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The *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* (JAAS) is a biannual peer-refereed academic journal that publishes, in the context of a faith community, quality biblical-theological research, including studies in biblical theology, archaeology of the biblical world, systematic and historical theology, applied theology, and missiology. JAAS is indexed in *Index Theologicus* (Universität Tübingen, GERMANY), *International Review of Biblical Studies* (Brill, NETHERLANDS; Universität Paderborn, GERMANY), *Religious and Theological Abstracts*, *Old Testament Abstracts*, *New Testament Abstracts*, *BIBIL* (Bibliographie biblique informatisée de Lausanne, SWITZERLAND), *Bulletin de Bibliographie Biblique*, *THEOLDI* (Theological Literature Documented in Innsbruck, AUSTRIA) and *RAMBI* (Index of Articles on Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, ISRAEL). The ideas expressed in the articles, book reviews, and thesis and dissertation abstracts are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the thinking of the Theological Seminary of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.

## ORDINATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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### 1. Introduction

To discuss the topic ordination in the New Testament (NT) is an interesting and yet somewhat tricky task. This is so for various reasons that will be discussed in a moment. "Ordination" is derived from the Latin *ordinatio* which points to an arrangement, order or the appointment to a function.<sup>1</sup> But how this term is filled with meaning differs from one denomination to another. Adventist church members have also certain concepts in mind when they talk about ordination. Typically, they think about a worship service in which hands are being laid on deacons, elders or pastors in connection with prayer for them. If something else happens and what happens in conjunction with this rite, may be debated. So why is the topic tricky?

### 2. Ordination in English Bible Translations

The term "ordination" is not used at all in the New Testament (NT).<sup>2</sup> The verb "to ordain" occurs here and there in some English translations<sup>3</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> See R. P. Lightner, "Ordain, Ordination," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 801. If the term "office" is used it is to be understood as a role and function and not in an ontological sense as taken, e.g., by the Catholic Church.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore some Bible dictionaries do not contain it, e.g., Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> King James Version (KJV) twenty-three times, New American Standard Bible (NASB) twice, New English Translation (NET) once, New International Version (NIV) once, The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) once, New King James Version (NKJV) four times, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) five times, Revised Standard Versions (RSV) three times, Young's Literal Translation (YLT) three times.

not at all in others.<sup>4</sup> In many cases, the translation “to ordain” does not refer to what we today consider to be the ordination of church leaders, for example, “So God again ordains a certain day” (Heb 4:7, NET), “from the lips of . . . infants you have ordained praise” (Matt 21:16, NIV), the law “was ordained through angels,” (Gal 3:19, NRSV), and the Gentiles “as many as were ordained to eternal life” (Acts 13:48, KJV). Various Greek words were translated with the same English term “ordained,” for instance, the Greek equivalents of “to do,” “to direct,” “to decide,” “to determine,” “to prepare,” “one must,” etc. Translations do not agree with each other in rendering Greek terms with the English word “to ordain.”

The more frequent use of “to ordain” in the King James Version (KJV)—twenty-three times in the NT—is not followed by other translations, not even the New King James Version (NKJV). The KJV seems to use “to ordain” in the wider sense of “ordering” and “determining” and in the narrower sense of “appointing” to a function or task. It translates thirteen different Greek words in certain contexts with “to ordain,”<sup>5</sup> even words such as “to be”/“to become” and “to do.” Obviously, with changes in the English language translators do no longer feel at ease with such rendering of Greek words and therefore do not follow the KJV.<sup>6</sup> According to the KJV the Twelve (Mark 3:14), the disciples (John 15:16), Jesus (Acts 10:42; 17:31), Paul (1Tim 2:7), Timothy (2Tim 4:22, editorial addition), Titus (Tit 3:15, editorial addition), elders (Acts 14:23; Tit 1:5), and every high priest (Heb 5:1; 8:3) were ordained. After Judas’ death a replacement for him had to be found, and the person had to be ordained (Acts 1:22, KJV). Some Gentiles are ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48), while certain evil men are ordained to condemnation (Jude 1:4). However, ordained are also decrees of the apostles (Acts 16:4), commandments (Rom 7:10), governments (Rom 13:1), wisdom (1Cor 2:7), the law (Gal 3:19), good works (Eph 2:10), and the earthly sanctuary (Heb 9:6). The KJV also uses “to ordain” for “to direct” or “to order.” Paul “ordains in all churches” (1Cor 7:17), and “the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1Cor 9:14). So what does it mean to be ordained?

<sup>4</sup> They are the English Standard Version (ESV), the Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSB), and the New Living Translation (NLT) of twelve English Bibles that were studied.

<sup>5</sup> These are the verbs: *cheirotoneō*, *diatassō*, *ginomai*, *heuriskō*, *horizō*, *kataskeuwō*, *kathistēmi*, *krinō*, *poieō*, *proetoimazō*, *prographō*, *tassō*, and *tithēmi*.

<sup>6</sup> Even the NKJV uses “to ordain” just five times, in one case the Greek phrase is “laying on of hands.”

### 3. Ordination in Various Churches

Typically Christian churches have a theology of ordination. The Catholic Church holds to a sacramental view. Ordained are deacons (different from Adventist deacons), priests, and bishops. The rite of ordination does not only bring about an ontological change in the person ordained, it is also a matter of succession. The pope stands in the apostolic succession and shares it with the bishops.

Protestants have a more functional understanding of ordination and do not consider it a sacrament. Yet for some of them ordination keeps a somewhat semi-sacramental character. Ordination is understood in a representative way. Ordained persons represent the body of believers.

Adventists have to ask themselves where they find themselves. They have to ask what ordination is, if it occurs in Scripture and/or if they follow a certain tradition not necessarily established in the Bible, if it is sacramental and moves persons into a specific sphere which makes them different from the rest of the people and allows them to function in a way the rest of the church members cannot function (preaching and administering baptism, Lord's Supper, and marriage), or if it is simply an appointment to a function or specific task, how it relates to the priesthood of all believers, why they ordain deacons, church elders, and pastors and no other persons, why they use laying on of hands, if this is a biblical command or a decision of the Church that the Church may have the authority to make, if there are different kinds of ordination, where pastors appear in Scripture, etc.

So the question is: Where do we go from here? The majority of the questions just mentioned cannot be dealt with in this paper. We will focus on vocabulary only that in the NT may be understood as pointing to ordination and evaluate it. From there we will move to some theological questions.

## 4. New Testament Vocabulary and the Ordination Issue

### 4.1. The Laying on of Hands

The first expression to be investigated is "laying on of hands." Typically it is assumed that ordination is laying on of hands on someone.

Hands can be powerful, especially God's hands. Peter speaks about "the mighty hand of God" (1Pet 5:6, cf. Heb 10:31). Nobody can snatch believers out of Christ's or the Father's hand (John 10:28-29). Jesus has the angels of the seven churches of Revelation in His hand (Rev 1:16). Indeed,

all things are in His hand (John 13:3). The hand of God was with John the Baptist (Luke 1:66), Paul, and other missionaries (Acts 13:11; 11:21). When Jesus laid hands on people they were blessed and/or healed.

However, the laying on of hands when persons are appointed to a specific ministry happens through humans, not directly through God. Yet the laying on of hands by the apostles led also to healings or the reception of the Holy Spirit. So is the human laying on of hands a representative action through which God works? What happens when hands are being laid on individuals?

#### 4.1.1. Direct Use of the Phrase

The English phrase “laying on of hands/the hand” occurs repeatedly in the NT.

*Epitithēmi tas cheiras/tēn cheira (laying on of hands/the hand)*. This phrase is used twenty times.<sup>7</sup> However, laying on of hands was used in different contexts and therefore does only rarely refer to the installment to a function or the setting apart for a specific ministry.

- (1) Most frequently it appears in the *context of healing* (Matt 9:18; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:12, 17; 28:8). Hands are being laid on sick people, and their health is being restored. Twelve of the twenty references are connected to health and healing.
- (2) Laying on of hands occurs twice in the *context of blessing* (Matt 19:13, 15). Jesus lays His hands on the children and blesses them.
- (3) Laying on of hands is *connected to baptism* three times (Acts 8:17, 19; 19:16). Acts reports two exceptional cases in which the Holy Spirit was not received with baptism as is common (Acts 2:38). In these exceptional cases the apostles laid hands on the believers, and they received the Holy Spirit. Simon wanted to buy this ability to bestow the Holy Spirit on people by laying his hands on them. However, laying on of hands is not regularly associated with baptism.<sup>8</sup>
- (4) Laying on of hands is found in the *context of appointing or commissioning* persons to a specific ministry and task. The NT reports that the Seven were appointed to their ministry by prayer and laying on of hands (Acts 6:6). Paul and Barnabas were set apart for their missionary ministry, and hands were laid on them in conjunction with fasting and praying (Acts 13:3). Apart from these two references to laying on of hands as appointment to ministry there is a third

<sup>7</sup> Twice the singular is used and eighteen times the plural.

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, to claim that baptism must in any case accompanied by an additional laying on of hands goes beyond NT evidence.

reference found in 1Tim 5:22. Timothy is charged by Paul “not [to] lay hands upon anyone/anything hastily” and not to share in the sins of others.” Elders are not mentioned in this verse. The context is somewhat ambiguous.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the text has been understood differently. (1) While the majority of commentators seems to favor the “ordination” of elders,<sup>10</sup> others suggest that the issue is (2) “reinstatement of an elder after he has been under discipline,”<sup>11</sup> (3) restoration of older men<sup>12</sup> or church members in general after grievous sin, (4) baptism of people, or (5)—if *mēdeni* is understood as a neuter term (“nothing”) instead of a masculine term (“nobody”)—a temple sacrifice in connection with a vow.<sup>13</sup> In any case, one cannot postulate a priori that this verse has to do with the ordination of elders.

<sup>9</sup> It could refer to (1) the immediate context or (2) the wider context. (3) It also could consist of a number of exhortations not directly related (e.g., the issue of drinking some wine in v. 23). In such a case verse 22 would not necessarily deal with the elder. One notices also a change from singular (elder in 5:19) to plural (sinners in 5:20) which makes one wonder, if in verse 20 Paul really continues with the elder. If he would, it can be assumed that the elder has indeed sinned and that the accusation is true in any case. However, Timothy would not be able to intervene, if there were not enough witnesses. As mentioned, Paul could have in mind the larger context of chapter 5-6. The context is discussing older men, women, etc. (5:1), widows (5:3), elders (5:17), and in chapter 6 slaves. Verses 24-25 seem to be general in nature and refer to the sins of all humans. It would be strange, if the elders were suddenly addressed as *anthropoi* (5:24; “some men” according to the NASB). If the issue is a financial issue, e.g., misuse of finances by elders (5:17-20) which would be carried on through the entire passage, the text would point to their reinstatement more than to their original ordination. Yet it would be the only text mentioning laying on of hands for the purpose of reinstating someone to the function of an elder. In addition, the question could be raised how someone can be made responsible of someone else’s sin, if at the time of ordination no indication of a present or future grievous sin is visible?

<sup>10</sup> E.g., George W. III. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC); Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 239; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Word Biblical Commentary 46; Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2000), 316.

<sup>11</sup> Francis D. Nichol, (ed.), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC) (7 Vols.; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), 7:314; S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), on 1Tim 5:22.

<sup>12</sup> Older men are mentioned in the context (1Tim 5:1).

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed discussion see Marjorie Warkentin, *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 143-152.

*Tithēmi tas cheira (laying on of hands)*. This related phrase in which the verb occurs without prefix is found once in the NT. It describes the blessing of children in Mark 10:16.

*Epithēsis tōn cheirōn (laying on of hands)*. In this case laying on of hands is not a verb followed by an accusative but a noun followed by a genitive.<sup>14</sup> The phrase occurs four times. In Acts 8:18 it is found in the context of baptism in which the Holy Spirit is received after the laying on of hands.<sup>15</sup> Hebrews 6:2 mentions among basic teachings the laying on of hands. Quite likely the phrase does not refer to appointment to a function but either to baptism, as suggested by some expositors,<sup>16</sup> or the Levitical system of sacrifices with laying on of hands on animals that has become obsolete.<sup>17</sup> 1Tim 4:14 and 2Tim 1:6, however, mention (1) the laying on of hands on Timothy by the *presbyterion*, the group of the elders, and a gift given to him in this context by prophecy and (2) the laying on of hands on Timothy by Paul and the gift of God within him. Whether or not this was the same instance cannot be shown on exegetical grounds but may be likely.<sup>18</sup>

*Epiballō tas cheiras/tēn cheira (laying on of hands/the hand)*. Here a different verb is used, while the English translation employs the same phrase as above. Of the eleven occurrences of this phrase ten refer to arrest and persecution, either of Jesus (Matt 26:50; Mark 14:46; Luke 20:19; John 7:30, 44) or his disciples (Luke 21:12; Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:1; 21:27). Once it occurs in an agricultural context as laying on of hands on the plow (Luke 9:62). The phrase is not used in connection with appointment to a ministry.

#### 4.1.2. Related Terms

While the previous terms are translated with “laying on of hands,” typically the following ones are rendered differently. However, all of them refer to “hand”/“hands” and some share part of their meaning with those above.

*Ekteinō tēn cheira/tas cheiras (extending/stretching out the hands/the hand)*. The phrase is found in thirteen verses and— with the exception of the plural in John 21:18— always in the singular.

<sup>14</sup> Noun and verb come from the same word family.

<sup>15</sup> See the first exceptional case above.

<sup>16</sup> Nichol, *SDABC*, 7:433; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistles to the Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 316.

<sup>17</sup> See Warkentin, *Ordination*, 115-119.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Warkentin, 136.

- (1) It appears in the context of healing and saving (eight times). Oftentimes the stretching out of the hand is accompanied by a touch. So Jesus stretched out his hand, touched the leper, and thereby healed him (Matt 8:3; Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13). He healed the man with the withered hand by ordering him to stretch it out (Matt 12:13; Mark 3:5; Luke 6:6). In Acts 4:30 the church prayed that the Lord may stretch out His hand in healings and that signs and wonders be performed. Jesus also stretched out his hand to rescue the sinking Peter (Matt 14:31). This usage is parallel to *epitithēmi tas cheiras/tēn cheira* (laying on of hands/the hand) when used in a healing situation.
- (2) According to Matt 12:49 Jesus stretched out his hands towards his disciples and called them his mother and brothers. This phrase may here appear in the context of an oath, promise, and possibly a blessing. Stretching out His hand toward the disciples Jesus called them His mothers and brothers. In Exod 6:8 and Num 14:30 "to stretch out one's hands" means to swear an oath with regard to the possession of the land,<sup>19</sup> and in Gen 48:14 the stretching out of the right hand is associated with a blessing.
- (3) The phrase occurs four times in the context of persecution. The Jewish leadership attempted to arrest Jesus (described in Luke 20:19 with the phrase *epiballō . . . tas cheiras*, i.e., to lay on of hands) but did not do it when Jesus openly spoke in the temple but only in the darkness of the night (described in Luke 22:53 with the phrase *ekteinō tas cheiras*, i.e., to stretch out the hands). In this case *ekteinō tas cheiras* and *epiballō . . . tas cheiras* are used in a parallel way. The phrase is also found in Peter's use of the sword to defend Jesus (Matt 26:51). In addition it refers to Peter's death (John 21:18), and Paul's defense at his trial before Agrippa (Acts 26:1).

It is not used in connection with an appointment to a function.

***Cheirotoneō (to appoint)***. This term appears two times in the present Greek New Testaments,<sup>20</sup> but another two times in the KJV. The KJV adds to 2Tim 4:22 one of the subscriptions which are found in some manuscripts but is not even followed by the NKJV: "The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time." The same is true for Tit 3:15: "It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia." The Adventist Bible Commentary notes with regard to 2Tim 4:22: "The postscript following v. 22 does not appear in any ancient manuscript and was evidently not appended to the original document. A few of the older

<sup>19</sup> See also Deut 32:40 and Dan 12:7 where similar vocabulary is used.

<sup>20</sup> Nestle/Aland 28 and United Bible Societies 4.

manuscripts, however, do have the words 'written from Laodicea' or 'written from Rome.'<sup>21</sup> The Bible Commentary states regarding Tit 3:15: "The postscript following v. 15 appears in no early manuscript. It was evidently not part of the original inspired record."<sup>22</sup>

So we will turn to the other two references. *Cheirotoneō* does not refer to the laying on of hands. It is a compound of *cheir* (hand) and *teineō* (to stretch, extend) and is similar to *ekteinō tēn cheira* (to stretch out one's hand). *Cheirotoneō* describes the stretching out or raising of the hand for the purpose of voting and therefore means "to elect" or "to appoint."<sup>23</sup> 2Cor 8:19 mentions an unnamed Christian brother who has been elected by the churches to travel with Paul and be involved in the collection for the church in Jerusalem. According to Acts 14:23 elders were elected/appointed in every church. These texts are important to our discussion, although laying on of hands is not mentioned.

*Epairō tas cheiras (to lift up hands)*. This phrase is found twice in the NT. Ascending to heaven, Jesus lifted up his hands and blessed the disciples (Luke 24:50) as in Matthew and Mark he had blessed the children (*epitithēmi tas cheiras/ tithēmi tas cheira*, laying on of hands). According to 1Tim 2:8 men are to lift up holy hands in prayer without anger and arguing. The phrase does not relate to an appointment to a function or task.

#### 4.1.3. Evaluation and Summary

In the vast majority of cases the phrases relating to laying on of hands describe other purposes than appointment to a function. However, there are a few instances that have to do with such an activity. Only the Seven, Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy are mentioned in the NT that have definitely received laying on of hands in connection with their ministry. Interestingly enough not even the ministry of the apostles is explicitly associated with laying on of hands. In the case of the elders the text may

<sup>21</sup> Nichol, *SDABC*, 7:352.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7:372.

<sup>23</sup> This is affirmed by current and older Greek lexicons and dictionaries such as Friberg Greek Lexicon, UBS Greek Dictionary, Louw-Nida Lexicon, LSJ Lexicon, Thayer Greek Lexicon, and Gingrich Greek Lexicon. See also Everett Ferguson, "Ordain, Ordination," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; NY: Doubleday, 1992), V:37-39. The related term *procheirotoneō* (to choose or appoint beforehand; *cheirotoneō* plus prefix *pro*) cannot be understood as laying on of hands. See also Daniel Berchie, "The Concept of Ordination in the New Testament," unpublished manuscript, BRC of WAD, 2012, p. 9, and Eike Mueller, "Leadership, Spiritual Gifts, and Offices in The New Testament," unpublished manuscript, BRC of EUD, 2012, p. 17-18.

or may not point to it; 1Tim 5:22 is a disputed text. Laying on of hands recognized that God had called the Seven, Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy to a special ministry. It set them apart and requested God's blessing upon them. Timothy received a specific gift.

None of these persons was a local elder. Although Paul (2Tim 1:6) and the body of elders (1Tim 4:14) were involved in laying the hands on Timothy, the term elder is not directly associated with receiving this type of "ordination" unless 1Tim 5:22 is understood in such a way. The NT may not directly connect laying on of hands with the function of the elder nor does it teach that laying on of hands is a prerequisite for the function of elder or any other function. According to Acts elders are appointed, and prayer and fasting are mentioned, yet not laying on of hands (Acts 14:23).

However, this does not mean that laying on of hands is an unimportant and merely symbolic ceremony in the NT. It does not even mean that apostles and elders were not ordained by laying on of hands. It only means that the NT does not record it. Somehow laying on of hands contributed to the healing of sick persons, obtaining a blessing, and receiving the Holy Spirit as well as spiritual gifts and may therefore also be important when persons are appointed to a ministry. The problem is that the NT does not describe a consistent practice in the first century and does not seem to demand explicitly ordination by laying on of hands.

## 4.2. Other New Testament Vocabulary

### 4.2.1. *The Vocabulary Itself*

The NT employs other vocabulary that describes appointment to a function. Sometimes these words can be understood as either appointment or election. In their context ritual may also occur. In some cases these terms may be used exclusively or almost exclusively for appointment to a task or ministry, but in the majority of the cases the terms are much broader and only a smaller percentage of their range of meaning refers to appointment of a person to a function or task.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides an illustration of what is going on in the NT with regard to appointment. We have also included references to Jesus but no references to Old Testament (OT) appointments (e.g., high priests in Heb 8:3) and no references to all believers when the same vocabulary is used for them in addition to individuals or function holders (e.g., John 15:16: all believers are called and appointed to bear fruit; Eph 1:4: they are called to holiness and to the adoption as children of

Greek Term	Translation	Occurrence in NT	Reference to Appointment	Appointed Persons	Function or Task	Accompanying Ritual (as found in text or context)
<i>anadeiknymi</i>	to show clearly, appoint, choose	2 times	Luke 10:1 Acts 1:24	The Seventy Matthias	Missionary Apostle	Pre-selection by church, prayer, casting the lot Fasting, prayer, laying on of hands
<i>aphorizō</i>	To set apart, exclude	10 times	Acts 13:2 Rom 1:1 Gal 1:15	Paul, Barnabas Paul Paul	Missionary Apostle Apostle	
<i>eklegomai</i>	To choose, select	22 times	Luke 6:13 Luke 9:35 John 6:70; 13:18 Acts 1:2 Acts 1:24  Acts 6:5	The Twelve Jesus The Twelve The Twelve Matthias  The Seven	Apostle Messiah Apostle Apostle Apostle  Organization of welfare, evangelist Missionary	Prayer     Pre-selection by church, prayer, casting the lot election by church, prayer, laying on of hands
<i>kathistēmi</i>	To bring, conduct, take, appoint	21 times	Acts 15:7 Acts 6:3  Tit 1:5 Heb 7:28	Peter The Seven  Elders Jesus	Organization of welfare, evangelist Elder Elder, High Priest	election by church, prayer, laying on of hands
<i>keimai</i>	To lie, stand, be laid, be appointed	24 times	Luke 2:34 Phil 1:16	Jesus Paul	Savior Apologist	
<i>horizō</i>	To determine, appoint, declare	8 times	Acts 10:42 Acts 17:31 Rom 1:14	Jesus Jesus Jesus	Judge Judge Son of God	

Greek Term	Translation	Occurrence in NT	Reference to Appointment	Appointed Persons	Function or Task	Accompanying Ritual (as found in text or context)
<i>procheirizō</i>	to choose for oneself, appoint	3 times	Acts 3:20 Acts 22:14 Acts 26:16	Jesus Paul Paul	Messiah Witness Servant, witness	
<i>tassō</i>	To order, appoint	8 times	Acts 15:2	Paul, Barnabas, and others	Delegates to council In Jerusalem	Sent by church
<i>tithēmi</i>	To put, place, lay, make, appoint	100 times	Matt 12:18 Acts 13:47 1Cor 12:28  1Tim 1:12 1Tim 2:7  2Tim 1:11  Heb 1:2	Jesus Paul, Barnabas Apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. Paul Paul Paul Jesus	Messiah Missionary Apostle prophet teacher etc. Ministry Preacher, apostle, teacher Preacher, apostle, teacher Heir, Creator, Sustainer, King	
<i>chrīo</i>	To anoint	5 times	Luke 4:18 Acts 4:27; 10:38 Heb 1:9	Jesus Jesus Jesus	Proclaimer of gospel Proclaimer, Healer Creator, King	Enthronement, being worshipped

God; 2 Cor 1:21: they are anointed with the Holy Spirit). While the Holy Spirit is given to all believers and while they have received spiritual gifts and various tasks, this is not the focus of this study. In other words, appointment vocabulary in the NT is applied to Jesus, all believers in a general sense, and specific groups and individuals with a specific divine assignment.

#### 4.2.2. Evaluation of the Data

Those appointed according to this list were the Twelve, the Seventy, the Seven, elders, Matthias, Paul and Barnabas, and Peter. In addition, the Seven, Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy received laying on of hands, as we saw earlier. Spiritual gifts are mentioned in 1Cor 12:28. In this case, "appointed" can be understood in the sense of "placed" and may not describe a formal appointment process. Nevertheless, the appointment of persons to ministry is quite important.

The functions or tasks to which they were appointed comprised apostle, prophet, teacher, preacher, missionary, "ministry",<sup>24</sup> elder, servant, defender of faith, witness, evangelist, delegate to the apostolic council, and bearer of spiritual gifts that became tasks or functions. Thus persons were not only appointed to leadership positions such as apostle, elder, and bishop but also to other ministries.

Accompanying rituals included pre-selection or election by the church, prayer, fasting, laying on of hands, casting the lot and sending out. However, in many cases no ritual is mentioned. In no instance are all elements found together. In addition one should note that, although very meaningful, these rituals are not explicitly prescribed.

### 4.3. Function Bearers

In the NT the term *presbyteros* (elder) is applied to Christian elders, i.e., church leaders on earth, eighteen times.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the term *presbyterion* (the group or council of elders) occurs once (1Tim 4:14). Elders are typically associated with a local church. However, Peter calls himself fellow elder (1Pet 5:1). The terms *presbyteros* and *episkopos* (bishop or overseer) are used interchangeably (Acts 20:17, 28; Tit 1:5, 7). The term "bishop" is used five times in the NT. One time it describes Jesus

<sup>24</sup> *Diakonia* is a broader term, also used for the ministry of the word by the Twelve (Acts 6:4). It is not to be limited to the work of a deacon.

<sup>25</sup> Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1Tim 5:17, 19; Tit 1:5; Jam 5:14; 1Pet 5:1, 5; 2John 1:1; 3John 1:1. It is used for Jewish elders thirty times, for the twenty-four elders in Revelation twelve times for older people, men and women, and the people of old six times.

(1Pet 2:25). He is the real bishop from whom others derive and receive their ministry. Aside from Jesus the term applies to Christian leaders only (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7). Finally, in 1Tim 3:1 *episkopē* describes the "function of bishop."<sup>26</sup>

The term *diakonos* (servant, deacon) is found twenty-nine times in the NT, but in most of the cases it is used in a general sense. The technical use of the term, namely deacon, may occur in Rom 16:1; Phil 1:1; and definitely and specifically in 1Tim 3:8, 12. The passage 1Tim 3:8-13 provides the most extensive description of deacons in the technical sense. As indicated above, the term *diakonia* is much broader than a reference to the function of a deacon. Some have suggested that the Seven (Acts 6:3) were deacons, while others think they are elders. It is more likely that they prefigure the ministry of the elder as well as the ministry of the deacon.<sup>27</sup> Their election happened early during the development of a church structure. Obviously at that time the only other established function was that of the Twelve, a specific form of apostleship. So we would not count the Seven among the later deacons and the elders.

The term *poimēn* (shepherd, pastor) occurs in the literal sense in Luke 2:8, 15, 18, 20, when the shepherds visit the newborn baby Jesus. Otherwise it is used symbolically. Jesus is the one who takes care of the people that are like sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9:36; Mark 6:34). As a shepherd, He will also separate the goats from the sheep (Matt 25:32). He is the Shepherd (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27; 1Pet 2:25), even the good Shepherd (John 10:2, 11, 11, 12, 14, 16) and the great Shepherd (Heb 13:20). Once the term is applied to Christian leaders, the pastor/shepherd-teachers of Eph 4:11. This is the only NT reference to a "pastor." The Greek construction of Eph 4:11 seems to imply that in this verse pastor and teacher should not be kept separate but be understood as one function, involved with the equipping of the saints to their ministry. It has been suggested that the elders who are "worthy of double honor" due to their teaching<sup>28</sup> and preaching (1Tim 5:17)—and this would imply respect and a financial reimbursement for their ministry (1Tim 5:18)—may point into the direction of a paid ministry and be a prototype of pastoral

<sup>26</sup> In Luke 9:44 and in 1Pet 2:12 it is used with the meaning "visitation" referring to the time or day of visitation. However, in Acts 1:20 it represents Judas' function which after his suicide was vacant and had to be taken by someone else.

<sup>27</sup> See Robert M. Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17/2 (2006): 10-11.

<sup>28</sup> See the literary connection between "the teaching" (*didaskalia*) in 1Tim 5:17 and "teacher" (*didaskalos*) in Eph 4:11.

ministry.<sup>29</sup> If this is true, pastors would be a subcategory of the elders, a special group of elders.

While elders are mentioned more frequently, deacons appear seldom and pastors hardly at all in the NT. The appointment of deacons is not mentioned. In the case of pastors the text notes that God has “given” (*didōmi*) among others pastor-teachers. This could indicate their appointment. Only twice is the appointment of elders clearly mentioned. In Acts 14:23 we are informed that elders were appointed in Asia Minor (*cheirotoneō*). This was done under prayer, fasting, and dedication to the Lord. Titus was requested to appoint elders in every town/city (Tit 1:5). What is surprising is that the NT does not contain a general command to appoint elders in churches and that laying on of hands is applied to them only, if 1Tim 5:22 talks about them. In other words, there is very little about the “ordination” of function bearers in the NT.

## 5. Toward a Theology of Ordination in the New Testament

In this section we will raise a number of questions and attempt to provide some answers that hopefully will help us toward the establishment of a NT theology of ordination. Some of these questions we may have already partially addressed but they need to be revisited.

### 5.1. Why is Ordination/Appointment to a Function Important?

According to the Gospel of Matthew Jesus talked about his *ekklēsia*, his church, twice (Matt 16:18; 18:17). Indeed, it was Jesus who created a visible community “. . . a fellowship of men and women under the kingship of God, a religious community of which He was the leader. . . The concepts of disciples, a remnant, and messiahship were constitutive of a new community, a people of God, which is the Messiah’s possession.”<sup>30</sup> Although Jesus was probably not talking directly about an organization, but rather about his specific people—“my church”—his

<sup>29</sup> However, it has also been suggested that these are older men like in 1Tim 5:1 but not church officers, although this is not likely. See the discussion in George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 231-233.

<sup>30</sup> Raoul Dederen, “The Church,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (ed. Raoul Dederen; (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 540.

sayings prepared the way for the church as we later find it in Acts and in the New Testament epistles.

The concept of Jesus' church is not limited to the term *ekklēsia*. Jesus' call to individuals to become his followers (Matt 4:19; 8:22; 19:21; Mark 2:14; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:59; 18:22), the election of the Twelve out of a larger group of his disciples, their designation as apostles, their sending out on a mission trip (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16; Matt 10:1-20), Jesus' particular teachings such as the Sermon on the Mount addressed to his disciples (Matt 5-7), and his sayings about his flock (Luke 12:32, Matt 26:31) and his family (Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21) indicate that the Synoptic Gospels are well aware of the fact that Jesus was gathering a special people, his church.

The Gospel of John agrees with the Synoptics. According to John 1:43; 21:22 Jesus called people to follow him and to become or remain his disciples. In John 15:1-8 Jesus compares himself with a vine and his community with its branches. Jesus is the good shepherd of his sheep (John 10:1-18). Finally, Jesus charges Peter to tend his lambs and his sheep (John 21:15-17). Thus, there is a Messianic community that will later be of a universal and yet united character (John 10:16).<sup>31</sup>

To care for, maintain, and grow this community Jesus called and installed a specific group of disciples, as we mentioned, the Twelve and later a larger group of Seventy (Luke 10:1). He trained them and sent them out to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-12). Being part of his church, they carried specific responsibilities. From that perspective it is important to notice that it was Jesus who appointed them for their ministry, following the pattern of the OT people of God. Thus the Twelve, named by Jesus "apostles" (Luke 6:13) were "made"/appointed (*poieō*) to be with him and to be sent out to preach and heal (Mark 3:13-14).

This fact indicates that appointment or "ordination" to a ministry in the messianic community originated with Jesus Christ and that the setting apart of some believers to specific ministries is crucial for the well-being, survival, and growth of the church. It also creates order and preserves unity.

<sup>31</sup> Gentile believers will not form a Gentile church separate from a church consisting of Jewish believers. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 512, notes: "They are to become united in one flock. And they all stand under the leadership of one shepherd. The unity is not a natural unity but one brought about by the activity of the Shepherd in 'bringing' them."

## 5.2. What are the Problems with the Use of the Term Ordination?

As already noted, the term "ordination" has been loaded with different notions of meaning in church history and may raise expectations and trigger ideas that do not fit the NT picture of the appointment of persons to various ministries. Because the term may not be avoided completely, it has to be used with great caution. "Ordination" cannot be linked to a sacramental view, the concept of succession, and the idea of an ontological change in the ordained persons. In the NT individuals are assigned to leadership roles and other positions/tasks. The Bible speaks about appointment, setting apart or in the OT about consecration (Exod 29:33) for a specific ministry without necessarily limiting it to laying on of hands. Therefore one of the questions would be: Should the term "ordination" be used today at all and if so, should it be defined as laying on of hands only or should it include appointment to a task, even if laying on of hands is not involved. This would be a decision the Church has to make.

## 5.3. What is the New Testament Understanding of Use of the Term Ordination/Appointment to a Specific Function?

Reading the NT, one recognizes that appointment to a ministry is a process, consisting of a number of different elements. This process seems to have to do with (1) a divine calling of individuals, (2) the working out of their call in their lives and their involvement in some type of ministry in the church, (3) a ritual in connection with their official appointment to a ministry, and (4) the involvement of the church.

The divine call can be as dramatic as Paul's Damascus experience (Acts 9; 26) or the experience of OT prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. It can also be less pronounced as was most likely the case with most Christians throughout history. But at one point or another an individual believers recognizes that God wants him/her to take on a specific ministry. Many, if not the majority of Adventist pastors would affirm that they have received such a divine call and were chosen by God to a special function. Many would consider this even a lifelong calling.

The election of the Seven reveals that they were already filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom and had a good reputation (Acts 6:3). So they must have been committed to Jesus as their Savior and Lord and must have lived Christian lives and presumably were involved in some church activities. Their appointment may be understood as a ratification of the

gifts already received. 1Tim 3:2-7 lists prerequisites for the function of a bishop (i.e., an elder) that affirm the second point we have made.

What is described as "ritual" would be elements such as an election process by the church, fasting, praying, laying on of hands, and sending out by the community of believers. Obviously the validity of such an appointment was not jeopardized, if one or more elements were missing.

The church may be involved on every level or may not be involved on every level. But it is evident that the church is and must be involved in the appointment process. The church must become aware that God has chosen an individual to a specific ministry. The church may be involved in the call through some of its members.<sup>32</sup> The church will definitely be involved in the evaluation of the individual. The lists of characteristics of bishops and deacons found in the NT indicate that an evaluation process by the church is to take place. The election of a person, following the divine call and the biblical guidelines, is the responsibility of the church as are the ritual and the final appointment or credentialing.

Such an outline of the appointment process, if correctly reflecting the NT, would mean that in the NT setting apart/appointing/commissioning is not just a standard procedure to be followed slavishly. For instance, the use of the lot in connection with an appointment to a function is mentioned just once and obviously has been abandoned by the NT church. These general principles may be constitutive to the appointment to a function or a specific task in the church.

#### 5.4. What Happened when Hands Were Laid on Individuals?

The five references to laying on of hands in the NT (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1Tim 4:14; 5:22; 2Tim 1:6) describe different consequences or results of the appointment process. We can certainly assume that with their appointment the appointees received the task or function to which they were "ordained" and most likely the respect and support of church members. But did they receive an additional gift that people today can also expect when they are appointed to a function?

Nothing like this is mentioned with the Seven, although their appointment "inaugurated a completely new type of ministry and church leadership."<sup>33</sup> They were already filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3, 5). In the case of Paul and Barnabas, the church recognized their divine

<sup>32</sup> Church members or officials may encourage an individual to pursue a certain course or ministry, and God may be speaking through them. See Ananias visiting Paul (Acts 22:12-16).

<sup>33</sup> Johnston, 8-9.

calling and giftedness—they were prophets and teachers—and installed them to the function the Holy Spirit had assigned them to. They set out on their missionary journey. No additional gifts are mentioned as being given to them along with the appointment process (Acts 13:1-5).

With Timothy this may have been different (1Tim 4:14; 2Tim 1:6). It seems that in his case a spiritual gift or the gift of the Holy Spirit was received with the laying on of hands.<sup>34</sup> Obviously both can happen, the reception of a gift or no reception of an additional gift. That something would happen always can be assumed. It does not make sense to pray for people and lay hands on them without expecting that the Lord would do something. In addition to the appointment and the bestowal of authority, one should assume that the Lord would at least bless the appointees.

Nevertheless, the case of Timothy's appointment to his ministry may have been unique. Timothy is not called an elder and is not considered as such.<sup>35</sup> He stands in a special and close relationship to Paul and is the apostle's representative (1Tim 1:2). The language used by Paul seems to align Timothy's appointment with the installation of Joshua by Moses. Deut 34:9: "Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses." As Joshua became the unique successor of Moses, so "Paul sees in Timothy the one person to whom he can entrust the gospel. . . Paul is, in a sense, delivering his last will and testament . . ." <sup>36</sup> Therefore, his "ordination" is not necessarily the paradigm for all subsequent appointments.

Nevertheless, in the case that a new spiritual gift or the fullness of Holy Spirit are bestowed on appointees, this gift does not change them foundationally. It does not elevate them to a higher level, superior to the rest of the church members. Those who have taken on a new function and responsibility are not and do not become different from others in their inner being. They are still part of the priesthood of all believers.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (The New American Commentary; Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 139, suggest: "The 'gift' likely represented an aptitude for teaching and preaching together with an ability to understand the gospel and discern error." Commenting on 2Tim 1: 6 they propose that "The act of laying on hands was itself symbolic. The laying on of hands was not the cause of Timothy's receipt of a spiritual gift but was a visible representation and symbol of it" (188).

<sup>35</sup> See William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 2000), 263.

<sup>36</sup> Warkentin, *Ordination*, 138. See also pages 136-143.

### 5.5. Who Did and Who Did Not Experience Laying on of Hands?

We remember that those mentioned as having received laying on of hands are the Seven, Paul and Barnabas, as well as Timothy. The elders are disputed. 1Tim 5:22 may or may not apply to elders.

On the other hand, those that are not mentioned include Jesus, the twelve Apostles, the Seventy, Matthias as an apostle, deacons, and that we definitely know of having received laying on of hands are special and do not necessarily form a pattern for a present-day practice. Maybe with the exception of Barnabas none of their functions or ministries is directly found in the church today.

Yet it may be very unlikely that while the elders were involved in laying hands on others, they did not receive laying on of hands themselves.

### 5.6. For What Task/Function Did these People Receive Laying on of Hands?

It seems that laying on of hands was not done for one specific ministry only. Although the precise role of the Seven is difficult to describe, obviously their *diakonia* included taking care of social and physical needs of church members. At least two of them were involved in evangelism. In the case of Timothy his role and function can be describes as providing leadership. With Paul and Barnabas we find missionary activity which would include at least cross-cultural evangelistic outreach, organization of churches, and pastoral care. Although all of this is descriptive rather than prescriptive, it may help the church today when she considers her theology of ordination. The Church, faced with the question how to organize itself and its ministry, will in any case take a close look at the NT and follow its model of organization and ministry even if it is not explicitly prescribed.

### 5.7. Does the Church Have the Authority to Define and Regulate "Ordination"/Appointment to a Function or Ministry?

This study has pointed out that the NT does not contain a direct command for post-NT times to appoint elders, deacon, and pastors. It does not contain a prohibition either regarding the appointment of these and/or others for various types of ministry. The NT does not contain a command to lay on hands on certain persons. It does not have a three-tier

“ordination” system of deacons, elders, and pastors. Rather such a system reminds us of a similar approach used by the Catholic Church. The NT does not expressly teach that in these three cases or tiers appointment is different, that a pastor has a worldwide scope of ministry while elders and deacons are limited to a local scope, that “ordination” can and needs to be repeated, if a person has previously served as an elder and then becomes a pastor, and that deacons and elders can be “ordained” right away, while pastors have to serve several years before hands are being laid on them. In other words the appointment process or “ordination” is not precisely prescribed in the NT. Rather one finds descriptions of what happened here and there in the first century AD when the church was organized and began to grow tremendously.

While we stated that the Church will follow the NT model of organization, not all issues have been settled in the NT. This brings us to the question whether or not the Church has the authority to rule on issues not directly prescribed in Scripture. This is a somewhat dangerous question, because it could—if abused—lead to a situation in which the Church becomes the master rather than the servant of the Word of God. Therefore this question must be carefully considered in this context. Adventists hold that the Church cannot make decisions against what is clearly expressed in Scripture.

However in case that Scripture does not provide a fully prescribed approach to appointment to function, we are faced with the question which of the following approaches we should choose: (1) What Scripture does not prohibit is allowed; (2) what Scripture does not allow is prohibited, or (3) using biblical principles to determine how questions on theological issues should be decided. While the first approach sounds good on first glance, it has major weaknesses and would, for instance, allow for the use of narcotic drugs, smoking, and involvement in gambling and pornography. The second approach is not as wide as the first one but faces problems on the other side. It is too exclusive. It would, for example, prohibit the use of all modern means of transportation and communication, modern medicine, and the Adventist Church structure including most of its institutions. The third approach, namely to look for biblical principles and then structure a respective theology is found in Scripture.<sup>37</sup> Our fundamental beliefs and other tenets of our belief system reveal that Adventists have decided to use this third approach. This approach keeps the authority of Scripture intact, while it allows the Church to formulate a theology based on biblical principles.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Jesus and divorce in Matt 19. For a more detailed discussion of these approaches see Ekkehardt Mueller, “Hermeneutical Guidelines for Dealing with Theological Questions,” *Reflections: The BRI Newsletter*, October (2012): 1-7.

While at this stage of Adventist history we are involved in formulating or re-studying Adventist ecclesiology, particularly the theology of "ordination," we should make sure that all data be placed on the table. The Church should be willing to reconsider how laying on of hands should stay away from being traditionalists, namely followers of an Adventist tradition, merely for tradition and practice sake. We should also stay away from making changes for change sake only. That does not mean that after careful study we as a Church may not come up with the same or a very similar approach to ordination that we have practiced so far or that indeed some adjustments are necessary. But it is our duty as believers and as a Church to check again and again whether or not what we do is still in agreement with the Word of God or in this case the principles of Scripture.

## 6. Conclusion

The NT clearly teaches that there are different ministries and functions and that among other things leadership is indispensable. It also suggests that an appointment or installation process is necessary, even though precise rituals and various details are not prescribed. Nevertheless, what we have is a good starting point for hammering out an Adventist Theology of Ordination. The process of studying this topic that we are currently going through is an excellent opportunity to check where we are and make adjustments, if necessary.



## THE PHRASE “HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE” IN 1 TIMOTHY 3:2

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### 1. Introduction

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Paul mentions several criteria for persons to be elected as bishops. One of them is that a bishop should be the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2). Titus, who was summoned by Paul to appoint elders in different cities, was also given a list enumerating virtues to be found in future elders (Tit 1:5-9). Among these criteria is again the qualification to be “the husband of one wife” (Tit 1:6). Obviously, at that time the terms “bishop/overseer” and “elder” were still being used interchangeably, a fact which is also seen in Acts 20:17 and 28. A bishop or elder was to be the “husband of one wife.” How should this phrase be understood?

### 2. Suggested Interpretations

Because the phrase “husband of one wife” can at first glance have a number of different meanings, expositors came up with various interpretations such as the following:

- (1) The term “wife” in this phrase has to be understood spiritually. It is the church “to which the bishop must consider himself married.”<sup>1</sup>
- (2) The phrase stresses monogamy and is directed against polygamy. The emphasis is on “one”: Only one wife at one time and being completely faithful to one’s wife. The person to be elected as an elder/bishop must have refrained from practicing polygamy in the past and should not practice polygamy at the present time.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles: Studies in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 122.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Earle, “1, 2 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (EBC) 11* (ed. F. E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 364.

- (3) The elder "must not be one who has divorced a previous wife and remarried."<sup>3</sup>
- (4) The elder must be a married man.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he should have at least two children, because in 1 Timothy 3:4 children are mentioned in the plural.<sup>5</sup>
- (5) The phrase stresses that an elder/bishop is allowed to marry only once. If his wife passes away he is not entitled to marry again.<sup>6</sup> In such a case, he could serve as a widower which, however, would be excluded with option (4).
- (6) Paul "requires fidelity within marriage from the bishop."<sup>7</sup> A mistress is not allowed.<sup>8</sup>
- (7) The elder/bishop must be a man. Women are excluded from that office, because the Greek term for husband found in the phrase "husband of one wife" (literally: "a man of one woman") clearly refers to a male (*anēr*) only and is not as broad as the term *anthropos* which denotes a human being whether male or female.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 78. Hanson lists four different possibilities (77-78), but chooses the interpretation dealing with divorce (75). Cf. Gottfried Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 13; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1980), 76. Lists of various interpretations are also found in Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 92. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (The Anchor Bible 35A; NY: Doubleday, 2001), 213-214; Robert M. Johnston, "Shapes of Ministry in the New Testament and Early Church," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Nancy Vyhmeister; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 50; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 75; Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 122-126; George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 157-159; Thomas D. Lea, & Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (The New American Commentary; Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 109-110; and William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Word Biblical Commentary [WBC] 46; Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2000), 170-173.

<sup>4</sup> Mentioned by Lea, & Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., Knight, *1 Pastoral Epistles*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus* (The New Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 82; Martin Dibelius & Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 52.

<sup>7</sup> Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 213.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. P. Gerard Damsteegt, "Shapes of Ministry in the New Testament," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (ed. M. H. Dyer; Berrien Springs:

- (8) Several of the above suggestions apply simultaneously. W. Lock seems to combine possibilities (2), (3), and (6).<sup>10</sup> Number (5) "is possible, but scarcely likely."<sup>11</sup> Knight seems to combine polygamy, concubinage, and promiscuous indulgence, which includes "wrongful divorce and remarriage."<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Principles for Interpreting Biblical Texts

Obviously not all of these interpretations can be correct at the same time. Some clearly contradict and therefore exclude others. Before moving to a brief evaluation of these suggestions, a few thoughts on principles for interpreting biblical texts are in order. This section is neither dealing with all exegetical steps employed to interpret biblical passages, nor are those that are mentioned explained in detail. However, a reminder of these principles may prepare the way for an evaluation of the eight suggestions mentioned above.

The exegetical task includes among others the study of the historical context of a passage, its literary context, the sentences and phrases of the passage under investigation, and its individual words.

The historical-cultural context consists of the historical-cultural situation when a biblical book was written, or the historical backdrop to which a document was addressed. The historical context is at least partially provided by Scripture. Other material can be helpful to shed light on the historical-cultural situation. In this case it is information about the Greco-Roman world.

The literary context consists of the verses, paragraphs, chapters, and even books that precede and follow the text that is to be studied. Normally, the literary context is more readily available than the historical context. One can distinguish between the larger and the more immediate

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Adventists Affirm, 2000), 146; and S. Lawrence Maxwell, "One Chilling Word: A Response to Popular Arguments for Women's Ordination", in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, 179. Whereas the two articles by G. Damsteegt and L. Maxwell attempt to provide exegetical reasons for their conclusions, others published in *Prove all Things* just assume that 1Tim 3:2 has to be understood as excluding women from functioning as elders or prohibiting the ordination of women as elders and pastors. See, for instance, pages 9, 118, 165, 186, 191, 198, 201, 235, 358, 373, 384-386, 389.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 36-37.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159.

literary context. When dealing with 1 Timothy 3:2 the entire chapter as well as the entire letter have to be taken in consideration. The larger context is provided by the Pauline epistles and the New Testament as a whole.

Larger units within the biblical passage under investigation are verses and short paragraphs. A number of issues have to be considered when studying these units: such as the author's main thought, the structure of the passage, time and geographical location, acting persons, and connections to other parts of the document and to other literature. When studying sentences and phrases the exegete has to focus on syntax, grammatical features, and literary and rhetorical patterns.

When it comes to investigating words, the most important principle is to allow the context of a given sentence to define the meaning of the respective term. In order to further clarify its meaning and see how the author has used it in different places, it is traced at least through the entire biblical book in which it is found. It is important to recognize how the author has used a term and what it meant to him without reading back into the text the current understanding of the word. Furthermore, phrases are more than the sum of words. One must allow the authors to speak for himself within the framework of his original language.

There are certain exegetical fallacies that should be avoided.<sup>13</sup> One fallacy is to ask questions that the author did not have in mind and draw conclusions based on these questions.<sup>14</sup> Another and yet related problem is the so-called argument from silence. Conclusions have to be based on what a biblical book teaches, not on what it omits. The author's intention is more important than the reader's agenda. Another fallacy is to allow the interpretation of a text to be shaped by preconceived ideas and dogmatic interests. Instead the biblical text should be heard on its own and should receive an unbiased investigation.

Due to its limitation, in this paper not all of these steps will be mentioned. Yet they are the backdrop on which the arguments will be developed. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to provide a brief overview.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-106.

#### 4. Summary of the Historical Situation and Literary Context

In all three Pastoral Letters Paul mentions false teachers and dangerous influences. Jewish-protognostic teachings seem to have endangered various churches. Some house churches may already have been lost (Tit 1:5,10-11). Paul decided to send Timothy and Titus and gave them instruction as to how to deal with the problem. The main purpose for writing these letters may have been the attempt to counter false doctrines by encouraging the preaching of sound doctrine, by establishing a sound church order that would help to maintain the unity of the church even during times of attack against its beliefs, and by promoting a pious life style. The letters contain instructions, encouragement, and a moral challenge the apostle's coworkers.

Since we will focus on 1Tim 3:2, a short summary of the content of this letter is in order. The apostle begins his letter with a common introduction (1:1-3). However, thanksgiving is missing. Immediately after the introduction Paul moves to the problem area, namely false teachers (1:3-11). This passage mentions the law in a negative way in 1:7 and in a favorable way in 1:8-9. The law is not for the righteous but for the sinners. A catalogue of vices follows.

From there Paul proceeds to praise God's mercy and thanks Jesus for bringing salvation not just to him but to all humankind. This message is now entrusted to Timothy, who is challenged to fight a good fight (1:12-20). In chapter 2, Paul stresses the importance of prayer and includes a passage on God as our Savior and Jesus as our only Mediator (2:1-7).

Following this section, the author addresses men and women (2:8-15), bishops, deacons, and deaconesses (3:1-13) and summarizes this section with 3:14-16, where he points to church order—the church as the pillar of truth—and adds a Christological hymn. When he talks about church offices, he puts down the qualifications for those that are to be appointed, bishops and deacons. 2Tim 3:16 may be the center of 1Timothy.

In 1Tim 4:1-5 Paul comes back to the false teachers and their ascetic tendencies. Then, he addresses Timothy directly and challenges him to perform the ministry entrusted to him. This includes being an example and paying attention to himself and the doctrine (4:6-16).

In chapter 5 and 6 older men and women, widows and elders, slaves, false teachers, Timothy himself and through him all Christians as well as the rich are addressed (5:1-6:21). When Paul mentions the elders, he seems to talk about the remuneration for some of them. Elders must also be protected against false accusations. The long exhortation addressed to Timothy concludes with a focus on Christ and on God, the King of Kings

and Lord of Lords (6:13-16). The letter closes with a benediction (6:21): "Grace be with you" (plural).

Here is a broad outline of 1 Timothy:

Introduction 1:1-2

- I. The problem of false teachers (1:3-11)
- II. Praise of the mercy of God as revealed in Paul's life (1:12-20)
- III. Proper worship and church order (2:1-3:16)
  1. The prayer of the church (2:1-7)
  2. Men and women (2:8-15)
  3. Bishops (3:1-7)
  4. Deacons and deaconesses (3:8-13)
  5. Summary statement: the church and Christ (3:14-16)
- IV. False teachers contrasted with Timothy (4:1-16)
  1. The problem with false teachers (4:1-5)
  2. A charge to Timothy (4:6-16)
- V. Groups within the Church (5:1-6:20)
  1. Older people (5:1-2)
  2. Widows (5:3-16)
  3. Elders and Timothy (5:17-25)
  4. Slaves (6:1-2)
  5. False Teachers (6:3-10)
  6. The man of God (6:11-16)
  7. The rich (6:17-19)
  8. Timothy and false teachers (6:20-21)

Conclusion (6:21)

## 5. A Short Evaluation of the Various Arguments

We now turn to the suggested interpretations mentioned above and spend a few moments to evaluate them in the light of the principles for interpreting biblical texts.<sup>15</sup>

### 5.1. The Term "Wife" Should Be Understood Spiritually

The view that the term "wife" should be understood spiritually may have been suggested in order to defend priestly celibacy. The bishop is married to one woman, that is, the church.

It is correct that in some prophetic texts and especially in apocalyptic biblical literature the "term" woman is used metaphorically. For example, in Ezekiel 23 Israel and Judah are designated as two women and are called Oholah and Ohololibah. The woman of Revelation 12 represents

<sup>15</sup> See also Nancy Vyhmeister, "The Bishop, Husband of One Wife: What Does It Mean?" *Ministry*, October 2005.

the church that is faithful to God, whereas the harlot Babylon of Revelation 17, also a woman, persecutes God's people and therefore is opposed to God.

However, in most texts the term "woman/wife" (*gynē*)<sup>16</sup> refers to a female human being and not a symbolic entity. This is especially the case in legal material and in narratives. Biblical texts have to be interpreted literally if a symbolic meaning is not clearly indicated. ". . . there is no warrant for spiritualizing this part of the passage when every other term in the list is understood literally."<sup>17</sup> A bishop is a human person that does not stand for a larger entity. So are his wife and his children. In addition, the other instances in which the term *gynē* is used in the Pastoral Epistles (1Tim 2:9, 10, 11, 12, 14; 3:11, 12; 5:9; Tit 1:6) clearly refer to literal women only.

## 5.2. The Phrase is directed Against Polygamy

As far as we know, polygamy was not a major issue for the early church. In his discussion with the Pharisees on the matter of divorce (Matt 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12) Jesus used the creation account (Gen 1 and 2) to point to the indissolubility of marriage. By stressing the fact that two become one flesh—a man and a woman—he excluded among other things polygamy. Polygamy was not allowed for church members and therefore was also forbidden for a bishop. It was not "a live option for an ordinary Christian, much less for a minister."<sup>18</sup>

In addition, there is evidence that already in the first century B.C. polygamy was not encouraged in the Greek culture. It seems that there was a concern to prohibit it, as marriage contracts of that time indicate. In 212 A.D. monogamy became law for Romans.<sup>19</sup> When Timothy received Paul's letters addressed to him he probably was pastoring in Ephesus, that is, in a context heavily influenced by the Greek culture. Thus, polygamy was not only prohibited by Jesus, but also frowned upon by the prevalent culture.

Hanson notes: "Anything approaching polygamy would have been abhorrent to the strict moral standards of the church of the time."<sup>20</sup> And

<sup>16</sup> The Greek does not differentiate between "woman" and "wife" as the English language does by using two different terms. There is only one term in Greek (*gynē*) which covers both aspects. The precise meaning must be determined by the context. The same is true for the term "man/husband."

<sup>17</sup> Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 122.

<sup>18</sup> Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 75.

<sup>19</sup> Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158.

<sup>20</sup> Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 78.

Lea/Griffin conclude: "Such a practice would be so palpably unacceptable among Christians that it would hardly seem necessary to prohibit it. It is best not so see Paul as writing primarily in opposition to polygamy."<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the phrase "husband of one wife" is used in the reversed form in 1 Timothy 5:9, namely "wife of one husband." Both phrases must refer to the same principle. But "wife of one husband" does not point to a prohibition of polyandry, "since polyandry was not practiced in the first-century Greco-Roman world."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, it is not likely that the parallel phrase refers to polygamy.

### 5.3. Divorce and Remarriage Are Prohibited

The New Testament is clearly opposed to divorce. Apparently, remarriage after a divorce was an option for a spouse only that was not involved in sexual intimacy with someone else or a spouse who was divorced by an unbelieving partner. Since divorce is generally prohibited, it is argued that Paul would not repeat such a prohibition when talking about the qualifications of a bishop/elder. It was clear anyway. Therefore, this interpretation is not regarded to be very likely either. Lea/Griffin state: "While this can be Paul's meaning, the language is too general in its statement to make this interpretation certain."<sup>23</sup>

Others suggest that divorce was a real problem and was taken lightly not only in Jewish society but also in the Greco-Roman world. Interestingly enough, the Gospel of Mark contains both the prohibition addressed to men against divorcing their wives and additionally the prohibition addressed to women against divorcing their husbands (Mark 10:11-12). The latter is not found in the parallel account in Matthew 19. While Jews considered it a privilege to be able to divorce their wives, in the Greco-Roman culture to which the Gospel of Mark obviously was addressed, divorce was also rampant and could be initiated by both spouses. Kent feels that in this context the divorce interpretation "is the most reasonable."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Lea, & Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109. This is supported by Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 122-123, and Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 81.

<sup>22</sup> Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158.

<sup>23</sup> Lea, & Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109.

<sup>24</sup> Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 125. See also Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 78. Some scholars suggest that a pre-conversion divorce is acceptable as long as the church leader is devoted to his present wife. Cf. E. Glasscock, "'The Husband of One Wife' Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2," *Biblica Sacra* 140 (1983): 255. Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 125, on the other hand, feels that "when men were to be considered for this high

#### 5.4. The Bishop Must Be a Married Man

Whereas option (1) spiritualizes part of the text, option (4) takes the text very literally demanding that bishops/elders must be married as long as they serve as bishops/elders. This would mean that a man who is not married and who has no children, cannot serve as an elder. However, such an interpretation does not do justice to the larger context. Obviously, in the New Testament apostles were also regarded as elders. As fellow elder Peter addressed the elders of the churches (1Pet 5:1). The apostle John talked about himself as an elder (2John 1; 3John 1).<sup>25</sup> Paul himself was not married and yet served the churches and functioned as an apostle. He even suggested that under certain circumstances it would be better to remain single (1Cor 7:1-9, 27-28, 32-33).<sup>26</sup> Jesus was not married either. In 1Pet 2:25 he is called "bishop."

Kent notes: "Such an understanding does not properly represent the force of the adjective 'one' (*mias*) which is placed first. The overseer must be the husband of 'one' wife, not 'many.' Paul does not say he must be 'husband of a wife.'"<sup>27</sup>

#### 5.5. The Bishop Must Be a Married Man

The view that an elder may be married only once and may not remarry after the death of his spouse is accepted by a number of scholars.<sup>28</sup> If this is correct, the emphasis is on fidelity rather than on the issue of being married or not.

This option seems to be supported by 1Timothy 5:9-10, a passage which mentions widows, who are to be put on a certain list, and enumerates certain criteria for doing so. One of these criteria is "having been the wife of one man." This phrase is parallel to "husband of one

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office, there must be no record of divorce or other marital infidelity in the candidate, even before conversion."

<sup>25</sup> See also Acts 1:20.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Lea, & Griffin, Jr. 1, 2 *Timothy, Titus*, 109; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 157.

<sup>27</sup> Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 124. Cf. Newport J. D. White, "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus" in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (ed. W. R. Nicoll; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 111.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus*, 82. Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77, lists some scholars who take this position. He also calls this view "the traditional explanation."

wife."<sup>29</sup> Such constructions—if appearing in the same document—should be interpreted in the same way unless clearly indicated otherwise. In 1Timothy both phrases should have the same basic meaning. Since in the case of the widows a second marriage seems to be excluded, it is reasoned that the same applies to the bishop.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, "in Graeco-Roman society the woman who had remained with one husband all her life, or who when widowed had not remarried, was honoured. The epithet *unavira* ('married to the one man only') is often found on epithaphs."<sup>31</sup>

The problem with this view is that remarriage after the death of a spouse is not prohibited in Scripture, nor is it discouraged. It is not morally questionable. On the contrary, in 1Timothy 5:14 young widows are admonished to marry again. It would be unintelligible if Paul encouraged young widows to remarry, when in later years—if widowed again—they would be excluded from certain privileges for this very reason.<sup>32</sup> Dibelius and Conzelmann conclude that even in 1Timothy 5:9 the prohibition of a second marriage "is improbable."<sup>33</sup> In Romans 7:2-3 and 1Corinthians 7:39 Paul states explicitly that widows are allowed to remarry.<sup>34</sup> This should also apply to the bishop/elder.

## 5.6. Marital Faithfulness Is Stressed

Option number 6 is more general than the other views and yet may include some of them. It is supported by a number of expositors. With the phrase "husband of one wife" Paul may have wanted to stress that "the overseer must be completely faithful to his wife."<sup>35</sup> He avoids any sexual immorality.<sup>36</sup> Knight suggests that this statement "positively affirms

<sup>29</sup> In both phrases the numeral "one" comes first followed a genitive ("man's" / "woman's") and finally the person to which the phrase refers ("woman" / "man"):

<i>Enos</i>	<i>andros</i>	<i>gynē</i>	(5:9)
<i>mias</i>	<i>gynaikos</i>	<i>andra</i>	(3:2)

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus*, 82.

<sup>31</sup> Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77; Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 123-124.

<sup>33</sup> Dibelius, 52. Discussing 1Timothy 5:9 the authors state: "The interpretation of this passage by Theodore of Mopsuestia is correct: 'If she has lived in chastity with her husband, no matter whether she has had only one, or whether she was married a second time' . . ." (p. 75). Cf. Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 37.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Lea, & Griffin, Jr. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109.

<sup>35</sup> Earle, "1, 2 Timothy," *EBC*, 364.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus*, 81.

sexual fidelity . . . It is analogous, therefore, to the command 'You shall not commit adultery' . . ." <sup>37</sup> The objection that this is required of all Christians is countered by the reply that other qualifications of the bishop mentioned in 1 Timothy 3 are also expected to be found in all Christians. <sup>38</sup>

### 5.7. The Bishop Must Be a Man

This option not only stresses that the bishop/elder must be a man, but also holds that women are excluded from this office. The literalistic reading that the bishop must be a married man (view 4) is difficult to substantiate—as shown above. A similar reading that the bishop must be a man should also be approached with great caution. The phrase "husband/man of one wife/woman" is found three times in Scripture—1 Timothy 3:2,12 and Titus 1:6. The reversed phrase "wife/woman of one husband/man" occurs in 1 Timothy 5:9 as already mentioned.

The term *gynē* clearly refers to a woman. In Scripture and outside Scripture the term *anēr* normally designates a male person. There are a few exceptions in which the term is "used for the human species" <sup>39</sup> in general including both men and women. For instance, Matthew 12:41; 14:35; Romans 4:8; Ephesians 4:13; and James 1:8,12, 20,23; 3:2 are obviously not restricted to males only but encompass both genders. "Emphatic sexual differentiation . . . is mostly expressed in biblical Gk. by ἄρσεν and θήλυ . . ." <sup>40</sup> When Jesus addressed the issue of divorce he used these terms to refer to man and woman (Matt 19:4; Mark 10:6), in addition to *anēr* and *gynē* (Mark 10:11-12). In the three texts found in 1 Timothy and Titus the term *anēr* undoubtedly refers to a male, because it is used in conjunction with the term "woman/wife."

Still the questions must be raised, What does the phrase mean? What was Paul's intention when he penned the phrase? Did Paul intent to say that women are not allowed to be elders or was he trying to say something else?

Some students of Scripture point to 1Tim 2:11-15 to indicate that women cannot be elders because they are admonished to be silent and in full submission and are reminded that Adam was created first. Since this paper is not dealing with this passage, a few remarks must suffice. According to other places of Scripture and even Paul's own writings women did teach (e.g., Acts 18:24-26). They prophesied and prayed

<sup>37</sup> Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 158.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77.

<sup>39</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "ἀνήρ, ἀνδρίζομαι" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. G. Kittel; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), I:360.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

publicly (e.g., 1Cor 11:5) and some had leadership roles (e.g., Lydia, Phoebe). So 1Tim 2:11-15 must describe a special situation. In our summary of 1Timothy we noticed the problem of false teachings. The letter indicates that women were involved in it (1Tim 4:17; 5:11-15) as does 2Timothy 3:6. The busybodies of 1Tim 5:13 (*periergoi*) are even understood as practitioners of magic in Acts 19:19. Very attractive in this part of the world, Asia Minor, was the mother goddess cult. According to this teaching women were necessary to communicate absolute truth. They were considered mediators (therefore probably the stress on Jesus as the only mediator—2:5). Gnosticism would see Eve as the spiritual source of enlightenment. Supposedly she existed before Adam and was responsible for infusing life into him. Adam was deceived and lacked knowledge that Eve had. Some suggested even that Eve had intimate relations with the serpent or was the mother of Yahweh. These ideas may have been already existing in proto-Gnosticism. If this is the background and situation in Ephesus, it is understandable that Paul admonished women to be silent<sup>41</sup> and accept that it was Adam, not Eve that was created first,<sup>42</sup> and that it was Eve and not Adam that was deceived.<sup>43</sup> So would the problem some women created in Ephesus exclude all sincere women from leadership positions. The New Testament would deny that.

We return to 1Tim 3:2! If Paul wanted to stress that bishops/elders must be male, he just could have stated it. He could have said: "An overseer must be above reproach, a man/male, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach." Instead he declared: "He must be husband/man of one wife/woman." In this phrase the emphasis is on the word "one." Paul did not say that bishops/elders must be "husbands of a wife"—which would have allowed for a stronger emphasis on the term "husband"—but he said: "husband of *one* wife." This clearly excludes a position claiming that Paul focused on the maleness of the bishop/elder.

<sup>41</sup> To be silent does not mean not to speak but not to get involved in disputes and controversial debates. See Angel M. Rodriguez, "1Timothy 2:12," <http://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-nt-texts/1-timothy-212>, (accessed June 10, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Priority in creation does not necessarily mean much. Animals were created before human beings were, and yet they are not considered to be superior. If, however, it was taught that Adam was dependent on Eve and that she even gave him the spark of life, Paul must remind the women in Ephesus that they have left the biblical evidence.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed discussion see Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), especially pages 73, 119-121, 159, 162).

He stressed the overseer's faithfulness toward his wife, not the fact that he had to be a man.

As the passage on the bishop should not be read in a literalistic way concluding that the bishop must be a married man with at least two children, thereby creating tensions with other parts of Scripture and Paul's own statements, so the phrase "husband of one wife" should not be used to conclude that this text teaches and commands that bishops/elders must be male. This is not the issue. The phrase discusses the relation of an overseer to his wife by stressing that he must be completely devoted and faithful to his wife.<sup>44</sup>

The same expression "husband of one wife" occurs again in 1Timothy 3:12, this time used in connection with deacons. However, in the case of the deacons, whose office is discussed in verses 8-13, an insertion is found with verse 11.

1Tim 3:8-10	Deacons
1Tim 3:11	Woman
1Tim 3:12-13	Deacons <sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> This fits the context of 1Tim 2:11-15 well which seems to deal with husbands and their wives. See, Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Nancy Vyhmeister; Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1998), 278-281, where he argues that the passage is dealing with the husband-wife relationship and has close parallels to 1 Pet 3:1-7 and 1Cor 14:34-36.

<sup>45</sup> Here is a syntactical display of 1Tim 3:8-13 showing how the passage may be outlined and how the parts relate to each other:

**Διακόνους ὡσαύτως**

(1) σεμνοῦς,

(2) μὴ διλόγους,

(3) μὴ οἶνω πολλῶ προσέχοντας,

(4) μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς,

(5) ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει.

καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρώτων,

εἶτα **διακονείτωσαν**

ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες.

**Γυναίκας ὡσαύτως** (1) σεμνάς,

(2) μὴ διαβόλους,

(3) νηφαλίους,

(4) πιστάς ἐν πάσιν.

**Διάκονοι** ἔστωσαν (1) μιᾶς **γυναικὸς** ἀνδρες,

(2) τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων.

οἱ γὰρ καλῶς **διακονήσαντες**

βαθμὸν ἑαυτοῖς καλὸν περιποιῶνται

καὶ πολλὴν παρρησίαν ἐν **πίστει** τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Verses 8-10 and 12-13 are quite parallel. Both passages talk about “deacons” which “serve as deacons” (noun plus verb) and about the importance of faith. One may gain the impression that both passages are complete in themselves, while a new and yet related thought is introduced in verse 11.

A literal translation of verse 11 begins as follows: “Women likewise must be serious/dignified/ worthy of respect . . .” Who are these women? Again there are several options:

- (1) They are women in general.<sup>46</sup> The term *gynē* can be rendered “woman” or “wife.” Greek uses one word to describe what in English is expressed with two separate terms. While English differentiates, Greek allows for two options. Therefore, theoretically verse 11 could point to women in general. However, the immediate context, which deals with the office of the deacon, does not fit this interpretation. Verse 11 hardly can be a description of Christian women in general.
- (2) These women are the wives of the deacons. This interpretation takes into consideration the immediate context, and some interpreters as well as Bible translators have chosen this option.<sup>47</sup> Verses 12-13 contain references to marriage and family, which make it possible that verse 11 refers to wives. However, the question arises why wives of the deacons are included when the office of the deacon is discussed, while wives of overseers are not mentioned when bishops are discussed (1Tim 3:1-7). Furthermore, Paul mentions criteria which these women need to meet. If the wives of deacons must meet certain qualifications, why are wives of bishops/elders not even mentioned nor their qualifications listed? This is all the more astonishing because bishops hold a “higher” office than deacons do. These considerations make it unlikely that women of deacons are described in verse 11.
- (3) These women are not wives of the deacons, but they are deaconesses.<sup>48</sup> There is no possessive pronoun that would directly

<sup>46</sup> This option is briefly mentioned by William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville, TN: Thomas, 2000), 203.

<sup>47</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202-204, discusses options (2) & (3) extensively and favors the women as wives of the deacons. Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 96-97, seems to leave it open.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Holtz, *Pastoralbriefe*, 85; Frances Young, *Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 113; Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” in *EBC 10* (ed. F. E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 161; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203-204. On page 210 he states: “While 1 Tim 3:11 was interpreted above to refer to deacons’ wives, it is also possible that it refers to deaconesses, not so much as an established order but as women involved formally and officially in serving the church.”

connect the women as wives to their husbands, the deacons.<sup>49</sup> While five qualifications of deacons are mentioned in verses 8-9 and two qualifications of deacons in verse 12, four qualifications of these women are listed in verse 11. Both paragraphs, the one on deacons and the one on the women begin in the very same way and are dependent on *dei . . . einai* (must be . . .) in verse 2:

Verse 2: "An overseer, then, must be . . ."

Verse 8: "Deacons *likewise* WORTHY OF RESPECT (*semnous*) . . ."

Verse 11: "Women *likewise* WORTHY OF RESPECT (*semnas*) . . ."

As in verse 8 a new category is introduced so also in verse 11. While the bishops and the deacons share the characteristics of managing well their children and their household and are no drunkards (verses 3, 4, 8, and 12), the bishops and the women share the qualification of being temperate (verses 2 and 11), and the deacons and the women have in common faith/being faithful (verses 9, 11, 13) and being dignified (verses 9, 11). The last qualifier of the women, "faithful in all things," "may be Paul's summary way of applying the qualities of a deacon to a deaconess."<sup>50</sup>

It is noteworthy that a female deacon is also mentioned in Romans 16:1: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a *diakonos* (servant/deacon) of the church at Cenchreae." Some interpreters suggest that Phoebe was serving in a general sense, as the word family is often used in the New Testament and that she did not occupy the office of a female deacon.<sup>51</sup> However, the Greek is quite specific: *ousan diakonon tēs ekklēsiās* (being a deacon of the church). Obviously, Paul by using the phrase "being a deacon" instead of employing the verb *diakoneō* (to serve) or the noun *diakonia* (service) and by connecting it closely to a local church<sup>52</sup> suggested to understand Romans 16:1 as pointing to a deacon in the narrower sense

<sup>49</sup> While the NASB remains neutral by translating "Women must likewise be . . .," the NIV has taken a position and interprets the verse: "In the same way, their wives are to be . . ." The NRSV follows the NASB and the NKJV the NIV.

<sup>50</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Are Those Things So?" in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (ed. M. H. Dyer; Berrien Springs: Adventists Affirm, 2000), 202-204; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 226.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 787, states: ". . . the designation 'deacon of the church in Cenchreae' suggests that Phoebe served in this special capacity, for this is the only occasion in which the term *διάκονος* is linked with a particular local church."

of the word.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, the male form as found in 1Timothy 3:8 and 12 is used in Romans 16:1, although it is applied to a woman. Schreiner proposes that “the use of the masculine noun *διάκονοι* also suggests that the office is intended.”<sup>54</sup> Mounce explains that the feminine form of the word *diakonos*, namely *diakonissa*, was not used in the first century A.D., but is found for the first time in the fourth century.<sup>55</sup> Obviously, the term was not available for Paul to employ. Therefore he had to resort to the male expression. This may also explain why he did not use it in 1Timothy 3:11, but chose to talk about “women” instead. If he had used *diakonos* in all three subsections of 1Timothy 3:8-13 the entire paragraph would seem to talk about the male deacons only without allowing us to see that he may have wanted to point to both male and female deacons.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to being a deaconess, Romans 16:2 seems to indicate that Phoebe was a patron and likely a woman of wealth.<sup>57</sup> “There was a stronger tradition of women filling roles of prominence in this period than has previously been realized—women with titles, for example, *ἀρχισυναγώγος* or *γυμνασάραχος* (Gen 1:1 BGT) . . . and acting precisely as protectors and benefactors . . .”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988), 886-887. That Phoebe was a female deacon is, e.g., supported by F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 457; K. Heß, “Dienen,” in *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* (2 vols.; ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther, & Hans Bietenhard; Wuppertal: Theologischer Verlag R. Brockhaus, 1977), 1:187; Johnston, “Shapes of Ministry in the New Testament and Early Church,” in *Women in Ministry*, 50-51; Francis D. Nichol, (ed.), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7 volumes (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 6:649; Barbara E. Reid, “What’s Biblical about . . . Women Deacons?” *The Bible Today* 51/1 (2013): 51-53.

<sup>54</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 787.

<sup>55</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202. Cf. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Romans* (Meyer’s Commentary on the New Testament 5; reprint; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983), 565.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Holtz, *Pastoralbriefe*, 85.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. the important discussion by Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 888-889; and also Schreiner, *Romans*, 788.

<sup>58</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 888-889. See also the discussion on the role of woman during the time of early Christianity in Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Second ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 70-74; James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 249-252; Margaret Y. MacDonald, “Was Celsus Right? The Role of Women in the Expansion of Early Christianity,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (ed. David L. Balch, & Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 162-168.

Deaconesses are found quite early in church history, "especially because women needed assistance from those of their own sex in visitation, baptism, and other matters . . ." <sup>59</sup> Obviously, biblical texts were understood in the way that it was legitimate to have female deacons. Around 110 A.D. in a letter sent by Pliny the Younger to emperor Trajan (epist. ad Traj, 96,8) two Christian ladies are called *ministrae*, which apparently points to deaconesses. <sup>60</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the *Didascalia Apostolorum* refer to deaconesses in the second and third centuries A.D. By the fourth and fifth century all the leading Greek Fathers know about deaconesses and mention them. <sup>61</sup> In many churches today deaconesses are well accepted including the Seventh-day Adventist Church. <sup>62</sup>

The apparent existence of women deacons in Scripture and later on in church history militates against the view that the phrase "husband of one wife" would mean that only men can function as deacons. Instead it

<sup>59</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 787.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Holtz, *Pastoralbriefe*, 85; Johnston, "Shapes of Ministry in the New Testament and Early Church," in *Women in Ministry*, 51; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 210.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Holtz, *Pastoralbriefe*, 85; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 211-212. On page 211 he states: "The basic picture is that deaconesses perform some of the functions of their male counterparts; yet their duties are restricted to serving the needs of women in the church, including baptism and anointing, teaching the newly baptized, and going 'into the houses of the heathen where there are believing women, and to visit those who are sick . . .'"

<sup>62</sup> In Appendix C of Ellen G. White, *Daughters of God* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1998), 249, the following report is found: "In 1895 Ellen White recommended the ordination of women who would give themselves to a deaconess-type of work: 'Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the church officers or the minister; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church.'--RH, July 9, 1895. A number of women were ordained as deaconesses during Ellen White's Australian ministry. On August 10, 1895, the nominating committee at the Ashfield Church in Sydney rendered its report, which was approved. The clerk's minutes for that date state: 'Immediately following the election, the officers were called to the front where pastors Corliss and McCullagh set apart the elder, deacons, [and] deaconesses by prayer and the laying on of hands.' Several years later, in the same church, W. W. White officiated at the ordination of the church officers. The minutes of the Ashfield Church for January 7, 1900, state: "The previous Sabbath officers had been nominated and accepted for the current year, and today Elder White ordained and laid hands on the elders, deacon, and deaconesses.--AR, Jan. 16, 1986."

points to their marital faithfulness. The same phrase "husband of one wife" is used in connection with bishops/elders in the same context of 1Timothy 3. It cannot be interpreted differently from the identical expression found in 1Timothy 3:12. Since in the case of deacons this expression does not rule out deaconesses, in the case of bishops/elders this phrase cannot be used to claim that a bishop/elder has to be male. Obviously, the biblical text in 1Timothy 3:2 does not address the question whether or not women can serve as elders. This does not seem to be Paul's concern, and we should avoid reading it back into the text. Furthermore, we should refrain from using 1Timothy 3:2 as a divine command opposing the involvement of women in leadership positions of the church.

### 5.8. A Combination of Some of the Above Mentioned Views

Some combinations of views are quite unlikely, because they contradict each other, for instance, the views that an elder must be married and must not remarry. Others are more probable, for example, the views that the bishop should not live in polygamy, should not divorce his wife and remarry, and should be completely faithful to his wife. However, option number 8 is not stronger than its weakest individual part discussed above.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has investigated the phrase "husband of one wife" as found in 1Timothy 3:2 and has pointed to its various interpretations. The fact that this phrase has been understood quite differently, alerts us to two issues: (1) A simple reading of the phrase may miss the point that the author wanted to make and may unintentionally allow the audience to read into the text their own agenda. (2) The multiplicity of interpretations may indicate that this text belongs to the more difficult ones in the New Testament and should be handled with great care.

Some of the above mentioned interpretations are quite improbable or even impossible, while others seem to make more sense. Obviously, literalistic interpretations lead to conclusions that are in contrast to Paul's own writings as well as the remainder of the New Testament. Single men or husbands with less than two children are not excluded from serving as bishops/elders. The hotly debated question whether or not a woman can be an elder does not seem to be addressed. Apparently 1Timothy 3:2

cannot be used to exclude women from the ministry of church leadership (bishop/elder).

The passages dealing with the bishop and the deacons do not provide much information on their functions, but stress their moral qualities, among them being "husband of one wife." Paul stresses that elders and deacons must live an exemplary life that includes their sexual relations. They must avoid "any appearance of immorality"<sup>63</sup> and be completely faithful to their spouse.

<sup>63</sup> Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 214; cf. Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 75.



## 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup>, sometimes including apostolic succession as part of a very

<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 539-540.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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".<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup>

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.

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

<sup>4</sup> Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service* (Exeter: Paternoster, 2002), 2.

<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.'"<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, already at this early stage, these followers, or later μαθηται, are called with a specific task in mind—that of being "fishers of men." The μαθηται are already foreshadowed as ἀπόστολοι at the outset of their calling.<sup>9</sup> 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 μαθηται (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 μαθητης 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 μαθητης. These Twelve men are

<sup>6</sup> "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 public 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.

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

<sup>8</sup> Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), 42-57.

<sup>9</sup> "[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),<sup>10</sup> 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 *μαθηται* 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)<sup>11</sup>. Yet none of these individuals, while fulfilling the same function as the Twelve, is labeled as *μαθητης* or *ἀπόστολοι*.<sup>12</sup> 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

<sup>10</sup> “Bei Matthäus und Markus tragen die Zwölf die Bezeichnung ‘Apostel’ nur im Zusammenhang einer zeitweiligen Aussendung. Ihre Funktion 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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).

<sup>12</sup> 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 *μαθηται* 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.<sup>13</sup>

## 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"<sup>14</sup> is displaced by the self-identification with the lowest possible rank.<sup>15</sup>

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

<sup>13</sup> "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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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 steal 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 βόσκει (feed, John 21:15.17) and ποιμαίνε (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)."<sup>17</sup> Peter in turn addresses the "fellow elders" with the same calling to ποιμάνετε 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

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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."<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup>

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.

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

<sup>20</sup> 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).<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> After Acts 11 the apostles are referred to only in conjunction with other groups. The

<sup>21</sup> See Joachim Rohde, *Urchristliche und Fröhkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Fröhkristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern* (ed. Hans Urner; Theologische Arbeiten 33; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 68-69.

<sup>22</sup> "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 brethren" (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<sup>23</sup>, for others the book shows the dependency of Paul upon the Jerusalem church.<sup>24</sup> 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).<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963).

<sup>25</sup> Rhode, *Urchristliche und Frühkatholische Ämter: Eine Untersuchung zur Frühchristlichen Amtsentwicklung im Neuen Testament und bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, 68.

<sup>26</sup> "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."<sup>27</sup> 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. . .<sup>28</sup>

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.

<sup>27</sup> Hermann W. Beyer, "Διακονέω, Διάκονία, Διάκονος," *TDNT*, 2:87.

<sup>28</sup> 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).<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3. Overseers or Elders

Two terms are significant for the discussion of this heading: the *ἐπίσκοπος* (overseer) and the *πρεσβύτερος* (elder).<sup>30</sup> 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."<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

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."<sup>33</sup> This concern is also at the heart of the

<sup>29</sup> Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 10-11.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> 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*."

<sup>33</sup> "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.<sup>34</sup>

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."<sup>35</sup> But if the antecedent is the congregation, then it "means to raise one's hand in voting."<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> See the BDAG ad loc. Because the apostles are the subject this action "does not involve the choice by the group."

<sup>36</sup> 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<sup>37</sup>, 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).<sup>38</sup> 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 characterized 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).

<sup>37</sup> Offices requirements are listed in 1 Timothy, but in Acts no requirements are listed.

<sup>38</sup> 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."<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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."<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Morris, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians: Introduction and Commentaries*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Lietzmann, "Zur Altchristlichen Verfassungsgeschichte," 110.

<sup>41</sup> F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Word Biblical Commentary 45; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 118.

<sup>42</sup> 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 *prohistamenoí* 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.”<sup>43</sup>

#### 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).<sup>44</sup> The division into grace-gifts (*χάρισμα*), services (*διακονία*), and works (*ἔνεργημα*) 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-

<sup>43</sup> “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 *prohistamenoí*, 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.

<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul ties the spiritual phenomena to the imagery of the *σῶμα Χριστοῦ* for “the idea of incorporation into the body of Christ emphasizes the priority of Christology to ecclesiology.”<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> Second, the spiritual phenomena are distributed to the individual for the benefit of the entire church body (1 Cor 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 (1 Cor 12:11 *ἰδίᾳ*) 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.”<sup>48</sup> 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<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> “[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.

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

<sup>47</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary 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.

<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> In this instance though Paul is not pleading for a unifying global church structure for the early church.<sup>51</sup> 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*.<sup>52</sup> 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"<sup>53</sup>. 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

<sup>50</sup> 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.

<sup>51</sup> 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.

<sup>52</sup> 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: Clarendon, 1950), 22; D. B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (London: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> 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  $\phi\ \mu\epsilon\nu$  in verse 8 and  $\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \mu\epsilon\nu$  in verse 27. This parallel is especially helpful for verse 27 where "contrastive  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  never appears and the construction appears to proceed differently."<sup>55</sup>

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)."<sup>56</sup>

To summarize, Paul employs among others the term  $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\alpha$  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

<sup>54</sup> 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).

<sup>55</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 1013.

<sup>56</sup> "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 charismatic. Paul makes no clear distinction between charismatic and non-charismatic 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."<sup>57</sup> 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*<sup>58</sup> 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."<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Johnston, "Leadership in the Early Church During Its First Hundred Years," 6.

<sup>58</sup> The gospel accounts repeatedly use the verb for women ministering.

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

<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> 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."<sup>62</sup> 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 *Ιουνιᾶν* in Rom 16:7."<sup>63</sup> Third, most scholars up to the thirteenth century clearly identified Junia as a woman. This is especially true of the patristic fathers.<sup>64</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Greek text<sup>65</sup> 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."<sup>66</sup> 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."<sup>67</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See the extensive study by Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle*.

<sup>62</sup> Epp, *Junia*, 44.

<sup>63</sup> *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).

<sup>64</sup> 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.

<sup>65</sup> Only in 1998 did the UBS and Nestle-Aland texts restore the earlier punctuation favoring the feminine view after roughly 70 years.

<sup>66</sup> Epp, *Junia*, 41.

<sup>67</sup> 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<sup>68</sup>. The prepositional phrase does not allow much option. "The consensus view is that the phrase means 'distinguished among the apostles.'"<sup>69</sup> 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!"<sup>70</sup> 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)<sup>71</sup>, the imagery of the body of Christ (Eph 4:4; 1Cor 12:12-26), numerous attestations of *oneness* (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 αὐτός in verse 11 refer back to Christ in verse 7 illustrate this connection. Verse 7 is clearly a reference to all believers

<sup>68</sup> 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>.

<sup>69</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 796.

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

<sup>71</sup> 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 χάρισματά, '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."<sup>72</sup> Barth concurs: "[T]he authority of the 'shepherds' or 'teachers' was ascribed to a *charisma*. . . just as much as that of 'apostles' and 'prophets.'"<sup>73</sup> 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."<sup>74</sup> 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."<sup>75</sup>

Yet, some counter arguments mitigate this view: First, the term shepherd (ποιμὲνας) 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."<sup>76</sup> 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

<sup>72</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 522.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 540.

<sup>74</sup> Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, 439.

<sup>75</sup> Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 538.

<sup>76</sup> 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.”<sup>77</sup>

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 δούλοι 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.”<sup>78</sup> This seems to be the next step up from Ephesians in the progression from function to form.

<sup>77</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919), 787.

<sup>78</sup> 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.”<sup>79</sup> 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.”<sup>80</sup> 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.”<sup>81</sup> (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.

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

<sup>80</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159.

<sup>81</sup> “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."<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> 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).<sup>84</sup>

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."<sup>85</sup> "Nowhere in the Pastoral Epistles does Paul teach a two-tiered structure of church authority, much less the tree-tiered one found in Ignatius."<sup>86</sup> Fee concurs by pointing out: "No evidence exists

<sup>82</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155.

<sup>83</sup> "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.

<sup>84</sup> 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 nurturing rather than administrative aspect of church life.

<sup>85</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 154-155.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

for a single leader as the 'head' of the local assembly in the Pauline churches."<sup>87</sup> 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."<sup>88</sup>

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)<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> At various times different terms are used to best express the current situation such as disciples, apostles, elders, bishops, and deacons.

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

<sup>88</sup> "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.

<sup>89</sup> 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.

<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup> 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.

<sup>91</sup> 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.

## TRAJECTORIES OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION IN HISTORY

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### 1. Introduction: Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System

The twelfth-century theologian, Peter Lombard, is best known for his sentence collection made up of quotations from authorities on the topic of his systematic arguments. As collector and exegete he empowered his arguments with proof texts and examples from both canonical Scripture and from the fathers of the Church.<sup>1</sup> His resulting work, the four books of *The Sentences*,<sup>2</sup> became the basis and curriculum of theological studies in the emerging European universities for centuries afterward.<sup>3</sup> Peter Lombard's *Sentences* were the foundation and model for Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*. They were also the basic curriculum at Oxford where John Wyclif wrote his initial Christological work as a commentary on book 3 of *The Sentences*.<sup>4</sup> Even Martin Luther lectured on *The Sentences* as a major part of his education in Erfurt.<sup>5</sup> Lombard's *Sentences* were made the basis of the curriculum not because he was always considered to be right when taking sides in the arguments within scholastic theology, but because of his coherent, systematic presentation of the issues as well as the breadth of his quotations from the early fathers.<sup>6</sup> Lombard was at

<sup>1</sup> Marcia L. Colish, "Peter Lombard," in *The Medieval Theologians* (ed. G. R. Evans; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 169.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sentences*

<sup>3</sup> Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual tradition: 400-1400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 282.

<sup>4</sup> Gillian R. Evans, *John Wyclif: Myth and Reality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 211.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483-1521* (trans. James L. Schaaf; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 93.

<sup>6</sup> Colish, "Peter Lombard," 182; Colish, *Medieval Foundations*, 286.

times considered more useful than right. This is why John Calvin, who usually used Lombard as a negative example, quoted him so many times in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.<sup>7</sup> Yet, Lombard was treated, by many generations of scholars that followed him, as the repository of the theological tradition of the Christian Church, including his descriptions of sacramental theology. The first three books of *The Sentences* cover the Trinity, creation, and the incarnation. It is the fourth book, on the sacraments, including ordination, that most concerns us here.

The main tenets of Peter Lombard's sacramental theology are detailed in his fourth book of *The Sentences*, which is made up of 50 distinctions, or issues, that need clarification. Here, after an initial Distinction differentiating sign from sacrament, he organizes the seven sacraments of the sacramental system of salvation developed in Christian tradition into the five which pertain to all Christians and the two that pertain to only some Christians. He introduces and discusses the first five sacraments, pertaining to all Christians, in the sequence in which Christians of his day received them: baptism (Distinctions 2-6), confirmation (Distinction 7), the Eucharist (Distinctions 8-13), Penance (Distinctions 14-22), and Extreme Unction (Distinction 23). The last two sacraments, Ecclesiastical Orders (Distinctions 24-25) and Marriage (Distinctions 26-42), are taken up last because they do not involve all Christians. The remaining distinctions (43-50) concern eschatological issues, or things pertaining to the last judgment and the post judgment realities.

In the first Distinction, as well as in the treatment of several of these sacraments, Lombard addresses his definition of the nature and function of a sacrament. He perceives that each sacrament moves Christians along their journey from the realm of sin (*regio dissimilitudinis*, the region of dissimilarity with God and self)<sup>8</sup> back toward the likeness of God. This progress in grace is possible because, for Lombard, grace is both contained and conveyed in the sacraments.<sup>9</sup> But Peter Lombard starts with understanding the sign (*sacramentum tantum*, only the sacrament) and the sacrament (*res sacramentum*, the thing of the sacrament); or more precisely, with the medium (accident) and the thing (*res*) of the sacrament. In other words, he denotes that the medium, which is the physical manipulation and the speaking with the mouth, are merely the motions of the sacrament. The real thing, the spiritual change that cannot be

<sup>7</sup> Calvin quoted the writers of the Early Church through Lombard at least 45 times, and at least 43 times he quoted Lombard's own words. Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 59 and 65.

<sup>8</sup> See Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.10.

<sup>9</sup> Colish, "Peter Lombard," 178.

physically seen is the spiritual aspect of the rite: what he terms the *res*, or thing, of the sacrament.

In distinction 24 Lombard turns his attention to the ecclesiastical orders and sacred ordination. Seven orders are recognized (chap.3). They are described in increasing hierarchy or "ecclesiastical degrees:" door-keeper, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, and priest (Chap. 5-11). The top two orders, deacons and priests, are in a different category than the lower ones because they handle the things associated with the altar. The priest consecrates and performs the sacraments while the deacon dispenses and assists. So Chapter 12 summarizes that "two alone are called sacred," and suggests that this is because the primitive Church had only two orders, and the Apostles only ordained these two. Chapter 13 pushes on to define the sacred character of the highest orders as having "some mark, that is, something sacred, by which spiritual power and office are granted to the one ordained. And so the spiritual character, when a promotion of power is made, is called an order or degree." He then clarifies that they "are called sacraments, because a sacred thing [*res*] is conferred in receiving them, that is, grace, which the actions and words carried out at ordination signify." So the actual motions of ordaining a deacon or priest/elder is understood to signify the sacred; but the *res*, the sacred thing, is conferred because the ordination is a sacrament, which changes the character of the one ordained into a being of higher spiritual power.

The bishop is considered as within the order of priests, specifically at the top of the order as high priest (chap 11). Furthermore, the bishops are divided into four levels (chap 17) with the pontiff at the very height of the hierarchy (chap 16, 17) as the "highest priest." It is interesting to note that these highest levels of bishops are not modeled after the OT priesthood and sanctuary the way the deacons, priests and bishops are modeled after the Levites, priests and high priest. Rather, they are modeled after the Roman priests of Jupiter called flamens. Lombard quotes Isidore (chap 17.3) describing that the distinction among the higher bishops "appears to have been introduced by the pagans, who called some of the priests simply flamens, others archflamens, and yet others protoflamens." The Christian hierarchical priesthood models these pagan hierarchies.

Distinction 25 addresses the issue of a sacrament conferred by a heretic. Cyprian, Jerome, Leo I, Gregory I and Innocent I all are quoted as suggesting that such a sacrament would be invalid because of the moral character of the one ordaining (Chap. 1-6). However, it is Augustine's argument that holds sway saying that the sacrament, even if conferred by a heretic, must be valid because of the *ordo*, the spiritual character of the one ordaining (chap 7-10). The ordination (*ordo*) contains the spiritual thing (*res*).

It was during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries that the fully developed sacramental system was completed in Roman Catholicism. Peter Lombard was a significant contributor in this process. It was at the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome in 1215 that the term “transubstantiation” was first voted into canon law as part of the creed in an Ecumenical Council.<sup>10</sup> Transubstantiation describes the ontological change of the elements of bread and wine that physically look and feel unchanged. It is a spiritual change that cannot be perceived by physical perceptions. With transubstantiation completing the full ontological sacramental conceptualization of the false system of salvation, the understanding of the ontological change of priests in the sacrament of ordination into a spiritual class distinct from, and spiritually above, the laity was also complete. Ordination conceived as a sacrament, as a part of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic sacramental system and part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, became a solid part of the Catholic Christian tradition at this time.

How did this sacramental system of salvation led by a mystogically changed priesthood which is so foreign to the biblical understanding of salvation or the NT conceptualization of the leadership of the Christian Church come to be? There is a vast difference and distance between the teachings of the Bible and this sacramental, hierarchical system. This false system of salvation is essentially what the Protestant Reformation was protesting against. What started the trajectories that ended at this point? How do these trajectories differ from the trajectories of the Bible concerning women and Christian leadership?

This paper seeks to highlight the Biblical trajectories relating to women and Christian leadership which contrasted with the ancient cultural understandings of women and leadership, compare them with the trajectories of the early Christian tradition, and then attempt an answer to the complex question of the causes for the shaping of the trajectories in the Christian tradition. The study is conducted to help towards a

<sup>10</sup> Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 1: There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation. In which there is the same priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (*transsubstantiatio*) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood, so that to realize the mystery of unity we may receive of Him what He has received of us. And this sacrament no one can effect except the priest who has been duly ordained in accordance with the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ Himself gave to the Apostles and their successors. Quoted from “The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215” in *Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215* (Fordham University website, July 2013), <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.asp>.

conclusion on the question of women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

## 2. Biblical Trajectory Toward Women in Leadership

### 2.1. OT Status of Women Higher Than in Surrounding Cultures

Though portraying many patriarchal elements, the Old Testament contains correctives to the blatant attitudes against women in the surrounding cultures. A quick comparison of some of Moses' statements and rulings with those of the Code of Hammurabi illustrates the distance between the two on their understandings of the status of women in their societies. In the Mosaic law, for example, women are allowed to own or inherit property and, except for slaves, cannot be sold.<sup>11</sup> Even the all-male particular priesthood of the OT Sanctuary may have been all-male intentionally as a polemic against the sexual cultic priestesses of the surrounding cultures.<sup>12</sup>

More indicative of trajectories toward an egalitarian relationship between men and women, specifically regarding leadership, is the occasional practice in the OT of showing women active in leadership. From Miriam's prophetic and worship-leading roles among women (Exod 15:20, 21) to Deborah's leadership as judge and military commander (Judg 4-5; especially 4:4, 5, 14, and 5:7), the OT has numerous examples of women taking leading roles.<sup>13</sup> The ideal woman of Prov 31 is concerned with her household, but functions with confidence in the public sphere in buying and selling of land and goods (Prov 31:16, 18, 24).

### 2.2. NT Status of Women Also Higher Than in the Greco-Roman Culture

Whereas Jesus did not include any women within the twelve disciples, women were integral to his ministry and, in fact, were the financial backing for his ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Mary, Joanna and Susanna are

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, laws 177 and 178 of Hammurabi. W. W. Davies, *The Codes of Hammurabi and Moses* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1905), 80, 81.

<sup>12</sup> John H. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 155.

<sup>13</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation" in Nancy Vyhmeister, Ed., *Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 157-186.

specifically called by name in conjunction with the twelve as being with Jesus as he traveled in Galilee. These stayed with him throughout his ministry and were even attendant on his death, garnering two mentions by Luke in contrast to the absence of the twelve at the crucifixion and burial (Luke 24:49, 55, 56). It was also to these women that Jesus first revealed himself after the resurrection (Matt 28:9, 10; Mark 16:9-11). It was through these women that Jesus sent the truth of his resurrection to the unbelieving eleven (Luke 24:9-11; John 20:18). These women were also listed in Acts as among the 120 joined in constant prayer (Acts 1:14) and who were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21).

Paul also refers to Women among the leaders and workers for the Church. Nine women are named in Romans 16,<sup>14</sup> including Phoebe,<sup>15</sup> Priscilla and Junia<sup>16</sup> being three who seem to have particular leadership roles. In Philippians, Euodia and Syntyche are implored to be in agreement at the same time they are praised as "fellow workers" who have contended by Paul's side in the cause of the gospel (Phil 4:2, 3).

Another place in the NT where women's leadership in the Christian Church is evident is in the Johannine epistles. The "chosen lady" addressed in John's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter (2 John 1, 13) may well be the leader of a house church in the province of Asia (now in western Turkey). As in the OT, there are many different authors representing women in many different leadership roles in the NT.

### 2.3. NT Church Leadership

In the NT, Church leadership is recognized by the church body in the form of gifts given by the Holy Spirit to fulfill necessary functions in the Church. The gifts are given to all of the body of Christ, with no class or gender qualifications (1 Cor 12:7). By the command of Jesus, those accepting authority functions among Christians are not to "lord it over" the others but to serve (Matt 20:25, 26). Paul concurs with this, referring to

<sup>14</sup> "The overall impression one gets from Romans 16 is that not only were a wide variety of women involved in the work of the church, but also that they were doing a wide variety of things including missionary work, carrying letters, serving in charitable tasks as deaconesses, providing aid or shelter for traveling apostles, . . . we see here a picture of a vibrant, multi-faceted Church using the gifts and graces of both men and women to spread the gospel." Ben Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, SNTSMS 59 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 116.

<sup>15</sup> Darius Jankiewicz, "Phoebe: Was She an Early Church Leader?" *Ministry* (April 2013): 10-13.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Vhymeister, "Junia the Apostle" *Ministry* (July 2013): 6-9.

himself and other Christian leaders, of both genders, using serving and fellowship terminology (1Cor 3:5; Phil 1:1, 4:3; Rom 16). In this conceptualization of leadership, the NT presents a very different trajectory of the development of leadership than the surrounding, Greco-Roman culture. Holy Spirit gifted leadership is not according to class or gender, nor is it of a quality to dominate or be in authority "over" others. In the Greco-Roman world, governmental leadership was both of these. Only the males of the Senatorial class could govern provinces or be in the Roman Senate, and the quality of the authority was hierarchical authority "over" the other citizens and people of the provinces.

In the Christian leadership visualized in the NT, Christ is the only head of the Church, the only high priest and the only particular priest. All other priestly roles are shared by all believers. There is no indication in the NT that the Christian ministry, the leadership of the Christian Church, was to be modeled after the OT particular priesthood. Rather this was decisively dissolved by God at the death of Christ when He tore the curtain in the temple from top to bottom (Matt 27:51).

### 3. Women in the Early Church Era

Women were clearly recorded in the NT as being in leadership positions in the Church. Yet by the end of the Fourth Century women in leadership were rare and relegated to the lower positions in the emerging hierarchical, priestly structure. This raises the question of what caused this shift away from women in leadership.

There were at least two major social pressures in the Second and Third Centuries which influenced Christians away from women in leadership in the Church: 1. World View: direct pressure against women taking leadership roles in society; 2. Sacerdotalism and Priesthood: the conceptualization of the Christian ministry as a hierarchical priesthood continuing the OT particular priesthood.

#### 3.1. Direct Cultural Pressure Against Women in Leadership

##### *3.1.1. House Churches to Public Structures: Women and Apologetics*

Direct cultural pressure against women in leadership in the Christian Church began to be felt in the late First and early Second Centuries when Christianity outgrew its house church structure and began to develop into

public institutions with public buildings.<sup>17</sup> Also, because Christianity was a fast-growing religion, through time it came under greater public notice and scrutiny. As such, a major motivator in this shift was apologetic in nature. Christians did not want to bring public embarrassment onto the Church. The Second and Third Century Christian apologists wrote a genre of defense literature aimed at presenting Christianity in a positive light to their neighbors, the public, the very public that was the object of their evangelistic thrust.

Several important changes came to Christianity in response to public accusations, changes which became integral parts of Christian tradition. In regard to these early changes away from biblical teaching and practice Mervin Maxwell often remarked, "The speed with which the Early Church tobogganed into apostasy can take your breath away." Three of these changes in particular very quickly made fundamental changes to the teachings of the Bible.

### 3.1.2. *Three Deviations From NT Teachings and Practice*

The first example of a deviation from the NT that became a part of Christian tradition concerns the Sabbath. Nowhere in the NT is there any suggestion on the part of Jesus or Paul that the Sabbath should be replaced by Sunday. Yet by about A. D. 150 we have at least two Christian writers in two different metropolitan churches illustrating such a change. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, chapter 15, argues against the weekly Sabbath and in favor of keeping the eighth day, the day after Sabbath in honor of the resurrection of Jesus. Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology* chapter 67, describes for his stated audience, the Emperor of Rome, what he represents as a typical Christian worship service, on the first day of the week. Justin also argues against weekly Sabbath keeping in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (12, 18, 21-24). The argument arises as to how representative Justin and the *Epistle of Barnabas* were of Early Christian practice, even in their home cities of Rome and Alexandria. Also, there is clear evidence that for centuries afterward many Christians kept both Sabbath and Sunday.<sup>18</sup> Yet Sunday, not the seventh day Sabbath became the standard

<sup>17</sup> Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth A. Strand, "The Sabbath and Sunday in the Second Through the Fifth Centuries" in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 323-332; Kenneth A. Strand, "Some Notes on the Sabbath Fast in Early Christianity," *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 3 (1965), 172.

Christian day of worship throughout the world, though with exceptions, and is currently well-known to be Christian tradition. It is very telling to see how far the evangelical Protestants go to find a NT teaching in favor of first-day worship and against seventh-day worship as they try to defend this Christian tradition against the Bible.<sup>19</sup>

So why is the change from Sabbath to Sunday in Christian tradition an example of societal and cultural pressure? Because, the Christian relationship to the Jews was changed by the shift in public sentiment after the three Jewish rebellions which occurred in A.D. 70, 118 and 135. Roman law had protected the Jewish religion as an ancient and respected religion before these three rebellions. After the Bar Kokhba rebellion around 135, however, Imperial law and public sentiment had changed. Hadrian made laws against the Jews ever inhabiting Jerusalem again, and public sentiment recognized connection to the Jews as tantamount to being a traitor to Rome and ungrateful of the advantages proffered. The Sabbath, along with circumcision and avoidance of pork, was a well-known defining characteristic of Judaism. The Sabbath functioned as a border issue between Jews and the surrounding cultures. Leaving behind the Sabbath was a defensive act of separation from the Jews, and was not based on fear of imprisonment or death. It would not seem logical that Christians who are willing to die for their faith in Christ, such as Justin Martyr, would shrink from the Sabbath out of fear of death. This Christian separation from the Sabbath of the Jews seems based more on fear of bringing public shame to Christianity (and themselves).

The second example of a deviation from the teachings and principles of the NT that became a part of Christian tradition consists of hell and the immortality of the soul. The Bible teaches that humans are continually dependent on God for life, and that we humans have a unified anthropology: we do not have souls, rather, we are living souls. However, even before the end of the First Century after the birth of Christ we find that Clement of Rome, in chapter five of his letter to the Corinthians known as *First Clement*, already represents Peter and Paul as living in heaven. This suggests an early Christian accommodation to a Platonic view of worthy humans gaining an immediate ascent of the soul to the divine realm upon death. Possibly even more telling is the development of the concept of hell within Christianity. Tatian, writing his *Oration to the Greeks* around A.D. 170, insisted on two things that seem incompatible: that the human soul is not immortal (13.1), and that after the resurrection of the wicked these would remain forever in a constant state of punishment which he calls a deathless death (14.5). Theophilus of Antioch

<sup>19</sup> Ranko Stefanovic, "'The Lord's Day' of Revelation 1:10 in the Current Debate," *AUSS* 49.2 (2011), 261-284.

and Irenaeus, two of his contemporaries have similar views of human dependence on God for life, yet they seem to view eternal punishing as a necessity so as to not be seen as soft on sin.<sup>20</sup> In his three books *To Autolytus*, Theophilus argues that the Greek poets and philosophers got their ideas about judgment from the Hebrew prophets (2.37) and extols the extreme retributive punishment of the wicked described by the Sybil as true, useful, just and profitable to all (2.36). In view of Christianity's doctrine of forgiveness, a presentation of a robust judgment on sin in the afterlife could allay a public perception of Christians as immoral and, therefore, as bad citizens.

Similar to the Sabbath, hell and immortality of the soul end up being the overwhelming tradition of Christianity. It takes care and attention to detail to demonstrate the true teaching of the Bible against this Christian tradition shared by nearly all Christians, especially those who are biblically conservative. Again, it was not fear of punishment that caused Christians to accept hell and the immortality of the soul but fear of casting dispersion on Christianity as being immoral and soft on sin.

A third deviation from New Testament teaching and practice that can be used to demonstrate the Second and Third century shift away from the New Testament and toward Christian tradition is the practice of women in Christian leadership. The New Testament shows many women in leadership roles. From Mary taking the message of the risen Lord from the tomb to the gathered disciples, and the woman at the well taking the message of the Messiah to her townspeople, to Priscilla, Lydia, Junia, Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche, thanked and corrected by Paul as ministers, apostles and deacons, all these are examples of women Christian teachers and leaders reported in the New Testament. Yet, almost every one of them has been meticulously played down in importance by Christians throughout history who sought to defend the traditions of the Church. So the early deviations of the Christian Church away from the teachings and practice of the Bible concerning Sabbath, hell, and women in leadership laid the foundations of non-biblical traditions that needed correction.

### *3.1.3. Greco-Roman View of Women as Subject by Nature*

The first of the two identified social pressures that led toward the Christian tradition of women not being allowed leading roles in the

<sup>20</sup> John W. Reeve, "The Theological Anthropology of Theophilus of Antioch: Immortality and Resurrection in the Context of Judgment" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009), 236.

Church was that the Greco-Roman culture viewed women as of a different class and kind than men, and subject by nature to being ruled. This caused a direct societal pressure against women in leadership which made women in the Christian institutional structures to be viewed negatively by the Greco-Roman super culture. This direct pressure against women in leadership roles throughout society is part of the world view of the patriarchal Greco-Roman culture. It is the assumed right thing with multigenerational underpinnings. For the Roman of Paul's day, it just seemed a part of nature that men, rather than women, should be in charge.

One source which demonstrates a rationale for this patriarchal view of leadership from the philosophical and academic sphere is Aristotle's hierarchy of being. The bottom of the hierarchy is pure material: rocks and minerals. Next up is plant life followed by the "lower" animals which swim, creep and crawl. Above them are the more upright animals such as quadrupeds. Above these are the animals who can walk on two feet in an actual upright position. Humans top the animals with the *daemons* above them in the semi-divine realm. At the pinnacle of the hierarchy of being comes the unmoved Mover, the first cause, the transcendent One, or God. Aristotle, along with many of the philosophers of his age, was a monotheist and his prime Mover topped the hierarchy. Within this hierarchy another division of levels is spelled out based on the male and female genders, with the males being above the females within the hierarchy. This is considered a natural law based on the observation of male dominance in most of the higher animals. Also, the class system of humans fits into the hierarchy: slaves at the bottom, the masses next, and both are topped by the ruling classes. This complex hierarchy of humans within the overall hierarchy of being is best illustrated by a passage in Aristotle's book *Politics*, 1.5.3-8 (1260a)<sup>21</sup> where he is discussing proper

<sup>21</sup> "First of all then as to slaves the difficulty might be raised, does a slave possess any other excellence, besides his merits as a tool and a servant, more valuable than these, for instance temperance, courage, justice and any of the other moral virtues, or has he no excellence beside his bodily service? For either way there is a difficulty; if slaves do possess moral virtue, wherein will they differ from freemen? Or if they do not, this is strange, as they are human beings and participate in reason.

And nearly the same is the question also raised about the woman and the child: have they too virtues, and ought a woman be temperate, brave and just, and can a child be intemperate or temperate, or not? This point therefore requires general consideration in relation to natural ruler and subject: is virtue the same for ruler and ruled, or different? If it is proper for both to partake in nobility of character, how could it be proper for the one to rule and the other to be ruled unconditionally? We cannot say that the difference is to be one of degree, for ruling and being ruled differ in kind, and the difference of degree is not a difference in kind at all. Whereas

household management by the male ruler of the slaves, women and children.

Aristotle asks whether a slave has value beyond that of a tool. After concluding that the slave does, as a human, have moral virtues, Aristotle then asks a similar question of a woman or child. Again he concludes that, as humans, they too have moral virtues. The next logical question that follows, given Aristotle's conceptualization of class and gender, is whether virtue is the same for the "natural ruler and the subject"? Then Aristotle asks the penetrating question. "If it is proper for both to partake in nobility of character, how could it be proper for the one to rule and the other to be ruled unconditionally?" In our world, many would answer

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if on the contrary it is proper for the one to have moral nobility but not for the other, this is surprising. For if the ruler is not temperate and just, how will he rule well? And if the ruled, how will he obey well? If intemperate and cowardly he will not perform any of the duties of his position.

It is evident therefore that both must possess virtue, but that there are differences in their virtue (as also there are differences between those who are by nature rulers and ruled). And of this we straightway find an indication in connexion with the soul; for the soul by nature contains a part that rules and a part that is ruled, to which we assign different virtues, that is, the virtues of the rational and the irrational. It is clear then that the case is the same also with the other instances of ruler and ruled. Hence there are by nature various classes of rulers and ruled. For the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child in a different way. And all possess the various parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways; for the slave has not got the deliberative part at all, and the female has it, but without full authority, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form. Hence the ruler must possess intellectual virtue in completeness (for any work, taken absolutely, belongs to the master-craftsman, and rational principle is a master-craftsman); while each of the other parties must have that share of this virtue which is appropriate to them.

We must suppose therefore that the same necessarily holds good of the moral virtues: all must partake of them, but not in the same way, but in such measure as is proper to each in relation to his own function. Hence it is manifest that all the persons mentioned have a moral virtue of their own, and that the temperance of a woman and that of a man are not the same, their courage and justice, as Socrates thought, but the one is the courage of command, and the other is that of subordination, and the case is similar with the other virtues.

And this is also clear when we examine the matter more in detail, for it is misleading to give a general definition of virtue, as some do, who say that virtue is being in good condition as regards the soul or acting uprightly or the like; those who enumerate the virtues of different persons separately, as Gorgias does, are much more correct than those who define virtue in that way. Hence we must hold that all of these persons have their appropriate virtues, as the poet said of woman: 'Silence gives grace to woman'—though that is not the case likewise with a man." Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.5.3-8 (Rackham, LCL).

this question with a strong, "No, it is not proper!" But for Aristotle, and those that for over 2000 years followed his conclusions from nature, the answer was a qualified "yes, it is proper," on account of differences in the makeup of their souls. Aristotle goes on to argue that there is a difference in kind between the souls of those who naturally rule, that is, ruling class males, and of those who are naturally subjugated, namely, slaves, women and children. "For the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child." This is natural, Aristotle says, because the souls of the rulers have "the virtues of the rational" while the souls of the subjugated have virtues of "the irrational." A further explanation details that "the slave has not the deliberative part at all, the female has it, but without full authority, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form." So Aristotle's hierarchy of being includes the details of the hierarchy between classes of humans which he defines as differences in kind, and ends up with a few rulers and many subjugated peoples. Like the slave is subjugated to the ruling class, the female is subjugated to the male because her soul lacks in rational and deliberative parts and is, therefore, naturally of a kind to be ruled.

This goes along very well with the differences between the male and female humans in the writings of Aristotle's teacher, Plato, who stressed the intellectual nature of the male and the sensual nature of the female. Whereas it is obvious that there are differences between males and females, it is a difficult jump to accept this Platonic philosophical view of the differences as being hierarchical. In his dialogue on the *Republic*, 431c, Plato pens Socrates as saying,

Furthermore, pleasures, pains, and appetites that are numerous and multifarious are things one would especially find in children, women, household slaves, and in the so-called free members of the masses—that is, the inferior people.

In the next statement of Socrates, the contrast of the few in the ruling class is given as those who are led by "rational calculation." This suggests that the ruling class, made up of a few high-born males, were more intellectual by nature than the slaves and women. One could summarize the Platonic view of male and female as the male being by nature intellectual (oriented toward the intelligible world and the divine) while the female is by nature sensual (oriented toward the sense-perceptible, or earthly, and emotional). And, he adds the value judgment of the earthly being inferior to the heavenly, so the female is inferior to the male.

So, women, according to Plato and Aristotle, are of a different kind and class, and are subjugated to men by nature.

How does thought and belief from the fourth-century before Christ affect the trajectory in the Early Church as they develop their Church

leadership and interpret the writings of the NT? It affects it very much because, the science and philosophy of the first centuries of the Christian era was almost entirely based on Middle Platonic philosophy. Early in the First-Century B.C., Antiochus of Ascalon<sup>22</sup> broke with his teacher in the Platonic Academy, Philo of Larissa, with what he called a return from the Skeptical Academy to the Old Academy. Antiochus included the teachings of Aristotle and the Stoic, Zeno of Citium, with Plato's teaching in the Academy, or Platonic school of philosophy. This became the dominant school of philosophy and the dominant thought of the Greco-Roman culture until the Third-Century A.D. when Plotinus<sup>23</sup> moved the Academy in a new direction, still highly influenced by Plato and Aristotle, which was called Neoplatonism. So the dominant thought during the earliest centuries of the Christian Church has come to be called Middle Platonism,<sup>24</sup> and includes ideas and doctrines from Platonic, Peripatetic (from Aristotle), and Stoic (from Zeno) systems of thought. The Early Church theologians followed this Platonic school as well, as can be seen in Augustine's grand book *The City of God*, book 8, where he rails against all philosophy as false knowledge and at the end makes an exception for the Platonic school, praising it for its truth. So the hierarchy of being, with its class and gender hierarchies within humanity, was part of the dominant world view in the infancy and childhood of Christianity. However, Jesus placed the ideal for Christian leadership in stark contrast to the surrounding cultural hierarchical leadership practices: "it should not be so among you" (Matt 20:25-28). Paul also did not just copy the thought of the day as evidenced by the many women in leadership that he referenced in his writings (especially Rom 16).

This hierarchy of being was treated as a moral compass, that which orientates all moral activity and decisions. It became the philosophical underpinnings within the political realm as well.

When faced with securing the structures of society as part of the *Pax Romana*, Caesar Augustus considered male dominance in the home and society through the *pater familias* system to be the basis of his defense against chaos and anarchy. The Peace of Rome depended upon the traditional structures of society to ensure stability. Stability was vital in the Roman system because about five percent of the population was

<sup>22</sup> See "Antiochus of Ascalon" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at plato.stanford.edu, revised Oct 4, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> See "Plotinus" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at plato.stanford.edu, revised Sep 15, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> See "Middle Platonism" in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at plato.stanfordwww.iep.utm.edu, viewed Jul 19, 2013.

ruling the other 95 percent for the benefit of the five percent. Any instability would threaten the whole system because the five percent were continually vulnerable. However, the system worked because the world view of the whole population stood on the social and religious structures built, at least partially, on the idea of male dominance in the hierarchy of being. Thus, the New Testament idea of women taking part in leadership was generally considered subversive to the stability of society.

An illustration of Christian women in leadership being viewed as subversive by a Roman governing official can be found in the correspondence between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger, then governing the province of Bythinia and Pontus on the southern shore of the Black Sea. Pliny described a passive approach to dealing with accused Christians that did not seek Christians out in order to punish them, but only dealt with Christians if someone accused them in his court. Trajan responded by agreeing that this was a good policy for Rome. The letters contain an interesting contact point between Christians as a minority group and a super-culture concerned with maintaining control. In pointing out the subversive elements of the Christians, Pliny includes such things as unauthorized meetings taking place at times outside of normal public hours. He also considers Christians to be immoral and superstitious on the basis of having women leaders, which he referred to as *ministrae*, a term Pliny used in the male form to refer to ministers of state a number of times in his official correspondence. In this circumstance he had two Christian women *ministrae* tortured, and when they would not give up their faith and offer the sacrifice he had them killed.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.1.4. Christian Tradition Follows the Greco-Roman View of Women as Subject by Nature

A century later, in 203, when the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus was taking a more active policy against Christians by seeking them out, we find an illustration of the Christian acceptance of the Greco-Roman view of women as of a different class and kind in the Christian reaction to the death of female martyrs described in the martyr story of *Perpetua and Felicitus*. These two women were said to have died valiantly with their faith intact and were duly praised by the Christian author of the story. It is significant to note that Perpetua was described in this circumstance in male terms, specifically as having "manly valor."<sup>26</sup> Assumedly this was because her valor virtue went beyond a woman's normal valor virtue as

<sup>25</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 10.96, 97

<sup>26</sup> Osiek and MacDonald, *A Woman's Place*, 135.

given by nature to women, who are naturally ruled, which Aristotle described as a "partial share," of the virtue. This is an example of Christians sliding away from the biblical trajectory of being a correction to the cultural misconceptions of women. Instead, Christians mirrored the Greco-Roman view of women.

There are many other examples of Christians adopting the Middle Platonic/Greco-Roman worldview on women as of a different class and different kind. This trajectory away from the biblical view of man and woman created in the image of God is heralded poignantly by Tertullian. He used 1 Tim 2 to generalize the unworthiness of women as well as to disqualify them from Christian ministry. In the first section in *On the Apparel of Women* Tertullian released a venomous statement about women based on his reading of 1 Tim 2: "And do you not know that each of you are an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man." Though he does not actually say it, Tertullian here suggests that females are not in the image of God and are, therefore, of a different class and kind than males.

John Chrysostom takes the negative rhetoric against women even farther. Although he insists in his *Discourse 4 On Genesis* that women share "the equality of honor" with men, in *Discourse 2 On Genesis* he revealed that he believed that the image of God "is not meant in regard to essence, but in regard to authority" and "this only the man has, the woman has it no longer. For he is subjected to no one, while she is subjected to him."<sup>27</sup> Chrysostom uses Paul (1Cor 11:7-11) to say that women are not in the image of God, but are instead subjected to men, of a different class and kind.

Augustine, in his *Literal Commentary on Genesis* (11.42) argues similarly, with even clearer Platonic language. Referring to the deception of the serpent, Augustine declares that the "man endowed with a spiritual mind" would not have believed the deception, but the one deceived was the "woman who is of small intelligence and who perhaps still lives more in accordance with the promptings of the inferior flesh than by superior reason." Augustine then asks, "Is this why the apostle Paul does not attribute the image of God to her?"<sup>28</sup> Again, Augustine uses his reading of Paul to cast upon women the lower class, and even lower spiritual class,

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from: Elizabeth Clark, *Women in the Early Church* (Message of the Fathers of the Church 13; ed. Thomas Halton; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 34, 35.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

understanding of Platonism and the Greco-Roman worldview. The tradition of the Church was building a barrier to a right reading of scripture in regard to women.

Even when the things being said about a woman are extremely positive, the same class and kind differences are evident. Gregory of Nyssa, when describing a conversation with a friend about the final hours of his beloved sister Macrina, for whom his respect is transparent, gave her the following compliment: "It was a woman who was the subject of our discourse, if indeed you can say 'a woman,' for I do not know if it is appropriate to call her by a name taken from nature when she surpassed that nature."<sup>29</sup>

The trajectory of the OT and NT showing women in more positive roles than the surrounding cultures allowed was truncated and turned aside by the Early Church which followed instead the trajectories of the Greco-Roman world. The direct cultural pressure against Christian women in leadership during the Second and Third Centuries led to the Church fathers developing a tradition that bowed to the surrounding culture. Again, this deviation from the teachings and practices of the NT followed the pattern of giving up the Sabbath and accepting the immortality of the soul.

### 3.2. Sacerdotalism and Priesthood: Adoption of the OT Particular Priesthood Excludes Women

The second form of social and cultural pressure against women in Christian leadership came from a pagan understanding of the Lord's Supper and salvation. This was most notable in the rise of the notion that the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, was a sacrifice repeatedly offered to God rather than a remembering of the once-offered sacrifice of Christ (Heb 10:12) on our behalf. With the continued *cultus* of a sacrifice arose the need for a priesthood. The OT model of the particular priesthood was adopted and placed over the NT conception of Christian ministry. Also, the hierarchical nature of the Roman Empire came to be reflected in Church governance as well.

During the first half of the second century, the Christian Eucharist came to be perceived as a sacrifice offered to God. Ignatius of Antioch, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians* 5, used sacrificial language metaphorically to denote the church as the place of the sacrifice. Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 41, 117) and the *Didache* (14) made the overt connection of the Christian Eucharist with the universal sacrifice prophesied in Mal 1:11. The Eucharist

<sup>29</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina* 1, quoted in Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, 236.

provided the fixed *cultus* for priestly activity, so familiar to the pagan backgrounds of the new Christians. Judaism and most of the pagan religions from which the new believers came believed in sacrifices offered to God by a specific priesthood. This familiarity could have been part of the influence leading to the perception of the Eucharist as a sacrifice.

It was Cyprian of Carthage and his experiences surrounding the Decian persecution in 249-251 that clarified for Catholics the relationship between salvation and the Church. In the aftermath of the persecution, a confused congregation that had looked to the martyrs and those in prison as confessors for spiritual direction and even forgiveness now had to deal with their bishop, Cyprian, who had fled the city during the persecution. When he returned, he had to reestablish order in the church when his own moral authority was in question. He called a synod of bishops, of which he was the leader as the metropolitan bishop of the province of North Africa, and asserted his official authority to reestablish the unity of the Church. In his treatise entitled *On the Unity of the Church*, he, and the bishops of the synod, summarized three principles of Catholic Church order:

1. *You cannot have God as your Father unless you have the Church as your Mother.*

This attested to his belief, that was gaining universal appeal, that salvation is only available through the Church. Through baptism and the Eucharist the Church offered salvation to its members.

2. *The Church is defined by and identified with the bishop.*

This emphasized the concept of a class distinction between the laity and the clergy. It also emphasized the single head at the top of the spiritual hierarchy.

3. *Only the Bishop can forgive sins.*

This placed the spiritual authority of salvation firmly into the hands of the bishops alone, it denied that either the confessors or the presbyters on their own authority could offer God's grace. This concept is built on Tertullian's understanding of the *ordinatio*, which set the bishop up as the high priest.<sup>30</sup>

In the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, the development of the mystagogical understanding of Church buildings, altars, the Eucharist, and priests by Ambrose of Milan, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom and others set the stage for the ever-heightening understanding of sacerdotalism of all things connected with salvation. An example of this can be found in Gregory's sermon *On the Baptism of Christ*:

<sup>30</sup> For a more thorough discussion see John W. Reeve, "The Presbyter: Jewish Elder to Christian Priest" (M.A.Thesis, Andrews University, 1997), 43-79.

For this holy altar, too, by which I stand, is stone, ordinary in its nature, nowise different from the other slabs of stone that build our houses and adorn our pavements; but seeing that it was consecrated to the service of God, and received the benediction, it is a holy table, an altar undefiled, no longer touched by the hands of all, but of the priests alone, and that with reverence. The bread again is at first common bread, but when the sacramental action consecrates it, it is called, and becomes, the Body of Christ. So with the sacramental oil; so with the wine: though before the benediction they are of little value, each of them, after the sanctification bestowed by the Spirit, has its several operation [*sic*]. The same power of the word, again, also makes the priest venerable and honourable, separated, by the new blessing bestowed upon him, from his community with the mass of men. While but yesterday he was one of the mass, one of the people, he is suddenly rendered a guide, a president, a teacher of righteousness, an instructor in hidden mysteries; and this he does without being at all changed in body or form; but, while continuing to be in all appearance the man he was before, being, by some unseen power and grace, transformed in respect of his unseen soul to the higher condition.<sup>31</sup>

This higher condition was seen as off limits to women both on account of the difference in class and kind between women and men as well as on the basis of the OT particular priesthood being exclusively male. It would have been seen as a sacrilege as bad as that of Korah, Dathan and Abiram recorded in Numbers 16 to view a woman as a priest under these influences. One might ask, however, whether making the Christian ministry into a priesthood not called for by God falls into the same category. Usurping priestly functions, such as Gideon did when he set up his ephod at Ophrah (Judg 8:27) never turns out well. The NT understanding of the particular priesthood does not involve the ministry, but rather Christ alone is high priest and head of the Church.

#### 4. Exceptions to the Exclusion of Women in Christian Leadership and the Force of Tradition

Though most of the Christian church followed the majority in the abandonment of women in leadership, especially ordained offices, there were some exceptions. Deaconesses were ordained for a thousand years before the practice was largely shut down in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Once the

<sup>31</sup> Gregory of Nyssa *On the Baptism of Christ* (NPNE, 5:519).

practice was no longer generally accepted the tendency was to deny that it ever had been done. A major difficulty in this denial lay in the clear recording in *Canon 15* of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 that Women who were to be ordained as deaconesses should be 40 years old. This difficulty was subverted, by Rufinus of Bologna in his *Summa Decretorum* 28.1.23, by the assertion that all the ordinations of women were not to the altar, but to some other ministry in the church.<sup>32</sup> In this way, it was made to seem that there had never been any "real ordinations" of women.

Other exceptions to the exclusion of women from Christian leadership include wives of bishops, presbyters and deacons who were ordained with their husbands and served with them. These would be ordained under the same term as their husband, except for the feminine ending: *Episcopae*, *Presbyterae* and *deaconesses*.<sup>33</sup> Abbesses, as leaders of women's monasteries were also ordained, with the level of deaconesses.

The best late-antique text we have extant which shows evidence of a minority view of Christians attempting to maintain a biblical view of women in ministry against the tide of tradition is from the Council of Laodicea around the year 364. There is confusion about almost everything concerning this council and this canon. First, there is ambiguity concerning when or whether the council met, or if the canons are just a collection from different councils. Then, the Greek term used for "ordain" is not the established (by this time) term for ordain, *cheirotomia* (meaning "vote" or "raise the hand"), but the more biblical term for designation to an office, *kathistasthai* (meaning "to be appointed"). Also, the term for "elder" used here is not *presbyter* or *presbyterae*, but *presbytides*. A more ambiguous term that may mean "old woman" or an "official female elder;"<sup>34</sup> though it would seem strange for an old woman "to be appointed" to be an old woman. At any rate, whatever was happening was causing enough furor to try to shut it down with canons from some council. It is interesting to note that this same set of canons, those associated with a council at Laodicea, rejects the keeping of Sabbath and denotes which books are in the biblical canon. So the list of canons is not without import.

<sup>32</sup> See discussion in Gary Macy, "Defining Women Out of Ordination" in *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 89-110, 214.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-77.

<sup>34</sup> See discussion in Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 163-202.

## 5. Protestant Reformation Continues Much of Christian Tradition in Christian Ministry

In the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, there was a strong rejection of the sacramental system as the way of salvation. The reformers denied that receiving the sacrament of the transubstantiated bread was the objective receiving of salvation through the Church, and that excommunication from the Church was the objective loss of salvation. In doing this they moved the understanding of salvation away from the trajectory built up from Justin Martyr, through Cyprian and Augustine, on through Peter Lombard to the 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. They moved the concept of salvation away from Roman Catholic sacramentalism and toward a biblical understanding. Seventh-day Adventists applaud and emulate this much needed reform. However, not all the reformers reformed as far toward the Bible and away from the sacramental system of salvation as might be hoped. Take the elements of the Lord's Supper for example.<sup>35</sup> Zwingli, and later the Anabaptists, tended to visualize the elements of the Eucharist non-sacramentally. They insisted on a purely symbolic relationship between Christ and the bread and the wine. For Zwingli, the presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper was in the hearts of the believers, the emblems of the body and blood are signs. They were important signs, but only signs. By contrast, Luther, though he shared the critique of the Catholic transubstantiation with Zwingli, argued that there was real presence in the elements of the Eucharist. Luther coined the term consubstantiation, which showed a high degree of sacramental retention in his view. Calvin is described by Schaff as having a view of the Eucharist that is half way between those of Luther and Zwingli, a *via media*, or "middle way."<sup>36</sup> Anglicans, seeking their own *via media* between Calvinism and Catholicism ended up somewhere between Calvin and Luther on a continuum of increasing sacramental conceptualization:

Zwingli	_____	Calvin	_____	Anglicans	_____	Luther	_____	Catholics
pure symbol		via media or middle way		consubstantiation		transubstantiation		

<sup>35</sup> For a classic discussion of three major reformers on the Eucharist see Philip Schaff, "The Eucharistic Theories Compared. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin" in *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 7 (public domain reprint edition from Amazon: Nabu Press, 2010), section 111.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Seventh-day Adventists have never been uniform on the conceptualization of the Lord' Supper. Some have viewed it like Zwingli and some like Calvin, with most spread out somewhere between these two.

The reformers moved away from the trajectory of the Catholic tradition on the relative sacramentality of the Eucharist. They had a similar shift away from the sacramentally ordained Catholic priesthood that, through the bishops, orchestrated the sacramental system of salvation through the Church. However, here too there was often not enough reform toward a NT conception of the Christian ministry.

The Lutherans kept a sacramental priesthood including confession, though the idea of repentance was reformed. The Reformed churches, following Calvin, tended to drop the priesthood altogether in favor of ministers or pastors, but retained some sacerdotal understanding of ordination as involving a special grace given only to ministers. The Anglicans, also being heavily influenced by Calvinism, retained the priesthood like the Lutherans, but had a less-heightened view of the sacramental nature, placing them, again, between the Lutheran and the Reformed traditions. The Anabaptist groups tended to reject all the *res*, or "spiritual thing," of the sacraments and conceive of the ministry as not separated from the laity by class, but merely by function. In this way they had an anti-sacramental view similar to Zwingli's on the elements of the Eucharist. In most protestant churches, then, the reform of the sacramental and hierarchical nature of the Christian ministry did not break enough with the Catholic tradition and completely adopt a biblical view. So a line can be added to the above chart to show which nomenclature each of these main Christian traditions have chosen to represent their leadership.

Zwingli_____	Calvin_____	Anglicans_____	Luther_____	Catholics_____
pure symbol	via media or middle way	consubstantiation	transubstantiation	
Minister	Minister	Priest	Priest	Priest

Once again, Seventh-day Adventists are within the part of the continuum from Zwingli and the Anabaptists to Calvin, with some moving toward the more sacerdotal end. There has never been complete agreement on the relative sacramentalism concerning the Adventist ministry. Since the 1850's there has been in Adventism those who have visualized some *res*, or spiritual change in ordination, and those who viewed ordination as pure sign, with no *res*, no class elevation of the clergy. The conceptualization of the ministry and ordination was not a focus of the young denomination and the early Adventists left it undefined and

simply held to a functional ministry without a lot of details.<sup>37</sup> Adventist practice has therefore varied greatly from place to place. In some countries that are strongly Catholic or Orthodox the Adventists have tended to see more sacramentalism, while other places have tended to see less. But even Adventists in Protestant areas are not exempt. The fundamentalist Evangelicals have tended to make the traditional Christian view of women as subject to men by nature a tenet of their current thought. Many have joined the Catholics in arguing against women in the Christian clergy. So, even Adventists in protestant settings have felt pressure to move toward a heightened sacramentalism.

It is unfortunate that the force of the Early Christian tradition adopting the Greco-Roman view of women meant that the society coming out of the Middle Ages assumed the nature of women defined by Aristotle and Plato as of a different class and kind, and as lacking in the intellectual and spiritual virtues. This, along with the traditional reading of Paul concerning women, following Tertullian, John Chrysostom and Augustine, caused the Christian Churches arising from the Protestant Reformation to not give serious consideration to women in leadership.

## 6. Conclusion

A vexing question is now commanding Seventh-day Adventists attention: Can there be co-existence between those who do not share exact conclusions on women in ministry? Is unity possible without uniformity on this issue? Adventist history and Adventist practical theology both suggest that the answer is "yes." First from history: Adventists have thrived in the last forty years in a world-wide fellowship of great diversity. The denomination has done well in terms of church growth, including evangelism and missions as the church surpasses 17 million members. Adventists have grown strong in the area of education both in discipleship training and educating for lifelong service in dozens of colleges and universities. Adventist institutions and administration are effective and well respected. Whereas there are struggles and challenges, the church is larger and stronger today than four decades ago, all while having great diversity in thought and action on women as local elders. This historical strength, in spite of strong disagreements on women elders, is due in large part to Adventist practical theology. Seventh-day Adventists have a functional rather than an ontological understanding of the Christian ministry. There is no dependence on ontologically elevated ministers to mediate forgiveness. The ministers lead, educate and inspire,

<sup>37</sup> Denis Kaiser, "paper title," forthcoming in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*.

but they do not have authority over salvation. As such, there can be very different nuances of ministry practice without endangering any member's relationship with God. There have been churches with women elders and other churches without women elders side by side for decades without much ill effect. Over 40 years of practice shows this issue need not divide the church. The same allowance can be made with ordained women pastors wherever they can practically function as ministers within the local society. Yes, Seventh-day Adventists can have unity even if there is not uniformity on this issue.

# DECONSTRUCTING ORDINATION: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OR POST-BIBLICAL TRADITION?

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## 1. Introduction

Is ordination a fundamentally theological issue, or merely a matter of church practice and policy? In order to answer this question, contemporary Seventh-day Adventist understandings of ordination will firstly be reviewed, and then the Old Testament, followed by the New Testament, will be considered as possible sources for a theology of ordination. A notable contemporary Protestant theology of ordination will then be critiqued to illustrate the typical underpinning assumptions of many contemporary theologies of ordination. These assumptions will then be further elucidated by analyzing the origins of the modern understandings of ordination in early Christianity.

The approach to be taken here will be both theological and historical in nature.<sup>1</sup> The principles of Biblical theology will be assumed in the arguments made here; explicit in this theological approach are the central principles of *sola scriptura*; progressive revelation through the unfolding history of God's dealings with humanity in Scripture; and Christ as the focus of redemptive history and as the means of continuity between the Old and New Testaments. Because of Biblical theology's high view of Scripture, as well as its emphasis on the Great Controversy narrative,<sup>2</sup> the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always particularly valued the contributions of this approach to theology.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fundamental Belief 18, "Fundamental Beliefs," Seventh-day Adventist Church (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013) No pages. Accessed May 1, 2013. Online: <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/>

<sup>2</sup> This is clearly reflected, for example in Fundamental Beliefs Nos. 1 and 12.

<sup>3</sup> On the methodology of Biblical theology, see Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 11–17; Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (ed. R. O. Zorn; trans. H. de Jongste; Philadelphia:

The analysis presented here does not specifically address the history of ordination in the early development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and in particular as reflected in the influential writings of Ellen G. White. This is a result of the focus of this essay on Biblical theology; and a focus on the earlier history of the Christian church where historical questions are addressed. The author acknowledges the importance of the history of ordination in the early development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and that this needs to be elucidated and understood. This should, however, not diminish the importance of the focus adopted in this present essay, since Fundamental Belief 18 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, dealing with the "Gift of Prophecy," states that the writings of Ellen G. White "make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested." This must surely be true of such a seemingly important teaching and practice as is ordination, and it is therefore based on this premise that the dialogue must begin.

## 2. Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of Ordination

Ordination is a topic that has not been comprehensively dealt with in the official, general, or scholarly publications of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Ordination as such is not mentioned in the Fundamental Beliefs of the Adventist Church. There are two cognates of the word "ordination" in this document: one mention is in the context of a general statement about gifts of the Spirit providing "all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions,"<sup>4</sup> and the other mention is in relation to Jesus having "ordained the service of foot washing."<sup>5</sup> It is relevant to note that while neither of these variants of the word "ordination" refer to the ritual of ordination itself, and that in both instances, the words assume a divine command of God to the church. It is also worthy of note that there is no reference in the Fundamental Beliefs to any "category" of ministries as being a separate class, as having a special dignity, or as requiring special ritual actions.<sup>6</sup>

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Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962), xi-xxviii; and recently G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 6-29.

<sup>4</sup> Fundamental Belief 17.

<sup>5</sup> Fundamental Belief 6.

<sup>6</sup> Note especially Fundamental Belief 17.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* calls ordination a “sacred rite,” but does not define ordination and provides no theological basis for it.<sup>7</sup> The *SDA Manual for Ministers* refers to ordination as “the setting apart of the man to a sacred calling, not for one local field alone, but for the entire church.”<sup>8</sup> The 1988 volume *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* states that “[t]he church recognized the sacredness of the calling to leadership through ordination, the laying on of hands.”<sup>9</sup> Relevantly, ordination is here equated with “the laying on of hands.”

Since there is no clearly established definition of ordination within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and it varies theologically in meaning across different Christian confessions. I propose using a simple and very general working definition of “ordination” as a “unique ritual by which people are appointed to church office.” Together with this, it must be recognized that different Christian confessions attribute varying degrees of sacramental value to ordination. Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, due to the essential lack of “official” definitions of ordination, and the scarcity of references to it in current literature, discussion of what the Adventist Church believes on the matter are currently somewhat fluid. We can only refer to the available published material, which will now be analyzed.

In late 1978, the question of ordination was dealt with in a number of articles in the February issue of *Ministry Magazine*. Thomas Blincoe’s suggestively titled article, “Needed—A Theology of Ordination,” sought to “take some steps” towards a “full-blown theology of ordination from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.”<sup>10</sup> Blincoe’s contribution relies largely on the works of Ellen White as a primary source for theology, with Scripture taking a decidedly secondary position.

In the same issue, Raoul Dederen provided perhaps the most thoughtful treatment of ordination from the perspective of biblical

<sup>7</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (18th ed; The Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2010), 77.

<sup>8</sup> *SDA Manual for Ministers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1964), 16–33, quoted in Raoul Dederen, “A Theology of Ordination,” *Ministry Magazine* (Feb. 1978). Note that all articles from *Ministry Magazine* have been sourced from <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive>. Pages numbers are not available for these archived articles.

<sup>9</sup> Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington, D.C.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 146.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Blincoe, “Needed—A Theology of Ordination,” *Ministry Magazine* (Feb. 1978).

theology to date.<sup>11</sup> Dederen commences with the New Testament idea of the priesthood of all believers, with the Christian life being “by definition a priesthood, a ministry performed in response to God’s call addressed to all sinners” which “means... every believer has free and direct access to God without the necessity of a priest or mediator.”<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, the ministry “is not an order of men religiously different from those who are supposedly mere “laymen.” It is not even a special group of persons. The ministry is a function of the whole church, distributed among its members according to God giving each various calls and corresponding gifts and capacities.<sup>13</sup>

Dederen refers to the notion of “a special call to ministry”<sup>14</sup> within the context of ordination. We cannot perceive a full-time professional gospel ministry, such as we have today, in the New Testament, so we have no precedents for this specific role being subject to “a special call to ministry” in a strictly biblical context. More generally, in the New Testament conception, we might more correctly say that there is generally no “special call” to ministry; rather, each member of the body of Christ is called to a “special ministry” which is supported by the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit has conferred upon each person (1 Cor 10:11). Dederen admits that while

it is true that there is no formal description of an ordination service given in the New Testament, there is ample warrant for the setting apart of those who have proved themselves to be called of God into the Christian ministry. The background of this practice is to be found in the Old Testament, where the concept of God's selectivity already clearly emerges.<sup>15</sup>

We may certainly agree with the principle of God’s selectivity; He selects each of the members of His body for different ministries. However, just as God selects each member of His church for ministry, there is absolutely no warrant in the New Testament for “ordaining” a particular group of people to the exclusion of others. We can certainly not appeal to the model of the priesthood in the Old Testament as the “warrant” and “background” to the practice of ordination.

<sup>11</sup> Dederen, “A Theology of Ordination.”

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Dederen rightly goes on to discuss the importance of ecclesiastical organization. He refers in this context to the offices for which the New Testament gives us evidence, having been designated by the laying on of hands. He remarks: “[b]ut I don’t think that these functions are reported to us as permanent, inflexible “orders” or offices. They are rather displayed to us as the ways by which the early church deployed its forces in the light of the particular campaign on which it was embarked in its own historical situation.”<sup>16</sup> This is quite right, and furthermore, neither is there anything in the New Testament to suggest that the offices that were designated by the laying on of hands were an exclusive group; they are simply the mentions that we have, often in the context of merely occasional references. Going further, there is nothing in the New Testament that differentiates the laying on of hands for the appointment of persons to ministries within the church from the laying on of hands for the purposes of healing or for general blessings. This is a fundamental and largely unrecognized problem with the way that ordination is understood in our modern contexts. Indeed, it is one of the most serious obstacles to developing a theology of ordination.

Dederen then notes the manner in which the Adventist Church restricts “the administration of the ordinances—called sacraments by others—to the church elders and the pastors, as ordained ministers.”<sup>17</sup> He significantly observes that “[t]his restriction is a matter of order, not a sacramental matter.” This may be taken as an informal description of the proper status of ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is a “matter of order, not a sacramental matter.” Correspondingly, it is a matter of church structure, not a matter of Biblical theology. It is for this reason that Dederen ultimately emphasizes that “[o]rdination gives the minister in his person no authority. It does not make him a repository of sacral or supernatural power. The authority and the power lie in the Word he is called to proclaim.”<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting that Dederen deals with the presumed Biblical evidence for a theology of ordination in a footnote. He comments that

[t]he words used for ordination, or setting apart, in the New Testament, specified only a simple laying on of hands. One common form of expression for this was the word *katastasis*, *kathistanein* usually translated “appoint.” This verb is used, for example, in Acts 6:3, of the seven, Titus 1:5, of elders, and Heb. 5:1; 7:28; 8:3, of the Jewish high

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

priest. *Cheirotonein* is found in Acts 14:23. As such, the laying on of hands could be employed as a simple blessing (Matt. 19:13) as in the Old Testament. This practice was doubtless closely related to prayer, or to the act of healing (Mark 6:5), a practice also employed in the early church (Acts 9:12). Hands were even laid upon the recipients of baptism (Acts 9:17–19). While little is said in the New Testament about ordination, there are four passages in which the laying on of hands is referred to in a context directly relevant to this issue (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).<sup>19</sup>

We should note here Dederen's acknowledgement of how little we find in the New Testament regarding "ordination," the diversity of contexts for the laying on of hands in the New Testament, and that the words used for this actually specify nothing more than the simple act of the laying on of hands. In his conclusion, Dederen points to the need to develop a theology of ordination:

A closer look at our theology of ordination may mean hard work and reciprocal understanding, for beneath the scriptural data we are often dealing with prejudice and self-interest from all sides as well as established patterns and deep-rooted habits. Yet the theology of ordination and its implications... is without doubt one to which our church must address itself sooner or later. The task is indispensable.<sup>20</sup>

In 1995, Charles Bradford picked up the discussion in the *Adventist Review*. The thrust of his article strongly supports a New Testament perspective. He writes:

In Adventism there is to be the model of the ideal community—truly charismatic, every member filled with the Spirit, every gift appreciated and used for the building up of the body. One body, many members. One worldwide ministry, with every member involved in ministry as the Holy Spirit guides.<sup>21</sup>

Bradford also emphasizes that "Seventh-day Adventists lay claim to being true Protestants, because we are neither sacerdotal nor sacramentarian.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Charles E. Bradford, "An Emphasis on Ministry: Is Ordination for Honor or for Service?" *Adventist Review* (May 1995): 10.

For us, no virtue is *imparted*... by the imposition of hands in ordination."<sup>22</sup> From this sharply Protestant perspective, Bradford argues that "[a]nything that smacks of exclusivity, of special class, of privilege that comes by initiation (ordination) must be demolished with the truth and reality of the gospel."<sup>23</sup>

Bradford asks: "[i]f ordination does not bring special powers why continue the practice?"<sup>24</sup> The implied answer, which does not emerge explicitly in Bradford's article, is that the practice of ordination should be continued for reasons of organization and order. Arguably, there has been little if any progress on the issue of ordination since Bradford's article was published.

In 1996, continuing the discussion in *Ministry Magazine*, Keith Burton refers to Bradford's article as stating that the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not possess a clear theology of ordination. Burton asks: "If that is the case, then under what premise have we been ordaining over the past century and a half?"<sup>25</sup> He urges that "it is time for the church to revisit systematically the relevant biblical passages that address this issue."<sup>26</sup> However, Burton's own contribution does not significantly progress the development of a theology of ordination; instead, he focuses on asking questions of the current church structure.

In May 2002, Nancy Vyhmeister, again in *Ministry Magazine*, published an article entitled "Ordination in the New Testament?"<sup>27</sup> She rightly notes that "the New Testament gives little specific information about services such as the one I saw that morning. Twelve passages speak of some kind of appointment or commissioning, but none uses the word "ordination."<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, "[t]he Greek phrase equivalent to "laying on of hands" occurs 26 times in the New Testament. In the largest number of times (12) the phrase is used in the context of the laying on of hands to bring about healing."<sup>29</sup> Specifically in terms of our contemporary practice

<sup>22</sup> Bradford, "An Emphasis on Ministry: Is Ordination for Honor or for Service?" Emphasis in the original.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. This quotation appears as a sub-heading in the article, and may have been inserted by the editors.

<sup>25</sup> Keith Burton, "A Practical Theology of Ordination," *Ministry Magazine* (Nov. 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Nancy Vyhmeister, "Ordination in the New Testament?" *Ministry Magazine* (May 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Vyhmeister, "Ordination in the New Testament?"

of ordination, "laying on of hands is mentioned three times in relation to appointment to office."<sup>30</sup> Among her conclusions, although Vyhmeister observes that the "how, when, where, and even why believers were commissioned to specific tasks or offices may not be clear,"<sup>31</sup> she also states that "ecclesiastical appointment was and is part of the church's legitimate activity. It seems to be one of those items that the church "binds on earth."<sup>32</sup> This last point in fact seems to be most relevant to our contemporary practice of ordination. In other words, the church is authorized to structure and govern itself following biblical principles.

### 3. Is the Old Testament a Valid Source for the Contemporary Practice of Ordination?

There are significant theological obstacles to basing arguments for ordination on the Levitical Priesthood in the Old Testament. According to the New Testament, the Old Testament priesthood was a type for the saving priesthood of Jesus Christ (Heb 8:5; 9:11, 23; 10:1; Col 2:17), and after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the Levitical priesthood has no efficacy in the light of the heavenly priesthood of Jesus. In Hebrews 8:13, Paul refers to the Levitical priesthood as "obsolete... growing old... [and] ready to vanish away [παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ]." That Paul clearly applies the cultic language of Judaism to the community of believers, rather than to the temple and its cult, strongly supports this understanding. In this way, Paul does not denigrate the temple concepts and its cult; he simply defines these in an altogether different way.<sup>33</sup> Within this paradigm, we have already noted Paul's ecclesiology and pneumatology, focusing on the new spiritual priesthood of all believers.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., citing Acts 6:6; 13:3; and 1 Tim 5:22.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., citing Matt 16:19.

<sup>33</sup> See 1 Cor 3:16, 17; 6:19-20; 9:13-14; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1. See also P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 119-122; M. Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 54-55, 74-78; Raymond Corriveau, "Temple, Holiness, and the Liturgy of Life in Corinthians," *Letter & Spirit* 4 (2008): 146-157; and J. B. Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 142.

We should affirm the principles of God's selectivity, and of appointment to different ministries and roles in the church. These are principles that we can certainly see applied in both the Old and the New Testaments. After all, we are dealing with the same God, the same eternal covenant, and the same plan of salvation. However, there is a real sense in which to argue for ordination from the Levitical priesthood equates today's ordained ministry with the Old Testament priesthood. Within the context of Seventh-day Adventist theology, we should not expect that Adventist ministers today would presume to fill a priestly or sacramental role. Indeed, to attempt to transfer the priestly anointing from the Old Testament to the New can be seen as denying the heavenly priestly ministry of Jesus Christ.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4. Ordination in the New Testament

The fundamental reason why it is inappropriate to develop a biblical theology of ordination is because not only are we unable to theologically derive ordination from the Old Testament, but ordination is also not a New Testament concept. Before examining this, it is worth remembering that the full-time, professional, gospel ministry is of course not a New Testament concept either; there are no precedents for "ordaining" people to the gospel ministry in our contemporary setting in this specific sense.

An equivalent word for "ordain," with our contemporary idea of a setting apart for ministry, does not appear in the New Testament. The word *χειροτονέω* appears in the context of appointment to ministry. This word does not carry with it the sense of laying on of hands. Rather, it literally means to "stretch out the hand,"<sup>35</sup> primarily in the sense of raising the hand to express agreement in a vote.<sup>36</sup> This word appears in Acts 14:23 ("ordained" elders); 2 Tim 4:22 (Timothy "ordained" as bishop; and Titus 3:15 (Titus "ordained" as bishop).<sup>37</sup> In each of these cases in the King James Version, the word is translated as "ordained." However, it is

<sup>34</sup> Bradford ("Ordination," 9) makes the same point: "Any attempt to resurrect the office of priest is to obscure the ministry of Jesus, the one and only High Priest."

<sup>35</sup> "*χειροτονέω*," Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*.

<sup>36</sup> Bernhard Lohse, "*χειρο*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 9.437.

<sup>37</sup> See also 2 Cor 8:10, in which the translators of the King James Version (KJV) translate this same word as "chosen," apparently simply because it is not mentioned in the text in connection with any particular office.

important to note that at the time of the writing of the New Testament, the word carried no particular connotations of a special ceremony or status. Neither did it have any particular religious connotations. The word could be well translated as, "elected" or "selected" or "appointed." This has been almost uniformly recognized in modern translations of the New Testament. The word χειροτονέω as used in these texts does not even have any connection with the idea of laying on of hands. These texts cannot therefore be used to support the idea that there is any particular biblical ceremony to acknowledge a call to the ministry or to appoint people to specific roles within the church. They cannot be used to support the contemporary idea of ecclesiastical ordination.

Another word used in connection with the idea of ordination is καθίστημι. The fundamental idea of this word is "to put in place."<sup>38</sup> This word is used seven times in the gospels, notably in the parables, in the simple sense of appointing someone to a position of responsibility (Matt 24:45, 47; 25:21, 23; Luke 12:14, 42, 44). In the rest of the New Testament, the word is used 14 times, with the same generic meaning. Therefore, although in Acts 6:3 (KJV) the word is used in the sense of "appointing" the seven, in the very next chapter it is also used of Pharaoh "making" (7:10; KJV) Joseph governor of Egypt, and in the complaint of the Israelites to Moses, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge?" (7:35; KJV).<sup>39</sup> Of the 21 times that the word is used in the New Testament, there are only two verses in which it is used in a sense we would recognize as in the context of the structure of the early church (Acts 6:3 and Titus 1:15).<sup>40</sup> In fact, it is significant that in spite of the tendency of the translators of the King James Version to inappropriately translate various words as "ordain," Titus 1:15 is the only verse in the entire New Testament where they translated καθίστημι in this way ("ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee"). An analysis of how the word is used in the New Testament provides us with no reason for believing it denoted any ecclesiastical ceremony, or that it had any specific use in relation to the appointment of people to church office. Neither did it carry any particularly religious connotations. It is also significant that the idea of laying on of hands is also not particularly attached to this word; it appears only in relation to Acts 6:3 (see v.6). We cannot, therefore, find

<sup>38</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "καθιστεμι, ακαταστασια, ακαταστατος," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3.444.

<sup>39</sup> See also v. 27. The KJV translation has been used throughout, since this is the version that most prominently translates a number of Greek words as "ordain."

<sup>40</sup> We should also note that Hebrews uses καθίστημι to refer to the appointment of the High Priest in the Levitical system. See Heb 5:1; 7:28; 8:3.

the modern concept of ordination as a unique ritual by which people are appointed to church office in the passages in which this word appears.

## 5. The Laying on of Hands in the New Testament in the Context of Ordination?

Not only are the Greek words often seen as referring to a “ceremony of ordination” merely generic words with a broad range of applications in the New Testament, the idea of laying on of hands was a similarly generic concept and practice. In the New Testament, the laying on of hands is simply a form of generic blessing, as in the Old Testament. There is no particular differentiation between laying hands on children (Matt 19:13), laying hands as part of the act of healing (e.g., Mark 6:5 & Acts 9:12), or as a whole-of-church blessing before a missionary journey (Acts 13:3), or to receive a spiritual gift (1 Tim 4:14),<sup>41</sup> or as a part of a blessing for people newly appointed to church office (Acts 6:6). In fact, this latter passage is the only reference in the New Testament to the laying on of hands in connection with something we might recognize as “ordination.”

Acts 13:3 is particularly interesting, in that it uses the term “set apart” in the context of laying on of hands. Today, this term is used in the church vernacular to refer to formal ordination. In relation to Acts 13:3, we should note that this is not an ordination to the gospel ministry. The Holy Spirit asks the church to “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (v.2). This work was the evangelization of the Gentiles, for which, after the laying on of hands, they are “sent out by the Holy Spirit” (v.4).

The word “set apart” is ἀφορίζω. It is significant that Paul himself uses the term to refer to his apostolic calling, notably in Rom 1:1: “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God [ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ].” Paul may here be remembering the blessing at Antioch (Acts 13:3). However, note also Gal 1:15, where Paul refers to having been “set apart” (ἀφορίζω) from his mother’s womb. It is significant that in 2 Cor 6:17, Paul uses the same

<sup>41</sup> See also 2 Tim 1:6. The gift to which Paul refers in 2 Tim 1:6 is not specified. With regard to this, Paul F. Bradshaw (*Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West* [New York: Pueblo, 1990], 33) comments that “2 Timothy 1:6 speaks of a gift being bestowed through the laying on of hands, but it would be dangerous to conclude from that sole reference that such was its universal interpretation in early ordination practice.”

word in quoting from the LXX of Isa 52:11: "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing." In its original context (Isa 52:11), the subject is clearly the Levitical priesthood ("you who bear the vessels of the LORD." However, Paul quotes this passage in the context of broadening the meaning of the priesthood to the entire church, "the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16).

Therefore, while Paul has been "set apart" for a particular ministry, so too has every member of the "temple of the living God." Every member of God's church has been set apart by God for ministry. There is no sense of exclusivity in relation to other spiritual gifts or ministries in the New Testament idea of having been "set apart." We cannot therefore restrict the idea of having been "set apart" to elders or deacons or any other church office. In terms of our common conception of what it means to be "set apart," this demonstrates our own overlaying of Scripture with cultural and ecclesiastical understandings which are not necessarily biblical.

Furthermore, with regard to Acts 13:3, we may note that this is not the first time that Saul had had hands laid on him (Acts 9:17), and Paul and Barnabas had already been involved in ministry for quite some time (Acts 9:19-29; & 12:25). Also in Acts 13:3, it is significant that the elders are not mentioned in connection with the laying on of hands; indeed, the subject here appears to be the whole of the church.<sup>42</sup> It is the entire church, then, that seems to have laid hands on Paul and Barnabas, in obedience to the instruction of the Holy Spirit through the prophets in the church. This action is best paralleled by the instances in the New Testament where the laying on of hands is part of the reception of the Holy Spirit and of specific spiritual gifts. It is certainly not an appointment to a church "office," nor an appointment to preach the gospel in any general sense.

The laying on of hands is most significantly associated in the New Testament with the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17; 19:6) and with baptism (Acts 19:5-6). We might also note that the only reference to anointing with oil in the New Testament is in connection with healing (in James 5:14); it is never mentioned in connection with appointment to a church office.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> See v. 1 and the pronouns in vv. 2-3.

<sup>43</sup> Bradshaw (*Ordination Rites*, 33) observes that it has often been thought that primitive Christianity may have adopted the practice of laying on of hands from rabbinic ordination in Judaism, but that this is far from certain, and even if this were the case, the meaning of the gesture in early Christianity may well have been different.

On the basis of the New Testament evidence alone, Bradford's assertion that "[i]n the New Testament times ordination was a simple service of dedication in which the ministers of the church laid their hands on the one chosen" is questionable.<sup>44</sup> To maintain this is to rely on one verse alone (Acts 13:3), which, as has been demonstrated here, does not specifically refer to ordination to the gospel ministry as we understand it today.

If we are to remain faithful to Scripture, the possibility of deriving a theology of ordination from the New Testament must therefore, be seen as extremely tenuous. For this reason, many are tempted to go back to the Old Testament for support. Some of the theological teachings of the church that are compromised in this way include fundamental questions of pneumatology, ecclesiology, as well as the doctrine of the atonement<sup>45</sup> and of the High Priestly ministry of Jesus. However, it seems clear from the verses examined here that the New Testament church did not transfer priestly or prophetic ordination from the Old Testament Scriptures to their own practice. It is also not possible to infer from the New Testament the existence of any particular ceremony to recognize the call to ministry or to appoint someone to an office of the church. There is not even any consistency or uniqueness in the terminology used in such contexts.

We have the instance of one verse, (Acts 6:6),<sup>46</sup> in which the laying on of hands, together with prayer, was involved in a church appointment. Beyond this, the New Testament provides us with no hint of anything we might recognize as ordination in our contemporary setting. The Bible provides evidence that the New Testament churches designated certain offices for the proper administration of their communities,,although these offices do not necessarily correspond with our own contemporary church structures.

Beyond this, there is scant evidence of a consistent understanding or practice that may be used as a model. In this regard, David Power, a Roman catholic sacramental theologian, deals fairly with the evidence when he observes that as far as the New Testament is concerned, "[t]he general impression is that ministry is wide-ranging, that it comes from the power of the Spirit, and that it goes with membership in the community

<sup>44</sup> Bradford, "Ordination," 9.

<sup>45</sup> To suggest the continuation of any aspect of the Levitical priestly ministry other than in the person and through the ministry of Jesus Christ is to deny the fundamental Protestant understanding of the atonement.

<sup>46</sup> Possibly also 1 Tim 5:22, although the context of this text suggests that the reference here may not be to "ordination" at all.

rather than being the result of any particular commission."<sup>47</sup> Neither the concept nor practice of ordination as it is understood in contemporary Christianity may be derived from the New Testament. From where, then, does our modern understanding of "ordination" come? This question will be examined in the final sections of this essay: firstly by examining the underpinnings of a recent theology of ordination proposed by Thomas Dozeman, and secondly by examining the historical origins of ordination in the early church.

## 6. A Critique of Thomas Dozeman: *Holiness and Ministry*

Having considered the difficulties of using the Biblical data to support the contemporary understanding and practice of ordination, it is instructive to see how contemporary theologians attempt to go about constructing theologies of ordination. Thomas Dozeman's *Holiness and Ministry* has recently made a significant contribution as a serious Protestant attempt to construct a theology of ordination.<sup>48</sup> Dozeman's fundamental premise is that "[o]rdination for ministry derives from the holiness of God."<sup>49</sup> He notes that "[t]he divine quality of holiness introduces... separation between God and humans... the separation between the sacred and the profane."<sup>50</sup> We may take issue with Dozeman even on these fundamental premises. He is correct in maintaining that there is separation between God and humans. However, this separation is not caused by God's holiness; it is instead caused by sin (Isa 59:2). This is not a "chicken and the egg" kind of question. It is clearly as a result of sin that humanity cannot enter into the presence of Divine holiness. The holiness of God embraces all of His creation in love; it is not God's holiness that separates.

One therefore suspects that there is a non-Biblical basis for the view that the holiness of God separates Him from humanity. This is confirmed by the next logical step in Dozeman's reasoning, in which he affirms that, because of this separation, "[o]rdination for ministry allows for the safe

<sup>47</sup> David N. Power, "Order," in vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives* (ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 294.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, *Holiness and Ministry: A Biblical Theology of Ordination* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

transfer of the sacred to the profane world of humans. The ordained must undergo a rite of passage to achieve a liminal status of those who are able to bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane."<sup>51</sup> These are the fundamental theological assumptions underlying many theologies of ordination. Importantly, Dozeman makes them explicit; they are often simply assumed.

These assumptions define a paradigm that is appropriate for understanding ancient pagan religions, but hardly does justice to the pneumatology and ecclesiology of the New Testament. Even if we grant that God allowed rituals and ceremonies to teach ancient Israel in the wilderness, these were transitional types and figures (Heb 8:1–6; Col 2:17). Furthermore, the entire didactic focus of the tabernacle in the wilderness was on a God who was certainly holy, but who at his own initiative in mercy and love came to dwell with His people Himself (Ex 25:8). It is not the people who "bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane," but God Himself who does so, providing the means for communication with His people.

When we come to the New Testament, the reality toward which the Old pointed is made clear. There is no "liminal status." Among the believers in Christ, there is no special class of people who can "bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane." It is the Son of God who has Himself come to dwell in humanity (John 1:14), and through His Spirit has filled each human member of His body (1 Cor 12:12–13), so that the church can be truly called the Temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16). All believers therefore form a new priesthood, in which all have full access to God in equal measure through Jesus Christ (Heb 4:16; 10:19–20). It is in this sense that the New Testament calls all believers the brothers and sisters of each other in general, and of Jesus in particular (Matt 23:8; Heb 2:12–17). That the church should have its appointed leaders is certainly ordained by God (Heb 13:7). However, they are not leaders in the sense that they achieve any kind of liminal status between the profane and the holy, or in that they have access to God over and above their fellow believers. It is evident that Dozeman is operating via a different paradigm regarding the nature of God and His holiness than that which is foreshadowed in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the New. His paradigm seems to have much more in common with non-Christian religions.

Certainly, Dozeman's theology is firmly grounded in the Old Testament. In this vein, he maintains that "Biblical authors use the story

<sup>51</sup> Dozeman, *Holiness and Ministry*, 32.

of Moses to fashion a theology of ordination."<sup>52</sup> This is a highly questionable assertion, since there is no theology of ordination based on Moses found in the Old Testament.

To begin with, Moses is not of the Levitical priesthood, to whom the anointing and the ministry of holy things belonged (Heb 9:6; Ex 28:38; Lev 22:2). Moses himself is certainly not "ordained" through any means described or modeled in the Old Testament. It is evident that in Second Temple Judaism, Moses was accorded a level of holiness even above that of the Levitical priesthood. Indeed, Philo even refers to Moses as "discharging the duties of high priest,"<sup>53</sup> as enjoying "the first priesthood,"<sup>54</sup> and as having "perfectly conducted sacrifices."<sup>55</sup> However, this can hardly be adduced as evidence for a Biblical theology.

In spite of this, Dozeman largely bases his theology of ordination on the Mosaic model. One is led to suspect that this is because of the theological difficulties—significantly impacting even on the teaching of the atonement of Jesus Christ itself—that would flow from basing a Biblical theology of ordination on the Levitical priesthood. However, in spite of the priority he gives to Moses, Dozeman still cannot avoid referring to "the theology of holiness and ordination in the book of Deuteronomy and in the priestly literature" as the "foundation for the ordination to the word and the sacrament in Christian tradition."<sup>56</sup>

This model of holiness logically leads Dozeman to a "sacramental view of holiness" that necessarily "presupposes gradations of holiness based on the locations of objects in the sanctuary. The altar area is more holy than the sanctuary where the laity sit, because it is the location of the sacramental objects and rituals."<sup>57</sup> This is certainly not a model of holiness to which the authors of the New Testament would subscribe (1 Cor 3:17).

When Dozeman comes to discuss the New Testament, he admits that "[t]he priestly office... is restricted to the mission of Jesus."<sup>58</sup> Therefore, in order to extend the concept of and office associated with the "ordained,"

<sup>52</sup> Dozeman, *Holiness and Ministry*, 35.

<sup>53</sup> Philo, *Mos.* 1.2. For more detail, see *Mos.* 13–24.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.5.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Dozeman, *Holiness and Ministry*, 104.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 104–5.

Dozeman maintains that the language of holiness is “deceptive”<sup>59</sup> in the New Testament, and that “the separate role of the ordained is maintained.”<sup>60</sup>

In conclusion, Dozeman writes that a Biblical theology of ordination requires “a broad view of biblical authority,” in which the Old Testament Scriptures “provide a framework for theological reflection.”<sup>61</sup> The question is whether this view of biblical authority is a sufficient basis for a Biblical theology. Dozeman answers his own implied question, admitting that “scripture alone is inadequate for constructing a contemporary theology of holiness and ordination... [and] the identity of the clergy” and that what is required for such a theology is “the postbiblical theological reflection of the church universal.”<sup>62</sup> In this way, Dozeman ultimately betrays and undermines the sub-title of his monograph, *A Biblical Theology of Ordination*.

In critiquing Dozeman’s work, one should also appreciate the thoughtfulness, incisiveness, and honesty of his approach. For the purposes of this study, its value lies in that it lays bare the theological assumptions that often implicitly underlie many discussions of ordination. Very often, discussions of ordination do not make clear these underlying assumptions. Given that the Seventh-day Adventist Church inherited ordination from its Protestant heritage, Dozeman’s work, as a serious Protestant attempt at defining a Biblical basis for ordination, is of particular importance. As we will see, many of Dozeman’s assumptions are also often implicit in Seventh-day Adventist considerations of the question of ordination.

## 7. The Origins of the Modern Understanding and Practice of Ordination

What is true of Dozeman’s theology of ordination appears to be true of the question of ordination in general: how ordination is understood in contemporary Christianity is based on extra-Biblical traditions. To appreciate this, we must consider the first centuries of post-Biblical

<sup>59</sup> Dozeman, *Holiness and Ministry*, 105. We may question whether it is appropriate to describe the language of the Bible as “deceptive” in this context.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* Here Dozeman refers particularly to Paul’s defense of his apostolate.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

Christianity. In his study of the evidence for ordination rites in early Christianity, Bradshaw points out that

[a]lthough references to different ministerial offices and functions are quite plentiful in the Christian literature of the first three centuries, references to a rite of ordination are almost nonexistent: election and appointment are mentioned, but few details are given as to how these were carried out.<sup>63</sup>

Bradshaw also comments that the imposition of hands is only rarely mentioned, suggesting that "the gesture was not regarded as especially significant at this time."<sup>64</sup> As ordination rites evolved, the imposition of hands accrued increased importance. Bradshaw suggests that this may have been at least partially due to the ambivalence of the Greek word χειροτονέω. Early Christianity extended the usage of this term from "the lifting up of hands," signifying election, to designate the whole ordination process.<sup>65</sup> He notes that a similar shift in meaning occurred in the Latin West with the Christian use of the terms *ordinatio* and *ordinare*.<sup>66</sup>

The English word "ordination" has these Latin origins in general, and Latin ecclesiastical origins in particular. The concepts that the term "ordination" reflects within Christianity are derived principally from Latin ecclesiastical usage rather than from the New Testament.

The word *ordo* and *ordino*<sup>67</sup> are Roman judicial terms that denoted the special status of distinct social classes, as, for example, senators versus plebeians.<sup>68</sup> However, the Romans used these terms in a different and much more precise way than we use our modern phrase "social class."<sup>69</sup> M. I. Finley defines an *ordo* as "a juridically defined group within a

<sup>63</sup> Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 3. Bradshaw also points out that it is for this reason that the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, usually dated to AD 215, "has assumed crucial importance in providing the only full account of ordination procedure prior to the fourth century." However, on the major difficulties in using the *Apostolic Tradition* as a historical source, see John F. Baldwin, "Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 520–542.

<sup>64</sup> Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Hence the present infinitive, *ordinare*.

<sup>68</sup> Stephen V. Sprinkle, *Ordination: Celebrating the Gifts of Ministry* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2004), 35.

<sup>69</sup> James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1999), 181.

population, possessing formalized privileges and disabilities in one or more fields of activity, governmental, military, legal, economic, religious, marital, and standing in a hierarchical relation to other orders... an order is... testable by objective norms."<sup>70</sup>

The notion that membership in a given *ordo* gave one greater honor and privileges, as well as defining the functions that the person was not able to perform, is a fundamental one in the social order of ancient Rome.<sup>71</sup> In this regard, the Roman *ordo* implied a separation between the various social classes, so that, in the words of Livy, "if each order retained its own rights and its own dignity, then, and only then, would the state be free and the laws equal for all. [*ita demum liberam civitatem fore, ita aequatas leges, si sua quisque iura ordo, suam maiestatem teneat.*]"<sup>72</sup>

The concept of the *ordo* operated within the context of an ancient shame/honor culture. Within this understanding, in ancient Rome, the notion of *ordo* represented "ascribed honour," which could not be earned, but was rather inherited.<sup>73</sup> Ascough observes that "ascribed honour was of more consequence than acquired honour,"<sup>74</sup> so that ultimately the rank of one's family took precedence over their actions or abilities.<sup>75</sup>

Ancient Mediterranean honor-shame societies were typically highly gendered. Ascough notes that "[i]n such a culture, women had shame, but in a positive sense insofar as they understood their role in maintaining the honor of their family."<sup>76</sup> In contrast to females' passive role with regard to honor, the role of males was active and aggressive, so that what was in reality a social competition for honor was "played out primarily among males."<sup>77</sup> Not only was gender a defining factor in terms of the Roman *ordo*, but in practical terms so too was social status, since as Osiek and Balch note, "the notion of *ordo* was confined to the very small upper ranks

<sup>70</sup> Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 45.

<sup>71</sup> Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 181.

<sup>72</sup> *Livy* 3:63.9–10, in vol. 2 of *Livy*, in B. O. Foster, ed. and tr., *Livy*, vol. 2, The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1959–1967). 214–215.

<sup>73</sup> Richard S. Ascough, *Lydia: Paul's Cosmopolitan Hostess, Paul's Social Network* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2009), 62.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> See Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 181, for a chart showing social class in the Roman Empire.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 62–63.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

of society, who constituted the elite in whose hands most power was concentrated."<sup>78</sup>

It is also important to be aware that in a society in which the secular and the cultic were inseparable, so too the Roman understanding of the notion of *ordo* was integrally tied to the performance of sacral duties. This was particularly true for the upper levels in Roman society. Therefore, for example, the decurionate played an important role in imperial cult activities.<sup>79</sup>

If the above description of the ancient Roman concept of *ordo* resonates loudly with modern concepts associated with ordination within Christianity, this is not mere coincidence. As Torjesen reminds us, "[t]he *ordo clericus* of the Christian Church. . . was modeled on these Roman *ordines*. Ordination was the ceremony for entry into the *ordo*."<sup>80</sup>

It is specifically within this context, and with the sense of "setting in order" and "regulation,"<sup>81</sup> that the word *ordinare* (ordination) was specifically used in the Roman Empire to refer to the appointment of magistrates and governors to office. Thus, Suetonius wrote that Julius Caesar "appointed magistrates to hold their offices for terms of years [*magistratus in pluris annos ordinavit*]."<sup>82</sup> That the word had an official and formal sense is evident from its usage in decrees and edicts.<sup>83</sup>

We should note the Vulgate's rendering of the clause "they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints" in 1 Cor 16:15. Here, the Vulgate uses *in ministerium sanctorum ordinaverunt se ipsos* to translate εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς. This suggests that the Vulgate is using the *Vetus Vulgata* at this point, since it uses the word *ordinare* in its general, non-ecclesiastical sense (this passage is not referring to a specific ecclesiastical office).

Tertullian, in the mid-third century, was the first Christian writer to use the word *ordo* in a distinctively Christian sense. He uses the word *ordo*

<sup>78</sup> Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and house Churches*, Family, Religion, and Culture (Louisville, KY: Knox, 1997), 92.

<sup>79</sup> Jonathan Edmondsun, "Cities and Urban Life in the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire 30 BCE–250 CE," in David Stone Potter, ed., *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 250–280, 273.

<sup>80</sup> Karen Jo Torjesen, "Social and Historical Setting: Christianity as Culture Critique," in Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth, *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, 181–199, 189.

<sup>81</sup> Lewis and Short, "ordino."

<sup>82</sup> Suetonius, *lul.* 76.3.

<sup>83</sup> Lewis and Short.

to refer to distinct social groups within the church. For example, he uses *ordo episcoporum* to refer to a "succession" of bishops from apostolic times.<sup>84</sup>

In the writings of Tertullian, we find that the words *ordinare/ordinator/ordinandus* are used strictly to refer to the priestly function, and in terms of a specifically sacramental role.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Rankin observes that "[o]f the eight occasions on which Tertullian employs the term 'ordo' to denote an 'order' proper, seven clearly indicate the clerical 'ordo' and at least one of these explicitly excludes non-sacerdotal ministries."<sup>86</sup> This is significant, because it indicates that the principal meaning of the term as it enters into the writings of early Christianity focuses on the sacerdotal functions of the clerical order.

As the Roman Catholic Church developed its sacramental theology into the middle ages, the words *ordo/ordinare* came to be more clearly defined in these terms. It is important to note that we are not dealing with New Testament evidence here, nor even first- or second- century usage. If we may use Tertullian as a reference point, these words seem to have entered Christian usage relatively late, in the early to mid-third century. It was only natural that over time, given its focus on the ministry as a literal priesthood, the Old Testament typology was given great importance within the Roman liturgy associated with ordination.<sup>87</sup>

The understanding of the nature of ordination in the Roman Catholic Church, which Protestantism largely inherited, is explained by David Power: "With the poorly developed pneumatology of the Latin churches... in common understanding and theological reflection the notion of an institutional transmission of office and power prevailed over that of a response of the Spirit to the prayer of the church and an enabling for ministry through its gifts."<sup>88</sup> To illustrate the subsequent development of the term, we may note how Thomas Aquinas, "distinguishes two meanings of the word 'ordo': *ordo* as a sacrament and *ordo* as office... [in

<sup>84</sup> Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.5.2.

<sup>85</sup> J. F. Puglisi, *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: A Comparative Study* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical, 1996), 213.

<sup>86</sup> David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 177. Rankin (*ibid.*) also observes that "[i]n the writings of Tertullian the 'ordo sacerdotalis' (*De Exhortatione Castitatis* 7,2) or 'ordo ecclesiasticus' (*De Idolatria* 7,3)—that order of the church which exercised the exclusive right to administer the Eucharist—is reserved to males."

<sup>87</sup> Pierre-Marie Gy, "Ancient Ordination Prayers," *Studia Liturgica* 13 (1979): 86.

<sup>88</sup> Power, "Order," in vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology*, 297.

the second meaning] the episcopacy is an *ordo* because the bishop has power over and beyond a priest with regard to the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, the Church."<sup>89</sup> In general terms, the Protestant Reformation continued to use the word "ordination" in this way, though with a greater or lesser sacramental focus depending on the theological tradition followed. To illustrate this, the great Lutheran historian of canon law, Rudolf Sohm, was of the view that the spirit of God operates in ordination, so that it is the realization of the divine will, and for this reason "in a strict sense [it] is a sacrament."<sup>90</sup> It was the reformers who transferred and "canonized" the word "ordination" within Protestantism by inappropriately and anachronistically translating the Greek words described earlier in this essay through this ecclesiastical term.

This is where our fundamental presuppositions concerning ordination come from. Charles Bradford was right when he observed that "[t]he problem is not with ordination—the problem arises out of our concept of ordination, our presuppositions."<sup>91</sup> He elaborates by explaining that "[i]n many instances our views on ordination are based on the practices and teachings of an early church already sliding down the slippery slope of apostasy."<sup>92</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church appears to theologically deny that ordination impacts any virtue; however, the way in which the church interprets and applies ordination in policy and practice implicitly suggests that it does. By limiting the performance of certain functions within the church to those who have been ordained, the church suggests that, for example, a baptism by an ordained minister has efficacy, while a baptism by a non-ordained person does not. These administrative controls may be necessary for organizational reasons. However, there is no reason to compound the theological issues by seeking a theological and ultimately extra-biblical basis for ordination. To do this is to suggest a move towards sacramentalism.

<sup>89</sup> Hermann J. Pottmeyer, "The Episcopacy," in Peter C. Phan, ed., *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000), 337–354, 345.

<sup>90</sup> Rudolf Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, vol. 2, München-Leipzig 1923, 263, quoted by Gy, "Ancient Ordination Prayers," 78.

<sup>91</sup> Bradford, "Ordination," 8.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

## 8. Conclusion

Amadi-Azuogu observes that "it is not difficult to see that power is at the center of the ordination controversy. There is no gainsaying that contemporary Christian ministry is power-centered or authority-oriented. Hence, to talk about ordination is to talk about church power. By implication politics is unavoidably involved."<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately, history shows us all too clearly that issues of power and politics can muddy theological considerations. If we apply the principle of *sola scriptura* to our contemporary understanding of ordination, then we must recognize that it is neither a New Testament idea nor practice. While some may think it easy to disagree, for example, with fundamental aspects of Dozeman's theology of ordination, it is much more difficult to avoid falling into similar theological misunderstandings.

What, then, are we left with? The Seventh-day Adventist practice of ordination serves an important function within the church, which is the recognition by the church of the divine call of God for various ministries. However, we cannot justify it with a biblical theology. We may class ordination together with the many other practices within Christianity which do not necessarily have a specific biblical precedent, but which have been "ordained" by the church to provide for its proper leadership and administrative needs. Indeed, God gave the church such authority (Titus 1:5). We may observe and apply the broad principles that we find throughout all of Scripture, such as God's selectivity, the appointment of humans to roles in God's plan, and the principle of order in all things. However, these hardly form sufficient basis for a theology of ordination as it is understood and practiced today.

In terms of actual practicalities, it is not clear from the New Testament that there was any specific ceremony associated with the appointment of people to church office. Even if we were able to demonstrate this, there is no indication that there was any consistency or uniformity to the practice. Neither is there any reflection in the New Testament about what any such ceremony may have meant. There is no indication in the New Testament of what appointment to any particular church office "allowed" or "qualified" people to do, or conversely, which church functions were "restricted" to people who were appointed to particular church offices. These are all notions and practices that the church has developed as it has responded to various organizational challenges throughout history.

<sup>93</sup> Adolphus Chinedu Amadi-Azuogu, *The Politics of Power and the Ordination of Women* (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2007), 151. The context of this statement is the broader debates within Christianity concerning the ordination of women.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not believe that ordination confers special spiritual powers or spiritual status on a person. This position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church sits well with the fact that neither the word "ordination" nor its modern understanding appear in Scripture. This position should be maintained. To do otherwise is to potentially compromise our biblical understanding of the church, the Holy Spirit, and the atonement. Ordination is ultimately a matter for policy, and not for theology.

## THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

"Leadership Behaviors of Small Group Leaders and Their Impact on the Effectiveness of Small Groups in the North Minahasa Conference: A Basis for Program Development"

Researcher: Bryan Edward Sumendap, D.Min, 2013

Advisor: Bienvenido Mergal, Ph.D.

Small group (SG) ministry has swept the Christian world with a storm. Various SG methods have been developed and tested in churches all over the world. The success has been significant, particularly in North America, South America, and Korea.

The *Tell the World* initiative is a program designed to involve all the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church members worldwide in proclaiming Jesus to others. There are seven key areas where the church's resources, energies, and prayers are to be focused on. The method chosen to accomplish this program was to use SG ministry. The SG ministry was implemented in North Minahasa Conference (NMC)—an organization of churches—of the East Indonesia Union Conference (EIUC)—an organization of several conferences—in 2007. Realizing the many components that make up an SG, this study chose to analyze the leadership aspect of the SG, more particularly the leadership behaviors of the SG leaders and its impact to the effectiveness of SGs since 2007 to 2011.

The primary purpose of the study was to identify the leadership behaviors that would be expected from SG leaders. To achieve that, the study examined the biblical foundations of SGs by exploring the various images of small groups in the Bible and the leadership behaviors of their leaders. The textual component of the study described the historical and cultural aspects of the Minahasa people and how it affected the SGs. It presented the cultural factors that affected the members' and leaders' attitude towards SGs.

The study employed two survey questionnaires to measure the perceptions of SG members on the leader's leadership behaviors and

effectiveness of the SGs. Purposive sampling method was used to determine the respondents. Finally, the data was analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Pearson's correlation and multiple regressions.

The findings showed that there were five predominant leadership behaviors and that leadership behaviors do have an impact to the effectiveness of the SGs. There were six predictors that entered for SG effectiveness considering leadership behavior and the demographics. Other findings revealed the members' perception that SGs are centers of community, training, and spirituality.

The conclusion of the study highlighted the importance of creating an SG leader's training program in order to have effective SG leaders that will lead effective SGs. Such SGs can function more effectively and create a difference in the church community. It also provided some recommendations for the leadership of the church in NMC and in EIUC.

"The Kingdom of God in Daniel 2:44-45: its Symbolism and Theological Implications"

Researcher: Dindo C. Paglinawan, M.A. in Religion, 2013

Advisor: Carlos Mora, Ph.D.

In Dan 2 the prophet Daniel interpreted the symbolisms used in the dream of a great image as kingdoms (vv. 36-45). However, of all the symbolisms employed in Dan 2, the symbolism of God's kingdom in vv. 44-45 is a bit confusing. In this text, there are two symbolisms that could possibly symbolize the kingdom of God: אבן "stone" and טור "mountain." Which of the two symbolisms is attested in the biblical text? What is/are the theological implication/s?

An examination of Dan 2 in its context has revealed that the mysterious dream of Nebuchadnezzar is about the future, which climaxes with the kingdom of God. There are some linguistic elements that give focus on God's kingdom: (1) the use of *הוזה* "see" or "look" in v. 31 and v. 34, (2) the use of the phrase *אלה שמיא* "God of heaven" in v. 37 and v. 44, (3) and the use of *peal/pael* stem which is dominantly used in describing the world kingdoms (vv. 36-43) but changes to *haphell/aphel* stem in describing God's kingdom (vv. 44-45). These linguistic elements draw attention to the theme and emphasize the difference between the world

kingdoms and God's kingdom. The previous is short-lived and destructible, while the latter is enduring and indestructible.

In the interpretation section (vv. 36-45), the use of the preposition כְּ "as" or "like" in vv. 44-45 accentuates that the kingdom of God is analogous to the stone only in the aspect of the breaking activity, not the idea that the stone is the kingdom of God. Moreover, the symbolisms written with a definite article הַ "the" which are consistently interpreted as kingdoms in vv. 36-43 suggests that it is consistent to associate the kingdom of God to the mountain symbolism which is written in a definite form, than with the stone symbolism which is written in an indefinite form. Furthermore, the morphological and semantic studies of the stone and mountain symbolisms in Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic, and Ancient Near East have shown that the mountain symbolism gains more depiction of God than the stone.

Based on the evidences, it is deduced that the kingdom of God in Dan 2:44-45 is symbolized by the mountain where the stone was cut out. This interpretation is theologically significant for it emphasizes that God's kingdom is pre-existent and concurrent with the world kingdoms, yet it will be established in the eschatological period. Hence the concept of God's kingdom with the use of mountain symbolism also emphasizes of a future eternal kingdom of God established in the new earth. It must be noted, however, that the stone is not treated insignificant, for in this respect, the stone symbolism describes how God's kingdom will be established at a divinely appointed event in time through the second coming of Jesus.

Knowing that the establishment of God's kingdom will consummate the history of the world kingdoms (vv. 44-45; cf. 7:27), it drives a concept of the end of evil and oppression. In God's kingdom, the people of God or the saints will live free from the intrusion of the enemies, they will live with God forever and ever, and they will share in God's dominion over His kingdom. Thus the concept of God's kingdom is significant in the Old Testament hope.

**“Contribution of Teamwork Culture to Job Satisfaction of Pastors and Administrators in West Indonesia Union Mission: A Basis for Teamwork Development Program”**

Researcher: Joseph Sianipar, D.Min., 2013

Advisor: Bienvenido Mergal, Ph.D.

This quantitative study examined the relationship between teamwork culture and job satisfaction, as reported by the Seventh-day Adventist pastors and church administrators in West Indonesia Union Mission (WIUM). Although many existing theories on teamwork and job satisfaction are found in the literature, the relationship between teamwork culture and pastors' job satisfaction is still not clear. This study addressed how teamwork culture influenced pastors' job satisfaction. It has 2 main purposes: to determine and investigate the relationships between teamwork culture and job satisfaction of the pastors and church administrators in WIUM; and to develop an intervention program that could improve the teamwork culture and job satisfaction of pastors and church administrators.

The subjects were 200 respondents (pastors and church administrators) of the 7 missions and 3 conferences in WIUM. They responded to a 5-part questionnaire—demographic variables, the Teamwork Culture Survey, and the Job Satisfaction Survey.

The results showed strong levels of pastor teamwork culture and job satisfaction. It also showed a significant relationship between WIUM leadership teamwork with pastors' satisfaction. Pastors' demographic factors—gender, age, educational degree, and years of experience revealed no significant difference in their perception in relation to pastors' teamwork culture and job satisfaction. However, position is considered as a determinant factor that affects pastors' and church administrators' satisfaction. The officers perceived higher job satisfaction compared to church pastors. Departmental directors have the highest satisfaction in their job. Furthermore, among the 10 dimensions of teamwork culture, it was found that trust and constructive conflict resolution are predictors in pastors' job satisfaction.

Based on those results, the following recommendations were made: Church leaders need to give careful attention to the job satisfaction of pastors and church administrators; they should develop an excellent teamwork culture through a comprehensive intervention program. This study

proposed Teamwork and Job Satisfaction Intervention Program as a model of teamwork development program. They should occasionally review pastors' satisfaction levels through interviews, group discussions, and formal and informal evaluation. Both pastors and church administrators should use an assessment tool which is called "A LEADING TEAM" to evaluate the implementation of the Teamwork and Job Satisfaction Intervention Program in their respective missions or conferences to pursue a higher level of teamwork culture in the church organization.



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