and deacon): the overseer is not over the deacon, nor does the deacon advance to the role of overseer."[85]"Nowhere in the Pastoral Epistles does Paul teach a two-tiered structure of church authority, much less the tree-tiered one found in Ignatius."[86] Fee concurs by pointing out: "No evidence exists

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82   Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 155.

83   "Timothy was not a pastor, or elder, or bishop of the Ephesian church. He was an itinerant apostolic 'delegate' . . . He stood outside the church structure described in 1 Tim 3 and 5 and had no title." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* lvii.

84   Gottfried Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (13; Theologische Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament vol.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965), 82. He overstates his case though by placing an undue emphasis on the nuturing rather than administrative aspect of church life.

85   Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 154-155.

86   Ibid., 163.

for a single leader as the 'head' of the local assembly in the Pauline churches."[87] Holtz expands this view found in the Pastoral epistles by including Romans 12:6-7. He disproves the idea of a lower ranked deacon office by stating that "die Diakonia [habe] den ersten Platz nach der Prophetie, während der prohistamenos fast an letzter Stelle in einer Aufreihung mit fallender Tendenz stehe."[88]

To summarize: In the Pastoral Epistles Paul reacts to a severe situation by promoting a governing paradigm that is based on Jewish-synagogue backgrounds but implemented and modified by the early church. The unified office of elder-deacon has now been separated and has received slightly different nuances. A hierarchy cannot be established in the Pastoral Epistles since the offices collaborate in light of spiritual oppression. To speak of a two or three tiered system of church governance (elders and deacons) is reading a hierarchal model into the NT. This development will become very clear in the writings of the early church fathers (Didache, Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius)[89] but the NT does not support this. It is better to speak of a two fold or cooperative model in the NT of elders and deacons. It also needs to be recognized that the NT evidence portrays a growing, flexible, and adaptive church. It can respond quickly to local challenges without losing sight of the church as whole.

5. Summary

An examination of the various church offices in the New Testament has led scholars to conclude that the development of the church beginning from the group of disciples was a gradual and advancing progression based on current needs and developments.[90] At various times different terms are used to best express the current situation such as disciples, apostles, elders, bishops, and deacons.

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[87] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (ed. Gordan D. Fee; New International Commentary on the New Testament ; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 67.

[88] "The diakonia takes the first place after prophecy, while the prohistamenos is mentioned in almost last place in this catalogue of declining importance" (my translation). Holtz, *Pastoralbriefe*, 82.

[89] Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years." Rohde, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 98-148.

[90] Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 2.

While there are shifting patterns visible in the progression of the book of Acts and the epistles, there are also unaltered principles that permeate the biblical record. First, for the most part the NT focuses its attention on the function rather than the office. The action is emphasized over the status. Every believer has a leadership function based on the spiritual gifts he has been bestowed with. This leadership might express itself to very different people or very different ways, but it is a natural extension of being a disciple. Only after the church has to battle false teachings, do we see the development of leadership structures. Even as these emerge though, the individual is still viewed in functional leadership capacity. Second, leadership is ultimately always connected with caring not with power. The imagery of "slave", "servant", and "shepherding" are loaded with the empathy and concern for the other members of the "body of Christ." This empathy also expresses itself in the concern for others salvation, which is expressed through teaching (1 Cor 12:28). Third, by tracing the leadership trajectory beginning with the disciples up to the development of early church it becomes clear that the plural references by far outweigh the singular. This is not accidental. Leadership throughout the NT is a communal effort, not a lone ranger endeavor. Especially those in high leadership positions in the early church include partners (Paul and Barnabas, Silas, Timothy), groups (the apostles and the elders), and even the entire church (Acts 6:2). From the seemingly insignificant elections in local churches even to the council of Jerusalem everything is community based. Fourth, leadership, offices, and spiritual gifts are extended without discrimination of age, gender, race, status, or history.[91] Finally, the modern church governance or a description of the pastor is not found in the NT material. The pastor might best be view as an amalgamation of different offices: shepherd, evangelist, apostle-helper.

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[91] This does not mean that there are no restrictions at all, but rather that the restrictions can be fulfilled by any age, gender, race, etc. For example: Peter's citation of Joel in Acts 2:17 includes young men (νεανίσκοι) and old men. The age span covers the entire spectrum of a mature adult life, but obviously excludes infants, toddlers, and young children. An additional time reference is mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:6: A bishop "must not be a recent convert." But this can be fulfilled by a man or woman, slave or free man.