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REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSION ON THE DIACONATE 1981

A INTRODUCTION

1 Recent calls for the recovery of the diaconate within the Anglican Communion

The need for the restoration of the diaconate within the church showed itself within the Anglican Communion prior to the fifties of this century in the commissioning and licensing of such lay ministeries as readers, catechists and sub-deacons. Lambeth 1958 regarded this development with some disquiet. It maintained that the lay offices mentioned depreciated the traditional and ancient order of deacon.

The Lambeth committee responsible for this section of the Report (on Ministeries and Manpower) sought to discover and define the difference between a licensed lay minister and an ordained deacon. The deacon they said is a "dedicated man" who is required to devote the whole of his life to his calling and who has a distinctive place within the threefold ministry of the church.¹

The Committee recognised that there would be considerable practical difficulties in seeking to restore the diaconate because of the virtual disappearance of the order within the Anglican Communion. Nevertheless, it considered the office important enough to recommend that "each Province of the Anglican Communion shall consider whether the office of deacon shall be restored to its primitive place as a distinctive order in the church, instead of being regarded as a probationary period for the priesthood" (Resolution number 88 of the 1958 Lambeth Conference).

Since the sixties of the century there has been an increasing realization that diakonia is a fundamental part of the total ministry of the church. Concurrent with this has been the revival of the ministry of the laity. The Toronto Congress (1963) approved a message to the members of the Anglican Communion which started with the assertion, "God has called us to be a serving church" and ended with the affirmation "God has called us all, clergy and laity together." During the early years of the same decade these two aspects were to be underlined and reasserted by Vatican II. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Lambeth 1968 gave more time and devoted more space in its Report to the diaconate than its predecessor. It came out much more strongly for reform of the ministry and stated that "to deprive the ordained ministry of the witness of the diaconate would be to impoverish its symbolism at the point where the greatest emphasis needs to be laid."² The Report stated firmly and unequivocally that the Anglican Communion should move towards a recovery of the diaconate as a significant and operative order within the sacred ministry

1 p 2.106 The Lambeth Conference 1958. SPCK and Seabury Press 1958

2 p 104 The Lambeth Conference 1968 Resolutions and Reports SPCK and Seabury 1968

This, it believed, would lead to an enrichment of the life of the church. Of particular importance was the realisation that the recovery of the diaconate would lead to a "re-establishment of the relationship of the secular world to the will of God through the liturgical action of the deacon."³

The final recommendation on the diaconate was the following:

- "(a) that the diaconate, combining service of others with liturgical functions, be open to
 - (i) men and women remaining in secular occupations
 - (ii) full-time church workers
 - (iii) those selected for the priesthood

- (b) that Ordinals should, where necessary, be revised:
 - (i) to take account of the new role envisaged for the diaconate;
 - (ii) by the removal of reference to the diaconate as "an inferior office";
 - (iii) by emphasis upon the continuing element of diakonia in the ministry of bishops and priests

- (c) that those made deaconesses by laying on of hands with appropriate prayers be declared to be within the diaconate (for 221, against 183).

- (d) that appropriate canonical legislation be enacted by Provinces and regional churches to provide for those already ordained deaconesses." (Resolution number 32 of the Lambeth conference 1968)

During the sixties too the issue of the ordination of women raised its troublesome head. The 1968 Lambeth Report has a section on Women and the Priesthood, which ends with the equivocation that the theological arguments presented for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood are inconclusive.⁴

Proposals concerning the formation of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) were made and subsequently approved by the member churches. The first of these met at Limuru in Kenya from the 23 February to 5 March 1971. In its discussion of renewal of the order and organisation in the Anglican church it had a good deal to say about bishops and lay persons, but nothing at all about priests or deacons.

The ACC meeting in Dublin in 1973 was so overwhelmed by the complexity of the questions of ministry that it "found itself unable to say anything of

3 p 105 op. cit.

4 Resolution 34 of Lambeth 1968. p 39 op.cit.

say anything of sufficient depth of quality to report to the member churches on this matter. One of the factors which complicated consideration of the ministry at that stage was the issue of the ordination of women. At the third meeting of the ACC in Trinidad in 1976 more detailed consideration was given to the diaconate than at any previous gathering of representative of the Anglican communion. The Report of that Council indicates that there was a very strong move to abolish the diaconate in spite of the moves at the two previous Lambeth Conferences to restore it. Those who advocated abolition did so on the grounds that there was no need for ordination to the type of service which had traditionally been performed by the order of deacons. This position was very clearly and cogently stated by bishop John Howe: "to ordain men and women would undo all we have learned about active christian service and turn them all into ministers." The position taken by bishop Howe has to be answered if a case is going to be made out for the restoration for the order of deacons in the church. This the Council at its meeting in Trinidad attempted to do.

In the end the Council came out on the side of retaining and reforming the diaconate. It emphasised that in ordained persons there is the assurance that they bring christian values to their service, that there is in them a particular grace and calling from God and that they have the proper authority of the church for their ministry. The last point is a fundamental one which is underlined by this Commission.

The Trinidad Council gave the following advice to the Anglican Communion:

- 1976
#60
- "(a) that the use of the Diaconate as a period of preparation for the priesthood be retained; and that every church should review its practice to ensure that this period is one of continued training and further testing of vocation; but that it is not to be regarded as necessarily leading to the priesthood;
 - (b) that the churches, and particularly the laity, be invited to examine the concept of the diaconate as an Order to which lay people serving the church, or serving in the name of the church, could also be admitted, to express and convey the authority of the church in their service. And, in this consideration to take into account Resolution 32 of Lambeth 1968, and Bishop John Howe's article on the diaconate written in preparation for that meeting of Lambeth. This study should include the status of deacons in synods."

The council re-iterated the call by Lambeth for deaconesses to be declared to be within the diaconate. (Resolution 10)

- 5 p 37 Partners in Mission - Report of the second meeting of the ACC Dublin 1973. SPCK 1973
- 6 p 42 Report of the third meeting of ACC 1976
- 7 p 44 ACC-3 Trinidad. Report of the third meeting 1976 ACC pub.

The only aspect of the diaconate as an ordained order within the church considered by Lambeth 1978 was the place of women within it. It recommended that "those member churches which do not at present ordain women as deacons now consider making the necessary legal and liturgical changes to enable them to do so, instead of admitting them to a separate order of deaconesses." (Resolution 20) The spectre of the ordination of women appeared to influence Lambeth's thinking to such an extent that real issues around the diaconate were over-shadowed by it.

A.2. Some factors in the life of the church which have influenced the call for the restoration of the diaconate.

A.2.1 The recovery of a corporate and collegial understanding of the ministry. The ministry is seen to be that of the whole people of God not only of those "set apart" by ordination. The ordained ministry's function is understood as stimulating, instructing and enabling the ministry of the faithful, not of performing it for them.^{7a}

This does not mean that the ordained ministry has no specific function and authority, but that the purpose of that function and authority is the offering and enabling of the total ministry of the people of God.

A.2.2 Ordination is properly understood as concerned with the ordering of the ministry. The presbyterate has the overall supervision of service in the parishes and of people under the bishop of the diocese. The diaconate ensures that that service is carried out in accordance with the will of God as understood and interpreted by the whole church of God.

A.2.3 The realization that the church is subordinate to the Kingdom of God, and instrumental in its establishment. The theologies of liberation and of hope have pointed to this. The church is involved in the ministry to the oppressed; it is concerned about righteousness and justice. The PIM report, referred to below calls for the restoration of the diaconate to enable the church to perform this ministry.^x

A.2.4 The recovery of the diaconate in the growth in relief work, self-help community and educational projects initiated by the church. The CPSA has developed a structure in the form of provincial departments to try to cope with God's calling to care for the poor and oppressed. The questioning of the effectiveness of such structures and the justification for funds for them without evidence of real growth in ministry in the local church is being conducted at present. Out of the questioning has come a call for the recovery of the diaconate.

^x See p 5

7a But their work does not in any way free the congregation as a whole from its diaconal responsibility. On the contrary, it should help to bring about the fulfilment of the diaconal responsibility of the whole church, both by the church as a whole and by its members severally'. p 34 WCC Study No. 2 1965 The Ministry of Deacons

A.2.5 Increasingly priests and especially bishops are overwhelmed by the burdens of administration and the proliferation of meetings. There is an urgent call by priests and bishops to be freed to pray and preach, to study and teach.

A.2.6 The false dichotomy between evangelism and social action confuses and divides Christians. A church which has a diaconate which expresses the incarnation of the Gospel of the love of God would not be so divided and confused.

These briefly are some of the factors within the life of the church which have within this century moved the church to consider the recovery and restoration of the diaconate. They will be dealt with in greater detail in various sections of the report.

The question of the ordination of women can bedevil the debate. I am sure that those who oppose the ordination of women must exclude them from all the orders of ministry. Conversely those who support the ordination of women cannot stop short at offering women the diaconate.

A.3. Call for a commission ^{xx}

Since Lambeth 1958, as I have indicated, there have been a number of calls by representative Anglican bodies for the restoration of the diaconate. These calls have been echoed faintly and rather individually within the Church of the Province until November 1980 when Provincial Standing Committee (PSC) considered the Report of the Second Partners in Mission Consultation (PIM). The Report stated that one of the priorities for the Province's missionary strategy for the next three years is the need to develop "a ministry relevant to the new society." Such a ministry, it maintains, should be set within the context of the Church's first priority viz. the total opposition to apartheid in church. In accordance with its first priority it is called to minister to the victims of apartheid and to prepare the minds and hearts of its members for a more just dispensation. "The Church must undertake immediate and long-term planning to alleviate the suffering of the resettled with particular concentration on the strengthening of resistant communities, development projects, decreasing dependency, and teaching in preparation for the new society."

After a discussion of the ordained ministry 'relevant to the New Society' the Report states "The fact that apartheid society creates so many areas of social need raises the question of reforming the diaconate so as to restore it to its original function of ministry to the suffering and the needy."

8 Report of the Second Partners in Mission Consultation page 7.

9 op. cit. page 10

^{xx} It is interesting to note that at the Ninth Provincial Synod held in Cape Town in 1919 the following resolution was passed on the Perpetual Diaconate:

This Synod requests the Bishop of the Province to consider the question of the establishment of the Perpetual Diaconate, whereby men may be licensed to conduct and assist at Sunday Services and Occasional Offices as permitted, without giving up their lay avocations.

The PIM Report, however, is not the only origin of a call for the restoration of the diaconate within the CPSA. The same meeting of PSC considered the ~~Supplementary Report~~ of the Commission on Departments, which contained the following paragraph: "the Commission suggests that many of the issues raised by its investigation into departments and committees indicate a deficiency in ministry at the local level and the attempt to compensate for this by some of the Provincial structures." In the light of this conclusion the Commission recommended "that a commission be appointed to examine the nature and significance of the permanent diaconate."

PSC responded to these calls for the restoration of the diaconate by requesting the Metropolitan to appoint a commission "to look into the question of reforming the diaconate as suggested in priority 3 of the section headed The Ordained Ministry, paragraph 3 in the Report of the Partners in Mission Consultation in 1980."

A.4. Membership:

The Metropolitan invited the following persons to be members of the commission: The Ven. L Bank (Chairman), the Ven. D C T Nkwe, the Rev. V P S Mkhize, the Rev. S T W Hayes, Dr E Strassberger. All the members invited agreed to serve on the commission.

A.5. Meetings

The Commission met three times, 11 to 13 February 1981 at the Convent of St John the Divine, Wentworth, Durban; 9 to 11 June 1981 at the same venue; 4 to 6 August 1981 at the Dominican Convent, Rondebosch, Cape Town. All the members attended the first meeting, the Ven. D C T Nkwe was not able to attend the second. We invited the Rev. John Aitchison who has chosen to remain in deacons orders to be present at the second meeting. The Rev. V P S Mkhize asked to be excused for the first part of the August meeting because of the meeting of the Elective Assembly of the diocese of Natal.

A.6. The Approach of the Commission.

The members of the Commission are convinced that the restoration of deacons as an ordained order of the church is an essential part of the renewal of its total ministry. The majority of the members of the Commission maintained that the resurgence of lay ministry, particularly as a result of the charismatic renewal, is not to be used as an argument against the ordination of men and women to the diaconate, but is another form of the restoration of the diaconate to the life of the church.

The Commission is fully aware of the problems confronting it in seeking to commend the restoration of the order of deacons

to the church. Very few lay people have ever seen them; candidates for the ministry can hardly wait until they have ceased to be one of them. Sectors impatiently tolerate them, waiting for them to be ordained priests; the rubrics in the Ordinal imply that they have not been faithful and diligent if they are not ordained priests within a year of their ordination to the diaconate! There is little, therefore, to encourage recognition of a permanent diaconate, but that is precisely what we believe to be necessary for the renewal of the ministry of the church and for the recovery of its relevance.

Recovering the diaconate is not like adding a lost part to the church, but rediscovering the full ministry of the church. It implies therefore the reformation also of the priesthood and the episcopate. It will integrate the laity and the world in the total ministry of the church. It will provide greater scope and opportunity for ministry and the consecration of life in the service of the world. It will save the church and its ministry from becoming a purely cultic activity. It will save priests and bishops from spending a good deal of their time being deacons. It will also save those who should remain deacons from being ordained priests or even becoming bishops. So we offer this report as a stimulus to the church for the recovery and restoration of the diaconate and the reformation of its ministry.

A.7. Thanks

Thanks to the sisters of the Order of St John the Divine, Wentworth, Durban, for their diaconal ministry to us during our meetings at the Convent. To the Dominican sisters in Rondebosch for accommodating us for our last meeting; to the members of the Commission for the contribution they have made together and separately to the final Report; to the Rev. John Aitchison for his participation in the discussion at the second meeting of the Commission; to all those who submitted memo-randa and made contributions to our thinking in preparation for this Report.

Louis Bank
Chairman

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION B:

After the debate on the ordination of women at PSC in November 1979 the South African Anglican Theological Commission was asked to consider the question of the theology of the diaconate. This has resulted in a concise and clear statement on the nature of the diaconate and its place and function within the ordained ministry of the church. We have included the Report in its entirety as theological background to the recovery of the diaconate.

B THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Report of the S A A T C on

THE DIACONATE

1 PROVINCIAL SYNOD, 1979.

1.1. Provincial Synod passed the following Resolution:

This Synod believes that it is theologically appropriate for women as well as men to be ordained to the diaconate",

1.2. and at the same time rejected the motion that "The ordination of women to the diaconate be now permitted in the Church of the Province of South Africa."

1.3. Whatever the reasons for this seeming contradiction, the Commission believes it right that further study be devoted to the nature of the diaconate and the permanence of the diaconate as a separate order in the ministry of the Church.

2. THE NATURE OF THE DIACONATE

2.1. The word 'deacon' comes from a Greek word meaning 'servant' (diakonos). It is the word used by Christ himself to describe his own service of love to the world (Mark 10:45 - "The Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many").

2.2. Therefore, the whole Church is called to the same service (diakonia) after the pattern of Christ (Mark 10:43f, John 13:14 ff).

2.3. Within the diakonia, or service, rendered by the whole Church, those ordained as deacons focus in themselves the service demanded of all Christians, just as the ordained priest shows forth the meaning of the priesthood of the whole Church (1 Pet. 2:9).

2.4. Just as the priest represents the priesthood of Christ to the Church and to the world, so too the deacon is a sign of the servanthood of Christ towards the Church and the world.

2.5. Following the example of Stephen (Acts 7) and Philip (Acts 8: 4 - 13 and 26 1 40), the deacon may rightly be seen as having a special evangelistic ministry, again focusing in himself an aspect of ministry which belongs to all Christians.

2.6. The diaconate can, therefore, rightly be seen as a distinct order of ministry in the Church and not simply as a prelude to priesthood.

3. THE HISTORY OF THE DIACONATE AND ITS TRANSFORMATION:

- 3.1. In the New Testament it is clear that 'deacon' is a technical term as well as a general description (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3: 8ff), and Acts 6: 1 - 6 refers to men set apart for a particular role of service in the Church.
- 3.2. In the early centuries of the Church, the deacon had a distinctive ministry, particularly in association with the bishop. For this reason Hippolytus (early third century) says that the bishop alone ordains a deacon, unlike ordination to the priesthood in which other priests share. The practice of the bishop alone being the minister of ordination to the diaconate has persisted until today.
- 3.3. For many centuries the diaconate was seen as a different order from the presbyterate (priesthood) and not as a stepping-stone towards it. Archdeacons were normally only in deacon's orders and often could look forward to ordination direct to the episcopate, as in the case of Athanasius.
- 3.4. By the Middle Ages the hierarchy of ministry had so developed that those to be ordained^a priest (or bishop) had first to be ordained deacon.
- 3.5. At the time of the Reformation, this pattern of ministry was retained in the Church of England and in this way it was followed by the C P S A.

4. THE DIACONATE IN THE CHURCH TODAY

- 4.1. The diaconate displays such an important aspect of the total life of the Church that it requires ordination, by which it is shown to be more than a local or temporary ministry, and through which it receives the authority of the whole Church. In these two respects the position of the deacon is analogous to that of the priest.
- 4.2. In the present situation in Southern Africa, the display of loving concern and service towards the poor and the deprived is particularly needed. By the faithful exercise of this ministry the deacon draws attention to an essential element of the gospel.
- 4.3. It is, therefore, to be expected that men may be called to exercise this ministry without thought of proceeding to the priesthood.
- 4.4. Such ministers may receive a stipend from the Church or may be earning their own income.
- 4.5. In recent years various recommendations have been made in

4.5.1 A paper prepared by Lukas Cischer for the W C C Consultation on the diaconate, 1964:- "The Church is fully justified in expressing the diaconal element in the apostolic ministry by a special ministry. This expression could be found within the structure of the threefold ministry". (The Ministry of Deacons: W C C, 1965: p.27)

4.5.2. Resolution 32 of the Lambeth Conference, 1968:-

"The Conference recommends:

(a) That the diaconate, combining service of others with liturgical functions, be open to

- (i) men and women remaining in secular occupation
- (ii) full-time church workers
- (iii) those selected for the priesthood.

(b) That Ordinals should, where necessary, be revised:

- (i) to take account of the new role envisaged for the diaconate;
- (ii) by the removal of reference to the diaconate as 'an inferior office';
- (iii) by emphasis upon the continuing element of diakonia in the ministry of bishops and priests."

(Two further recommendations follow concerning the position of those who are at present deaconesses).

4.5.3 An Agreed Statement on the Ministry: Faith and Order Paper no. 73 (WCC; 1975):

"In the course of history, the function of diakonia has found expression in the office of deacon and deaconess. For about 20 years now, many churches, independently from one another, have been giving attention to the possible renewal of this office" (p.36).

4.5.4 Anglican Consultative Council (ACC3, Trinidad, 1976): Resolution 10 The Diaconate.

"The Council advises:

(a) that the use of the diaconate as a period of preparation for the priesthood be retained and that every church should review its practice to ensure that this period is one of continued training and further testing of vocation; but that it is not to be regarded as necessarily leading to the priesthood;

(b) that the churches, and particularly the laity, be invited to examine the concept of the diaconate as an Order to which lay people serving the Church, or serving in the name of the Church, could also be admitted, to express and convey the authority of the Church in their service..."

4.5.5 Lambeth conference 1978 (Resolution 20) endorsed the resolution of 1968.

5. WOMEN IN THE DIACONATE

5.1. It is to the distinct order of deacon (the permanent diaconate) that it can be argued that women may be ordained.

5.1.1. Romans 16:1f describes Phoebe as a deacon in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish between her role and that of deacons in Phil.1:1. Similarly I Tim. 3:12 would seem to refer only to male deacons, but the preceding verse, in the Greek, naturally refers to women deacons, though it may refer to the wives of deacons. Commentators agree that it cannot refer to the women of the Church in general.

5.1.2. In the ministry of loving care involved in the diaconate, women would seem to have a particular contribution to make.

5.1.3. The new creation affected by Christ can well be seen as introducing a completely new understanding of the place of women in the service of God's people.

5.1.4. Opinions, recommendations and resolutions (see 4.5) agree that the diaconate be open to women as well as to men.

5.2. Others have submitted arguments against the ordination of women to the diaconate.

5.2.1. The diaconate is one order of the three-fold ordained ministry which in its totality represents the ministry of Christ. Some would, therefore, find it impossible for any but a male to be a true icon, or image of Christ in this ministry.

5.2.2. The tradition of the Church has restricted the ordained ministry, including the diaconate, to men, from the time that a separate order of deaconesses began to emerge (at least from the third century). Those who have reservations about the ordination of women to the diaconate would prefer to retain the title and order of deaconess.

5.2.3. In view of the tradition of the Church, some would think it unwise to ordain women to the diaconate without a wider consensus of the universal Church.

6. FUNCTIONS OF DEACONS

6.1. In the liturgy the serving and evangelistic role of deacons is expressed in several ways:-

6.1.1. In the eucharist:-

6.1.1.1 The deacon reads the gospel.

- 6.1.1.2 He leads the prayers of intercession.
- 6.1.1.3 He receives the offerings of the people and prepares the Holy Table.
- 6.1.1.4 He assists in the ministration of the Holy Communion.
- 6.1.1.5 He distributes the sacrament of Holy Communion to the sick.
- 6.1.1.6 At the Easter Vigil he carries the Paschal Candle and sings the Exultet.

- 6.1.2. At other services of the Church:-
 - 6.1.2.1 The deacon assists the bishop or priest.
 - 6.1.2.2 In the absence of the priest, the deacon has responsibility for ordering the worship of the congregation.
 - 6.1.2.3 In the absence of the priest he may baptize.
 - 6.1.2.4 With the permission of the bishop he may preach.
 - 6.1.2.5 He may officiate at the burial of the dead.

- 6.2. Outside the liturgy the deacon has a primary concern for the whole caring ministry of the local congregation towards those who are in need.

7. TRAINING FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

- 7.1 All those who are to be ordained to the diaconate as a distinct order without any intention of proceeding to the priesthood need to be well versed in the understanding of the gospel and the teaching of the Church, and the meaning of its liturgy, and to be made aware of social issues of the communities, both local and wider, in which they are to minister.
 - 7.1.1 In the case of stipendiary deacons ("full-time church workers" - Lambeth 1968) the training should involve a full-time course of study at theological college or university or both
 - 7.1.2 In the case of deacons who remain in secular employment a course of training should be followed through TEEC or UNISA or both.
 - 7.1.3 Guidelines for determining the nature and length of the training required for each candidate need to be drawn up by Episcopal Synod in consultation with the Department of Theological Education.

8. MATTERS NEEDING FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- 8.1 Although the diaconate is not to be considered an "inferior order" to the priesthood, the recommendation of Lambeth 1968 that the diaconate be retained for those who are to proceed

to the priesthood should be followed.

- 8.1.1 The length and nature of such form of diaconate need to be considered by the bishops (e.g. Should a man be ordained deacon while still at theological college? In what ways does the diaconate represent the final stage in a man's preparation for priesthood?).
- 8.2 In view of the distinction between the orders and functions of the priest and the deacon, it does not necessarily follow that the stipend-scale of a deacon - and especially of a permanent deacon - should be inferior to that of a priest.
- 8.3 In view of the diversity of gifts and talents which God gives to men and women, criteria need to be established for determining which gifts can be best used in the diaconate, and how men and women should be selected for training for the diaconate.
- 8.4 Guidelines will be needed to determine the procedure to be followed when a permanent deacon is recommended to proceed to ordination to the priesthood.
- 8.5 Guidelines will be needed to establish the conditions on which a person ordained deacon while remaining in secular occupation may become a full-time stipendiary deacon.

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THE DIACONATE-HISTORICAL NOTE

C INTRODUCTION:

Since the early church's understanding of the work of the deacon developed from the New Testament, it is necessary to make one or two observations concerning the deacon in the New Testament. First the New Testament links liturgia, which is service to God with diakonia, service to ones fellow Christians.

The underlying belief being that these two forms of service were manifest in the life and work of Christ. The deacon therefore had a significant role in the worship of the local church. He preached and distributed bread and wine. This liturgical function he combined with the work of charity, for the service for which he had been primarily ordained. In the eyes of the New Testament writers Liturgia and Diakonia were inseparable. Secondly, in his role he was not an official occupying a social status. He was a minister entrusted with an important task, and performed his duties among equally important ministers of the mysteries of God, that is Apostles, Teachers and Prophets. In the new Testament he is subordinate to the apostle, or the bishop. But his ministry was not an inferior one, there was no rigid hierarchical order in the New Testament times. Rather, we see a pattern of different ministries and orders.

2 THE EARLY CHURCH

The pattern found in the New Testament continues at the beginning of the Second Century. But we witness a gradual transformation, until the three-fold ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons becomes the accepted order. About AD 115, however, we learn from Ignatius that the deacon, like the bishop and presbyter belongs to the altar. He still combined liturgical and welfare functions. He cared for widows and orphans and visited the faithful, reporting their needs to the bishop. The requirement to inform the bishop shows that he was subordinate to him. But Ignatius insisted that the deacon was "subject to the bishop as to the grace of God and to the presbyterium as to the law of Christ". In other words he was not a lesser official serving human lords, he is still seen as someone who in his own right carries out an important function in Christ's redemptive work.

With the 3rd century the picture changes, the fluidity of ministries found in the New Testament hardened into the three-fold hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons. So far as the diaconate was concerned, emphasis came to be laid not on the deacons' work but on his status. He now was a subordinate member of a fixed order. We read in Hippolyth's "The tradition of the Apostles" that when a deacon is ordained "the bishop alone lays on hands, for the deacon is not ordained to the priesthood but to the bishop's service, to do what the latter tells him". His ministry is to be the bishop's helper. From Syria we have a document - the Didascalia - which records church order in that region. Here too the deacon is first of all a bishop's servant. The bishop is an administrator and the deacon his executive. In fact, according to

the Didascalia the bishop is so supreme that the laity have no access to him save through the deacon, who then becomes a liaison officer.

The subordination of the deacon was brought into sharp focus by the Synod of Arles in AD 314. This Synod ruled that the deacon was subordinate to the presbyter as well: "the deacon should not be arrogant, he should honour the priest and do nothing without his knowledge". The reasons for this might have been many and varied, one thing seems clear, it is the importance of the diaconate that contributed to this state of affairs. Both bishops and especially the presbyters, might have felt threatened by the deacon's significant role. The picture did not change until the Middle Ages when the deacon's role was considerably attenuated. In many places during this period the number of deacons was limited to seven.

3 THE MIDDLE AGES

As already pointed out, the influence of the deacon declined in the Middle Ages. His functions were restricted to the liturgy, and the diaconate eventually became a stepping stone to the priesthood. This decline in importance is surprising because according to Kenneth Scott Latourette in the period 950 - 1350 Monasticism and several other movements strove to revive Christianity in Europe. 1350 - 1500 saw a decline in Christianity, but 1500 - 1760 there was again a great awakening in Christendom, due to the Protestant Reformation. Calvin in particular tried to revive the diaconate.

4 THE REFORMATION AND AFTER

The Reformers aimed at rediscovering the New Testament ministries, thus the diaconate as reformed had a social thrust. Calvin for instance had two types of deacons, those who administered the alms and those who cared for the poor and the sick.

As in the Middle Ages, the Anglican and the Roman Catholic deacon has become a stepping stone to the priesthood. Thus while Protestant churches have emphasised the social welfare functions of a deacon, overlooking his liturgical functions, the Anglicans and Roman Catholics have tended to restrict the deacon to curtailed liturgical functions, and have deprived him of social welfare duties. A similar situation is seen in the churches of the East, the deacon features only in the Church's liturgy.

5 THE PRESENT SITUATION

5.1 Roman Catholic Church

5.1.1 Deacons in the Roman Catholic Church

5.1.2 From the Middle Ages until the Second Vatican Council, the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church was regarded as simply

a stage on the road to the priesthood. Indeed the Codex Iuris Canonici (Con 973) only allowed the bishops to confer the order on those who go on to the priesthood.

- 5.1.3 The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the essential features of the diaconate in accordance with tradition, widened the range of liturgical functions proper to the deacon, and agreed in principle to the restoration of the diaconate as a separate and permanent rank in the hierarchy of the Latin Church. It also permitted married men of mature years to be ordained. The implementation of these reforms was left to the decision of each episcopal conference.
- 5.1.4 The South African hierarchy did not delay in giving its approval, but only the dioceses of Pietersburg and Kroonstad began training candidates immediately, followed later by Pretoria and other.
- 5.1.5 In these areas, there were several reasons for enthusiasm:
- 1 The structures of the church were basically 'colonial' heavily dependent on overseas sources for finances and personnel. The diaconate seemed able to tap an indigenous source of manpower.
 - 2 Rapid church growth (up to 8½% a year) required an equally rapid expansion of ministries.
 - 3 Spontaneous leadership already existed in rural outstations, and could be recognised and developed.
 - 4 The closing of many church schools through Bantu Education meant that the Church had to explore alternative avenues of evangelisation. The diaconate seemed to offer one such alternative.
 - 5 Where priests were celibate, married deacons could offer a powerful witness to the values of Christian marriage, especially in African culture where celibacy is hardly valued.
 - 6 Perhaps the most attractive aspect of the diaconate was its flexibility. No patterns existed to which it must be made to conform. Minimal Canon Law was attached to the Order. Many forms of the diaconate could be developed, all pastorally valid.
- 5.1.6 Two other developments went hand-in-hand with the development of the diaconate. These were the establishment of lay ministers and the commitment of the bishops to the development of Basic Christian Communities - "The Diaconate, the Ministries and the Basic Christian Communities are not separate institutions, but simply three aspects of a surging current in the Church. In creating one, the need for the others is discovered." (Report of Commission for Ministries, Archdiocese of

Pretoria, November 1980).

5.1.7 Training

While the Roman documents envisage 3 year training courses in special colleges, it has not been possible to establish these in South Africa. In-Service training using extension methods is used, with resources developed by T.E.E.C. and the Lumko Missiological Institute being widely used.

5.1.8 Present Position

In South Africa, at least, most deacons are self-supporting. Each diocese makes its own decisions about whether to have deacons, and also makes its own arrangements for training

The duties of deacons include assisting the bishop and priest: the liturgy as specified in liturgical books, and carrying out works of charity and administration, and doing works of social welfare in the name of the Hierarchy.

5.2 The Orthodox Churches

Historical

In the Orthodox Churches, over the centuries, the ministry of deacons has tended to become increasingly liturgical, with the social ministry falling away. Generally this is seen as partly due to the fact that for many centuries Orthodoxy has been a minority faith in most countries where it has flourished, either under Muslim rule, or under Communist regimes. The only long-standing exception to this was Tsarist Russia, where in the 19th century deacons were re-established as part of the normal parish ministry for each church having more than 700 souls¹. They were made responsible for religious education and for education in the public schools - which seems analogous to the Anglican requirement that deacons should "instruct the youth in the catechism".

At present the majority of Orthodox live in a society where social activity on the part of the Church is strictly forbidden. The deacons role in its liturgical aspect has been absorbed by the priest on the one hand, and in its social aspect by the laity on the other. In earlier ages, however, it was considered that the diaconate was a direct and personal means of charity for the Christians, and this activity was kept by the diaconate in close relation with the liturgy.

Liturgical

More than most episcopal churches, the diaconate has been retained in its liturgical function in the Orthodox Churches.

1 WCC Report "The Ministry of Deacons" p.43.

At least in the rubrics, the deacon has a prominent function in all liturgical services, though the Euchologion (the book which regulates the celebration of the various offices) provides that in the absence of a deacon the parts assigned to him are to be said by a priest. He calls on the celebrant to begin the Eucharist, and leads litanies or antiphonal prayers, and generally acts as a "master of ceremonies".

Social

In the Orthodox diaspora in Western Europe, at least, there has been in recent years a revival of the social functions of the deacons. The priest is seen as the elder, who presides at the eucharist, who preaches, and is a spiritual father, who "conducts the parish symphony", while the deacon's liturgical functions are seen as flowing out naturally into practical responsibilities at the local level, depending on the charisms of the individual deacon and the needs of the parish - "it may be social service, secretaryship and administration, catechism, who knows what else?"²

Present Position

In the Orthodox Churches of Western Europe most deacons (and priests, for that matter) are self-supporting. Deacons follow a period of theological study. In France, some deacons and priests are ordained without any specific theological education, but simply are trained through their experience as lay members of the parish. Theological Education by Extension is used, and some of those who have studied in this way are ordained, but many are not. Some deacons are trained at residential institutions like Institute of St Sergius in Paris or St Vladimir's in New York.

Women in the Diaconate

The Orthodox Churches do not ordain women as lectors, sub-deacons, deacons, priests or bishops. Fr Alexander Schmemmann, a well-known theologian, speaks of the ordination of women to the priesthood as 'a radical and irreparable mutilation of the entire faith, the rejection of the whole cripture, and needless to say, the end of all "dialogues"³ There is, however, an order of deaconesses, and there is considerably more openness among some Orthodox theologians towards regarding this as an ordained, and not a lay ministry. The liturgical rite for laying on of hands is parallel to that of deacons, and implies that deaconesses receive, as do deacons, a genuine sacramental ordination not just a cheirothesia but a cheirotonia. It appears that in the Coptic Church of Egypt there is an ordained order of deaconesses.⁴

2 Letter sent to the Commission by Fr Jean Echekan of Courbevoie, France 1981 02 14

3 Quoted by Kallistos Ware in an article "Man Woman and the Priesthood of Christ"

4 Ibid

5.3 THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

5.3.1 The Reformer, John Calvin, settled for four spiritual offices in the Church.

- (a) Pastor-preacher (as 'elder' for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament);
- (b) elders - concerned with Church discipline;
- (c) deacons - for the care of the poor;
- (d) doctors - for teaching

Calvin recognised two classes of deacons:

- 1 Those who administered the alms;
- 2 Those who cared for the poor and sick.

5.3.2 According to Prof. J du Preez (Theological Faculty - Dutch Reformed Church Pretoria) the apostolic office eventually took shape in four following offices:

- 1 Elder - supervision and discipline in the congregation;
- 2 minister - apostolic tasks of preaching
- 3 deacon - apostolic task of compassionate service
- 4 missionary - apostolic task of proclaiming the Gospel to non-believers.

5.3.3 Deacons

These men are to be leaders in the compassionate service in the congregation. The service in the congregation takes place under the leadership of the deacon.

5.3.4 Elders and Deacons are elected by the elders and can be re-elected annually. The elders do pastoral visiting, together with the minister. The deacons collect contributions from the congregation; visit the members, serve at the tables with Holy Communion. Elders are usually senior men; deacons are junior men.

~~4~~ In the Pentecostal Churches

5.4. The Lutheran Church

5.4.1 Among the Lutherans in Germany the word deacon is generally applied to assistant minister-pastor, though fully ordained, ministers who aid the minister-in-charge of a particular parish; however, it is also used in certain localities for lay helpers who take part in the work of instruction, finance, district-visiting, and relieving distress.

5.4.2 In the German Democratic Republic, the Church is struggling to

maintain her identity, yet it is reported that there is a 15,000 staff of the (D D B) German Dem. Republic Churches engaged in deaconal service, after having been trained for a wide range of ministries. One of the key areas of service is in the 273 rest homes and homes for the aged run by the service.

- 5.4.3 The Protestant Churches in East Germany have training courses for the different kinds of deaconal work. Staff are trained in more than 50 centres, including six brotherhood houses.

5.5 The Methodist Church

There are no deacons in the Methodist Church.

5.6 Pentecostal Churches

In its early years Pentecostalism regarded church organisation as stifling and resisting the Spirit. (cf p.424 the Pentecostals Hollenweger. SCM press). The ministry of the church is exercised by all its members. Most Pentecostal churches which have existed for some time have pastors accepted orders of ministers usually apostles, elders and deacons. The church constitutions tend to be similar to the presbyterian and congregationalist patterns.

The deacons are chosen by the elders. In some cases, such as the Assemblies of God they are then commended to the prayers of the congregation who decide on their suitability. Should they prove suitable they are ordained by the elders and members of the Assembly. Their main task seems to be similar to that of sidesmen in the Anglican Church with the additional function of keeping in touch with members of the Assembly allocated to them. In a few Assemblies there are full-time deacons or deaconesses who do maintenance and welfare work.

Pentecostal churches are generally opposed to admitting women to the diaconate.

5.7 The Present Situation in the C P S A

5.7.1 The Ordinal

The Preface to the Ordinal on page 677 of the S A P B says:

"It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests and Deacons."

and later on refers to "the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of this Province."

What the Preface states is that in order that these orders may be continued, used and esteemed, nobody may exercise these ministries unless they have been called, tried, examined and

admitted to them in the form laid down in the Ordinal, or have formerly been episcopally ordained and consecrated.

The Preface, therefore, has little to say about the nature of the Orders themselves, but is more concerned with regulating admission to the orders. What can be assumed, however, is that the intention is that these Orders, including those of a deacon, should be exercised in a manner consistent with what is written in "Holy Scripture and Ancient Authors".

The Ordinal itself prescribes that, on the day of the Ordination, after Morning Prayer, there should be a "Sermon or Exhortation, declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted Deacons; how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ, and how the people ought to esteem them in their office."

It appears, however, to be customary in most dioceses to ordain priests and deacons on the same day, and therefore this rubric is rarely observed in practice, the Sermon or Exhortation usually being on ministry in general.

The Collect in the Ordinal specifically likens the present-day office of deacon to that of St Stephen and the others referred to in Acts 6:1-6, which is indeed the alternative Epistle reading at the ordination service (the other being from I Timothy 3, which describes the qualifications for ordination of deacons).

The Bishop, in examining the candidates, then asks them if they will gladly and willingly perform the duties pertaining to their office, and the following are specifically mentioned:

- assisting the priest in Divine Service
- assisting at the Holy Communion, and especially with the distribution of the communion
- reading the Scriptures in Church
- instructing the youth in the catechism
- baptizing infants in the absence of the priest
- preaching, if licensed by the Bishop to do so
- so search for the sick, poor and impotent people of the parish, and informing the curate, so that they can be relieved by the alms of parishioners or others,

The only comment to be made about these is that restricting the deacon to baptizing infants is unscriptural (Acts 8.38) Most of the other activities can be found in Holy Scripture or the Ancient Authors, or can be derived by extension from them.

Ministry Performed	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
(a) Reading the Gospel at the Eucharist	23	1	4	0
(b) Preparing vessels at the altar during the Eucharist and supervising lay ministers and servers etc.	20	0	3	7
(c) Administering Holy Communion during the Eucharist	26	1	1	0
(d) Giving instructions to the congregation eg As Christ has taught us we are bold to say, Draw near and receive etc.	17	3	3	6
(e) Physical ministry to sick: running errands, care of children etc.	9	4	2	13
(f) Individual ministry to the poor and oppressed spiritual (eg prayer and counselling) and physical (eg relief work etc)	5	6	2	15
(g) Communal ministry to poor and oppressed: eg 'conscientization', community development, etc.	4	5	4	14
(h) leading baptism and confirmation classes 'instructing the youth in the catechism'	11	7	3	6

Immediately after the ordination, the Bishop hands the newly-ordained deacon a New Testament, and authorizes him to read the Gospel in the Church, and to preach, if licensed by the Bishop.

At the end of the Ordinal is a rubric which says that it must be declared to the deacon that he should continue in that office for a year, and that if he is found faithful and diligent in his ministry, he may be admitted by his diocesan to the Order of Priesthood.

While it is not mandatory for a deacon to be admitted to the priesthood, there is an implication that if a deacon remains in that office for longer than a year, he has in some way not been found faithful and diligent in his ministry. The Commission will recommend that this rubric be amended.

There is, however, nothing in the present Ordinal to prevent a restoration of the diaconate, and all that is required is for its provisions to be taken more seriously and observed more closely.

It is perhaps worthy of note that it is not assumed that every deacon will be gifted or trained in preaching, though those who have that gift may be licensed to preach by the Bishop. This again accords with Acts 6 ff, where two of the Seven are mentioned as preachers, whereas the others are not mentioned in this connection. It perhaps needs to be stressed that a deacon need not expect to, or be expected to preach.

5.7.2 Current Practice

Some of the current practice in the C P S A regarding ordination services has already been referred to in Section 4.5.1 above.

The Commission also sent questionnaires to deacons, and to priests who had deacons in their parishes, to ask them what they actually did. Thirty deacons, and twenty priests with deacons in their parishes replied to the questionnaires.

A large number of activities was included in the questionnaire, and a summary of the findings is included in the appendix to this report. For the purpose of this section, we shall note four of the 'characteristic' liturgical ministries, and four of the characteristic pastoral ministries of a deacon. There are many other ministries which deacons are involved in, which are not characteristic ministries, and other members of the church are also engaged in them.

In the table below will be indicated the ministry, and then the number of deacons who said they performed that activity frequently, occasionally, rarely or never.

In current practice, therefore, there seems to be a heavier emphasis on the liturgical ministry of deacons, but even there, it is to be noted that some deacons rarely or never performed the liturgical functions proper to their office, and these expressed considerable frustration over this. Some indeed said that they were only able to exercise these ministries when they were invited to parishes other than the ones where they were licensed.

The majority of deacons who responded reported that they saw their vocation as ultimately leading to the priesthood, and this would explain the emphasis given to the liturgical ministries, and the neglect of the pastoral ministries.

A few of the deacons said that either they did not consider that they were called to the priesthood, or that they did not think that they were called to the priesthood at the present time. Some of these were involved in the pastoral aspects of a deacon's ministry through work with secular welfare or development organizations or educational work.

The assumption in most of the training institutions is that those in training for the ordained ministry are being trained to be priests, and little training is given in the characteristic ministries of a deacon, although in one of the theological colleges this is done at least in the case of the liturgical ministries.

It is well-known that a deacon is popularly assumed to be an apprentice priest, and this assumption has an effect on the ministry of deacons. Most of the deacons we have at present, therefore, are ill-equipped for the task of ministry to the suffering and needy. Also, most of the deacons are placed in parishes where there are relatively few suffering and needy to be ministered to.

5.8 Summary and Conclusions

The present situation in the C P S A therefore is that the ordinal generally permits and encourages a New Testament pattern for the ministry of deacons (with the few exceptions noted above), but that in practice deacons are not equipped to minister to the suffering and needy, and are very often not placed in parishes which give them an opportunity to do so. Parishes where there are many suffering and needy people very often lack trained deacons.

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D. THE NEED FOR A RESTORATION OF THE DIACONATE

1 Partners in Mission Consultation - May 1980

This Commission received its mandate from Provincial Standing Committee in response to the Partners in Mission Consultation held in Johannesburg in May/June 1980. The report of the Consultation states:

"The fact that apartheid society creates so many areas of social need raises the question of reforming the diaconate so as to restore it to its original function of ministry to the suffering and needy"

The kind of ministry to the suffering that is envisaged by the PIM Consultation is spelt out in some detail in the PIM report, and includes, inter alia, the following (quoted from the Report, with page numbers indicated in brackets):

x immediate and long-term planning to alleviate the suffering of the resettled, including:

- strengthening of resistant communities
- development projects
- decreasing dependency
- teaching in preparation for the new society
- continuing work of mercy
- having the causes of suffering removed (PIM Report p.7)

x demonstrating the necessity for the redistribution of power and wealth which accumulates at the centre of the economy, especially in development and transport. This includes "men and women of talent" being called to "sacrificial service in the deprived peripheral areas."

x presenting to the authorities proposals which would seek to prove that it is possible in planning to give priority to Christian values in development and dignity.

x non-violent action

x monitoring the impact on society of corporations

x setting up crisis teams of laity and clergy to set up people in acute need (eg the resettled, and those who are banned, detained etc)

x a Provincial resource person skilled in ministry to victims of apartheid society (in resettlement areas, migrant hostels, industry and workers etc) (p 10)

2 The Need for a Diaconal Ministry in Church and Society

- 2.1 It is important that any proposed restoration of the diaconate as such should be seen in the setting of the total ministry of the Church. Before the Church can begin to function in any significant way in ministry to the suffering and oppressed, it must experience the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, without which any such action will be simply "dead works". There is little point in restoring one ministry in the Church if most of the other ministries remain dormant. Thus a restoration of the diaconate should be seen as one aspect of a total renewal of the Church as the Body of Christ.

In Section E of this report, the relationship between the diaconate and other ministries will be dealt with in more detail. At this stage we merely wish to stress that this Commission believes that, important as the restoration of the diaconate is, it must not be seen in isolation from the renewal of the whole Church and all its members in commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, commitment to serve one another as fellow-members of the Body of Christ, and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world in word and deed.

At present it would appear that there is a division between those who see social action as an integral part of the ministry of the church, and those who see it as worldly and 'unspiritual', or, at best, something which is all right for those who like that kind of thing, but not really the concern of the whole Body of Christ.

There is thus a tendency towards a cleavage between social action and evangelism in the life of the church. In some cases those who see an urgent need for one of these ministries tend to belittle those who stress the other. This cleavage appears to have arisen with the decline of the diaconate though it is probably not possible to prove that one was the cause of the other.

In the New Testament the model for the diaconate is seen in the ministry of the Seven in Acts chapter 6, and it is quite clear that, apart from serving at tables, at least two of the Seven were active evangelists as well. For them, at least, service and proclamation went together. The current cleavage was not apparent then, and in the traditional liturgical ministry of the deacon this is symbolized and set forth in the deacon reading the Gospel at the Eucharist, and also setting out the vessels at the offertory, and performing the ablutions after communion.

- 2.2 A restoration of the diaconate, therefore, would be a recognition that social concern is a proper part of the ministry of the Church, and that certain persons, with the grace of Holy Orders, are especially set aside to stimulate, co-ordinate and encourage such work.

This need in no way detract from the ministry of the laity. If

the church is sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, there will always be men and women raised up by God for a ministry of service to the poor and oppressed who will not necessarily be called to the ordained ministry. However, having deacons who are set apart to order and encourage such work would greatly help those who are already involved in it, as well as making it apparent to those who see such ministry as 'unspiritual' that it is an integral and recognized part of the ministry of the Church as the Body of Christ:

- 2.3 In poor parishes, especially in the rural areas, the work of diakonia is much neglected. The priest who serves many rural congregations sees on the one hand the need to encourage people to give to the church (at its best, as an expression of Christian stewardship and tithing, but all too often because the diocesan assessment needs to be paid) and on the other hand, the fact that many people in the parish are a lot worse off than the priest himself, who at least had his stipend paid, and is not depending on crops which have failed because of drought. Instead of asking the people for money, the sensitive priest may feel that it should be the other way round - he should be distributing it. This would, however, only increase dependency. In such a situation, deacons could "search for the sick, poor and impotent people of the parish" and then "intimate their names, estates and places where they dwell unto the curate" so that by his exhortation they may be relieved by the alms of parishioners, or others.

By seeking aid first among the parishioners, and only afterwards from others (presumably outside the parish) dependency is not increased, but rather the members of the Body are encouraged to care for each other, and so the Body builds itself up in love. There have been instances, too numerous to cite, of aid from outside the parish being distributed by the priest, who does not know those to whom he is distributing it, with the result that there are many widows who are neglected in the distribution. This kind of ministry does not just happen. It needs the power of the Spirit moving among the people to persuade them of their need for Christ, to build them into a community which cares for its members, and then that caring needs to be developed, ordered and channelled along the lines suggested in Acts 6. If it is to be effective, the priests cannot do it, without neglecting their own distinctive ministry. It needs men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, specially set aside for that task of diakonia - and the personal noun of diakonia is deacon.

- 2.4 The question has been raised as to whether the diaconate should be seen as ministry to those within the Church, or whether it should also extend to those outside it.

In the New Testament it appears that the diaconal ministry was to the poor within the Christian fellowship. However at a very

early stage the care of Christians began to extend to the pagan poor as well, and this was well established by the 3rd century. The last pagan Roman emperor, Julian the Apostate, could complain that 'the godless Galileans feed not only their own (poor) but ours also'. A concern which the pagan cults he had tried to revive had failed to show.

In this, St Paul's injunction "while we have the chance, we must do good to all, and especially to our brothers in the faith" (Gal 6.10) seems to be an appropriate guide. The love of Christians for one another, which receives its practical expression in diakonia, and which is the mark of true discipleship, should also overflow into the world, and to those outside the Christian fellowship.

It is therefore quite legitimate to consider the diaconate in relation to the needs of secular society, and not simply in relation to the Christian community. The report of the Partners in Mission Consultation has highlighted some of the needs in South African society, which make the deficiencies in our present practice of the diaconate stand out. It would, however, not be a sufficient justification for a restoration of the diaconate standing on its own. The diaconate in the Anglican communion is part of the ordained ministry, and as a ministry of order expresses part of the structure of the Church. The only real justification for restoring the diaconate is that it is essential to the life of the church, and not as a temporary expedient to cope with the particular needs of the present.

2.5 The diaconate is concerned with the poor, and so the issue of poverty and wealth needs to be examined Biblically. We live in an age in which two ideological systems are preaching that men must be slaves to principalities and powers in the economic realm. The ideologies of Marxism and Free Enterprise are both saying this in different ways, whether the name of the deity is "the free rein of the market mechanism" or "the dialectical forces of history"

2.6 The whole Church is to have the ministry of Christ who came as a servant, and diakonia is to be characteristic of the ministry of the whole church. There is far more scriptural authority for speaking of a diakonia of all believers than there is for speaking for a priesthood (presbyterate) of all believers. (see Mark 10.35-45; John 13.2-16 etc)

Thus the diakonia of the Church is not exercised only by the deacons, but by the whole body. It is the task of the deacons to order and encourage the ministry of diakonia. The ministries of service are many and varied (I Cor 12.4) and therefore deacons should be called upon to exercise a wide variety of ministries, especially in the economic sphere.

2.7 The needs for which a restored diaconate is envisaged cannot be adequately met by deacons who are inexperienced and not trained for their work. Yet at present, as we have seen, the majority of deacons in the C P S A feel called to the priesthood rather than the diaconate, and see the diaconate merely as a temporary stage in their progress to the ministry to which they believe God has called them. Thus the deacons we have are not experienced, and not, generally speaking, trained for a diaconal ministry. The diaconate needs to be seen as a distinctive vocation, and there would need to be a permanent diaconate. This is not the same as 'permanent deacons' - we do not speak of permanent priests, and there should be no need to speak of permanent deacons. Ignatius of Antioch said 'without these three orders no church has any right to the name'. We should see that a diocese without deacons is as deficient in its ministry as a diocese without a bishop, and that there is a 'vacancy' in such a see.

2.8 If the diaconate is seen as a distinctive ministry, then there would also need to be a distinctive training. Because of the variety of the needs, this training should be flexible, and perhaps geared to many different aspects of the diaconate. Because the diaconate has been neglected for so long, it is, in fact, a very flexible ministry, and people in parishes have very few expectations of what a deacons ministry is to be. This means that it would be possible for deacons in one parish or diocese to exercise their ministry in a very different way from those in another. Because of the variety of needs, uniformity in training or the pattern of the diaconate would not be desirable.

3 SOME PARTICULAR NEEDS

3.1 The Rift between Social Action and Evangelism

This has already been mentioned. The Seven referred to in Acts 6 were appointed to serve tables, but they also evangelised. Evangelism as such is an apostolic ministry, and therefore it would not necessarily be the task of deacons to organize evangelistic work, but deacons should most certainly participate in this.

3.2 Those performing diaconal ministries needing recognition and support

In Southern Africa, as in other places, people who minister to the poor and oppressed are likely to find themselves oppressed by the rich and powerful. When Christians are engaged in such a ministry, and the Church recognizes such a call, then such people should be ordained. In this way, the Church proclaims that the so-called political activities of such Christians do not arise out of a personal idiosyncrasy, but out of a calling

from God, recognized officially by the church, and part of its ordained ministry. Not all people involved in the diaconal ministry are called to be ordained as deacons, but the ordination of those who are called, to work alongside lay people in such ministries is a sign and symbol of the fact that this is the ministry of the Body of Christ. It signifies a greater commitment on the part of the Church as a whole to this ministry, and to those involved in it, so that when they are called upon to suffer for their witness of Christ, they have the visible support of the rest of the Body. (I Cor 12.6)

3.3 Investments

The Partners in Mission Consultation called for a monitoring of the impact on society of corporations, and referred to what has been done in other countries by Christians.

In the early Church, deacons often performed the work now done by church treasurers (in churches of the congregational pattern, this is the distinctive work of deacons.) Deacons, trained in economics, accountancy and similar disciplines, as well as in theology, could perform a very important ministry in this regard. Many dioceses do not have people trained in financial disciplines, and so they employ commercial firms of investment advisers to invest funds belonging to the Diocesan Trusts Board (which usually has many Archdeacons on it). The commercial firms thus employed may, or may not be run by Christians, and so the probability is that they will invest these funds as worldly wisdom dictates, and not as guided by the Spirit of God. The Church, in effect, abdicates its responsibility. The world's wisdom seeks the highest return consistent with a safe investment, without inquiring too closely into how that return is obtained.

If, as in the Orthodox Churches, the Archdeacons were Arch Deacons (ie in deacon's and not priests orders) trained in theology and economics, they could themselves see to the investment of the Church's funds, and perform the task of monitoring corporations. This is a distinctive ministry, and it is not adequately performed by having priests whose ministry is primarily pastoral, and laymen whose expertise is entirely financial, trying to work together on a board when neither is trained enough to grasp the full implications of the task.

If the trust funds are seen as an economic base on which to support the 'real' work of the church, and therefore adequately dealt with on the basis of the safest investment with the highest return, then the so-called 'real' work is parasitic, and the Church deserves all the strictures which the Marxists have bestowed upon it - and will have abdicated from the task of being an image of Christ, the true man, the economos of creation.

3.4 Institutions

Much of the diaconal work of the Church has been carried out in institutions. The church has founded orphanages, hospitals, clinics, and in more recent times, ecumenical development agencies. In some cases this work is also done by Government bodies; and it is now seen as a burden which the church should shed. The church, where it has not already abdicated, would like to do so. The diaconate is seen as superfluous, because the functions of the diaconate have been taken over by the state. The State is now seen by many Christians as solely responsible for "religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father" (James 1.27)

But where church orphanages or hospitals exist, would it not be better to have those administering them in deacon's orders? As a sign that the Church is not abdicating, as a sign that such a ministry is still seen as an essential part of the Body of Christ, without which the Church cannot be the Church. To be warden of an orphanage or a church hospital requires more than worldly wisdom, or a degree in administration or social work. It requires the grace of the Holy Spirit, in order that it may be seen that this is the diaconal work of the church.

3.5 The Church's Responsibility for Welfare etc.

The State pays old age pensions, unemployment insurance, and many private bodies offer medical aid schemes, life insurance and other services which obviate the need for much of the work undertaken by deacons in the early church. Many people are unable to make use of the kind of services mentioned, and some Christians have recently been engaged in a diaconal ministry of taking legal action against Government Departments to force them to pay pensions to which people are entitled, but which they do not receive. Helping people to overcome the bureaucratic obstacles, as well as fraud and corruption, is a diaconal ministry which is very much needed. The work of a deacon in a computerised welfare bureaucracy may be different from what it was in New Testament times, but it is just as much needed.

4 FRUSTRATIONS EXPERIENCED BY DEACONS

Those at present in deacon's orders have sometimes expressed frustration at their ministry not being understood, or not being allowed to exercise their ministry by priests who do not understand the ministry of deacons. This is dealt with more fully in other parts of this report. It is mentioned here as part of the need for a restoration of the diaconate in order that deacons can do what they were ordained to do, and so fulfil their ministry.

5 OBSTACLES STANDING IN THE WAY OF A RESTORATION OF THE DIACONATE

5.1 There are, aspects of the Canons and Rubrics and other regulations, which, while not preventing, at least serve to discourage deacons from a full exercise of their ministry.

5.1.1 The rubric at the end of the service of making of deacons seems to imply that a deacon who remains in deacons orders longer than a year has not been found faithful and diligent in his ministry. This rubric does not oblige the Bishop to ordain deacons as priests after a year - it is permissive rather than obligatory.

5.1.2 In most dioceses, increments for stipendiary clergy are calculated from the date of ordination to the priesthood, and no increments are given to deacons, however long they may have served. There is thus a financial incentive not to remain a deacon longer than a year. If the diaconate is to be restored, therefore, it would be desirable for increments to be calculated from the date of ordination to the diaconate.

5.2 The main obstacles, however are not in the Canons and Rubrics, but simply in the neglect of this ministry. Little teaching is given on the need for this ministry, and many of those ordained to it are often not encouraged to exercise it - indeed, as we have seen, they are often actively discouraged from exercising it.

5.3 Therefore, there are four possible courses of action:-

5.3.1 Say that the diaconate is obsolete and abolish it. This would require alterations to the preface to the Ordinal, the removal of the service of Making of Deacons from the Ordinal, and the deletion of references to deacons in the Rubrics and Canons.

5.3.2 Do nothing. Individual dioceses could restore the diaconate as they see fit, as there is nothing to prevent them from doing so.

5.3.3 Remove the discouraging factors from Canons and Rubrics, such as those mentioned in 5.1

5.3.4 Take positive action to restore the diaconate, which would mean not only removing the negative references in Canons and Rubrics, but also actively encouraging vocations to a permanent diaconate. It would also require teaching on the diaconate at all levels of the Church, Provincial, Diocesan and Parochial. The Department of Theological Education should be asked to consider ways of training deacons for all aspects of their ministry. It might also be desirable for the life of the present Commission on the Diaconate to be extended, or for another such body to be established, to monitor progress.

E. PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES IN REFORMING THE DIACONATE

1. CURRENT ATTITUDES WITHIN THE CPSA TO THE DIACONATE AND POSSIBILITY OF REFORM

1.1 Current attitudes were assessed mainly through inviting members of the Church to submit material to the Commission. Questionnaires were also sent to clergy and some laity, to find what they thought deacons ought to do. In analysing the replies, a distinction has been made between what deacons actually do, and what members of the Church think deacons ought to do. A more detailed analysis of the questionnaires is given to Appendix A.

1.2 Four main attitudes to the diaconate can be distinguished.

1.2.1 Traditional

This attitude seemed to be found at the high Church end of the spectrum. Priests who take this view generally welcome the deacon's ministry, and particularly his liturgical ministry at High Mass. Deacons in parishes where there is a regular High Mass seemed more secure in their ministry, and to feel that they were exercising a real ministry, rather than simply filling in time before they were ordained as priests. In this group, however, the diaconate is valued mainly as a tradition handed down from the past, and there was little thought of deacons breaking new ground in ministry. The diaconate is valued as a sign of 'valid orders', and is seen as the validation of the church, rather than the Church giving authority to the ministry of the deacon.

1.2.2 Status Quo

This is the attitude that sees the deacon primarily as an apprentice priest. The concept of apprenticeship was sometimes valued, and sometimes denigrated, generally depending on the respondent's own experience of the diaconate. Some who did not see the diaconate as being of any value in itself saw it as a possible means to a different end: some saw it as a useful means of preventing women being ordained to the priesthood, while others saw the possibility of women deacons as a threat - the thin end of the wedge. Others, in favour of the ordination of women to the priesthood, saw the diaconate again as either valuable as a lever, or worthless as an obstacle, to the ordination of women to the priesthood. As one respondent put it: "I dislike the idea of women deacons - as it is a form of sidestepping the ordination of women - 'perpetual' deacons."

1.2.3 Abolitionist

This is the attitude which sees deacons as a threat to the ministry of the laity in general, and of licensed lay ministers in particular. Those who take this line would rather not see a reformation of the diaconate. As one person put it: "I would like to see Deacon's orders dying a graceful death."

1.2.4 Restoration

A fourth group sees the need for a restoration of the Diaconate as a distinctive ministry in the Church. They were not satisfied with it being merely retained as a traditional office, but rather wanted to see it developed and extended into neglected areas of ministry.

1.3 Some Typical Responses

The following extracts from comments received by the Commission indicate something of the range of responses received, and some of the problems and possibilities seen in the restoration of the diaconate.

1.3.1 Those who see Problems

"To me the main concern is with the Church's ministry to the needy and oppressed. The question in my mind is whether we are going to deal with this best by reforming the diaconate. Is there not a danger that the priests will feel that it is not their task any longer, and likewise the laity? To me, Christ's ministry to the needy and oppressed is so central to what it is to be a Christian at all, that I am wary of any attempt to identify it with any particular order in the Church."

"While I feel that it is a very good thing that the duties you have outlined should be performed by the Church, I am not entirely convinced that people need to be ordained to exercise such ministries. I would prefer to see lay people being encouraged to perform them."

"I think that the restoration of an ordained diaconate in a serious way would in fact harm the Church, by implying that Diakonia is only for the ordained."

1.3.2 Those who see possibilities

"It would alleviate manpower problems by freeing priests from a number of jobs which could just as easily be performed by a deacon. Also it would be an embodiment of the ideal of service visible to all within the Church and without"

"I believe that our Lord IS calling many to the diaconate full stop. Many who are coming forward for ordination to the priesthood (esp. those for the so-called Self-supporting Priesthood) are actually describing that call in terms of the functions of a deacon. This is because

1 We only talk in terms of vocations to the priesthood (seldom about 'permanent' deacons.)

2 The diaconate is seen as a short stepping-stone to the priesthood.

3 We have failed to see the importance of the deacons ministry and allow for it. Terms such as 'lay minister' and 'sub deacon' blur this matter further. We should revive the threefold form of ministry."

"The deacon is to act as a visible sign of the link between liturgy and the Body of Christ's task of service in the world"

"I believe the speedy restoration of the diaconate is essential to help us regain a right and dynamic balance in the Church as regards the ordained ministry. Words must be balanced and authenticated by deeds, and the deacon is there to see that this is never forgotten, and to stimulate, lead and take part in serving ministries with and on behalf of the local and diocesan body of believers as part of the essential mission of the Church . . . ordination does not limit ministries, but highlights responsibilities."

1.4 Characteristic Ministries of a Deacon

A second questionnaire was sent to those who replied to the first one, and indicated that they would be prepared to give more information to the commission. It was also sent to a number of lay people. This questionnaire (which will be referred to as Questionnaire B) had 47 replies - 21 priests, 10 deacons and 16 laity. In it, 40 different ministries were listed, and respondents were asked to indicate whether these ministries should be performed by clergy, priests, deacons, deacons and others, clergy and laity or laity only.

Questionnaire B therefore may be regarded as the answer to the question "What do we want deacons for?"

The following ministries were those for which the respondents to Questionnaire B thought a deacon was most needed. The ministries are given in the order of importance attached to them by all respondents. The figure given at the end is a percentage which indicates the relative value attached to that ministry by laity, deacons and priests respectively:

The foregoing twelve ministries are the ones seen as most important among all respondents. As can be seen, in some cases there are considerable differences between priests, deacons and laity. Some further differences are noted below:

1.4.1 Priests

Ministries, not mentioned in the foregoing, which priests included among their top twelve, were:-

	Laity	Deacons	Priests
Administering the Holy Communion during the Eucharist	21%	33%	43%
Conducting occasional offices (eg Baptism, Marriage)	19%	30%	37%

Ministries included in the general list above, which priests though less important for deacons, were:

- No. 11, Community Development
- No. 10, Supervising Sunday school

1.4.2 Deacons

Deacons responding to the questionnaires gave a higher value to the following:

Caring for alcoholics and drug addicts

and omitted caring for the poor and oppressed from their 'top twelve'

Order of Importance	Ministry to be undertaken by Deacons	Laity	Deacons	Priests
1	Preparing the altar vessels at the offertory and doing ablutions after communion	63%	56%	68%
2	Reading the Gospel at the Eucharist	54%	68%	64%
2 (tie)	Giving communion from the reserved sacrament in Church, in the absense of a priest	65%	78%	51%
4	Supervising the work of servers and sub-deacons	53%	63%	60%
5	Taking communion from the reserved sacrament to the sick and housebound	56%	65%	46%
6	Training Servers and Lay ministers in their liturgical duties	48%	63%	51%
7	Giving instructions to the congregation during the service (eg in Liturgy 1975 "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith" "Go in peace and serve the Lord"	44%	40%	56%
8	Organizing members of the congregation to do physical ministry for the sick (eg running errands, nursing, cleaning house, caring for children etc)	46%	43%	37%
9	Training Catechists, Sunday School Teachers, leaders of Bible Study groups etc.	43%	40%	37%
10	Supervising Sunday School	41%	45%	29%
11	Doing community development work eg 'conscientization', forming co-operatives, finding work, dealing with officials, community organization etc	41%	35%	29%
12	Visiting the poor and oppressed and ministering to their immediate individual needs (widows, orphans, detainees resettled etc)	27%	29%	42%

1.4.3 Laity

The laity generally placed a greater importance on the ministry of deacons than clergy, and these ministries included sick visiting and leading youth groups, as well as leading Bible study and prayer groups, which the clergy did not regard as important for deacons to do.

1.4.4 In general, as the list indicates, far greater importance was placed by clergy and laity alike on the liturgical ministry of deacons, the most important ministries being seen as the preparation of the altar vessels and doing the ablutions at the eucharist, followed closely by reading the gospel and administering the communion from the reserved sacrament during a 'priestless service'.

The latter was seen as important in spite of the fact that several priests thought that it should not be done at all. The first two are probably the best-known of the 'traditional' ministries of the deacon.

1.4.5 Some people suggested that lay ministers or sub-deacons should be abolished, and that they should be ordained deacons instead. In practice the ministry of many licensed lay ministers is purely liturgical, and if the diaconate is perceived as primarily a liturgical ministry, as the questionnaires indicate, then this would seem to be a logical step. It would not, however, meet the need envisaged by the Partners in Mission report.

1.5 Current Attitudes to the Ordination of Women as Deacons

1.5.1 The Theological Commission's report on the theological arguments for and against ordination of women as deacons is incorporated into this report at Section B. Most of those who responded to the questionnaires used the arguments reported in the theological commission's report, whether for or against.

1.5.2 Detailed results of the questionnaire on this issue are given in the Appendix to this report.

1.5.3 The results are summarised as follows:

(a) The attitude of clergy to:	For	Against
a Ordination of women as bishops	13	55
b Ordination of women as priests	25	45
c Ordination of women as deacons	51	22

(b) ANALYSIS BY DIOCESES OF THE ATTITUDES OF CLERGY TO ORDINATION
OF WOMEN TO THE DIACONATE

Opinion by diocese:	For	Against
Swaziland	2	1 (deacons only)
Lesotho	1	1
Pretoria	4	2
Port Elizabeth	3	1
Bloemfontein	1	2
St Helena	0	1
Zululand	7	1
Namibia	2	0
Grahamstown	6	1
Kimberley	1	2
St Johns	3	1
Cape Town	9	0
Johannesburg	6	7
Natal	6	1
George	0	1
Matabeleland	1	1 Outside CPSA
Mashonaland	0	1

Thus the opinion of priests who responded to the questionnaires is largely in favour of the ordination of women as deacons.

2 The Relationship Between Office and Function

2.1 Several of those who responded to the questionnaires expressed concern about the relationship between office and function, and saw the work of the Commission as having to do with the restoration of an office in the Church, and were concerned that the function of diakonia would be overlooked.

The Commission, however, does not share this view. We already have the office of deacon in the church, but this office has become divorced from its function. The Partners in Mission Consultation raised the question of reforming the diaconate so as to restore it to its original function of ministry to the suffering and needy.

The Church therefore has a simple choice: it may decide to abolish the office of deacon, or it may restore the function. This Commission advocates that the office be retained and the function restores.

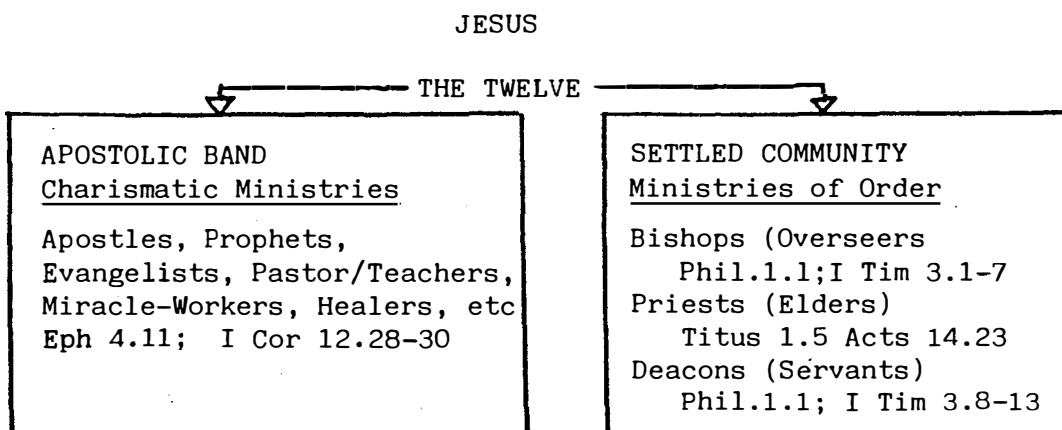
2.2 Why Ordination?

A second question, arising out of the question of the relationship between office and function, is the question, asked by several who responded to the questionnaire: "Why does one need to be ordained to perform this function?"

We refer to Sections D.2.1. and D.2.2. of this report, where we point out that diakonia is a function of the whole Body of Christ. The ordination of deacons is to a special role within this function of diakonia - the role of ordering, encouraging and enabling the diakonia of the whole Body.

The development of the church as a Body with different orders and ministries can show the place of the ministry of deacons within the life of the Body.

The schematic representation given below is a simplified presentation of a process about which many works of erudite scholarship have been written. It is not possible, in the compass of this report, to go into this process in great detail.



2.2 (continued)

Charismatic ministries, by direct inspiration of the Spirit, bring life to the Body.

Ministries of Order (Holy Orders) bring structure to the Body, and are imparted by laying on of hands with prayer for the Holy Spirit to give grace for this ministry.

Both types of ministry require the grace of the Holy Spirit, and in theory at least the Church has required that candidates for ministries of order should manifest the charisms of the Spirit before they are selected for ordination (Acts 6.3) Ministries of order have been regarded by the Church as structural and 'indelible', with grace imparted through the prayers of the leaders of the Christian community.

This is not seen as a mechanical process. For instance, in the Orthodox Churches at the ordination of a deacon, the Bishop prays "For not through the laying on of my hands, but through the visitation of thy rich bounties, is grace bestowed upon thy worthy ones."

Where charismatic ministries are exalted above ministries of order, there is life but no structure: eg Montanism in the early Church. Without order there is little discernment, and leadership tends to become personality centred, and the body tends to break up into its individual cells (eg Zionism today)

Where ministries of order are exalted above charismatic ministries, there is structure, but no life. The Body is in a coma, and needs to be revived. Eg Bishop Butler saying to John Wesley that pretending to special gifts and revelations of the Holy Spirit is a "horrid thing, a very horrid thing".

In the case of deacons, the ministry of order is to order the ministry of diakonia of the whole church. The Church needs ordained deacons to order this ministry so that it can be a sign and a sacrament of the kingdom of God, a sign of God's grace and love. The ministry of diakonia is then seen to be an essential part of the structure and life of the Church, and not a personal idiosyncrasy of those engaged in it, or an expression of humanistic values which have nothing to do with the kingdom of God.

2.3 Representation at Synods

If the number of deacons were to be greatly increased, the system of synod representation might need to be revised.

2.4 Deacons and Lay Ministers

Lay ministers licensed to assist in the administration of the

Holy Communion are commonly known as sub-deacons, and it is just these ministers who have, in many places, taken over the liturgical ministry of deacons. In many cases these ministers see their ministry as purely liturgical, without any pastoral dimension.

The Diocese of Pretoria has recently issued regulations for licensed lay ministers specifying offices to which people may be licensed, and the training which they should receive in order to be licensed.

People may be licensed to the following ministries:

- Evangelist
- Liturgical Assistant,
- Preacher
- Teacher
- Lay Pastor

In addition there are two 'senior' categories of lay minister:

- Catechist - trained as Lay Pastor and either as Teacher or Preacher.
- Sub-Deacon - licensed as liturgical assistant, and in one other category.

In this we can see the Sub-Deacon is envisaged as having a wider ministry than simply a liturgical one, and in this there is also the possibility of having a team of lay ministers (licensed and unlicensed) who could work with deacons in making the diaconal ministry an integral part of the life of the parish and its total ministry, and not as an optional extra. It would be the duty of the deacons to supervise, stimulate and encourage this ministry, and to be responsible for the training of the sub-deacons or other lay ministers (licensed and unlicensed) involved in it.

2.5 Deacons and Elders

First, in considering this relationship, it needs to be recognized that the English word "priest" is derived from Old English "Preost". Old High German "prest", Old Norse "prestr" and ultimately from the Latin "presbyter". The word "priest" is thus not merely a translation, but also a derivation from the Greek "presbuteros" used in the New Testament. Thus, as an office in the Church, and especially with reference to the second order of ministry, "priest" and "elder" are synonymous. To say this is not to ignore the fact that in English usage the word priest has come to mean any religious functionary, and has thus also been used in a wider sense to translate the Greek "hierous" and the Hebrew "cohen", which do not necessarily have the same connotation of "eldership".

It is customary for elders to be chosen from among the deacons, and this has led many people to say that a distinctive order of deacons is not needed, because the priests are already deacons, and can fulfil the function of deacons.

In practice however, most deacons are only deacons for a short time, and regard that time as a time of learning how to be priests. The priest is still seen as the only 'real' minister, and not as one minister among many.

Many of those who responded to the questionnaires from the Diocese of Johannesburg said that they thought self-supporting ministers should be deacons, and not priests. It would appear that in that Diocese the self-supporting clergy have been regarded as having their main ministry in their place of work, and not in the parishes where they worship. Many of those offering themselves for self-supporting ministry in Johannesburg have expressed their vocation in terms appropriate to the diaconate rather than the priesthood, but they nevertheless have been led to see the priesthood as the only proper ministry to aim for.

In other words, people are being ordained as priests when they have a vocation to ministry, even if their vocation is not to the priesthood (eldership) as such. The priesthood has become a kind of 'catch-all' ministry, in the same way as the word has become a kind of catch-all appellation for any religious functionary.

A restoration of the diaconate, therefore necessarily involves a restoration of eldership as a distinctive ministry within the Body of Christ. Teaching would need to be given on the distinctive ministries (and not only those of elder and deacon, but other ministries as well) and it would be preferable for deacons and priests to be ordained on different occasions, and not together, as is the common practice nowadays.

If the ministries are distinctive, then the training for the ministries also needs to be distinctive.

2.6 Order of Deaconesses

2.6.1 Some of those responding to questionnaires suggested that there should be an order of Deaconesses. The Commission also considered a World Council of Churches report which advocated that churches which do not yet have orders of deaconesses should establish them.

2.6.2 The W C C report also advocated that the question of the establishment of an order of deaconesses should be considered

quite separately from that of the ordination of women. However responses to a question on the subject in Questionnaire B showed that many people were not able to consider the two issues separately.

2.6.3 The Commission also noted that the 1978 Lambeth Conference recommended that it would be preferable to ordain women to the diaconate than to have an order of deaconesses.

2.6.4 It might also be possible both to ordain women to the diaconate and have an order of deaconesses.

2.6.5 However, in view of the confusion of issues, the Commission believes that the question of an order of Deaconesses should not be considered before the Church has made a clear decision on the ordination of women to the diaconate.

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F. CONCLUSIONS

F.1 The diaconate of the whole church

The Commission affirms that the diaconate of the Church is that of Jesus Christ its Lord. This diaconate is to be exercised by all the members. The ordained order of deacons exemplifies and enables the total diaconal ministry of the church.

'The sole purpose of Church order is to make room for the Spirit to carry out his work of edifying the church (and we must add - saving the world) - with as little hindrance as possible.- (from E. Schweizer - Church Order quoted by Hollenweger op.cit. p.429)

F.2 The Duties of Deacons

2.1 to assist the Bishop and Priest in liturgical actions among which are the following:

2.1.1 At the Eucharist he reads the Gospel, leads the intercessions, and at the offertory, assisted by other ministers, prepares the altar. He assists the priest in receiving the people's gifts, and hands the priest the paten with the bread, prepares the chalice with wine and a little water either at the altar or the side table, and hands it to the priest. If incense is used, the deacon assists the priest as he incenses the offerings and altar, and afterwards he, or another minister, incenses the priest and people. During the Eucharistic Prayer the Deacon stands near the priest, but a little behind. Where provision is so made, he announces the Acclamation saying "Let us Proclaim the Mystery of Faith" or "Let us acclaim the victory of Christ" as the case may be. At the doxology the deacon stands beside the priest and raises the chalice while the priest raises the paten, until the people have responded Amen. The deacon assists the priest in giving communion to the people. After communion, the deacon returns to the altar and collects any remaining particles. He then washes the chalice and other vessels, and arranges them in the usual way, either on the side table or on the altar. Or he may cover the vessels to be washed after the eucharist when the people have left. After the blessing, if there is one, the deacon dismisses the people, saying "Go in peace and serve the Lord". He may also during the eucharist say the introduction to the Lord's prayer, and invite the people to come to receive communion.

2.1.2 the administration of baptism, when required to do so.

- 2.1.3 where provision is made, to reserve the Sacrament, from which he may distribute the Holy Communion to himself and others.
- 2.1.4 when there is no priest, to assist at marriages and bless them in the name of the church, through delegation of the Bishop or the parish priest.
- 2.1.5 to administer sacramentals and carry out funeral and burial rites.
- 2.1.6 to read the Scriptures in Church and to teach and exhort the people.
- 2.1.7 to preach, when licensed to do so.
- 2.1.8 to preside at functions and prayers where the priest is not present.
- 2.2 To carry out works of charity and administration, and to do works of social welfare in the name of the Church. Depending on the circumstances, and the gifts and training of the deacon, such works may include the following:
 - 2.2. Care of the Sick
 - 2.2.1. To take communion to the sick and housebound from the reserved sacrament.
 - 2.2.2. To pray with the sick and give them counsel.
 - 2.2.3 to see that the physical needs of sick members of the congregation are met, either by himself, or preferably by arranging for these tasks to be done for others.
 - 2.2.4 to take part in community health education, or to initiate and lead health education schemes where there are none, and he has the gifts and training needed.
 - 2.3. Care of Widows and Orphans
 - 2.3.1 to visit widows and orphans and pray with them, and give them spiritual counsel.
 - 2.3.2. to ascertain the spiritual and physical needs of widows and orphans, and arrange for the parish to help with these.
 - 2.3.3. to help with applications for pensions, dealing with red tape, helping to get money to which a widow is entitled, taking legal advice and action where necessary.
 - 2.3.4. to distribute food, clothing and other necessities of life where these are needed.

2.4. Care of the Poor and Oppressed

- 2.4.1. to visit the poor and oppressed and pray with them, and give them spiritual counsel,
- 2.4.2. to assess the situation of needy individuals and families, maintaining their rights where poverty is a result of or exacerbated by an infringement of those rights (not 'legal' rights but rights of the poor in God's eyes - Prov.29.7) Helping them to help themselves - eg helping the unemployed find jobs, to develop their skills to increase their chances of getting a job, or a better job. Arranging for emergency help - food, clothing, shelter and legal assistance for those who are resettled, evicted or have lost homes/livelihood through war, natural disaster or human malice.
- 2.4.3. to help poor communities to assess their needs, and undertaking community development work to enable the community to take action to meet its needs, and for people in the community to help one another; to be aware of resources available to help achieve this.
- 2.4.4. to care for others with particular needs, which may also be a specialized ministry in a fairly narrow area, including the following:
 - 2.4.4.1. refugees, detainees and their families, those who are banned, banished or otherwise persecuted;
 - 2.4.4.2.2 those addicted to alcohol and other drugs;
 - 2.4.4.3. the mentally retarded;
 - 2.4.4.4. the physically handicapped;
 - 2.4.4.5. the young,
 - 2.4.4.6. the old
 - 2.4.4.7. other groups or communities within a parish needing special ministry: migrant workers and their families (including miners, seamen, etc) trade unions, hospitals, schools, prisons etc.

2.5. Administration

The word 'diakonia' in the New Testament is often translated 'administration'. In the early church, deacons were often administrative assistants to the bishop, and in the Orthodox Churches there are Arch Deacons who are Diocesan Administrators.

Again, in the Orthodox Churches, there are Proto Deacons,

which are probably the equivalent of Anglican Archdeacons, except that they are in deacon's, and not priest's orders. These are responsible for the administrative aspects of the work done by an Anglican archdeacon. The spiritual oversight of the Anglican archdeacons is in the Orthodox Church done by Archpriests.

2.5.1. Diocesan Staff

Such jobs as diocesan secretary or administrator, bishop's secretary etc should be seen as spiritual leadership, and not simply as secular jobs requiring secular leadership and administrative skills and knowledge such as accounting, office management etc. Deacons who have received appropriate training can exercise these ministries, and many of those who see these ministries as a vocation from God could be ordained to the diaconate. These duties would be:

2.5.2. Institutional Administration

2.5.2.1. Administrators of Church Hospitals

2.5.2.2. Wardens of Hostels, orphanages etc.

2.5.2.3. Administrators of Diocesan Welfare or Development programmes.

F.3 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

3.1 Recruitment:

The Church would recruit candidates for the diaconate from members who are already exercising diaconal ministries in the parishes and dioceses. They could come from the licensed lay ministry; house church leaders; church social workers; directors of education; full-time and part-time workers for diocesan boards and committees for social responsibility, justice and peace; from the diocesan staff; etc. They would be selected according to their ability to order and organise the service in which they are engaged and not simply on the basis of the fact that they exercise it.

Once the church has ordained deacons from among those exercising diaconal ministries, they will serve as models for others who have a vocation to the diaconate. The neglect of the diaconate has meant that many people who might otherwise have perceived a call to such a ministry have not done so.

3.2 Training

3.2.1 The Commission believes that, because of the wideness and variety of the diaconal ministry, the training should be

flexible enough to be appropriate to the specific ministries for which it is required and to the persons being trained. In our recommendations we, therefore, make a number of suggestions about training, making use of the resources already available, but which will require the harnessing of these resources according to the ministries needed on the one hand and the candidates' abilities on the other

3.2.2 We commend the following patterns of training:

3.2.2.1 In-service training. This is used for the training of the ministry in a number of dioceses.

3.2.2.2 Training by Extension: The present courses offered by UNISA and the T E E C could be extended to offer training for the diaconate.

3.2.2.3 Institutional

The Huguenot College, Wellington and Selly Oak College, Birmingham England are examples of institutions which can be used for training diaconal ministries. Further institutions such as these could be developed if it is thought to be desirable. We recommend that consideration be given to sending candidates for the diaconate to these institutions.

The College at Wellington informed us that they are willing to accept students from any denomination. At present their courses are in Afrikaans, but we believe they would consider offering courses in English should the demand justify it. They were considering their position about taking in black students.

Theological Colleges could include specific courses for diaconate ministers in their curricula. Those could be the B Diac. Degree similar to that offered by the Huguenot College through UNISA and diplomas based on this course.

3.2.2.4 Candidates could use any or all of the forms of training recommended above in the course of their preparation for ordination to the diaconate.

3.2.3 Curricula:

We foresee that many deacons will exercise a specialised ministry in a particular field which would require practical as well as theological training specific to the ministry to be exercised. UNISA offers a B. Diac. degree to students at Huguenot College which combines training in theology and social work. The following suggested syllabus for a B. Diac. degree contains other possible combinations of theological and practical disciplines.

PROPOSED SYLLABUS FOR B.Diac. DEGREE

10 courses (or equivalent in modules) with two major subjects. One major subject shall be from group A, and one from another group, OR 12 courses.

GROUP A (Theological)

Biblical Studies
Church History
Systematic Theology
Missiology
Practical Theology

GROUP B (Administration)

Applied Economics
Business Economics
Accounting
Economics
Health Development Administration
Farm Management

GROUP C (Development)

Health Development Administration
Applied Economics
Community Health Nursing Science
Co-operation
Farm Management
African Politics
Sociology
Anthropology

GROUP D (Social Work)

Psychology
Industrial Psychology
Sociology
Social Work
Social Law
Marriage Guidance and Counselling

GROUP E (General)

Practical English
English I
Communication I Education I
A First or Special Course in an African Language
or Practical Afrikaans
Introduction to the Theory of Law I
Indigenous Law I

At least five courses shall be taken from Group A, one of which shall be a major subject. One course in each of Biblical Studies and Church History shall be compulsory.

A second major subject shall be taken from groups B, C, or D. At least one other course in a subject shall be taken from the same group as the second major subject.

Where the second major subject consists of only two courses, then a further two courses shall be taken from the same group.

Where 10 courses are taken, one course shall be selected from one of the groups from which a major subject was not selected.

Where 12 courses are taken, one course shall be selected from a subject in each of the remaining groups.

B.Diac. (Honours)

15 courses shall be taken.

At least one course shall be taken in each of the subjects in Group A, and in addition to the major subject, two courses shall be taken in one other subject from that group.

In addition to a major subject from Groups B, C or D, two other courses shall be taken in subjects from the same group, and two courses from subjects in any of the remaining groups.

We approached UNISA to ask whether they could offer a course similar to the one outlined above. At the time of writing the Report we had not had a response from them.

Should the Report of this Commission be accepted we believe it is important that a body be appointed to supervise training for the diaconate.

F 4 Placement of Deacons

4.1 As deacons are ordained by the bishop alone, he should be enabled to send them where they are most needed in the diocese. The diocese should make funds available to enable him to do this.

4.2 Areas of Social Need

Deacons should preferably be placed in parishes where the social need is greatest. This applies to those who are called to the diaconate as such, as well as to those who are called to the priesthood. Parishes where there are people who are genuinely poor should receive preference in getting deacons - and as these

parishes are often poor themselves, and so unable to afford full-time deacons, they should be assisted from diocesan funds where necessary.

4.3 Choice of a Rector

Deacons should only be licensed in parishes where the rector understands and believes in deacons, and will allow the deacon to perform all aspects of a deacons ministry. The rector should also undertake to teach the congregation about the different ministries in the church, and specifically about the ministry of a deacon.

4.4 Team Ministry

Where possible, deacons should be placed in parishes with other deacons, so that they can work as a team. Again, the newly ordained deacons should be placed in parishes where there are experienced deacons.

4.5 Diaconate as Apprenticeship

The concept of diaconate as apprenticeship needs to change. It is right and proper that the church should select its priests from among its deacons, and that a priest is still a deacon. Therefore those who are called to the priesthood should continue to spend a year or more as deacons, as a kind of apprenticeship. What needs to change, however, is the idea that in this time they are learning how to be priests. Rather, this period should be one of learning how to be a deacon, so that when the person concerned is ordained priest, he will have a better understanding of the work of a deacon and will be able to work with deacons when he is a priest. If the first year as a deacon is spent in a parish with the greatest social needs, working with a team of deacons, then those who are called to the priesthood could spend their first year as a priest working in a parish best for the purpose of providing an apprenticeship as a priest.

F 5 Payment and Means of Support

5.1 Deacons may be stipendiary, non-stipendiary or self-supporting.

5.1.1 Stipendiary Deacons would be paid according to a diocesan stipends scale.

5.1.2 Non-stipendiary deacons would be supported in the exercise of their ministry, but not on a diocesan stipend scale. These might include administrators of church hospitals which are subsidised with outside money, and those working for para-church organizations to exercise their ministry, and paid by those organizations.

5.1.3 Self-supporting Deacons would be those working in an occupa-

tion unrelated to their ministry in order to support themselves and their families.

- 5.2 Stipendiary deacons would also include those who are serving as deacons while preparing for the priesthood, as well as those who are called to continue as deacons. It would be a simple matter to have a common stipend scale for both deacons and priests, with increments calculated from the date of ordination to the diaconate. The current practice of separate stipend scales, with deacons receiving no increments, which is common in many dioceses, not only unfairly penalises continuing deacons, but will also affect them should they later be ordained to the priesthood.
- 5.1 Non-stipendiary deacons would be paid by bodies other than the diocese for the exercise of their ministry. As far as diocesan finances are concerned, they would be similar to self-supporting deacons, but they would in all probability need a specialized training for their particular ministry.
- 5.4 Self-supporting deacons could be the commonest variety, if the diaconate were to be restored. Stipendiary deacons would probably receive specialist training, and be licenced to work in the diocese or archdeaconry. Self-supporting deacons would be licenced in parishes, and there could be a considerable variety of levels of training, from that similar to the stipendiary deacons, to a far more rudimentary training for those who would be similar to the deacons in the Reformed Churches.

F 6 WOMEN AND THE DIACONATE

The Commission endorses the resolution of Provincial Synod 1979 which stated the CPSA 'believes that it is theologically appropriate for women as well as men to be ordained to the diaconate' and hopes that it will have the courage of its convictions in proceeding to permit the Church to do so.

Father Stephen Hayes dissented.

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G. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

G 1 Amendments to Rubrics in S A P B

That a Measure be presented at the next session of Provincial Synod, to be moved by the Chairman of the Commission, or other member of Synod, reading as follows:

- 1.1 "That the rubric following the service of the Making of Deacons in the Ordinal attached to A Book of Common Prayer, South Africa, be deleted, and that a new rubric be inserted at the beginning of the service of The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests, to read as follows: "No person shall be admitted to the order of Priesthood unless he shall have continued in the office of Deacon for a whole year at the least (except for reasonable causes it shall seem good to the Bishop)"
- 1.2 That in the Ordinal on page 681 of the SAPB the words 'in the absence of the priest to baptize infants' be deleted and the words 'to baptize when required to do so' be substituted.

G 2 Amendment to Rubrics of Liturgy 1975

The following should be added to Rubric III (1) in Liturgy 1975. 'The reading of the Gospel (23), the announcement of the Acclamation (61, 62, 86), the announcement of the Lord's Prayer (98), the Invitation to Communion (102) and the Dismissal (112, 113) should normally be performed by a deacon,'

G 3 Liturgical Revision

We commend to the Liturgical Committee of the C P S A the wording relating to the function of a deacon in the Ordinal of the Alternative Service Book of the Church of England (1980) and in particular the order in which the functions are listed.

G 4 Initial Recruitment

Suitable people already engaged in diaconal work of a social development or administrative nature should be asked by bishops to consider whether they have a vocation to the diaconate, (cf. F.3.1) in order that they might provide models for others who might be called to such a ministry.

G 5 Training

The Department of Theological Education should be asked to consider all aspects of the training which needs to be given to deacons both before and after ordination, and to make recommendations to Provincial Standing Committee and the Dioceses. Dioceses could also be encouraged to develop their own schemes

for training deacons, according to local needs. (cf. F.3.2)

G 6 Ordination

That except where circumstances make it impossible, the ordination of priests and deacons should be on separate occasions, in order that the sermon or exhortation which precedes the service, and the lessons and prayers during the service, may relate specifically to the particular order to which candidates are being ordained.

G 7 Placement of Newly Ordained Deacons in Parishes

Newly ordained deacons, including both those who intend to continue as deacons and those who think in their hearts that they are called to the priesthood, should initially be appointed to parishes where:

- (a) the rector understands and believes in the ministry of deacons, and will help, encourage and train the new deacons to exercise their ministry as fully as possible;
- (b) the circumstances are such that there is a clear social need for the ministry of deacons to be exercised;
- (c) there is, if possible, a number of deacons already working as a team with other people.

Pursuant to this we recommend that, where possible,

- (d) the Bishop shall meet with the Rector and Churchwardens and draw up with them, and in consultation with the deacons, an agreement concerning the duties of the deacon to be appointed.
- (e) as parishes with the kind of social need most likely to need the ministry of deacons are often unable to afford them, that help should be given from diocesan funds, and that deacons should not simply be appointed to parishes which can afford them.
- (f) self-supporting diaconate should also be encouraged, in order to enable parishes to have teams of deacons.

G 8 Stipend Scales and Increments

In the case of church-supported clergy, a single stipend scale should be in operation for priest and deacons, with increments calculated from the date of ordination to the diaconate, and not from the date of ordination to the priesthood.

G9 Crisis Teams of Deacons

Where situations of poverty, oppression or distress warrant it, dioceses should consider establishing teams of deacons and other diaconal workers which would be sufficiently mobile to be able to respond to emergency situations. Those responsible for organizing this work would need to be experienced. Such teams could minister in resettlement areas etc.

G10 Administration

Persons appointed to full-time administrative posts in dioceses, church institutions and parishes, and people already in such posts should consider whether God might be calling them to be ordained to the diaconate. (cf. G.4)

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