

October
1977

the newsletter of
associated parishes

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703/548-6611

EDITORIAL

Our last issue of OPEN, which contained the Wewoka Statment, called forth a very interesting response from Bishop Wesley Frensdorff of Nevada. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination to the diaconate he held a symposium on the subject of the diaconate which was subsequently published as a small booklet. My first idea was simply to have AP buy enough copies of the booklet to send to our members as an issue of OPEN, but since there are not enough copies available, with the Bishop's permission, we will publish a part of the symposium in this issue.

It would appear to me that what we are doing in pushing for the revival of a "real" diaconate is trying to resurrect the "apostolic ministry" in all its fullness. The key to many of our problems can be found in the following quote which begins Bishop Frensdorff's article in the July, 1977, issue of the Anglican Theological Review.

The devouring myth of the omnicompetent parson has broken down. Thus we need to examine the nature of ministry and of holy orders. New Testament ministry is functional and varied and can be carried on by all sorts and conditions. Where then is the place of holy orders? The answer is in the concept of "representation" -- both summing up and facilitating the total ministry of the whole Church: The episcopate as regards unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity; the priesthood as regards the offering and worship of Christ; and the diaconate as regards the servanthood of Christ. Thus we are able to 'unpack the one-man band' and do justice to the varieties of the One Spirit as well as the indelible character of orders.

The "omnicompetent parson" is the problem that we have inherited from the nineteenth century and earlier. In this country, the problem has been exacerbated by the absence of bishops for the first 150 years and by their present isolation from the life of the local parish.

AP's concern for the ministry is a logical one since we believe the liturgy and mission of the Church are linked, and certainly the ministry is central to both liturgy and mission. In our next issue of OPEN we hope to publish another paper from the Frensdorff symposium, but, in the meantime, if any of our members have things to contribute to the discussion, they are urged to send them in.

Henry H. Breul

Ministry-To-Go

Josephine Borgeson

Personal Introduction

Let me begin with a bit of personal history. I began seminary when the preparation for holy orders was a two-step process of postulancy and candidacy. I entered uncertain of whether or not I should seek ordination. My diocese, however, was reluctant to accept someone as postulant who had already enrolled, so, to cover my bases, I made the necessary appointments with bishop and diocesan functionaries and completed the necessary file. My understanding was that should I wish to apply for postulancy at a later date, everything was in order. Several months later, during the winter of my first year at CDSP, I received the annual diocesan report in the mail and discovered that I was a postulant. I had a minor fit of pique, and there the matter laid. I had firmly decided at that point that I did not want to be a presbyter, nor did I favor eligibility to that office for women. I did not pursue candidacy when my classmates did.

In the spring of my middle year in seminary I was taking two courses which had me laboring over ecumenical questions. I was particularly interested in the role of orders in schemes of reunion. One evening I was sitting in my room studying our revised ordinals. While reading the examination of an ordinand for the diaconate, I came to the words, "You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world."¹ I burst into tears, aware that this was the most difficult job anyone would ever ask me to do, and I was totally inadequate to it.

If it can be pinpointed, such was my call, and after a period of testing by the community, I became a candidate. I have now been a deacon for a year and nine months -- not long compared with a number of faithful deacons and deaconesses, but very long compared with the majority of people with whom I attended seminary. I expected to feel resentment as the invitations to presbyteral ordinations came rolling in, but I haven't. There has only been a sense of

disappointment -- another rat deserting the sinking ship of diaconate -- and a sense of incredulity -- how can anyone take on the added responsibilities of the presbyterate when the tasks of the diaconate are so compelling and so profound. It is from this personal response, as well as a conviction that an ordained diaconal ministry is necessary to the fullest expression of the Church's ministry, that I speak.

I have been asked to address the question of the relationship of the diaconate to various orders and forms of ministry in the Church today. Before I present some specific ideas, I want to suggest one overall model. With some of the assertions of Bishop Frensdorff's paper² in mind, I formulated this fundamental analogy:

sacramental
symbolic, minister:gathered community
ordained
as Church:world

That is to say that the role of the ordained, especially in its liturgical or symbolical expression, bears a relationship to the gathered community of the faithful analogous to the relationship of the Church as a whole to the world. The ordained one is in and among the community, just as the Church is in and among the world; but he-she is, like the Church, called to a special task or tasks.

In fact, the ordained minister must be an example to the community of her work in the world and a facilitator of the work as it is carried on by each individual member. And so, when we gather, the deacon is a symbol of our collective serving and active proclamation of the good news; the presbyter of our collective proclamation, forgiving, and thanksgiving; the bishop of all of these, and in addition, of our collective defending of the faith and shepherding of all men.

It should also be added that, because the deacon is charged especially to be attuned to and strive to understand the interaction of Church and world, his-her place in the model is further emphasized and quite complex. The deacon is not just an analog, but

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at times the very analogy itself. He-she is a link. The primary relationship of the deacon to each order in the Church, lay, presbyteral, and episcopal, is as a link between that order and another, between that order and the Church as a whole, between that order, as one aspect of the Church, and the world.

Diaconate: People

First I want to discuss in some detail the relationship of the diaconate to the laity. To understand the symbols of *diakonia* presented to the people, we must look at what the deacon does in the liturgy. (I am speaking primarily of the Eucharistic liturgy.)³ Following the proposed rites, the normative role of a deacon is that he-she read the Gospel, lead the prayers, invite or exhort confession, receive the offering of the people and prepare the table, assist in the ministration of the sacrament to the people, and give the dismissal.

When the deacon receives the gifts of the people and prepares the table, he-she offers in action a summation of the service of the whole people. It is an act that unifies the preparation of all the people for the great act of thanksgiving to follow. The deacon is representative of the service of all the people to Christ. This seems to me the center or focus of the relationship between the diaconate and the laity. It is linked with the dismissal when, after giving thanks and being fed, we turn outward again; having served our Lord at his altar, we are renewed to serve Him in his world. Here is a clear example of what is meant in the original analogy. As the deacon sums up the service of the faithful to the Lord, so he-she bids the whole Church serve the Lord in the world.

Unfortunately, the symbolism of service as a distinctly diaconal function is frequently obscured in the liturgy. A lack of deacons, a plethora of assisting priests in urban areas, a misplaced but well-intentioned sentiment that the importance of the laity needs support, and a feeling, unfortunately usually well-grounded, that it will be easier and smoother if the celebrant simply does it himself -- all have contributed to the erosion of diaconal symbolism in the liturgy. It is not surprising that many people ask what could I do as a deacon that I can't as

a layman except read the Gospel? Except? Though the symbolism of the service be, God forbid, altogether eroded, there remains the symbol of the deacon standing in the midst of the people proclaiming the good news. The expressed relationship is this: as I stand among you, a channel for this message of good news, so we must stand in the world letting the light of the message of Christ shine in the world.

The diaconate as a whole and individual deacons in their vocations must effect in their relationships to the laity the great themes which are shown in the liturgy. Because the liturgical actions of service and proclamation are part of the task of the whole Church, the actions themselves are part of the relationship between diaconate and laity, but they are merely foci, not the whole relationship. Perhaps the most obvious way in which a deacon helps the people to do the Church's work is by example. The deacon who visits the sick and the elderly, who shows concern for the poor and disenfranchised, either on a one-to-one basis or in community action, is, by performing the tasks of the special ministry to which he-she has been called, offering a model for those very facets of the general ministry to the Church.



By extension, it seems logical that some deacons might be involved in training lay persons for a pastoral outreach ministry or in advising or working with those lay persons who, through their secular occupations, are already engaged in such a ministry. Deacons also must be ready to offer support, advice, and models for the evangelizing work of the laity. It seems, too, that in the role of an interpreter of the concerns of the world, the deacon bears a special relationship to the laity: that of listener. Where do the faithful encounter tensions between their faith and lives in the work-a-day world? What are their hopes for their work, their families? What challenges are they meeting politically, educationally, economically? Without genuine concern, without hard listening, there can be no interpretation, no linkage, no facilitation, and ultimately little meaningful interaction between Church and world. And the diaconate is given this particular task. →

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Diaconate: Presbyterate

The relationship between the diaconate and the presbyterate is a thorny area, fraught with misunderstanding and differences of opinion. If we hope to move away from the model of deacon curate-apprentice and mini-presbyter in a parochial setting, we have to re-examine the relationship between these two offices.

As the liturgical functions of the deacon symbolize proclamation and service for the laity, so must they in some sense also represent these things to the presbyters. We harbor a misunderstanding that the deacon serves at table merely to help the presbyter. The assumption seems to be that it is the norm for the presbyter to do everything, but in this instance he has delegated a few less important things to the deacon. The deacon does assist the presbyter, but in a much more positive way. The deacon, assuming those responsibilities for which he-she is empowered by ordination, frees the presbyter to be more fully presbyter: i.e., those liturgical functions reserved for the presbyterate are enhanced because the presbyter does only those things.



How does liturgical cooperation focus the working-together of presbyterate and diaconate outside the sanctuary?

Ideally, the work of a deacon has the same freeing power on the pastoral and administrative work of the presbyter as it does liturgically. As the deacon prepares the table, so to him-her might be given a responsibility for preparing the faithful for greater participation and service of the faith. As the deacon assists in administering the sacrament, it is appropriate that he-she deliver the sacrament to the sick and shut-in. This is the emphasis of diaconal work: taking out the hope, prayers, and alms of the gathered community. Despite changing roles for clergy, the weight of symbol and tradition suggests that the presbyter is primarily a father to that unit of the whole Church which he serves. His, whether salaried or not, is a parochial ministry. The diaconate is ministry-to-go. Any work of service or outreach assumed by the deacon which frees the presbyter for better fathering is a good expression of the relationship between the two orders.

While cooperation should be the emphasis in the presbyteral-diaconal relationship, there remains the question of the relationship of both offices in one man's vocation. Is time spent in the diaconate a necessary preparation for the presbyterate? At times I have thought that the distinction between the two lesser offices might be made clearer by ordaining those men who are so called directly to the office of presbyter. It's an open question, but I think there may be some good reasons for not doing so. A time of humility and, yes, sometimes even humiliation, in service seems to me a necessary preparation for ordination to the presbyterate. A time devoted to grappling with the problems of church-world interaction also seems necessary if one is meaningfully to offer reconciliation as a father to the members of the gathered community. Just as within the body of a good relationship between diaconal and presbyteral functions enhances both, so, I feel, it may be in the individual life of a clergyman. Ideally, the time spent in service as a deacon by one seeking the presbyterate would be spent acting as a deacon, not a priestette. Pragmatically, I think that, while, as most understand it,⁴ presbyters are still deacons, we must realize that the emphases of ordained ministry often shift away from diaconal concerns when deacons are made presbyters.

There is a difference, too, in the role of deacon as contrasted with other members of the clergy. Deacons are not members of the club. When a presbyter is ordained or instituted, he is reminded of the collegiality of his office.⁵ He is enjoined to share in the councils of the Church. At the moment of his ordination not just the bishop but the presbyters present lay hands on him. The deacon is ordained by the bishop without this expression of shared authority, even though presbyters are required to be, and deacons may be, present. He-she is ordered to serve the other orders of the Church's membership and is made responsible to the laity, presbytery, and episcopacy. But the lateral supports are not defined. Is it a logical consequence,



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then, that deacons are not eligible to represent their dioceses at the General Convention?⁶ I think there is a difference between the aloneness of the deacon and his-her disenfranchisement from the political scheme of the Church.

Diaconate: Episcopate

Ordination to the diaconate may be a place to begin to discuss the relationship between deacon and bishop. While a bishop may ordain any number of deacons at one service, there is not, as I have pointed out, the collegiality in a diaconal ordination that there is in a presbyteral ordination. Each deacon is his/herself responsible and accountable to his-her bishop. This is done liturgically and pastorally in a similar way and to similar ends as in the relationship between presbyterate and diaconate. The deacon serves the bishop in order that he may be a better bishop.⁷ Because there is a biblical precedent for the deacons' assuming some responsibilities for the bishops, it is appropriate that the modern deacon do some of the bishop's dirtywork. The bishop may then devote more time to being a protector and defender of the faith and a pastor pastorem. The diaconal work itself might take many forms, but primarily that of administration, both in-house and for outreach.



The diaconate also has a special role vis-à-vis the episcopate in terms of my original analogy. The deacon facilitates the relationship between bishop and people just as he/she facilitates the relationship between Church and world. The deacon's relationship to the laity as a listener comes into play, for he/she has a special obligation to interpret the bishop and the laity to one another. By doing so, the legwork, if you will, of the bishop is redoubled and the cohesiveness of the Church in a particular see is increased. In service, education, and outreach, the deacon strengthens the linkage between bishop and people. In the sense, too, that the bishop represents the Church, the deacon has a special obligation to share with him and interpret to him the worldly concerns with

which he/she is in touch.

Finally, while the role of the diaconate is wholly subordinate to that of the episcopate, it also remains a sharing, if only in the sense that the diaconal function and symbolism in and out of the liturgy recalls for the bishop, as well as for the presbyters and laity, that he is called to share in as well as guide the Church's diaconal ministry.

A Question of Professionalism

Again and again people say to me, "But I don't understand what you do. Who pays you?" Should deacons be paid? Can we have both professional and non-stipendiary deacons without having two classes of deacons? I believe that with a bit of vision it is possible.

First, let me grind one of my favorite axes -- very well honed by this time. I do not believe that professional and ordained ministry are or need to be synonymous. I do not think that we pay a man or woman for his/her sacramental ministry. The presbyter presides at table because he is a member of the household of faith so called and so ordered. The deacon reads the Gospel and prepares the table because he/she is so called and so ordered. The bishop carries a staff and leads us when he is present because he is a member of our larger Church community called and ordered to bring to mind our task of shepherding. And the laity are there, participating in the liturgy, because they, too, are called and ordered.⁸ If we pay a man or a woman in the name of the Church, we must pay them for their expertise in administration, counseling, teaching, etc., not for any sacramental leadership they may provide.

What I hope to see emerging is a variety of models for diaconal ministry, showing the diversity possible in a linkage ministry rooted in service and proclamation. One possible model is the stipendiary deacon as part of a diocesan team. The work of these deacons might be primarily administrative; they might serve as trainers and facilitators for T.E.A.M. projects; they might specialize in communication; or they might serve as resource persons in areas where parishes and missions cannot afford specialists -- education and music are two probable fields.

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Normally, as I see it, these program deacons would be seminary trained.

Another possibility is that a deacon might serve as a chaplain to a prison, a hospital, or university, responsible to the bishop or a diocesan committee. In not every case would these services require a seminary degree. Some other sort of professional training -- in counseling or education, for example -- combined with reading or some seminary study could be appropriate for a chaplaincy.

Any of these models might be part-time, combined with part-time work for a parochial unit, or part-time work as an independent counselor, consultant, teacher, etc. In most cases the stipendiary deacon would have a more parochial role, serving the relationship between bishop and laity, between the whole Church and her members. The number and tasks of such deacons would depend on the size and societal milieu in which they worked.



The non-stipendiary diaconate suggests another cluster of models. It could include

men and women trained in a variety of ways, but most probably those who have read for orders and those who have participated in a T.E.A.M. program. Such persons might have professional involvement or gifts in administration, counseling, healing, dialogue, community organization -- gifts and skills related to service and proclamation. Some examples might include a businessman or woman who assists in matters of administration and stewardship; a doctor, nurse, or hospital staff member devoted to the prayerful and sacramental aspects of healing, a person with legal or organizational skills who helps the Church provide leadership in community action; a leader of a parish team for visitation of the elderly, community youth work, or evangelization. These deacons would all be leaders in outreach from their parochial unit, or persons who could help in the administration of that unit. In most cases these deacons would serve especially the relationship between Church family and the world.

These models are only suggestions. We need to maintain a great flexibility and an openness to diaconal ministries where they are occurring at the same time that we do not lose sight of the fact that the symbolical function of the diaconate will be the same no matter how an individual's life is acted out in ministry. By being open to new styles of diaconate while we maintain its traditional symbolical expression, we insure that no deacon is any more or less than any other, yet free to respond to the particular Church and societal community which is the context of his-her service. Consequently, the inter-relationship of the Church and world will be well served.

Diaconate: The Larger Household

Finally, I want to mention one more vital relationship. The proposed topic of this paper was: "The diaconate in relationship to the other orders and varieties of ministries". I am aware that I am trapped by a very narrow Anglican perspective. There are deacons, there are diaconates, and, especially, there is *diakonia* in the other Christian communions. But in my inquiries I have not found an understanding of diaconate closely akin to that of the Episcopal Church. There are glimmers of hope for a revival of the diaconate in Methodism.⁹ Romans in some dioceses have established "married deacons' programs", but seem tied up in knots as to whether these men are or are not valid clergymen.¹⁰ Perhaps it's a valid question. My experience has been that the Christian-in-the-street does not understand how one can be an ordained minister but not empowered to celebrate the Eucharist. In our diaconate, weak as it is, we have a great witness to make. To me, the tension which comes to bear on individual deacons -- the tension between worldly involvement and sacramentalizing -- mirrors and focalizes a tension basic to the life of the Church. I sincerely hope that our goal of revitalizing the diaconate is not just another in-house harangue but a contribution we can make to the whole Church and, ultimately, to the modern world as we renew our expression of joy in service in Christ's name.

Conclusion

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. Instead of wishing, let me be realistic and

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beg for three things. I beg you all to encourage the growth of the diaconate. This requires teaching, by word and, for some of us, by example, that the office of deacon is a valid ministry. I beg you all to work for the empowerment of the diaconate. This means removing the bars to participation of deacons in the governing processes of the Church. And I beg you all to re-examine your own participation in the very *diakonia* of Christ himself. We hear much use and abuse of the phrase, "the priesthood of all believers". Only when we realize that there is a *service* of all believers will we afford to the office of deacon the true meaning of its relationship to all the faithful. Only then will we understand that the sacramental actions of the deacon focus for us, the body, a mandate for our relationship to the world.

Acknowledgements

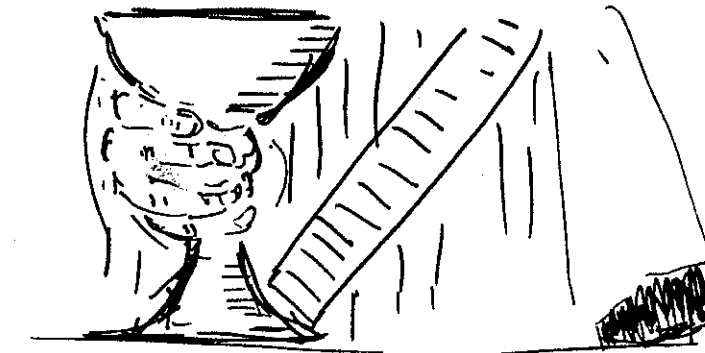
Much of what I say in this paper is not the result of scholarly research, but of conversation and hard thinking with many friends.

First, thanks go to my bishop, Wesley Frensdorff. I have leaned heavily on his paper *Holy Orders and Ministry: Some Reflections*, and on our conversations. Some of these ideas were hammered out during my seminary years. Thanks are due the Reverend William L. Tye of Berkeley, California, and Miss Lynette Golderman of Berkeley and Honolulu.

There is no way to measure adequately the support of deacons who have provided models or listening ears. Despite the ordinal, we have a fellowship. +++

*** NOTES ***

1. *The Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church*. The Church Hymnal Corp., New York, 1976, p. 543
2. See acknowledgements.
3. *The Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 300-316.
4. Those who would take exception stress that both presbyterate and diaconate derive their authority from the bishop. If the diaconate does not derive its authority from the presbyterate, then it follows that the presbyterate does not subsume the diaconate in the same sense that the episcopate does. A logical argument -- but one that opposes tradition in the Western Church.
5. *The Draft Proposed B.C.P.*, pp. 531 & 533.
6. The Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., Article 1, Section 4.
7. In addition to the liturgical functions mentioned in the body of the paper, it is appropriate that a deacon serve as "bishop's chaplain", generally assisting him at worship.
8. *The Draft Proposed B.C.P.*, p. 306. "Will you continue in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?"
9. In conversation with Methodist colleagues.
10. *Conversation and Observations in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe*, and Richard L. Rashke, *The Deacon in Search of Identity*, Paulist Press, New York, 1975.



John, in his Gospel, introduces Jesus' farewell discourse, the Last Supper, and the events of the Passion in these words: "Jesus knew that his hour had come and he must leave this world and go to the Father. He had always loved his own who were in the world and now he was to show the full extent of his love." (John 13:1)

Jesus, through his life, his ministry, and in his relationships, showed the extent of God's love. "He who was nearest to the Father's heart, he has made him known." (John 1:18). But before entering the fullness of the offering of his love, Jesus demonstrated to his disciples the nature of his offering -- the basis of his redemptive actions.

And so at the Last Supper, "he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel." They, led by Peter, could not comprehend this action, even after all their time with him. "If I do not wash you," Jesus said, "you are not in fellowship with me. If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet. I have set you an example, you also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:14).

Servanthood, *diakonia* in the Greek, is at the center of Jesus' life and ministry. But it goes a lot deeper than a mere symbolic action or even than the periodic concerns he expresses for those in need. The nature of Jesus' servanthood is centered in his very incarnation. Jesus was "sent by the Father to carry out the redemption of human existence, not dealing with us from the outside, but by operating from within it, not by the sheer fiat of divine power, but by humble acts of service in all the weakness and frailty of human creaturehood, i.e., as Man among men..."¹

Jesus revealed to us, through his life, the nature of God. At his very heart is Love -- a love that "operates by stooping to suffer all the worst that man can do and be, by entering into his revolted and

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alienated existence, and by dealing with sin (and evil and their effects on man) from within the depth of human life..."²

Jesus, in his love, engages the forces of evil especially wherever they cause suffering to mankind. Through his acts of compassion and his miraculous acts of grace, he allies himself with man against this evil that has entrenched itself within him and around him. He not only confronts evil; he is not only constantly affronted by evil, but he takes upon himself the very consequences. He himself suffers -- he bears the consequences. He buys in where it really hurts. His redemption, his recreation, is from within -- totally -- and thus he shows the full extent of God's love. The roots of Jesus' servanthood, therefore, lie in the very nature of God who "made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave." (Ph. 2:7)

That servanthood, all of Jesus' gifts of himself, was not to be a one-time intrusion into this world, but it was to have an ongoing life and presence. So Jesus gathered a company of disciples whom he formed into one Body with himself as the inner nucleus of the Church. He empowered them with his holy spirit and sent them out to exercise and share in his servanthood.

"In constituting them as His Body, baptized with His Baptism, and partaking of His cup, He so assimilated them into His own diaconal life and service on earth that He made *diakonia* an essential mark of the Church redeemed by Him and built up around His own Person as the Christ. It cannot be doubted that this diaconal character of life and service in Christ is a basic and permanent sign of the Church sanctified in Him, for it is here that Christ's own image and likeness most clearly appears..."³

"His Body" the Church therefore is not only his servant, but it is as him, the servant of and in the world. It is to give itself, as he did and does, in service, engaging evil and its consequences, reaching out especially to those who suffer most, taking upon itself some, at least, of their pain and thus, in the name of Jesus, releasing the healing and reconciling power

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of God's love.

And -- the mystery holds a marvelous paradox -- it is there in the service of the oppressed, the sick, the poor, the hungry, and the imprisoned that we find him who has sent us. "I tell this; anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me." (Matt. 25-40). That's where the love of God comes full circle. And thus it is that the Church as his Body will not be recognized "except in that meeting of Christ with himself in the depth of human misery where Christ clothed with his Gospel meets with Christ clothed with the desperate need and plight of men." ⁴

This servanthood of Jesus is not one of power, except it be the power of love surrendered and suffering accepted. That is why Jesus warned the disciples at the Last Supper "...to beware of allowing their service in His name to gather a worldly prestige in which its nature as service would be lost or take the form of a munificent patronage that could lord it over mankind." ⁵

In fact, often, if not most of the time, the Church's diaconal service must be incognito -- as the leaven must become part of the dough, as the salt must lose its life to give flavor.

When the mother of James and John sought a special place for her sons, Jesus shocked his disciples by turning things upside down again. "Among you," he said, "whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever would be first must be the willing slave of all -- like the Son of Man; he did not come to be served, but to serve and to give up his life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:26-28).



Such, then, is the centrality of servanthood in the life and mission of the Church as it was central in the life and mission of Jesus her Lord. A life of service is so central in the Church that we can well speak of the "servanthood of all believers" as well as the "priesthood of all believers". As each member of the Church shares in the priesthood of Christ and of His Body, so every member shares in the servanthood of

Christ also. Whether or not these are exercised, is, of course, another matter.

But if this "diakonia" is general and all are to share it, what about the diaconate, that much forgotten and now much talked about order in the Church's tradition? Is there a place for it, and, if so, how can it be useful in helping the whole Church and all of her members exercise more fully their diaconal ministry?

It is precisely because the Church needs always to be called, and re-called, to her servanthood that a vital diaconate is needed. As the Church is gathered around the altar -- by the priest -- to exercise the priesthood of Jesus as his Body, so the Church must be sent for by the deacons to exercise the servanthood of Jesus as his Body.



The Church has a long and often glorious history of servanthood in the world, but there are relatively few periods when the kind of service which Jesus rendered was at the forefront of the Church's mission. It may be that this has been so because for a very long time now the diaconate was not only considered an inferior order but it has in fact been hidden, absorbed, as it were, by the orders of priesthood and episcopate. For some years now, this has been explained by saying that the diaconate had thus become the foundation of the other two orders. While this perhaps makes acceptable theory, it has not in fact been borne out in practice.

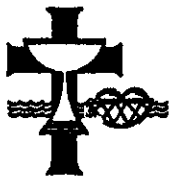
Most of the discussion about the diaconate in recent years has given attention to this office as a way to support the priesthood and episcopate in their preaching, teaching, and pastoral tasks, while also taking its proper place within the worship life of the Church. *It seems to me that if the diaconate is truly to be restored in its fullness and with its own integrity, it must be re-established on the basis of the essential servanthood of the life of the Church, expressing the servanthood of Jesus, her Lord.*

Few would disagree that in our time -- as always -- the Church, if she is to be faith-



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ful to her Lord, must be called and re-called to this central task of being the servant of the world and especially of those in particular need -- the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the sick, the lonely, the anxious and frightened. That is "where the Lord, clothed with his Gospel, meets the Lord clothed with the sufferings of his children." That is where the Church, his Body, engages most directly the powers of evil and shares with Jesus, through the offering of his life, in the redemption, reconciliation, and re-creation of his world. A reconstituted and revitalized diaconate could play a most vital and significant part in recalling the Church to servanthood and in enabling her and her members to render such service in meaningful and effective ways.



For this to happen, however, the office of deacon must first of all be understood in its "re-presentational" nature, rather than primarily to be seen in functional terms. The same is true for the other orders. The episcopate -- the order of bishops -- re-presents to the Church her life of worship, her life of offering, her life of eucharistizing. The priest "presents" the great high priest within the community for the community. He calls and gathers the Church around the table of the Lord to offer itself through and with Him, to be made whole by being made one with Him, to offer sacrifice in communion with the one eternal sacrifice of her Lord.

But from there the Church is sent to serve the world as He the Lord Jesus served the world. And so the deacon sends the Church in service to proclaim the good news to the poor, to release the captives, to bring healing to the sick and suffering, to "let the broken victims go free". (Luke 4:18).

"The deacon emerges out of the universal *diakonia* to be distinctive in the midst of the community as its public official who makes present in his person and deeds the servant character of the Church. Sacramental ordination signifies and seals the bestowal of church office...not a bureaucratic structure of jurisdiction, but a new relationship of responsibility for the mission of the Church. Through sacramental ordination the deacon becomes a distinct and public sign to the world of the servant

character of the Church..."⁶

The order of deacons re-presents to the Church her life of servanthood; not to deprive the Body of its ministry of service but to uphold it -- to sacramentalize it -- as central to the Christian life and mission. The deacon represents -- presents -- servanthood, puts the spotlight on it, for and to the Church, by doing it and by enabling the whole Church to do it.

From the very beginning, the diaconate has had this focus. While there is some question as to the exact function of those seven ordained to "wait at tables" (Acts 6), there is considerable evidence that, while the early church deacons assisted the bishops in a variety of ways, they carried particular responsibility for those in need, especially the poor. "When all the relevant New Testament material...is considered, the image of a primitive diaconate becomes tolerably distinct. That the diaconate did not free either the congregation as a whole or the individual members severally from their responsibility for *diakonia* is clear... Rather it must have served to stimulate and to organize, to lead and to focus, the *diakonia* of the whole Christian community."

This is not to say that the deacons should not carry out other ministries, such as teaching, for example, or have their proper place in the Church's liturgies, but *it is easy to say that the primary concern must be to focus the Church's concern on the needs of person, both within and outside of the Church.* The liturgical functions must be closely connected with the primary purpose of the office. For the deacon to proclaim the Gospel in the congregation's worship, to lead the intercessions, to receive the offerings and prepare the table, and to participate in the distribution of the communions is most appropriate. Such participation in the congregation's worship bears witness to the unity of Christian life -- worship and service. The two are complementary and inter-dependent "since each requires the other for its fulfillment and one is obstructed by the lack of the other...the Service of the Word (Eucharist) serves Christ with his Gospel so that through it he draws near to man with forgiveness in unconditional grace;



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and the service of response to the Word serves Christ clothed with the misery of man so that through it He sustains and upholds man in unutterable compassion..."⁸

"The Church needs today a massive recovery of authentic *diakonia* if it is to hold forth the image of Christ before mankind and is to minister the mercy of God to the needs of men in the deep root of their evil and in the real sting of their misery."⁹

A revival and renewal of the diaconate, based on the servanthood of Christ and His Church, could well be a most helpful means to bring about such a "massive recovery of authentic *diakonia*".

I can envision the great value in having a deacon in every congregation. Such a person would have to have a deep commitment to "serve" and not only a desire but also an affinity for serving those with particular and special needs. Such a person must be sure of God's love and be whole in spirit, not needing results or appreciation in order to continue, and be fulfilled by such service.

A deacon must be able to draw others into ministries of service, organizing and enabling them for it. Furthermore, the deacon's task would include searching out and identifying where and how persons in need can best be served. "You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the World..."¹⁰ The deacons must make the work of intercession a central part of their prayer life, holding before God always those who are being served. They would also spearhead for the congregation its relationship to the government of the community, state, and nation, since often the needy persons are best served through improving and changing the communities' programs of assistance. The deacons would be advocates -- ombudsmen -- for the poor, the oppressed, the sick, the lonely, the imprisoned, the neglected. In the diocese, the group of deacons could well be a very strong force -- a vital reminder of the central focus of the Church's mission and a constant witness for servanthood.

A diaconate thus focused fits well into the TEAM model we are trying to develop in Nevada, in which priesthood and diaconate,

as well as all the ministries, are shared by the membership as broadly as possible. Those who are "called" to holy orders rise up from among the congregations; they are not sent to them. With the kind of diaconate we've been describing, this is probably most important. A deacon who is really "called" by the congregation will be more able to enlist the household in service in their world than someone sent to them.

Each congregation might well have more than one deacon. Most, if not all, would not be employees of the Church. Their own employment would give them closer contact with the life of the community and help them in identifying needs. Besides that, "professionalization" through Church employment would probably blunt their effectiveness in the congregation to enlist the membership in significant service. The "let George do it, we pay him" syndrome would quickly be in effect.

The time has come for the Church to take the diaconate seriously or forget it. The discussion and efforts during recent years regarding the permanent or perpetual diaconate have not yet borne very much fruit. In some dioceses a number of deacons have been ordained, but questions of their usefulness have been raised. One diocese has declared a moratorium on further ordinations. Another which only recently has begun a new program with a most heartening response apparently has difficulty in "putting them to work". How can this be? Is it because the deacons have been largely seen as "assistant" priests, not quite qualified for the "full ministry"? Is it that they have not "risen" out of a congregation which needs and wants them to "present" Jesus the servant and to send them in service to their world? The diaconate will never be effectively renewed if it is understood in the traditional terms. Only a radically new (though really old) orientation will bring about such renewal.

A recent (1974) report on the diaconate of the Church of England comes to the opposite conclusion and recommends the order be allowed to atrophy totally. It does not find sufficient reason for its



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continuation. This report includes one reason which is sometimes mentioned by others. "There is a danger," it says, "that an enlargement of the membership and work of the diaconate would inevitably clericalize this lay witness and work. However, there is further danger that any enlargement of the diaconate in numbers or in work would tend to obscure the serving function and work of the whole Christian community."¹¹

Such a danger certainly exists. The concern is understandable, but it is equally applicable to the other orders. One of my strongest concerns is how to overcome it in all three orders. But it seems to me that the problem lies not in the orders themselves but in our use of them. No one has yet suggested doing away with the order of priests because it has often obscured the ministries in which all the laity ought to share. The priest, furthermore, as he gathers the Church in Eucharist, enables each member to share in the priesthood of Jesus the Priest. In a similar way, the diaconate ought to be able to focus the Church on servanthood and send the Church's membership forth in service.

Is it not perhaps the "professionalization" of the orders which has resulted in their obscuring the ministry of the laity, of the whole Body? Our almost total dependence on full time, highly trained professional clergy has resulted, I believe, in the present situation where "ministry" is seen by most Christians as something done to them instead of by them and which is sent to them rather than that in which they are sent. In order for the ministry of every member to become at least a potential possibility, we need to change the model radically. We need to distinguish between the ordained offices and the functions of the ministry and understand the former more in terms of their

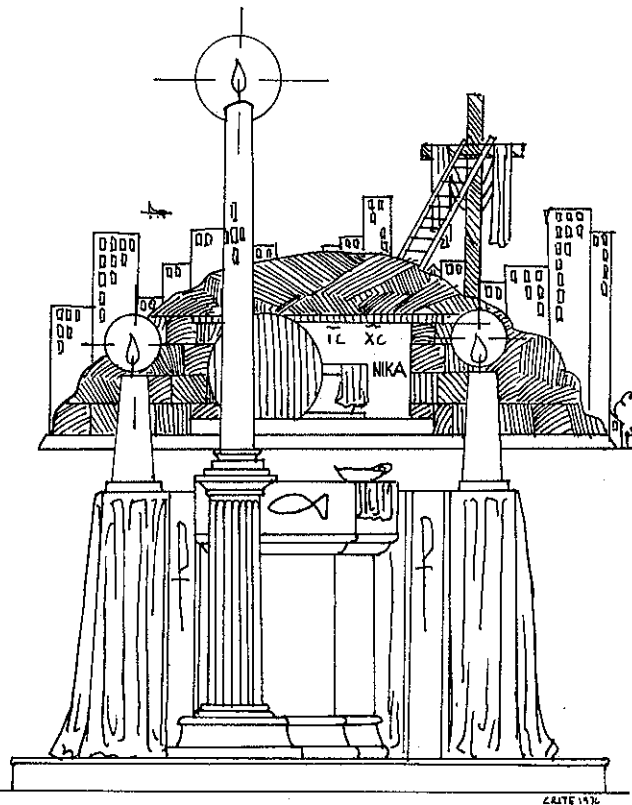
re-presentational character than in terms of functions of ministry. This I have tried to do above. Furthermore, those exercising the ordained offices need not necessarily be "professionals". Most of them need to be "raised" up from within congregations and trained for their particular office. Others in the congregation would be able to share in the various aspects of ministry and be trained and supported to carry them out. The seminary-trained clergy's primary function would be to enable and train others, both for holy orders and for the marvellous varieties of ministries within the congregation and beyond. The danger to which the English report points is real, and it needs to be considered carefully, but other new approaches could perhaps minimize this tendency.

The Lambeth Conference of 1968 saw the need for the preservation of the diaconate:

"We do not recommend that the diaconate should be allowed to lapse. To do so would be to reject our firmly established tradition; it would produce stresses in our relationships with those Churches which retain the threefold order of ministry; and it would deprive the Church of the witness of service which was an essential element in the ministry of Christ, and which is reflected in the overall ministry of

his Church to the world. This *diakonia* is laid upon the whole people of God, and must be embodied and reflected in the ministry and witness of every Christian. Renewal in service thus demands a response from every member of the Church.

"In the sacred ministry this universal Christian characteristic of service is specially represented. Just as every Christian must imitate Christ the Servant, so in the sacred ministry the *diakonia* of Christ is set before the Church as a quality which typifies the life of the Christian. To deprive the ordained ministry



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of the witness of the diaconate would be to impoverish its symbolism at the point where the greatest emphasis needs to be laid.

"We therefore recommend that the Anglican Communion should move towards a recovery of the diaconate as a significant and operative order within the sacred ministry."¹²

The Church needs the diaconate as a distinct order whose primary purpose is to

re-present, to present, the Servant Lord to His Church and to call and re-call the Church to her essential servanthood. "It is a charge to be merciful as the Father is merciful, and a call to follow Jesus Christ in the form of a servant, that all members of the Body of Christ may be fellow laborers in His work, and that deacons reflecting in themselves the pattern of Christian service, may prompt the whole people of God in the ministry of divine mercy."¹³ +++

*** NOTES ***

1. Torrance, T.F. *Service in Jesus Christ*, p.4 in the volume of essays entitled *Service in Christ*, edited by James I. McCord and T.H.L. Parker, Eerdmans, 1966.
2. Ibid, p.5.
3. Ibid, p.9.
4. Ibid
5. Ibid, p.11.
6. Gula, Richard M., *A Theology of Diaconate*, p.33 (a paper from St. Thomas's Seminary, Kenmore, Washington.)
7. Cranfield, C.E.B., *Diakonia in the New Testament*, p. 46 in *Service in Christ*, op. cit.
8. Torrance, T.F., op. cit.
9. Ibid, p. 14.
10. From "The Examination", The Ordination of a Deacon, *Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer*, p. 543.
11. "Deacons in the Church", the report of a working party set up by the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry, p. 23.
12. Lambeth Conference Report 1968, pp. 104-105.
13. Torrance, op. cit., p. 11.

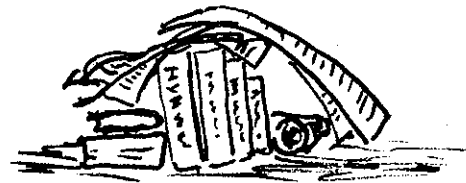
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BOOKS

reviewed by HENRY H. BREUL



The Feminization of American Culture, Ann Douglas, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, pp. 402, \$15.00.

One often wonders when hearing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" where the idea of Jesus expressed in "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea" comes from. It certainly represents a picture of Jesus eroded by sentimentality and early Victorian "Ladies' Garden Book" symbolism.

In her book, *The Feminization of American Culture*, Ann Douglas gives us a fascinating picture of the cultural developments which lead up to the sentimentalization of theology, death, literature, and almost every facet of the thinking of Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Miss Douglas sees an unconscious alliance between the disenfranchised Congregational clergy and the disenfranchised housewife of the period. The New England clergy were disenfranchised when the church was disestablished. Their power base was reduced to influencing the ladies in the pews. The Industrial Revolution disenfranchised the wife and mother who, no longer supplying the homespun and making the household goods, was reduced to the role of "consumer". The "spiritual reading" and sentimental novels of the period are dominated by the feeling tone of these two disenfranchised groups which fed into each others' needs. Henry Ward Beecher seems to represent the epitome

of it all. In the churches, the ravages of the "Sunday School" took over from theology, and the "pretty" Jesus who loved children was drilled into generations of female teachers and feminized male preachers; so much so that even today Sallman's "Head of Christ" is the picture most often hanging in the vestibules of Protestant churches.

All of this has a great deal to do with the present problems of all the churches, not just the Congregational. The trivialization of the altar in our own Church is still with us, and many an altar still reflects the tastes of the ladies of the congregation and their sideboards at home.

Miss Douglas sees Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* as the turning-point. That all-male novel started a sort of counter-revolt against the prevailing mode of thought and was not recognized as a masterpiece until our own era. When Margaret Fuller was drowned off Long Island, a strong, truly "feminist" voice was lost, for she alone of the women writers of the period seemed to be able to cut through to reality.

Anyone wanting to understand the theological struggles of our times had better read this book, and any liturgiologist who wonders why feminine taste so long controlled such things as vestments and hangings and why sentimentality controlled our hymnody will find this book an essential document. +++



etc.

* We thought it's time we told you something about the mechanics of our "head-quarters" office here in Alexandria. It's staffed by only one person, Art Jenkins, the coordinator, and is open Monday thru Thursday from 10:00 to 3:00. Art handles all correspondence, fills orders for publications, coordinates with Council members, maintains membership records and sends renewal notices, etc., etc., etc.

* Speaking of membership renewals, AP would like to thank the increasing number of members who have been availing themselves of the "Sustaining" and "Supporting" categories of membership. We wish it were possible to write our thanks to each of you personally, but, as you can see from the previous paragraph, that is difficult. Please be sure, however, that this evidence of your support is greatly appreciated!

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