

## V. Officers in the Church

### A. NT catalogs

1. Eph. 2:20 = "foundation of the apostles and prophets"

2. Eph. 4:11,12

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

"pastor-teachers" = single office (per Granville Sharp's Rule)

3. I Cor. 12:28 = three offices or roles implied

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

--"teachers"

--gift of "administrations"

--gift of "helps" (cf. verb in Acts 20:35)

4. Phil. 1:1 = "Bishops and deacons"

Significantly, the later NT literature shows a shift in identification from the title "Apostle" to the designation of "elder:" see 2&3 John and 1 Peter 5:1

### B. Divisions of ministry

1. Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, chapter 2, suggests the roles of the ordinary offices:

- Ministers = Doctrine
- Ruling elders = Discipline
- Deacons = Distribution

2. Christ's offices reflected in church gov't. (Witherow, p. 34)

prophet -> preacher  
priest -> deacon  
king -> ruling elder

3. Superior offices not only had authority over inferior offices, but even had the right to discharge the duties of the lower offices. In I Timothy, Paul calls himself an apostle, teacher, and a preacher.

Acts 6:2,6; 13:1,2; I Tim. 4:14 cf. II Tim. 1:6; I Pet. 5:1; II & III Jn. 1; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 1:3

C. Temporary, extra-ordinary apostolic church offices

1. Apostle

a. Most authoritative

- first in scripture lists
- Gal. 1:1,8,9; Matt. 18:18
- chosen directly by Jesus, Mk. 3:14; Gal. 1:1; Acts 1: 21,22

b. Functions

- Jesus 1) Bear witness to the work and resurrection of

Acts 1:21,22; 2:32; 9:15,22 (Lk. 1:2)

- 2) Authoritative exponents of His doctrine

Gal. 1:8,9

Jn. 14:26; 16:13-15; Acts 6:2,4; Heb. 2:3,4 (II Cor. 12:12) I Thess. 2:13

- 3) Oversee affairs of church

Mt. 28:19-20; Titus 1:5

- c. Attestation of authority by attending signs of Holy Spirit - II Cor. 12:12

Acts 13:6ff.; Heb. 2:4

- 2:27; d. Cessation with death of John; phps. earlier (Phil. II Timothy 4:20)

e. Occasionally, a generic term

- described function instead of office

e.g., Barnabas - Acts 14:14, Epaphroditus -  
Phil. 2:25, Christ - Heb. 3:1; cf. Jn. 17:18

2. Prophet (see G. Knight's booklet on "NT Prophecy")

a. Function: divine revelation and exposition

1) Scripture writing

Rev. 1:3; 10:11; 22:6,18

2) Revelation before Scriptures completed

Agabus - Acts 11:27,28; 21:10

Acts 21:9

I Cor. 12:28

b. Office ceased with completed canon since this office  
was foundational, Eph. 2:20

3. Evangelist

a. Commission - from apostles II Tim. 1:6, 4:5

b. Function

1) Apparently, deputy-Apostles

Timothy - I Tim. 1:3; II Tim. 4:5

Titus - Tit. 1:5

Philip - Acts 21:8, but cf. Acts 8:5ff. (vv.  
15,18)

Luke?

2) Ministers to the church at large and serves as  
gospel preacher to heathen

Eph. 4:11?

c. Cessation is debatable

- see Chs. Hodge on Ephesians and J. Murray, vol. 2, p.  
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D. Permanent Offices, (sometimes called "ordinary" offices)

1. Overseer/Elder = Pastor-Teacher

The background, of course, is the OT office. This background is implied by the first Apostolic reference (Acts 11:30) to "elder" without any introduction to define the office. (Deacons, however, seem to be newly introduced.) Likewise, the title "pastor-teacher," which occurs as a noun only in Eph. 4:11, finds its background in the OT references to the Shepherds/pastors, e.g., Ezk. 34, Zech. 11:17.

a. Terms

1) Significance: "*episkopos*" is a Greek term describing the function of the office, while "*presbuteros*," a translation of the OT "*zachen*," signifies the qualification and dignity of the office.

2) Equality of the terms

Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5,7; Phil. 1:1; James

5:14

b. Division of duties?

1) Two office view: elders and deacons

Pastors and ruling elders are seen as holding the same office with the same functions, although there may be one particular elder given the duties/employed as a teaching elder. The other elders will also occasionally teach and preach. Hence, ruling elders participate in the ordination of teaching elders, and also officiate at the sacraments.

2) Three office view: pastor-teachers, ruling elders, deacons

Here only the ministers are permanent members of the presbytery and subject only to its discipline. Under this interpretation, the teaching elders rule as well as preach, but the ruling elders do not generally function as preachers nor partake in the ordination of ministers. Ruling elders may preach, but if this is done regularly, they will generally be certified with a license from the body (presbytery) of teaching elders. If a ruling

elder enters the ministry, he will be re-ordained by presbytery.

The minister serves as an exponent of God's revelation representing Christ (cf. priestly service), while the ruling elder acts more as a representative of the flock (cf. synagogue structure).

a) I Tim. 5:17: indicates two orders, if not two offices

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

see Col. 4:17 (“ministry of Archipus”) and Clement of Rome *ad Corinthians*, 42,44,54,63

b) Rom. 12:7,8: teaching gift is listed separately from gift of administration

cf. I Cor. 12:28: “teachers,” not “gift of teaching”

2Tim 2:24 “servant must be able to teach”

c) Acts 11:30: office of elder appears without any NT introduction. Hence, the term in the Apostolic church would evoke an OT image.

d) the OT elder was basically a representative of the people with duties of judging, ruling, and admonishing, while there are no clear references to his role of teaching (but note Num.11:25).

“Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.”  
-Ezk. 7:26

On the other hand, the Levites and priests were charged with the duties of teaching the people (Mal. 2:7) and officiating in ritualistic worship (Deut. 33:10). Later the scribes would assume the duties of teaching in the synagogues (Ezra 7:11; Neh. 8:1ff).

See also Isaiah 3:2 for a division of

labors.

e) This interpretation allows many gifted elders to rule in the church (I Cor. 6:5) who otherwise perhaps would have been

disqualified because of lacking the one essential gift of teaching (2Tim. 2:2,14,25). (All elders still need to be able to confute the gainsayers, Tit. 1:9.)

Under the two office view, all elders need gifts of public speaking and a knowledge of the fine points of Scripture as well as administrative gifts of wisdom, holiness, and maturity. Compare points a) and b).

f) In studying church history, it is more likely that the hierarchy of the 2nd century episcopacy evolved from the three office view rather than the two office view. The tendency is already manifest in the writings of Ignatius: ("To Magnesians" 6:1)

g) Prophet, Priest, King analogy

In sum, the structure of NT church leadership is analogous, with some modifications, to the pattern of the old dispensation. The pastor-teacher (teaching elder) officiates over the worship and sacraments as did the Levites. He teaches, admonishes, and shares in the oversight of the flock as did the synagogue scribes. The ruling elder is chosen from among the people because of recognizable gifts, and he admonishes and bears rule among the flock as did the OT elders.

c. Kind of authority for elders (teaching and ruling)

1) Christ's authorization of the office

Eph. 4:11; I Tim. 3:1: "The Pastor's office is first in usefulness and dignity" -- old Presbyterian Form of Govt and Hodge

a) Dignity of the office indicated in I Tim.

5:17

b) Exercise of discipline necessitates

authority

c) Degree of exemplary qualifications in I Tim. 3 may imply that these office bearers are the chief priests among the priesthood of believers

2) Deputies of Christ: Kingdom vs. democracy

Although ruling and teaching elders are elected by the people (Acts 1:15,26; 6:3,5; 14:23), the elders must rule according to the constitution of the church, the Scriptures; they must not be moved by the democratic caprices of the people but act in obedience to Christ (I Cor. 4:1; Acts 20:28). When it comes to decency and order in the church, the boundaries of the individual priesthood of believers must be recognized, else the scriptural injunctions regarding church discipline (submission to the church offices) are given in vain.

3) Rule through servant leadership as opposed to fiat orders

Heb. 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account..."

"*peithesthe*" = passive voice: "be persuaded"  
"watch over" = "oversee"

4) Rule through example

Acts 20:28 - "take heed to yourselves"

I Peter 5:3 - "not lords, but examples..."

Heb. 13:7 - "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

d. Qualifications

1) Gender - male

a) Male headship - Eph. 5:22-24; I Cor. 11:8-9; I Tim. 2:12-14; I Pet. 3:5,6

b) Silence commanded for women in the church  
- I Cor. 14:34,35; I Tim. 2:12; cf. ch. 3

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." -I Cor. 14:34,35  
"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." -I Tim. 2: 11-14

- c) With this directive, Paul did not sustain custom, but opposed the cultic priestesses/prostitutes
- d) Only men can be "husbands" - I Tim. 3:2
- 2) Maturity - not necessarily grey-headed  
I Tim. 4:12; cf. 3:6
- 3) Management ability - the family (I Tim. 3.5)
- 4) Specifics - I Tim. 3; Titus 1  
- see your own glossary of qualifications (assignment #2)

e. Tenure for ruling elders?

1) Fixed Terms

a) Pros

b) Cons

2) Life long - see John Murray II, pp. 353ff.

a) Gifts normally are permanent

b) implications of the Church's recognition of Christ's call (Rom. 11:29)

c) teaching elders are not called for a term

f. Functions of teaching and ruling elders

1) Represent the people in decisions

2) Custodians of truth

- regulate worship service
  - instruct
  - guard against error (A. 20:29,30; II Tim 2:15,24-26; Titus 1:9)
- 3) Lead and admonish - I Tim. 5:17; 6:17
- Regular visitation reaches the grass roots level (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:1ff.)
- 4) Pray for the flock - James 5:14,15; Heb. 13:17

## 2. Deacon

### a. Establishment of the office

1) Established in Acts 6? John Murray is not so sure

- "Waiting tables" (v. 2) may mean serving the Lord's supper
- "full of wisdom" is not a deacon qualification in I Tim. 3, while it is for elders
- These deacons preached: Philip, Stephen

Still, most have historically understood Acts 6 as the beginning of the formal office. See Fraser in "Office of the Deacon," *Presbyterion*, XI:1:13ff.

- a) OT silence on the office, though the synagogues did recognize the "parnasin" who supervised collections for the poor
- b) Luke's emphasis in Acts 6; the problem and the resolution. Some raised up to assume ministry of distributions, while some (viz., apostles) maintain pastoral ministry.
- c) Descriptive language: no office mentioned, but a "diaconate" is (v. 1) and so is the verb "to deacon" (v. 2)

cf. I Tim. 3:10,13 where "diaconate" and "to deacon" are also found

d) Early tradition

- (1) Irenaeus (120 a.d.): first reference to Acts 6 starting office of the deacon
- (2) III Century Roman church: 46 elders in Rome, but only seven deacons after the apostolic pattern

2) Philippi

Phil. 1:1 = functioning diaconate; 2:25: phps. Epaphroditus was a deacon; 4:15-19 ctr. Tit. 1:5 where no deacons are to be

appointed

- b. Nature of the work: basically spiritual gifts for temporal work. It is non-cultic in the sense that the elders oversee the corporate worship, preaching, and ceremonies. It is non-judicial as implied by the emphasis on "service" and by the apostles holding the prerogative of oversight of the daily ministry (cf. 20:28).

--I Cor. 12:28 ("helps"); cf. Acts 20:35

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." -I Cor. 12.28

--Gal. 6:10; I John 3:17,18 show the spiritual

nature

1) Christian charity elevated to an office

"An active diaconate assures the congregation that each individual members's material and financial needs, even when unknown to most others, are systematically discovered and met." - Berghoef and DeKoster, *The Deacon's Handbook* p. 42.

needs

- a) corporate resources focused on particular
- b) regular and routine services assured; ctr. Acts 6:1
- c) role model provided for individual

stewardship

## 2) Material stewardship

Acts 6:2 - "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

"From a purely business point of view, the diaconate assures the congregation of a systematic, disciplined, orderly approach to meeting the overall financial and material necessities requisite to its existence and function." - Berghoef and DeKoster, p.42.

### TRUSTEES EXCURSUS

See Berghoef and DeKoster's APPENDIX

- a) Incorporation requirements
  
- b) Security operations
  
- c) Properties management
  
- d) Properties maintenance
  
- e) Budget proposals and audits
  
- f) Keep purchase and maintenance records

END EXCURSUS

- 3) Office of Deacon not necessarily a preparatory office for eldership

- a) Office based on diverse gifts, not just experience
  - b) Beware of promoting individuals over their heads to their level of incompetence
- 4) Duties and authority are subject to the perquisite of the session

elders  
Acts 20:28 = oversight of the flock by the

c. Qualifications

- 1) Good stewardship

Acts 6:3 -- good reputation = #1

I Tim. 3:8 -- not irresponsible or motivated by greed "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

- 2) Probationary period or simply "prove by examination"?

I Tim. 3:10 "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."

cf. 5:22 (II Cor. 8:22 = same verb as in I Timothy)

d. **Deaconesses?**

Passages in question:

Rom. 16:1,2

I Tim. 3:11

- 1) Con (Ryrie)

- a) Synagogue titles for women were honorary

*Zeitschrift fur die Altentestamentaliche*, 1990, 1,2, notes

that "apostles" is used in a non-technical sense in Rom. 16:7. This term here as well as deacon in 16:1 may be terms of honor by way of deliberate exaggeration.

b) Jesus commissioned only men - i.e., the 12, the 70

c) Greek for "deacon / to deacon / deaconate" often used in sense of function with no reference to office. Paul uses the term generically 20X. E.g.:

Rom. 13:14 = of civil rulers

Rom. 15:8 = of Christ

I Cor. 16:15

I Cor. 3:4,5; Christ a deacon in Gal.

2:17?

d) No explicit term for deaconesses in I Tim.

3:11

1) The generic term has no definite

article

2) "Prophetesses" are deliberately

recognized

e) Deacons' wives might naturally aid their deacon husbands in ministering to needy women, I Tim. 3:11

f) Silence of apostolic fathers, while "bishops and deacons" mentioned

g) Prototype deacons of Acts 6 were men whose ministry was basically to women (Greg Reynolds, "Women in Ordained Office," *New Horizons*, June/July '88, p.16

2) Pro (Foh, Strimple, D. Bannerman, Lightfoot)

a) Deaconesses serve -- not rule

- b) Rom. 16:1 reads like a title: "being a servant of the church..."  
Cf. similar participial phrases of introduction in Jn. 11:49; Acts. 18:12; 24:10
- c) Rom. 16:2 - "Succourer" (*prostatis*) may carry the idea of servant-leader. It is often applied to the office of the elder (I Tim. 3:4,5; 5:17; I Thess. 5:12) and once to male deacons (I Tim. 3:12) and has to do with the idea of "presiding with authority" (Rom.12:8).

Moulton and Milligan also relate that this term "is applied to an office bearer in a heathen religious association." Also applied to the *gerusiarch* as president of the Sanhedrin.

- d) Rom. 16:1 - *diaconon* is masculine; because the masculine form also introduces the general office in I Tim. 3:8, the designation "women" (3:11) must be used if deaconesses are also in view.

e) Two separate conjunctions may indicate emphasis

- 1) I Tim. 3:11 - "Likewise" sets off another distinct class (office?) of people; cf. 3:8. The simple conjunction *KAI* would otherwise have been used to show continuity.
- 2) Preferred mss of Rom. 16:1 introduce "our sister Phoebe, who is *ALSO* a deacon of . . ." (Robert Strimple, "Phoebe Was a Deacon," *New Horizons*, June/July '88, p. 18

- f) 3:11 closely parallels the qualifications of 3:8

- g) No qualifications given for elders' wives; why is there no possessive pronoun here, "their wives"

- h) Early church history

- 1) Pliny the Younger (111 A.D.) records in his letter to Trajan that he had examined two female Christian servants (*ministrae*), possibly as a result of hearing them called "deaconesses". (See D. Bannerman, p. 501-2)
  - 2) *Didascalia Apostalarum* (III cent) and Apostolic Constitutions (IV) take I Tim. 3:11 as referring to the office of deaconess
3. Third and mediating position: the "women" of I Tim. 3:11 are single women, virgins and widows, who serve as assistants to the deacons in their ministry, especially among other women. As assistants, they probably would not have been ordained. See R.M. Lewis, "The 'Women' of I Timothy 3:11" in *BibSac* 136:542:167ff.
- a. "women" is generic for any adult woman
  - b. Significantly, qualifications for these women is inserted immediately prior to the family considerations for the deacon holding office. This may imply that the women (3:11) had no immediate family they were responsible for.
  - c. Married church women faced a challenge of fulfilling their familial roles (I Tim. 2, 5, Tit. 2, II Tim. 3:14,15). Married women were called to serve first in their families; single women were more free to serve the church at large, e.g., Phoebe, Lydia, Dorcas.
  - d. The earliest references to deaconesses identify them as virgins and widows.
  - e. There is/has been a plain need for ministries by women. Why do we have only paid pastoral staff visit shut-ins, the sick, the lonely, and those in need of counseling, when there is a pool of single women who would themselves be blessed in serving in this way?

## E. Ordination

### 1. Defined

Ordination "consists of the solemn setting apart of a man to the regular discharge of certain ecclesiastical functions and his formal investiture of office by the church in the name of Christ."

## 2. God's calling

- a. Inward call of God (see Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students*)
  - 1) Heartfelt response to serve Christ in obedience to the Great Commission, I Cor. 9:16
  - 2) Conviction of some measure of God's gifts and graces for service
  - 3) Awareness of God's providential leadings in this matter

### b. Outward call of the church

- 1) General: church's call for laborers for the harvest, John 4:35; Mt. 28:19,20
- 2) Specific
  - a) Personal encouragement and counseling by officers
  - b) Screening: "not a novice; no hands suddenly"
  - c) Examples: Deacons of Acts 6:3,5

Paul & Barnabas of Acts 13:2-4

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia..."

### c. Uniqueness of the office

- 1) Set apart by God Himself for the good of the church, Eph. 4:11; Acts 13:1-4; 20:28; ctr. Jer. 23:32
- 2) Servants sustained daily, II Cor. 4,5
- 3) Sacredness of the office, Heb. 5:4

"And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

- 4) Solemn consecration to the office, Acts 6:6;  
13:3,4; I Tim. 4:14
- 5) Permanence, Rom. 11:29 - "The gifts and calling  
of God are without repentance"

d. Imposition of hands

1) OT background

--Familiarity / trust and commitment

2) Apostolic use

Acts 6:6 = deacons

(Acts 8:17 = Samaritans and H.S.; Acts 9:17 =  
Ananias and Saul; Acts 19:6 = Paul imposes  
hands on Ephesians)

Titus 1:5?

I Timothy 4:14 = presbyterial ordination of  
evangelist Timothy

3) Significance

a) Blessing with prayer

b) Consecration by "holy hands"

c) Authority transfer?

cf. hands on head of vicarious sacrifice