

IDENTITY CRISES
Is There a Role for Deacons in 21st Century
Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches?

by

Perry Wayne Hanley
B. B.A., University of New Brunswick, 1991
M. Div. Acadia Divinity College, 1996

Submitted to the Faculty of Theology, Acadia Divinity College,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

Acadia Divinity College,
Acadia University
Spring Convocation 2008

© by Perry Wayne Hanley

This thesis by Perry Hanley was defended successfully in an oral examination on March 26, 2008.

The examining committee for this thesis was:

Dr. Andrew D. MacRae, Chair and Director of Doctoral Studies.

Rev. Ron Baxter, External Examiner.

Dr. Alison Trites, External Examiner.

Dr. Harry Gardner, Principal.

Dr. Richard Jackson, Thesis & Ministry Supervisor.

Dr. Craig Evans, Faculty Reader.

This thesis is accepted in its present form by Acadia Divinity College as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

I, Perry Wayne Hanley, hereby grant permission to the Head Librarian at Acadia University to provide copies of this thesis, on request, on a non-profit basis.

Author

Supervisor

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family first and foremost for the opportunity to write this dissertation. To accomplish this task while ministering full-time has been a challenge: A challenge for not just me, but also for all whom I love. Without their prayers, patience and sacrifice, this work would not have made it to print. To my wife Andrea, sons Zachary and Matthew and daughter Grace, I look forward to investing in you since you have invested so much in me.

I would like to thank my ministry and thesis supervisor Dr. Richard Jackson for both his insight and encouragement. Thanks to Rev. Hugh McNally and Dr. Philip Griffin-Alwood for the use of their extensive digital libraries and archival materials.

I would like to thank the church and leaders of Springhill Baptist Church for their patience and encouragement in finishing this project.

Finally, and above all, I would like to thank God, “who began a good work and is carrying it out to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

ABSTRACT

Robert E. Naylor in the opening chapter of his book, *The Baptist Deacon*, asks the following question; “Are deacons needed now?” Citing issues such as a changed world, misunderstood office and leadership tensions, Naylor recognized the traditional deacon - pastor model in Baptist churches is being strained and in some cases replaced. What is eye opening is that he was writing fifty years ago!

In this thesis, the writer has examined the deacons’ office to its present day application. The first chapter deals with the scriptural underpinnings and principles of leadership in general, and the eldership or deaconship specifically. The second chapter examines how the Church interpreted this role up to and including the Reformation. The third chapter explores the birth of Baptist office of deacon and seeks to understand its context within Baptist culture. The fourth chapter explores the document trail that leads to the 1905/06 Statement of Union, specifying how Atlantic Baptists have interpreted the role of deacons.

The fifth chapter describes the thesis project whereby three comparably sized congregations were examined in relation to a change in their diaconal or organizational structure. The sixth, seventh and eighth chapters are three case studies of different leadership models. The final chapter offers a proposed approach to how churches may wish to address the deacon’s role today.

This paper utilizes the New American Standard Bible as the default translation for all Scriptures. The case studies provided the researcher with greater clarity and insight into the thought processes of the churches and their leaders as they wrestled with the deacon role and relevance.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General

ANE	Ancient Near East
ca.	<u>circa</u> , about, approximately
CABC	Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches
Ed.	Edited by, edition
Eds.	Editors
e.g.	<u>Exempli gratia</u> , for example
et al	<u>et alii</u> , and others
etc.	<u>et cetera</u>
Ibid.	<u>Ibidem</u> , in the same place
i.e.,	<u>id est</u> , that is
KJV	<u>The Holy Bible: King James Version</u> (1611)
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place, no publisher
NASB	<u>The Holy Bible: New American Standard</u> (1977)
pp.	pages
TDNT	<u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u> (1964)
TDOT	<u>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</u> (1974)
TWOT	<u>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</u> (1980)
v	verse
vol.	volume

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL OF THESIS	ii
PERMISSION TO PHOTOCOPY.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTER 1.	
THE BIBLICAL UNDERPINNING OF DEACONS.....	1
CHAPTER 2.	
DEACONS IN HISTORY (70 AD to REFORMATION).....	38
CHAPTER 3.	
THE TRADITION OF THE BAPTIST DEACON.....	66
CHAPTER 4.	
THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST DEACON.....	88
CHAPTER 5.	
EXAMINING MODERN CABC DEACONS.....	115
CHAPTER 6	
CASE STUDY A – THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH.....	123
CHAPTER 7	
CASE STUDY B – THE EFFICIENT CHURCH.....	147
CHAPTER 8	
CASE STUDY C – THE RELEVANT CHURCH.....	173
CHAPTER 9	
THE FUTURE OF THE DIACONATE.....	201
APPENDICES	
1. Atlantic Baptist Churches.....	225
2. Church A – Perceptions of Ministry Accountability.....	226
3. Church B – Organizational Chart.....	227
3. Church B – Perceptions of Ministry Accountability.....	228
4. Church C – Perceptions of Ministry Accountability.....	229
5. Accountability Model for Church C	230
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	231

CHAPTER ONE – THE BIBLICAL UNDERPINNING OF DEACONS

In 1905, the United Baptist Convention, now the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, was formed from a merger of the Free Baptists and the Regular Baptists of Atlantic Canada. These two groups painstakingly fashioned a Statement of Union which is in effect today. Foundational to this statement was an agreement that the Scriptures were to be the standard: “The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have their authority from God alone, and are given to us by divine inspiration. They are the only perfect, supreme, infallible and sufficient standard of faith and practice ”¹

Therefore, being familiar with the Scriptures is crucial to understanding the structure of Convention churches. To further clarify the way that a “Gospel Church” is to be governed, a unique feature of this brief statement is the definition of church governance. It states, with respect to officers, that “the only scriptural officers are bishops (pastors), and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles of Timothy and Titus.”²

With these parameters, the Convention was attempting to set a norm from an interpretation of Scripture. Consequently, in understanding how deacons became a staple of the Baptist Churches in Atlantic Canada, Scripture must be the starting point

¹ Basis of Union, United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1905-6

² Ibid.

Leadership in the Scriptures

Although the terms “deacon” and “bishop” are New Testament in origin, their predecessors can be found in Old Testament accounts and structures. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, there existed many models of leadership. The people of God looked to guidance from men and women who gained their influence in one of two ways: by serving God, or His people, Israel.

זְקֵנִים -THE ELDER:

The Hebrew word for elder זְקֵנִים appears in Exodus to describe the elders of Israel. "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them ..." (Ex 3:16). The way that elders simply arose within the cultural context of the people of Israel is noteworthy. It points to a societal structure in which a community may *recognize* leaders as opposed to *create* leaders. The noun derives from the word for beard, thus the connotation with aged.³ The term is pluralized in almost 100 instances, the vast majority of its usage. It is through context that the reader must determine whether or not the term means “old men” or “ruling body.”⁴ The TWOT also notes that the ruling body of a Hebrew city also used the term זְקֵנִים, meaning elders.⁵ They would gather at the gate of the city to settle many issues ranging from trying murder cases, to disputed virginity.⁶ It was an institution known and utilized amongst

³ זְקֵנִים, TWOT, 574

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Deut 21:1ff, 22:15

neighboring civilizations,⁷ implying that this was perhaps an office arising from culture as opposed to a divine creation.

The elders of Israel were clearly representatives of the people, and God validated their role in Leviticus. He did this by stating that it was appropriate to have the elders place their hands upon the sin offering before the slaughter:

"If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, they are guilty. When they become aware of the sin they committed, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the Tent of Meeting. The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull's head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD" (Lev 4:13-15).

As spokespeople for the nation of God, it was the זְרֵי who approached Samuel on behalf of the people desiring the institution of a monarchy (1 Sam 8:4). It was also the elders of Israel who met with David and actually anointed him as their king, following the anointing of David by Samuel, the prophet (2 Sam 5:3; 1 Sam 16:13). The affirmation of the elders could be considered a completion of the promise, making David the king chosen by both God and His people.

In synagogue worship, the elder was a position of prominence directing the synagogue and collecting alms, much like a modern day usher.⁸ Though the זְרֵי fulfilled a societal need, it was also a leadership position utilized by God as a way to lead the people under the elders' influence. It does not appear to matter how the role was birthed, what is significant is how God worked within this human structure. God is not restricted to working only through the structures He created. God influences and leads through all strata of leadership.

⁷ זְרֵי, IWOI, 574.

⁸ δῆκονέω, IDNI, 2:91.

שָׂר – THE OFFICIALS CONCEPT

Witnessing an administrative nightmare, Jethro suggested to Moses that he choose capable men to be leaders:

"Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders (שָׂר) of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace. So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads (רִאשִׁים) over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge" (Ex 18:21-26).

The Hebrew word שָׂר is a masculine noun derived from an infrequently used verb which has its root in words meaning "to rule," and "to have dominion over."⁹ The word שָׂר denotes a type of leadership that is very official in its capacity: chieftain, prince and military commander are all other manners in which this noun has been interpreted in other passages based on context.¹⁰

When Moses referred to these people, we are told their identity is to be the ראש "head" over the people (Ex 18:25). The use of ראש in this context leaves no doubt that these people are the "chief officers of the divisions of Israel."¹¹ Placing multiple officers with graduated authority over large numbers of people is the basis of efficiency. It is also the foundation of hierarchical institutions

⁹ שָׂר, TWOT 2295, 2295a.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ ראש, TWOT, 2097

At first reading it may appear that this position was created solely on the basis of human wisdom. However, scholars such as Durham believe the advice was more than reasonable as he believed the new position started and ended with God.¹² “Though the counsel was very practical, since Moses was wearing out both himself and the people..., the response is also clearly perceptive of the source from which the counsel comes.”¹³ He goes on to say that the requirements, instructions, laws, covenanted people and yes, even Moses, are all God’s.¹⁴

Since the basis of leadership is based upon the law, and all laws in the Ancient Near East flowed from deities of some sort, obedience to God’s laws was in fact obedience to God. In this way the *שָׂרֵי* are acting in an intermediary or priestly fashion, called not by Moses, but by God through Moses. This is a major differentiation, recognizing their conciliator function. This means that the structure for Israel’s legal system, and perhaps mirrored in the military divisions,¹⁵ is an outflow of God’s wisdom, even if not directly commanded through a prophet.

נָבִיא - THE PROPHET OF GOD:

The Hebrew word for prophet *נָבִיא* is used to describe prophets in all the cultures, not specific to the prophets of God.¹⁶ The *נָבִיא* encapsulates the concept of an authoritative spokesman, yet only if the message they speak is given to them by

¹² Durham, John I., *Exodus Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 246-253.

¹³ *Ibid*, 250

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 251.

¹⁶ *נָבִיא*, TWOT, 1277a

their superior¹⁷ The divine prophets, and more specifically the prophets of God, were by nature servants of their God.

Preparing the Israelites for the death of Moses, the “office” of prophet was created (Deut 18:15), requiring the people of God to obey these spokespeople just as they would Moses.¹⁸ Great care was taken to make certain these representatives were legitimate, and the consequence was death if they were found to be fraudulent (Deut 18: 20; 1 Kings 18:20-40).

In the pre-Christian tradition, a prophet needed to be both an Israelite and one clearly chosen by God. It was the role of the Jews to determine if the prophet was truly authentic, in accordance with the guidelines that God set (Deut 13, 18).

The authority of prophets was directly related to service. As intermediaries, these נְבִיאִים were to go to people with God’s word, typically a word of repentance, and to make themselves available to God’s people who sought counsel.¹⁹ In essence, the role of the prophet was to communicate the relational dynamic between God and Israel. Unfortunately, in the vast majority of times, that relationship was not good.

A prophet’s duty was not to make the people obey, but rather to emphatically and correctly convey God’s Word of warning.²⁰ Their defining phrase, “Thus says the Lord,” reminded all who heard, that the utterance was not of human insight, but divine communication. Thus, they were servants of God, ergo servants of His people

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ נְבִיאִים, TWOT, 1277.

¹⁹ Prophecy, D N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, London: 1992, 5:482-3

²⁰ Ibid, 484-5.

כֹּהֵן - THE PRIEST

The other widely held position that interacts with the people of Israel directly on God's behalf is the priest - כֹּהֵן. The priest and prophet are complementary offices. The prophet brought a gift forth from God to Israel, such as a message, and the priest responded by bringing a gift from Israel to God, such as sacrifices.²¹

Although in a sense all Israelites were priests, the God ordained priesthood was established from the tribe of Levi, specifically the sons of Aaron (Ex 28:1; 40:12-15). This family line of priests served God by serving His people. Their service on behalf of Israel were through prayers for the people (Joel 2:17), and officiating at the sanctuary (Deut 18:5). Their service as God's examples was to live a life of holy example (Deut 33:9), and to teach the Law (Lev 10:11).

Though the selection of a priest was biological as opposed to the result of an individual sacred encounter, he was still a servant minister whose importance equaled the prophet. The nature of the ongoing role of the priest, as well as the duties and apprenticing necessary, leads one to see how continuation in the office was desirable, if not necessitated. To be a prophet one must simply speak what is revealed. To be a priest involves continually serving both God and man. Preparation for this task would continue from early childhood until death.

While much scholarship has focused on whether Levites and priests were two separate offices within the priesthood, i.e. Aaronites and Mushites, suffice it to say for the scope of this paper, their function is analogous.²²

²¹ כֹּהֵן, IWOT, 959a.

²² Levites and Priests, ABD 4:309.

עֶבֶד - THE SERVANT

Though עֶבֶד is not translated as deacon per se, there is a functional similarity to the concept. The Israelite notion of slave, though lowly, did afford some benefits and privileges.²³ The term is used as both a social order and a sense of identity. Often one would use the term in reference to oneself to show one's humility, such as when one approached God in prayer (Ex 4:10; Ps 19:12, 14; 109:28).²⁴

This term is also used with reference to official service within the temple, as a prophet, or a person who is given a special mission by God, such as Moses, Caleb or Zerubbabel.²⁵ The Jewish nation recognized that they were not simply the people of God, functionally they were to be His servants.

SUMMARY OF HEBREW TERMINOLOGY

In summary, although the Old Testament roles were very clearly defined and highly regulated, the theme that emerges is complete dependence upon God. In this, there is variety in its manifestation, be it direct communication (such as prophets); indirect through teaching and judging via the Law (judges and officials); or, through service to His people Israel (priests and elders). Thus, accountability and authority find their foundation firmly in service.

²³ There are many privileges afforded to Jewish servants against physical abuse and mistreatment. There was also the offer of freedom after a period of six years of service, and appeals could be made under the law. עֶבֶד, TWOT, 1553a.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To determine a pure, exact, ecclesial structure and hierarchy from the New Testament is an exercise in futility! “The aim of Jesus’ earthly ministry was not to set up human orders in this world.”²⁶ His concern was with the kingdom of God and the age of glory. Though this kingdom is eternal, manifestations of its structure can be seen through the establishment and/or recognition of earthly roles.

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός – JESUS CHRIST

The incarnation of Christ both challenged and changed the focus of God’s people. Jesus Christ was the embodiment of prophet, priest and king.

During His earthly ministry, many actually thought that Jesus was in fact a prophet (Matt 16:14). In the classic sense, He truly was prophetic, as He foretold many future events, performed miracles, and urged people to repent (Matt 24; Luke 21). However, Jesus was much more than a mere prophet!

In fact, Christ expanded upon the prophetic tagline, “Thus says the Lord,” by saying that He not only heard from God but “knows” God: “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). He goes on to say that He was taught by the Father (John 8:28), does what the Father does (John 10:37), and actually the Father is “in” Him (John 10:38). This knowledge of God superseded any prophet’s word, since He was in very nature God (Phil 2:6). This meant that “the medium was the message.”²⁷

²⁶ διακονέω, IDNT, 2:85.

²⁷ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 207

Through His death, Christ acted as both Supreme priest and perfect sacrifice, bringing atonement to God's chosen people by the presentation of His own blood (Heb 7:26-28; 9:11-28). Consequently, He continues to act as intercessor on the believer's behalf (Rom 8:34).

Hebrews states that this new High Priest sets forth a new priesthood, no longer Levitical, but rather Christian; not limited to a family line, but descriptive of all believers: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet 2:9).

Jesus is also deemed king, or more specifically Head (κεφαλή), of the Church: "God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Eph 1:22-23). Paul's letter to the Colossians expounds on this concept: "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" (Col 1:17-18)

Therefore, as Head of the Church, Christ establishes a new covenant through His blood. The believers are given a commission before His ascension that is to be the purpose statement of the church:

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matt 28:18-20).

Implicit in this commission is the command to make μαθηταί (disciples) via teaching them His commandments. In His earthly ministry, Jesus summarized the breadth of teaching into two compact statements: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:37-39).

Thus, the mandate for the Christian is to produce disciples, evidenced by their obedience to the command to love both God and man (John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:3-4). To expand upon this further, Christ not only verbally taught these principles, He demonstrated them. One of the most poignant examples of how to express this love practically was the model of foot washing undertaken by Jesus just before His death. John 13:1 actually states that through this incident, "he now showed them the full extent of his love."²⁸

After washing each of His disciple's feet, Jesus said:

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:13-17)

The example of service and authority was a major teaching of Christ, perhaps in reaction to the current leadership dynamic within the Jewish community. From the Beatitudes to settling issues of prominence within His disciples, Christ equated meekness and humility with greatness and authority (Matt 5:1-12; Luke 22:24-30).

²⁸ In conjunction with this statement, Matthew 12:15-18 identifies Jesus as the servant of God prophesied in Isaiah 42:1-4

Christ was the epitome of the servant leader. His authority was through His submission to God the Father, yet he exhibited it through His servant nature amongst humanity. Therefore this is to be the standard of Christian leadership. The writer of Philippians put it best:

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Phil 2:5-8).

μαθητής - **DISCIPLE**

The term “disciple” in Greek - μαθητής, appears to be a generic term for a “learner” or “one who follows another’s teachings.”²⁹ Thus, “disciple” is the primary word used in the Gospels and Acts to describe a follower of Christ,³⁰ but it was not limited to a Jesus devotee; for example, a student of John was also called μαθητής.³¹

The meaning of μαθητής is never explained in the NT, indicating that the early readers understood it in relation to contemporary rabbinic or Greek practice.³² It was used by learners who associated themselves with a teacher, philosopher, or rabbi with the assumption that the pupil would become like his teacher (Matt 10:25; Luke 6:40). The word entails an activity involved in the way one learns, to the point that

²⁹ *disciple*, in W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

³⁰ In John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 196, n. 2. He states that, “It is apparent that not every disciple is necessarily a true Christian (cf. John 6:66). The term disciple is sometimes used in Scripture in a general sense, to describe those who, like Judas, outwardly followed Christ.”

³¹ Matt 9:14, 11:2; Mark 2:18; John 3:25.

³² μαθητής, TDNT 4:415-41.

these pupils could be described as imitators of their teacher³³ with the existence of a personal attachment that shapes the whole life.³⁴

Within the μαθητής construct, there was definitely a clear sense of master and student as opposed to the modern concept of a facilitator (Matt 10:24). The greater the student's submission to their master, the greater the student's transformation, increasing the likelihood that they would become the master's successor. In fact, the master's ultimate expectation was that each of his disciples would be proficient in their master's teaching.³⁵

Therefore, it is not surprising that Jesus states that there were expectations placed upon His disciples. In Luke's account, Jesus explains that His disciples are to be imitators by submitting their lives to Him, to be willing to endure hardship for Him and finally, to be willing to sacrifice earthly possession and even personal identity for Him (Luke 14:26-7, 33).

Jesus recognized that a μαθητής is not born, but rather is made, or more appropriately - apprenticed. This is why in the Great Commission, He commanded His disciples to go and "make disciples" or "disciple"— the verb form of μαθητής in the transitive sense and active voice (μάθητεύσατε).³⁶

This formation process is a matter of debate. Some, such as Boice, would equate being a Christian with being a disciple.³⁷ Others see discipleship as a process entered into after salvation, such as the renowned author and former speaker at the 2004 Assembly of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, Dallas

³³ disciple, W.E. Vine.

³⁴ μαθητής, TDNT 4:441.

³⁵ Shamuel Safrai, "Master and Disciple," *Jerusalem Perspective* 3 (November-December 1990), pp. 5, 13.

³⁶ disciple, W.E. Vine.

³⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), pp.13-23.

Willard He writes: "It is almost universally conceded today that you can be a Christian without being a disciple. And one who actually is an apprentice and co-laborer with Jesus in his or her daily existence is sure to be a 'Christian' in every sense of the word that matters."³⁸

Of the 264 passages referring to μαθητής, this writer cannot draw any solid conclusions as to when the process starts. The word is used very descriptively to depict those who physically followed Him without faith (John 6:64-66), and is used very prescriptively to define a lifestyle emulating Jesus, Himself (Luke 14:26-33).

ἀπόστολος - **APOSTLE**

From amongst the disciples, some were set apart as apostles -ἀπόστολος. These were the ones who were "sent forth."³⁹ The usage of ἀπόστολος in Greek culture had its foundation in seafaring and military expeditions, defining whether a boat and crew was dispatched or sent.⁴⁰ It was a word not used by the Jewish people and appears to be a very "Christian" word, "part of the distinctive Christian vocabulary."⁴¹

The ἀπόστολος, in the biblical sense, is one who is sent with full authority.⁴² Interestingly enough, as a descriptor for the "bearers of the NT message," the term is always ἀπόστολοι – plural.⁴³ This appears to be the first structural group that Jesus establishes. As a group appointed by Jesus, save two, Matthias and Paul, they

³⁸ Dallas Willard, "How to Be a Disciple," Adapted from **The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God**. Reprinted in *The Christian Century*, 1998. At Religion Online

³⁹ ἀπόστολος, TDNT 1:407

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid, 1:414.

⁴² Ibid, 1:421.

⁴³ Ibid, 1:422

functioned as somewhat of a separate entity based in Jerusalem (Mark 3:13-19; Acts 8:1).

These ἀπόστολοι are not officials of congregations, but rather “are officers of Christ by whom the church is built.”⁴⁴ Paul references them to the NT equivalent of the OT prophet (as ἀπόστολοι is often paired with προφήται), preparing people for God's arrival (Eph 2:20; 3:5)

In a similar fashion as disciples, apostles were formed. The apostles were first disciples, and as such had to listen and learn. Only then were they eligible to be chosen and sent, for they would bear witness to all they taught. However there was no clarifying reason why the twelve were chosen over others; they just were.⁴⁵ This is consistent with the term ἀπόστολοι for they are truly the ambassadors, the ones picked at the discretion of the Master by His purposes and through His process.

The focus of the apostles is likened to the prophets ... the message, or “the commission itself is the main thing.”⁴⁶ The relationship between Jesus and His ἀπόστολοι is what made their work His work, and their authority His authority.⁴⁷ By this authority, in the absence of the Risen Lord, these ἀπόστολοι took a leadership position amongst the small band of Christians. However, as a result of the Great Commission, these men also became missionaries, which is in actuality what really characterized their office.⁴⁸ In fact, as the original ἀπόστολοι were disappearing by

⁴⁴ Ibid, 1:423

⁴⁵ The one prerequisite in Acts 1:21 is that an apostle must have been an eyewitness of Jesus' entire ministry from baptism to ascension.

⁴⁶ ἀπόστολος, IDNT, 1:427.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1:429.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1:431.

the time of Eph 4:11, the new bearers of missionary responsibility, the εὐγγελισταί, were emerging.⁴⁹

There was interconnectedness between the ἀπόστολοι, Jesus and the disciples. To remove the role of the ἀπόστολος from the realm of the μαθητής or to draw structural hierarchies is erroneous, for that was not the intent. Both find their essence of existence within each other and fully within Christ.

Προφήτης - **PROPHET**

The NT prophet προφήτης appears to be an extension of the OT נָבִי, because the נָבִי (such as Jeremiah and Isaiah) are simply qualified in the gospels and greater NT as προφήτης (Matthew 2:17, 12:17). “The early Christian prophet was an immediately inspired spokesperson for God, the Risen Jesus or the Spirit who received intelligible oracles that he or she felt impelled to deliver to the Christian community, or representing the community to the general public.”⁵⁰ Like the OT prophet, prophecy in the NT needed to be carefully evaluated. Although there were many cultures that had prophets and seers,⁵¹ only the prophets of God were true; the others, ψευδοπροφήται, were false (Matthew 24:11; John 4:1-6).

Unlike the ἀπόστολος, there are references made to προφήτις or prophetesses (Luke 2:36) In the Early Church, there was great hesitation in designating women as prophetesses, and instead of saying they were προφήτις, they were almost exclusively restricted to the verb form προφητεύω – which meant to “act

⁴⁹ διδασκαλος, IDNT 2:158.

⁵⁰ Prophecy (Early Christian), ABD, 5:496.

⁵¹ Ibid.

as a prophet” or “to have the gift of prophecy.”⁵² This is true of Philip’s daughters in Acts 21:9 who προφητεύουσαι (prophesied). The only exceptions were Anna, the Jewess (Luke 2:36), and the Jezebel who self-declares the title in Rev 2:20.

Arguments could thus be made that the office of prophet (and especially prophetess) was being eclipsed by the gift of prophecy, a subtle but substantial shift.⁵³

Throughout the gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus refers to Himself as a prophet (Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4). Yet, throughout the rest of the gospels, Jesus is more often described as a prophet by the masses rather than personally laying claim to the title. In actuality, Christ was mostly the fulfillment of the word of the prophets of the OT. He fulfilled the prophecies of both types of נביא whether they be the speaking prophets or the writing prophets.⁵⁴

Christ refers to John the Baptist as a prophet – and even more than all that title meant (Matthew 11:9). Not only did John the Baptist fulfill the classic requirements of the OT prophet, but he also directly connected his words to the person of Jesus. In essence he was a “bridging” prophet and was perhaps the last of his type.⁵⁵

In Acts, Luke speaks of Agabus as a legitimate prophet, matching the title with the predicting of a famine (Acts 11:27-30; 21:1-14). As a historian, Luke appears to describe the Church as a natural outflow from her OT roots. Thus, in Lukan writing, one would expect prophets to continue to exist.⁵⁶

⁵² προφητης, TDNT, 6:829.

⁵³ The New Testament clearly emphasizes leadership as a more spontaneous gift based ministry which in itself may not define a role as opposed to the identity of Jewish offices.

⁵⁴ προφητης, TDNT, 6:832-3

⁵⁵ Ibid., 6:839-40

⁵⁶ Prophecy (Early Christian), ABD 5:500.

Whereas Luke is descriptive, it appears that Paul is far more polemic and prescriptive in the realm of the prophetic. According to Paul, Christian prophecy as a gift is to be encouraged, yet thoroughly tested (1 Thes 5:19-20; 1 Cor. 12, 14). He recognizes that there can be many prophets within a church setting, yet he seeks for the prophets to exercise the gift (which is under their control) in an orderly fashion. This appears to counter the ecstatic trance of pagan prophets who often in a fit would explode with a message.⁵⁷ In fact, in Pauline writings, there is no emphasis on the ecstasy of prophecy; the important aspect is simply the Word of God, of which the prophet is only a vessel⁵⁸ “The prophet does not declare what he has taken from tradition or what he has thought up himself... he declares what has been revealed to him.”⁵⁹

There are also far more NT prophets than old and, “it is not a gift for the chosen few.”⁶⁰ The early Christian prophet mirrors the OT prophet with the exception that Yahweh is replaced by the Holy Spirit. It could be surmised that similar to the OT, these prophets may have a closer relationship with God. Though teachers were to expound Scripture (i.e. the past), prophets were not bound to just Scripture and could speak to the congregation on the basis of revelation (i.e. the future).⁶¹

Prophets are frequently found listed after apostles: “And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets ...” (1 Cor. 12:28a).⁶² The prophet is also ordered before other roles/gifts such as evangelists, pastors and

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ προφήτης, IDNT, 6:851.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 6:853

⁶⁰ Ibid, 6:849.

⁶¹ Ibid, 6:854.

⁶² see also Eph 2:20, 3:5, 4:11; Rev 18:20

teachers. 1 Cor. 12:28b goes on to say: "...third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues."⁶³

This is very significant if Paul, Luke and John are all seeking to set an ecclesiastical hierarchy. That is not the case. In fact, "We must be on our watch against the idea that there is an order of rank in the lists of 1 Cor. 12:28 f. and Eph 4:11."⁶⁴ For example, nowhere in this structure are deacons or elders listed. Rather than a clear chain of command, these are descriptions of the gifts and gifted which are evident in the early church. There is no single comprehensive list in Scripture of all ecclesial offices; they have been derived from a plethora of Scriptures.

διδάσκαλος – MASTER OR TEACHER

Of the many titles in the NT, διδάσκαλος is one of the clearest. This term is universally understood as a teacher in the ANE context, a role of "expositor of the divine will as laid down in the Law and the prophets."⁶⁵ In the gospels, Nicodemus (John 3:10), John the Baptizer (Luke 3:12), and even Jesus Himself (John 1:38), are designated διδάσκαλος as well as the general teachers, διδάσκαλοι, of the Law.⁶⁶

The role of teacher was well developed and clearly understood. In fact, Jesus was called both διδάσκαλος and rabbi (ραββί), synonymous terms within the Jewish tradition (Matt 26:25, Mk 9:5, 11:21, et al.). There was great honor tied to the teacher, and rather than elevate the position, Jesus used it as a platform from which

⁶³ see also Eph. 4:11; Acts 13:1; Rm 12:6 ff.

⁶⁴ διδάσκαλος, TDNT 2:158.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 2:152

⁶⁶ Ibid, 2:152-153.

to expound upon the Kingdom.⁶⁷ Of course, as the supreme διδάσκαλος by which all future teachers were to model, Jesus through the course of his ministry exhibited the greatest knowledge and insight.

In both 1 Cor. 12:28 f. and Eph. 4:11, the διδάσκαλοι are found in a list of roles, or offices, separate from prophets. It could be said that the prophets were “pneumatics,” whereas the teachers were “non-pneumatics,” who “edify the congregation through means of their own clearer understanding.”⁶⁸

This does not mean that the teacher is not gifted or guided by the Holy Spirit; rather the διδάσκαλος of the early church was a position necessary for the furtherance of the Kingdom. This gifting, much like that of the OT priest is one that can be honed with mentorship and scholarship. Therefore, seminaries and universities that have been established to train Christian leaders in the area of teaching do not diminish the nature of the gift.

Ποιμήν – SHEPHERD

The usage of Ποιμήν (shepherd) in the NT is a concept that finds its basis in the OT concept of the care of God (Psalm 23). Though Jesus teaches in parables about the ποιμήν, He never says that God is a shepherd.⁶⁹ However, he does call Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10)

Only once is the term ποιμήν used to describe a NT office, and it is often translated “pastor.” This instance is found in Ephesians: “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2:154-155.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ ποιμήν, TDNT, 6:491

and teachers” (Eph 4:11). There appears to be a strong metaphor tied to the title, for the pastor is to care for the congregation as diligently as a shepherd would care for the flock⁷⁰

The shepherd may be considered the foundation for the modern concept of pastoral care. The ποιμήν suggests a powerful imagery of trust and influence exercised for the wellbeing of the masses. The sacrificial nature of the shepherds, and the awareness of the dangers facing those within their care, is the motivation for their authority. The flock’s trust in the leader is founded upon the leader’s willingness to sacrifice and care, as evidenced through attentiveness.

This watchfulness appears very relational and individual, focused upon a local “flock”, as set against the more global oversight. This lends well to the discussion of other positions of oversight as mentioned in the NT church.

ἐπίσκοπος -**BISHOP (OVERSEER)**

The term ἐπίσκοπος is used to describe a position of oversight with respect to the church.⁷¹ Henceforth, ἐπίσκοπος will be defined as “bishop,” for that is how it is interpreted in the 1905 Statement of Union. It is used five times in the New Testament and each should be explored individually.

1 Peter 2:25

“For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls ”

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6:498, 500-2.

⁷¹ ἐπίσκοπος, IDNT 2:608.

This usage of bishop τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον pairs it not with deacon, but rather with shepherd. This is a descriptive pairing based on functional similarity. In this instance, it is Christ who is the bishop and shepherd. "It is a title of majesty ascribed to Jesus in His work in relation to the community."⁷² This symbolic language emphasizes God's oversight as the ultimate ἐπίσκοποι.

According to the TDNT, the other four examples of ἐπίσκοποι refer to men acting as leaders in the church.⁷³ These are not the "wandering charismatic preachers of the gospel" (i.e. apostles, prophets and teachers); rather, these are the officers "where there are fixed settled congregations in which regular acts are performed."⁷⁴

Acts 20: 28

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Placed in context, ἐπισκόπους is first found in Luke's recording of the Pauline speech at Miletus to the Ephesian πρεσβύτεροι (Acts 20:17). After explaining that he would not be back, he asked these elders to be the ἐπισκόπους ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν - bishops, shepherds of the church (Acts 20:28).

⁷² Ibid, 2:615.

⁷³ ἐπίσκοπος, TDNT 2:615.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

These elders were made ἐπισκόποι not by Paul's command, but rather το πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο, by the Holy Spirit. In this incidence it appears that Paul is recognizing an anointing, as opposed to imparting or commissioning an ecclesial office.

The key question that arises in this text is: Why is Paul addressing πρεσβύτεροι and telling them to be ἐπισκόποι? One could argue that the two words appear to be almost, if not completely, synonymous. Luke may in fact be seeking to fuse the tradition of the elder with the title of bishop.⁷⁵ “The way they are used interchangeably by the exacting writer shows that these men, although perhaps not officially ordered, were in fact overseeing the church in Ephesus.”⁷⁶

Phillippians 1:1

“Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.”

Paul in his own hand is beginning to now address officers.⁷⁷ This is the first encounter of the pairing of deacons διακόνοι and bishops ἐπισκόποι. The holy ones in Christ Jesus in Philippi are together with this pairing of ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις. At first glance, it might appear that this phrase was used to draw attention to extremes; those above you (bishops) and those below you as servants (deacons). However, that is not the context in which either term is used within Christian vocabulary. More fittingly, this appears to be a pairing of offices that go together, and are in fact

⁷⁵ πρεσβύς, IDNT, 6:665

⁷⁶ ἐπισκόπος, IDNT, 2:616.

⁷⁷ Ibid

necessary for the function of the community of “holy ones.” Since it is used in a salutation, it appears that this context places the two offices in high esteem, regarding them first in the Philippian epistle. Since function and authority are synonymous, the terms are a call to perform a task versus bowing to an office. The designations are to people in these positions, or else the whole introduction makes no sense.⁷⁸

1 Timothy 3: 1-7

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Based to a large part upon this passage, the United Baptist Convention, now the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, equates ἐπίσκοπος with the term “pastor.”⁷⁹ The first verse in Timothy’s third chapter states that the office of bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) is a noble one. It also implies that one can set their heart upon this goal of becoming an ἐπίσκοπος. This makes the office achievable and tied to human action in response to a global calling of God.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Basis of Union, 1905

By this point in the text, ἐπισκοπή has become a very clearly defined “office.”⁸⁰ The descriptors of an ἐπισκοπή seek to depict one who is worthy of what they do, and what they do not do. They are to be above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, peaceable, managing their own household well, keeping children under control with all dignity, and have a good reputation with those outside the church. The restrictors are that they are to be monogamous, not be addicted to wine, not be confrontational, be free from the love of money, and not to be a new convert.

Some of the qualities exist to show Christ-likeness in character (i.e. good reputation, above reproach). Other qualities show stewardship ability (i.e. management of the home). Some show maturity (not a new convert) while others show qualities and talents that will be necessary in the responsibilities tied to the office of bishop (ability to teach, prudent, temperate). The ἐπίσκοποι should be “skilled teachers” so that they may be “able preachers.” Also, as a warning, both the new convert and those without good reputations outside the church are in danger of failing for either pride or scandal respectively.

Whether these are descriptive or prescriptive matters not. The purpose of the list is to make sure the office of ἐπίσκοπος is filled with appropriate people who in their daily life exhibit trustworthiness. It does not list what they do specifically, but rather seeks to depict who they are.⁸¹

⁸⁰ ἐπισκόπος, IDNT, 2:617.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Of note is the parenthesized verse of 1 Timothy 3:5. This is a significant statement that evidences overseeing ability. Paul does not refer to vocational oversight, but rather familial. This leads to the obvious deduction that church oversight is highly relational, as opposed to corporate. The leader's ability and temperament is to be honed in the primary church unit: the biological family.

The 1 Timothy 3 qualifications are primarily tied to character. Thus, their duty must flow from their character, as a flower blossoms from a seed.

Titus 1:5-7

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain.”

This final passage is a parallel reference to 1 Timothy 3, starting off with instructions to appoint *πρεσβυτέρους* as Paul directed him. The task that lay before Titus required Paul to elaborate, but he no longer called the appointees *πρεσβυτέρους*, but rather *ἐπίσκοπους*. This shows that the two terms, “originally referred to the same thing, namely, the guidance and representation of the congregation and the work of preaching and conducting worship when there was no apostle, prophet or teacher present.”⁸² Teaching (and more specifically correction) is primarily required of the *ἐπισκοπή* of Titus, for Paul goes on to state that there are many who need to be rebuked or convinced (Titus 1:10-16).

⁸² Ibid

In fact, rather than establishing a “monarchical” church structure, the office of bishop was, to do just the opposite. The bishop was to ensure the continuous ministry of the local church in lieu of outside rule or influence.⁸³ This would lead to an interpretation of a more active ἐπίσκοπον, not simply maintaining a community of faith, but aggressively addressing the health of the disciples and all threats to the community’s belief structure.

In summary, the development of the ἐπισκοπή as an office was a calling to serve both formally and informally. The authority of the office came from submission to the Holy Spirit, and faithfulness to the oversight of the flock.

Πρεσβύτερος - ELDER

The word equivalent for ἡγή in the NT, πρεσβύτερος, is found 67 times with a range of meanings from describing the aged, elders in the temple and even elders in the new Christian community.⁸⁴ Since the Jewish synagogue had two types of workers, some say this is where the two offices have their roots.⁸⁵ In the synagogue the conduct of worship was entrusted to one group while the other, the elders, collected alms and directed the synagogue. This could explain why in churches with Jewish roots the term ἐπίσκοπος (overseer) was replaced with πρεσβύτερος (elder).

Although πρεσβύτεροι and ἀπόστολοι are often paired, there are places in Acts such as 11:30: ὁ και ἐποίησαν ἀποστείλαντες πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους διὰ χειρὸς βαρναβᾶ καὶ Σαύλου, and 21:18 τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ εἰσήει ὁ Παῦλος σὺν ἡμῖν πρὸς Ἰάκωβον,

⁸³ ἐπισκόπος, TDNT, 2:617

⁸⁴ πρεσβύς, TDNT, 6:652.

⁸⁵ διακονέω, TDNT, 2:91

πάντες τε παρεγένοντο οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, where the term is found on its own. However these occurrences parallel the Jewish synagogue council.⁸⁶

In Acts 15:4, the combined πρεσβύτεροι and ἀπόστολοι form a supreme court not far removed from the Jewish Sanhedrin, where they act as an authority for the whole church and not simply a local congregation.⁸⁷ Many believe that Luke's crisp account is meant to show the natural development from the Jewish roots, and that this form of council only existed briefly during the influence of James, after Peter's departure (i.e. Acts 21:17-26).⁸⁸

In the post-apostolic churches, the elders are viewed as office holders with gifts (such as prayer) tied to the office.⁸⁹ For example, in James 5:14: "Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). Thus in reference to the sick, the πρεσβύτεροι are to be called upon for anointing toward healing. In Acts, "When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed," (Acts 14:23), these πρεσβύτεροι are to carry on in place of the apostles, administering their legacy as guardians⁹⁰ This is also the case in Acts 20:17-38.

The pastoral epistles take on a different aspect of the πρεσβύτεροι. In 1 Tim. 5:1: "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the

⁸⁶ πρεσβύς, TDNT, 6:662-3.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 6:665.

younger men as brothers,” the word πρεσβυτέρω is best defined as “elderly ” In other times it refers to a college who ordain such as 1 Tim. 4:14: “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.” It also can refer to positions within the church that need to be filled to keep church order such as Titus 1:5: “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.”

It appears that these elders not only ruled but were paid: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages’” (1 Tim 5:17-18). This would lead to an interpretation of the elder being paid, similar to a modern pastor.

The only major difference between the bishop ἐπίσκοπος and the elder πρεσβύτερος, is the fact that in the Pastorals ἐπίσκοπος is always singular as opposed to the πρεσβύτεροι who can form a college or authoritative group of some sort⁹¹

There has been much written on the elders of the Apocalypse of John. Suffice it to say most academics point to a concept of the “heavenly council of God” and these πρεσβύτεροι are not considered to be the “redeemed, transfigured” saints.⁹²

⁹¹ Ibid., 6:667.

⁹² Ibid., 6:668.

διάκονος - DEACON

Finally, in exploring the terms relating to a deacon (διακονέω, διακονία, διάκονος), we discover an office thoroughly based upon action. In the verb form, διακονέω embodies the concept of serving with a very personal aspect.⁹³ Only rarely is it translated to mean deacon (1 Tim 3:10, 13).

Another scant interpretation for the term διακονέω is “to administer” as in 2 Cor. 8:19-20:

“... and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift.”

In fact, this verb διακονέω is always translated in the gospels as “to minister” or “to serve.”⁹⁴ The service referred to appears to be a response to love, as opposed to a duty or obligation.⁹⁵ The term in the secular circles of the time referred primarily to waiting tables, coordinating a marriage feast, or generally to “care.”⁹⁶

THE MINISTRY OF διακονία

The concept of service was very degrading and unsatisfying to the Greek man, the only exception being service to the state.⁹⁷ It is completely foreign for a

⁹³ Διακονεω, TDNT 2:81.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 2:82

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Hellenist to consider self-emptying service to others as an existence; such was a slave's duty.⁹⁸

To the Jew, however, there was no shame in serving. In fact, if one is serving a great master, then the duty is considered commendable.⁹⁹ Jewish law commands the Jew to love one's neighbour as oneself (Leviticus 19:18) and implicit in this command is the readiness and commitment to serve.¹⁰⁰ However, as Judaism developed, unconditional service was retracted for various reasons, i.e. exceptions for the unclean and eventually, the invaluable.¹⁰¹ Service became a work of merit and was restricted to only the righteous and the worthy.¹⁰²

When Jesus encounters the service concept, He "purifies the OT command from current distortions."¹⁰³ Within the Greek culture this concept was quite radical. Not only does Christ embody it, Jesus expands the usage of διακονέω to include giving food & drink, extending shelter, providing clothes, and visiting the sick and prisoners (e.g. Matthew 25:14ff). Thus, Christian love is a mark of true discipleship.¹⁰⁴ Noteworthy is the feminine noun form διακονιά which is defined most often as ministry, and used almost exclusively to describe Christian ministry in the biblical world of the resurrected Christ.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid., 2:83

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid , 2:84

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 2:85

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The concept of διακονέω finds its final theological depth in the full and perfect sacrifice as the offering of life. This is the very essence of service, serving whether in life or to the death.¹⁰⁶ In διακονέω, to serve Christ, God, or neighbour is one and the same.¹⁰⁷ The ministry is to be discharged in the power which God gives, and to His glory alone. It takes place both from God and to God.¹⁰⁸ So, just as all Christians are apostles (sent), so too are all Christians deacons (servers). It is a lifestyle command for all disciples, not an office for a select few.

Διάκονος in the LXX –

The word διακονέω is used only rarely in the Septuagint. It incorporated a type of service that was deeply personal: or “the concept of the service of love.”¹⁰⁹ The accounts in Esther refer to a group who closely served the king. They were very trusted, to the point of being somewhat confidants (Esther 1:10; 2:2; 6:3, 5).¹¹⁰ The proverbial use of διάκονος refers to a fool becoming the slave of the intelligent; a personal yet humbling position.¹¹¹ The apocryphal 4 Maccabees 9:17 refers to the διάκονοι as bodyguards.¹¹²

Recognizing that the Septuagint was Scripture to the apostles and the Early Church Fathers, save Jerome, the inclusion of this term warrants it for usage in the New Testament. The close personal contact of the διάκονος combined with their

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 2:86.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2:87.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 2:81.

¹¹⁰ *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* Oxford University Press, available from <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/17-esther-nets.pdf>; Internet accessed 12 February 2008.

¹¹¹ Ibid, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/25-proverbs-nets.pdf>.

¹¹² Ibid, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/23-4makk-nets.pdf>.

trustworthy nature provided the perfect backdrop for the term's usage by Paul and Luke to describe the servants of God

Usage In The New Testament

Since δίακονος in other forms is most often defined as to “minister” or “ministry”, the noun is likewise predominantly translated as either “minister” or “servant.” The gospels utilize the word δίακονος in various verses meaning the pure sense of table waiter or servant (John 2:5, 9 and Matt 22:13). In 2 Cor. 11:14 f – διακονέω is used figuratively as the servant of a spiritual power (in this case Satan) with the action of the servant being to the benefit of the master.¹¹³ Even the heathen can be an oblivious servant of God (Romans 13:1-4) in the sense that they are appointed and assist in maintaining God's order in the world.¹¹⁴

Δίακονος translated as deacon

The understanding of deacons as officials is found twice in Scripture. The term is found once in the opening line in the letter to the Philippians, and later in Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Philippians 1:1

“Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.”

¹¹³ διακονέω, TDNT 2:88.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

With respect to the Philippians' reference, scholars state that "at the time of this epistle there are thus two coordinated offices possibly two different aspects of the work from the same men."¹¹⁵ When referring to the passages in Timothy, the TDNT surmises that the διάκονος were the administrative practical workers, as opposed to the more supervisory ἐπίσκοπον.¹¹⁶ This is based upon not only a pure interpretation of διακονέω, but also the qualities demanded of those closely connected to the bishop.¹¹⁷ This is expounded further in the 1 Timothy 3 passage.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

"Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

This passage of Scripture is Paul's prescriptive command to Timothy. It is an exacting parallel with, the ἐπίσκοπος (1 Tim 3:1-7). The linkage is made even stronger by Paul's use of "likewise" in v 8. One of the primary differences between διάκονος and the ἐπίσκοπος is that in order to be appointed, the deacons must first be "tested" (1 Tim 3:10a). Although no test is prescribed, the implication is that this is a test of character. This can be derived from the concept of worthiness being founded upon their ability to be "beyond reproach" (1 Tim 3:10b).

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 2:90.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 2:90.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

The reference in 1 Tim 3:11 has been interpreted by different translators as being “women” (NASB, ASV, AB) and others as “*their* (deacon’s) *wives*” (NIV, KJV, NLT). In the midst of this dispute, many miss the intent of the Scripture: To show a strong Christian character in every aspect of life. In fact, most of the requirements of deacons parallel that of the bishops. They show that dedication and Christian character are foundational to any leader in His Church.

The Table Servers

Central to the Christian worship tradition is the Lord’s Supper. For this reason alone, it is possible to witness the creation of an office specifically dedicated to the continuation of the common meal at the heart of the life of the community.¹¹⁸

Although Acts 6 does not define the deacon office per se, this passage may be regarded as indirect evidence concerning the diaconate. Here the μαθηταί (disciples) were growing in number and a crisis was forming.¹¹⁹ The necessity of leadership apart from the apostles is great. F.F. Bruce draws comparison to this passage and the selection of God-fearing men by Moses as recorded in Exodus 18:17-23, so that the greater work could be accomplished.¹²⁰

In response to the crisis the Scripture states: “So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables’” (Acts 6:2). In this context, the term διακονεῖν can in the widest sense mean to completely supervise a meal, not only the provision of

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* 3rd ed., (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 180.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 182.

food but also the preparation and organization. According to the TDNT, it is a debated question how this service, in which the Hellenistic widows felt they were being overlooked, was executed in the period depicted by Acts 6.¹²¹ The difficulty arises as to whether the disciples were to distribute portions to those in special need or if they were to arrange common meals.¹²² Rather than issues of portion size, it is most likely that such issues as physically serving and the influence of Jewish Law and the concepts of purity were involved.¹²³

If this were the case, then this service of the “Hellenistic Seven” surely implies rather more than a purely external release of the leaders of the community from administrative duties.¹²⁴ This was to be a crucial ministry in the globalization of the church, as Jews and non Jews were to be treated equally, within the context of the new Way. This affected the selection: “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task” (Acts 6:3). Key in this description is the character of the servers, who were to be of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

These requirements appear to be more than obligatory of a typical table server, implying the task was far more of a leadership position. There is no description of how large the meal was and it very well could have been a massive undertaking with hundreds, if not thousands, being served.¹²⁵ In fact, these men

¹²¹ διακονέω, TDNT 2:85.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ In conversing with a former missionary from the Middle East, he advised that perhaps the Acts 6 men were more ‘pastors’ than table servers. His rationale was in preparing for a huge feast on a regular basis may have required extremely gifted men such as those described by Luke. This of course is conjecture; this writer has found no scholastic support to confirm or deny this theory

would be responsible or “charged” with the hands-on ministry. Though these seven were appointed they are never referred to as the *διάκονοι* per se. In the purest sense they were just the functional sense of the verb – meal planners and table waiters.¹²⁶

Though not *διάκονοι* in the literal sense, most see the actions of these men as the foundation of the church office. In fact, the ordaining of deacons, a tradition still existing within some CABC churches today, is rooted in Acts 6. After the twelve were selected by the community, the apostles held a special ceremony meant to identify and/or impart a gift for the task. “And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them” (Acts 6:6).¹²⁷

Summary:

All of these terms and passages point to a central theme; active diligent oversight and service was crucial to the survival and flourishing of the people of God. Every follower, from disciple to apostle was called to be a personal witness in their lives to the redemptive work of Christ. All of the gifts that were imparted upon the church were given to further the kingdom through sacrificial service. There was not to be a hint of superiority or hierarchy in any sense other than functional. Those given oversight responsibilities were to be the epitome of integrity and models of Jesus Christ Himself.

¹²⁶ Bruce, 180.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 184.

CHAPTER TWO - DEACONS IN HISTORY (70 AD to REFORMATION)

To jump immediately from the scriptural references to the current deacon construct in CABC churches would be a misinformed leap. As with every biblical office, the reality is that time builds in tradition which is either embraced or rejected by the next generation. Therefore, it is paramount to see how the diaconate has been practically interpreted over the centuries.

THE GOLDEN AGE

In what has been called the “Golden Age of Deacons,”¹²⁸ the scant references available point to deacons as having had a vital role in the community of faith called churches. This system proved to be foundational to not only the Roman Catholic Church of today, but it also provided the framework that was in part rejected by the Reformers. Therefore, it is paramount to understand how the early post-apostolic church was organized. Plater states, “In the thirty years between Paul of Tarsus and Clement of Rome, the diaconate became established firmly in the young churches. In the second through fourth centuries, it accumulated functions and symbols that have endured to the twentieth.”¹²⁹

¹²⁸ James Monroe Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order: A Comprehensive and Critical Study of the Origin, Development, and Decline of the Diaconate in the Context* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1983), 43.

¹²⁹ Ormonde Plater, *MANY SERVANTS: An Introduction to Deacons* (Cowley Publications, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004), 17.

WERE THE HELLENISTIC SEVEN DEACONS?

As stated in the previous chapter, there is no direct mention in Acts 6 of servants as deacons. Yet, the Catholic Encyclopedia states, “according to the constant tradition of the Catholic Church, the narrative of Acts 6:1-6, which serves to introduce the account of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, describes the first institution of the office of deacon.”¹³⁰ Noteworthy is the picture of the communal life of the Church in Jerusalem given in Acts. It shows that almost from the outset, the Church found it necessary to appoint those who would assist in looking after its poor.¹³¹ In essence, it was only natural.

The nature of the Church of that day required the members to do what needed to be done as co-labourers with little thought of hierarchy, save Christ Himself as Lord and Saviour. In fact, to superimpose a modern concept of structure on this time would be erroneous. “The primitive Church did not think in terms of “subordination” as we do today... We do not find rank and dignity of office there, rather the subordination is one simply of authoritative leadership exercised for the welfare of the community.”¹³²

Therefore, it is important to reiterate that there was apparently no clear model for deacons, at least defined scripturally, and the apostolic churches continued to utilize the diaconate and other leadership in accordance with tradition. This is true of all the churches, even those planted under the leadership of the apostle Paul. The argument is made that Paul’s inconsistency in vocabulary and typology means, “it is

¹³⁰ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “deacons.”

¹³¹ Barnett, 28.

¹³² Barnett, 31.

reasonable to think that there was no uniform structure of offices in the Pauline churches of the early New Testament period.”¹³³

Over the course of just a few decades, there was a deliberate maturity in church offices from instinctual to institutional. Historians say that the *Didache* “reflects an era of transition from charismatic leaders, the traveling prophets, and teachers to one in which officers of the church were attached to one place.”¹³⁴ This earliest recorded non-scriptural document mentions the two-fold bishops and deacons.¹³⁵ “You must, then, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are a credit to the Lord, men who are gentle, generous, faithful, and well tried. For their ministry to you is identical with that of the prophets and teachers.”¹³⁶ The best way to show this progression would be through the documentation that remains from the Church Fathers.

CLEMENT OF ROME (c. 100 AD)

Irenaeus tells us that Clement “saw the blessed Apostles and conversed with them, and had yet ringing in his ears the preaching of the Apostles and had their tradition before his eyes.”¹³⁷ Therefore, Clement was considered an authority with respect to the tradition of the Apostles.

¹³³ Barnett, 35.

¹³⁴ Eduard Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1961), 187.

¹³⁵ Although the date of the *Didache* is controversial, for the scope of this paper, a date of approximately 100 A.D., based upon the findings of Stephen J. Patterson.; “Of course today, when the similarities between the *Didache* and *Barnabas*, or the *Shepherd of Hermas*, are no longer taken as proof that the *Didache* is literarily dependent upon these documents, the trend is to date the *Didache* much earlier, at least by the end of the first century or the beginning of the second.” *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press 1993), 173.

¹³⁶ *Didache* 15, (CCEL).

¹³⁷ St. Irenæus, *Against Heresies* 3.3, (CCEL).

He desired to keep their traditions and reinforced his arguments appealing to Apostolic legacy. It is most visible in his writing to the Corinthian church: “The Apostles knew that there would be strife of the bishop’s office. For this reason, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the officials mentioned earlier and afterwards (*bishops and deacons*), they gave the offices a permanent character.”¹³⁸

Clement though traditional, does not appear to endorse a standardization of terms, since he calls the leaders of the church at Corinth “bishops and deacons,” but he uses “presbyters” for these same leaders elsewhere.¹³⁹ He also uses the terms “bishops” and “presbyters” interchangeably.¹⁴⁰ With no solid documentation of individual church composition at the time, it is uncertain as to whether or not he is using formal titles which are unique at different churches, or if he is linguistically paralleling offices.

However, Clement did seek continuity. He sought to show the Church’s structure as an outflow of her Jewish heritage. He compares the bishop and presbyter to the Hebrew priest and the deacon to the Hebrew Levite. In a convoluted passage, Clement parallels Christian worship with its predecessor.

“Those, therefore, who present their offerings at the appointed times, are accepted and blessed; for inasmuch as they follow the laws of the Lord, they sin not. For his own peculiar services are assigned to the high priest, and their own proper place is prescribed to the priests, and their own special ministrations devolve on the Levites.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Clement, 44.1-2 Michael W. Holmes, “*The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings*.(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 77.

¹³⁹ Barnett, 45.

¹⁴⁰ Barnett, 44.

¹⁴¹ Clement, *1st epistle to the Corinthians XL* (CCEL).

And later, Clement seeks to firmly establish this chain of command on the basis of preexisting Scripture (which is not canonical as modern Baptists would recognize):

“They (*the Apostles*) appointed the first-fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, “I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons ‘in faith.’”¹⁴²

This may be why historians such as Pelikan state that the Early Churches’ view of priest was very closely tied to the Jewish roots, including within the family of “priesthood” various identities such as Jewish priests, Christ, the Church, apostles and bishops.¹⁴³ Reflecting on this era, Edward Echlin states that though, “the similarity between Jewish Levites and Christian deacons is striking,” the evidence does not support the implication that they were prototypes.¹⁴⁴

With respect to the Corinthian letter, “there is little intentional dogmatic teaching in the Epistle, for it is almost wholly hortatory.”¹⁴⁵ Thus Clement of Rome’s printed legacy is of benefit for his description of the time and does not in actuality prescribe a new structural form, but rather reinforces a traditional one.

¹⁴² Clement, *1st epistle to the Corinthians XLII* (CCEL).

¹⁴³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1:25.

¹⁴⁴ Edward Echlin, *The Deacon in the Church - Past and Future* (New York: Alba House, 1971), 4.

¹⁴⁵ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. s.v. “Clement.”

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (c. 117)

If the legend is to be believed, Ignatius is the small child Jesus picked up and blessed in Mark 9:35.¹⁴⁶ Regardless of this tale, there is more accuracy in the belief that he was the third bishop of Antioch, and a contemporary of (and possibly auditor of) the apostle John along with his contemporary Polycarp.¹⁴⁷ John Chrysostom lays special emphasis on the honor conferred upon Ignatius, believing he received his Episcopal consecration at the hands of the Apostles themselves.¹⁴⁸

The historian Eusebius states that the oldest collection of the writings of Ignatius was made up of the seven letters written on his way to Rome.¹⁴⁹ As the Catholic Encyclopedia states, "It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of the testimony which the Ignatian letters offer to the dogmatic character of Apostolic Christianity."¹⁵⁰ The Catholic faith points to the Ignatian letters as supporting "the hierarchy of the Church instituted by Christ; the threefold character of the hierarchy and the order of the episcopacy superior by Divine authority to that of the priesthood."¹⁵¹

In his writings, Ignatius is far more distinct in his definition of offices. Barnett states that Ignatius recognizes "[d]eacons as intimately connected with their bishop."¹⁵² This was significant for the churches were beginning "to become

¹⁴⁶ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Ignatius."

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Plater, 18.

'monepiscopate,' a term denoting rule of the local church by a council of presbyters (possibly including deacons) over which one bishop presides."¹⁵³

The overwhelming message of all the Ignatian letters is this: unity through submission and obedience. Ignatius sets his three fold view of leadership as follows: "In like manner let everyone respect the deacons as they would respect Jesus Christ, and just as they respect the bishop as a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and college of apostles. Without these no group can be called a church."¹⁵⁴

Apparently, though the office is fixed, deacons can, and even should be, mobile helpers to the encouragement of the Church. "Seeing...that the church which is in Antioch of Syria hath peace, it is becoming for you, as a church of God, to appoint a Deacon to go thither as God's ambassador, that he may congratulate them when they are assembled together, and may glorify the Name."¹⁵⁵ Barnett summarizes;

"Ignatius asks the Church at Ephesus to let their deacon, Burrhus, whom he describes as 'my fellow slave,' remain with him. But Burrhus is said to be a deacon of the Church at Ephesus, not of the bishop, and his position appears incidental to the request. The evidence in these letters indicates that the position of the deacon was that of a servant of the Church, who naturally at times acts to assist its leading officer."¹⁵⁶

SHEPHERD OF HERMAS (c. 125)

Another piece in the puzzle can be placed by the Shepherd of Hermas. His concept of church unity revolved around the strong interdependence of the officers.

¹⁵³ Barnett, 48-49.

¹⁵⁴ Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians* 3.1 (CCEL)

¹⁵⁵ Ignatius, *Letter to the Philadelphians*, 10 (CCEL).

¹⁵⁶ Barnett, pp. 51-52.

His imagery is flawless, “Hear now with regard to the stones which are in the building. Those square white stones which fitted exactly into each other are apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons, who have lived in godly purity, and have acted as bishops and teachers and deacons chastely and reverently to the elect of God.”¹⁵⁷

Very early in the post-apostolic age, the roles of officers and deacons were becoming far more defined. One belief is that this was precipitated by the movement of the Holy Spirit. The charismata with its prominence was becoming “rarer and rarer”¹⁵⁸ “By the end of the age of the apostolic fathers the leadership of the Church is clearly passing from the charismatically appointed apostles, prophets, and teachers of the primitive Church to the threefold orders of bishops, presbyters (or elders), and deacons.”¹⁵⁹ The new mantra was the Pauline concept of: “... all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner” (1 Cor 14:40).

POLYCARP (c. 155)

The contemporary of Ignatius, Polycarp the bishop of Smyrna, is best known for his legendary martyrdom. Although Polycarp did address a diaconal structure, his primary concern was for the character of the officers. He believed that the presbyters were to be compassionate and merciful, visiting, patient and impartial.¹⁶⁰ “Likewise the deacons should be blameless before his [God’s] righteousness, as servants of God and Christ and not of men; not slanderers, or double-tongued, not lovers of

¹⁵⁷ Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 3, 5.1 (CCEL).

¹⁵⁸ Pelican, 1:100.

¹⁵⁹ Barnett, 53.

¹⁶⁰ Polycarp, in his letter to the Phillipians, 6.1 (CCEL).

money, temperate in all matters, compassionate, careful, living according to the truth of the Lord, who became ‘a servant of all.’”¹⁶¹ His contribution reinforced the benevolent philanthropic work of the deacon and reinforced the need for them to be submissive, versus authoritative in demeanour.

JUSTIN MARTYR (c. 165)

By the time of Justin Martyr, deacons were depicted as primarily bishop assistants.¹⁶² The deacon’s duties now, though still tied to the church, were clearly directed. Justin Martyr gives us the first succinct description of the liturgical duties of a deacon and a reference point for the tasks they performed. “After the president has given thanks and all the people have shouted their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each one present to partake of the Eucharistic bread and wine and water; and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.”¹⁶³

By the middle of the second century, the deacon office and others were taking shape. Barnett summarized it this way,

“As the diaconate developed in this period deacons flourished in numbers and in importance. They oversaw the pastoral care of the Church. They were administrators of the Church’s charities. They were assistants of its bishops, often succeeding them in office. They had a major role in the Church’s liturgies. They were the great symbol of the servant ministry to which the Church has been called by Christ.”¹⁶⁴

Also, this was a time when the churches were starting to recognize that perhaps Christ’s return was not going to be as imminent as they first believed.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 211.

¹⁶² Plater, 19.

¹⁶³ Justin Martyr Apology I, section 64. (CCEL)

¹⁶⁴ Barnett, 43.

Pelikan stated: “The decline of eschatological hope and the rise of the monarchical episcopate are closely related phenomena already at work in the second century church.”¹⁶⁵ The desire for order and consistency was arising primarily in response to diversity of the churches.

IRENÆUS (c. 190)

Irenaeus stated that the Church’s continuity was, “guaranteed by apostolic office.”¹⁶⁶ However, this office did not restrict the typical Christian from doing ministry. Pelikan states that the “official” priesthood was not diminishing the concept of the laity in that the Fathers also equally defended a priesthood of all believers. “All the righteous have a priestly order, all the disciples are Levites and priests.”¹⁶⁷

TERTULLIAN (c. 200)

This concept was reiterated by Tertullian summarizing the thought in the following way: “all believers have the Spirit of God, but not all are apostles.”¹⁶⁸ Tertullian stated his interest in asserting the authority of the bishop was like that of Ignatius: “from his concern for the Church’s unity, for he explains that schism can easily follow when others assume the bishop’s functions.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Pelikan, 1:98.

¹⁶⁶ Harvey, *Irenaeus. Heresies* 4.8.8.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid* (CCEL).

¹⁶⁸ Tertullian, *Costit.* 7.3 (CCEL).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 5: 58.

DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM (≈ 220 AD)

The Didascalia Apostolorum is commonly viewed as a landmark work for the Early Church, summarizing the church's ritual and traditions.¹⁷⁰ This early third century document states that the deacon's work was so closely tied with the bishop's that it was as if they were "a single soul dwelling in two bodies."¹⁷¹ The goal for the office at this point in the development, was to be a physical link between the bishop or presbyter and the people.¹⁷² The deacons of the time were also often given duties similar to modern day ushers. They were described as:

"a full-time, paid factotum,.. one deacon stood by the oblations, and another guarded the door as the people entered. The deacon inside saw that each person went to the proper place (in a congregation segregated by ecclesiastical status, sex, and age), and prevented whispering, sleeping, laughter and signaling."¹⁷³

These duties appear to be quite utilitarian and not quite the high calling perceived from earlier writings. The writers made a distinction between those offices that required ordination, and those that were filled by appointment.

"Ordination required the laying on of hands by the bishop and prayer over the candidate," and "appointment was a matter of being selected and recognized."¹⁷⁴

Also, within the same document there was an attempt to give direction to the number of deacons necessary in specific congregations proportionate to the

¹⁷⁰ Didascalia Apostolorum, in J. A. McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

¹⁷¹ Plater, 21.

¹⁷² Jeannine E. Olson, *One Ministry, Many Roles: Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1992), 33.

¹⁷³ Plater, 21.

¹⁷⁴ Olson, 32.

congregation size. In places such as Rome, the number of deacons was fixed at seven.¹⁷⁵

But the deacon was now, a century after Ignatius, first to take care of all the work that he could, reflected in the increase of the numbers in the churches. With the added responsibilities thrust upon the bishop as leader of the local Church, the bishop had become somewhat more remote than previously.¹⁷⁶ This made the deacon far more visible as a contact point for the masses.

Yet, although deacons were visible, this did not mean they took on the important role of preacher:

“The assertion that deacons preached as a matter of their office in the early Church is clearly contrary to the evidence. The function belonged normally to the president of the Eucharistic assembly, and except when deacons functioned in that capacity as an extraordinary act, there is very little, if any, reason to believe that they preached before the Church.”¹⁷⁷

HIPPOLYTUS (c. 236)

The progression becomes most obvious with Hippolytus. He is clear in the chain of command, with the bishop being *a priori*. In his order of ordination, it is described as follows...

“In ordaining a deacon, the bishop alone lays hands, because [a deacon] is ordained not to the priesthood but to the servanthood of the bishop, to carry out commands. [A deacon] does not take part in the council of the clergy, but attends to duties and makes known to the bishop what is necessary

...After the silence, the bishop prays:

God, who created all things and set them in order by the Word, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you sent to serve your will and to show us your desires, give the Holy Spirit of grace and care and diligence to this your

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 67.

¹⁷⁷ Barnett, 82.

*servant, whom you have chosen to serve your church and to offer [to bring forward] in your holy of holies the gifts which are offered you by your high priests, so that serving without blame and with a pure heart, he may be counted worthy of this high office and glorify you through your Servant Jesus Christ.*¹⁷⁸

Plater describes this initiation as a teaching tool, showing that the laity elect the deacon chosen by God to a role, but that position was neither laity nor clergy. The key was that these were orderly appointments, flowing from a God of order.¹⁷⁹

CYPRIAN (c. 250)

To ensure orthodoxy, Cyprian believed that the unity of the church was to be found in the unity of the bishops.¹⁸⁰ Without the physical apostle's authority, the Church was now looking for a new reliable source. This desire birthed a greater dependence on tradition, specifically an "apostolic tradition."

There was a desire to keep order within the church through offices. "I have done what I could to quiet their minds, and have instructed them to maintain ecclesiastical discipline."¹⁸¹ This structure was developing into substrata with Cyprian acknowledging new levels within the diaconate, i.e. "I had read your letter which you lately wrote hither to my clergy by Crementius the sub-deacon."¹⁸²

The structure was firmly established by this point, with titles and duties gaining greater importance. "But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is bishops and overseers; while apostles appointed for themselves

¹⁷⁸ Hippolytus in H. Boone Porter Jr., *The Ordination Prayers of the Ancient Western Churches* Alcuin Club Collections 49 (London: SPCK, 1967), 10.

¹⁷⁹ Pelikan, 1:155.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.159.

¹⁸¹ Cyprian, Epistle 14 To the Presbyters and Deacons Assembled at Rome. Section 2 (CCEL).

¹⁸² Cyprian, Epistle 14.3 (CCEL).

deacons after the ascent of the Lord into heaven, as ministers of their episcopacy and of the church.”¹⁸³

THE FOURTH CENTURY

In determining order, especially in light of the apostolic tradition, it was only natural that the bishop came to be considered the highest official. Next in line would come the presbyters for they were normally older, and in some churches, they governed by a council of presbyters. Finally, the deacons, normally being younger and actively serving the Church in their distinctive functions both pastorally and liturgically, naturally came to be thought of as ranking after the bishops and presbyters.¹⁸⁴

At approximately the same time, there were exceptions being made to a deacon’s authority, yet only when his overseers are absent. Canon 77 of the Council of Elvira, c. 306, is unambiguous in this regard when it refers to a deacon who “takes care” of a congregation without either a bishop or presbyter. “If a deacon serving a community without a bishop or presbyter baptizes, the bishop shall then give his blessing to those baptized.”¹⁸⁵ Thus any authority a deacon had would be short lived.

THE CONSTANTINIAN ERA

A summary of the development of deacons could best be described as follows: “[A]fter the peace of Constantine in 313, the church gradually shifted from a

¹⁸³ Cyprian, Epistle 64.2 (CCEL).

¹⁸⁴ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “deacons.”

¹⁸⁵ Bingham, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, 9.8.4-5, in Pelikan 3:413-18.

small and familiar organism to a large and often remote organization.”¹⁸⁶ Following the adoption of the Constantinian policy of toleration for Christianity and equality for all religions by the co-emperors at Milan in 313, radical changes took place in the Church’s ministry in the course of the century.¹⁸⁷ The church no longer had to fight for survival, which it had needed to do since its inception. It could be said that this new environment mutated the church.

The Council of Nicea, a Constantinian document, dealt specifically with church hierarchy and limited the deacon’s importance.

“It has come to the knowledge of the holy and great Synod that, in some districts and cities, the deacons administer the Eucharist to the presbyters, whereas neither canon nor custom permits that they who have no right to offer should give the Body of Christ to them that do offer. And this also has been made known, that certain deacons now touch the Eucharist even before the bishops. Let all such practices be utterly done away, and let the deacons remain within their own bounds, knowing that they are the ministers of the bishop and the inferiors of the presbyters. Let them receive the Eucharist according to their order, after the presbyters, and let either the bishop or the presbyter administer to them. Furthermore, let not the deacons sit among the presbyters, for that is contrary to canon and order. And if, after this decree, any one shall refuse to obey, let him be deposed from the diaconate.”¹⁸⁸

The deacons were to be servants, yet primarily through their obedience to Christ through church structure. It is interesting to note that a few decades later a new title would form showing a new type of deacon. Barnett explains...

“Although it is ordinarily assumed today that the title “archdeacon” was created to designate the chief deacon, such was not the case. It originally was used to designate the ‘bishop’s deacon.’ This point is the more significant when it is remembered that the first mention of the archdeacon comes c. 365 after the emergence of the diocese. It is clear that, although the bishop in many places did have a deacon to minister as his assistant,

¹⁸⁶ Plater, 17.

¹⁸⁷ Barnett, 92.

¹⁸⁸ Canon 18, Council of Nicea (CCEL).

most deacons did not serve under a diocesan bishop after the emergence of the diocese.”

THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

The Apostolic Constitutions, written near the end of the fourth century, show pieces of how hierarchical the church had become. First, the Constitutions show how highly to exalt the bishop.¹⁸⁹ “For now the deacon is to you Aaron, and the bishop Moses. If therefore Moses was called a god by the Lord, let the bishop be honored among you as a god, and the deacon as his prophet.”¹⁹⁰

It also shows the active nature of the deacon amongst the community.

“Let the deacons be in all things unspotted, as the bishop himself is to be, only more active; in number according to the largeness of the church, that they may minister to the infirm as workmen that are not ashamed. And let the deaconess be diligent in taking care of the women; but both of them ready to carry messages, to travel about, to minister, and to serve. ... It is your duty who are deacons to visit all those who stand in need of visitation. The presbyter is only to teach, to offer, to baptize, to bless the people, and the deacon is to minister to the bishop, and to the presbyters, that is, to do the office of a ministering deacon, but not to meddle with the other offices.”

Under this new order, deacons could however take a more prominent role.

Olson makes the point upon evaluating sections 2.57 and 2.47 of the Apostolic Constitutions respectively that “... because the liturgy was becoming more elaborate and congregations were becoming larger, the work of deacons in worship increased. Deacons took over the reading of the Gospel from the readers in some churches and chanted parts of the liturgy.” She goes on to state: “*The Apostolic Constitutions*

¹⁸⁹ Apostolic Constitution, McGuckin, J. A. *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004)

¹⁹⁰ Apostolic Constitution, 2.30.

reveal the presence of deacons on panels with other clerics to adjudicate quarrels among Christians... *deacons* served as bishops' representatives to church councils and meetings."¹⁹¹ Thus their authority was still primarily ambassadorial.

Yet, as ambassadors, deacons were highly esteemed. "The church of late antiquity compared deacons to angelic orders and clothed them in white albs or tunics for their liturgical participation."¹⁹²

A NEW IDENTITY:

The prominence of Christianity flourished within the new Christo-friendly empire to the extent that, "in A.D. 380-382, the Emperor Theodosius, through decrees and church councils, required that people of the empire practice orthodox Christianity."¹⁹³ By a single royal pronouncement, the fringe faith became the state religion.

Perhaps due to the new position of power that the Church experienced, it did not need to fear confusion with its Jewish predecessor. The threefold order of the church which existed since Clement was now being renamed.

"The presbyter was termed a "priest," a sacerdos or hiericus, designations the apostolic Church clearly refused to use, instead of 'presbyter' or 'elder'. 'Priesthood' now is thought of as belonging to the presbyterate instead of being 'the function of all members of the church with the bishop as 'high-priest,' an important impoverishment."¹⁹⁴

Therefore, one should not be surprised by the language of Jerome who wrote in the late fourth or early fifth century. He draws comparison to the Jewish tradition

¹⁹¹ Olson, pp. 56, 58.

¹⁹² Barnett, pp. 200-205.

¹⁹³ W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church: From the beginnings to 461* (London: SCM, 1992), pp.175-177.

¹⁹⁴ G. Dix, "The Ministry of the Early Church," K.E. Kirk, ed. *The Apostolic Ministry*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957), 282.

with priests and Levites, “Bishops, presbyters and deacons occupy in the church the same positions as those which were occupied by Aaron, his sons, and the Levites in the temple.”¹⁹⁵ He also reports that presbyters at Rome are ordained only on recommendation of a deacon; and, were “less thought of,”¹⁹⁶ an anomaly for the highly organized church. He clearly directs the churches in his epistles: “Each church has a single bishop, a single archpresbyter, a single archdeacon; and every ecclesiastical order is subjected to its own rulers.”¹⁹⁷

As times changed, like the Roman Empire, the Church was becoming highly structured. “The shaping of the Church through a hierarchical structure in its clerical ministry from the plenitude of the greatest to the paucity of the least on the basis not of *diakonia* or service but of office has obscured the essential nature of the Church, so much so that we hardly comprehend the admonition that “other clergy” are not permitted to do the work of a deacon. The organic character of the Church’s ministry was destroyed.”¹⁹⁸ The deacon was no longer a joyful end in itself but rather, “the diaconate gradually became a rung on the ladder toward the priesthood.”¹⁹⁹

Dix builds upon this argument by stating, “The transformation here stands in marked contrast to the old organic structure of the Church and its ministry of the pre-Nicene period. Prior to the fourth century, the Church’s ministry was one in which every person had a part and each functioned for the benefit of the whole. Offices

¹⁹⁵ S.L. Greenslade, Ed. *Early Latin Theology*. The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 5. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956). Jerome, Epistle. 146.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 388

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Williams, “Ante-Nicene,” 29.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

were not thought of in terms of orders but in terms of functions: each relating to the others. But by the end of the fourth century a radical transformation had taken place in the structure of the Church's ministry, which affected the basic character of the Church itself. In fact the, post-Constantinian church had "office(s) that became a full-time occupation for many bishops, presbyters, and deacons, who became dependent upon ecclesiastical revenues for support."²⁰⁰

The old "horizontal" concept and structure were replaced by one that was "vertical" and "hierarchical."²⁰¹ Reynolds argues that the configuration of the day consisted of, "eight grades ... doorkeeper, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, presbyter, and bishop."²⁰²

It is possible to see the offices tied to a believer's age. According to Church Orders of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, which varied over time and space, deacons were ordained at 25 years of age and presbyters at 30 years of age. This age difference may have made it seem natural to think of deacons as junior.²⁰³

Yet, to emphasize the official capacity by more than simply age: "[T]he presbyters came to be thought of as possessing certain liturgical functions denied to both deacons and laypeople. This was increasingly thought of as the presbyter's right, not merely as a concession from the bishop."²⁰⁴ The issue of the presbyters' power in the hierarchy was a dichotomy. "Even after the tradition was established that a priest passed through the minor orders, the office of presbyter was frequently

²⁰⁰ Olson, 51.

²⁰¹ Dix, 282.

²⁰² Roger E. Reynolds, "A Florilegium on the Ecclesiastical Grades," *The Harvard Theological Review* 63, no. 2 (Apr., 1970): 242.

²⁰³ Olson referring to, "Canons of Neocaesarea," Canon 11, in Stevenson, *New Eusebius*, 313.

²⁰⁴ Paul F. Bradshaw, "*Liturgical Presidency in the Early Church*," *Grove Liturgical Study* 36 (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1983): 27.

skipped by deacons who became bishops.”²⁰⁵ Centuries later, some bishops continued to come directly from the diaconate, such as Hildebrand, who was archdeacon and still in the diaconal office when chosen bishop of Rome (Pope Gregory VII, r. 1073-1085).²⁰⁶

Modern Catholic scholars believe that they do have the structure correct.

Rausch states:

“Study of Scripture alone does not yield a complete theory of apostolic succession in the ministry. It does not give clear information about the specific role of bishops as distinct from presbyters and others, nor does it tell us much about succession in the Petrine office. Regarding such matters we must draw on the resources of tradition. But even from Scripture alone it is possible to conclude that Christ instituted an authoritative apostolic ministry which was maintained in full force throughout the New Testament period.”²⁰⁷

This ecclesial form is foundational to the Catholic Praxis. Dix goes on to say, “This structure has continued to the present time essentially unchanged, at least in Catholic Christendom.”²⁰⁸

THE GREAT SCHISM:

The next thousand years saw little if any change in the structure of the Church. Even the orthodox split of 1054, though colorful, primarily dealt with East and West relations, and questions of supremacy at the patriarchal level. There was no issue over the “minor” ecclesial orders, such as deacon; thus it is not in the scope of this paper to discuss the split between the churches.

²⁰⁵ Olson, 67.

²⁰⁶ Barnett, 82.

²⁰⁷ Rausch, Thomas P., Ed. *Catholics and Evangelicals, do they share a common future?* (Paulist Press, New Jersey, 2000), 116.

²⁰⁸ Dix, 282.

THE MIDDLE AGES:

During the Middle Ages, deacons were affixed to the work of benevolence. Although they were the primary benevolent officers of the Church, laypeople also participated in helping the poor through “poor tables,” or charity funds, at the parish level. In the Holy Roman Empire and in the Low Countries (modern Belgium and the Netherlands), the expression referred to an actual table near the door of the church that was used to make distributions.²⁰⁹

The deacon’s roles were being challenged from without and within. “The diaconal role in social welfare and property administration declined and as deacons became subordinate to priests, (while at the same time) the medieval theologians restricted the sacramental role of the deacon.”²¹⁰ Thus the emasculated “deacon had moved into a role that was almost exclusively liturgical” by the fifteenth century.²¹¹

Hitherto, whatever was lost in function of the church offices, they were still defined as “holy” in themselves. Sourcing a medieval scholar, Pelikan states, “Thus also the Catholic Church is called ‘holy’, not on account of the holiness of all that are present in it, since many of them are sinners, but on account of its holy offices and on account of the holiness of the sacraments that are present in it.”²¹² Thus the structure supports the existence of the Church.

²⁰⁹ Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages, An Essay in Social History*, trs. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 139.

²¹⁰ Olson, 90.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²¹² Henry of Kalteisen “On the Free Proclamation of the Word of God [De libera praedicatione verbi Dei] (Mansi 29:977) as quoted in Pelikan 4:92.

LUTHER

Luther challenged the Church's (being the Roman Church's) concept of priesthood. He railed against the exclusivity tied to the priestly office.

“The title of priest did not belong to the clerical estate in the church. In the most fundamental sense, only Christ was a true priest, for he was the sole Mediator between God and man. Derivatively, the title applied to all believers, whom Christ by baptism admitted to the priesthood. The ordained ‘priests’, as we call them; are ministers chosen from among us. All that they do is done in our name; the priesthood is nothing but a ministry.”²¹³

Olson states, “The Reformation eliminated intermediaries – be they priests or saints – between God and the individual. These teachings had profound implications for church office that even today have not been fully worked out by Protestants.”²¹⁴

There appeared to be little concern on Luther's part regarding appointment or apostolic succession. Of preeminence to Luther was the Scripture, and he would not equate with it the tradition and continuity of the episcopate.²¹⁵ This did not mean that ministry was insignificant, but on the contrary, it was so important to faith that “to obtain such justifying faith, God instituted the office of the ministry.”²¹⁶

The apostolic continuity on which the church was founded rested on three criteria that were being challenged by the reformers. First, the revelation that the apostles had “handed down to us in the Scriptures as the pillar and bulwark of our faith,”²¹⁷ the doctrinal and creedal “tradition that is derived from the apostles,”²¹⁸ and finally, the ecclesiastical structure represented by those who by the apostles

²¹³ Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (6 October 1520) in Pelikan 6:564.

²¹⁴ Olson., 107.

²¹⁵ Pelikan 4:176.

²¹⁶ Augsburg Confession, 5.1. (CCEL)

²¹⁷ Harvey, 2:2.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:7-8.

instituted bishops in the churches, and the succession of these men in our time, particularly at Rome.”²¹⁹

Luther’s influence was not solely within the walls of the cathedral, for his reforms were shaping Wittenberg itself. In fact, with respect to the deacon, the primary benevolent servant of the church, the emerging political structures affected their role considerably. The result was that “religious orders and confraternities were disbanded or gradually disappeared. This had profound implications for church-run social welfare and education.”²²⁰

On January 24, 1522, the Wittenberg City Council passed a Church Order that organized a welfare system, a “common chest” to assist the poor.²²¹ The distribution team, called deacons, was made up of “two from the city council, two from the citizens at large, and a secretary. The secretary collected money, supervised distribution of aid, and kept the books.”²²²

This community reform spread and impacted the role of deacons in other communities such as Braunschweig in 1528. This community held two common chests recommended for large parishes rather than one. “The first chest was the poor chest for those in need; a second chest, the church chest, provided for church supplies and repairs; the salaries of preachers, sacristans, and organists; and housing for preachers and schoolmasters.”²²³ The oversight of these funds was entrusted to, “deacons chosen by the council and members of the commune.”²²⁴

²¹⁹ Ibid., 2:8-9.

²²⁰ Ibid. 107.

²²¹ Ibid., 110.

²²² Grinum, “Luther’s Contributions to Poor Relief,” 225-26 as quoted in Olson, 110.

²²³ J.Kidd (ed.), *Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp.230-33.

²²⁴ Ibid.

There were to be three deacons for the poor chest and four for the church chest, but “the sets of deacons differed because the four deacons of the church chest”²²⁵ had “authority from the commune in company with the council to appoint a preacher.”²²⁶

Another factor to note is that during Luther’s time, the deacon term was not exclusively for ecclesial use. “Besides being associated with social welfare, the word *deacon* came to designate an assistant minister in Germany.”²²⁷

CALVIN

If Luther sounded the trumpet for reform, Calvin orchestrated the score by which the Reformation became a part of Western civilization. Though the fullness of reform may have been superimposed on the authors of reformation, there were many areas where the fathers of reformation stood on the same side as the Holy Roman Church. For example, Calvin and his colleagues stressed “the continuity of the ages” as assured by “the transmission of the true doctrine of faith” through the Catholic centuries.²²⁸ This happened when the Radicals of the Reformation, who took such “delight in the novelty of things,” rejected infant baptism or the trinitarian creeds in the name of the authority of Scripture as the word of God.²²⁹

Thus, “Apostolic continuity was a standard around which several different – and opposing – theological armies could rally.”²³⁰ Calvin believed in: “[F]our orders

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Olson, 117.

²²⁸ Pelikan., 4:304.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

of office instituted by our Lord for the government of the church. These are pastors or ministers, doctors (teachers), elders, and deacons.”²³¹

Calvin appealed to Scripture over tradition for the ritual of ordaining deacons.

He states in a sermon on Acts 6:1-3:

“St. Luke reports in this passage that, after they had elected deacons, the apostles laid their hands on them to show that they had been dedicated to God (as in all the sacrifices made under the law it was necessary to lay on hands, as we see discussed in Moses). The apostles kept that order. And even today, it would not be a bad idea if we had this ceremony; for if we reject human superstitions and inventions, that is not to say that we despise what is of God and His apostles.”²³²

Calvin also supported a duality in the deacon role, and he found a biblical basis for this two-part division of the diaconate in Romans 12: 6-8. In interpreting this text, Calvin described what has sometimes been called the double diaconate.²³³

“When Paul speaks here of givers, he does not mean those who give their own possessions, but (technically) the deacons who are charged with the distribution of the public property of the Church.”²³⁴

SUMMARIES OF LUTHER AND CALVIN ON DEACONS

Olson summarizes the reformers’ view clearly with respect to the diaconate:

“On the issue of deacons and social welfare, Luther and Calvin were similar because they both (1) looked to Scripture and the early church for their model of the diaconate, (2) thought of the seven chosen to help the poor in Acts 6:1-6 as the first deacons, (3) preferred deacons who were active in poor relief to the medieval diaconate, (4) disparaged the liturgical roles of deacons

²³¹ W. Stanford Reid, (ed.), *Calvin: His Influence in the Western World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1982), 66.

²³² Elsie Anne McKee, *John Calvin: On the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1984), pp.151-52.

²³³ Olson, 126.

²³⁴ McKee, 195.

in the Catholic Church, (5) were actively interested in civic welfare programs, (6) and wanted begging abolished.”²³⁵

Yet there were differences. Luther seemed ambivalent as to whether or not the church kept the deacon title exclusive as long as the work was done. In contrast, Calvin sought to keep the ecclesial structure, albeit modified into a double diaconate.²³⁶

ANNABAPTISTS

Though there is a small indication of diaconal activity in the Annabaptist's birth, their appeal was to the tradition of the apostles in a purely functional way. They interpreted the ἀπόστολοι as the “sent” people.²³⁷ In this way they made an apostolic claim - a position created not through human tradition, but instead by divine commission.

When it came to church offices, “Anabaptists, like Zwingli, felt that practices not authenticated by clear biblical example, should be eliminated from church life.”²³⁸ Thus, rather than creedal they were more confessional. In so doing, they would attract other like-minded persons with their statements. “While they had no generally binding creeds, Anabaptist individuals and congregations issued such statements, some doing so as formulae of union between various branches.”²³⁹

The Anabaptists gave prominence to the New Testament ministry of the deacon. In fact, the Anabaptist Mennonite movement established the office of

²³⁵ Olson, 133.

²³⁶ Ibid., 133.

²³⁷ Pelikan, 4:316.

²³⁸ Olson, 119.

²³⁹ William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 10.

deacon as an ordained office.²⁴⁰ Although the purely ecclesial deacons in many reform movements were lessening in their direct benevolent role as the state intervened, this was not the case in Anabaptist communities. Their deacons held a vital role in meeting the economic needs of the community, primarily due to the fact that “the separation of Anabaptists from established churches and civil governments would have made integration into state welfare systems difficult, so they strove to become self-sufficient and to meet their needs within their own communities.”²⁴¹ The deacon’s role in this community was fluid. “Many Anabaptist deacons had pastoral duties, others had served as deacons before they became pastors, and some appear to have been the pastors of the community.”²⁴²

THE RESULT OF THE REFORMATION:

As the Reformation spread in both intensity and geographically, the theological implication was not reform but revolution, drawing every presupposition and structure into question. In the sixteenth century, Protestants had broken with the medieval view of the diaconate as a transitional office leading to the priesthood. They had attempted to restore deacons to the functions and roles they had held in Scripture and the Early Church: helping the poor, which meant giving deacons a role in social welfare.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Olson, 131.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., 133.

²⁴³ Ibid.

The biblical role of deacon was starting to reemerge into prominence. However, it would not take long before the new budding denominations would structure offices as rigidly as their predecessor.

CHAPTER THREE - THE TRADITION OF THE BAPTIST DEACON

It is important to restate that the purpose of this thesis is to recognize that there is much confusion regarding the current state of deacons within our construct. In fact, it is difficult not to be impressed by the uncertainties and ambiguity surrounding the life and work of deacons.²⁴⁴ “A growing uncertainty about the adequacy of traditional patterns and a deep hunger to provide a ministry and leadership for today’s church increase the apprehension of many, even among those who are not deacons.”²⁴⁵

A BIBLICAL MODEL?

Baptists are truly children of the Reformation, seeking to primarily find their roots in the early, uncorrupted Church of Jesus Christ. From their beginning, their all-sufficient guide and foundation of faith and practice has been the Scriptures.²⁴⁶ As Baptists sought to organize themselves, they turned to the Bible to find a pattern, since “one of the instincts of the church is to turn to the Scriptures for guidance in times of perplexity and confusion.”²⁴⁷

Yet, Scripture was not conclusive on ecclesial forms. Nevertheless, Baptists did try to standardize the Scriptures. John Smyth stated in the early seventeenth century: “That Christ hath set in His outward church two sorts of ministers; viz.,

²⁴⁴ Donald F. Thomas, *The Deacon in a Changing Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969), 28.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁴⁶ Gaines Stanley Dobbins, *Baptist Churches in Action: A study of New Testament Principles and modern methods of Application* (Nashville: Sunday School Board, 1929), 11.

²⁴⁷ Thomas, 12.

some who are called pastors, teachers or elders, who administer in the word and sacraments, and others who are called deacons, men and women; whose ministry is to serve tables and wash the saints' feet.”²⁴⁸

Modern Baptist scholars state that “Baptists did oversimplify the New Testament data... biblical scholarship has demonstrated that the form of the ministry in the primitive churches was too varied to be reduced to a single pattern.”²⁴⁹ This is not simply a matter of ministry, but also ecclesiology. “In fact, New Testament and historical students have clearly demonstrated that the early Christian communities followed varying patterns of worship and church organization.”²⁵⁰ These “multiple lines of historical development have given rise to the conflicting ecclesiological theories and ecclesiastical forms of present day organized Christianity.”²⁵¹

Therefore, the modern concept of determining how to organize a Baptist structure involves looking at the Scriptures in order to understand descriptive models, as opposed to exposing prescriptive plans. In this context, there is more flexibility. Dobbins states: “[H]aving laid the foundation of the church, He (Jesus) did not announce detailed plans which would be outgrown with every changing circumstance, but he gave abiding principles which find their application in every time and space.”²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion, 1612-14 (w.l. Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions of Faith p. 138, Art. 76) as quoted in Thomas, 36.

²⁴⁹ Norman H. Maring and Winthrop S. Hudson. *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice: Revised Edition* (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1991), 88.

²⁵⁰ Thomas, 13.

²⁵¹ Duke K. McCall (ed.) *What is the Church?* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 3.

²⁵² Dobbins, 15.

STANDARDIZATION

The resulting dilemma is the question of consistent structures within Baptist churches. “Two tendencies may result: On the one hand, the Christians may be tempted to careless fragmentation and anarchy in matters of church polity, and, on the other hand, they may become purely pragmatic, directed by activistic impulses, transient interests or hunger for ‘success.’”²⁵³

Baptists typically recognize that where Scripture is not absolute, there must be an autonomy for the local church. At the crux of autonomy is the reality that “in the conduct of its (the Baptist church’s) own internal affairs, it is absolutely independent.”²⁵⁴ In fact, “the unity of the New Testament churches was a unity in diversity, there is no trace of enforced uniformity of practice or belief.”²⁵⁵

Therein is the admission that the church is alive, thus its outward form will vary from other churches within the same denomination. Within certain limits, her organization is flexible and adaptations may be made to meet changing conditions.²⁵⁶

The question arises as to what those “certain limits” are. As with orthodoxy, denominations such as Baptist seek to clarify and simplify what they believe and practice. These often take the form of documentation agreed upon by congregations, associations, societies, conventions and even denominations. Later in this thesis, this subject will be explored in depth for the congregations who are member churches of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches.

²⁵³ Thomas, 29.

²⁵⁴ Gordon C. Warren. *Basic Baptist Beliefs* (Canadian Baptist Federation)

²⁵⁵ Dobbins, 16.

²⁵⁶ Maring, 90.

Unfortunately, even when there is liberty in interpretation, many wholeheartedly believe that only their interpretation is correct. McCall puts it this way:

“All Christians bring to New Testament study conceptions and misconceptions which have developed in the course of their varied and divergent denominational histories. Specific forms, traditions, and dogmatic formulas have not only become dear but have also conditioned thinking until they may be regarded as absolute truths.”²⁵⁷

It is important that there be “caution about endowing diaconal practices one sees in his own church with unusual sanctity, because there is simply no traditionally universal form of Baptist practice of very long standing.”²⁵⁸ One historian believes the diversity is positive. “At least we cannot get so busy following blueprints and organizational diagrams of the early church that we miss other imperatives which we face today.”²⁵⁹

Therefore, rather than restrict churches to one form, there has been a national recognition of the denominations’ range of interpretation. Less than twenty years ago, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec stated in a working paper that “local congregations choose others to share with the pastors the leadership, pastoral care, and oversight of the congregation.”²⁶⁰ What is glaringly obvious to the traditionalist is the omission of the term “deacon,” but not their purpose.

OFFICE

“The place of the diaconate in the Christian church is secure. Virtually every communion provides for the office of deacon though there may be widely differing

²⁵⁷ McCall, 2.

²⁵⁸ Thomas, 53.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 17.

²⁶⁰ *This We Believe: Resources For Faith* (BCOQ: Toronto, 1990) 7.2.4.

descriptions of the measuring and responsibilities which belong to the position and differing names for it.”²⁶¹ These are the words of Donald Thomas in the 1960’s, and for the most part his words ring true today.

Most churches still keep the term deacon because, “[t]he deaconate is in a sense the conservator of the past, holding in its role as steward of the best practices and traditions of the church of the ages that which is lasting eternal and valid in the Christian faith.”²⁶²

However, Baptists recognize there have been more than two offices in the history of the Church. The Canadian Baptist Federation working group document, circa 1987, points to four officers noted in Ephesians 4. They are apostles, prophets (who were wandering preachers), evangelists (who were wandering missionaries) and the pastor-teachers (who were the settled workers).²⁶³ This concept of officers was further narrowed by scholars: “[T]he Apostolate, was a special provision by Christ for a special purpose, and was not perpetuated.”²⁶⁴ Then, another officer was eliminated shortly thereafter: “The Christian prophets vanished within a century because they were the first to suffer persecution under the Romans, they conflicted with the local church organization and their office was liable to abuse.”²⁶⁵

Thus:

“The work of apostles, prophets, and evangelists prepares for and culminates in the work of pastors and teachers (two functions of the same group). These latter lead in the developing of converts in their duties, their function, their organization, their Christian living ‘worthy of the gospel.’ Paul

²⁶¹ Thomas, 11.

²⁶² Ibid., 105.

²⁶³ Watts (ed.) *Ordinances: a Project of a Working Group of the Canadian Baptist Federation* (Mississauga, 1987), 24.

²⁶⁴ Charles A. Jenkins, *Baptist Doctrines* (St. Louis: Chancy R. Barns, 1885), 212.

²⁶⁵ Watts, p24.

said that the function of each group looks to the equipment of all the saints for the work of ministering. The ultimate end is a continuous, harmonious, effective progress of the entire body, ever increasing in love as it becomes the body of the Christ."²⁶⁶

Even within the denomination's own history, other offices were entertained at one time or another. For example in the late nineteenth century:

"In some cases a Baptist church also elected a ruling elder to assist the pastor in governing church and in some there was a teaching elder to help with the educational aspect of the work. Neither of these offices had any function independent of the pastoral duties, however and they did not become permanent among Baptists."²⁶⁷

Office, as a designation, is a rarely used term in CABC churches. There was and is a strong reaction to the Roman Catholic concept that offices are sacramental in their own right. Watts, on behalf of Canadian Baptists, stated that, "We believe that ordination is to a function rather than to a person, to a form of ministry rather than to holy orders."²⁶⁸ Thus the predominant form of the diaconate in Baptist Churches is called the Board of Deacons.

BOARD OF DEACONS

In most local churches there is a singularity of the pastor, and a plurality of deacons. How Baptist deacons organized themselves, from the 1840's on, has been typically in a board format.²⁶⁹ Writings of this time state that "in the Baptist churches,

²⁶⁶ McCall, 5.

²⁶⁷ Maring, 87.

²⁶⁸ Watts, 28.

²⁶⁹ Charles W. Deweese, *The Emerging Role Of Deacons* (Nashville: Broadman, 1979), 41.

the deacons ... are a board of directors, and have charge of all the secular affairs in the kingdom of Christ.”²⁷⁰

This organization, flowing from the pre-twentieth century Baptist concept of only two offices, led to the Board of Deacons having great power. They became the Mother Board to which all the other boards and committees reported. Foshee states that the board concept is evidenced when “all major recommendations from church organizations and committees are screened by the deacons to determine whether they should go to the congregation.”²⁷¹

This meant that not only in title, but also in practice, the deacons were in charge of all temporal matters of the church. But even the clergy would fall under their domain.²⁷² This accountability structure provided the bridge between laity and clergy. These deacons’ boards also held the purse strings, making sure “the use of or expenditure of major church resources, such as facilities and finances, was first approved by the deacons.”²⁷³

Some churches cling to this tradition or are looking to reintroduce it. There are many reasons to promote a single board system. For example, it utilizes the best leadership from among a small group of people, and it is more efficient to have the total program under a single board, rather than to divide responsibilities among several discrete groups which often become competitive.²⁷⁴ If one of the key goals

²⁷⁰ RBC Howell, *The Deaconship: It's Nature, Qualifications, Relations & Duties* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1846), 11.

²⁷¹ Howard B. Foshee, *The Ministry of a Deacon* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1968), 33.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Thomas, 116.

of the deacons is to provide harmony within the church, then a structure that would minimize infighting would be advisable.

Communication and strategy within a single board is definitely advantageous. This way, the minister is not the only link between several programs and various phases of the life of the church.²⁷⁵ Also, having all people in policy making positions on one board provides agreement on implementation and financing as well as on policy. This arrangement often provides a cross section of the congregation more readily than is possible with several boards.²⁷⁶

Yet, there is a fear when decision making and planning is localized. Deweese notes that common complaints are: it is possible for power to become too centralized, fewer people will be actively involved, a few strong persons on one central board can easily dominate the total program, and something is lost by way of checks and balances.²⁷⁷ These all appear to be trust issues. Another ultimate concern is that “the work of the board can include so many details that it will never get on to the major concerns it should face.”²⁷⁸

By the twentieth century, there was a new emphasis forming within Baptist churches, moving away from a pure board system. Congregants were frowning “upon the idea of deacons being too closely aligned with church business and they cautioned against the misuse of power by deacons.”²⁷⁹ There was a new focus placed on the care role of the diaconate. The movement recognized that “deacons

²⁷⁵ Thomas, 116.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Deweese, 50.

have spiritual duties to perform other than those related to church business and the ordinances (i.e. providing for the poor, the sick, care for the pastor, etc.).”²⁸⁰

This emphasis expanded to the point that in many churches, the business portion of the Deacons’ Board was being reallocated to another group, such as a church council. Foshee, for one, suggests that a deacon’s work is separate from a church council’s work. “The church council provides the congregation with a group of responsible leaders to whom it can look for planning, coordinating and evaluating a church’s work.”

These councils become the guardians of the church organizationally and administratively. The council’s work is to formulate and recommend to the congregation suggested church objectives. Goals are then developed and recommended to the congregation as action plans. The council is also to provide oversight by reviewing and coordinating suggested program plans. In addition, councils oversee church officers, organizations and committees, and seek to provide adequate communication amongst the church as a whole. The council moreover reviews and reports the use of resources along with evaluating program achievements.²⁸¹ A council, as described above, has all the characteristics of the biblical office of overseer.

Some believe that this move is proper, while others believe that it makes the Deacons’ Board impotent and subservient. In reflecting upon this, Hiscox states that

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Foshee, 42.

“the office is becoming far too little esteemed.”²⁸² It brings into question the whole realm of authority.

GOVERNANCE

The movement from a traditional board, with all its power, has reignited an issue once thought non-negotiable: the question of governance. Just as there have been historical interpretations of officers in the church, there are also historical interpretations of how authority is to be exercised within the Church.

The first form, predominant in the Early Church Fathers, Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodox, is collegial governance. “In this context, authority resides with the pope and the bishops. All decisions that involve doctrine and practice within the church are determined by this college of bishops guided by the action of synods and councils.”²⁸³ This is the ultimate hierarchy since the local body of believers’ role is to be the recipients of authority.

The second variety is the Episcopal form of governance utilized by the Church of England and Methodists. This style has authority residing “in the general conference which is composed of the bishops, i.e. pastors appointed by superintendents under direction of the conference.”²⁸⁴ Though there is a sense of authority vested in the superintendents through the body (i.e. conference), most would admit that the individual congregant’s authority is miniscule.

²⁸² Edward T. Hiscox, *The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1981), 113.

²⁸³ Gordon G. Johnson, *My Church: Manual of Baptist Faith and Action* (Evanston, IL: Harvest Publications, 1973), 106.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

A third form of governance, Presbyterianism, embodies a graduation of authority. Within this context, the local church is run by session, composed of the pastor and elders. The presbytery is next in order of authority, then synod followed by the general assembly all of increasing geographical size.²⁸⁵ Perhaps the authority limitation is best shown by how a church selects a minister. Within the Presbyterian model, “a local church can choose a pastor, but it must be ratified by the presbytery.”²⁸⁶ Though in theory this construct is highly restrictive, in practice it is seldom exercised.

The final model, and most often considered ‘Baptist’, is the Congregational form of governance. This is because Baptists believe that “the New Testament points to a democratic form.”²⁸⁷ This reflects best that “the ministry belongs to the church as a whole, the priesthood of all believers.”²⁸⁸

To reinforce this stance, Baptist scholars support the strong congregational model to the exclusion of all other forms. “Some church groups have taken these different words and developed a hierarchical system of church offices. This we do not believe is warranted in the New Testament.”²⁸⁹ Further to this argument is the belief that “no one has the right to represent other people without their approval, a congregation must approve the officers who are to act on its behalf.”²⁹⁰

Culturally, democracy and freedom are synonymous - at least in North America. Therefore, in order for a church to be free, logically it must be ruled congregationally.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Johnson, 108.

²⁸⁸ Maring, 91.

²⁸⁹ Johnson, 102.

²⁹⁰ Maring, 94.

However, the concept of church to the first Christians was also one of freedom, regardless of governance. “To the Jews, ecclesia was the congregation of Israel, to the Greeks, the ecclesia was the assembly of the free city state. In the first case, the idea was that of a free people governed by God through his chosen representatives; in the other, it was that of a free people governing themselves.”²⁹¹

Yet, most Baptists today would side with Winston Churchill: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."²⁹²

DUTIES

Though there is no such thing as a stereotypical deacon, from the beginnings of the office in the Baptist tradition there has been a commonality of duties. One of the first Baptist leaders, Thomas Collier, in 1654, described the deacon’s work as “that of serving tables – the table of the Lord, the table of the minister and the table of the poor.”²⁹³ It is within this schema that deacons have typically found their function.

The Lord’s Table:

Closely tied to the deacon’s position are the duties surrounding communion. According to a survey of North American Baptist churches in the mid twentieth century, the “number one commonly assigned responsibility of a deacon is to assist

²⁹¹ Thomas, 15.

²⁹² Winston Churchill from a House of Commons speech on Nov. 11, 1947 available from [http://wais.stanford.edu/Democracy/democracy_DemocracyAndChurchill\(090503\).html](http://wais.stanford.edu/Democracy/democracy_DemocracyAndChurchill(090503).html); Internet: accessed 10 Jan 2008.

²⁹³ Collier as quoted in Deweese, 23.

at communion services.”²⁹⁴ This is most likely due to the common characterization of deacons being likened to the table servers of Acts 6.

Indeed, “When the title deacon is used subsequent to Acts 6 in the New Testament it is generally assumed that it refers to men who were performing service similar to that which was assigned to the original seven that were selected.”²⁹⁵ By extension, it has been viewed as a separate function distinct from “ministry” since within Baptist tradition there is no sacramental aspect to communion. Therefore, reflecting on the birth of the position, Baptists have written that “the duties of the deacons are presented to us by the apostles themselves, as the opposite of the duties of the ministry.”²⁹⁶

Yet, the “care for the membership is a primary consideration for the diaconate.”²⁹⁷ This is in keeping with the early church tradition, and also early Baptist tradition. “The 1644 Confession of the Particular Baptists describes the elders and deacons as responsible for “feeding, governing, serving, and building his Church.”²⁹⁸

The congregation understands that the deacon’s role at the Lord’s Supper is a broader duty than simply cutting and serving bread, or pouring and delivering grape juice. At its core, the service is far more ministerial as the Acts 6 example showed. “The duty of the deacon was (and is) to serve the disciples’ daily need.”²⁹⁹ In fact, “the deacon has been committed to the spiritual growth of each person.”³⁰⁰ Though

²⁹⁴ Thomas, 64.

²⁹⁵ Harold Nichols, *The Work of the Deacon and Deaconess* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1984), 2.

²⁹⁶ Howell, 62.

²⁹⁷ Thomas, 69.

²⁹⁸ W. L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* p. 166, Art. Xxxvi. As quoted in Thomas, 36.

²⁹⁹ Nichols, 1.

³⁰⁰ Thomas, 70.

expressions of this vary, the deacon's role of care to the church as a whole is well understood.

The Minister's Table

After communion, the second and third most commonly attributed duties from the same survey are to assist at baptisms, and to provide for pulpit ministry.³⁰¹ This is indicative of the role that the deacons have in assisting their pastor. As one author has stated, they “under gird the work of the clergy.”³⁰²

Some may point to the model of the Acts 6 selection as a way of dividing duties so that the ministers could be freed to do a “greater” work. Thus the deacon would have one area of responsibility and the pastor another. In the book, *The Deaconship*, originally printed in 1846:

“The nature of the deaconship finds its chief, and most prominent illustration in the history of the origin of the office. By the acts there set forth, as well as by all that appears in every other part of the word of God, it will be fully seen that, as the pastor has supervision of all the spiritualities of the church, and is therefore overseer or bishop in that department, so the deacons are overseers of all her temporalities, of which they of right have the full control. This was, certainly, the form of organization in the model church at Jerusalem.”³⁰³

However there is a modern recognition that “pastors and deacons have served as brothers in ministry through the centuries.”³⁰⁴ The relation is now far more of

³⁰¹ Ibid., 64.

³⁰² Ibid., 11.

³⁰³ Howell, 12.

³⁰⁴ Harold B. Foshee, *Now That You're A Deacon* (Nashville:Broadman Press, 1975), 10.

community whereas the deacon “is to assist the pastor in handling the affairs of the church.”³⁰⁵ There is less of territorial battles, and far more of community.

Since deacons are for the most part the highest level of lay leadership within the church, often deacons are viewed as the link between the congregation and the minister. As such they care for the minister on behalf of the church. One way that they do this is to see that “their pastor receives a competent temporal support.”³⁰⁶

This relationship can and has been strained by the ability of one officer to financially control another. Yet, it also provides for a level of accountability necessary to ensure the health of the minister.

The Table of the Poor

Benevolence ministry and deacon ministry for most of Baptist life has been synonymous. “In 1611, the early Baptist, Thomas Helwys, wrote of deacons as “men and women who by their office relieve the necessities of the poor and impotent brethren concerning their bodies”³⁰⁷

With this precedent, Howell is justified in stating that “the duties of the deacons require them to administer to the wants of the poor, the distressed, the afflicted, the fatherless, and the widows of the household of faith and especially of their own particular church.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Harold L. Fickett Jr., *A Layman’s Guide to Baptist Belief* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1965), 58.

³⁰⁶ Howell, 81.

³⁰⁷ w.l. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* p. 121, 122, Art. 20 as quoted in Thomas, 36.

³⁰⁸ Howell, 73.

This means by implication that the deacons held the purse strings. In fact, “deacons related closely to money matters in (1600’s English) churches.”³⁰⁹ Even in the mid-nineteenth century the deacons were still viewed as the church’s “permanent financial officers.”³¹⁰ Thus, it should not be a surprise that a century later, the administration of the deacons’ funds was still a significant part of a deacon’s identity. It was the fifth most commonly ascribed diaconal duty amongst polled churches.³¹¹

LEADERS

Within Christian literature at the dawn of the twenty-first century, there is perhaps no area more exhaustively explored than the whole area of Christian leadership. This genre fills the pastoral section of bookshelves where commentaries and scholastic tools once dominated.

It is true that “[i]t should be self-evident that churches need leaders in order to be faithful to their calling.”³¹² Though it is difficult to clearly define what a leader is, there is little question that they do exist. “By virtue of definite calling and special fitness, certain members of the church would naturally be placed in positions of leadership.”³¹³

Leadership with respect to deacons is a huge issue. “As a rule, Baptist churches have tended to be only as strong as their deacon bodies.”³¹⁴ With this in mind,

³⁰⁹ Deweese, 30.

³¹⁰ Howell, 97.

³¹¹ Thomas, 71.

³¹² Maring, 93.

³¹³ Dobbins, 18.

³¹⁴ Deweese, 7.

churches need great wisdom in selecting members to this level of leadership. “We cannot place too much stress on the importance of selecting for the office of deacon persons suited by gift, concern and character.”³¹⁵

These representatives have a role that is very significant in a multitude of ways. The congregation chooses servants to be leaders, for “in a New Testament church, the leader becomes the servant.”³¹⁶ This being said, “the permanent influence of a deacon is scarcely surpassed by that of the pastor himself.”³¹⁷

The immensity of the leadership task is daunting:

“The leader of a church must exercise wise oversight of their lives, thinking ahead and planning ahead for their welfare, keeping them busily and happily at work, as a good overseer with a group of workmen under his direction. He must add to his love the quality of vision and authority so that his people will not only be protected from spiritual danger, but led to highest usefulness and effectiveness in Christian service.”³¹⁸

And yet through mediation, the leadership of the deacons is often viewed as a ministry of stability. In referring to the diaconate, McCall states that “the emphasis is in every case on service in the interest of unity, the harmony, and the effectiveness of the church as the witness of the redeeming gospel.”³¹⁹

It must be stated at the forefront that there is no simple solution to the dilemma of leadership, regardless of either structure or character. Thomas states:

“Unfortunately, the position of the leader is exposed to all and his use of the office will seldom go unquestioned, sometimes because he had to choose just one of several possible, perhaps unpopular, alternatives, and sometimes because there are unfortunate persons who will always have dark suspicions concerning any officeholder. Some people will question the motives of even the most committed able leaders. To hold an office does not exempt one from

³¹⁵ Thomas, 40.

³¹⁶ Dobbins, 20.

³¹⁷ Hiscox, 113.

³¹⁸ Dobbins, 20.

³¹⁹ McCall, 5.

misunderstanding and difficult pressures, but it can test and refine the qualities of Christ's servants."³²⁰

UNHEALTHY DIVISIONS

From the start of the Baptist movement, there has been a sharp division between the office of deacon and that of the bishop/elder/pastor of a church. For the most part, this division restricted the collaboration of pastors and deacons. Often the deacons were considered to be the lesser leader. For example, "in the 1774 Charleston confession of faith, deacons were to be in charge of 'inferior' services of church."³²¹

Soon, these 'inferior' services became the powerful position of the church, so much so that deacons became business managers. This is evidenced in times when deacons:

"...a) solely deal with business management matters b) administer affairs of the church as primarily a business operation. c) When the deacons are viewed as the decision makers in most business affairs. d) when business efficiency seems to predominate the activities of deacons."³²²

This division from the pastor, though in theory could release a minister to focus on the spiritual growth of the flock, has in fact created a struggle between two positions that should work very closely together. This model ultimately leads to the pastoral function being subservient to the board.

Thomas summarizes the dilemma as follows:

"There have been groups who felt called merely to direct the work of the pastor; allotting his time, setting priorities for his work, and determining what convictions he should have and how he should express them. Other boards

³²⁰ Thomas, 39.

³²¹ Foshee, *The ministry*, 35.

³²² *Ibid.*, 83.

have served only to review plans and programs in order to be certain all the norms were being met. Neither kind of group is particularly creative or helpful in bearing the Christian witness in our very untraditional age.³²³

MODERN DEACON THEMES

Suggested themes are emerging on how Baptist deacons should proceed can be classified as falling within three categories: leading in a team, leading in spirituality and leading in vision.

The leadership team

As in the early church, most Baptists now recognize that the deacons and pastor need to work together. The new emphasis, in reaction to the unhealthy divisions of the past, is to work together in a team. Indeed, “the New Testament does not divide the clergy and the laity in the function of church order.”³²⁴

Within this team of pastor and deacons it is important to note that there are roles. “A church calls a pastor to be a generalist leader. The pastor serves as a pastor-coach, an enabler. He leads the church to determine its spiritual mission.”³²⁵ This does not mean the deacon has no role, for as will be noted later, “Deacons can join the pastor in leading the church to formulate the goals of life and ministry.”³²⁶

The deacons are the ever-present saints in a community of faith often with greater understanding and insight of cultural identity. Their input is vital, especially to the pastor who is often transplanted into a community.

Thomas states:

³²³ Thomas, 46.

³²⁴ Johnson, 109.

³²⁵ Foshee, *Now*, 27.

³²⁶ Thomas, 107.

“By the very nature of its assigned ministries, the diaconate is close to the pastor. Earlier books referred to the deacon as “an aid to the pastor” ‘a member of the pastors cabinet,’ ‘a counselor to the pastor’ or ‘the pastors coadjutor’. These were earnest attempts to emphasize the working bonds which link the diaconate and the pastor; and they are good, provided the deacons are more than the errand boys for the minister. Theirs should be, rather, an authentic ministry, deepened in spirit by sharing closely with the pastor and interpreting to him the concerns and hunger of the laity to relate their faith to the world they know.”³²⁷

Spiritual leadership:

The leadership of the deacon office is unlike any other. Its power is found in its ability to place others first. “It is interesting to note that this word, ‘deacon’, which from the first has implied some form of leadership, does not carry the connotation of power or prominence.”³²⁸ The actual authority of deacons is one of Christian influence rather than authority as a board of directors.³²⁹

They are to be, even more so than the congregation, the example of Christ in the fulfillment of their duties. “Deacons serve as personal Christian examples to others.”³³⁰ In order to exemplify Christ, these leaders need to know those whom they lead. “The deacons should be those who are nearest to the spiritual needs of the people. No church can grow unless it is led, not only by precept but by example. The deacons should provide such leadership. It is in this spirit that they must view their labours.”³³¹

The servant style of spiritual leadership builds the trust necessary effectively to guide. As Thomas states, “Even today the authority one may exercise in the church

³²⁷ Thomas, 46.

³²⁸ Thomas, 19.

³²⁹ Foshee, *The Ministry*, 33.

³³⁰ Foshee, *Now*, 28.

³³¹ Nichols, 15.

is derived from the accuracy with which he reflects the will and the character of Christ, but never apart from the recognition of this fact by the people.”³³²

In order to reflect the character and will of Christ, the deacon’s duties need to flow from a deep and rich relationship with God. This is evidenced by a life devoted to godly principles, Scripture and prayer. Nichols states that “[a] deacon must practice unceasing prayer if he is to be able to find fullness of the Christian life for himself, and more, if he is to be a leader among the people.”³³³

The ability to lead from service, versus leading from authority, is the way Baptists have structured themselves to minimize corruption. As Lord Acton stated, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."³³⁴ Consequently, “no Deacons’ Board can become dictatorial over the activities of the church and remain true to its high calling of serving.”³³⁵

Therefore, to make sure that deacons are to be viewed as effective and worthy leaders, a church needs to be wise in their selection. They need to be “persons who have demonstrated in their lives a concern for the deeply complex needs of the faithful and the world.”³³⁶

Visionary leadership

The concept of vision, though old, is becoming a key component of a deacon’s role. This alone is a fascinating study with its foundation in the change of society,

³³² Thomas, 38

³³³ Nichols, 5.

³³⁴ Lord Acton in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887, available from <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/288200.html>; Internet accessed 8 October 2007.

³³⁵ Johnson, 105.

³³⁶ Thomas, 21.

both toward business models and also away from Christendom. Churches are no longer a staple of society and there is much work necessary in order to introduce people to an organized religious group.

Thomas states the strains that are upon the “no longer maintenance” deacon:

“The modern deacon must be a planner as well as a leader. Dreams must be made to walk the streets in concrete programs designed to fulfill God’s will. Objectives must be set for the church in its capacities as a fellowshipping, worshipping, studying, witnessing and serving community. Paths toward the goals must be plotted. Resources should be evaluated and every effort made to have the plans provide creative opportunities for Christians to fulfill their commitment in a diaconal ministry that moves them beyond themselves.”³³⁷

It is from these foundations that churches in the twenty-first century are creating and recreating structures seeking to be biblically faithful and effective in a culture that has left the Church behind.

Summary:

Though the Baptist denomination is relatively young, over its history it has been quite experimental in its interpretation of the diaconate. The autonomy of the church can be widely attributed for the diversity in practice over time and space. However, that same autonomy has made it difficult for the denomination to have a clear ecclesiology. It is almost universally viewed as an area of struggle for both the church and the deacons themselves. One thing that all can agree upon is that the diaconal role is under stress and needs to be remade, renewed or abandoned.

³³⁷ Thomas, 107.

CHAPTER FOUR –
THE ATLANTIC BAPTIST DEACON

“The Apostle of Nova Scotia,”³³⁸ the infamous Henry Alline, is said to have started the Baptist movement in Atlantic Canada. He was a “self-taught Arminian theologian, (and) Alline held Calvinism to be blasphemous and contrary to Scripture.”³³⁹ His New Light teachings were the foundation from which became the modern Atlantic Baptist movement. This is a bit of an anomaly since, “For Alline, while baptism was voluntary, the experience of the new birth in Christ was a necessity.”³⁴⁰

In fact, Alline was an “acute embarrassment for the heirs of the Awakening.”³⁴¹ Apparently, as early as a quarter century later, strong Calvinistic leaders were distancing themselves from Alline due to his emotional and uneducated methods. These leaders, known among Canadian Baptists as the “Maritime Fathers,” included; Edward Manning (1766-1851), Theodore S. Harding (1773-1855), James Manning (1763-1818), Thomas H. Chipman (1756-1830), Joseph Dimmock (1768-1846), Harris Harding (1761-1854), and Joseph Crandall (1775-1858).³⁴²

Thus, even in the foundation of Atlantic Baptist life, there was a sense of merging theologies and reform of beliefs. The pendulum shift to the sophistication of

³³⁸ Brackney, 473.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ James Beverley and Barry Moody (eds.), *The Journal of Henry Alline*, Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada 4 (Hantsport NS: Lancelot Press, 1982), 10.

³⁴² Brackney, 474.

the Baptists of the mid-nineteenth century was still grounded in the simplistic roots of a charismatic revival based underpinning. Thus, it is important to recognize this tension throughout the ages of the now CABC.

Existing documents show best how the congregations and associations defined and refined themselves over the years leading to the birth of the Convention. As the document trail is explored, it will become evident how diverse groups of independent Baptists came to common ground over the course of a little over a century.

Though the Baptists are not a creedal people, they are a people with a written heritage in the Atlantic Provinces. The only 'creed' appropriate in Baptist life was Scripture. In fact Congregationalist (our predecessors in many churches) historians have long believed that the earliest Separatist/Independents "had no consciousness that their views were derived from any other source than the New Testament."³⁴³

Therefore, as the associations formed and reformed, they sought to define themselves with agreements, treatises and articles of faith and practice. The general form these took was confessions, which are "summations of religious belief in succinct form."³⁴⁴ As Brackney puts it, "While creeds had sought to unify the fractured church, confessions implicitly recognized the divisions among the churches."³⁴⁵

There is a strong sense of independence or individuality within the roots of the Baptist experience. Confessions, the predecessor to articles of faith and practice, "in a sense evolved from personal and congregational 'testimonies' a kind

³⁴³ Williston Walker, *Creeks and Platforms of Congregationalism* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1960), 7.

³⁴⁴ Brackney, 8.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

of ‘personal apologetic.’”³⁴⁶ Thus it is not surprising that “what is obvious from the documentary evidence is that there is no one confessional tradition that reflects anything close to a comprehensive ‘Baptist’ perspective across time.”³⁴⁷

The Baptists in Atlantic Canada did not start as a singular cohesive denomination. Philip Griffin Allwood in his article entitled, “Canadian Baptist Christians,” presents an extensive yet confusing organizational chart showing the “development” of Baptist life in Atlantic Canada. (Appendix 1)

As one weaves through the maze of Atlantic Baptist history, themes begin to emerge regarding diaconal and pastoral leadership. The following documents provide a snapshot of the denomination’s interpretations.

1778 - CHURCH OF CHRIST (CORNWALLIS, NOVA SCOTIA)

The earliest record we have of Baptist faith in the Atlantic Provinces is a copy of the “Articles of Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ” which consisted of Baptists and Congregationalists in 1778, and was confessed by the Church of Christ in Cornwallis on July 15, 1778.

ARTICLE SEVEN

In its practice articles, Article Seven states,

“That a number of Believers in the fellowship of the Gospel being visibly united together into a Church of Christ have power to choose and set apart by ordination such officers as Christ has appointed in His Church. Such as ministers or Elders and Deacons and by the same power to depose such officers as evidently appear to walk contrary to the Rules of the Gospel or fall

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 14.

into erroneous Principles or practices. Matthew 18:17.18 Acts 13:1.2. Numb.8:10.11. 1 Cor. 5:4.5.”³⁴⁸

This article begins with the foundation that ministers, elders and deacons are not merely appointed but rather ordained. In keeping with Baptist practice, official status was not transferable to other congregations.

“In the 1611 Confession, Baptist deacons ministered to the 'daily necessities' of the congregation. Deacons were not required to have any specific training but were ordained by the congregation in which they served. Should they move to another congregation and be called to serve as deacon, they would need to be re-ordained in the new congregation.”³⁴⁹

The Scriptures referred to are foundational to describing the process and purpose of ordination. The Numbers 8:10-11 passage equates the blessing of the current leaders with the Jewish people’s blessing of the Levites: “...and present the Levites before the LORD; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites” (Num 8:10). This reference most assuredly points to the broader concept of the respect of the ministers of God as opposed to the narrow restrictive sense of the liturgical duties of the Levite. This belief is based upon the tempering of the Numbers passage with the passage from Acts 13, referring to the setting apart of Barnabas and of Saul for a called work:

“Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away”(Acts 13:1-3).

³⁴⁸ Article 7, “Articles of Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ”, Church of Christ, Cornwallis, 1778.

³⁴⁹ McBeth, H. Leon, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1987), 78.

There is no hint, however, of a blind faith in any man's leadership. Included in the Seventh article is a mechanism for deposing of leaders if they are found derelict.

The gospel reference of Matthew states:

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven" (Matt 18:17-18).

The right to discipline is clearly within the realm of the church or congregation.

This congregational authority is appealed to again through the 1 Corinthian 5 passage:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:4-5).

ARTICLE EIGHT

The Eighth Article deals with the qualifications of the potentially ordained.

"That before choice and ordination of such officers Trial shall be made of their qualifications by the church in which they are to be officers. 1 Tim. 3.1 and so on to 10."³⁵⁰

The church's authority is exercised through trial. No functional description is given as to how these officers are examined, and the only qualifications officially referred to are the historical biblical prerequisites from 1 Timothy 3:1-10. It is also unclear as to how the church was to interpret the qualifications.

³⁵⁰ Article 8, *Church of Christ*, 1778.

ARTICLE NINE

The Ninth Article seeks to walk the fine line between equality and leadership.

It reads:

“That ministers or Elders hath no more power in church government than any other brother excepting by the superiority of their gifts and graces. Their work chiefly consisting in praying with and preaching to, exhorting and visiting their flocks, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. But yet, we think those who labor in Word and Doctrine, in case of a tie ought to have the privilege of a double vote. Acts 1:2. Numb. 8:11. 1 Corinthians 5:4:5. 1 Peter 5:3.”³⁵¹

Democratic church government appears to be a very strong emphasis for this church. There is also the recognition that God has set apart ministers or elders with a divine leadership role. The result is a mix of Scripture creating a unique picture. The tapestry begins with an obscure reference to apostolic authority: “Until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen” (Acts 1:2). This is clarified by drawing a comparison to a Levitical ordination ceremony: “Aaron then shall present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, that they may qualify to perform the service of the LORD” (Num 8:11). This biblical account shows the congregational involvement crucial in the task of leadership, with both God and man having a role.

Though not referenced directly, Acts 20:28, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,” is the groundwork for the language of the middle of the text of Article Nine. The last reference points to the idea that the only power that is to be exerted is through their “gifts and graces” as opposed to official status. Thus, a shepherd symbolism is reinforced in the selection

³⁵¹ Ibid., Article 9.

of Scripture regarding authority, “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3).

Yet, most fascinating is the desire to recognize that the minister’s opinion is considered slightly higher than the typical congregant. This may be an interpretation of, “[t]he elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching”(1 Tim 5:17). Though the authors did not use a biblical reference for giving a minister a double vote, this polity stance was deemed important in the church structure. It was apparently reached congregationally by use of the first person plural in the wording of the resolution.

There is no documentation showing whether or not this Cornwallis church had a template to work from in the development of their articles. However, it is important to note that much literature existed in the colonies and the Old World that could influence churches and elders. Many books of sermons and proposed ecclesiologies were promoted by booksellers and became the texts of official church documents.

1800 - NOVA SCOTIA REGULAR BAPTISTS ASSOCIATION

On June 29th, 1800, the practices of Nova Scotia Regular Baptists Association were agreed upon in Yarmouth. It is very clear that this document does have a model which it follows, the Cornwallis Street Articles of 1778. The association document was signed by fathers of the Atlantic Baptist faith of the time: Edward Manning, T.S. Harding and T.H. Chipman. This manuscript held three articles related specifically to church officers and the first two are almost verbatim from the Cornwallis document; thus, it is necessary only to highlight the differences.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Article Seven “Of the Authority of the Visible Church,” is equivalent to the Cornwallis Article Seven with only slight changes.

“That a number of Believers in the Fellowship of the Gospel being visibly united together as a Church of Christ have power to choose and set apart by ordination such officers as Christ appointed in his church, such as Ministers and Deacons. And by the same power to depose such officers as evidently appear to Walk contrary to the Rules of the Gospel or fall into erroneous principles or practices. Num. 8.10, Matthew 18.17.18, Acts 13.1.2.3., 1 Cor. 5.4.5.”³⁵²

The small changes include dropping the word Elder as a parallel term to minister, and an expansion of the Acts 13 reference to include, “Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away”(Acts 13:3). Most likely this was included in order to describe the physical nature of the ordination ritual. There also was the omission of the eleventh verse of Numbers chapter 8, referring to the wave offering necessary in appointing Levites. It appears the addition of the New Testament protocol superseded the Old Testament reference and most clearly defined ordination as an early church tradition.

ARTICLE EIGHT

The Eighth Article, “Of Trial of Church Officers,” reads, “That before choice and ordination of such officers, trial shall be made of their qualifications by the church in which they are to be officers. 1 Tim 5.22 and 3.1.--10.”³⁵³

The only addition here is the passage which states, “Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep

³⁵² Article 7, *Articles of Practice* of the Nova Scotia Baptist Association (1800f.)

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, Article 8.

yourself free from sin” (1 Tim 5:22). This warning was apparently necessary to show why diligence is important, and implies that trial and examination were to be stringent.

ARTICLE NINE

The final article of practice related to church officers, “Of the Work of A Gospel Minister.”

“that Ministers or Elders hath no more power in church government than any other Brethren excepting by the superiority of their gifts and graces. Their work chiefly consisting in Praying with and Preaching too, exhorting and visiting their flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. ~~“But yet we think those that labour in Word and Doctrine In Case of A Tie ought to have the privilege of A Double Vote.”~~ Acts20.28, 1 Pet 5:3.”³⁵⁴

This article underwent significant revision. It reveals something of the working paper nature of the meetings. The first glaring change is the line through the sentence offering ministers double votes. This shows both how much this document came directly from Cornwallis and how, in negotiation for the association, it was unacceptable. Never again would this construct appear.

In addition, the scriptural underpinnings of this article were thoroughly reworked and many convoluted references were dropped leaving only two summarizing passages. The Acts 20:28 passage, referred to in the past through language but not cited, now appears. The overseeing “bishop-like” role of the minister is not in any way to be considered hierarchically authoritative. Again, the only power that is to be exerted is through their “gifts and graces” as opposed to official status. As stated in chapter one, the use of the term of bishop/overseer

³⁵⁴ Ibid., Article 9.

implies a leadership of close association versus aloof authority. This symbolism is reinforced in the preexisting selection of 1 Peter 5:3 regarding authority, “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:3).

The Association document of 1800, though heavily influenced by its predecessor, shows that the churches were at least struggling to define themselves structurally.

1810 - CHURCHES OF CHRIST ARTICLES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

In 1810, the “Articles of Faith and Practice and Church Covenant of the Churches of Christ, composing the Nova Scotia Baptist Associations,” was published. Although its title said only Nova Scotia, the views encompassed New Brunswick as well.

Under its section of “Concerning a Visible Church of Christ and Its Discipline,” there are three statements referring to church officers per se:

ARTICLE FOUR

Article Four begins:

“A church thus gathered has power to choose, and by elders to ordain those officers that Christ hath appointed in his church, viz.; Bishops or Elders, and Deacons; and also to depose such as walk contrary to the rules of the gospel; and to discipline their members, though in some such cases it may be convenient and profitable to request the advice of neighbouring churches of Christ. Acts i. 21-26; vi. 3-6; Mat. xviii. 15-18; Acts xv. 1-31; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 14; 2 Thess. iii. 6.”³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Article 4, “Concerning a Visible Church of Christ and its Discipline.” In Articles of Faith and Practice and Church Covenant of the Churches of Christ, composing the Nova Scotia Baptist Associations” 1810.

The theme of this section is slightly different than the previous two documents explored. There is a strong congregational government sentiment, but there is also a recognition that there may be advantages to working in cooperation with like minded congregations.

This document clearly equates bishops with elders and places selection at the hands of the church and ordination at the hands of the elders. It is interesting to note that while the 1800 document pointed to a Levitical link in the church offices, the 1810 document points to the selection of an apostle as a foundation for appointing leaders:

“So they put forward two men,...and they prayed and said, ‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.’ And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles”(Acts 1:21-26).

The Acts 6 passage is used clearly in reference to leadership and most likely pointed to “deacons.” The Matthew 18 passage is the same as the 1800 document disclosing the protocol for addressing discipline.

Most of the references of this section point to discipline and warnings against the unruly. The Romans passage clearly states that there needs to be diligence in caring for the flock: “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them”(Rom 16:17). This is reinforced with: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you

received from us”(2 Thes 3:6). Finally, these disruptive people need to be addressed as well as avoided: “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly” (1 Thes 5:14).

ARTICLE FIVE

The fifth article of practice states:

“A Bishop or Elder hath no more power to decide any case or controversy in the church than any private brother; yet they, having superior gifts for teaching and ruling ought to exercise and improve the same for the benefit of the church; and the church ought to be subject to the gifts bestowed on the minister from the Lord, while he is rightly administering in his place, whose duty it is to lead in the actings of the church, and to administer the ordinances of the gospel, and to devote himself to the work of teaching, warning, rebuking, and exhorting the people, publicly, and from house to house. Mat. xx. 25-29; 1 Peter v. 3; Mat. xxviii. 19, 20; Acts xx. 20-28,31; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 17.”³⁵⁶

This unique clause both endows the bishop/elder with great duty yet no great authority, save in his gifting. The Scriptures referenced show Christ as the model servant-leader.

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.’ It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave”(Matt 20:25-27).

This is supported with the parallel Petrine passage, and as in 1800, the shepherd nature of the bishop/elder is appealed to in the Acts 20 passage.

The 1 Thessalonians passage points to honoring those in leadership: “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem

³⁵⁶ Ibid., Article 5.

them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another” (1 Thes. 5:12-13). However the way the article is stated, the obedience is to the Lord via the giftings in the bishop/elder.

Though, the case can be made that the people do recognize that the bishop/elder has a level of accountability for them: “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

ARTICLE SIX

The sixth article from the 1810 Articles defines the deacon’s work. It is important to note that this is the first account in Atlantic Baptist life of diaconal duties.

“The deacon's office or work is to take care of the poor, and to have the oversight of the temporal affairs of the church, and to minister at the Lord's table. Acts vi. 1-5; 1 Timothy iii. 8-14.”³⁵⁷

This definition of a deacon clearly refers to the table servers of Acts 6, and exegetes their duties as benevolence, administration, and ministry. The use of broad terms such as “to take care of” and “to have oversight” provides great flexibility but little direction. The definition appears far more descriptive of existing duties that the people of the time readily understood. However, it gives no direction to historians looking back trying to understand the mechanics of the office.

Though the reference is made to deacon selection criteria (i.e. 1 Timothy 3:8-14), this is not spelled out or expanded in the article itself.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., Article 6.

1834 - TREATISE ON THE FAITH OF THE FREE WILL BAPTISTS

In 1834, the Free Will Baptists sought to define themselves. Their document was written in Nova Scotia and sought to standardize their basis of faith with, *A Treatise on the Faith of the Free Will Baptists (1834; Nova Scotia 1840f.)*. This document served as a teaching tool of historicity, pointing to founder Benjamin Randal (who was influenced by George Whitefield), as well as orthodoxy.³⁵⁸

CHAPTER 13, Section 1

Under Chapter Thirteen, which is entitled, “The Church,” Section One deals with the Officers of the church. It states that:

“The officers in the primitive church were apostles, bishops, and deacons [Eph. 2:20]. The apostles were the especial witnesses of the works and sayings of Christ [Acts 10:39]; and of course this office ceased when their work was accomplished. The gifts perpetuated in the church are evangelists, pastors, teachers, helps, and governments [Eph. 4:11]. These, however, do not appear to be distinct officers; but they imply different kinds of duties, which are performed by bishops or elders, deacons and others.”³⁵⁹

The theme of this section is educational more than descriptive. It appears to seek to answer the question “why?” instead of the question ‘what?’ In referring to primitive officers, this document chooses “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone” (Eph 2:20). Thus they are equating the prophet with bishop and/or deacons. The reference supporting the apostles as witnesses from the account of Peter is clear. “We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem”

³⁵⁸ Introduction, *A Treatise on the Faith of the Freewill Baptists (1834; Nova Scotia 1840f.)*.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 13.1.

(Acts 10:38). The statement logically concludes that the apostolic office has ceased, but not the gifts of the Spirit for the ministry of the church. “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11). In expounding upon this Scripture, the authors state that these gifts do not create offices, but rather are for the body as a whole.

CHAPTER 13, Section 1.1a

In defining the congregational leader, Section One continues,

“Bishops are overseers [Acts 20:28], who have the charge of souls--to instruct and rule them by the word [1 Tim. 3:5]. They are called elders [Titus 1:5-7], and they perform the duties of pastors, teachers, and evangelists [2 Tim. 4:5]. The qualifications required in a candidate for this office, are as follows:--He must be guiltless and the husband of but one wife. He must be watchful, prudent, and have the regular exercise of cool, dispassionate reason. His conduct and manners must be decent, orderly, and grave. He must be a lover of hospitality and of good men; ready to communicate, and able to teach [1 Tim. 3:2]. He must be temperate; not quarrelsome; nor desirous of base gain. He must be meek; not contentious, neither a lover of money [1 Tim. 3:3]. He must govern his family well; he must not be a young convert, but experienced in the things of God, and have a character not justly liable to reproach [1 Tim. 3:4-7]. He must be especially called of God to the work [Heb. 5:4], adhere closely to the doctrine of Christ [Tit. 1:9], and be ordained by the laying on of hands [1 Tim. 4:14].”³⁶⁰

In qualifications, the treatise clearly spells out their oversight authority from Acts 20:28 and then goes to the 1 Timothy 3 passage defining qualifications. The section also points to this divine Aaronite calling through Hebrews: “And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was” (Heb 5:4). The Free Will Baptists saw the terms of bishop and elder as synonymous. The book of Titus is referenced as a justification for deeming the

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

bishops 'elders': "for this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you" (Tit 1:5). They also pointed to the importance of orthodoxy, "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Tit 1:9). Finally, the treatise ends this section with the biblical example of the laying on of hands as ordination from 1 Timothy 4:14.

CHAPTER 13, Section 1.1b

The duty of an elder or bishop is further defined later in the section:

"1. To be an ensample to the flock in all things [1 Tim. 4:12]. 2. To examine into the spiritual state of all souls under his care, and suit all his instructions, entreaties, and admonitions, to their condition. In this work is included the duty of a pastor [Heb. 13:17]. 3. To study, preach the word, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper [2 Tim. 2:15]. 4. To do according to his ability the work of an evangelist [2 Tim. 4:5]. 5. As a steward he receives authority from Christ to rule the flock by the word. Therefore, he should neither act as a lord over God's heritage, nor yield to the doctrines and wickedness of men; but see that gospel discipline and holiness are enforced and practiced in the church [Titus 1:7]. He should assist in ordaining elders and deacons, committing the things which he has learned of God to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also [Titus 1:5]. The care and the salvation of souls being more important than every thing else, he should, as far as possible, avoid engaging in any temporal concerns which divert his attention from his great calling, and devote himself wholly to the work [2 Tim. 2:4]."³⁶¹

According to the treatise, the elder must be one of exemplary character, i.e.

"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe" (1 Tim 4:12).

Similar to the Regular Baptist document of two decades earlier, the Freewill

Christians point to the significance of the bishop's oversight as a matter of divine

³⁶¹ Ibid.

accountability as described in Hebrews 13:17. To describe the work ethic required, the reader is pointed to 2 Timothy where one should “be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15). The elder is to ordain and also do the evangelist’s work: “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:5).

The bishop is given great sway in maintaining discipline and holiness within the church provided he not lord over the church nor contravene orthodoxy. This is alluded to with the reference made to the invested authority of Titus 1:7. The bishop/elder is meant to mentor others and assist in their growth. “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you” (Tit 1:5). The bishop/elder is also to refrain from temporal matters in order to attend to the higher calling to, “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim 4:2).

The importance of the care and salvation of souls is clearly a priority, and the minister is to be segregated from worldly concern in order to accomplish this heavenly purpose. Though the division is noble theoretically, in practice it creates a greater division between clergy and congregants. Thus the clergy must trust that all temporal concerns for both himself and his flock will be cared for by other leaders, such as deacons.

CHAPTER 13.1.2a

The second subsection of Section One states:

“A deacon is a regular or stated servant of the church. As the bishops were appointed to take the charge of souls, it is inferred that the seven appointed to minister to the saints (Acts 6:1-6) were deacons; and that as the former have the oversight of the spiritual concerns of the church, the latter have the charge of its temporal affairs, particularly in serving the tables of the needy [Acts 6:1-4]. Though there is no Scriptural evidence that serving the Lord's table at communion was required of deacons, it appears that by common consent they have long performed this service in several denominations.”

This document embodies a mid-nineteenth century mindset of Howell's statement on the differentiation of a pastor's and deacons' duties. It divides the spiritually needy from the physically needy.

Though this document clearly emphasizes the Acts 6 men as deacons, the reason given for justifying their involvement in the Lord's Supper is both common consent and what other denominations are doing. In essence, this document is saying that though they have no scriptural evidence, they support it. This appears to be a foreshadowing of future interpretations of the office.

CHAPTER 13.1.2b

Free Will Baptists went on to describe the necessary qualities of a Deacon:

The qualifications required in a candidate for this office, are the following. He must be sober, honest, temperate, not desirous of unrighteous gain, holding the mystery of the gospel in a pure conscience. Being first proved he must be found blameless. His wife must also be serious, not a defamer, but sober, and faithful in all things. He must have but one wife, and rule his children and his own house well [1 Tim. 3:8-12]. He should be a wise man and filled with the Holy Spirit [Acts 6:3, 5]. Having been selected by the church, he should be appointed by prayer and the laying on of hands [Acts 6:6].

The biblical qualifications from the Pastoral Epistles are revealed, and the writers interpreted the diaconate as a male role, with the feminine form being

interpreted as deacon's wife. Rather than making huge theological implications, it is important to note that this is in keeping with the culture of the day and the reading of the King James Version. The secondary example, referred to in Acts 6, speaks of men being chosen with qualities such as wise, and full of the Holy Spirit. Finally justification is given for ordination as set out in the Acts 6 account by referring to the manner of selection (congregationally), and the manner of ordination (by the laying on of hands).

CHAPTER 13.1.2b

The 'duties of the deacon' section is more of a philosophical stance than a clear job description:

Duties of a Deacon. 1. He should attend to the temporal wants of the poor members of the church that those called to labor in the gospel may give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. 2. As the design of his appointment was that the ministry might be freed from temporal care, the inference naturally follows that it is his duty to see that their wants also are supplied, lest they should be compelled to leave the word of God to serve their own tables. 3. Their being no other officer in the church to superintend its temporal affairs, it is inferred from the nature of his office that the deacon should attend to all the concerns essential to its prosperity, which do not devolve on a bishop. 4. From the important nature of his qualifications, it has been considered his duty to take the lead of religious meetings in the absence of the minister.

The logical argument is developed, but like most descriptions of duties, there are no solid Scriptural references. The closest to an actual duty is subsection three "the deacon should attend to all the concerns essential to its prosperity." Just how that happens is not defined; just the mandate to make sure it is done.

The deacon had considerable authority in the work of the Free Christian Baptists. The elder was to take care of the spiritual, and the deacon was to take care

of the temporal. Rarely is this division so clearly drawn and well documented. This places a huge level of responsibility, without any written guidance, upon the deacon as the leader of the church.

1848 - FREE CHRISTIAN BAPTISTS OF NS AND NB TREATISE

In the mid nineteenth century, the Free Christian Baptists developed a pamphlet entitled, *A Treatise of the Faith of the Free Christian Baptists in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick*. This document had extensive instruction in the areas of church officers, and was significantly influenced by the statement of 1834.

CHAPTER 11.1

In Chapter 11, Section One entitled “Officers of the Church” the following statements are found:

“The Officers in the primitive church were apostles, bishops, and deacons [Eph ii. 20]. The apostles were the especial witnesses of the works and sayings of Christ [Acts x. 39]; and of course this office ceased when their work was accomplished. The gifts perpetuated in the church are evangelists, pastors, teachers, helps, and governments [Eph. iv. 11]. These, however, do not appear to be distinct officers, but they imply different kinds of duties, which are performed by bishops or elders, deacons and others. Bishops are overseers [Acts xx. 28], who have the charge of souls—to instruct and rule them by the word [1 Tim iii. 5]. They are called elders [Titus i. 5], and they perform the duties of pastors, teachers, and evangelists [2 Tim iv. 5]. The qualifications required in a candidate for this office, are as follows:-
-He must be guiltless, and the husband of but one wife. He must be watchful, prudent, and have the regular exercise of cool, dispassionate reason. His conduct and manners must be decent, orderly and grave. He must be a lover of hospitality and of good men; ready to communicate, and able to teach [1 Tim iii. 2]. He must be temperate; not quarrelsome; nor desirous of base gain [1 Tim iii. 3]. He must govern his family well; he must not be a novice, but experienced in the things of God, and have a character not justly liable to reproach [1 Tim iii. 4]. He must be especially called of God to the work [Heb

v. 4], adhere closely to the doctrine of Christ [Tit i. 9], and be ordained by the laying on of hands [1Tim iv. 14].”³⁶²

The only change between these sections and those in the previous document are in the areas of qualifications. The minor variance is the section referring to 1 Tim 3:4-7, stating that “he must not be a novice” as opposed to the wording “he must not be a young convert.” The difference, though slight, implies that age may not be as significant an issue as maturity.

CHAPTER 11.1a

The document goes on to not only describe the Elder’s character but also duty. This description is far more functional than instructional.

“The duty of an Elder or Bishop is, 1. to be an example to the flock in all things [1 Tim iv. 12]. To preach the word, baptize, and administer the Lord's supper [2 Tim ii. 15]. He should assist in ordaining elders and deacons [Tit i. 5], and according to his ability, do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of his ministry [2 Tim iv. 5].”³⁶³

Though the description is a third the size of the “1834” paper, it keeps the substance of the previous articles. The vast amount of omission is in the philosophy as opposed to the praxis.

³⁶² Section 11-11.1, A Treatise of the Faith of the Free Christian Baptists in Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick 1848.

³⁶³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 11.2

The next subsection deals with the deacon proper, again significantly abbreviated. “A deacon is a regular or stated servant of the church. For the qualifications required in a candidate for this office, see 1 Tim. iii. 8-12. Acts vi. 1-2.”

³⁶⁴ These standard references marry the table server with the Pauline office. In reference to the duties of a deacon, the section states that “[h]e should attend to the temporal wants of the poor members of the church [Acts vi. 1-3].”³⁶⁵

The deacon’s role is clearly benevolent and the function restricted primarily to the table servers of Acts 6. The 1834 statement is reiterated with the only change being the now title “elder” preferred over the title bishop.

“As the design of his appointment was that the ministry might be freed from temporal care, the inference naturally follows that it is his duty to see that their wants also are supplied. There being no other officer in the church to superintend its temporal affairs, it is inferred from the nature of his office that the deacon should attend to all the concerns essential to its prosperity, which do not devolve on an Elder. From the important nature of his qualifications, it has been considered his duty to take the lead of religious meetings in the absence of the minister.”³⁶⁶

Thus, the 1848 treatise showed the consistency of Free Will structure with the philosophical distinction of the elder (minister) caring for souls with the deacon’s responsibility being all else.

1880 NEW BRUNSWICK SOUTHERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Literature from the Northern United States was often promoted and read in Atlantic Canada. Such was the case as the Baptist movement was growing

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 11.2.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

numerically and in diversity. This provided the backdrop for new insurgency of Baptist identity and ideals. The nearing of the dawning of the twentieth century led to a greater focus on finding common ground for Baptists.

In this light, the New Hampshire Confession of Faith was utilized, even though it had been written in 1833. “The objective of *(this)* confession was to bring closer together the main branches of Baptists in northern New England, the Regular or Calvinistic Baptists and the Freewill Baptist Connexion.”³⁶⁷ It was an American version of the mediating type of confessional statement.³⁶⁸ This document was adopted in 1880 by the New Brunswick Southern Baptist Association as found in J. E. Hopper’s, “Manual for Baptist Churches” printed in 1894.

ARTICLE 13 - A GOSPEL CHURCH

In Article 13, this document defined “A Gospel Church,” this way:

*We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers [1 Cor. i. 1-13]; associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel [Acts ii. 41, 42]; observing the ordinances of Christ [1 Cor. xi. 2]; governed by his laws [Matt. xxviii. 20]; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word [Eph. iv. 7]; that its only Scriptural officers are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons [Phil. i. 1], whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.*³⁶⁹

This is one of the most succinct statements in the whole document. Most likely the brevity was in part due to the desire to build unity, and the fewer words, the better. This statement did define the officers with the terms bishops (equated with pastors) and deacons. The Elder title is completely omitted. It is unclear as to

³⁶⁷ Brackney, 40.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ J. E. Hopper’s, *Manual for Baptist Churches* (Saint John: s.n.1894), Article 13.

whether or not the title ceased to exist in churches of the day or if, more likely, preference was given to the new titles as being distinctly modern and Baptist.

The Regular Baptists never did fully expound upon either the elder's or deacon's duties. The New Hampshire Confession relegates the whole description to the Scriptures of Timothy and Titus. Unfortunately, the duties of a deacon are not clear in the two Scriptures, thus the term takes on a whole new ambiguity again.

1901 FREE BAPTIST TREATISE

For the first time in over fifty years, the Free Will Baptists attempted to redefine themselves. This new document, very different from its forerunner, was called "A Treatise of the Faith and Practice of the Free Baptists - 1889 ed., Nova Scotia, 1901f."

CHAPTER 16

In Chapter 16 under "The Gospel Ministry," there are two very brief statements on ministers:

- "1. Qualifications of ministers. They must possess good natural and acquired abilities [2 Tim 2:15], deep and ardent piety [Ps. 50:16], be specially called of God to the work [Acts 20:28], and ordained by the laying on of hands [1 Tim. 4:14].
2. Duties of ministers. These are, to preach the word [Mark 16:15], administer the ordinances of the Gospel [Matt. 28:19], visit their people, and otherwise perform the work of faithful pastors [Heb. 13:17]."

What started as a very expository and articulate denomination, with respect to written orthodoxy, has devolved in less than a century. It has been reduced in its written description of practice to extremely vague and brief summarizing statements.

The statements have reverted over the movement's life from answering "why," to answering "what," to barely answering "who."

The significant position of deacon is completely absent from the 1901 statement. The only benefit in hindsight is that two vague inarticulate statements held by two denominations who in the past were vastly different in practice now appear to have very little conflicting issues.

1905 THE BASIS OF UNION OF THE UNITED BAPTIST CONVENTION

The melding of the Free Will Baptists and the Regular Baptists into a single denomination finally occurred in 1906 as both groups eventually found common ground in the above mentioned manuscript. Phillip Griffin-Alwood scholastically examined the *Basis of Union* and identified the guiding documents that underpinned the Basis.

ARTICLE 13

There is only one section that deals with church governance. The following text from his archive is displayed with the following caveat: boldface print is text from the New Hampshire Confession, underlined text denotes the Free Christian Baptist *Treatise*, italics comes from the Backus Articles and non descript text is original to the document.

"A GOSPEL CHURCH.--We believe that a Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word. In more general sense the word Church is used to designate all whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The **only Scriptural officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose**

qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.³⁷⁰

Thus the Regular Baptist statement, or more specifically the New Hampshire Confession, provided the backbone for the Gospel Church concept in the Basis of Union. It is also important to note that clearly these documents were a snapshot of where the church was, being primarily descriptive. Though many would point to sections of the statement of union as crucial in orthodoxy (i.e. Scripture, God, Faith, Baptism, etc.) there are other sections that are not as cast in stone.

The primary problem exists in the wording of how pastors and deacons are to function. The duties are not found in the epistles to Timothy and Titus as the Basis of Union implies. This is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it is an extremely Baptist document, with the Basis of Union allowing individuality and freedom in interpreting how governance can be accomplished within each setting. On the other hand, it provides no direction or consistency for members of Convention churches who are looking to develop leadership structures. Even if the Basis of Union was crystal clear as to how to organize, it would have been for a church grounded in a very Christian culture, as opposed to the world in which the 21st Century Convention churches find themselves today.

Summary

In Atlantic Baptist life there has only been a little over a century's worth of documents to study. However, throughout that time it has been clear that the movements that became the CABC have rich pasts with clear opinions with respect

³⁷⁰ Basis of Union.

to church leadership. In the beginning, the leaders were highly esteemed and highly regulated. They were not chosen lightly and held great power in the local churches. As the 20th century loomed, the Baptist consolidation movement led to a watering down of requirements and descriptions of duties, at least on paper. However, as will be explored in the case studies, what is written in statements of practice, by-laws and Constitutions rarely captures the practice of the deacon ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE - EXAMINING HOW CABC CHURCHES ADDRESS DEACONS TODAY

The unique nature of Baptist ecclesiology has led to great diversity in current practice within CABC churches. In order to understand how Baptist churches are interpreting the role of deacon in 21st Century, the following case study and methodology was undertaken.

Selection of Churches

Selections of three relatively large churches within the denomination were made. The churches were located in the same geographic area to minimize the effect of cultural diversity from a sociological standpoint. Each church has had a significant history within the denomination, with one exception. That was a church which was formed from a merger of smaller churches. Even in that case, each church in the merger was a Convention church so the historicity was Baptist. These three churches were selected primarily on the basis of their diaconal structures. Of the three, one had a Deacons' Board, one had an Elders' Board and the third had a Leadership Team construct. The second criterion of selection was the congregation's involvement in an ongoing or planned organizational change. And finally, in order to be included in the study, each church had to be experiencing growth and health as determined by their respective Regional Minister.

Ministry Dynamic

Each of the churches studied had a weekend attendance over 350. Therefore it is important to note there are dynamics specific to this congregation size.

According to Arlin Routhage, this “Corporate Church” is characterized by the following attributes:³⁷¹

- Because these churches usually have abundant resources, they will usually have the finest music in town.
- The head of staff usually spends more time than other clergy preparing for preaching and worship leadership.
- When members are in the hospital, it is almost taken for granted that they will be visited by an associate or assistant pastor, rather than the senior pastor. Those who value highly the Corporate Church experience are willing to sacrifice a personal connection with the senior pastor in favor of the Corporate Church's variety and quality of program offerings.
- Key to the success of the Corporate Church is the multiple staff and its ability to manage the diversity of its ministries in a collegial manner.
- The clergy who are called as head of staff in a Corporate Church are usually multi-skilled persons who have proven their skill in a great variety of pastoral situations.
- These clergy are becoming chief executive officers of substantive operations. The Corporate Church needs leaders who know how to build momentum.

Gathering of Data:

Each church studied provided the author with a copy of either their constitution, by-laws, guiding principles or policy manual sections that related to leadership structure, qualifications and duties. To gain a breadth of understanding, and as unbiased a survey as possible, a total of three interviews were conducted in each church, leading to a total of nine interviews for this project. Within each church,

³⁷¹ Arlin Routhage, *Sizing Up a Congregation For New Member Ministry* (New York, NY: Episcopal Church Center, 1983), on line resource at

interviews were conducted with the pastor, a member of the diaconate (or equivalent) and a member of the congregation selected randomly by the church secretary.

Interviews were carried out personally at a location suitable to the subject; only one interview had to be conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded on audio tape and later transcribed.

Interview Scope

The first set of questions asked interviewees about their personal history with the church. The goal of these questions was to establish a baseline of understanding. Each interviewee was asked the following questions:

- What is your history with this church?
- What was your understanding of the role of deacons in the church at that time (or growing up)? I.e. what did you see as the duties and purpose of the Deacons' Board?
- Why do you believe the deacons and leaders functioned the way that they did?

The second line of questioning revolved around the current organizational structure of the church as a whole. These questions were asked to determine if the subject understood the changes that have occurred, the process involved and the effect these changes have had on their church. The following questions were asked of all candidates:

“Does your church have a clearly defined structure in either written or chart form? If so...

- How long has the church had this structure?
- Is it understood by the church?
- How often is it reviewed?

- Would you describe your structure as Baptist?
- Would you describe your structure as scriptural?

For churches that have gone through organizational change in the past year, the following questions were asked:

- Who (or what group) was the driving force behind the change?
- What helped inform this need to change structure?
- Do you believe the changes were necessary? Why?
- In the change, was your church recognizing what already existed or was your church introducing a whole new paradigm shift or structural philosophy?

Questions were then asked of the change:

- Does your new structure add or eliminate previous positions? Which ones?
- Is your structure still congregational? How so?
- Did these changes affect constitution, by-laws and incorporation?
- Has the entire structural change achieved its objective?
- How is that measured?

The next set of questions dealt specifically with the dominant board of the church. In this interview section, responses were sought in order to understand the function and role of the deacons, or equivalents, and how they interacted with the pastor and the congregation as 'leaders'. The questions in this section were:

- What is your dominant board called and what is its purpose?
- Is the dominant board facilitating its purpose? Why or why not?
- Has your church considered revising its board structure to make it more helpful in accomplishing its purposes?
- Would you say that this board provides spiritual leadership to the congregation?
- If so, how do your leaders demonstrate spiritual leadership? (i.e. How do the leaders lead?)
- How does the dominant board interact with the pastor?
 - a) Prime Minister and Cabinet
 - b) Board and CEO
 - c) Full equality
 - d) Other

For churches whose dominant board was not called deacons, follow-up questions were asked to clarify why the traditional name was no longer in use in their context. The subsequent questions asked were:

- Why did your church move from the structure and title of deacon in your dominant board?
- If you could summarize your personal concept of deacon in one word, what would it be?
- Does the title “deacon” exist in your structure?
- Does it exist by another name?
- If so, what is their purpose and duties in your context?

The next line of questioning related to the flow of ministries within the church. The goal was to get an understanding of how the subject believed the new structure works in practice, and how the ministries were affected by the change. Inquiries were made in order to understand what the dominant board does, and what it delegates. This was followed by a list of ministries and determining who is responsible for them. The list of ministries included:

- prayer ministry
- administration
- fellowship
- facilities
- worship
- stewardship
- benevolence
- structure/constitution
- missions
- evangelism
- visioning
- staffing
- discipleship

Questions focused on processes, such as how one becomes a part of the dominant board and how things are done at the board level. This required some

understanding and some speculation, especially for the congregant interviewees.

The queries included:

- What criteria are used to select a member of the dominant board, and are they in print?
- Are there any written or unwritten rules limiting selection i.e. gender, age?
- Who nominates/selects the individual?
- How are they ratified?
- How does governance take place within your structure?
- Are there policies which govern ministries and staff?
- Who monitors ministry effectiveness?
- There is much attention given to a local church's vision and mission. Who determines these statements and goals?

The last set of questions required reflection and introspection, hopefully after hearing one's own answers. They dealt with areas as diverse as trust in traditional Baptist structure. The questions were as follows:

- Can you point to some resources (books, lectures, models) which have influenced or clarified your view of church leadership and structure?
- The CABC has a statement of Union from 1905/06.
 - Is this something that you believe the pastor has read and is aware of?
 - The leadership?
 - The congregation?
- Does changing a church's external structure change its internal make-up or DNA?
- In your opinion, at what point would a structural change make a church no longer Baptist, or is that an issue of significance?"

Three quotes were presented to the interviewees for their reaction. The first question dealt with denominationalism and the "Basis of Union" of what is now known as the CABC:

"Under 'A Gospel Church,' it states: 'The only Scriptural officers are bishops (pastors), and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles of Timothy and Titus.' How would you interpret that statement in your context?"

The second question sought to understand the perceived role of pastor and deacon today versus the view held in the mid-nineteenth century.

“Can you please comment on the following statement? ‘The pastor has supervision of all the spiritualities of the church, and is therefore overseer or bishop in that department, so the deacons are overseers of all her temporalities, of which they of right have the full control.’”

The last question in this section sought to understand the issue of trust with structural change and implementation:

“How would you interact with the following quote? ‘The challenge with adopting any new governance structure, no matter how well crafted or articulated, is that the implementation depends on trust of those proposing and trust for those who serve in the new model.’”

Finally, the subjects were asked to offer any advice to churches considering modifying their church structure with respect to leadership or offer other comments.

The average interview took approximately forty-five minutes and many stories and illustrations were shared by the interviewees in order to clarify their views. Unfortunately, far more information was received than can be recorded. Many other theses ideas and topics sprang forth as a result of listening and learning from these very articulate people.

Qualifier

As the following case studies are explored, each church is identified with a descriptive title: traditional, efficient and relevant. These are not discriminators in any sense. These are simply common themes that have arisen from the interviewees themselves and are meant to help distinguish between the three case studies. Also,

it does not imply anything about the church's ministry. For example, the author is not saying the traditional church is not relevant, or that the efficient church cannot be traditional.

CHAPTER SIX - CASE STUDY OF CHURCH A – THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH

Church A could most clearly be defined as traditional. It is a church with a distinguished history and is a cornerstone of the denomination. The late nineteenth, early twentieth century structure is immaculately kept. The breathtaking stained glass tells of the church's history in the community and faithfulness to the call of the gospel. Today, the pews are filled with worshippers of all ages, though many are retirees, and the service style would best be described as predominantly traditional. This church does a significant amount of benevolence ministries within their community, including providing hot meals and clothing for those in need.

The church recently embarked on a survey of church health, facilitated by the Regional Minister, called NCD (Natural Church Development). This instrument found that the church scored well in many facets, with one exception. The area that needed the most work was 'functional structures.' This meant that there needed to be either organizational simplification or reorganization in order for the church to be more effective.

The forty-something pastor of church A (Paul) had been called there within the past decade. The fifty something chair of the Board of Deacons (Andrew) had grown up in the church. Finally, the seventy something congregant (Laura) has had a history in the church spanning over forty years, though she had not grown up at church A. All were very socio-economically successful and articulate.

HISTORICAL VIEWS OF DEACONS

All of Church A's interviewees had views that were quite similar in this section. The pastor stated that at the time of his arrival, his understanding of deacons was that they were spiritual leaders, fulfilling an eldership function. In his understanding, they were, "the bottom line veto power with a very active role in every aspect of church life." He directed me to the constitution which has duties and roles defined, and he added that "Yes, there is the written reality, but then there is the cultural dynamic, and the cultural dynamic was that these men are very set apart as spiritual leaders."

The Chair of the Board of Deacons saw the deacons as more of, "the old guys up front" - the rule makers and the ones in overall charge of the church. He never thought much about their function until he was approached to join the board. When following up as to their function, Andrew said, "I guess I thought what they did was for the betterment of the church and I guess ultimately helped in persuading people about the gospel and that type of thing."

The congregant, Laura, was very sentimental in her reflection on deacons when she joined the church in the sixties. She stated that the deacons were very involved in church life. "Most of them were older men. To me as a young person coming there, I felt they were close to God in their walk – they were very spiritual. And one of the things I was impressed with is when we came we got a call from this man. He told me he was a deacon of the church and that he and his wife would like to come and visit me." She viewed the deacons as spiritual leaders who were

concerned with the needs of the people. “They were always at prayer meetings, ready to give a testimony of what the Lord had done for them. I should say it was evident that we could see that they walked the walk.” The pastoral care and spiritual formation for Laura was vital. She held the deacons to a high standard of prayer and spiritual formation, as was promoted in the middle of the twentieth century.³⁷²

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

When asked if Church A had changed significantly in the past decade, there was some confusion. Pastor Paul stated that there had been two changes, one about seven years ago and a second minor one a year ago. He said that the structure could be determined from a line in the church’s documents. Although he stated there are “segments of the church that know nothing about church government,” for the most part he believed the church understands its own structure.

Chair Andrew acknowledged that they had just re-written the bylaws a couple of years ago. When asked if the congregation understands the changes, Andrew said unequivocally: “Absolutely not. We did the natural church development program here last year, and although we scored extremely high, our lowest mark would have been ‘structure,’ which comes to people understanding the structure and how the church works.”

Laura stated that she understood the structure and that it had changed. Then she made some telling comments. In reference to why the structure changed she said, “In many cases I think it’s what someone else does,” and churches want to

³⁷² Nichols, 5.

“imitate other churches and they think ‘why shouldn’t we?’. That may not be the main reason, but a lot of times it is.” When questioned further as to whether or not the change was necessary she stated, “Well, maybe necessary – not better.”

When it came to understanding if their structure was Baptist, Laura believed that “yes,” there is, “no other.” When followed with a question of whether it was scriptural her response was that she believed it was, “to the best of my abilities.” Andrew the deacon said with respect to a Baptist structure, “No, because I’m not sure where the structure actually came from. I guess if you look at a number of Baptist churches there would be a lot of similarities, but if you look at the structure of where we are today with our boards and committees, I’m not sure exactly where that came from. It’s been an age-old thing.” He goes on to say, “I don’t see any Scripture in the organization... As far as the church structure goes, I’m not sure I see it that way.”

Pastor Paul agreed in theory, “Yes, (*it is Baptist. With respect to scriptural*), we hope so, although I’m realizing that much of what we do as Baptist churches is not necessarily scriptural. It is more in terms of our broad understanding of Scripture and then we have made specific applications that aren’t necessarily ... that are not directly in Scripture, but they may be implied.”

These answers from the leaders show that they recognize the struggle of finding a template in Scripture. Whereas the deacon does not see Scripture at all in the structure, the Pastor sees the attempts at structure as based on scriptural interpretations.

Only the pastor believed that the church changed significantly in the past decade. He believed that the driving force behind the change was the deacons. “It resulted from a review (of) the bylaws. Because of legal concerns we realized that we had some big gaps and looking at it we realized we needed to review the whole thing. The Deacons’ Board set aside a constitutional committee and they met for about six months and re-wrote the constitution.”

Paul believed the changes were necessary stating that miscommunication and chain of command issues were leading to considerable frustration. He also added, “There were a lot of dynamics that we needed to clarify, and we needed to do more in terms of having a council within our structure.” He stated that the changes were “a paradigm shift. We moved in the direction of more policy government within our existing structure.”

His understanding of the new structure saw the elimination of committees. “We had a number of small committees that were actually written into our bylaws that we removed and now these committees are appointed. It was more of an administrative cleaning up where the bylaws designate that leaders should have the power to set up committees underneath them.”

When questioned if the structure is still congregational, Pastor Paul stated: “Very much so. We have congregational meetings, number one, so we have periodically open congregational meetings whereby anyone who is a church member or a church affiliate can come. We’re congregational in that all of the major decisions every year at the annual meeting come to the congregation, not only for

reporting, but also for approval. That includes nomination of leaders and all finances. And in terms of the procedure that we have for search committee staffing and pastors, it's very congregationally oriented."

He went on to state, "The other thing we have in our church, which is very unusual – for me anyway – is that in prayer meetings it's a congregational meeting every week. At that meeting we approve new members coming in and out. And so, we have that as a consistent congregational structure on a regular basis."

The new structure was very policy dominated, at least in theory, as a result of the latest changes. In reference to the constitutional changes, the pastor elaborated: "We tried to clarify areas in that each board is responsible for their (own) policy. And under each of those policy areas we are encouraging the leadership to then develop their policies. So we have different layers of policies. Obviously, the policy at the board level is more formal and can only be changed by the board, but the people underneath are given much more authority in terms of developing their own mission statements and developing their instructions in their areas."

To close this line of questioning the pastor was asked, "Has the change achieved its objective?" His response was: "Well, I think we're going in a healthy direction. I think also the communication has changed with our congregation. We've had a lot of changes with our congregation and a lot of new people, so I don't think we are at a mature level of communicating, and we are using our structures as a vehicle of communication in ministry the way we'd like to." When asked about measuring the success, he referred to: "Natural Church Development... and it was

one of the things that got us into structural change. Another evaluative tool that is much more extensive is staff evaluations (in terms of who does it and how), and that's been really helpful."

DOMINANT BOARD

All agreed that the dominant Board was the Deacons' Board. The pastor stated: "The purpose of the Board of Deacons is to work in cooperation with pastors in giving the church vision and direction and maintaining and ensuring the spiritual health of the church, seeking the will of God, trying to carry that out, and also walking according to Scripture." The Chair, though earlier did not see strong Scriptural basis in organization, did see the deacons functioning as ministers, equal to the nineteenth century view of elders. "We (the deacons) would be the spiritual overseers of the church – we would work in conjunction with the pastor to 'tend the flock' and look after most of the spiritual needs of the church. We're not a facility-type board. It's more of a teaching/learning type."

Laura, the congregant, stated that she overheard it said that, "Oh, I think the deacons think they're just there to serve communion." She disagreed and said, "I think they're concerned about leadership: pastor or relief pastor or whatever pastor there is, the function of it and the church's finances." Her view is interpreted as the deacons being more of a subordinate pastoral support, caring about the 'temporalities' of the church.

When asked how the board is doing fulfilling its purpose, the floodgates opened. Pastor Paul stated, "They've really struggled." Pastor Paul believed that

many of the deacons had various opinions as to what their role was. This would and could make meetings almost dysfunctional, and until they were in agreement as to their purpose, the board would not be as effective as they could be. Paul believed that this confusion had a ripple effect on the church since they were the dominant board.

These frustrations are what have led this author to write this thesis. A group of gifted individuals with no clearly defined roles will naturally look to different experiences, traditions and philosophies to determine their attitudes and actions. This appears to be a wide-spread problem in most diaconates in the CABC.

When the chair was asked the same question regarding fulfilling its purpose, he did not seem as animated, but demonstrated the confusion of which the pastor spoke. "That's a hard question to answer. Some days I would say yes, and some days I think, 'What are we doing here?'" This response was followed up. Andrew stated that, "For me (we are doing our job) when we're doing the basic things of talking about people coming to Christ and leading people to Christ and doing that type of activity. When we're talking about housekeeping activities in the church, although they're necessary, and by housekeeping I mean just the general run-of-the-mill stuff in the church, I don't find that an effective thing for us to be working on. We need to be involved with people and concerned with people. That's the number one thing with us."

It is clear in Andrew's response that he believes that someone else should be responsible for the administrative details so the deacons can be involved in a hands-

on spiritual ministry. Frustrations are exhibited when considerable time is spent on housekeeping details, and his ministry satisfaction appears to wane when his leadership becomes policy focused rather than people focused. What is encouraging is the desire to be personal versus distant as a leader.

Laura stated, again retrospectively: “I don’t know what instructions the deacons have today as to being a deacon, or their responsibilities – that would be my concern. I don’t know – I’m not saying they don’t have instructions or they do. When my husband was young and became a deacon, (he) had an elderly deacon that walked beside him and took him to places where he was taught – spiritually.”

When asking the question about deacons being the spiritual leaders of the church, Pastor Paul stated that they were the “spiritual fathers of the church” and that “they provide very good spiritual leadership in the things they do.” He went on to indicate that there are areas where the deacons could provide even more leadership such as: “Praying together. It would be on the basic things of consistency, and steadiness and of a spiritual accountability among themselves.” Deacon Andrew stated: “I think the church looks at us and looks up to us for that (spiritual leadership). I think one of the things that Pastor Paul has tried to do in the past couple of years: to make us more visible. And I think that’s an important thing. We need to be in front of the people and we need to be showing them. I think that although we have a long ways to go on the care side of things with people, our deacons are doing a much better job than they did at one point in time.”

This led to a rabbit trail on the definition of elder and deacon. Andrew was asked, “Do you see a difference between elders and deacons?” He said, “I think I do. I think elders would be totally a spiritual role, and I see deacons as more of the workers of the making sure the needs are getting taken care of and they would work very closely hand in hand, but I think I do see a difference.” When asked, “What do you think you are, an elder by a different name?” He responded: “I believe I am at this point. Not to put myself in any position, that’s not what I’m saying. I think my role, over time, certainly changed. Yeah, I do feel very strong about that. Not that I’d need to see a name change or anything, but just what I’m called to do. Just what I feel God is calling me to do.”

The reality is that within most traditional Baptist Churches, there is a sense that the deacons function as both deacons and elders. This has been the case since the beginning of the Baptist witness in Atlantic Canada, yet as of late there has been a realization that perhaps the two roles could be separated. What is interesting in Andrew’s admission is that he sees the elder role as more spiritual and interested in people’s lives. This is opposed to churches that function with separate elders’ and deacons’ offices, such as Church B. These churches have been typically delegating the pastoral care aspect to the deacons and the policy decision making to the elders.

Laura believed that a deacon was a spiritual leader whom she identified as “[a] man of prayer.” She went on to say, “To me (he was) a man who would listen, a man who was caring for everybody – not just one or two, you know, one who has a caring heart.” With respect to how the pastor and deacons function, all agreed (with some caveats) that the structure most reflected a Prime Minister and Cabinet model.

Paul admitted that in the past few years accountability has been reworked so that there is not the “watch dog of the pastor” mentality. Also, he acknowledged that although the deacons sought vision from their Prime Minister, there was an uncertainty as to how to either affirm or not affirm vision, but that is changing.”

Andrew, the deacon, stated that although it was a Prime Minister concept, “I also think it’s a very together thing... I believe you call the pastor and he is the leader or the lead shepherd and so I think the pastor does a lot in casting vision and helping that mold or grow, but one person’s opinion isn’t the only opinion. It’s in conjunction, and we all need to work together.” Laura simply stated without any elaboration that it was the Prime Minister and Cabinet model.

When asked what the deacon’s duties are, Andrew stated a major component was caring and working in areas of influence. He added that there is more worship leading as well. Pastor Paul stated that there is confusion in duties. He sees the division based on the elder vs. deacon concept: “One camp believes that the primary structure of the deacons is to make decisions for the church. The other camp is more ‘old school’ and trained that they are the fathers or shepherds and they have a key role in encouraging and supporting, visiting, caring for the church in cooperation with the pastor.” Paul leaned toward the latter.

MINISTRY ALLOCATION

The chart in Appendix 2 shows how the respondents from Church A answered the question of who is ultimately responsible for the following ministries.

This chart shows that perceptions of responsibility still need some clarification. Some interesting observations can be made with respect to how the pastor and deacons view their roles. For example, each believes the other is responsible for worship in the church. Most likely, each is interpreting the question differently. Often times, in these settings, the deacons are given a task and they in turn commission the pastor to perform it. This is one way how both end up being responsible. If not, however, this can lead to a lack of accountability and direction in this aspect of ministry. This is similar in the case of stewardship whereas the pastor sees it as a board's responsibility and the deacons place it solely at the pastor's feet.

Another item of note is the chair's lack of recognition of the Christian Education board's duties or responsibilities. If he believes discipleship is a deacon's duty and Christian Education believes it is their duty, there will be conflict. In fact, Andrew's view of the deacons' duties is staggering with his board being responsible, either directly or indirectly through encouraging the minister, for every aspect of the church. It is not surprising that Andrew is frustrated with the administrative side of his board.

SELECTION

Church A was asked about process, specifically criteria used in selecting deacons. Church A's recently adopted bylaws refer to deacons as follows:

"The Board of Deacons shall consist of up to twelve members, the qualifications for nomination being those as recorded in the New Testament, Acts, Chapter 6, verses 1 to 7, and 1st Timothy, Chapter 3, verses 8 to 13. The Board shall report on its activities at the Annual Business Meeting of the church as well as its assessment of the

overall spiritual health of the church, plus objectives and plans for the year ahead.

When the church calls an individual to serve as a deacon, it shall be considered a lifetime calling to the Office of Deacon, although the individual will serve actively on the Board of Deacons for various terms as outlined below. When a deacon is not under active appointment to the Board, the individual shall continue to serve the church through on-going spiritual influence and example, and may be called upon from time to time to assist the current members of the Board of Deacons in the duties of the Board as described below.

Normally, a new deacon who is serving his first term on the Board of Deacons shall be set apart for such service by prayer. At the start of a second term, based upon personal conviction of a call to the Office of Deacon and upon affirmation of the Church fellowship, a Deacon shall be set apart for service by "laying on of hands" and prayer, thus being ordained as a deacon with the view of lifetime service, whether under active appointment to the Board or not."³⁷³

These written guidelines refer to the Basis of Union requirements from the Pastoral Epistles. It then adds the Acts 6 as a foundational reference. This document shows the process for ordination is clear, but not the selection process.

Pastor Paul said of the standards required of deacons: "We would like to think it is 1 Timothy 3. (The) criterions are character, spiritual walk with God, maturity". When asked if there are any written or unwritten rules of selection such as gender, he stated that they only have male deacons, so their wives are important in terms of confidentiality. Pastor Paul believes that having male deacons enlarges the office's influence since the wives take on a role as well. "The wives' roles are important in

³⁷³ Section 10.1 *Board of Deacons bylaws*, Church A, 2006.

terms of dealing with women's issues in the church, and we tend to include them more." When questioned if this is written anywhere in the bylaws he said "No, they would be spelled out in Scripture." He also indicated that, "Age would be an unwritten rule, and I don't think you would find someone under 25."

When the question of qualifications was posed to the chair of deacons, he replied, "1 Timothy 3." He said when asked of restrictions: "Gender would be at this point in time. It's not a written rule, but it's always been." When questioned on age restrictions he said that there was no unwritten rule regulating this.

When asked of selection criteria, Laura stated that it was crucial, "that they 'walk the walk' of God. Many, many times it's been difficult to fill the role." When asked if there are any restrictions, written or otherwise, she stated, "I don't think the congregation has much input on that. I think it's the deacons that are there, plus the pastors (who decide)."

This led to the follow-up question on how deacons were selected. Pastor Paul stated: "They are nominated by the deacons themselves. The deacons prioritize the list, the deacons approach people for possible candidates, and then those names are given to the congregation at the same time as (the) nominating committee (report) for approval or disapproval." Deacon Andrew stated in selecting: "We start to gather a list of names and what has been done in the past is, (we) will all bring 2 or 3 other names, then if a name comes up 3 or 4 times, that would put you higher on the list. Then we'll start to contact, either through the deacons or through the pastor, or a combination thereof and go from there." Laura recognized the

congregation had the final say on deacons, but implied that congregants really didn't have much input. "Deacons plus pastors (choose deacons). At the business meeting they (the church) accept the nominations but they're given to us. They are presented to the congregation to accept."

Laura indicated that although the church is congregational, there is a sense that the power to select leadership remains within the hands of leadership. In fact, this is common in traditional churches, with leadership boards being self-perpetuating and seeking like-minded individuals to fill vacancies. These churches often have a mechanism where the deacons' names are affirmed by the congregation, but often as part of a nominating report, and often in a rubber stamp fashion.

GOVERNANCE

The whole area of governance was being explored at Church A. Pastor Paul stated, "[T]he deacons are regularly writing policies to deal with staff and those policies can be changed within the board – they're not a part of our bylaws. As well, pastors, have written minor policies in terms of staff in evaluation and reporting kinds of things." Paul believed that he was to monitor ministry effectiveness.

The whole policy governance approach was gaining importance with Andrew. "As I said, that is one of the things we're tackling and it's been on the back burner. We are looking at governance and how the boards function." When asked if there was a policy manual, Andrew stated, "Not other than what's written in the Bible." He did believe it was the deacons' duty to monitor ministry effectiveness.

Both the pastor and deacon felt it was their responsibility to measure effectiveness. Laura did not discuss governance much, but she did believe that the deacons were responsible for ministry effectiveness.

VISION

Vision was the next item on the agenda. Pastor Paul stated, “Probably the process would begin with either a discussion within a deacons’ meeting of a need or an area, then either myself or one of the deacons would come up with a proposed vision or mission statement and then the board would discuss that.” Paul saw the congregation very involved in the refining of the vision stating that eventually the deacons, “bring it to the congregation, depending on how big a thing it is, then back to deacons and deacons approve or change it, then it goes to the congregation. Sometimes it will go for approval, sometimes it will just go for communication, depending on the size and importance of it.”

Deacon Andrew summarized his view of vision by saying the “mission statement or mission goals would be, again, (determined by) the deacons and the pastor, and then basically rolled out to the congregation to make sure everyone is in agreement.” The theme was that the congregation was the owner of the vision.

INSIGHTS

The final section showed how the interviewees were processing their changing church. The first question was what has influenced your view of church structure. Pastor Paul responded that he had attended multiple conferences and

lectures, from which he learned there is great flexibility in determining a scriptural structure, highlighting the difference between descriptive and prescriptive accounts. He also said he has learned that whether or not it is clearly expressed in a church's documentation, the pastor does have a leadership role to live up to. Deacon Andrew said he hadn't seen much to help him understand structure. "I'm not sure I've seen anything on clear direction. I would like to see some sort of resource on it, for sure. There are lots of things for pastors, a lot of things for Sunday School teachers, but there is very little on deacons or elders or whatever you want to call them." Laura did not comment.

When asked about the 1905/06 Basis of Union, Pastor Paul said, he was, "Aware of it, but (I) haven't read it." He said that would be the same with his congregation, they would be aware, but most likely hadn't read it. This belief was confirmed by both Andrew and Laura. When asked what they thought of the dual officers' statement in the Basis of Union, Laura agreed with it. Andrew thought it sounded reasonable and Pastor Paul stated, "I would say that our church probably models itself after that unknowingly, and in most of our people's minds, that's what they would see as officers. We have other officers legally in our bylaws, but in the church's mind that would be how they see deacons."

When the subjects were asked if structural change meant a DNA change to a church, there were mixed results. Pastor Paul said no, and that he was more concerned about being scriptural and Christian than being Baptist. He sees the freedom in the Baptist denomination to interpret Scripture. However, "Given that, I think at the point of which the personal relationship with God, and secondly the

responsibility of priesthood of all believers was jeopardized” threatens to change a church negatively. “To be a minister of service of God and to be involved in community with the other believers (is crucial). I think if that is threatened, then I think we’re on thin ice.”

Andrew responded that structural change could affect a church’s DNA. “I think it would, yes.” When asked, “At what point do we no longer remain Baptist?” He said, “First of all, I think that happens when you stray outside the confines of Scripture, I think that there are certain things you just don’t vary from. And I think there are some minor points probably that are arguable, but not the main point.” When asked about the congregational form of governance, Andrew said, “I don’t think the general congregation understands the inner workings of what happens and that come business meeting time or annual meeting time they get a brief glimpse of what goes on, but I don’t think they generally understand.

A clarifying question was asked, “Are you saying that although they have the authority, they might not understand the decision they need to make?” He responded, “I agree. And quite honestly, sometimes I think we take it too much to the extreme. Democracy is a great thing and I wouldn’t ever want to fight against that, but I think that sometimes we tie our hands and I think at the end of the day somebody needs to be able to make a decision somewhere on some point to tie it up for a congregational vote doesn’t make a lot of sense to me – not in today’s world.”

Andrew is battling with the issue facing most modern church leaders. How does one lead effectively while still honoring congregational government? This will be a theme in all the churches interviewed with various mechanisms developed to address the issue with varying degrees of success.

In the midst of this, Laura stated structure can change a church, “because I think the deacons are according to Scripture.” At what point is a Baptist church no longer Baptist? She stated cryptically, “What goes in the building – it is a building and the church are the people - but I think there are some things you don’t allow under the heading of church because it’s ... I don’t know.” She was leaning very heavily on Scripture through the eyes of tradition and as in previous responses is wary of new ideas or changes.

In response to the question of trust, all agreed that it was key, with Andrew adding that “who” presents the change is key. Laura added that, “Trust in God first,” was vital.

When asked if there was any advice to those considering a change, Pastor Paul said, “We can sometimes use structure to cover over sin or trust issues and react to them, as opposed to dealing with the sin or the area that’s a problem head-on. I think often the issue is not the issue when you’re talking church structures. But given that, that we have a consistent effort to maintain and build Christ-like relationships. I think that if people are praying and seeking the Lord then there is a life-blood of Christ in the structure. And so it goes both ways. I disagree with

leading change through structure. I believe personally that we lead change to the heart and the character of the people.”

Deacon Andrew stated, “Well, I think you need to be open ... for one thing, I think that if we’ve fallen down in this church at any point, it’s probably been in the communication aspect.” Laura did not have anything else to add.

Summary of Church A

This was a traditional church through and through evidenced by both the structure and the ways that the subjects processed information. Scripture was extremely important to all the subjects. The key concepts arising over and over were relationships and tradition.

Tradition

The pastor was aware of the struggle a traditional model held and yet has optimistically found ways to work within the structure in order to help the church flourish. For example, his view of deacon’s wives involved in ministry to gender sensitive situations was a creative response to traditional construct. Also, the weekly prayer meeting was being maintained in this church and the pastor saw it as not only a discipleship event but a miniature form of congregational government on a regular basis.

Deacon Andrew referred to following tradition in the selection of deacons, and yet he was frustrated with some of the inefficiencies of the older model. Though he did not discuss it directly, in the bylaws of Church A, an extensive amount is written to explain procedures for lifetime deacons and ordaining deacons. In this church, it appears that leadership is anchored in tradition and yet stretching to meet modern needs.

Laura's nostalgia may be quite indicative of the vast majority of attendees. Through the filter of time, previous struggles are forgotten and only the glow of a simpler time and wonderful memories explode. Her desire appears that she wishes the church were "as it was," not "as it could be." Her defining quote, "Change might be necessary, but not better" implies a pessimism toward modern methods that may be widely held amongst older congregants.

It could very well be that this church's greatest strength may be its greatest weakness. There is a stability and accountability in this church that rivals most other congregations today. Because of this, ministries have flourished over the years, and these ministries have been well maintained and managed. To some extent, this has occurred as a result of honoring a godly tradition and staying within clearly set boundaries.

However, the bureaucracy that once fostered spiritual growth is now threatening to be a restriction to current and future growth. The number of lay leaders necessary, and time commitments required of each, to maintain the organizational structure is either taxing the participants or removing them from

informal ministries. Laura indicated that it is getting harder to find workers and deacons.

Many older congregations have constitutions and bylaws that require a large number of officers who are not as readily available as they once were. This is a point that desperately needs to be addressed. Churches are in a dilemma if their documentation requires more candidates than are qualified to serve. The question exists: does the church function with less members; lower the standards; or change the documents?

Many of these churches fear changing the documents because of their historicity and the amount of work necessary to legally make the change in most of our churches. Barriers arise such as setting up yet another committee to propose changes to the documents. This committee often needs trusted and respected individuals focusing on these details, which unfortunately limits those same people from other ministries during this time. Even then, the proposals must be brought to duly called meetings, gaining typically a two thirds majority. If the changes are perceived as too radical, it is back to the drawing board. If the changes are not significant enough, the leadership will remain frustrated.

Therefore, many churches faced with this dilemma ignore an aspect of the requirements. Either they function with less or they lower their standards. This is a reality which many traditional churches face, especially if they have restricted deacon selection to only the male gender. If the leadership proposes a change to the documentation, it has the potential of being very explosive. If the deacons function

with fewer than allotted, it will require even more work of an overworked board. If the standards are lessened, the effectiveness of the church and integrity of the leadership is terribly compromised.

Relationships

The pastor saw relationships as the key to renewal and revival within the church as opposed to a new structural plan. His desire to see people doing ministry and in a vibrant personal relationship with Christ took precedence over structure. He even believed that a strong Christian walk was the key in his deacons understanding their role and identity in an unclear job description. In other words, who they were would determine what they would do.

Deacon Andrew reiterated that his desire was to help directly in the spiritual growth of the people in his church, as an overseer, both visible and recognizable. In his opinion this was superior to policy or administrative details. He had a strong pastoral care heart and nature which affected his view of what deacons should do.

To Laura, relationships from the past are what warmed her heart. There was a sense from her that she perceived mentoring relationships may not be as prominent as they were when her husband was a deacon. She also looks to deacons as leaders who are demonstrating a close relationship with Christ. This was evidenced in the past through their presence at prayer meetings and ability to give a ready testimony.

The relational aspect will be critical as this church moves forward. The subjects recognize the importance of relationships, be they spiritual, caring or mentoring. What is encouraging is the desire of all parties, pastor, deacon and congregant, to be more clearly and openly communicating. Not only are relationships crucial in leadership development, they meet one of the greatest needs of the post-modern world.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CASE STUDY OF CHURCH B – THE EFFICIENT CHURCH

Church B is a modern church with a modern physical structure. The congregation has gone through an expansion and is planning yet another in the near future. The church came into existence within the past fifty years as a result of an amalgamation of smaller Convention churches. Multi-purpose rooms, stunning graphic banners and worship team instruments are the signatures of this church. There are worshippers of all ages here, yet the thirty year span between twenty and fifty year olds would make up the vast majority of the adult population in both morning services. The Sunday evening service would have lower numbers, a more traditional flavour, and an older crowd.

The church recently went through a very exhaustive process with respect to defining leadership, desired outcomes, and the role of the deaconate. After a few congregational modifications, the result is a structure wherein the church functions with an Elder Board as the dominant board.

The forty something pastor of church B (Ken) had been called over a decade ago, the seventy something chair of the board of Elders (Lionel) had grown up in one of the pre-merger churches and has been a part of Church B since day one. The fifty something congregant (Vic) joined the church relatively recently, though he has been a leader within the church. He currently serves on a committee. All interviewees were successful, middle-class and exceptionally business minded.

HISTORICAL VIEWS OF DEACONS

The Church B participants all believed that, in one way or another, deacons in this church used to function in primarily a traditional role. Pastor Ken stated that they were his spiritual advisors, a sounding board for planning and programming, and tended to help a lot with staffing issues. Beyond that, he said that they did some of the more common and fairly traditional things like serving communion. Pastor Ken stated he thinks “in a lot of ways, a lot of our churches are very clergy-centered,” and have a tendency to rely too heavily on pastors.

Elder Lionel saw the duties of the deacons as primarily involving a lot of administrative responsibility, though their role was to provide spiritual leadership and guidance to the pastor. He felt they functioned as they did in order to fill a need within the traditional structure. Congregant Vic reaffirmed what the other interviewees stated, saying that deacons were the spiritual leadership and the catch all. They oversaw finances, facilities, and other aspects, primarily functioning that way because of tradition.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

When asked if Church B had a clearly defined structure, all respondents indicated that it was both clear and well known (Appendix 3). Each participant had a great breadth of knowledge of the new structure due to its recent adoption within the past year. Pastor Ken stated that “if people don’t know about the new structure, it is

because they're asleep or they're not really interested. He stated, "we have been very transparent in getting it out there."

Elder Lionel stated that a task force was set up to see what was needed and brought back a proposal to the church (through focus groups) with extensive two-hour presentations. He said that the rejection of the first proposal was based on a feeling by some of a power grab. He said that fear and misunderstanding precipitated the failure. "Some influential individuals and boards felt threatened, because change brings that." Vic understood that it took about two to three years to develop the initial proposal which, eventually when presented, did not pass a congregational vote. He saw it as being modified by the congregation's input and then passed. All stated that the document was a living document. As long as the church continued to grow, they expected this structure to change and grow as well.

When it came to understanding if their structure was Baptist, the people of Church B responded, "yes" with some qualifications. Pastor Ken said, "I would say, yes, although it would be very different from what most people in the region would be familiar with, for sure." Lionel stated after a brief chuckle, "Certainly not traditional. There is a major difference between administering a small church and a five hundred plus member church." He believed that the crucial difference is whether the church, "is volunteer led or staff led." There was no question in his mind that it must be staff led. He clarified that by saying, "staff led does not mean staff controlled." Vic simply stated when asked if it was a Baptist structure, "I wouldn't know any other." All agreed that their model was scriptural.

All were in one accord: their church's structure had changed significantly in the past decade. The theme that arose from the questioning was that Church B was a growing church and as such was being restricted by outdated and inefficient structures. Pastor Ken believed that the leadership and obviously the staff collectively were very frustrated with the old model. "The whole decision making process was very cumbersome and was creating turf wars and confusion a lot of times. There was just a real need to change because it became a lid on the health of the church and the growth of the church." His view was that the old structure "reflected a church that was substantially smaller than what we had and it was causing us to be ineffective in a lot of ways. So, it was really a matter of good stewardship, of being good stewards of the mission."

In reflecting upon the initial rejection of the plan Ken stated, "it took us a whole extra year to really help people through the process to understand why make the change, what it was all about, and to feel less threatened by it. At the end of the day, you're never ever going to please everybody, but I think the church is a lot healthier because we took the extra year."

Lionel saw the board of management and senior. Pastor, "who is a very informed and wise individual," leading the charge for the change. To him it was a matter of efficiency, freeing up staff, and setting clearly defined roles to keep groups from meddling. He also felt it answered questions of responsibility.

Vic saw the need for the church to be more flexible than the previous structure allowed. He saw the leadership team and deacons making the change because "the church needed to operate on a day to day basis. Sometimes a church

has too many layers of committees before something can get done. Our model says lets make some of those decisions front line and keep the congregation informed.”

All understood that the leadership examined other successful churches in order to determine what model would be best for them. Pastor Ken added that he talked with other pastors, both nationally and internationally. Ken said that they chose “prevailing churches that had a track record of growth, a track record of integrity, in terms of being really biblical and evangelical. They all had models of governance that were biblical and that really allowed leaders to lead and really freed up the ministry. That way people weren’t spending all their time going around in circles in bureaucracy, in meetings, or whatever.”

There was some contradiction on whether the document developed was a paradigm shift or rather a recognition of an existing structure. Pastor Ken said that it was a whole new paradigm shift and “we realized we couldn’t just do a few tweaks to the old document. We had to overhaul fundamentally the whole deal and we’ve gone to a governance model.” Vic said that it was more of recognizing what was already there. Lionel merged the two by saying that it was bringing the “structure up to where we were and it clearly defined roles.”

There were significant changes to offices and positions within the church. Pastor Ken stated that there were fewer boards and standing committees. Lionel stated, “It in effect eliminated most (positions) and redesigned them... i.e. the deacon’s role is very different. The elder’s role is now what deacon’s role was, and what the Board of Management’s was. The biggest change was allowing staff to

operate and keep elders out of operations, not the leadership.” Vic saw that the structure’s main change was the introduction of elders.

All agreed that the new structure was congregational. Ken stated,

“Ultimately, the final authority in the church is the congregation. We still have two annual meetings per year. We spell out the things that the congregation votes on in the bylaws, and so ultimately they call or fire the Senior Pastor. They personally vote, by name, for each of the eight elders who are chosen annually. It’s not just a slate, you actually vote for each person. They vote on the budget. They certainly delegate a lot of the authority to the board, but still they have the power to nominate or to vote off an Elder, as well.”

Elder Lionel stated that his board reports to the congregation at two meetings a year when programs, accountability reports and proposals are given to the congregation. The congregation then approves programs and hands it back to the elders. Vic added, “If there was an issue, the congregation has the ability to bring it to a vote.”

When asked, “Has the change achieved its objective?”, all said, “Yes.” The pastor saw “some significant change in terms of the use of people’s time, decision-making, getting things done.” He said, “It has significantly streamlined, in a positive way, the decision-making of different groups in the church to be able to get their work done.” The elder saw its value in the clarity of roles; especially holding people accountable for their responsibilities, “but not in a dictatorial way.” Vic saw it was successful, “by being more agile in moving in ministry, the activity in the church, the number of souls, and the responses to course offering.”

DOMINANT BOARD

All agreed that the dominant Board was the Elders' Board. The bylaws of Church B in Article 8 under the Board of Elders states the purpose of the Board is as follows:

The Board shall be the spiritual guardians of the church and be responsible for the spiritual development of the church, according to the teachings of Scripture, the Statement of Faith, Church Covenant and the By-laws. The Board shall be responsible for assuring the management of the activities of the church on behalf of the Members.

8.02 General responsibilities of the Board

The Board shall administer the affairs of the church. It shall make or cause to be made for the Church; in its name, any kind of contract which the Church may lawfully enter into and save as herein provided. The Board shall exercise such other powers and do such other acts and things as the Church is otherwise authorized to exercise and do. The Board is the chief acting board of the Church through which the operations of the Church are coordinated.

- (a) They will provide guidance to the Senior Pastor in the spiritual oversight and the administration of the total ministry of the church.
- (b) They will approve the hiring and dismissal of pastors and staff according to Article IX.
- (c) They will approve applications for or removals from membership in accordance with Articles 6.02 and 6.03.
- (d) They will assure scriptural administration of the ordinances of the church (i.e., communion, baptism).
- (e) They will approve objectives, budgetary and financial plans and policies and programs.
- (f) They will assure the ministry conforms to the teaching of Scriptures, the Statement of Faith, the By-laws and the stated purpose of the church.
- (g) The Board shall be responsible for the assignment of specific and/or general responsibilities of pastoral staff, church officers, committee members, and other personnel of (Church B).
- (h) The Board shall take such steps as it shall deem requisite to enable the Church to acquire, accept, solicit or receive legacies, gifts, grants, settlements, bequests, endowments and donations of any kind whatsoever for the purpose of furthering the objectives of the Church.
- (i) The Board may accept on behalf of the Church any contribution, gift, bequest or device for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Church.
- (j) The Board constitutes the "Trustees of Church B" as per the requirements of the Provincial Act.
- (k) The Board, committees and each ministry team are responsible for the development and implementation of policy and procedures within their areas

of ministry. These policies and procedures, along with other documents, such as church procedures, business papers, and financial records, are to be filed and made available to any Member of the congregation upon request to the Board. All church policies and procedures are to be approved by the Elders' Board.

(l) The Board shall oversee the strategic and long range plans of the ministry. The Elders shall oversee a strategic and operational review of each ministry area to review goals, assess performance, and evaluate resource and ministry effectiveness and assure programs are consistently aligned with church objectives.

The entire article is printed to show the church's desire to remove obscurity from the role. It clearly points to the overseeing role of the elders. They are commissioned with the spiritual development of the church via the management of the church's activities.

Pastor Ken stated, "The purpose of the Elders' Board is governance. Their role is to keep me accountable, and then ultimately as senior pastor I'm accountable for the staff and then the staff the ministry teams, and then ultimately the congregation. The Elders' role is also to monitor the goals that the ministry team puts forward each year, and to make sure ultimately that we are fulfilling the mission principle of the church. He said that with this new emphasis, "We have fewer meetings and the role is really to focus on the end game, sort of to monitor and to maintain."

Elder Lionel stated that the purpose of the board is to carry out the plans of the church and to work with the CEO (or Senior Pastor) to fulfill that. This term was the first real indication that the church was utilizing significant "business" language.

Yet, Vic saw the job of the Elders' Board more religious than business oriented. They have "a handle on the spirituality of the church, where we are, and

where we are going.” Actually, the congregant’s view was closest to the description in the bylaws.

All recognized that the new structure was not fully up to what it will become. Ken stated, “the board is to be applauded in being incredibly disciplined in maintaining their function of governance and allowing the ministry lead team to be responsible for the management and the ministry of the programs.” Vic saw them as successful in their way of making sure people are fed and growing, and new attendees are coming out.

The aspect of spiritual leadership amongst the elders was addressed. Pastor Ken stated that the elders were spiritual leaders, “although it’s not a board that’s necessarily super visible. They’re not on the platform; they’re not making speeches all the time. They’re more out there than in there, and monitoring and assessing.” With respect to their demeanour, “certainly they’re people of impeccable integrity and character and highly regarded by the congregation.”

The Elder said that spiritual leadership is supposed to be the main function of the board. He went on to give evidence of the involvement of his fellow elders stating that as leaders they are actively involved in different ministries of the church. Lionel warned, “the danger of an Elders’ Board is that it becomes too active.”

Vic said that the elders, with the pastor, were the spiritual leaders. He said that the elders’ spiritual stature is evidenced as they are presented to the church for nomination. “When voted on, there is a write-up about each elder with a biography of who they are, with their favorite Scriptures and passions.” Vic said that they are also leading as they are observed over the week.

When asked what dynamic exists between the pastor and the elders, all agreed to some extent that it was a Board and CEO model. Pastor Ken interjected, "I would actually be the ninth elder, so I do have voting privileges, so in that sense I'm one of 9, but certainly it's not full equality in terms of I'm accountable to the board with an annual review of my job performance." Vic sees that unity as well, but would rather see something other than the board run the pastor.

Since this church moved from the title of deacon in the dominant board, a line of questioning ensued as to why. The pastor stated:

"We wrestled a lot with what we'd call the board. We were open to not even using the term 'Elders'. We decided to go with the term 'Elders' because it's biblical. We do have deacons but they are appointed by the Elders and have delegated responsibilities. Certainly the early church had Elders. We didn't really spell out all of what they are. But at the end of the day, there are some churches that have Board of Governors, or the Lead Board, or whatever, but we decided to go with Elders. I think the key consistently is that we felt that there needed to be, biblically, a lead board of shared leadership. (These would be) people with complimentary skill sets who could provide accountability for the church."

When followed up with the question, "Do you think that using the title 'deacons' would have confused people with the new paradigm shift?", Ken responded, "Yes, that was a big part of it. There was a lot of baggage associated with it and we were trying to unlearn the church. It's not the deacons of old, or the trustees of old. We have a facilities committee, we don't have trustees. We used to have five boards, we now have one board."

Elder Lionel said of the title change, "in reality since 1987 it hasn't been the case." He saw in Scripture the role of deacon as a clearly defined area of responsibility and felt the deacons should operate there. He felt that, "the deacons were spending 90% time in administration and not in the area of work that they were

supposed to do.” Vic stated from his viewpoint the name change was probably due to congregation size, with a larger church breaking up the traditional deacon into two offices with a separation of duties.”

When asked about the role of deacons within their specific context, all recognized their existence to varying degrees. Pastor Ken called deacons:

“Servants who fall under the elders, appointed by the elders, not by the congregation. The responsibilities the deacons have right now are to oversee visitation, prayer, missions and benevolence ministries. Primarily a deacon is someone who has a real servant’s desire, willing to come alongside the elders in order to facilitate ministry.”

Lionel, the Elder, stated that deacons “are to help. They are assigned specific areas of ministry: prayer, missions, visitation.” Vic saw them as “someone who looks after facilities and practicalities of spiritual stature, with duties such as communion.”

MINISTRY ALLOCATION

Questioned as to what ministries are assigned to whom, some clarifications were made at this point by both the pastor and the elder. They described a concept called the “Ministry Leadership Team” (MLT). This MLT consists of a paid staff member and members of the church who have a passion for a specific area of ministry. For example, worship would have a MLT consisting of the worship pastor, musicians, vocalists, sound and technology workers and other members of the church that have a passion for that ministry. It is within this context that the results were gathered in Appendix 4.

This exercise showed that the elder and the pastor are somewhat on the same page when it comes to understanding the flow and responsibilities of staff. In the area of visioning, the elder commented that the elders are ultimately responsible for the vision; however they rely heavily on the Senior Pastor as the one who develops and articulates it to them.

The other standout was the various players involved in this church's ministry. It appears to be far more diversified, with both the elder and congregant recognizing that most of the time the ministry is accomplished by someone other than the Senior Pastor. Even the pastor himself sees that ministries are not solely his responsibility. Much of this has come from clarification in the recent reorganization. Thus it appears that the structural change has led to a greater diversification of the ministry and its responsibilities.

SELECTION

The bylaws of church B clearly state how elders are selected. The following is an excerpt starting from 8.03 - 8.06.

8.03 Number of Board members - The Board will consist of nine (9) voting members including the Senior Pastor and eight (8) elected members.

8.04 Qualifications of Board members

An individual who may be considered, as a board member shall:

- (a) be a professing Christian and follower of Jesus Christ, being in agreement with our Statement of Faith (see Appendix A);
- (b) be a Member in good standing of Church B, honouring the church covenant (see Appendix B);
- (c) strive to serve as a model of Christian faith and servant leadership;
- (d) be supportive of the Church's mission, direction and ministry style;
- (e) be a faithful contributor as a steward of time and resources;
- (f) consent to an annual internal review of performance of roles and contributions as a Board member, to the Board; and meet the spiritual qualifications of a Board member

8.05 Selection and tenure - The Members of the Church according to Article 8.06 shall elect board members. The Board members will be elected for a three-year term, subject to an annual internal review by the Board, with approximately one-third of the terms expiring each year. A Board member is eligible to serve two consecutive three-year terms after which the board member will be ineligible to serve on the Board for a minimum of one year.

8.06 Elder nomination and election

Elder Nominations

- (i) Each year the existing members of the Board will determine any positions to be filled for the coming year. New members for the Board of Elders are to be nominated by the present Board of Elders.
- (ii) The Elders will invite church Members to suggest names of potential candidates whom they consider to satisfy the requirements for serving on the Board.
- (iii) The Elders will review, research, and interview (if deemed necessary) any potential nominees to make certain that they are willing to let their name be considered for service on the Board and are qualified as per Article 8.04.
- (iv) The Board of Elders will post the name(s) of nominees a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the Annual Operation Meeting.
- (v) The nominees for the Board of Elders will be presented to the church body for approval by a majority vote. Each nominee will be voted upon individually.
- (vi) Should any nominee for the Board of Elders fail to be elected at this time, the newly appointed Board of Elders shall follow the guidelines outlined in Article 8.09.

Though this does describe the entire selection process, these articles do not include any defining Scriptures with respect to the roles. Instead, the focus is on Christian character in general. Included in the articles is the understanding that the candidate is in agreement with the statement of faith and church covenant.

The interviewees were asked about their understanding of the selection process. All agreed that the guidelines were clearly spelled out, with an emphasis on giftedness, and there was no restriction with respect to gender. All understood both the selection and ratification process.

Pastor Ken was quite pleased with the process, since the congregation was involved both in the ratification, and the selection process of the candidates. He saw this through the broad list being gathered from nominees and amended by the Elders, but then given back to the congregation again, to vote on individually.

GOVERNANCE

The following governance structure is found at Church B:

Church B Governance Structure

An imperfect system filled with men and women of integrity will function far better than a perfect system filled with men and women who lack integrity. The people we choose are more important than the system we use. Furthermore, the imperfections of any system will stand out larger than life when the system is put to the test.

- (a) Lordship of Christ
- (b) Church B Membership
- (c) Board of Elders
- (d) Senior Pastor
- (e) Ministry Lead Team
- (f) Ministry Teams
- (g) Members and Adherents

(a) Jesus Christ is the ultimate head of the church, which is His body, therefore the vision, values and practices of Church B should reflect His Lordship over our lives ... "that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18b)

(b) The membership of Church B, as a body, is the highest decision-making body as per the Church B bylaws.

(c) The Board of Elders is given authority by and is accountable to the Church B membership, through the Church B bylaws, to govern the aspects of the church to which it has been delegated.

(d) The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Board of Elders and is responsible to carry out all aspects of the ministry of Church B, within the policies set out by the Board of Elders.

(e) The Ministry Lead Team is accountable to the Senior Pastor or his designates and are responsible to carry out ministry within the guidelines set out by staff in consultation with the Ministry Lead Team.

(f) Ministry teams are accountable to the appropriate staff or designates and are responsible to carry out ministry within the guidelines set out by staff in consultation with the Ministry Lead Team.

(g) Church B members and adherents, who individually serve in various capacities to accomplish the work of the church, are accountable to staff or their designate. They are responsible to carry out ministry within guidelines established by the ministry team leaders.

This model places the congregation on mass at the top of the decision making process, yet on the bottom as the chief ministers as well. The elders are clearly commissioned with the ministry's oversight.

All respondents stated that the church followed a CEO model, and the concept of policy governance. Pastor Ken stated that the boards follow "a 90% Carver approach," a model being modified for many non-profit organizations incorporating policy governance. He stated that each group makes their own policies, but it is a new mindset, even for himself. He says, "When I bring things to them, I need to be clear... Am I bringing this to them for information purposes? Am I bringing it to them for their feedback? Am I bringing it to them for their approval?" He believes that the policy process has been extremely helpful. For example, "Even within the policies in the board, anybody who brings a report, it's to be submitted 48 hours in advance of meetings. People get a copy of what's being presented, so it leads to better discussions."

Elder Lionel sees the policy development as a work in progress. The board is "currently working on policies and one elder leads that effort; written policies are hard to find." Lionel sees that ministry effectiveness is being evaluated at different

levels with, “the MLT monitoring all staff, and the elders responsible for the Senior Pastor.”

Vic believes, however, that there are many policies, and that governance is taking place “at local levels and ultimately at the Elders’ Board.” His perception is that there are very clear policies developed for all ministries and referred often to a “very extensive policy manual.”

VISION

The concept of vision was explored in Church B. The pastor felt that this area was one of his non-negotiable duties. “Ultimately the senior pastor has to be the communicator of the vision, but he would be foolish if it was done in isolation.” He sees the Senior Pastor as the catalyst for the vision, “which is developed through retreats with staff and elders.” He said, “Each New Year we explore five to six areas and reaffirm those in our annual meetings. The fall meeting is our vision meeting versus the operations meeting in the spring.”

Lionel agreed that the bulk of the work was left to the pastor and staff when it came to vision. “It is developed by pastoral staff and then given to the elders who recommend to the church body. This is the major way the church is staff led. They are the leading force. The same is true in a company, with employees bringing forward the details. The elders are ultimately responsible for the creation of the vision.”

Vic saw this same dynamic when it came to vision. He said, “A lot of it would be developed by the pastors and elders together, through retreats, etc., pulling away and bringing things to the table, especially the pastors.”

INSIGHTS

When asked what resources helped clarify the respondents’ visions of church leadership, all readily answered. Pastor Ken stated that if he could suggest some: “I’d recommend two great books: John Kaiser, *Winning on Purpose*. The other fabulous one is Aubrey Malphur’s, *Leading Leaders*. In the old structure, the deacons of the church tended to be involved in much more management than what the elders are currently, so there’s some real learning there. These resources point to the elder’s role of governance.”

Elder Lionel agreed with Pastor Ken’s choice in books saying that they contained “real good stuff with good practical approaches to things.” He added that he was also “significantly influenced by the 15 churches we studied.”

Even Vic, who was a congregation member, referred to an annual conference, “The Leadership Summit,” sponsored by Willow Creek, along with their literature. He also alluded to past experiences with churches and conversations that he has had with other denominations.

There appears to have been extensive research done by this congregation in order to arrive at their concept. The books that were mentioned have been promoted within the whole church so that all can understand the philosophy behind the shift.

This also gives the new structure credibility. It is not much different than how the Basis of Union was crafted, with its dependence upon another publication, *The New Hampshire Confession*.

When asked about the Basis of Union's description of church officers, all had a problem with its definitions. Pastor Ken stated that he "would see elders as a plurality in the local setting." He went on to say that, "most churches in the Maritimes have one staff, so our board functions as elders." Elder Lionel said, "I haven't thought about it. I'm more concerned about what Scripture tells us about today's requirements." Vic stated, "this view is hierarchical and would not work today." All appeared to dismiss the view as outdated, rather than revere it as traditional.

A question was asked of the respondents regarding structural change and whether or not such a change could change a church's DNA. Most believed that it was not the case at all, except the congregant, Vic, who said, "it depended on how the change was done."

When pushed further, all could find scenarios where a structure could rob a church of its identity. Pastor Ken stated: "If a dictatorial pastor is allowed freedom with very little accountability that is dangerous. Accountability is very important." Ken went on to say of accountability: "some would say that our church has too much power in the hands of too few people. But the flip side is how accountable are other churches... how many have they reached for God? How many baptized? Where is the accountability there? I believe that in the priesthood of all believers, 'every member is a minister'."

Elder Lionel said, “If a local congregation changed its bylaws to let elders make all the changes, then it would be no longer congregational.” This is something he would oppose.

Congregant Vic gave a very telling answer in the realm of denominational loyalty, or rather a lack thereof. He said after a brief chuckle: “The whole Baptist Convention is ‘good ties.’ There is a something lost in my generation, it is not as passionate today. We’re Baptist, but it is Christ we are following. We’re not ‘Baptist’ if you know what I mean!”

The post-denominational concept is strong within Vic, and may be indicative of the congregation as a whole. There is a far greater affiliation with Christ than with a denomination. Alister McGrath calls the new movement a type of “evangelical ecumenism,” where all evangelicals can gel outside of restrictive denominational boundaries.³⁷⁴ In fact, many churches are now promoting themselves more and more without their denominational tagline and very little denominationalism is evident to the average church attendee.

All were asked to interact with the Howell Statement on the pastor being responsible for the spiritualities of the church and the deacons, the temporalities. All of them did not see the division as black and white. Pastor Ken stated: “it sounds noble, but the reality is the local church is a business with staff, resources, money and time. Our old model had deacons on one spiritual side with the Board of Management on the other side with facilities. All of it is spiritual and that is the key to being strategic and missional. That is why the Elders’ Board is a merger.” He went

³⁷⁴ McGrath, Alister. *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, (InterVarsity: Illinois, 1995),159.

on to clarify, “[I]f the spiritual side says, ‘Let’s do evangelism!’ and the other group says, ‘No!’ due to cost, then there is just conflict.”

Elder Lionel expressed the opinion that the statement lacked “how they come together.” He said, “That would mean a modern Board of Management or the like. To say the two are separate is wrong.”

Vic also believed: “That wouldn’t work, because it is ill advised to give one person, or think one person could handle all the spiritual requirements of a whole church. Pastors have done this in the past willingly.” He drew a different distinction: sometimes it is “hard to lead and feed.” He said, “Pastors need to be feeders and leaders sometimes. Our pastor feeds and our elders lead.”

The whole area of trust was addressed. Pastor Ken believed that “trust is the foundation of leadership and a healthy church.” He said, “If they don’t trust, they don’t give.” He went on to say that in order to gain trust, leaders need “humility and courage.”

Lionel pontificated, “Anytime you change there is a major element of trust.” Vic stated with respect to trust in the modifying of the church structure in the past year, “it was the key element to how we transitioned. There was a challenge from the congregation and the board rehashed and tweaked (the document), and the trust was built when we returned a second time. It was a ‘please reevaluate,’ not a trust thing.” He saw the concern as a healthy interaction of what could happen, and he could see that if the wrong people get a hold of the structure it could be detrimental. He added, “We need to trust our board too, because that has always been an issue in the Baptist church.”

Finally, all were asked if they wished to offer any advice to churches considering structural change. Pastor Ken was both practical and philosophical. He intimated that patience and congregational ownership was crucial. He said it will take: “Longer than you think. The reason for it is the missional side of it. It takes time to build ownership by being transparent. Take your time. Do focus groups. Educate! Bring in others who can educate. Kaiser was very helpful; we had 30 to 40 people reading him.”

He warned, “Our final mandate was 87%, and you will never be able to please everybody. We lost a few. People are threatened by change; without a culture of trust they will take it personally.” He closed by saying that for the leadership of Church B: “the fear of not changing was greater than the risk of upsetting people.” He believed that “governance is a huge sacred cow and a lid on ministry in Atlantic Canada.” He said, “Unless more churches address it, it will hinder their growth.”

Elder Lionel felt the best advice was: “to talk to someone who has gone through it to save effort. It will take patience and commitment.” He also stated, “bylaws can’t be simply transplanted into another setting verbatim. The fundamentals may be the same but each church needs to adapt individually.”

Vic stated, “[T]radition is a good thing. Churches shouldn’t change for the sake of change. Loggerheads can exist with people who have the ‘we have always done it this way’ attitude, and unfortunately pastors take on too much.” He believes that this does not equip the laity to work in their mission field.

Summary of Church B

This church worked diligently over the past few years and appears to have crested the peak when it comes to structural change, both philosophically and practically. The themes that arose throughout the interviews were efficiency, leadership, and accountability.

Efficiency

All parties saw that the old structure was inefficient. Time was being wasted, ministries were being held up and staff was spending more time in administration and less in ministry. Recognizing the size of the church, this church would naturally follow a corporate structure, as noted in Chapter Five.³⁷⁵ Tom Bandy states in the prelude to John Kaiser's work, *Winning on Purpose*, "Organization is the growing theme in the quest to grow God's mission."³⁷⁶ The people of this church understand the business dynamic well, and appear to be open to change in the name of efficiency, more than a traditional church. In fact, efficiency is what brought the three founding churches together to form this church in the first place.

This Church has deliberately made a stand on biblical principles and seeking first the Lordship of Christ. Tied closely to efficiency is effectiveness. This approach can be a wonderful tool for the church in helping to identify how best to be stewards of God's blessings. Jesus' parable of the talents is an example of God's desire for his children to be good stewards of blessings (Matt 25:14-30).

³⁷⁵ Rothauge.

³⁷⁶ Tom Bandy in John Edmund Kaiser, *Winning on Purpose: How to Organize Congregations to Succeed in Their Mission* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006), 13.

Challenges that face efficient churches are different from those that face traditionalists. When it comes to efficiency, the focus can easily become on what works as opposed to what is proper. If not careful, streamlining can become a goal as opposed to a means to a goal. Short-cuts can be made with dire consequences.

Another challenge is worldly business models fail in the area of measuring return on investment. Spiritual effectiveness is many times opposed to practical profitability because it is qualitative and immeasurable by its nature. For example, benevolence ministries do not provide much “bang for the buck” or earthly return on investment. From a business standpoint, resources for a soup kitchen could be diverted a high quality Easter Cantata, or a youth ski weekend, targeting middle to upper class nonbelievers. These temptations need to be exposed and assessed in the light of the truth of Scripture.

It would be interesting to study efficiency from a scriptural standpoint. One could argue that the Lukan example of the table servers in Acts 6 was an account of organization for the purpose of efficiency. However, there is also Jesus’ endorsing of what appears to be inefficiency, in His parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin (Luke 15). Many of Jesus’ miracles occurred when he was interrupted, and God’s provision afforded far more than human effort ever could (such as the feeding of the five thousand). There appears to be a theme of seeking to be a good steward, yet recognize that sometimes our inefficiencies are the soil for God’s miracles.

Leadership

A comment was made by Elder Lionel that the church should be “staff led, but not staff controlled.” This phrase is helpful in understanding the mindset of the church’s leadership, and also places in context the drive for efficiency. The most efficient leadership model that exists is the dictatorship, but that is not what is desired. There is a yearning to be effectively led by a gifted leader, especially in a church the size of church B. There is a strong desire for the people of this church to follow, with the full understanding that the pastor is leading.

This church appears to be formalizing more power in the hands of the pastor and elders. The deacons here are clearly benevolent officers, with very practical duties, with a form of Levitical leadership. They are the classic servant assistants, and subordinate to the elders, much like early church accounts. This is reinforced by the elders’ selection of the deacons, as opposed to the congregation; and the designation of deacons as a committee. There is a historical foundation for this, as founded in the early church interpretation. “But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is bishops and overseers; while apostles appointed for themselves deacons after the ascent of the Lord into heaven, as ministers of their episcopacy and of the church.”³⁷⁷ It is a Cyprian interpretation but not a historically ‘Baptist’ interpretation.

The incorporation of the pastor into the elders recognizes that this group does not assist the leaders of the church, but rather they are the leaders of the church. This too is a classic Cyprian view with a plurality of leadership. The only difference is the appointment of the overseers being congregational versus dictatorial. Yet, the

³⁷⁷ Cyprian, Epistle 64.2 (CCEL)

overseers do have considerable sway in determining who is allowed to be considered.

Even the title “CEO” used in the interviews implies that although the pastor is still an employee of the church, he does have a defined leadership role. Leadership is key in this church. This was evidenced as congregant Vic mentioned the importance and benefit of the Leadership Summit in his own growth.

This is a church that appears to have distinguished itself by its proactive leadership style. The leadership is willing to make some sacrifices in order to lead. It is clear that the goal of the change was to make it easier to follow, with clear roles and accountability. Although they may believe it is innovative, it actually has many classical components.

Accountability

Accountability is a major component of this church’s structure as demonstrated by both the pastor’s and elder’s responses. In fact, according to the pastor’s opinion, accountability to the Great Commission was the driving force behind the change. He believes that churches will be held accountable for how well they make disciples; therefore, all effort must be made to accomplish that objective.

Tied closely to the accountability of the church is accountability within the church. The leadership structure at Church B is deliberately developed so that roles are not only clearly defined, but each participant also has a level of accountability for the tasks he/she is given. This approach (where there is reciprocal accountability) is

heavily influenced by Kaiser, but also shows commitment on the part of the leaders to do what they are called to do.

Accountability needs to be extended outward as well, a concept that successful churches struggle with. One congregant, at least, is emotionally disconnected from the denomination. The new movement of “ecumenical evangelicalism” allows Christians to feel like they are part of something bigger, yet with no strings attached. Now, churches more readily identify with style than orthodoxy. Though Church B is a CABC church, they would equally identify themselves as a “Willow Creek” or “Leadership Summit” church.

Ecumenical evangelicalism is an identity with neither responsibility nor accountability. This movement in essence replaces what was once denominational allegiance. What is lost is more than a characteristic; there is a severing of the very fabric of Baptist identity. Without a covenanting people purposefully joined for common good, the influence of the faith on a grand scale will decline.

CHAPTER EIGHT -

CASE STUDY OF CHURCH C – THE RELEVANT CHURCH

Church C is a suburban church with a large modern campus. The signage does not readily define the church as Baptist. It holds only the name of the community wherein it is located, as the identifying mark, with title “Church” afterward. Inside the building there are a significant number of expensive graphics placed strategically to convey the church’s vision and missional messages. Church C appears to appeal to a young congregation with significant space and resources devoted to what appears to be excellent children’s ministries.

This is not accidental. Their comprehensive mission statement states: “Church C exists so that thousands of young professionals and their friends in our city will become committed followers of Jesus Christ.” This niche approach has led to how they interpret church.

They seek to accomplish this objective through addressing five areas made famous by Rick Warren’s bestseller, *The Purpose Driven Church*.³⁷⁸

MP1.1 Component: Membership

The highest priority of Church C shall be reaching people in the community who need to be welcomed into the body of Christ, whether seekers or unchurched believers.

MP1.2 Component: Maturity

A significant and supporting priority of Church C shall be helping believers to become grounded in the Christian faith and to grow in their participation with the body of Christ.

MP1.3 Component: Ministry

A significant and supporting priority of Church C shall be equipping and deploying each believer for a significant ministry by developing their God-given gifts, talents, and experiences.

³⁷⁸ Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

MP1.4 Component: Mission

The second highest priority of Church C shall be sending out missionaries, empowering each church member for a personal life mission in the world, and planting new churches.

MP1.5 Component: Magnification

A significant and supporting priority of Church C shall be gathering and leading people into the presence of God through worship so that they are transformed and mobilized.

The progressive nature of the church is visible in details ranging from debit machines in the lobby, to the promotion of multiple service times, including Saturday night services. Due to the combined attendance at three weekend services topping 600 people, the church is a hub of activity all week long, with multiple paid and unpaid staff overseeing various ministries.

Church C's experimental side includes how it approaches the concept of church leadership and deacons. The church has abandoned the deacon title, and for a while had no level of leadership surrounding the pastor. About a decade ago, some former deacons in the church surrounded the pastor in a new role as a "Lead Team." As of late, the church is looking to adopt a progressive governance structure proposed by Dr. John E. Kaiser. This is promoted in his book, *Winning on Purpose*, where he, "offers leaders a way to organize congregations for success by creating structures that enable church life and health."³⁷⁹ This book is the textbook for all paid staff and members of leadership in the church. It was jokingly referred to as Church C's "bible" by a member of the pastoral staff.

The forty-something pastor of Church C (Bob) has been the pastor over the past two decades. During his time, it has moved from the traditional country white

³⁷⁹ Kaiser, prelude.

steeple church to a very contemporary physical structure and with a progressive worship style. The thirty-something member of the dominant board (Jane) has been a part of the church for about six years and the forty something congregation member (Brenda) has been a part of the church approximately thirteen years.

HISTORICAL VIEWS OF DEACONS

The sense that Pastor Bob had of the deacons when he began was one of the deacons being the foremen or bosses of the pastor. They were: “Guardians, who watched to be sure that the pastor doesn’t mess up. If anyone had a problem, typically they’d contact a deacon and at the next meeting the deacons would bring the pastor back into line.” He saw them as, “gatekeepers,” which, “was part of what spiritual leadership needs to be: ‘watching the store.’ ” He saw their duties as preparing communion and “attending a monthly meeting to approve of what I was doing.” He added that they also, “modeled, probably more unintentionally, commitment, service and ministry in the local church.”

Jane, a member of the dominant board, saw the deacons as “leadership that met with the pastor,” a people who supported him. She saw this support as being twofold; acting as the pastor’s, “eyes and ears in the congregation, and a people to feed off of or to give reassurance and guidance.” Jane mentioned that her father was a deacon, but not in this particular church.

Brenda, the congregant, saw deacons at Church C as “the spiritual leadership - running the bigger issues of the church, and they were somewhat visible.” Brenda

had a very telling account of how she had been impacted positively by deacons in a previous church which she shared willingly:

“My church was going through a split. There were ten deacons who all got on the stage one morning. I didn’t know most of them. They were so vulnerable with the congregation. They walked us through what was going on. They walked us through their heart story in relation to what was going on. It just became very visible to a person like myself, who had never seen anything like that before. I had full and complete trust and faith that these men were praying through it, and were solid, and were struggling terribly. They were together. When I think of spiritual leadership that is what I think of.”

When asked of their duties Brenda stated that, “They would do hospital visits, lead business meetings and communion.” She also saw a financial component in their office.

When it came to understanding why the deacons functioned as they had, Bob said, “They caught their cues from a base understanding of Timothy and Titus’ character attributes such as being godly.” He also believe they got their ‘in charge attitude’ from previous deacons. They were performing duties based more on the “tradition than the Bible.”

Jane believed their duties flowed from clear biblical roles, complimented by the church’s constitution. Brenda saw a greater purpose behind their duties, saying, “They were the leadership behind the pastor to help the church move forward.”

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

When asked if the church had a defined structure, Pastor Bob pointed to the Guiding Principles as opposed to a chart or constitution. He explained that at Church C, there have been, “many experiments in leadership models, (including) functionally

forgetting the old constitution in order to experiment with new models.” He stated that there was a clear dividing point eight years ago.

He believed that “the deacons should provide spiritual visionary leadership, a level of care, and micromanage the ministry. Due to growth, the deacons were inefficient in all three. There were too many ministries to manage and too many people to care for, with 500-600 attendees. They were overwhelmed.” He summarized his dilemma as follows: “Here we were, experiencing growth in a messy way, but the very area where I needed help (looking to the horizon), the deacons had never been taught to do that. It was at that point we divided deacons into two groups.”

Jane similarly saw the move from the constitution beneficial, “since they found it too rigid and was not effective for the 21st century.” Her opinion was that “scripturally in the 21st Century, a constitution church is too rigid.” Instead they are now “following a governance model based on Kaiser.”³⁸⁰

The lack of written structure recognized by both the pastor and lead team member was lost on the congregant Brenda. She believed that there was a written structure, saying “a work chart is very visible if it is sought out.”

Pastor Bob believed that the church doesn’t fully understand the dynamics of how they are structured, and “that is why we are moving toward a written form.” He said, “I think they understand that the lead team oversees me, and I’m

³⁸⁰ This leader was interviewed last, and at this point the church was preparing to launch their guiding principles for congregational approval.

accountable to them and they are in turn accountable to the church. Their role is to help me in leading the church.” He held that few people have structural questions. “If you trust the leadership, how you get it done seems to be a secondary question, especially for those who are apart from God.”

Bob described the structure as a three pronged milking stool: lead team, management team and staff. He said that the staff, whether paid or unpaid, was part of the leadership. “Of course, different layers of staff and paid staff have greater expectations.” It is through these three groups that all decisions and action steps are filtered before they go to the congregation.

Jane, as a member of the dominant board, saw a circular nature to the accountability structure as diagramed in Appendix 6.

This is similar to an interpretation of an accountability circle as found in John Kaiser’s book.³⁸¹ In fact her entire description was almost a précis of Kaiser’s work. This was evidence that this text has shaped more than the pastor’s mindset; it has become the leadership’s philosophy.

Brenda, the congregant, saw the structure as becoming clearer but still quite modifiable and fluid with the exception of some foundational components. She did not refer to Kaiser, accountability or boundaries.

The telling question for this church was how it answered the question of Baptist identity from a structural point of view. Pastor Bob said that the structure

³⁸¹ Figure 6.1, Kaiser, 74.

was Baptist “simply because it respects the Ephesians 4 model of equipping people to be the ministers of God.” “All members as ministers of Christ,” he saw to be a fundamental Baptist belief. He recognized: “How we have mobilized the members to be ministers is non-Baptistic, in the general traditional sense. Our structure is not violating any scriptural boundary principles, and since we are within boundaries, then yes, ends justify means.”

Jane stated after a brief chuckle, “Kaiser is from a Baptist background.” Arguing that though the structure is Baptist, Jane admitted that it is “not an Atlantic Baptist model.” Brenda really struggled with the denominational identity. She fumbled to put into words: “I think it is not Baptist... well, I guess fundamentally, yeah, it has Baptist roots.”

The lack of any traditional approaches is most likely beneficial for Church C. It is clearly not the way to meet the niche group the church has targeted: yuppies. You can read between the lines as you talk to the leadership: “This is not your grandparent’s church.”

All recognized that the church had changed in the past decade. The consensus was that it happened by the design of the pastor and some key leaders. Jane understood: “Some leadership approached the pastor and said, ‘you need to have a team to support, encourage and hold accountable.’ This is what led to the lead team.”

Jane recognized that “structure naturally creates accountability, but the right structure is necessary. Our constitution was too rigid, but something was needed.” Brenda thought the change came as the result of people wanting structure and clarity combined with watching other larger North American churches. Pastor Bob felt that it was a result of “the pain of ineffectiveness the deacons were feeling for the five years before that.”

Pastor Bob felt it was a necessary change because the deacon office had an inherent split personality:

“People who are gifted in care are often different than people who are gifted in leadership. At meetings, those who wanted to talk about ‘Who is in hospital?’ weren’t the same as those who were talking about ‘What are the four most strategic decisions we can make for our church in the next four years?’ and ‘Where are we willing to bleed?’ and ‘What are we willing to let go?’ (It meant we were) always at a crossroads at meetings as we sought to balance care and leading.”

All agreed that the change was, at the time, a huge paradigm shift. It was a redefining of roles and a definite shift from a board led model. Pastor Bob said, “Board’s manage or micromanage, and are to keep the pastor in line, and in board driven structures, churches suffer. Boards don’t lead. I am quoting Kaiser when I say this, ‘People lead.’ People lead boards, boards don’t lead people.” He believed that the church had shifted to a model where there is both accountability and authority to make the decisions that need to be made.

These changes led to a dramatic structural transformation, as deacons were eliminated along with all committees. According to the pastor, these groups were replaced with a) a lead team that oversees directional issues, b) a

management team that oversees operations, such as facilities and financial issues, and c) a staff that oversees ministries which was previously a committee's domain. He saw that the changes made the church "very fluid and concise."

There was disagreement when asked if the structure is congregational. Pastor Bob saw the results of the change as extremely congregational. "There is far more participation in actual ministry because members are doing ministry. Ultimately, all areas of leadership rise and fall on the mobilization of ministers to do God's work. That is the litmus test." He added, "Ultimately the congregation approves board members and big broad strokes, such as full time ministry positions, expansion of facilities and costs - all need congregational approval." Pastor Bob added, "But, after the church approves the main direction, the leadership is commissioned with the day to day fulfillment of that ministry."

Jane saw the structure was clearly congregational, since the congregation is one of the key players in the accountability structure. However, the congregant responded, "The appearance is congregational, the reality is...it is not." She referred to herself and others not in positions of leadership as "the little people."

The dilemma that is arising is the congregational members' sense of ownership and empowerment. Kaiser warns that "it's hard to win if everyone picks the plays."³⁸² Yet, Atlantic Baptists pretty much always have been calling the plays. If they don't, some feel controlled. Although there are many leadership styles, there is a simplification that either "I am the boss," (which has been

³⁸² Ibid, 40.

somewhat the case in congregational democracy), or “They are the boss,” a perceived hierarchy. This is brought up at this time since it was the pastor of this church who often mentioned that the deacons of old were to be a pastor’s boss.

The objective of the structural change is being met according to the pastor. He says that the ultimate measurable of effective structure is, is the mission of Christ being accomplished? He sees the structure as a means to an end. “In deference to all those wonderful leaders who love their constitution and committees from 1929, if your church is leading people to Christ, growing them in Christ and they are being sent out, and the church is healthy because of it, then God bless the constitution!”

However, he went on to describe the challenge of new wine in old wine skin:

“I would argue it is a new day, and a new 21st Century world, and even the people we are reaching don’t function in the same governance structure. Even if they say it ‘bores them,’ they are still thinking governance. We have new people who show up to take up offering who wouldn’t make the usher committee. We have inclusively allowed those who should do ministry, and made it easier for them, whether they are far from Christ, or growing in faith.”

Interestingly, the simple church member’s viewpoint on the change is quite different. “As a congregant, I think that sometimes what looks good on paper does not work in reality. I think many other areas needed to be explored rather than just one facet of change. Change is like a domino effect, affecting a lot.” Brenda went on to say, “The focus has been on one aspect to the exclusion of others. When focusing on a work chart and that is the sole focus - to get organized - sometimes

you can forget some of the spiritual components, and forget some ministry focuses that should be given time and energy.” She believes that while the church focused on “one piece of the pie, a lot of other stuff slipped by the wayside.”

Pastor Bob recognized that the transition time has been difficult. “There are two types of pain. One is to just go in and change the constitution without knowing what you want, which is a useless pain. I cannot be accused of that! But there is a second type of pain. It is an in-between, ‘getting business done today before everything is in place,’ scenario. That is hard.”

DOMINANT BOARD

The dominant board in this church is called the Lead Team. There is very little written information that gives direction to this structure. This is the entire description of the Lead Team that is found in the church’s Guiding Principles:

The responsibility of the Lead Team before God, on behalf of people in this city and the surrounding area who need to be led to Christ and nurtured in Him, is to see that Church C, through the leadership of its Lead Pastor, (1) achieves the fulfillment of its Mission Principles, and (2) avoids violation of its Boundary Principles.

AP1.1 Component: Stewardship to Christ for Those He Calls Up to Serve

The Lead Team shall maintain an active connection the “moral ownership” of the church: Christ and the people he has called his church to serve.

AP1.1.1 Detail: Community Research and Public Relations

The Lead Team will invest significant resources each year to enhance its understanding of the needs of people in the community and to enhance the church’s reputation of service to the community.

AP1.1.2 Detail: Church Feedback and Assessment

The Lead Team will collect input and feedback from members, attendees, and non-returning visitors to better understand their needs. Every three years or

less the Lead Team will arrange a full church assessment by a competent consulting group.

AP1.1.3 Detail: Devotion to Prayer and the Word of God

Under the teaching and guidance of the Lead Pastor, the Lead Team will continually seek the wisdom and leading of Christ as the Lord of the church. To this end, significant attention will be given to prayer and study of Scripture as a group.

AP1.2 Component: Disciplining the Process of the Lead Team

The Lead Team shall conduct itself with discipline and integrity with regard to its own process of governance.

AP1.2.1 Detail: Lead Team Style

The Lead Team will govern with an emphasis on (1) outward vision rather than internal preoccupation, (2) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, (3) strategic leadership more than administrative detail, (4) clear distinction of Lead Team and staff roles, (5) collective rather than individual decisions, (6) future rather than past or present, and (7) proactivity rather than reactivity.

AP1.2.2 Detail: Lead Team Job Description

The essential job outputs of the Lead Team are linkage to the people served, definition of guiding principles, and monitoring of Lead Pastor performance. In addition to these three essentials, the Lead Team shall exercise authority granted to it in the bylaws and not delegated to the Lead Pastor.

The pastor summarizes the Lead Team's purpose as follows: "To listen to the congregation and make sure the overall mission is being accomplished (i.e. people coming to Christ, growing in their faith with measurables)." They are also "to strategize, encourage, support, and help to create an environment of vision." He said, "(The) deacons had it half right. They are meant to keep the pastor in line and also to protect him and support him in vision. Otherwise they are referees who are not liked. The Lead Team is to encourage and protect." He believes that by default this board provides the spiritual leadership to the congregation. "They are models of Christ's followers that take on a model role in tithing, praying, etc."

Pastor Bob recognizes they are not extremely visible: “Much of their role is unseen. In our contemporary style they do not take a predominant role in things like communion anymore, but they do provide pastoral prayers. Whenever there is something involving the leadership, they are on the platform. At annual gatherings ,our business meetings, we will present directional visional issues, and the Lead Team will be standing behind me.” Pastor Bob chose the description of “Full Equality” over “Board and CEO” to describe interaction between himself and this team.

Brenda found the new team was not working out well at all. She pointed to the fact that the Lead Team has become less visible than when there were deacons. “Not to say changing names is a big deal. A name is a name is a name, but with that change came a lot of change in responsibilities.” Brenda saw that “the focus was on business rather than on vision,” and it reminded her of “putting out fires versus focusing on the big picture.”

She believed that instead of the Lead Team becoming spiritual leaders by default: “The church lost, I think, the spiritual leadership. Even though it was not a key component in the past, it was really lost in the transition. The connection with the little people (us) was lost as well. The perspective is that the Lead Team, for a little person, is gone. It is nonexistent. It’s there, but I don’t see them. There may be a lot of visioning, but I don’t know.”

WHY NOT DEACONS?

The question was posed, “Why did you move from the structure and title of deacon in your dominant board?” Pastor Bob said that it came from a conversation

with a fellow pastor talking about functional titles versus spiritual titles. He said, “What does deacon mean? Why don’t we call them what their role is? Pragmatically... we could move from Lead Team title in the future.”

Jane had a much more extensive answer mirroring Pastor Bob’s earlier answer about the dual nature of the preexisting Deacons’ Board: “Scripturally, what deacons have been is a combination of the deacon’s role and the Elder’s role from Scripture. Since we do not have two offices, and that may be the goal in the future, the use of neither would be best, and choose a word that closely links our role with the lead pastor’s role, thus Lead Team!”

She added as well: “Also, words create worlds and using language that is very familiar to Baptists or Christians but not to others, well... we want to get away from jargon. We want to be scriptural, but we don’t want to use words that will trip people up and confuse people so that they couldn’t get past that to Christ... and then educate them later.” She offered a very seeker sensitive response, completely aware of the church’s mission.

Brenda agreed with Jane’s interpretation, “The idea is to be more relevant for the non-churched background; to get rid of all church lingo and to use more business titles. It is neither right nor wrong; it is just the way it is going.”

When asked if deacons exist by another name, Pastor Bob said: “Ultimately that is what the Lead Team is. We are in an evolution. If someone asks about the ‘hospital-visiting, widow-caring deacons,’ the Lead Team is not taking care of that. However, we are responsible for it, by empowering others with gifts of mercy with our care ministry team and structure.”

Brenda recognized that the deacons' ministries were being done, but they were split up with no one group doing what the previous deacons used to do. This is consistent with Pastor Bob's description.

MINISTRY ALLOCATION:

The next set of questions focused on communication within the structure by asking each interviewee, "Within your structure, which officers or leaders are primarily responsible for the following?" The results can be found in Appendix 5.

The way each responded was actually quite consistent for a church that does not have much in the way of written structures. Almost all of the areas have direct oversight by either a staff member or a pastor which is consistent with the accountability structure this church has developed. Also, for a church that has been in experimentation mode for quite a while, not much has fallen through the proverbial cracks.

SELECTION

The criteria for members the Lead Team can be derived from the Guiding Principles document.

AP1.2.3 Detail: Lead Team Member Code of Conduct

The Lead Team commits itself and its members to the following code of conduct:

a Members of the Lead Team must exhibit loyalty to the interests of Christ regarding those whom he has called his church to serve (Matt. 28:18-20). This loyalty supersedes any personal or group interest among or outside consumers of the church's services. A member must disclose any fiduciary conflict of interest and withdraw from any decision-making affected by it.

b Members of the Lead Team must honor the principles and decisions of the Lead Team acting as a whole. They may not foster dissent or attempt to exercise individual authority over the staff or the organization except as explicitly stated in the guiding principles.

c Members of the Lead Team must respect the confidentiality of sensitive Lead Team issues and must avoid facilitating gossip or other “triangulation” against the practice of direct, biblical resolution.

Although not clearly spelled out in print, Pastor Bob believes that the Lead Team members should be in keeping with the requirements as printed in Timothy and Titus. He would also like to see members demonstrating servant leadership in some form in the church, i.e. small group. “Core to me is someone who is ‘leading’ if you are not a leader of a small group that would be a red flag.” Jane agreed, stating that she believed these people should have gone through membership training and be tithing.

Brenda’s disdain for the current position became evident. When asked about selection criteria, she chuckled, then said, “Do you want positive or negative?” She saw selection as a process to attract a certain personality or gift type. “My opinion is that they are looking for largely business focused leadership qualities, and business sense - CEO qualities.”

When asked about how people are nominated or selected to the board, Pastor Bob stated, “At this point we basically inherited deacons who were approved as deacons; both functionally and internally, the board was replacing itself.” He implied that the congregation was not involved in the process; it was a formal rubber stamp. In fact, in the past five years, there have been no new members to the Lead Team. However, Bob did believe that rotation was needed, and that the church should both recommend and approve members for the team.

Jane, the Lead Team member, saw selection as a function of the Lead Pastor together with Lead Team, with the church ratifying their selection. Brenda did not know how they were selected.

GOVERNANCE

The concepts of guiding and boundary principles were recently presented to the congregation of Church C by its leadership. They are to be the foundations for governance in this church. The boundary principles define, “the limits of acceptable means that the Lead Pastor is hereby authorized to use in achieving the Mission Principles.” They are as follows;

BP1.0 Comprehensive Boundary Statement

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or circumstance that is unlawful, imprudent, unethical, or unbiblical. If anyone within the community of faith of Church C has just cause to believe a Boundary Principle is being violated, a written and signed letter of concern and/or complaint must be submitted to the Lead Team who holds the Lead Pastor accountable. Upon review of this submission, the Lead Team will determine the appropriate action steps.

BP1.1 Component: Biblical and Moral Integrity

With regard to the teaching, leadership, and membership of the church, the Lead Pastor shall not fail to uphold high standards of biblical teaching and morality.

BP1.2 Component: Financial Planning and Budgeting

Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the Lead Team’s Mission Principles, risk financial jeopardy, or fail to be derived from a multiyear plan.

BP1.3 Component: Financial Condition and Activities

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial conditions and activities, the Lead Pastor shall not allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from Lead Team priorities established in Mission Principles.

BP1.4 Component: Asset Protection

The Lead Pastor shall not allow the assets of the church to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, or unnecessarily risked.

BP1.5 Component: Treatment of Constituents

With respect to interactions with constituents or potential constituents, the Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decision that

are unsafe, undignified, unnecessarily intrusive, or that fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy.

BP1.6 Component: Compensation and Benefits

With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, consultants, contract worker, and volunteers, the Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or public image.

BP1.7 Component: Treatment of Staff

With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the Lead Pastor may not cause or allow conditions that are unfair or undignified.

BP1.8 Component: Communication and Support to the Lead Team

The Lead Pastor shall not permit the Lead Team to be uniformed or unsupported in its work.

BP1.9 Component: Emergency Lead Pastor Succession

In order to protect the Lead Team from the sudden loss of Lead Pastor services, the Lead Pastor may have no fewer than two other ministry staff members familiar with Lead Team and Lead Pastor issues and processes.

The following are accountability principles, “defining for the chairperson the standards to uphold for enforcing the integrity and fulfillment of the Lead Team’s process.”

AP1.3 Component: Monitoring the Performance of the Lead Pastor

The Lead Team’s sole official connection to the operating organization of the church, its achievement, and conduct shall be through the Lead Pastor.

AP1.3.1 Detail: Unity of Control

Only decisions of the Lead Team acting as a whole and documented in the Guiding Principles or the minutes of Lead Team meetings are binding on the Lead Pastor.

AP1.3.2 Detail: Accountability of the Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor is the Lead Team’s only link to operational achievement and conduct, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the Lead Team is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Lead Pastor.

AP1.3.3 Detail: Delegation to the Lead Pastor

The Lead Team will instruct the Lead Pastor through written principles that prescribe the mission to be achieved and establish the boundaries to be avoided, allowing the Lead Pastor to use any reasonable interpretation of these principles.

AP1.3.4 Detail: Performance of the Lead Pastor

The Lead Team will conduct systematic and objective monitoring of the Lead Pastor's performance solely against accomplishment of the Mission Principles and compliance with the Boundary Principles.

A. The Lead Pastor will be required to write measurable goals each year that correspond to each of the Lead Team's Mission Principles. At least one of these goals for each mission principle must project growth in the number of people who benefit or participate.

B. Each year the Lead Team shall review the results achieved by the Lead Pastor on each of the Mission Principles as the basis of compensation increase or corrective action. These results include both those achieved with reference to annual goals and those achieved in addition to annual goals.

C. The Lead Pastor will be required to report to the Lead Team on compliance with the Boundary Principles at each annual performance review and to affirm or give evidence of compliance upon request by the Lead Team at any time.

The proposed governance structure is significant and complete, yet vague in specifics. This is most likely due to the desire to keep the document's nature as *guiding versus binding*.

Pastor Bob reflected on the governance of church C. "Simple rule - we give people freedom within ministry, coupled with reporting of activities." His impetus is the personal relationship. "We like to think limitations are relational. If a person refuses accountability the ministry is shut down. Relational closeness causes policies on the fly."

The nature of the fluidity in the "Guiding Principles" became clear. "I loathe having written rules for every situation; it is exhausting and there are exceptions in every rule." He said further to clarify, "The question I'd like is not, 'What does the policy say?' but rather, 'What is the best thing and loving thing we should do?'" He sees that each situation needs contextual consideration.

Pastor Bob closed by saying that this is not the right type of governance for every leadership style. “For someone who loves policy manuals and rules they would have a nervous breakdown in this place.”

VISION

This was a church dependant on vision, which according to the guiding principles, is the main area of concern for the Lead Pastor.

AP1.2.5 Detail: Responsibility of the Lead Pastor for Visionary Leadership

The Lead Pastor has the responsibility, authority, and accountability to serve as the primary leader of the church at every level: congregation, Lead Team, and staff.

With respect to the Lead Team, the Lead Pastor will envision the Lead Team on all actions except for monitoring of Lead Pastor performance. If a question of process arises with regard to the bylaws or guiding principles of the church, the Lead Pastor will defer to the judgment of the Lead Team chairperson.

Jane supports this fully, “The Lead Pastor is responsible for vision. He brings it back to us. In fact, the Lead Team commissions the pastor for this role.”

Pastor Bob indicated this has been the case for some time. “The Lead Pastor needs to develop a missional driving statement. The mission statement was done by me and I think it will continue to evolve and sharpen... from an evangelical Baptist background the focus is in making disciples, but that needs fresh language. ‘Make a difference by making disciples.’ Even though half the congregation still doesn’t get it, the staff knows it.”

INSIGHTS

When asked who informed their view of church structure, all were quick to respond. Pastor Bob pointed to John Kaiser, Aubrey Malphurs, Bob Biehl and the

Arrow Leadership program and its resources. Jane pointed to Kaiser as well, along with the resources from Willow Creek and Saddleback Community churches. She saw it as, “mature leadership, integrated into teaching.” Brenda looked to some of the same resources, and some different ones. “People who are leading churches and targeting social issues such as the Rob Bell’s, the Erwin McManus’ and the Tony Campolo’s.” She reiterated she was, “not talking about mega-churches in any capacity, but vision and focus.”

The next line of questioning revolved around the Basis of Union. It was revealed that the pastor had read it, the Lead Team may have seen snippets of it, (only from other denominational involvement), and the congregation would for the most part be completely ignorant of the statement.

As the pastor pondered the Basis’ statement on scriptural officers as deacons and pastors only, he said, “On one hand I would like to think the spirit of how we are structuring ourselves mirrors that.” He noted that it was interesting that a 100 year old statement had to bracket a word for semantics. In his context he saw, “The true spiritual leadership as Lead Team and Pastor.”

Jane agreed in an almost verbatim statement. “I think in the high level of leadership is a pastor and a leadership team.” She did believe that the statement minimizes other leaders and found the word bishop insinuating “hierarchical.” She then mirrored Pastor Bob’s earlier comments on boards, “Teams don’t make decisions; individuals make decisions.” Therefore she found the statement lacking.

Brenda pondered in reaction to the Basis of Union, “I think I’d have to read Timothy & Titus, but it was probably very rule focused, anti-women, and probably a good description of what a deacon would look like.” She believes that such a description should evolve.

Pastor Bob reacted to the Howell statement on leadership roles. He said, “I think we create a false division between spiritual and temporal. For example, he noted when his church was running out of children’s space to lead kids to Jesus, was that a spiritual or a temporal matter? Who was responsible? For him, there was a need to be responsible for both.”

Jane was somewhat taken aback. She stated: “I am not sure if this is applicable, looking at the size of churches today. Mind you it is a great focus; every pastor should have the spiritual focus, but the deacons or some board should have a spiritual focus as well, so they are not man’s decisions but God decisions.” She hoped her decisions were viewed as spiritual.

Brenda also said that people need to lead in both the temporalities and spiritualities in order to communicate appropriately. For her, the issue was theological language or academic lingo making the pastor aloof when he only focuses “on the ‘heavenlies’.”

The question was asked if a change in a church’s structure can change its DNA. Pastor Bob believed that the mission of the church is what shapes the structure. He did state though that if the pastor acted Pope-like, or the Lead Team felt they no longer needed a pastor, those extremes would make the church no longer Baptist.

Jane sees structure as an exoskeleton, harnessing the objectives of the church: “Structure is to rein in DNA and mission of church.” In her description, the structure is outward focused: “We look outward before inward. We are to first ‘GO!’ then baptize and make them disciples.”

Brenda unloaded when asked if structural change can change a church from a Baptist identity. “Yes, I do believe that. I think it happens when a church doesn’t fit within the denominational box. I am saying this is positive to get outside of the box.” She went on to say, “I think Baptists are known for being very rule focused, strict and unaccommodating. That is people’s perception - the ‘no dance’ thing, and the whole bit. I think when you remove those barriers and the Christian lingo, that no one understands except us, I think that is when we are outside of the box and that could be a very good thing.” To Brenda, the denomination meant restrictions which meant fundamentalism and cultural irrelevance.

When interacting with the issue of trust, Pastor Bob interjected that his church, though weak on formal written structure is very successful with a large attendance. He said, “We have a good oral structure. We have invested a lot into relational structure. Without relationships or trust, structure doesn’t fly. It all comes down to love and trust as the guts of the statement.” He said that in his church there is “trust in relationships versus a structure document.” He then referred to the first churches: “I would like to go into a time machine and see how much documentation there was as the church exploded in growth. I believe that there was some documentation, but I don’t think it was as much as we in our ‘non trusting community’ would want.”

Jane saw trust as crucial and “trust is not built by saying on a Saturday night, ‘We have a new structure and it is a new day!’” She said of the new Guiding Principles document: “We have tried (to build trust) by taking a long time, we’ve used outside sources, sought feedback, and then took it to the church for feedback. We will now give them eight weeks to interact. This is not a quick decision.”

Brenda sees only lost trust. In her opinion the church has not done a good job in building trust. She believes that “better communication is needed with more opportunity for the ‘little people’ to speak into it.” She would like to see opportunities for everyone to wrestle and to be vulnerable with decisions.

Finally, the candidates were asked if they had any advice for churches considering modifying their church structure with respect to leadership. Pastor Bob believed that often: “We do it too quickly so it becomes paper pushing, versus meaningful and relational. It is sometimes an exercise of futility.” He thought it would be wise to have an in-between period of experimentation which he recognized is hard in a culture of certainty. The question he would like to pose is, “Can we suspend what we are doing and experiment with a spirit of trust?”

He said structural change is hard work: “like laying septic lines. It is dirty and at the end of the day no one sees it. But if you don’t deal with it, the place stinks.” He believes that true leaders appreciate boundaries and principles. He said, “We need to make our guiding principles and governance a living document.” He encouraged churches to get rid of the word constitution.

Jane took the informed approach. “Read, read, read!” Her words of wisdom were to “compliment Bible reading with Christian and secular reading, looking at different models, talking to other congregations and other pastors. Look for feedback.” She says that it is hard work. “There is a temptation to revert to the old rule set, and the way it always was done; and who has done it in the past? - the pastor!” She also recognized the need for divine help. “Look to Christ and pray for wisdom.” Finally she wanted churches to know the importance of broad participation. “Seek input from the whole congregation and not just six friends.”

Brenda closed with a warning against becoming just another business: “God has got to be such a part of the foundation. It is so easy to slip into the business mode and grow bigger and better with new models. This is not to say that it is bad; we can learn a lot from the world’s systems, but if God is absent from this entire vision and change, we become a business. We lose the church. We lose Jesus.”

SUMMARY OF CHURCH C

This church was a very interesting study. The participants all interpreted the church in a very nontraditional way. The leadership of this church has read many of the same works as church B, but understood them in an entirely different light. Though many individual nuances arose, the two major themes distinct to Church C appear to be relevance and freedom.

Relevance

The mission of the church, to reach young urban professionals, mandates that the church's tactics need to be relevant. This was shown in a variety of ways from new ways to contribute (debit machines), new times to worship for Protestants (Saturday nights), and new definitions and titles. The argument made by Lead Team member Jane was that words create worlds. There appears to be a recognition that the Christian "jargon" is irrelevant and that the more functional, descriptive business titles should be utilized.

The issue of relevance is most poignant here because of the target demographic, yet it is a question worthy of consideration. The post-modern "why not?" cannot be answered with "Because we have always done it this way before." In this scenario it appears that if it has been done before, it is relegated as an old and irrelevant technique.

Another factor to note is that the denomination to which this church is connected is being viewed as irrelevant. Therefore, within this church, a mutual orthodox standard that had been held dear decades ago is now not known or encouraged, especially if it is cloaked in archaic language.

It is interesting to note that the Baptist denomination has deliberately sought to be relevant through their youth movement. Mission tours, Springforth and Youth conventions have experienced considerable and consistent growth. The reality of

relevance is lost in the perception of irrelevance. Apparently the denomination needs a strong public relations campaign especially within its own churches.

However, in the search for relevance, difficulties naturally arise. Models will constantly change, terminology will constantly change, and communication will constantly change. If not careful, the desire for freshness can shroud a desire for compromise. At the core of the Christian experience are self-sacrifice, moral absolutism, humility and forbearance. These are not trendy values. They are diametrically opposed to the consumer-culture of the generation X and millennium kids. This in no way means the church should not seek to be relevant. It does mean the church should be cautious as to what is packaging and what is the content. Paul stated, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

Freedom

Baptists incorporated autonomy into their character even prior to the Basis of Union. The Convention format, in which we have organized, is a testimony of how unique and distinct churches can come together for common goals and purposes. A healthy independence is vital to our identity.

In the case of Church C, independence is a mantra that all leaders appear to repeat. There is a desire from the pastor’s perspective to be freed to do the work of ministry, and a desire for the Lead Team to be freed from diaconal duties to focus on oversight. There is also a desire on the congregant’s part to “break out of the box”

denominationally. There is a freedom to worship the way they like, and to use the terms they wish. There is great freedom in this church for the yuppies.

Freedom can be a great strength and also a great weakness if not addressed. The church is to be attractive. Jesus has called disciples to be fishers of men (Matt 4:19) as well as salt and light (Matt 5:13-16). Paul tells of his deliberate approach:

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:19-20).

There is an inherent desire to make the gospel relevant to people of all cultures. Paul changes his identity in order to identify. In his freedom, he was willing to use “all means” (1 Cor 9:23) in order to save some. A trademark of the Atlantic Baptist denomination has been the use of multiple culturally specific strategies to reach unreached people groups. Yet, this has mostly occurred in overseas missions. At home, the approach has been far less creative and more outdated, clinging to tradition above all else.

The next generation does not see the Baptists, or any denomination for that matter, as particularly “free.” The challenge will be to develop deep and meaningful relationships as disciples, provide a place to belong, and yet reach a culture that is ferociously independent. To model a ‘freedom *in* Christ’ versus a ‘freedom *from* everything’ is where the diaconate can play a vital role.

CHAPTER NINE-

THE FUTURE OF THE DIACONATE

It could be argued that the deacon's role has never been more scrutinized than it is today. In fact, the author of this paper predicts that most churches will struggle with organization more in the next two decades than they have in the past two centuries. As with most contentious matters, as Pastor Paul of the traditional church stated, sometimes "the issue isn't the issue." Many factors are in the mix when discussing the future of deacons: tradition, leadership, denominationalism, apathy, and even the nature of the Church herself.

Rather than withdrawing in this time of confusion, there is great opportunity to experience renewal in areas where the Church is faltering. If not approached correctly, especially in a post-denominational culture, the effects will be devastating. However, it will be a productive exercise for the churches that seek meaningfully to articulate their structure in light of their mission and their beliefs, while keeping relationships and communication a priority.

STARTING POINT

An engineer would never design a bridge without a full understanding of architecture and physics. A doctor would never conduct an organ transplant without a thorough understanding of arteries and infection. In a similar manner, no leader would be wise to suggest structural change within the local church without an understanding of Scripture and culture.

Though many Christian leaders today are inundated with books on post modernism and cultural studies, society alone cannot determine how a church should organize. In fact, as Church B noted, even successful models in other churches cannot simply be transplanted into another church. This is important to note at this juncture, since as Atlantic Baptists we have been most influenced by what others are doing, or what we have read. Even our Basis of Union, as has been shown, was heavily grounded in the New Hampshire Confession. Our culture, even Christian culture, must be placed in context.

Culture is important, for it will place pressure upon the Church much like the freezing of a bridge or the infection of a patient. It is important to know these dynamics to be sure that the change will succeed, but the change cannot be for culture's sake. In her very being, the Church is counter-cultural and alternative.

As the foundation of our faith and practice,³⁸³ Scripture should be the lens through which one interprets culture, and not vice versa. Any system employed must not minimize biblical influence over the affairs of the Church. The dilemma the 21st century Church now faces is a widespread scriptural ignorance. Without a solid grasp of Scripture, the Church will be ill equipped to promote herself in a culture of experience and moral relativism.

Therefore, it is this author's assertion that biblical titles should be incorporated to define the Church's leaders. Since the scriptural titles of "elders" and "deacons" have both been utilized in the denomination's past, both (or either) could be used.

³⁸³ Basis of Union.

Though this may not instantly define their purpose for the seeker or the biblically illiterate, it does ground the discussion in Scripture. When using the title of “deacon,” as opposed to a purely functional title, there is a subtle call for a higher standard of biblical literacy. This word forces people to look for the source of the title, the creator of the title and the biblical purpose. Ideally, both the leaders and the congregants will be constantly confronted with the reality that the leaders of the Church are different from any other type of leader – or should be.

As this paper has shown, though there is no clear organizational chart in Scripture, there are unwavering tenets from which a structure can be birthed. Preeminent in any discussion of the structure of the Church is an understanding of the nature of the Church.

THE CHURCH

At the outset it is imperative to note that the Church is unique. It is like no other institution on the earth. Though it meets in a building, it is not a building; though it is organized, it is not simply an organization; though it conducts business, it is not merely a company; though people are joined for the same purpose, it is not just a society.

The Bible’s view is clear: the Church is alive! “The church is called to be a dynamic movement rather than a static institution.”³⁸⁴ The imagery of the Church in the New Testament is vibrant. It has been described as both “the Bride of Christ”

³⁸⁴ Hirsch, Alan, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 155.

(Eph 5:25-27), and “the Body of Christ” (Rom 12).³⁸⁵ These two images will be used to frame the definition of the Church, and hitherto the definition of her officers.

The Bride of Christ

The Church as the “Bride of Christ” lends well to the concepts of commitment, faithfulness, sacrifice and biblical love. It is an extremely personal allegory, with the groom expecting the bride to be faithful and enamoured by no other. Therefore, faithfulness to Christ must be the mandate of the Church. Every aspect of the Church’s organization and leadership needs to focus on this primary relationship. In order to stay true to the high calling as Christ’s bride, leaders must demonstrate a deep personal relationship with God. This relationship is what must bring clarity to all areas of Christian living.

It is through this lens that the Church should see her mission and purpose. Thus, Christian character and integrity are foundational and must never be waived for skills or talents. Christ has not called the Church to be gifted; Christ calls the Church to be faithful. It is He who gifts the Church. Often the temptation exists to select individuals who have expertise in the roles they will perform. When emphasis is prematurely and disproportionately placed upon ability, local churches are found to be in precarious situations. The author of this thesis has personally witnessed such a dilemma in the past. When excellence replaces faith, the temptation will exist to choose those who are most gifted over those who are faithful. For example, what

³⁸⁵ also 1 Cor. 12; Ephesians 3:6, 4:1-12, 5:23; Col 3:15.

happens when the most gifted musician, who applies for a choral position, leads a lifestyle opposed to Christ's teachings?

Personal faith in Christ must be viewed as the core value of leadership. All actions and duties must flow from the "springs of living water" (John 4:14); all ministries will bear fruit only as the minister is firmly rooted "in the vine" (John 15:4). Christian character cannot be a restrictive component of the selection process; it needs to be the focus of the search.

The Body of Christ

The Church is not only to be faithful; it is also to be united, as a body. Unity is a major theme of the New Testament. It is an expression of the Holy Spirit's working amongst God's people. Interconnectedness and interdependence are nucleic values promoted in the New Testament church.

Built into the body member analogy is the realization that each part needs the others in order to function (Eph 4:16). In essence, it is the priesthood of all believers in action. The case studies showed that though there was a difference in how each church interpreted congregational government, all saw the importance of lay based ministry. The Traditional Church sought unity in ministries through more formal channels, the Efficient Church focused on less structure and more on small group ministries, and the Relevant Church put forward ministry opportunities for all congregants, finding a job for even first time attendees.

Though the Church is a body, and each member has a function, there is often confusion as to who coordinates and directs the functions of the body. It could be argued that uncoordinated activity is actually worse than inactivity. Cases could be made that the pastor leads the church, or that the deacons lead the church. However, the biblical record reveals a different paradigm.

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

When it comes to understanding who should lead the church, Scripture is clear; Christ is the Head:

“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Eph 4:14-16).

God has always wished to be the leader, and His people, for the most part, have always wanted someone else. The clearest biblical example is the account of the Jews rebelling against Samuel:

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, ‘Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.’ But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, ‘Give us a king to judge us.’ And Samuel prayed to the LORD. The LORD said to Samuel, ‘Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day--in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also’” (1 Sam 8:4-8).

The Jews of old sought the socio-political norm of the day, a king. Later, the Constantinian Church would do something similar, adopting a form that mirrored Roman hierarchy. Later still, the Baptists would forge ahead as democrats. God's people have always tried to create structures that emulate the politic of the day. While faith may shape a world view, history has shown that culture shapes a church view.

Though it may seem shocking to Baptists, democracy is not God's plan for the Church. God's desire has always been a theocracy. In democracy, the focus is on the earthly leaders, personal persuasion, and the greater good for those who have a vote. A theocracy recognizes God as the leader and Lord, with emphasis placed on following, over gathering support. Democracy births politicians; theocracy births disciples.

Theocracy may appear unattainable, as it did thousands of years ago to the elders in Samuel's time. Yet, it is important to note that this is to be the ultimate goal of the Church. In fact, various forms of governance seeking theocracy have been utilized over the centuries, with varying degrees of success. Most forms of leadership can be theocratic to some extent if the primary goal is to follow Christ. If viewed correctly, the structure is only the format, not the content. Just as a Beethoven symphony can be recorded on a compact disc or an eight track tape, God's message of Lordship can take many formats without altering the content. Therefore, democratic church governance can be used appropriately within the Church, as long as the focus is on His will and not merely the will of the majority.

It is important to note that not all decisions in the New Testament church were made democratically, but they were made in a spirit of trust. Unity was crucial; united with God and then with each other. Perhaps the best definition of the process would be the Lukan phrase, "...it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28a). Trust in God's direction was the critical factor in decision making.

THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

Since Christ is the Head of the Church, the heart of the church is to be the people described in 1 Tim 3 - the elders and deacons. The author has chosen the heart illustration because of its rich imagery. The heart is a part of the body which has both practical and symbolic functions. Its bodily function is to keep life flowing through the entire organism. Yet, the heart does not produce the lifeblood, it only promotes it deliberately to all without discrimination. The church's leadership is to function in a similar manner, providing life and care to all the members of the body so that they accomplish their mutual purposes.

Figuratively, the heart is the place of caring, from whence compassion and empathy flow. The heart is also the place of deep-seeded dreams and desires - the type that gives meaning to life. Similarly, the elders and deacons of the church hold offices that are rich in symbolism. They are looked to as the guardians of life, vision, and the agents of benevolence. The case can be made that the Church needs strong leaders as much as the body needs a strong heart.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HEART

It is the recommendation of this writer that there be recognition of the three functions of leadership. Whether these comprise three distinct groupings or coexist within the same team is a matter of preference. What is non negotiable is the fact that all three need to work together intimately, and on a regular basis, for the health of the ministry. These roles are somewhat triune with each of equal importance, each finding its foundation in the other, and each functionally different by necessity. The three functions are the deacon function, the elder function and the prophetic function.

THE DEACON

It is the conclusion of this author that the title of “deacon” is to be utilized in Baptist churches today. Though other descriptive titles have some warrant, one should reexamine why the deacon title has been used for two thousand years. At its core, the deacon office is a divine creation. It is a high calling and a synonym for the godly servant.

The deacon function is the part of the church’s heart that makes certain that all the members of the body are being fed spiritually and physically. It pumps the lifeblood to the extremities and it carries away the toxins and disease. It allows the blood to heal the wounds, just as deacons symbolically bring Christ’s blood to the hurting.

One cannot discuss the deacon without first addressing their nature. A deacon's character is to be grounded in the description of 1 Tim 3:8-12:

“Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households” (1 Tim 3:8-12).

Unfortunately, the focus on the diaconal role in the past has been upon what the deacon *does* as opposed to who the deacon *is*. Deacons need to interpret their role in the light of their personal relationship with Christ. In turn, the nature of the diaconal work should be primarily personal in nature. The deacons are to be the most “hands-on” of all the ministers. These ministers are to recognize that their position is “servant-leader” as opposed to “leader-servant.” The effective authority in their leadership will be directly proportional to their service. For it is true, “nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”³⁸⁶

The goal of an effective deacon is to honor Christ by taking the compassion of Christ to the rest of the body of Christ. Their core task involves “cultivating a loving and spiritually mature network of relationship and community.”³⁸⁷ In order to function effectively, deacons will be most successful when they work in the areas of their gifting. Spiritual gifts that are well suited for deacons include service, mercy, giving, exhortation, healing, helps and hospitality. These are all gifts that are practical expressions of God's love. They are also gifts that require trust on behalf of the

³⁸⁶ variously attributed. i.e. Theodore Roosevelt, John Maxwell, etc.

³⁸⁷ Hirsch, 170.

recipient, thus the need for the deacon to be a person of impeccable character and commitment.

A deacon's ministry will be as varied as the deacon's giftings and the congregation's needs. The following is only a partial list of potential ministries that would involve the deacon reaching out to the body: visitation, benevolent care, prayer ministries, counseling, palliative care and even practical ministries such as shoveling walkways. Deacons could use their homes to show hospitality to new families or new believers. There may be other opportunities such as weekly commitments (e.g. fellowship groups or Bible studies) that would provide forums for those who wish to grow in structured ways. Another formal role of the deacon could be the preparation and serving of communion.

The challenges:

The primary cost to members of the "deacon team"³⁸⁸ would be in the area of time and emotional energy. It will take considerable time to create, build and restore solid relationships. It is a ministry of patience and perseverance - many tears and some laughs. It is an investment in the kingdom of God and must be viewed as such.

Many barriers exist to a personal diaconal function in the 21st Century Church, and re-education will be necessary. It is true that the office has been tarnished in recent history due to its misunderstanding and cultural baggage. Many churches

³⁸⁸ Defining this grouping is a challenge. To use a term such as board carries business baggage without any scriptural support. To use the word team is very modern, but could imply a game or competitive task. This author recommends the term diaconate, simply because it shows a plurality.

have been historically trained to believe that the pastor is to provide the primary congregational care, and that deacons are merely a substitute. On the other hand, many view the historical deacons as the vetted employers of the pastor, making sure the ministry is accomplished. Also, there exists a consumer mindset within the church today. One of the challenges deacons will face is to transform congregants from consumers to ministers.

A practical challenge will also exist in understanding how a small number of people can possibly minister to a whole congregation. Ideally there would be a two-pronged approach. First, the deacons would determine whom they could personally visit and assist. Second, those same deacons would need to mentor others who can visit with them and thus exponentially increase the effectiveness of their pastoral care ministry. The author is not proposing offices such as sub-deacon or deacon-in-training, rather a diaconal network that prioritizes people. However, at no point should the deacons completely remove themselves from personal care; to do so would minimize their ministry effectiveness.

The opportunity

A revival in biblical understanding of deacon will lead to a far greater and refreshing view of ministry. The result will be that ministries previously performed by a pastor or paid staff will increase exponentially. Deacons who view their role as caregivers will naturally see a higher retention of their members and a level of influence never achievable without personal contact. This singularity of focus will lead to creativity and the creation of networks previously unseen. For example, the

Traditional Church that was interviewed had a benevolence care network that ranged from hot lunches to newborn visits, parish nursing to clothing giveaways. In this dynamic the concepts of “little people” and hierarchy readily diminish.

THE ELDER

The eldership function naturally occurs in some form within the Church. It is what the Relevant Church’s pastor called, “the gatekeepers.” Churches that have moved to incorporate the title “elder” in their dominant board are on a solid biblical footing. Even churches that choose not to move to the elder title, for a variety of legitimate reasons, must still recognize the importance of the eldership role and incorporate it into their structure.

At its core, the eldership function is one of governance and protection. The heart has a primary function, especially in crises, to assure the life of the organism by focusing on the organs. The church parallel of organs would be the ministries of the church. It is important to note that the focus is not on programs, but rather ministries which are the collaborative effort of the church’s ministers.

The character requirements for elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must

have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Tim 3:1-7).

To use a quote from the Pastor of Church A, the elders are in essence, “the fathers of the church.”³⁸⁹ Where the deacon is to be hands on in the individual lives of the congregation, the elder is to be the protector, transitioning from personal to parental. They would encapsulate the concept of the good shepherd (□□□□□□□□) who would lay down their lives for the sheep. The goal of the elder is to unify and keep the church safe. They are to be aware of all threats to the church, both from within and without.

Some of the spiritual gifts that would be suited for this ministry would include teaching, leadership, administration, discernment and knowledge. The elders’ duties will be best performed when they flow from a gifting. The gift of teaching will help in directing the work of the church, in keeping with the guidance of Scripture. It will help explain why the elders are directing as they do. Leadership is necessary as the people of God naturally need to follow someone who will lead them in the ways of God. Administrative gifts will assist in the details of ministry, including finances. Since the elders are responsible for the whole health of the church, and nothing is unspiritual, it is obvious that the financial decisions should be channeled through these people. Discernment is a crucial gift in decision making, especially in light of the threats and opportunities that face the congregation. Finally, knowledge is an asset in the elder setting. This gift helps to complete pictures of how God has worked and is working today.

³⁸⁹ This does not imply the author of this paper sees the elder role (or any leadership role for that matter) as gender specific. However, the quote aptly defines the parental nature of the ministry.

Though there is a level of management necessary for elders, congregations need not necessarily appoint secular business managers to these positions. Spiritual discernment comes in many packages. Though many wonderful Christian entrepreneurs are great elders, so are some humble homemakers. The key is to remember that the issue is not experience, but rather character and commitment to Christ.

The challenges

An eldership function can be taxing. It requires constant oversight and evaluation of the greater good in light of faith. Often tough decisions will need to be made. It can be mentally and emotionally taxing. There may be a perception that since an elder is not as personally involved in the congregants' lives, they are superior, as was the case in the congregant from Church C. Elders do not own the church, but are to love the people entrusted to them on Christ's behalf. Christ teaches clearly about the attitude of authority he desires in the church:

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves (Luke 22:24-27).

Therefore the challenge is for the elder to find meaningful ways to serve the congregation consistently in non official forums. This will be critical in keeping connectedness and minimizing hierarchy.

Opportunities:

There are great opportunities for the church when an eldership group is freed to lead and to protect. There is fluidity in the planning and coordinating of church life. Resources are readily directed to areas that need attention. New ministries can be fostered, and ministries that are no longer effective can be pruned. Church B has testified that through their division of leadership ministry has functioned better, evidenced by both greater clarity and accountability.

THE PROPHET

The author of this paper struggled in the choice of the word prophet. Unfortunately, this biblical term has become synonymous with excesses, a highly charismatic ministry style and a leader who is often autocratic. Though none of these interpretations is the biblical model, these perceptions are held by many. However, “[w]e simply have to get over our historical cringe in this matter if we are going to grow and mature as a missional movement.”³⁹⁰

The role of prophets is significant with respect to the modern church. A major component of the leadership writings in the twenty-first century emphasizes the importance of ‘vision’. Though the writers do not specifically refer to the prophetic gift, there is an implication that the vision sought is God’s vision for the church. Solomon stated that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov 29:18). In fact, all the churches interviewed believed that vision was a key, if not the key, component in the future growth of their church.

³⁹⁰ Hirsch, 153.

In essence, the Church is looking to her leaders for guidance and direction. The vision is to be brought forward by the leadership of the church implying that either the leaders or the pastor has insight. There are two ways this can occur: either the vision is a modified secular business model or it is a divine revelation to God's people. For example, many larger churches have adopted a CEO model with their pastor as the CEO. This may be functionally fine, but, if not careful, a vision or dream can easily be created and promoted as a "duty."

This is not the way vision should be interpreted. The word used for vision in Proverbs 29:18 is not translated as "a plan," but rather as "a divine revelation"; something beheld not dreamed.³⁹¹ Congregations do not need dreamers, but rather a people who seek after God's will. In fact, God has a dream and a plan for his people.³⁹² Rather than replace His design with ours, God needs people who are focused on the revelation of His will. That is the definition of prophets.

Why is there hesitation in the use of the prophetic title? Is it not the biblical command to seek after such a gift? "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor 14:1), because "one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (1 Cor 14:3). In fact, Scripture states: "Do not despise prophetic utterances" (1 Thes. 5:20). It is almost as if the author knows that the gift's influence would be weakened.

³⁹¹ TWOT 633, 633a.

³⁹² "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'" Jeremiah 29:11.

The rise of Christendom led to the belief that the whole world was now Christian, for the most part, and focus was placed on maintenance ministries. “A direct result of this was that the apostolic, the prophetic and the evangelistic ministries and leadership styles were marginalized and effectively ‘exiled’ from the church’s official ministry and leadership.”³⁹³

The age of Christendom is over, and now it is time to revive the positions the church has always needed, including the prophetic. The prophetic task is likened to the heart function of interdependence. The heart must be in contact with the head in order to mobilize the body. If the head is not controlling the heart, or movement of the body, the organism will not work properly.

The biblical requirements of the prophet are not as clearly defined. Inherent would be all the character requirements of a deacon and elder from the third chapter of Paul’s first letter to Timothy. The prophetic counsel would be best filtered through the leadership team as part of the body. The prophet must be one who can accept criticism, reject pride and seek unity. The prophets are but a vessel of the divine; equal members in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12).

The goal of this heart function is to be “focused on listening to God and discerning His will, paying attention to social justice issues and questioning the status quo of an increasingly middle class church.”³⁹⁴ The revelations of the prophetic will surely be in contrast with the business model of visioning goals which is often preoccupied with narcissistic tendencies and physical assets.

³⁹³ Hirsch, 169

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 174.

The primary spiritual gift for these leaders would be, of course, prophecy. However, due to its neglect, few in the denomination know how to recognize or foster this gift. Other gifts, that would be complimentary, include discernment and knowledge.

The prophetic voice is needed at the leadership table. The duty of the prophet is to challenge “everything and ask irritating questions about how God fits into the grand scheme.”³⁹⁵ One so gifted seeks to ground the church solidly in the will of God.

This is the most challenging role in the leadership circle. Though it is an old office, it has not been practically explored in recent memory, if ever, within the Baptist denomination. The challenges will be to find individuals who are in tune with God’s spirit and understanding how the gift is to work in body life. The problem of training and educating is great since even seminaries do not teach practical theology courses on the prophetic gift.

Yet, the opportunities are as vast as the kingdom of God. To be able to capture God’s vision in fresh ways for His people will be truly transformational. To change the direction of visionary dialogue from “a larger campus” to “a humbled people of prayer” is healthy. Perhaps a bigger campus is necessary, but it should flow from prayer, not be the focus of the prayer. Though it will be a difficult paradigm shift, it is necessary. The life of the Church depends on it.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 176.

Summary of the Diaconal Functions:

The three functions are a blend of old and new constructs. They could take the form of an official council, board or team. Some churches may decide to keep the title “Deacons” or “Elders,” and some may avoid the title “Prophet” due to the cultural baggage. Even the advice from churches that were studied, who went through significant changes, recommended taking time and building trust. Churches need not rush hastily into name changes and new structures. They simply need to do the work.

Ideally, a biblical study of church leadership would be the starting point in this process. There is nothing stopping a current Deacons’ Board, or equivalent, from embarking down the path of adopting these recommendations within the context of their current structure to the level their constitution allows. One way could be to subdivide a board of say seven deacons, with two focusing on each of the three functions and the seventh as a coordinator.

THE PASTOR’S ROLE

As these three heart functions are explored, an obvious question should arise: What about the pastor? The Basis of Union has equated the elder/bishop role to the pastor. However, it is the belief of this writer that such a characterization is not accurate.

When a man or woman of God seeks to become a pastor, the CABC, and the local churches therein, seek to understand the candidate's sense of call. Then, once fully trained, tested and accredited, an ordained pastor's credentials are held by the denomination. This practice allows credentialed pastors to entertain and accept or reject a call to another church within the CABC (with an expectation that a pastor will be called to other churches during his ministry). These "callings" are a distinct feature of the pastor. There is not a parallel in the elder model. Timothy was not to select "called" individuals, but rather people of character. From the biblical record, a strong case can be made that the elders and deacons are the resident members of a church's leadership. In its simplest form, the difference is a matter of being selected by the church or being called by God.

There is a biblical designation that does parallel the modern Baptist pastor, and that is the apostle. As with the prophet, this title has been long dormant and misunderstood. Many immediately associate apostleship with dictatorial government, unquestionable authority and even the ability to write Scripture. Instead, the apostolic role, in the truest sense, is to bring God's message to His people by encouraging and building up the Church, His body. This writer appeals to a definition of apostle that emphasizes their "sent" nature and the renewal role they fulfill within the local church. "Apostolic ministry is basically a function and not an office."³⁹⁶ I concur with Hirsch who has devoted an entire chapter in his book, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*, to the apostolic environment.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 153.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 149-177.

The pastor's fulfillment of the apostolic office is a heart function as well: the pastor is the pacemaker. A pacemaker is a mechanism that is connected to the heart to ensure that it is working properly. The work of the heart determines the work of the pacemaker. Similarly, the pastor's role is to come beside and be intrinsically connected to the leadership of the church. The pastor is to help set the pace, making sure that not only all the functions are being performed, but also that there is a synergy in their functioning. "Apostolic Ministry does this by reawakening the people to the gospel and imbedding it in the organizational framework in ways that are meaningful."³⁹⁸

Though pastors do perform caring ministries, oversight ministries and prophetic ministries, their purpose is to "encourage and equip." This is a radical shift and may be the most difficult to implement. Pastors naturally gravitate to one aspect of ministry, and congregations often desire their pastor to perform some tasks to the exclusion of anyone else.

The choice of the pacemaker analogy is deliberate. It focuses on the core leadership of the church as the driving force and sees the pastor as a help and facilitator. The pastor helping the diaconate versus the diaconate helping the pastor is the servant leader concept in practice. It is a drastic change. The deacons need to step up, and the pastor needs to step into an enabling role.

The divide between laity and clergy has become most pronounced when pastors believe the church is theirs. Leaders withdraw from functions, which they

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 156.

can and should do, in order to allow the professional to accomplish the tasks. When the transient pastor is viewed as the heart of the church, pastoral transition becomes the equivalent to open-heart surgery. Without the heart, the loosely connected members of the body stop functioning and sometimes withdraw completely.³⁹⁹

Conclusion:

To say that the church does not need a deacon's role, or equivalent, is to say that the church does not need a heart. Rather than a hierarchy, the church needs to reexamine its structure on the basis of body image. When it does so, leadership will develop within the congregation to the point that it will be difficult to point out who is the professional minister. Vision for ministry will flow from a vibrant relationship with Christ rather than from a covetous desire to become a mega church. In the new paradigm, pastors will be freed to mentor and disciple, modeling what they have learned from the Lord through their experiences and education.

I appreciate how all three churches I studied are seeking to bring Christ to the people of their communities. The movement to clarify roles is a wonderful step in understanding how the members of the body best function. God wants His Church to be efficient and effective, relevant and revelatory, grounded and growing.

As the church enters the 21st Century, the best direction in moving forward can come from the past. In fact, the new situations the Church faces today are no different from what the Early Church faced - a hostile environment with a plurality of

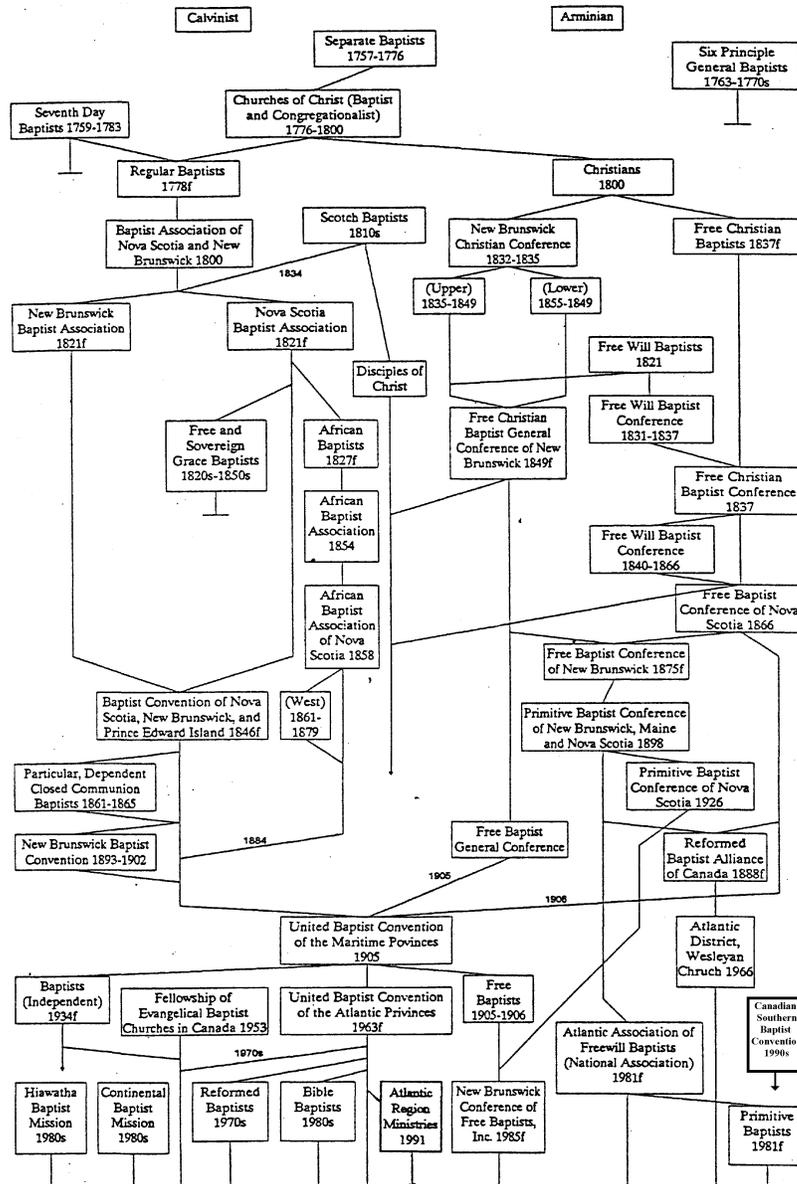
³⁹⁹ Ibid., 163.

faiths. In fact, it is within such an environment that Christianity thrived, and will again if dependence is solely upon the Holy Spirit.

In light of the research and evidence discovered, it is the conclusion of this writer that the diaconate is both a valid and vital office to the life of the church. To be most effective, the diaconate should be comprised of godly individuals who seek to exercise their giftings for the purpose of strengthening the body by bringing it into Christ's divine will.

Appendix 1

Atlantic Baptist Christians



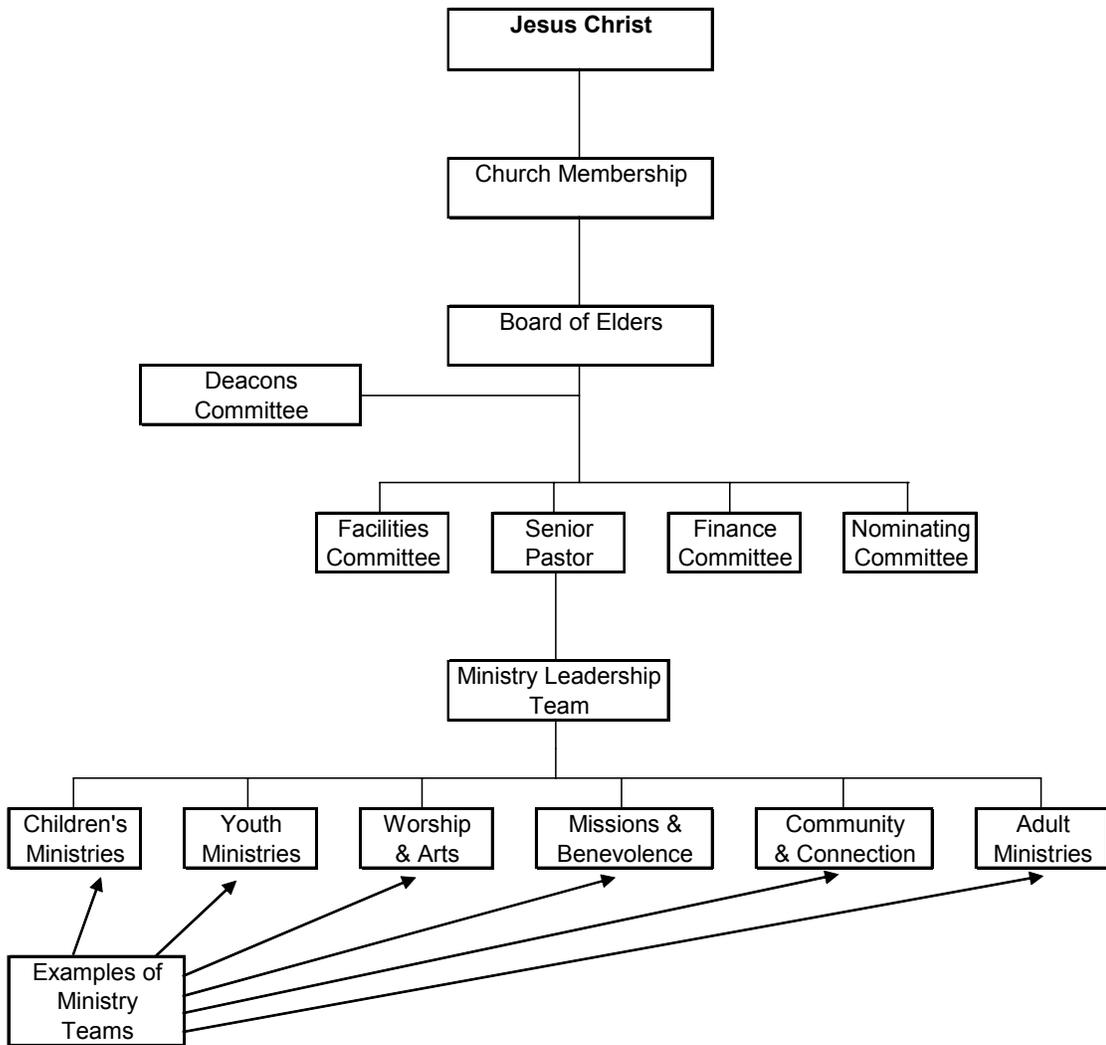
Appendix 2

CHURCH A – Perceptions of Ministry Accountability

CHURCH A	Pastor	Deacon	Congregant
Prayer	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Facilities	Board of Management	Board of Management	Don't know
Benevolence	Deacons & committees	Deacons	Deacons & parish nurse
Evangelism	Evang. Committee & Deacons	Deacons & Pastor	Don't know
Staffing	Deacons	Deacons & Pastor	Chair of Deacons
Administration	Pastor	Pastor	Pastor
Worship	Deacons	Pastor & other staff	Worship committee
Constitution	Deacons	Deacons	Constitution committee
Discipleship	Board of CE	Deacons	Don't know
Fellowship	Board of CE	Pastor & other staff	Assistant pastor
Stewardship	Board of Management	Pastor	Pastor to preach on it
Missions	Evangelism Committee & Deacons	Deacons & Pastor	Ladies Mission group
Vision	Board of Deacons	Deacons & Pastor	Don't know

Appendix 3

Church B Organizational Chart



Appendix 4

CHURCH B – Perceptions of Ministry Accountability

CHURCH B	Pastor	Elder	Congregant
Prayer	Deacons	Deacons	Layperson
Facilities	Facilities committee	Facilities committee	Deacons
Benevolence	Deacons	Deacons	Congregation
Evangelism	Staff	Pastor of community	Congregation
Staffing	MLT and Sr. pastor	Senior pastor	Elders
Administration	MLT	Senior pastor	Pastors
Worship	Staff	Worship ministry or Sr. pastor	Worship team
Constitution	MLT	Task force	Task force
Discipleship	Community Minister, staff	Pastoral staff	Minister of community
Fellowship	Pastor of community	Pastoral staff	Minister of community
Stewardship	Finance committee	MLT	Elders & finance
Missions	Deacons	Deacons	Elders
Vision	Sr. Pastor	Elders	Pastors

Appendix 5

CHURCH C – Perceptions of Ministry Accountability

CHURCH C	Pastor	Lead Team Member	Congregant
Prayer	Prayer Coordinator	Prayer Coordinator	Volunteers
Facilities	Management Team	Management Team	Management Team
Benevolence	Staff	Care Minister	Care Ministries
Evangelism	Staff	Minister Of Evangelism	Don't Know
Staffing	Lead Pastor	Exec Pastor	A Pastor Or Pastors
Administration	Exec Pastor	Exec Pastor	Exec Pastor
Worship	Worship Pastor	Worship Pastor	Pastor Of Worship
Constitution	Lead Team	Lead Team and Lead Pastor	Exec Pastor & Lead Team
Discipleship	Staff	Exec Pastor & Staff	Do Not Know
Fellowship	Small Group Mobilizer	Small Group Mobilizer	A Staff Member
Stewardship	Exec Pastor Lead	Exec Pastor	A Lot Of Times Sr. Pastor
Missions	Paid & Glocal	Minister Of Evangelism	A Lay Person Who Left
Vision	Lead Pastor	Lead Pastor	Sr., Exec Pastor & Lead Team

Appendix 6

Accountability Model of Church C

(as defined by a Lead Team Member)



Bibliography

- Barnett, James Monroe. *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order: A Comprehensive and Critical Study of the Origin, Development, and Decline of the Diaconate in the Context*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1983.
- Bell, D.G., Ed. *The Newlight Baptist Journals of James Manning and James Innis*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1984.
- Bercot, David W., Ed. *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1998.
- Betteson, Henry, Ed. and trans. *The Early Christian Fathers*. London: Oxford, 1956.
- _____. *The Later Christian Fathers*. London: Oxford, 1970.
- Beverley, James and Barry M. Moody, Eds. *The Life and Journal of the Rev. Mr. Henry Aline*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1982.
- _____. *The Journal of Henry Aline*. Hantsport NS: Lancelot Press, 1982.
- Boice, James Montgomery. *Christ's Call to Discipleship*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.
- Brackney, William H. *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004.
- Bruce, F.F. *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990.
- Cuthbertson, Brian C., Ed. *The Journal of the Reverend John Payzant (1749-1834)*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1981.
- Daniélou, Jean. *The Development of Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicea*. Trans. J. Baker. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964.
- Deweese, Charles W. *The Emerging Role Of Deacons*. Nashville: Broadman, 1979.
- Di Berardino, A., Ed. *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992.

- Dobbins, Gaines Stanley. *Baptist Churches in Action: A study of New Testament Principles and Modern Methods of Application*. Nashville: Sunday School Board, 1929.
- Durham, John I. *Exodus*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.
- Echlin, Edward. *The Deacon in the Church - Past and Future*. New York: Alba House, 1971.
- Ferguson, E., Ed. *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. NY: Garland, 1990.
- Fickett, Harold L. Jr. *A Layman's Guide to Baptist Belief*. Michigan: Zondervan, 1965.
- Fitzgerald, A. D., Ed. *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Foshee, Harold B. *Now That You're A Deacon*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975.
- _____. *The Ministry of a Deacon*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1968.
- Freedman, David Noel. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Frend, W.H.C. *The Early Church: From the Beginnings to 461*. London: SCM, 1992.
- Gordon, Grant. *From Slavery to Freedom: The Life of David George, Pioneer Black Baptist Minister*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1992.
- Greenslade, S.L. Ed. *Early Latin Theology: The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 5. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956.
- Gregory, L. A. *Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec Year Book, 1961-1962*. Toronto, ON: 1962.
- Griffin-Allwood, Philip G. A., George A. Rawlyk and Jarold K. Zeman. *Baptists in Canada 1760-1990: A Bibliography of Selected Printed Resources in English*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1989.
- Grillmeier, Aloys. *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1987.
- Harnack, Adolf von. *History of Dogma*. NY: Dover: 1961.

- Harvey, W. W., Ed. *Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*. Cambridge: Academic Press, 1857.
- Hirsch, Alan, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.
- Hiscox, Edward T. *The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1981.
- Holmes, Michael W. *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Hopper, J. E. *Manual for Baptist Churches*. Saint John, 1894.
- Howell, RBC. *The Deaconship: It's Nature, Qualifications, Relations & Duties*. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1846.
- Jenkins, Charles A. *Baptist Doctrines*. St. Louis: Chancy R. Barns, 1885.
- Johnson, Gordon G. *My Church: Manual of Baptist Faith and Action*. Evanston, IL: Harvest Publications, 1973.
- Jurgens, William A., Ed. *Faith of the Early Fathers*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1970.
- Kaiser, John Edmund, *Winning on Purpose: How to Organize Congregations to Succeed in Their Mission*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006.
- Kazhdan, A. P. et al., Ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. NY: Oxford, 1991.
- Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.
- Kidd, J., Ed. *Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911.
- Kirk, K.E., Ed. *The Apostolic Ministry*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957.
- Levy, George E., Ed. *The Diary and Related Writings of the Reverend Joseph Dimock (1768-1846)*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1979.
- _____. *Baptists of the Maritime Provinces: 1753-1946*, Saint John: Barnes-Hopkins, 1946.
- Livingstone, Elizabeth, Ed. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. NY: Oxford, 1997.

- Loneragan, Bernard. *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961.
- MacArthur, John F. Jr. *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.
- Maring, Norman H. and. Hudson, Winthrop S. *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice: Revised Edition*. Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1991.
- McBeth, H. Leon, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1987.
- McCall, Duke K. Ed. *What is the Church?* Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958.
- McGrath, Alister. *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*. InterVarsity: Illinois, 1995.
- McGuckin, J. A. *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.
- McKee, Elsie Anne. *John Calvin: On the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*. Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1984.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964.
- Mollat, Michel. *The Poor in the Middle Ages, An Essay in Social History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Moody, Barry M., Ed. *Repent and Believe: The Baptist Experience in Maritime Canada*. Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1980.
- Murray, James S., Ed. *"Through Him Who Strengthens Me": Selected Shorter Writings and Sermons of Stuart Eldon Murray*. Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1989.
- Naylor, Robert. *The Baptist Deacon*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1955.
- Nichols, Harold. *The Work of the Deacon and Deaconess*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1984.
- Olson, Jeannine E. *One Ministry, Many Roles: Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries* Saint Louis: Concordia, 1992.
- Patterson, Stephen J. *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*. Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1993.

- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Plater, Ormonde. *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons*. Cowley Publications, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004.
- Priestley, David T., Ed. *A Fragile Stability: Definition and Redefinition of Maritime Baptist Identity*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1994.
- Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology*. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1996.
- Ramsey, Boniface. *Beginning to Read the Fathers*. NY: Paulist, 1985.
- Rausch, Thomas P. Ed. *Catholics and Evangelicals, Do they Share a Common Future?* New Jersey, Paulist Press, 2000.
- Rawlyk, G.A, Ed. *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.
- _____. *Champions Of The Truth, Fundamentalism, Modernism, and the Maritime Baptist*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.
- _____. *Ravished by the Spirit, Religious Revivals, Baptists, And Henry Alline*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983.
- _____, Ed. *The New Light Letters and Spiritual Songs*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1983.
- _____, Ed. *The Sermons of Henry Alline*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1986.
- Reid, W. Stanford, Ed. *Calvin: His Influence in the Western World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1982.
- Renfree, Harry. *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada*. Mississauga: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988.
- Schweizer, Eduard. *Church Order in the New Testament*. London: SCM, 1961.
- Stevenson, Ed. J. and Frend, W.H.C. *New Eusebius: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church to AD 337*. London; SPCK, 1987.
- _____. *Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church AD 337-461*. Cambridge: University Press, 1989.

- The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912.
This We Believe: Resources For Faith. BCOQ: Toronto, 1990.
- Thomas, Donald F. *The Deacon in a Changing Church*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969.
- Vine, W.E., Unger, Merrill F., and White, William, Eds. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.
- Walker, Williston. *Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1960.
- Warren, Gordon C. *Basic Baptist Beliefs*. Canadian Baptist Federation.
- Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Watts, Ed. *Ordinances: a Project of a Working Group of the Canadian Baptist Federation* Missisauga: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1987.
- Willard, Dallas. "How to Be a Disciple." *The Christian Century*, 1998.
- Wilson, Robert S., Ed. *An Abiding Conviction: Maritime Baptists and Their World*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1988.
- Young, Francis. *From Nicea to Chalcedon*. London: SMC, 1983.
- Zeman, Jarold K., Ed. *Baptists In Canada, Search for Identity Amidst Diversity*. Burlington: G.R. Welch Publishing, 1980.
- _____, Ed. *Costly Vision. The Baptist Pilgrimage in Canada*. Burlington: G.R. Welch Publishing, 1988.
- _____. *Open Doors: Canadian Baptists 1950-1990*. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1992.

Journal Articles

- Bradshaw, Paul F. 1983. Liturgical Presidency in the Early Church. *Grove Liturgical Study*, 36 Bramcote: Grove Books.
- Porter Jr., H. Boone. 1967. The Ordination Prayers of the Ancient Western Churches. *Alcuin Club Collections*, 49 London: SPCK.

Reynolds, Roger E. 1970. A Florilegium on the Ecclesiastical Grades. *The Harvard Theological Review*, 63 no. 2, April.

Safrai, Shmuel. 1990. Master and Disciple. *Jerusalem Perspective*, 3 (November - December)

Baptist Treatises and Articles of Faith and Practice

A Treatise of the Faith of the Free Christian Baptists in Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick. 1848.

A Treatise on the Faith of the Freewill Baptists 1834; Nova Scotia. 1840f.

Articles of Faith and Practice and Church Covenant of the Churches of Christ, composing the Nova Scotia Baptist Associations. 1810.

Articles of Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ. Church of Christ, Cornwallis, 1778.

Articles of Practice of the Nova Scotia Baptist Association. 1800f.

Basis of Union, United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces, 1905-6.

Internet Resources

A New English Translation of the Septuagint. Oxford University Press, 2007. available from <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/17-esther-nets.pdf>.

Ecole Initiative: Hypertext Encyclopedia of Early Church History. available from <http://www2.evansville.edu/evoleweb>.

Rothauge, Arlin. *Sizing Up a Congregation For New Member Ministry.* New York, NY: Episcopal Church Center, 1983. on line resource at http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200702/200702_000_various_size.cfm

Schaff, Philip. *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus.* Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2001. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ii.html>