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TRAINING DEACONS FOR MINISTRY AT  
RIDGEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH,  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Ashley Edward Ray

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TRAINING DEACONS FOR MINISTRY AT  
RIDGEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH,  
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To Carrie,  
who believes in me even  
when I am not at my best.  
And, to our children,  
Harrison and Anna Grace,  
who are learning to serve Jesus.

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## PREFACE

There were several critical catalysts for the project of Developing Deacons for Ministry at Ridgeway Baptist. First, two of my best friends filled a role of which they may be unaware. Mark Blankenship of Blue Goose, Tennessee, caused me to see how much deacons can love their pastor, as he loved me and the pastors that came after me at Union Grove Baptist Church. We have kept in close contact over the years. Also, James Bohrer, Senior Pastor of Hope Community Church, Brownsburg, Indiana, and I became inseparable as we hunted, fished, and discussed church leadership issues, many of which related to deacons. Jim introduced me to Southern Seminary and helped convince me to pursue the Doctor of Ministry at the Graham School. Both of these men cheered me on to finish what I had started. To these two dear friends, I will forever be loyal and grateful.

Also, my example and mentor, the late Adrian Rogers, gave me a glimpse of how crucial humility is in the pastor's life. His being my pastor, and Ronnie and Paula Ray being my parents, have everything to do with my love for Jesus Christ and the spirit in which this project was done.

My deepest appreciation goes to my church staff and deacons, who have provided me with an effervescent atmosphere of support and love. The staff put up with me while I completed the project, and the deacons were the project. These humble deacons humbled me. I had the privilege not only to train them, but to see firsthand that men of great spiritual stature still exist in this postmodern era of abdicative men.

My deepest respect goes to two men who God graced me with as full-time deacon volunteers: Howard Locke and Dennis Colley. Without these two holding up my arms, I would have faltered many times by now.

Finally, my deepest love I give to my wife of almost fifteen years. God, partially through this project, has taught me to serve Carrie first, and thus I shall the remainder of my life.

Jesus alone is why a pastor can be a pastor and do a project like this one. That Suffering Servant girded Himself with a towel, and He allowed others to put Him on a cross. The God of the ages, Jesus, now builds His church using spiritual servants to lavish His body, the Church, with tender care. Can it be any wonder that leadership affecting church growth is inseparable from being imitators of Jesus who said of the people He was teaching, “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat” (Mark 8:2 ESV)? It is my constant prayer that I, and those church officeholders around me, will see how precious people are to God and lead them with character, compassion, and God’s sanctifying Word.

Ashley Edward Ray

Memphis, Tennessee

May 2013

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to develop a biblical understanding and deportment of the office of deacon among deacons of Ridgeway Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Methods will include a synergistic approach to training in evangelism, character development, and leadership through service.

#### **Goals**

This training process focuses on four goals for determining the effectiveness of this project. Utilizing Aristotle's three qualities that induce belief in the hearers of oratory, this project seeks to equip deacons using the threefold idea of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* in order to accomplish a more effective ministry to those within the church. While not used in the strict Aristotelian sense, the following three goals target these three areas of training.<sup>1</sup>

The first goal is to develop the character of ordained men by increasing both their understanding of a biblical *ethos* and their practice of spiritual disciplines. One of

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, *Peri Sophistikou Eelegkon*, 1.5, trans. John H. Freese under the title *On Sophistical Refutations*, in *Aristotle: The "Art" of Rhetoric*, in *Aristotle*, ed. G. P. Goold, vol. 23 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, and London: William Heinemann, 1926; reprint, 1982), 171. Aristotle's three qualities were applied to speech and the speech maker. The Developing Deacons for Ministry project at Ridgeway Baptist Church will use a similar threefold idea applied to a more broad range of ministry activities than oration. While Aristotle's threefold idea is not presented as such in Scripture, it is certainly not antithetical to Scripture; it is latent within the Scripture in an implicit way. This adaptation of Aristotle is simply a teaching tool and is in no way intended as equivocal with Holy Writ.

the survey instruments will gauge both the current understanding of the biblical character requirements of deacons and the current practice of spiritual disciplines. The assessment will include their devotional and prayer life, and personal evangelism, as well as other measures. The thesis of the project is that many of the declensions and divisions in churches result from spiritual immaturity compounded by a misunderstanding of the office and function of deacon. Deacons, correctly deployed, will build fellowship, not break it.<sup>2</sup> A major goal of this project is to design and implement a deacon development plan that sharpens the thinking and practices of Ridgeway deacons resulting in unity between the pastor and deacons and reduced friction in the congregation.

The second goal is to develop an orientation of service for deacons by teaching the necessity of a Christlike *pathos*.<sup>3</sup> Too often, the larger part of deacon activity in the church is attending deacon's meetings. These meetings often morph from seeking a way to serve into questioning the decisions of the pastor and staff.

The third goal is to equip deacons with a *logos* closer to that of Stephen and Philip as seen in the biblical record (Acts) of their preaching the gospel. In his book, *Simple Church*, Thom Rainer offers help toward having a simple plan for making disciples.<sup>4</sup> With specific training in evangelism, deacons can effectively augment the church's Sunday school evangelism efforts, keeping one simple process for connecting to people and getting them the gospel.

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<sup>2</sup>Darrell W. Robinson, *Total Church Life: How to Be a First Century Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 66-67.

<sup>3</sup>*Pathos* is not used in the strict Aristotelian sense of using rhetoric to produce an emotive response in one's audience, but in the sense of the deacon himself being moved with compassion, which motivates him to serve people in a Christlike way.

<sup>4</sup>Thom S. Rainer, *Simple Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 60.

Personal growth as a pastor in both maturity and influence is the final goal. Secular culture often marginalizes pastors. Under this culture's influence, churches also display less than healthy respect for their ministers. Training deacons to be "of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" as well as "faith" (Acts 6:3, 5),<sup>5</sup> should increase the pastor's capacity for leadership due to the increased time for prayer and study resulting from the deacons' improved attitude and aptitude. I will assess my time spent in proclamation and prayer ministry both before and after the project by identifying and delegating areas of ministry that biblical deacons can accomplish.

### **Ministry Context**

Ridgeway Baptist Church's facilities are in the eastern section of Memphis, Tennessee, just north of Bill Morris Parkway/Hwy. 385. Located at the southernmost part of Memphis zip code 38119, just north of zip code 38115, Ridgeway is between two demographically distinct areas. Although the southern part of 38119 is racially blended, it is more than 80 percent white, while 38115 has twice the number of African-Americans as whites.<sup>6</sup> The church's location adjacent to Bill Morris Parkway, which is an extension of Interstate 240, makes the church accessible within minutes for most of the Memphis populace. Memphis is the eighteenth largest city in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Most members who do not live in 38119 or adjacent zip codes drive inward from the

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<sup>5</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from *New King James Version*.

<sup>6</sup>Neighborhood Link National Network, "38115 Zip Code Profile," 1997-2010 [on-line]; accessed 17 September 2010; available from <http://neighborhoodlink.com/zip/38115#demographics>; Internet. Neighborhood Link National Network, "38119 Zip Code Profile," 1997-2010 [on-line]; accessed 17 September 2010; available from <http://neighborhoodlink.com/zip/38119#demographics>; Internet.

<sup>7</sup>U. S. Bureau of the Census [on-line]; accessed 17 September 2010; available from <http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/tables/SUB-EST2007-01.csv>; Internet.

suburbs of Memphis. Ridgeway is one of several churches in the greater metropolitan area that functions as both a community and a regional church.

Bill Morris Parkway not only makes Ridgeway accessible by the entire metropolitan populace, but functions, in the general expressed perception of area residents, as a buffer between what is a high crime area and a relatively safe area.<sup>8</sup> The easy access from the interstate and the close proximity to an area of socioeconomic decline have created regular opportunities for holistic ministry.

Ridgeway currently has around 500 active members, 900 resident members, and 2,200 total members. The average Sunday school attendance is approximately 300, with the Sunday morning worship service averaging approximately 325. Attendance has increased from 260 in Sunday school and 285 in worship, since my arrival in August of 2009. Over 30 people have joined in the past year, but around 30 have either died or left the church. On a positive note, Ridgeway averages approximately 5 visitors a Sunday and continues to see attendance build.

Ridgeway is a conservative, traditional Baptist church, rich in history, with a somewhat blended worship service. The musical selections are comprised of hymns and praise songs that are at least ten years old, as well as a touch of urban choir music. J. R. Graves, famous for articulating Landmarkism in Baptist life, served as the church's fourth pastor in 1876. Ridgeway, while not rigidly a landmarkist church, remains consistent in not accepting alien immersion other than from baptistic churches that would not have

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<sup>8</sup>This statement was the general sentiment of congregants and others familiar with the deterioration of the Hickory Hill section of Memphis and is reflected in a color-coded map available at Neighborhood Scout, "Crime Rates for Memphis, TN" [on-line]; accessed 5 May 2013; available from <http://neighborhoodscout.com/tn/memphis/crime/>; Internet.

existed in Graves's day. Ridgeway was a wealthy church and remains so for its size, although with decline finances have diminished.

The church is committed to Southern Baptist missions, giving 10 percent to the Cooperative Program, 1 percent to the Mid-South Baptist Association, and around 2 percent to other causes. A new missions minister is serving to extend members' mission experience beyond giving money to going both locally and globally. For the first time in its history, Ridgeway conducted two international trips in 2010.

Ridgeway also has a strong history of biblical preaching. The late Philip Allison, brother of B. Gray Allison, was a member for over thirty years and served as Professor of New Testament and Greek at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. For years, he taught through the New Testament before prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings. Due to the stature of Allison and other great leaders, many people have expressed that Ridgeway was one of Memphis' great churches, but that it has fallen on hard times.

Ridgeway's median age is 54. Younger families visit and join the church on a regular basis. High attendance campaigns and spiritual renewal events keep the prospect files full and challenge the people to reach out.<sup>9</sup>

During my first year, I began to cast vision, to learn the church culture, and to build strong relationships. During these first days morale rose through physical improvements such as the cleaning the campus, painting murals in the children's area, and installing much needed new carpet in the preschool area. An unsightly storage building, which was an eyesore from the road and an emblem of the church's decline

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<sup>9</sup>This statement reflects conversations with church members and data the Pastor Search Committee supplied me in the summer of 2009.



to many of the congregants, has been torn down. In addition, the church has eliminated clutter and has a fresh logo, website, and bulletins. Along with the physical, visual improvements, new processes have been integrated including staff retreats, Sunday school leadership meetings, and a discipleship ministry called Ridgeway University. Through this ministry, over 170 people participate in discipleship training classes in personal evangelism, *The Baptist Faith and Message* Lifeway curriculum, and *Making Disciples through Mentoring* by Charles Lawless.

Upon arriving as pastor in August of 2009, the pastoral staff administrated the food pantry and other benevolence requests. This holistic aspect of ministry differs greatly from Ridgeway's ministry in the 1980s and 1990s, in which missions and community involvement meant giving money, paying the staff to minister, and operating a sports program.

Some indicate that, in the past, the deacons perceived their greatest role as going to meetings to preview and review information for the monthly business meetings. A small new wave of volunteerism, however, now exists among the deacons. If Ridgeway's deacons continue to grow toward a more biblical model of deacon service, they will be better equipped to handle problems similar to those that threatened the fellowship years ago during Ridgeway's high-growth period.

As Ridgeway ministers without respect of persons, it faces challenges that make the ministry of men with the characteristics described in Acts 6 more crucial. Whatever Ridgeway's future disputes between members, the deacons did not solve her disputes in the 1990s. In some cases, however, these disputes were at least partially started by deacons attempting to be a checks and balances system on the pastors. Acts presents deacons, or deacon prototypes, as at least one solution for church-growth

problems. Unfortunately, in Ridgeway's past, deacons sometimes added to conflict that existed rather than resolving the problems.

Looking back, Ridgeway's decline began after a change in pastors and after explosive growth. Pastor Livy Cope had predicted Memphis' rapid eastward growth twenty years prior to its fruition.<sup>10</sup> As he settled into retirement and remained a member of the church, the next pastor came in 1988. Ridgeway Baptist Church was formerly Southern Avenue Baptist, but developed a satellite location in a mobile home on the current campus. The entire church relocated to the present location in 1976 and changed its name to Ridgeway. As people continued to move into the area, Ridgeway grew from an average Sunday school attendance of under 1,000 in 1988 to over 1,200 the next year. They had a high attendance of over 1,700 in Sunday school and 2,000 in worship, but this growth did not last.

A business meeting in December 1989 was unruly and resulted in lasting conflict. As a result, 500 people left and formed another church and Ridgeway remained in decline until 2009. Current deacons who were present then regularly express, in different ways, how the church should operate so as to avoid dissension. Deacons, and others who remain or have returned since 1989, express their love and excitement for Ridgeway's future.

Indicative of fallen people, Ridgeway experienced sinful relational issues. These issues included attacks on the pastor and a violation of the church covenant by a Sunday school teacher who was selling alcohol in his gas stations. One deacon chairman, along with other deacons, indicated that spiritually immature deacons were one cause

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<sup>10</sup>Eugene Rutland, *History of Ridgeway Baptist Church* (Memphis: Information Age Communications, n.d.), 49.

of the split. While the church had seen a decadal growth rate of nearly 17 percent from 1985-1995, the church continued to splinter and decline, averaging only 260 when I arrived. Thankfully, the previous pastor, who had a five-year tenure, stabilized the church for the future. Despite this stabilization, conversion growth remained nonexistent and there was no net growth.

After a year, I assessed that some of the deacons were operating in a way that could be identified with the office of deacon as portrayed in the New Testament, but also surmised a struggle continuing between a board of director's mentality and a servant mindset. If the deacons can extend the ministry of prayer and the Word, Ridgeway can grow healthier, thus seeing at least a platform for maintained numerical growth.

### **Rationale**

When the New Testament church exploded onto the scene, problems arose. One of the answers to those problems was the apostles' and congregation's selection of servants who had the capacity for spiritual leadership. They were to be "of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). Explicit in Acts is the function for which these were set apart: freeing the disciples for preaching and prayer, and the evangelistic activity of two of them, Philip and Stephen. Implicit in Acts is the connection between faithful men meeting needs and the second great multiplication of Christ followers (Acts 6:7).

Though the development of the office of deacon in Scripture forms a method of governance for local churches, it does not depict a checks and balances operation concomitant to the United States executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government. Ridgeway, however, seems to mirror the United States' democratic process

more than the biblical leadership pattern by vetting pastoral staff team decisions. Unlike the remedy of freeing those who preached the Word in Acts, Ridgeway's deacons and pastors found a growing church in a quagmire of relational problems in 1989.

Like so many church declensions, spiritual immaturity caused the split at Ridgeway. That the church remains today seems to be no less than miraculous to many members. Ridgeway's fellowship patterns, however, indicate that the stability is due, in large part, to God's providence by means of caring Sunday school classes.

An alternative approach to adding lay elders to solve the dilemma of conflict is to train up biblical deacons. Equipped deacons can lead the way in promoting unity, thus yielding a church on mission instead of one afflicted with dissent. Ridgeway demonstrates a reticence to rapid change, but the lay leadership seems amicable to new training and the analysis of what needs to happen to be more Christ-honoring. With twenty-four months of relationship building and good will, the church leadership has a strong basis on which to launch a project that develops biblical deacons at Ridgeway.

The deacons at Ridgeway are good men, but many have not been mentored in evangelism. They have had training, but have very little experience. The fact that Ridgeway will face new challenges both internally and externally in the years to come seems a safe assumption. That the deacons will respond differently and more appropriately than at previous times is an outcome the pastor and staff are not willing to assume. The aforementioned goals issue from the foundational truth that spiritual maturity is concomitant with being "of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom," as well as "faith and power," which Acts mentions as characteristics of the servants. The import that these servants were to be a solution to a problem that was

potentially disastrous for the unity of the early church must not be overlooked in an age in which the turmoil of a local church is often in public view.

### **Definitions and Limitations**

The purpose of this project is to develop a biblical understanding and deportment of the office of deacon through a synergy of training in evangelism, character development, and leadership through service. This project will explore Scripture texts that explicitly refer to deacons, as well as the record in Acts, which does not specify the chosen seven as deacons.<sup>11</sup> There is, however, good ground to conjecture the congregational selection in Acts 6 as the first episode of the office of deacon. At the least, the seven were the forerunners of the office.<sup>12</sup> While one does not find the noun *diakonos* as a proper term for the seven, the noun cognate *diakonia* (service or ministry) and the verb *diakoneo* (to serve) are present.<sup>13</sup> Also, since the project is within the context of a traditional Southern Baptist Convention congregation, practical grounds exist for appealing to Acts 6 as a cadre of principles that should undergird the Baptist understanding of the office of deacon.<sup>14</sup>

This project is limited to fifteen weeks. Two weeks will be used to assess the concept of the office of deacon among ordained men at Ridgeway, one week for preaching towards their commitment to the training, six weeks of training, four weeks of

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<sup>11</sup>Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel* (Nashville: Broadman, 1955), 90.

<sup>12</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1990), 121.

<sup>13</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 130.

<sup>14</sup>*The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: Lifeway Christian Resources, 2000), 13. The church uses Acts 6:3-6 as a reference for the office of deacon.

deployment in service and evangelism, and two weeks to reassess their concepts of the office of deacon, as well as to present a long-term evaluation of their involvement in the project.

The delimitation applies to participants in the project. The training plan will limit the number of participants to twenty active ordained men. Active deacons are men currently on the elected deacon body or, due to the rotation Ridgeway's bylaws require, are not on the body but are eligible to rotate onto the body next year. This number will be both plausible and manageable since the current active body is seventeen, and there are approximately that many more ordained men in the church that remain eligible to serve.

### **Research Methodology**

The first goal of this project is to develop the *ethos*, or character, of ordained men. An assessment tool will gauge participants' understanding of the prescriptive character qualifications given in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 at the onset of the project. We will conduct a commitment service in which to challenge deacons to make the remainder of the training a part of their intention to deepen their walks with God. At the end of the project, they will interact with the same assessment as the pretest and both sets of responses will be compared.

The second goal is to deepen the compassion of these men of service by teaching and examining the *pathos* of Christ, though not in a strict Aristotelian sense. The deacons will train using ministry opportunities and studying an abridged compilation of Christ's verbal and emotive interaction with the needs of humanity. Along with this didactic exposure of Christ's ministry, deacons will minister through service projects. These opportunities will include, but not be limited to, homebound and hospital visits,

benevolence ministry, and leading Sunday school classes in community mission projects. Together, both faith and practice should result in a deacon body that can more effectively relate to the felt needs of people.

The third goal is to equip Ridgeway's deacons with a *logos* that resembles Stephen and Philip's clear presentations of Christ in the Acts record. The deacons will augment age-graded Sunday school classes for the purpose of evangelism. In a church with both traditional, two-office Baptist government and traditional, age-graded Sunday school, this approach keeps the organization simple and aids classes in more difficult follow-up visits. As an option, deacons can be trained and deployed to preach at our local missions for the homeless or retirement homes. These options fulfill the purpose of the deacons being used in divine appointments just as Stephen preached to a group and Philip preached to the Ethiopian. This project presupposes that God uses servant-evangelism.

I will achieve my personal goals of maturing as a pastor-leader and seeing my influence grow as I ensure that I am leading the deacons through personal example. Also, as I prepare their training course for them, as well as walk with them in ministry, I have opportunity to grow. Two to three deacons involved in the project will evaluate my perceived leadership both before and after the project. These deacons will serve as my feedback group, and will meet three to four times during the project. Seeing the office of pastor given its true scriptural place of influence at Ridgeway may not be as measurable, and may be a longer process.

### **Summary of Chapters**

Chapter 1 describes the ministry context and history of Ridgeway Baptist Church, especially as it relates to deacons and church conflict. Using the most recent

demographic information available for 38119, and other zip codes that border it, chapter 1 describes the geographical area where Ridgeway is located. This chapter also contains the goals of this project. These benchmarks issue from the philosophy of spiritual church leadership and evangelism as related to the biblical understanding of the office of deacon, and are seminal in formulating this effort to develop deacons in evangelism, character, and leadership.

Chapter 2 formulates the biblical and theological basis for the local church office of deacon as set forth in the project. It contains an exegesis of Acts 6-7, 1 Timothy 3, and numerous passages related to service and leadership. Biblical deacons, theoretically, both free pastors for the ministry of prayer and the Word and exemplify Christlikeness to the church in meeting needs, which translates into local church harmony.

Chapter 3 examines the scriptural principles of spiritual authority and leadership in reference to the significant influence deacons seem to have in traditional Baptist churches. This chapter also contains an examination and critique of how Ridgeway and other churches select deacons. The apostles gave a serious charge the church needs to heed today, the premise being that congregations need to be taught and led to carefully select men for service.

Chapter 4 presents the curriculum and practicum administered during the course of the project. Each portion delineates the process so as to enable someone else to provide the same training in another setting. Chapter 5 thoroughly evaluates the effectiveness of the project. This evaluation deems the project profitable insofar as the survey instruments and ministry opportunity tallies demonstrate the development of these ordained men.



CHAPTER 2  
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS  
FOR THE OFFICE OF DEACON

Within the local church and denominational context of this project exists the foundational presupposition that the Bible is the only authority for faith and practice.<sup>1</sup> Churches that wish to function efficiently and effectively for the spread of the gospel will only be impeded by deviating from the church-government principles found in the New Testament. In regards to examining the office of deacon, there must be a level of importance assigned to such a task. Benjamin Merkle states,

The organizational structure of a church is an important issue. It is not, however, the most important issue. There are many other issues that have priority over this one. The deity of Christ, justification by faith alone, the inspiration, infallibility, and sufficiency of Scripture, and the substitutionary atonement of Christ are just a few examples of issues that are more crucial to the Christian faith. . . .

But just because a topic may not be the most important does not make it unimportant.<sup>2</sup>

While affirming Merkle’s prioritization of church office structure as less important than the fundamental doctrines of the faith, yet important in the life of the local church, church leaders should observe that all the fundamental doctrines affecting the eternal destinies of men were not handed down in a vacuum. Scripture indicates there was a direct and dependent relationship between the ministry of the Word and the ministry

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<sup>1</sup>“The Scriptures,” *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 7.

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 21.

to the needy. The needy, in Acts 6 where the seven servants were chosen, were Greek-speaking widows.

### **The Basis for the Office of Deacon Today**

Some would object to Acts 6 being used to discuss the need for deacons today because both the noun *diakonos* is not in the text and because churches today are not the sole source of sustenance for their widows. Conceding that Acts 6 may describe the prototype of the later office of deacon overcomes the first objection. If a prototype of what later became the office of deacon, Luke's employment of both the verb *diakoneo* and the cognate noun *diakonia* amply provides a framework from which to understand how men need to be set apart for certain types of service in the church today.<sup>3</sup>

### **The New Testament Presents Two Offices: Bishop and Deacon**

Millard Erickson conveys a disparity of development between the church government found in the New Testament and what is found in churches today. He states,

It is probably safe to say that the evidence from the New Testament is inconclusive; nowhere in the New Testament do we find a picture closely resembling any of the fully developed systems of today. It is likely that in those days church government was not very highly developed, indeed, that local congregations were rather loosely knit groups. There may well have been rather wide varieties of governmental arrangements. Each church adopted a pattern that fit its individual situation. We should bear in mind that at this point the church was just coming into being: it was not as yet sharply distinguished from Judaism.<sup>4</sup>

Although Erickson disclaims any clear specificity in the New Testament for prescribing the form of government for every church today, he affirms congregationalism as the

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<sup>3</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 130.

<sup>4</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 1094.

government most reflective of New Testament principles. He also writes from an assumption that the seven chosen in Acts 6 were deacons, and that deacons were not endowed with the same level of authority as bishops.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, that much of the secular and Jewish world perceived the church as a sect of Judaism does not construe an ambiguity in Luke and Paul's writings as to how churches functioned.<sup>6</sup>

Paul identified two offices when writing to a local church (Philippi) and when writing to a local elder (Timothy in 1 Timothy). In Philippians 1:1, he began, "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:"<sup>7</sup> The term *bishop* denotes the overseeing function of the office, while the terms *elder* and *shepherd*, or pastor, are used to describe the functions of the same office of overseer in Acts 20.<sup>8</sup> Although there are objections to this view, this project approaches the task of training deacons from this basis of which Merkle asserts, "This view . . . is best able to account for all the New Testament data."<sup>9</sup>

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul sets forth qualifications for the same two offices. Other than Philippians 1:1, this is the only case where the two terms are used side by side. Throughout the New Testament, different terms are used to describe these offices and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1091-93.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>T. C. Skeat, "Did Paul Write to 'Bishops and Deacons' at Philippi? A Note on Philippians 1:1," *Novum Testamentum* 37, no. 1 (January 1995): 12-15. F. G. Kenyon questioned the text of Phil 1:1 based on "the Chester Beatty papyrus codex of the Pauline Epistles (and Hebrews) denominated P 46 in the list of New Testament papyri, generally agreed to have been written about the year 200." Through measurements and word calculations, Skeat demonstrates that scribes could have omitted one of several clauses, one being "To the Bishops and Deacons." He concludes there is no firm resolution for thinking the reference to these offices a later addition.

<sup>8</sup>B. H. Carroll, *An Interpretation of the English Bible* (Nashville: Broadman, 1948), 135.

<sup>9</sup>Merkle, *40 Questions*, 78.

their functions, and these references fit under the two distinct categories of bishop or elder and deacon.<sup>10</sup>

If Acts 6 originates a point for the necessity of the office of deacon today, and 1 Timothy 3 assumes the existence of deacons as well as prescribes their qualifications, the modern church and culture must prove to be a receptor church and culture to these same principles. The principles of dealing with problems and selecting qualified men were foundational in establishing deacons in the New Testament era. Not every single facet of a principle, practice, or language translates or carries over neatly into the receptor culture or language. Nevertheless, there is a legitimate dynamic equivalent that observes the conveyed intent. The office of deacon converts from the New Testament culture to all cultures of all times because of the timelessness of the New Testament principles of looking to godly men for leadership and service.

### **Acts Identifies Deacons as Solutions to Church Problems**

Shortly after the birth of the New Testament church, a problem arose. Because Luke first declares the rapid growth of the church, his report of a problem that garnered the attention of the apostles demonstrates the seriousness of the complaint. Luke records, “Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution” (Acts 6:1 ESV). Luke uses the present active participle of *plethuno* with the genitive absolute, which indicates the growth and the complaining were happening simultaneously, and that the complaint was caused by the neglect that occurred

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<sup>10</sup>George W. Knight III, “Two Offices: (Elders or Bishops and Deacons) and Two Orders of Elders (Preaching or Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders): A New Testament Study,” *Presbyterion* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 3-4.

during this time.<sup>11</sup> The apostles assessed the grievance and involved the congregation in the solution by admonishing them, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:2-3).

Another insight into these servants’ sacred role is the identity of the two groups of widows. John R. W. Stott explains:

The complaint concerned the welfare of the widows, whose cause God had promised in the Old Testament to defend. . . . But there were two groups in the Jerusalem church, one called *Hellēnistai* and the other *Hebraioi*, and the former *complained against* the latter *because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. . . .*

. . . The *Hellēnistai* came from the diaspora, had settled in Palestine and spoke Greek, while the *Hebraioi* were natives of Palestine and spoke Aramaic.<sup>12</sup>

Stott goes on to explain that culture, more than language, caused these two groups to remain in tension despite Christ’s unifying death for all of them. This problem brought to the surface a more serious concern.<sup>13</sup> In the words of the text, “It is not desirable that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables” (Acts 6:2b). More will be said later concerning appropriate roles for deacons today.

In Acts, the first men set apart by the church were selected as a solution to the problem of neglect of certain members and the prevention of further disputation in the church. These servants were to ensure that no one was neglected in the ministry and that the ministry of the Word via the apostles was not impeded. Though there is no continuation of the office of apostle today, there is a continuation of the ministry of the

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<sup>11</sup>Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to The Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 240.

<sup>12</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1990), 120.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 120-21.

Word of God. Without making the hermeneutical error of treating the historical literature of Acts as a prescriptive letter such as 1 Timothy, the pattern Acts presents of growth-problem-solution-growth should not be overlooked. Through inspiration, God gave a report on these occurrences for a reason. As Robert Naylor indicates in his practical church-manual for deacons,

The leadership of the Holy Spirit gave rise to the office of deacon in the New Testament churches. Divine wisdom brought deacons into being, and divine ends were to be accomplished. While the office may be misinterpreted and its usefulness nullified, God has put it into the pattern for a purpose, a purpose that should be discovered and accepted because of its eternal significance.<sup>14</sup>

### **Churches Have Problems Today**

In Acts 6, some of those who had been connected in Christ were effectively disconnected to the ministry. Just as a complaint came forth in Acts 6, complaints come forth today, especially when people feel neglected, disenfranchised, or disconnected. In *The Connecting Church*, Randy Frazee approaches church growth and discipleship from the need to connect people together into a church community. He asserts,

In this postmodern age, the church is truly the one institution that has the function of community as part of its strategy to achieve its mission—which is the development of people who follow Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews lays out the priority of community: “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”<sup>15</sup>

Although Frazee never ties his arguments to the role of deacons, he observes the need for a rediscovery of interdependence within the church. He stresses a church model based on a more communal emphasis applied by our churches following more closely the model of

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<sup>14</sup>Robert E. Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon* (Nashville: Broadman, 1955), 6.

<sup>15</sup>Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 35.

the New Testament rather than American individualism. From this perspective, deacons are needed because other people matter.

Relationships are important within the church. Churches have problems today because they continue to be made up of people. Naylor points out that the conflicts within the church, such as the Greek-speaking widows being neglected, have a much more devastating impact than the persecution and problems from outside the church.<sup>16</sup> As it was then, the ministry of the Word must be guarded by those who would relieve the teachers as in Acts 6, thus promoting church harmony and the following of Christ's way.<sup>17</sup>

### **Deacon Qualifications**

The concept of deacon in the New Testament is broader than the definition of the technical office. Insofar as someone refers to a deacon in any way, including that of an appointed official in a local church, he has referred to one whose role is inseparable from servanthood.<sup>18</sup> Appearing in three forms, variations of the word deacon occur one hundred times in the Greek New Testament.<sup>19</sup> Exploring the biblical qualifications given for official deacons informs a biblical understanding of their role.

### **Acts 6**

It stands to reason that those relieving both the neglected widows with sustenance and the Holy Apostles with representative service to these ministry needs

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<sup>16</sup>Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon*, 7.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 10-13.

<sup>18</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert, "Behind the Word 'Deacon': A New Testament Study," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140, no. 558 (April 1983): 151-52.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 153.

meet certain qualifications. They were observed to be of a certain quality, and the function of these servants most likely preceded the official office.<sup>20</sup> The admonition of the apostles necessitated the fundamental importance of this servant position in the structure of the local church. Naylor, in *The Baptist Deacon*, explains, “Since the work of the deacon is so vital, what kind of men are adequate for it? Obviously not just anybody will do, for a church is a spiritual concern. Spiritual qualifications are basic, and many present problems have come about from ignoring this.”<sup>21</sup>

While chapter 2 of this project deals with the apostle Paul’s prescriptive requirements forthrightly, Luke’s description of the apostles’ charge informs readers of the nature of this prototypical office of service. These characteristics were observable to the congregation since they were charged to select the men.<sup>22</sup> Though they are not identical, the qualifications in Acts and 1 Timothy certainly do not conflict.

**Men of good reputation.** A translation of the present passive participle, *martuoumenous*, the seven literally were to be “well reported of.”<sup>23</sup> These seven were to have people who could vouch for them. There is some similarity in Paul’s first prescriptive requirement for deacons, *reverent* (1 Tim 3:8). The English Standard Version renders *semnos* as “dignified.” Like Luke described in Acts 6, Paul began with a qualification that could be understood to encompass all the following required characteristics. Having a good witness and being worthy of respect are synonymous in

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<sup>20</sup>Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 221.

<sup>21</sup>Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon*, 14.

<sup>22</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 241.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*



practical application. The characteristics that follow build a more specific connotation of the apostles' first demand and the apostle Paul's first criterion for the young elder, Timothy.

**Full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.** The coupling of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and wisdom is a genitive of content followed by a future tense verb.<sup>24</sup> These criteria were to describe the candidate's state of life before selection and appointment. To be filled with the Holy Spirit in Luke's understanding was to have experienced the fire of God in a consuming way based on his account of Pentecost and Peter's testimony in Acts 2. Paul would later use the imagery of the temple phraseology in connection with both justification and sanctification.<sup>25</sup>

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Cor 6:11, 17-20 ESV)

While there is much debate about the experience and ramifications of being filled with the Holy Spirit, the basis for the apostolic injunction in Acts 6 is oneness with the Lord evidenced in a set apart life. Limited to the context in Acts, however, the Holy Spirit's filling and speaking the gospel are inseparable. From those at Pentecost, to Peter's sermons, to the saints praying in Acts 4, and to Stephen in Acts 7, the filling of the Holy Spirit is inseparable with speaking the Word of God. Alan Thompson explains,

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<sup>24</sup>Martin M. Culy and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 109.

<sup>25</sup>Rodney Reeves, *Spirituality According to Paul: Imitating the Apostle of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 64.

The most obvious stated purpose for the coming of the Spirit in Acts is to empower God's people to speak for him, proclaiming his salvation. . . .

Thus Jesus promises in 1:8 that the disciples will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and the result of this reception of power will be that the disciples will be witnesses of him. . . .

An illustration of this may be found in Peter's sermon itself. In Acts 2:4 the word used to refer to the Spirit's enabling of "all who were filled with the Holy Spirit" to speak in other languages is *apophthengomai* (as the Spirit *enabled* them). . . .

This link between the enablement of the Spirit and the ability to speak for God is also highlighted throughout Acts with the verb *pimplēmi* (filled) followed by an activity of speaking. As noted above, in Acts 2:4 Luke states, "They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak . . ." Similarly, in 4:8 Peter is "filled with the Spirit" and declares to the temple leadership that salvation is found in the name of Jesus alone. In 4:31 those at the prayer meeting were "all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly". In 6:10, although the word *pimplēmi* is not used, the Spirit enables Stephen to speak.<sup>26</sup>

Although the verb *to fill* is not used, Thompson does note that the accusative adjective *plereis* (full) is used as a qualification of the seven.<sup>27</sup> A further connection exists. In Acts 7:55, the adjective is used again as Luke records, "But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (ESV). In addition, at the onset of Stephen's sermon, Luke portrays a deacon who is qualified because of the Spirit of God in his life. Luke explains the demeanor of Stephen's hearers as, "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke" (Acts 6:10). Inseparable graces then are the filling of the Spirit and wisdom, which were qualifications for these seven servants in Acts 6.

Furthermore, the Book of Proverbs indicates that wisdom, among other uses, is the ability to understand the mysteries of life.<sup>28</sup> Stephen demonstrates an understanding

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<sup>26</sup>Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 131-33.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 67-68.

of the Old Testament and boldness due to the filling of the Holy Spirit and the gift of wisdom. Jesus had earlier explained to the disciples, “But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matt 13:16-17 ESV).

The observation that Stephen and Philip were special is hardly questionable by those encountering their stories in Acts. While guarding not to make deacons some superior class of Christians in the church, the tenor of Acts 6 presents seven who stood out to the congregation, and these seven displayed maturity in the Christian faith, but being full of the Spirit should not conjure up the idea of a rare state of believers.

G. Campbell Morgan writes,

A man full of the Spirit is one who is living a normal Christian life. Fullness of the Spirit is not a state of spiritual aristocracy, to which few can attain. Anything less than the fullness of the Spirit for the Christian man is disease of the spiritual life, a low ebb of vitality. Fullness of the Spirit is not abnormal, but normal Christian life.<sup>29</sup>

**Full of faith.** Though not specified as a criterion for the seven, Acts describes Stephen as a man full of faith (or grace, depending on which manuscript). Luke lists him first because he is the hero of the following narrative.<sup>30</sup> Aforementioned is the connection between the fullness of the Spirit and preaching the gospel in Acts. Luke chooses Stephen as the first and primary example of the seven, and his special favor from the Lord enables him to preach and to die for his faith.

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<sup>29</sup>G. Campbell Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1924), 47.

<sup>30</sup>John B. Pohill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 181.

## 1 Timothy 3

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul addresses the offices of both bishop and deacon, enumerating the prerequisites for each office of the local church. The fact that these ancillary men are of no small importance, and their holy disposition crucial to the church's ministry, comes into sharper focus when one examines Paul's Words to Timothy on the matter.

It is important to note that deacons are to possess pristine characters analogous to overseers. The NIV translates the word *hosautos*: "in the same way," "likewise," "the same thing," "the same," "also," "similarly," "so also," "the same way," and "too."<sup>31</sup> The Bible, therefore, conveys that bishops and deacons are similar in their department.

**Reverent.** As stated above in reference to Luke's description of good reputation, this term encapsulates the following criteria in the passage and carries with it the idea of worthiness of respect.<sup>32</sup> Other biblical usage of the term *semnos* confirms this understanding. Merkle observes,

The Greek word translated dignified (*semnos*) occurs only four times in the New Testament (Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2). The term normally refers to something that is honorable, respectable, esteemed, or worthy and is closely related to "respectable" (*kosmios*), which is given as a qualification for elders (1 Tim. 3:2). In Philippians 4:8, Paul exhorts the believers to meditate on things that are true, *honorable*, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. In Titus 2:2, Paul commands the older men to be dignified. The other two occurrences are found in 1 Timothy 3.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>John R. Kohlenberger III, Edward W. Goodrick, and James A. Swanson, *The Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 787.

<sup>32</sup>Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 116.

<sup>33</sup>Merkle, *40 Questions*, 234.

**Not double-tongued.** This description could refer to either a gossip or one that says one thing and does another. The best choice is the idea of saying one thing to one person and something different to another.<sup>34</sup> This rare term simply means to be duplicitous.<sup>35</sup> Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin reason in reference to the New International Version's rendering:

The deacon would be a frequent visitor in homes, and he needed to be consistent in what he reported to others. The NIV's metaphorical translation "sincere" obscures the fact that the Pauline phrase (*dilogos*) has the meaning of *not double-tongued* and refers primarily to controlling speech (ie., "not indulging in double talk," NEB). The deacon is not to spread rumors to different groups of listeners.<sup>36</sup>

**Not given to much wine.** Employing a present active participle used with the dative, Paul prohibits deaconship from one who has a continuous habit of turning his mind toward alcohol.<sup>37</sup> Lea and Griffin interpret it as, "forbidding the love of alcohol."<sup>38</sup> Although those who hold the differing positions of total abstinence and a pro-alcohol moderation continue to debate, the purpose of this project is to challenge deacons to a higher standard than the status quo. While adding prohibitions to Scripture can be classified as legalism, it is clear to many evangelicals that any Christian, not to mention deacon, wanting to portray a blameless testimony for Christ ought to abstain from alcoholic beverages. In an address to his church, John Piper made clear that while not a requirement for membership, believers should abstain. He testifies,

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<sup>34</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 492.

<sup>35</sup>Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 262-63.

<sup>36</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 116.

<sup>37</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 492.

Now if there were some good reason, I could work to reeducate my conscience on this matter. But in view of what I know about alcohol I have no inclination to rid myself of my conscientious misgivings about the use of alcohol. Many young evangelicals need to have a far more positive attitude toward the sensitivities of conscience which many owe to their parents and church. It is a mark of great immaturity to be constantly kicking against the ways our parents taught us. I know I owe my conscientious misgivings about alcohol to my parents. We never drank and I am glad. I never felt the least slighted. On the contrary we were the happiest family I ever knew. Total abstinence paid off.<sup>39</sup>

The position of total abstinence will inform the deacon training produced by this project because it best serves the biblical principles of sobriety given out in the first century AD, and before, and especially as these principles flow into the receptor cultures of once modern and now postmodern society.<sup>40</sup>

**Not greedy for money.** Paul warned deacons against greediness of gain, of which his opponents were guilty in 1 Timothy 6:5-10. Paul emphasizes this, as does Peter.<sup>41</sup> Like the overseer in 3:3, the deacon's motivation for service must not be tethered to money. The references to the greed of money in the pastorals and in 1 Peter 5 are connected to false teachers.<sup>42</sup> The deacon must stand in contradistinction to these that prey on others.

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<sup>38</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 116.

<sup>39</sup>John Piper, "Total Abstinence and Church Membership" [on-line]; accessed 6 March 2012; available from <http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper81/100481e.htm>; Internet.

<sup>40</sup>Though evangelicals vary in their opinions on the moderate use of alcohol, the purview of this project is limited by both the Ridgeway Baptist Church covenant and my understanding of wine in the Bible. For a further discussion on this topic, see David Brumbelow's volume *Ancient Wine and the Bible* (Carrollton, GA: Free Church Press, 2011) and Peter Master's book, *Should Christian's Drink? The Case for Total Abstinence* (Vale, Guernsey: The Guernsey Press, 1992).

<sup>41</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 263.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

**Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.** The first four qualifications end a section dubbed “self-mastery” by Stott. He groups the others into three additional categories, the second of which is “orthodox convictions” based on “holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.”<sup>43</sup> Stephen was accused of blasphemy as he explained the Old Testament background of the gospel. He, however, continued until being murdered. Stephen exercised a faithful stewardship of understanding and beliefs he had to share with others. Mystery must refer to the gospel because Paul defined “the mystery of godliness” as,

God was manifested in the flesh,  
Justified in the Spirit,  
Seen by angels,  
Preached among the Gentiles,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up in glory. (1 Tim 3:16)

Merkle explains, “Consequently, this statement refers to the doctrinal beliefs of a deacon. Unlike those who have suffered shipwreck regarding the faith (1 Tim. 1:19) and whose consciences are seared (1 Tim. 4:2), deacons are to hold firm to the true gospel without wavering . . . the behavior of a deacon must be consistent with his beliefs.”<sup>44</sup> Paul conveys the sense of a cathartic experience of the gospel instead of a mere intellectual experience. Again, Luke points us to Stephen whose possession of hidden truth could be classified as anything but a mere intellectual attestation.

**Tested.** Tested (“proven of worth,” NIV) here is in the present imperfect form of the root *dokimazo* and may mean a continual testing.<sup>45</sup> This word is used by

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<sup>43</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 101.

<sup>44</sup>Merkle, *40 Questions*, 235.

<sup>45</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 117.

Paul fifteen out of its twenty-two uses in the New Testament; it is used of metals, Paul's apostleship, and God's testing. The word denotes a testing or authentication.<sup>46</sup> Here, the term battle-proven best describes the sense.<sup>47</sup> That these men were recommended by their track records suggests additional support for the practice of congregational nomination.

**Blameless.** The word "blameless" (*anegkletos*) means without charge, without accusation, irreproachable.<sup>48</sup> As men who extended the ministry of those preaching the Word, it makes perfect sense that nothing be in their lives that could be a liability to the ministry. It is not that they were not to blame for their own sin, but that there was no specific charge that could be leveled against them.<sup>49</sup>

**Comparable wives.** "Wives" originates from the word *gune*, which is translated either wives or women, depending on the context. Much discussion exists on how to understand Paul here. Is he referring to women deacons (deaconesses) or to the wives of the deacons, since the term *their* is not in the original language but supplied by the translators?<sup>50</sup> Although some conjecture that God's Word does not prohibit women deacons as clearly as it prohibits women elders, there is no reason to build a case for the latter.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:340.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 492.

<sup>49</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 118.

<sup>50</sup>Merkle, *40 Questions*, 236, 249.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 257-59. The purview of this project is ordained deacons mirroring the prototypes in Acts 6, thus men. I recognize that any women serving in the church can legitimately be referred to as a deaconess or deacons, and that there is a disparity of opinion on these issues, even within conservative church affiliations. For a discussion on the historical use of women deacons, which were a different order than males, see G. M. Burge's discussion in Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 320-21.



If the meaning then is wives, what kind of wives? Using the term likewise, Paul indicates they are to be comparable wives. Like their husbands, they must be reverent. They, too, must have pure and harmless speech, which Paul defines as not slanderous (from *diabolos*).<sup>52</sup> Naylor states, “The Greek word is *diabolos*, and this is the only place in the New Testament where it is translated this way. Thirty-five times it is translated devil. Twice it is translated false accuser. The Holy Spirit says that the deacon’s wife is not to be the things this word describes.”<sup>53</sup>

In addition to not slandering or gossiping is the qualification temperance (*nephalis*) just as the elders in verse 2, which connotes abstinence from alcohol, but also connotes self-mastery. William Hendriksen differentiates:

In mode of living (tastes and habits) temperate. . . . Other possible translations of the adjective would be sober (not, however, in the sense of somber or sad), circumspect. Such a person lives deeply. His pleasures are not primarily those of the senses, like the pleasures of a drunkard, for instance, but those of the soul. He is filled with spiritual and moral earnestness. He is not given to excess (in the use of wine, etc.), but moderate, well-balanced, calm, careful, steady, and sane. This pertains to his physical, moral, and mental tastes and habits.<sup>54</sup>

The final qualification for wives of deacons is “faithful in all things.” The NIV renders it “trustworthy in everything.” Lea and Griffin state, “The demand that the women be “trustworthy in everything” was an insistence on absolute reliability and faithfulness. Their trustworthiness could not be limited to a single sphere but had to be a part of all they did.”<sup>55</sup> Requiring the wives to be temperate and faithful is logical seeing that their husbands’ reputation is of most importance to Paul and the other Twelve based

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<sup>52</sup>Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 492.

<sup>53</sup>Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon*, 124.

<sup>54</sup>William Hendriksen, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1957), 122.

<sup>55</sup>Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 121.

on Luke's documentation of the apostles' requirements in Acts 6. To be otherwise would also breach the Pauline understanding of unity in a marriage and in a church according to 1 and 2 Corinthians, where believers must speak the same thing, purge out gross sin, not be unequally yoked, and remain one with their spouse.

**Husbands of one wife ruling their children and their own houses well.**

Paul's requirement that deacons be the husband of one wife draws no less controversy. The verb *be* is in the present tense and suggests a continual state. Where commentators seem in total harmony is that this is to be a "one woman sort of man."<sup>56</sup> One thing is clear: if deacons can be divorced, so can bishops. This assumption is based on the identical qualifications within the same passage. In keeping with the exegesis of the words *blameless* and *reverent*, it seems incongruous to argue for a relaxation of the no divorce policy existing in many churches.

Since not formally the norm, Baptist churches that ordain divorced men as deacons prompt the question: Has the church allowed changing cultural norms to change its interpretations of Scripture? Other questions for consideration are: When does a man cease to become a one-woman man? How many divorces can one have had and still be a deacon? How long of a probationary period after divorce must men wait for ordination? If they are to rule their children and their house, how could they rule two sets of children and two houses? Allowing for an interpretation based on a twenty-first century understanding of the literally rendered phrase "one woman man" necessitates an entire new subset of elder and deacon qualifications not addressed by Scripture. With sensible clarity, Stott argues for a higher standard for church leaders when he answers in reference

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<sup>56</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *The Pastoral Epistles in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 54.

to Jesus and Paul's concessions for divorce: "Do these concessions not apply to clergy and prospective clergy, then? If not, does this not erect a double standard? Yes it does, but is it not reasonable and right that a higher standard should be expected of pastors who are called to teach by example as well as by words?"<sup>57</sup>

Finally, there is a dangerous potential for myopically applying this qualification of being a one-woman man. Divorce is not the only potential pitfall for a man. Henry Webb issues: "In considering this qualification concerning marriage, churches should not limit their attention to the issue of divorce. Certainly Paul was primarily concerned about the faithfulness by the husband and wife to their marriage relationships."<sup>58</sup> The deacon cannot be a polygamist or an adulterer. In keeping with the qualification reverent, deacons must not lust after other women.<sup>59</sup>

In connection with being a one-woman man, spiritual servants must first serve at home. Naylor points out that both *rule* and *well* are emphasized, but not to read any modern negative connotations into the word *rule*.<sup>60</sup> Logically, if both the apostles and deacons in Acts 6 were concerned for the neglected, then deacons must not neglect their own families.

From a sound understanding of the biblical qualifications of deacons, it is easy to surmise that such qualified men will be men of influence. Just as Aristotle found that a speaker must be received as believable and respectable through a strong *ethos*, in addition

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<sup>57</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 93-94.

<sup>58</sup>Henry Webb, *Deacons: Servant Models in the Church*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 2001), 32.

<sup>59</sup>The scope of this project does not deal with whether or not some divorces are biblically sanctioned or whether divorce prior to conversion to Christ is to be viewed differently when it comes to potential deacons; it deals only with the qualifications listed in Scripture.

<sup>60</sup>Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon*, 128.

to the qualities of his *logos* and *pathos*, so a deacon in the church must serve from a pristine character, and this *ethos* must be perceived as such by those being served.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Role of a Deacon**

If the Scripture and the nature of Christ's body point to both the need for the office of deacon today and the qualifications for that office, then the question of the deacon's role in today's church emerges. Also, how can a pastor reform his current deacons' perspectives who are assuming authority or responsibilities not conferred on them by the church, much less Holy Scripture? Presenting a clear biblical ministry description is an indispensable beginning point toward remedying such a situation.

### **Deacons Relieve the Elders**

In *Breakout Churches*, Thom Rainer classifies leaders of formerly plateaued but now growing churches into six categories, all based on the first seven chapters of Acts. Acts 1 is the called leader, Acts 2 is the contributing leader, Acts 3 is the outwardly-focused leader, Acts 4 is the passionate leader, Acts 5 is the bold leader, and Acts 6/7 is the legacy leader. The leader classified by the Acts narrative presenting the first set-apart servants of the church, and one of the stand-outs (Stephen), is one who gives away ministry opportunities. Rainer explains:

Acts 6/7 leaders are hard to find. They have all the attributes of the previous stages plus more. These leaders, such as the Twelve mentioned in Acts 6:1-7, are quick to give ministry to others and let them take the credit for their work. . . . But Acts 6/7 leaders, like Stephen, are not merely concerned about the church during their lifetime; they seek to make decisions that will benefit the church after they are gone. This kind of leader is rare.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Aristotle, *Peri Sophistikou Eelegkon*, 1.5, trans. John H. Freese under the title *On Sophistical Refutations*, in *Aristotle: The "Art" of Rhetoric*, in *Aristotle*, ed. G. P. Goold, vol. 23 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, and London: William Heinemann, 1926; reprint, 1982), 171.

<sup>62</sup>Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2005), 44.

Rainer goes on to identify eight qualities of Acts 6/7 leaders, including “fierce biblical faithfulness, acceptance of responsibility, and unconditional love for people.”<sup>63</sup> Rainer observed these traits, among five others, in the leaders studied by his research team, but they also fit the behavior of the apostles and deacons described in Acts.

As seen in the above exegesis of Acts 6, these seven were selected to relieve those who could not afford to neglect the ministries of prayer and preaching. In fact, “able to teach” in 1 Timothy 3:2 is the only major distinction in the qualifications Paul gives elders and deacons. Mark Dever points out three levels of service for the deacon: ministering to the needy, helping the church remain in harmony, and support for the apostles.<sup>64</sup> He goes on to declare, “They minister to physical needs, but their ministry is a spiritual ministry.”<sup>65</sup> It stands to reason, therefore, that all elders must be able to teach, but not all deacons must be able to teach. This distinction helps to continue defining the deacon’s role today.

### **Deacons Minister to Further the Gospel**

The Scripture is ambiguous concerning any scope of certain tasks to which deacons must be assigned. The Acts 6-8 narrative shows one assigned task to the deacon prototype and two notable deacons who come on the scene giving out the gospel. It makes little sense to define narrowly the role of a set-apart deacon as simply a volunteer or an extra hand due to both Scripture’s silence on specific tasks and the gospel ministries of Stephen and Philip. Accordingly, those being saved should all be put into some sort

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 53-62.

<sup>64</sup>Daniel L. Akin, ed., *A Theology for the Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2007), 799-800.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 800.

of Christian service. It would not be prudent, therefore, to use those of the highest qualifications for ministry that does not preclude participation by novices.

Examples help any student or audience understand the information imparted to them. In Acts 7-8, both Stephen and Philip have observable behaviors concomitant with the aforementioned criteria in Acts 6, as well as Paul's prescriptive qualifications in 1 Timothy. Luke describes Stephen as one "full of grace and power" (Acts 6:8 ESV), and his following sermon demonstrates no less than the epitome of Christian witness and leadership as he boldly connects the message of the Old Testament to Christ, while calling for repentance. Edmond Hiebert points out that *diaokonia* is used both as a description of serving tables and ministering; the word indicating that the deacon service "is not limited to material things."<sup>66</sup> He states, "While unquestionably Stephen faithfully performed his assigned task of serving tables, he did not regard himself as limited to such a material ministry. He also carried on an effective spiritual witness, as Acts 6:8-7:60 makes clear."<sup>67</sup> Though some might view Stephen an anomaly when it comes to deacons, there is no biblical example of what the twenty-first century, preconceived notion of the normal deacon would be, save perhaps the administration of the Lord's Supper.

With a new emphasis on the plurality of elders underway in Baptist life, the role of the New Testament deacon should not be overlooked. Some say that deacon positions are created according to needs, including "budget, bookstall and library, sound, child care, children's ministry, ordinances, member care, hospitality, ushers, weddings, community outreach, and audio duplication."<sup>68</sup> While no deacon should be above any

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<sup>66</sup>Hiebert, "Behind the Word 'Deacon,'" 155.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 169.

task, it is faulty to connect specialized deacon ministries relegated to Sunday service activities and twenty-first century technology to the qualifications Scripture demands.

In his book *What Is a Healthy Church*, Dever states, “If God has so gifted a certain man in the church with exemplary character, pastoral wisdom, and gifts of teaching, and if, after prayer, the church recognizes these things, then he should be set apart as an elder.”<sup>69</sup> In pointing out that congregations need to look within for elders, he makes little room for the role of deacons. Since “able to teach” (1 Tim 3:2) is the principle distinguishing mark between a bishop and a deacon, there should not be a hybrid office of elders not functioning as teachers of Holy Scripture.

In another book, Mark Dever and Paul Alexander seem to make a concession from the previous statement about being gifted to teach when they stipulate that “it is wise to choose men who are at least willing to teach publicly and who show some modicum of interest and propensity to do so.”<sup>70</sup>

After warning against specialized ministry for elders, Dever and Alexander say, “Whenever a deacon position seems to outlive its usefulness, we feel free to discontinue the position as a way of conserving the energy of the body and pruning the ministry branches that are either no longer needed or are no longer bearing fruit.”<sup>71</sup> With qualifications similar to pastors, or bishops, it would be wise not to demote deacons to specialized positions that can end when deemed obsolete. Also, if departmentalization of the elders is harmful to the church, why is the departmentalization of deacons not

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<sup>69</sup>Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 113.

<sup>70</sup>Dever and Alexander, *The Deliberate Church*, 146.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 169.

harmful? If Dever and Alexander's principle of noncompartmentalization is valid, then it should apply comprehensively to both offices.

Dever and Alexander portray the biblical roles of elders, hired staff, and deacons as: "The elders decide on the destination. The staff drive the bus. The deacons make sure we've got enough gas to get there."<sup>72</sup> The biblical picture accommodating the exegesis of the aforementioned Scriptures on deacons would read, "The elders pray and preach, and the deacons minister to ensure no interruption of the praying and preaching."

In light of the New Testaments' ambiguity on specific church government functions as discussed earlier, room must be left to focus on the more important elements of spiritual leadership. For example, the hired, non-ordained staff members Dever and Alexander propose do not fit into the biblical model, but are not prohibited by the biblical model.<sup>73</sup> Church cultures and governments that do not conflict with Scripture should not be deemed inferior. To see the results of a church served by spiritual, biblical deacons as in Acts 6, churches can strive to have biblical deacons without changing their founding form of government.

The path taken by this project, therefore, will not be to transition to a plurality of different orders of elders, but to begin to train and choose biblical deacons. The idea of ordained staff honors the New Testament's evidence of more than one elder, and there is no logical or scriptural footing to deny the presence of a primary leader in each New Testament church.

If Acts 6 is only about waiting tables to free the apostles, what is there to surmise from the following narrative about Stephen and Philip? What about the widows

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 168-69.



who were not being neglected? Who was ministering to them? Jesus was clear that all believers must wait on one another (Matt 20:26-28; Mark 10:45).<sup>74</sup> The point emerges that churches wishing to be biblical must have an authentic and viable order of deacons.

### **Conclusion**

In training deacons for ministry, there must be a biblical understanding of the identity of such an office, the qualifications of the office, and the role the deacon fulfills in today's church. After the seven were chosen in Acts 6, Luke records, "And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7 ESV). The New Testament affords some room to implement the timeless principles of leadership and service within the confines of the two offices: bishops and deacons. Deacons are set apart men to further the ministry of the Word by attending to church members' needs, while proclaiming the same gospel as the pastors.

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<sup>74</sup>Hiebert, "Behind the Word 'Deacon,'" 157.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES  
OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

Secular corporations and leadership consultants are ascertaining and adopting leadership principles found in Holy Scripture, especially from the life of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Companies find themselves in changing cultures and business paradigms that necessitate adjustments in order to maintain productivity and profit. The Church exists in that same ever-changing culture, and it, before any corporation, should access and apply these principles of leadership. These biblical leadership principles were present at the birth of the Church and remained inextricably identifiable with the early Church.<sup>2</sup>

Essentially, leadership is influence.<sup>3</sup> Something persuades people to follow leaders. In rhetoric, Aristotle identified three vital elements affecting the locutor's ability to persuade. First, *ethos* is the character of the speaker when he has shown himself to be

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<sup>1</sup>Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons for Everyone from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), xiii.

<sup>2</sup>The direction of this discussion differs significantly from what I proposed in chap. 1. In the following section, I narrow the focus to Aristotle's threefold idea in order to support the practicum in chap. 4 and in order to eliminate discussions that would prove to be either too long, have little bearing on training our participants, or be a Pandora's Box. For example, our participants were the case study for this project, and there was no need to broaden the scope of the project with the case study listed under section III. B in the outline (see appendix 2, page 104). The first sentence in my chapter 3 summary on page 13 is given ultimate attention throughout the following discussion, looking at the influence of men whose leadership composite includes a sound *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.

<sup>3</sup>John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 13.

trustworthy. Second, the *pathos* of the speaker stirs the emotions of his audience, and the third, *logos*, is the argument itself.<sup>4</sup>

While Aristotle applied this threefold idea to oratory, his understanding of human influence has pervasive implications for broader applications. For example, the Greek-speaking widows mentioned in Acts complained due to neglect. The men chosen to remedy the problem were required to meet certain qualifications (discussed in chapter 2 of this project). The apostles' explicitly stated criteria and the examples of Stephen and Philip can be explained using Aristotle's threefold idea.

First, the foundation of the congregation's choice of the servants in Acts 6 was the good reputation, or *ethos*, they exuded.<sup>5</sup> Second, although used in a much different sense, *pathos* (awakening emotional response) issues implicitly out of the Acts 6 narrative because the men were now to be servants of needy women.<sup>6</sup> Third, Luke records sermons of great *logos* (well-reasoned argument).<sup>7</sup> Subsequent to their platforms of ministry to widows, Stephen and Philip communicate with scintillating clarity and with the underpinning of the Old Testament, which corroborates the identity of Christ and His gospel.

While careful not to insinuate a connection between the fact that Aristotle was Greek and the culture of the Hellenist widows, observations of key characteristics in Acts,

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<sup>4</sup>George A. Kennedy, *Aristotle on Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 14.

<sup>5</sup>In chap. 2 of this project, I explain each of the biblical qualifications for the office of deacon per Acts 6 and 1 Tim 3.

<sup>6</sup>Naylor points out that the Greek-speaking widows being neglected could have had a more devastating affect on the church than attacks from without the church. Robert E. Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon* (Nashville: Broadman, 1955), 7.

<sup>7</sup>See Bruce's discussion on Stephen's historical retrospect form of presenting the gospel. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 144.

as they relate to leading as servants of the church, can be organized under Aristotle's threefold idea. Furthermore, if these traits are binding upon the lives of deacons, it is logical and helpful to trace these qualities in the lives of Paul and Jesus.<sup>8</sup> Paul should be studied because he is the prescriber of ordination qualifications in 1 Timothy 3. Leaders should look to Jesus because it is with Him that Paul is consumed, and to Him alone that Paul is accountable.

In addition, the application of scriptural principles (namely, spiritual disciplines) should yield a proactive approach to those wanting to have these traits found in them as they serve today's church. Both Jesus and Paul gave practical instructions, which are both timeless and transferable to leaders in modern culture today.

## **Logos**

### **Jesus**

**The person and preaching of Christ.** Jesus not only has an effective *logos*, He is the *Logos* according to John 1:1-14. Jesus not only made perfect sense when He taught, He is the meaning of life; what He said was worthy of acceptance. Jesus' character could not be impugned, so the Pharisees tried entrapping Him in something He said. After His Sermon on the Mount, Matthew reports, "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (Matt 7:28-29 ESV).

In turn, Jesus recovered the true meaning of the Old Testament for His listeners from the error of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The *Logos* (The Christ) used impeccable *logos* (reasoned communication) by explaining the care of the Heavenly Father using a

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<sup>8</sup>Blanchard and Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus*, xiii.

maxim, and explaining how to identify false prophets using a good tree/good fruit and evil tree/evil fruit metaphor. These examples of Christ's condescension show He made God accessible and illustrated God's Kingdom with stories and metaphors the everyday person could understand.

**Jesus' commitment to Holy Scripture.** Jesus' use of sound reasoning is the perfect example of an effective servant-leader. Being fully divine, Jesus is the ultimate author of Holy Scripture through the Holy Spirit. He said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Being also fully human, Jesus was a student of Scripture. He would have been trained as all young Jewish males were in that day. At twelve, He astounded some experts at the temple with His understanding of God's Word, but He had not bypassed being taught by the Rabbis.

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. (Luke 2:39-46 ESV)

In the life of Jesus, the deacon has a perfect example of one personally and wholly committed to Holy Writ and to sound theology. Jesus read the Scripture in the synagogue. Jesus quoted the Scripture in order to stand against the temptations from Satan. Jesus, being fully man, quoted the sacred writing of Moses, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4).

Just as Jesus did, the deacon should turn to the Scripture. He should be convinced of the veracity of God's Word, which will inform his theology as he ministers, especially his Christology. When Jesus was around the disciples, they often asked Him questions. His physical presence was a luxury and would not always exist for His followers. Fittingly, and with perfect power and wisdom, Jesus disguised the eyes of the Emmaus Road disciples, while "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27 ESV). Later, the once discouraged followers exclaimed, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32 ESV). Jesus had trained these two downtrodden followers to look to Him through the lens of Scripture, and not simply through their experience.

The deacon should have a desire to emulate Jesus' *logos* by knowing how to communicate basic doctrine. Jesus did not conceal spiritual truth, except from the proud and faithless. He brought the good news of the kingdom down to man, both as the incarnation of God and the master-teacher of God's Word. Likewise, in a microcosmic way, servants in the office of deacon should be able to bear witness by conveying God's Word when given a divine appointment like Stephen before the Pharisees and Philip before the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Conversely, deacons should not abdicate their opportunities of conveying the gospel to the elders, or overseer-pastors. Naylor, on the exegesis of the phrase "great boldness in the faith" in 1 Timothy 3:13, elaborates:

This has been defined as a "confident public expression of the faith, such as would belong to an experienced Christian who had gained a good standing and in consequence had no temptation to be double tongued." That may be just a little long and confused, but it suggests that these men by their faithfulness had lost all sense of the apologetic, and courageously and positively presented their testimony for the

Lord. How many churches are handicapped by timid men? There are so few that will speak confidently, with assurance that is born of experienced Christian service, and will boldly launch their programs of faith.<sup>9</sup>

In thinking about being Christ's ambassadors, some overlook the nature of the worship gathering during the establishment of the early church. Christians often met in people's homes, as seen clearly in Acts (2:46; 12:12). The first deacons were dispersed to the homes of Greek-speaking, Jewish widows. As the community saw the church's responsive care for these neglected women, opportunities likely presented themselves for deacons to share the gospel. Some surmise that household churches were always held in spacious, more luxurious homes, but this is a conclusion without sufficient support.<sup>10</sup> Deacons, therefore, would have had great opportunities to share Christ as they gained entrance to communities through believing widows' homes.

Knowing Christ and knowing Christ well from Scripture should serve to embolden deacons to "sanctify the Lord God in [their] hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet 3:15). Jesus' *logos* is a perfect example that cannot be emulated perfectly by imperfect men. The deacon, however, can allow the *Logos* to live through Him by the filling of the Holy Spirit, which can never be divorced from the Word of God. Paul commanded, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16).

## **Paul**

Making a case for highlighting Paul's instructions on studying the Scripture and how he kept his message centered on Christ comes with more ease than pointing

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<sup>9</sup>Naylor, *The Baptist Deacon*, 136-37.

<sup>10</sup>David J. Feddes, "Caring for God's Household: A Leadership Paradigm among New Testament Christians and Its Relevance for Church and Mission Today," *Calvin Theological Journal* 43, no. 2 (2008): 278.

the deacon to each of Paul's methods of argumentation. Stephen and Philip articulated the gospel with a fully informed Christology, as seen in their encounters in Acts. Concomitantly, Paul's direct instructions concerning the ingestion of Holy Scripture, tied to the identity of Christ, are major themes in his letters. As churches and deacons embrace the Pauline selection criteria for elders and deacons, they should foster an atmosphere of mentorship via the Holy Scripture in this age of obtuse doctrinal frameworks.

Paul adjured the churches he helped establish to be grounded in the doctrine of Christ. Moving canonically through Paul's letters, the following commands represent an enforcement of the true identity and centrality of Christ, both through references in the Old Testament and through Paul's own testimony, as well as through instructions to his contemporaries, as these passages demonstrate:

For I am not ashamed of *the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

"Their sound has gone out to all the earth,  
And their words to the ends of the world."

But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

"I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,  
I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."

But Isaiah is very bold and says:

*"I was found by those who did not seek Me;  
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."*

But to Israel he says:

"All day long I have stretched out My hands

To a disobedient and contrary people (Rom 1:16; 10:4; 16-21) [emphasis added].

I thank my God always concerning you for the *grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus*, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as *the testimony of Christ* was confirmed in you.

For the *message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*. For it is written:



“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

For I determined *not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; *for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,  
Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor 1:4-6, 18-19; 2:2, 7-9) [emphasis added].

In light of Paul’s constant presentation, defense, and doctrinal teaching as to the identity and function of Jesus in the *euangelion* of God, there is no reason for a man, who is set apart by the local church, not to have the ability to present the claims of Christ. A deacon can be well-equipped if he will embrace sound doctrine and allow the God-breathed words of Holy Scripture to thoroughly furnish him for all good works.

### **Ethos**

For the sake of the propagation of the gospel, impediments to the apostles’ preaching and prayer had to be removed. “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables,” declared the apostles (Acts 6:2b ESV). This declarative was followed immediately by the imperative to choose men of good reputation. In efforts to foster the *ethos* of deacons today, deacons and pastors can study Stephen and Philip in order to define and describe a biblical *ethos*.

In churches today, deacons and pastors cannot expect to influence effectively those from whom they garner little or no respect. In examining the leadership of Charles Spurgeon, Larry Michael writes,

The man [Spurgeon] had a lifelong consistency, and his influence helped to lead thousands of people to follow the Christ he loved and served. . . . Those who have made the greatest mistakes are leaders who have assumed that their position was

more important than their lifestyle. For some of them, the consequences have been tragic.<sup>11</sup>

Michael also quotes John Hawkins, who says, “In essence, leadership is not a position, it’s a lifestyle.”<sup>12</sup> Spurgeon not only lived this, but taught it himself. He admonished, “A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you, and were helped by you, will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered. Carve your name on hearts, and not on marble.”<sup>13</sup> The early church was able to observe this type of pristine character, or *ethos*, in the seven they chose prior to the seven’s holding any position. The demand, therefore, for any church officer to maintain godly character is inseparable from the New Testament.

## **Jesus**

Jesus never sinned. This statement alone provokes reaction even among those who wholeheartedly accept Christ’s sinless nature because it is difficult to conceptualize a difference between sinful human nature and simply human nature. The author of Hebrews lays out this apparent paradox: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:15-16 ESV).

As the deacon reads of the mass and eager reception of Jesus, His presence, and His preaching, he may be confident the same principles of leadership apply to him. Not only had Jesus explained scriptural truth and spiritual principles with clarion logic,

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<sup>11</sup>Larry J. Michael, *Spurgeon on Leadership: Key Insights for Christian Leaders from the Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 75.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., quoting John Hawkins, *Leadership as a Lifestyle: The Path to Personal Integrity and Positive Influence* (Provo, UT: Executive Excellence, 2001), 2001.

<sup>13</sup>Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry* (Pasadena: Pilgrim, 1973), 351.

His teaching had the unique authority of a man with a pristine *ethos*; in fact, a sinless one. A careful examination of the Sermon on the Mount, as well as other happenings in the Gospels, reveals that the Pharisees lacked respect among the people because of their hypocrisy. Jesus's life and teaching contrasted starkly. People were willing to hear Jesus; He influenced them. Even so, a Christlike character is the primary basis on which deacons are selected, and should be the primary drive from which the deacon serves others.

Also, Jesus is the only infinite God-Man, which makes Him alone the perfect example for deacons today. His status as one of us qualified Him, in part, to be our leader. Blanchard and Hodges point out a dozen tests that leaders face, and ask the reader to decide if Jesus faced and passed these tests, which they plainly affirm:

1. Working with or living and caring for imperfect people
2. Taking time to train, develop, and delegate
3. Under constant scrutiny and testing of commitment and integrity
4. Required to handle rejection, criticism and opposition
5. Facing fierce competition and conflicting demands from friends and foes
6. Tempted by instant gratification, recognition, and misuse of power
7. Facing serious personnel issues, including turnover and betrayal
8. Required to communicate in a multicultural environment
9. The need to challenge the status quo and hierarchy to bring about change
10. The need to communicate a radically new vision of the future
11. The need to call attention to poor leadership at great personal risk
12. The need to put career or relationships on the line to serve a higher purpose<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Blanchard and Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus*, 16-17.

As the deacon seeks to walk circumspectly, he can look to the perfect example of *ethos* in Jesus.

Furthermore, the gospel writers included facts about Jesus' routines. Routines that serve as a template for followers of Christ today, especially set apart men. *Ethos*, or pristine character, is not something with which one is born. Evangelicals affirm the Scripture, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom 3:10). Even Jesus, the only sinless one, left an example of character-building, spiritual discipline for us today. He spent time talking to His Father. The Scripture reports, "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35 ESV). Referring to another instance, Luke records, "In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12 ESV). Jesus also commanded the disciples to "watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt 26:41). In *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren teaches,

You cannot talk about character without talking about habits. . . . The most practical and powerful way to get believers headed in the direction of spiritual maturity is to help them establish habits that promote spiritual growth. Dostoyevski once said, "The second half of a man's life is made up of the habits he acquired during the first half." And Pascal said, "The strength of a man's virtue . . . is measured by his habitual acts."<sup>15</sup>

Charles Lawless even defends prayer itself as one of the main purposes of a New Testament church when he states,

Whereas most writers simply assume prayer within the other five purposes, I have elevated it to its own category. . . . "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching . . . to fellowship, to the breaking of bread . . . and to prayer." . . .

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<sup>15</sup>Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Every Church Is Big in God's Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 348.

Prayer was as much a part of the calling of the early church as were worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry and fellowship.<sup>16</sup>

If the early believers followed Christ in this routinized way, then men today, set apart to serve, should look to Jesus' dependence on God and follow suite in order to be strong in character.

## **Paul**

**Paul's example.** The apostle Paul, especially in his mentoring of Timothy, exemplified and encouraged a life of godly character for those in Christian ministry.

Oswald Sanders, in his classic *Spiritual Leadership*, states,

In the apostle Paul himself we see exemplified the qualities he stated were essential to effective spiritual leadership. It is characteristic of truly great leaders that their stature looms larger with the passing of the years. When viewed from any standpoint, Paul grows in moral and spiritual grandeur the more critically he is analyzed.<sup>17</sup>

From Paul's pen come the prescriptive requirements for deacons. As exegeted in chapter 2 of this project, many of these deal with the standards for a deacon's character. In addition, Paul's *ethos* was often the basis for his appeals to local churches, along with his apostleship, as in 1 Thessalonians 2:10, where he claims, "You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe."<sup>18</sup> He was "innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26). He guarded his reputation by refusing compensation for gospel ministry in order that he might ensure the

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<sup>16</sup>Chuck Lawless, *Disciplined Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 149-51.

<sup>17</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: A Commitment to Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 49.

<sup>18</sup>See also discussion on Paul's "Credible Witness" by A. A. Trites, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 974.

uninhibited reception of the gospel. The ultimate reason the seven were chosen in Acts 6 was to free the apostles for ministry so as to prevent impeding the spread of the gospel. This same reason beckoned Paul to willingly abdicate many of his rights as an apostle. He testified to the church at Corinth, “Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ ” (1 Cor 9:12 ESV). On no occasion can Paul’s influence be divorced from his godly *ethos* as he lived out a consecrated life in front of all to whom he preached.

**Pauline instructions concerning *ethos*.** In addition to the prescriptive qualifications Paul gave for bishops and deacons in the pastorals are his admonitions to Timothy, his young protégé. Paul told Timothy to be an example just after his delineation of qualifications for elders and deacons: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim 4:12). He also admonished Timothy to “keep yourself pure” (1 Tim 5:22b). Ethical leadership was of utmost importance to the apostle Paul. His concern covers doctrinal error to be sure, but he traces these evil beliefs to the faulty character of so-called teachers when he warns Timothy, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared” (1 Tim 4:1-2 ESV). Stott comments,

On the surface the situation is quite straightforward. Certain teachers begin to spread their erroneous views, and some gullible people listen to them. . . . The devil does not usually deceive people direct. “Demon-inspired doctrines” (REB) gain an entry into the world and the church through human agents. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars (2a), or literally by means of the hypocrisy of liars. . . . For the hypocritical lies of the false teachers are now traced back to the violation of their consciences, which have been seared as with a hot iron. . . . In that state of moral

insensibility false teachers easily fall prey to error. Paul has already mentioned Hymenaeus and Alexander as examples. By rejecting their consciences they “shipwrecked their faith” (1:19).<sup>19</sup>

In light of the grave risk of error and ruin the church faces, that officers of the church have godly character cannot be overstated.

A common concern today is that young people are leaving the church and the faith. Studies show that many of these young people are leaving because of a lack of genuine godliness on the part of their parents and church leaders.<sup>20</sup> Pastors and deacons, therefore, must guard their influence. People respect the gifts that accompany the positions of elder and deacon. John Maxwell explains this as an irrefutable law of leadership. He states, “People don’t follow others by accident. They follow individuals whose leadership they respect.”<sup>21</sup> In several of his letters, Paul stresses safe-guarding his and other’s respect. He writes to the church at Corinth concerning his own precautions against losing his influence when he says, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor 9:27). He continues in chapter 10, referring to the missteps of the Israelites as exemplary warnings, when he declares,

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor 10:11-13)

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<sup>19</sup>John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 111-12.

<sup>20</sup>Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, *Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2008), 102-05.

<sup>21</sup>Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 70.

It should not elude students of the New Testament that much of 1 Corinthians was addressing the *ethos* of an entire local church, which was losing its potency in preaching the gospel due to a loss of respect in the community.<sup>22</sup> This loss of respect stemmed from disunity, doctrinal ambiguity, and moral impurity. Although different in circumstance, the burgeoning division in the newborn church of Acts 6 and the sectarianism found at Corinth's church undermined the church's credibility to the outside world.

As his predecessors in Acts 6, Paul was deeply concerned with the harmony of the church as evidenced in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 by his words,

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul was pleading with the church at Corinth because churches lose their stature in communities because of fellowship problems. As a great remedy, Paul provides an exemplary life and prolific warnings for churches and their leadership. If the church's message is to be believed, it must project such a message from a platform of a pristine *ethos*. Insofar as this godly character extends to and from the elders and deacons, it will extend to the flock. Darrell Robinson pictures deacons as the second group of fellowship builders behind the pastors.<sup>23</sup> The apostle Paul's example, prescriptive

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<sup>22</sup>John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 Corinthians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1984), 26.

<sup>23</sup>Darrell W. Robinson, *Total Church Life: How to Be a First Century Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 66.



character requirements for deacons, and general warnings about the church's potential loss of testimony beckon deacons, and churches selecting deacons, to regard *ethos* as top priority.

## Pathos

### Jesus

Jesus was the ultimate servant or *diakonos*. While no exegete would place Him as an officeholder in the early church as such, one cannot escape the interchangeable terminology used of Jesus' actions and of those men in Acts 6. Mark used both *doulos* and *diakonos* to express Jesus' servanthood, and the service for which He was calling in the disciples' lives. "But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45 ESV).

Jesus' acts and words touched the hearts of people. They identified with Him. From the onset, the lost and the least gave Jesus a hearing because His life's mission identified with them. In his book, *Jesus on Leadership*, Gene Wilkes explains,

At least three times Jesus provided what we would call a mission statement: When Jesus stood in his hometown synagogue, he read his mission statement from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." *Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19*

When Jesus stood among his disciples and defined greatness and being a leader in the kingdom of God, he couched his mission statement this way: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." *Mark 10:45*

When Jesus stood in tax collector Zacchaeus's home, he stated it another way: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." *Luke 19:10*

Jesus articulated his mission in order to define what he was as Messiah. Where and how he led flowed from a clear sense of why he had come in the first place.<sup>24</sup>

People responded to Jesus, not only because He defined His mission as being their servant and friend, but because humility attracted them to Him. Charles Haddon Spurgeon believed humble service itself postures people into leadership. He admonished,

Let us remember that we are the servants in our Lord's house. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Let us be willing to be door-mats at our Master's entrance-hall. Let us not seek honor for ourselves, but put honor upon the weaker vessels by our care for them. . . . In our Lord's Church, let the poor, the feeble, the distressed have the place of honor, and let us who are strong bear their infirmities. He is highest who makes himself lowest; he I greatest who makes himself less than the least.<sup>25</sup>

Jesus so postured Himself that He received strong emotive rebuke from Peter when demanding to wash His feet.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:3-8)

This event in the life of Jesus and His followers is a powerful object lesson. John the Apostle recorded an event so audacious that reenactments of foot washings, in today's culture that is unfamiliar with such customs, often evoke tears. Jesus was able to reach into the heart and imprint on His followers' minds the disposition He desired they have with one another through this selfless act. Leon Morris says of this action, "Jesus makes

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<sup>24</sup>C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leadership from the Life of Christ* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1998), 10-11.

<sup>25</sup>Michael, *Spurgeon on Leadership*, 154-55.

it clear that his action was no casual event. It set them an example that they were to follow.”<sup>26</sup>

## **Paul**

Critics of the postmodern era deem Paul anti-women, and they judge many of his admonitions culturally irrelevant for today.<sup>27</sup> This position at least alludes to a harshness in Paul that contradicts the witness of Scripture. Oswald Sanders pointed to Paul as an ideal leader with a hospitable personality.<sup>28</sup>

For years it has been popular to instruct leaders to be positive about everything.<sup>29</sup> In personal encounters, persons tend to tout the effectiveness of offering constructive criticism between two layers of praise. Long before leadership seminars, the apostle Paul was corresponding with churches that needed to hear the truth spoken in love. He began every canonical letter with praise or positive titles for their recipients, with the exception of Galatians in which he was defending the essence of the gospel. As church leaders look to Paul for doctrine, they should also look to him for tact.

Complementary to his direct commands, Paul is self-effacing as he corrects and admonishes. For example, 1 and 2 Corinthians deal largely with corrections the church needed to make, and toward the end of 2 Corinthians Paul notes, “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the

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<sup>26</sup>Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 551.

<sup>27</sup>Roger S. Oldham, “Positional and Functional Equality: An Appraisal of the Major Arguments for the Ordination of Women,” *Mid-America Theological Journal* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 3.

<sup>28</sup>Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 54-55.

<sup>29</sup>Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Pocket Books, 1936), 3-27.

less I am loved” (2 Cor 12:15). The pinnacle of Paul’s heart for his fellow believers to be humble is in Philippians where he stresses humility by pointing to Christ and confesses what formerly gave him a sense of pride.<sup>30</sup> All this is said before he admonishes two women to cooperate with one another. Despite some persons’ view of Paul as austere, his writings are warm and demonstrate that he connected emotively with people.

As deacons serve, they will be most effective if they add good relationship building to their sound theology and blameless character. John Maxwell explains his law of connection, “Effective leaders know that you first have to touch people’s hearts before you ask them for a hand.”<sup>31</sup> In training deacons, this principle of connecting with people must receive attention alongside theology and character. Not only did the apostle Paul exemplify connecting with people, but he also gave explicit instructions for interacting with others, even in a corrective way. Although the thrust of this project’s attention to *pathos* is differentiated from oration, connecting with the people one serves often begins with words. Paul gave thorough instructions for one-on-one verbal communications when he commanded,

but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. . . .

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (Eph 4:15-16, 29)

Another encouragement for looking to Paul’s *pathos* in order to serve the church more effectively is following the compilation of his commands containing the phrase *one another*. Commonly called the *one another commands*, and not limited to

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<sup>30</sup>See Phil 3 where Paul communicates his own emptying after he has communicated Christ’s.

<sup>31</sup>Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 101.

Paul in most lists, these highlight Paul's emphasis on Christian relationships.<sup>32</sup> One such command is Philippians 2:5-11 where Paul points to Jesus' radical *kenosis* of rights and revealed glory as a model for relational humility. He admonishes;

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:3-11)

Having the mind of Christ diffuses interpersonal arguments and conflict, which needs to be differentiated from serious doctrinal conflict. The deacon should be the epitome of a man who thinks of others before himself. From both the way Paul wrote and from his instructions about speech, as well as the treatment of fellow believers, church leaders should surmise the importance of a strong *pathos*. Randy Frazee, In his book, *The Connecting Church*, refers to Francis Schaeffer's words: "Our relationship with each other is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful—Christian community is the final apologetic."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>See John Egleston's list of One Another Commands in appendix 14, which was used for the deacon training. John Egleston, "New Testament 'One Another' and 'Each Other' Commands," InterVarsity Christian Fellowship [on-line]; accessed 14 September 2012; available from <http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/4511>; Internet.

<sup>33</sup>Frazee, *The Connecting Church*, 85, quoting Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970).

## **Finding *Logos*, *Ethos*, and *Pathos* in the Old Testament**

When looking at Jesus and Paul's leadership, it makes sense to reference the Scripture available to them in their day. Then, as today, God did not operate contrary to His preceding revelation. Certainly, Solomon's descriptions and prescriptions of wisdom in Proverbs require sound *logos*, set-apart *ethos*, and sympathetic *pathos*, but there are some men who come to the forefront as exemplars of these leadership qualities.

While the Hebrew Testament has an almost exhaustive amount of instructions and examples concerning leadership, three examples, correlating to the three Aristotelian ideals discussed above, stand out. The Book of Nehemiah provides a classic example of *logos* (sound reasoning) and its conveyance to others. Ezra is the chief expositor of God's Word, and the former exiles the hearers. Nehemiah records,

So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law.

Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, *helped the people to understand the Law*; and the people stood in their place. *So they read distinctly from the book*, in the Law of God; and *they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading*.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." *For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law*. (Neh 8:2-3, 7-9) [emphasis added]

Ezra exuded logic, order, and detail as one might expect of a scribe. The reaction of the people of God demonstrates the effectiveness of Ezra's *logos* as an enumeration of what had to be the revelation of God. They renewed their covenant with God in Nehemiah 8, and they did this in response to understanding who God was and the separation He required of them. J. Barton Payne, in his *Theology of the Older Testament*, ties Ezra's

astute knowledge and communication of God’s Word to the common understanding of the biblical doctrine of inspiration among the people of God:

After the return from exile, the priestly author of Chronicles, presumably Ezra, described the Pentateuch as, literally, “The book of the law of Yahweh, by the hand of Moses” ( 2 Chron. 34:14). Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Yahweh, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances: (Ezra 7:10). . . . In 444 B.C. accordingly, after the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, he and Nehemiah and the Levites read the law, explained it, and reestablished it as it had not been since the days of Moses himself. (Neh. 8)<sup>34</sup>

For exemplary *ethos*, Joseph and Daniel are men on which there is no negative commentary in Scripture. They are unblemished in this regard. First, of Joseph the Pharaoh exclaimed, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” (Gen 41:38). Joseph found himself governor of Egypt, but the Scripture presents a man who had to journey through adversity on his way to prominence. Joseph maintained his integrity during these difficult portions of his life; namely, refusing to have sexual relations with Potiphar’s wife, though she was relentless in her pursuit of Joseph (see Gen 39). Speaking of Joseph’s conviction that to commit this act would be a sin against God, Kenneth Mathews points out, “Joseph’s retort reaches the highest ethical plane: ‘How . . . could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?’”<sup>35</sup>

Also, Daniel showcases a life of no-compromise. Herbert Lockyer writes, “As we study his character we cannot but be impressed with his refinement, his reserve and the high sculpture of his life.”<sup>36</sup> From Daniel’s abstinence from the king’s food and wine, to his governmental participation, he can only be impugned for worshiping God. In fact,

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<sup>34</sup>J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 69-70.

<sup>35</sup>Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1B (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 734.

<sup>36</sup>Herbert Lockyer, *All the Men of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 88.

there were those who tried to find fault and could not. Of Daniel and the conspirators against him, Stephen Miller states,

They [the jealous officials] began to examine Daniel’s governmental activities in order to discover some flaw in his character or professional ability in order to bring a charge against him to the king, but none was found. Daniel handled his duties in a faithful manner (trustworthy)—he was neither politically corrupt (dishonest) nor negligent in the performance of his work.<sup>37</sup>

Corresponding, therefore, to *ethos*, the stature of these men is un-impugned.

Finally, the Old Testament offers us an example of *pathos* in leadership influence. Moses is called the servant of God (see Josh 1:2). Moses epitomizes servant-leadership that connects emotively to those being influenced. The author of Hebrews testifies, “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward” (Heb 11:24-26). There is no reasonable way to show that Moses would have been the leader he was without his refusal to be identified with wealth, privilege, and power or his embrace of suffering with his fellow Hebrews. Other microcosms of his self-deprecation include his defense of Hebrew slaves (Exod 2:11-12) and his willingness to suffer eternal demise in place of the Israelites (Exod 32:31-32). Eugene Merrill makes application of Moses’ aggrandizement at the end of Deuteronomy, “It is no less true today that the unbelieving world as well as the church depends to a great extent upon faithful servants of the Lord to make Him known in his saving and sovereign purposes.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 18 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 179.

<sup>38</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 455.



This project has employed the word *pathos* throughout to refer to the Christian influence the deacon has due to his connectivity with the people. This connectivity is a form of suffering along with them, corresponding to the denotation of *pathos*. The life of Moses illustrates this principle of compassionate service incumbent on the New Testament deacon.

While these Old Testament men of influence all exhibit the totality of the threefold composite for effective leadership, they each have been chosen as a showcase for one of the three. Although structures changed with the fulfillment of the Old Covenant through Jesus, the timeless principles of influence through clear communication of God's truth, blameless character, and caring compassion remain the same.

### **Conclusion**

*Logos, ethos, and pathos* may not be words that laymen use very often or even know. Men set apart by the church, however, have already exuded a well-roundedness the congregation has noted. At least in theory this is true.

Compartmentalizing the biblical criterion and examples of godly deacons into these three categories helps men see what the congregation has perceived about them. Looking at these three virtues will also help deacons, and pastors for that matter, assess their strengths and weaknesses. One deacon may be able to recite the latest gospel outline, but may be tempted to relegate his deacon service to confrontational evangelism alone. His ministry would be lacking when compared to the biblical witness. Another deacon may be kind and known for his servant-spirit (*pathos*) but come up short when asked to counsel an inquirer in the matter of his salvation (*logos*). Again, such a scenario demonstrates this deacon falls short of the threefold composite a New Testament deacon

must possess. If a deacon became less than blameless in his character (*ethos*), his adeptness in the other areas would not undue the lack of confidence that would come from an aware congregant. Looking at Jesus and Paul, their examples and their teachings, deacons can seek the enabling of the Holy Spirit to take them through a process of becoming a more scriptural example of the office of deacon.

CHAPTER 4  
THE RIDGEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH  
DEACON JOURNEY

The “Journey with the Pastor” developed from assessing the history of Ridgeway and Ridgeway’s deacons. Also, a biblical exegesis of Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 informed the practicum of the “Journey with the Pastor,” as well as a study of leadership, which transferred Aristotle’s threefold idea of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* from rhetoric to servant-leadership.

Leading up to August of 2012, I began making Ridgeway Baptist Church’s deacons aware of a training opportunity. During the first half of August 2012, I recruited, primarily through a mailed invitation, deacons for a training time I called “Journey with the Pastor” (see appendix 1). Using Ridgeway’s annual deacons’ and wives’ appreciation banquet, I explained the thesis of my doctoral project and my conviction that further training for our deacons would benefit our church spiritually and numerically.<sup>1</sup>

I designed the “Journey with the Pastor” to be a synergistic deacon development plan focusing on a deacon’s understanding and articulation of theology, a deacon’s character, and a deacon’s passionate connectivity to people. Using a survey tool, participatory lecture, homework assignments, object lessons, and a field trip, I challenged participants to assess and adjust according to scriptural qualifications for deacons, while pointing them to the examples of Stephen and Philip, and the servant-leadership of Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup>Many showed interest and expressed that the endeavor seemed worthwhile. Twenty initially signed up, and I perceived no negativism in the deacon body or church concerning this training opportunity.

After the recruitment and assessment phase of the journey, classroom training began, during which I gave homework assignments and held the men accountable. The third phase commenced at the end of the classroom training with a ceremony, a field trip of ministry, and some ministry assignments. The final phase was a re-administration of the survey instrument, a debriefing time, and a testimony time during a Sunday night worship service. I gave the deacon participants a general schedule indicating the aforementioned components of the journey, to which they committed unless providentially hindered.<sup>2</sup>

### **Recruitment of Project Participants**

Within the deacon body of a traditional Baptist church, there exists a diversity of ideas and opinions as to the deacon's role, especially in relation to the pastor's role. I made this observation during my first deacon's meeting at Ridgeway in September of 2009, which was a peaceful but tense meeting. I began to learn the church and its culture, as well as catch a vision for investing in Ridgeway's deacons.

After taking two years to develop a helpful deacon project and desiring to capitalize on a leadership style of building relationships, I maintained the Ridgeway tradition of having a deacons' and wives' banquet. In the past, this evening had been a mixture of appreciation, recognition, entertainment, and spiritual challenge, as well as vision casting. My appellate process of recruiting assured the deacons of their value to me and to the church. I also expressed concern over the neglect and marginalization of the office of deacon in our denomination. I made the audience aware that, while I do not

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<sup>2</sup>I told the participants they were agreeing to be at my disposal for the fifteen weeks. They agreed and followed through with participation. Four sessions were recorded for the few who missed, and each of those received a compact disc of the lecture.

believe deacons to be a board of directors, I do not subscribe to changing our church's government or relegating deacons to what some could perceive as menial tasks, so many of which are tied to the church's physical facilities.<sup>3</sup> The following warm reception may also have been based, in part, to loving parishioners desiring to help me finish my degree. I initially had 20 participants agree to start, with 17 remaining at the time of administering the survey. Of the 18, only 3 were limited in their involvement, but none dropped out during the training.<sup>4</sup>

### **Orientation and Survey**

Following two weeks of recruitment, I had an orientation in which I administered a survey (see appendix 3). The survey was an effort to assess a participant's understanding of the office, role, and qualifications of biblical deacons, as well as their own practice of certain spiritual disciplines. In addition to the survey, and after explaining Aristotle's threefold idea of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, I placed three main objectives of "Journey with the Pastor" before the enlisted deacons: (1) to equip deacons in basic theology and with an effective gospel presentation in order to develop a *logos* epitomized in the ministries of Stephen and Philip, (2) to develop deacons' characters by helping them to understand the *ethos* of deacons presented in Scripture and the practice of some primary spiritual disciplines, (3) to develop an orientation of service among deacons through teaching and other practical means that connect them relationally to

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<sup>3</sup>Mark Dever advocates this position when he states, "In our church, we create deacon positions according to the practical needs of the body. So we currently have a deacon for each of the following areas: budget, bookstall and library, sound, child care, children's ministry, ordinances, member care, hospitality, ushers, weddings, community outreach, and audio duplication." Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 169.

<sup>4</sup>All limitations were work-related.

the congregation and others. This goal necessitated that the deacons understand *pathos*, not as a complement to oration, but as soliciting emotional buy-in from those under the deacon's influence.

The participants promptly returned almost all the surveys, and all checked the agreement to participate box, as well as placing their names on the survey. Asking for their names was not an easy decision. While this could have affected the survey, I thought it would add a measure of accountability and make the training more about each man's development instead of about my project. The surveys helped me understand what I needed to emphasize during the remainder of the training time. One issue was the participants' ratings of themselves in reference to the qualification of being blameless as listed in 1 Timothy 3:10. The participants' ratings of themselves surfaced an issue needing clarification. It was evident from most of their responses that they understood blameless as the equivalent of sinless. This was the only widespread gap in their understanding of deacon qualifications. Their other answers were encouraging, and I will include an analysis of the pre-training and post-training surveys in chapter 5.

### **Classroom Training**

Using Aristotle's threefold idea of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, I broke the training into three, two-week segments covering each virtue. Since beginning my work as pastor in August of 2009, I have been encouraging all deacons to be ready for those who might respond during the invitation time following my sermons. Some of the deacons had previously allowed me to give some training in this area. Knowing, therefore, this portion of my classroom training would be slightly repetitive for some of the participants, I chose to cover it first as part of the *logos* section.

## Session 1

During this first session of the *logos* section, I asked the men to pause and review Acts 7, while reading closely verses 51-60. I also asked them to read Acts 8:26-40. Before any explanation, I gave them some homework assignments, which included reading a supplied copy of the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, memorizing the introduction to a witnessing outline I gave them, and handing out a gospel tract.<sup>5</sup>

After assigning homework and allowing ample time for reading the passages in Acts, I reviewed the background of Acts 6 and put special emphasis on verse 7, which says, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” I explained from this verse that the early church only chose seven, and these had great impact. It stands to reason, therefore, that they must have been more than simply table-waiters.

Through interactive discussion, I pointed out that Luke told us about two of these deacons, Stephen and Philip. I then demonstrated to the men that these two deacons were convinced of Jesus’ identity and were able to present to their listeners, from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Messiahship and gospel of Jesus. Stephen’s argument was powerfully underpinned by the Old Testament concerning the identity and interaction of Jesus with the rejecting Jews. The wisdom of his gospel presentation could not be resisted, but his hearers did resist the Holy Spirit, thus rejecting Christ and stoning Stephen.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>I used Ken Hemphill’s Got Life?® track because of its clear presentation of the gospel and the addition of apologetics. We have these available at church so they were not new to the participants.

<sup>6</sup>Notice in Acts 6:10-11; 7:51-58a my emphasis on resisting and the result of the Jews’ resisting: And they were not able to *resist* the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always *resist* the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit joined Philip to an individual. When questioned about his understanding of Isaiah, the Ethiopian eunuch responded, “How can I unless one guides me?” (see Acts 8:31). The word guide (*odegesei*) means to show the way.<sup>7</sup> I emphasized to the men that a deacon ought to be skilled above the average church member in showing someone the way to be saved. We noticed the Holy Spirit’s role with Philip and observed Jesus standing on the right hand of God at Stephen’s martyrdom. I explained that we all fall short of these two men, but we all can guide people to Jesus with a clear *logos*.

After discussing Stephen and Philip, I went through a basic outline of how to guide someone to Christ (see appendix 6). I told the men to have the introduction, transitional statement, and broad headings memorized by our next meeting. I also took care to show them how they could mark a New Testament so as not to worry about forgetting which Scriptures to use or failing to quote the Scripture from memory (see appendix 7). All of this instruction was done with reference to overcoming fear when witnessing through having a strong, biblical *logos*.

Finally, to close session 1, I undergirded the importance of believing and knowing what the Bible teaches about salvation. I explained pluralism, universalism, annihilationism, antinomianism, and works-righteousness as all impediments to evangelism (see appendix 8).

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of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.” When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” Then they cried out with a loud voice, *stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.*

<sup>7</sup>Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to The Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 247.



## Session 2

I began session 2 with prayer and by asking who had read the 2000 edition of the *Baptist Faith and Message* and who had handed out a gospel tract. Most the men had read our statement of faith, and around half had followed through with handing out a tract. I then administered a short true-false quiz on the doctrine of Christ (see appendix 9).<sup>8</sup> This quiz was not handed in, but we discussed each of the eight statements thoroughly with class participation. I continued by assigning homework, which required them to complete any incomplete portions of the previous week's homework, memorize an additional portion of the gospel outline, hand out a tract after asking an introductory and diagnostic question, have a more consistent quiet time, investigate what blameless means in 1 Timothy 3:10, and be faithful to church.

Before the quiz on the doctrine of Christ, I reminded participants that we wanted to have a strong, biblical *logos*. I also I reminded them there were many doctrinal statements that they read in the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* edition. I expressed, however, that although all scriptural teaching is important, our focus would be on the gospel (the doctrine of Salvation) and the *Logos* Himself, Jesus. We returned to the Acts text and surveyed Philip and Stephen's Christology, but I did not point out specifics. Then I administered the quiz, which took, with discussion, the remainder of our ninety minutes. Of the eight statements, numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5 were problematic (see appendix 9). Number 1 stated, "According to Colossians 1:15, Jesus was the first thing God created." Over half of the men marked true. I did not panic, but went to Colossians 1:15 and explained, in laymen's terms, the co-eternal and co-equal nature of the Son. Utilizing

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<sup>8</sup>I wanted to see if our deacons possessed a sound Christology, but I also wanted them to see how easy it is to misstate our beliefs about Christ instead of giving a clear presentation like that of Stephen's.

some articles from the *Watchman Expositor* on cults<sup>9</sup> gleaned from Daniel Akin's Christian Theology II notes and explaining *prototokos*,<sup>10</sup> I helped the men see that Paul is not referencing chronology, but is stating Christ's supremacy above creation.<sup>11</sup>

A third of the participants missed question 2, which read, "According to Philippians 2, Jesus was God who only appeared as a man. He was not really a man like we are." I did a brief study of Philippians 2, and we referenced 1 John 3. In order to clear up the misunderstandings of some, I taught briefly and exegetically out of Philippians 2, explaining that Paul was not saying that Christ only appeared to be a man. In verses 6 and 8, the word *morphe* is translated *form* in many translations, including the New King James Version and the English Standard Version, but the New International Version renders it *nature* in verses 6 and 7, and *appearance* in verse 8. Paul is not saying Jesus is only appearing to be God or to be a servant; rather, Jesus remained deity while changing forms in the incarnation. Richard Melick explains,

Two ideas modify the verb "made himself nothing." They are: taking the very nature of a servant and being made in human likeness. These statements explain both how this took place and what it means. Paradoxically, being "made nothing" means adding humanity to deity rather than subtracting deity from his person. The language has a vagueness to it; that vagueness allows for theology which cannot be expressed easily, a theology of the relationships between the divine and human in Christ.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>For the purpose of this project, I defined cults as those whose Christology falls outside the realm of orthodoxy. This type of usage probably originated in 1938 from J. K. Van Baalen's, *The Chaos of Cults: A Study in Present-day Isms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), and Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 313.

<sup>10</sup>The word emphasizes the preexistence and uniqueness of Christ as well as His superiority over creation. The term does not indicate that Christ was a creation or a created being. Rogers and Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, 461.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel L. Akin, *Christian Theology*, Part II, Book I (Louisville: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, n.d.), 188.

<sup>12</sup>Richard Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 103.

Although a few answered false to number 4, which was corrected as we discussed Colossians 1, the only other statement that received a wide and wrongful affirmation was number 5, which states, “We worship one God who expressed Himself in three different modes: Father, Son, Spirit.” From John 16-17, we discussed the trinity and the error of modalism. This session was well received by the men and they seemed to take on more humility after affirming so much heresy. They evidenced a serious concern for their *logos*.

### **Session 3**

For sessions 3 and 4 we discussed *ethos*. We began with prayer, and I asked how many could recite the first part of the outline, as well as how many had handed out gospel tracts. Approximately one-third had handed out a tract, and approximately four-fifths were confident in the first third of the outline. I warned of an upcoming quiz and challenged them to progress in their memorization of the gospel outline.

To begin the discussion of *ethos*, I reviewed *logos* and gave an illustration. Luke presented Stephen and Philip as knowing the identity of the Messiah. I reinforced our former sessions on a deacon’s *logos* by reading Acts 7:59, “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” From this verse, I showed the men the clear indication of Jesus’ divine identity. In order to differentiate *ethos* from *logos*, I offered the following example. Naming one of the participants, I claimed that he opened a used car lot. I explained that four of us bought automobiles from this individual and all four had bad transmissions, which had been made to temporarily run smooth. Then we all encountered this individual teaching a Bible lesson at church. I asked the participants, “Could we receive what he was saying?” They said, “No.” I

explained, “But his presentation was clear and passionate.” All the participants seemed to see where I was taking them in this fictitious story, and several responded with statements such as, “His walk did not match his talk.” By this statement, respondents were clearly indicating to me that the man in the example had little influence because of the public knowledge that his dishonest character did not coalesce with his teaching.

After introducing *ethos*, for the first time we discussed some of their survey responses. I pointed out that, while most of them indicated a confidence in sharing the gospel, a third of them did not feel they were blameless. In fact, only one deacon indicated he strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel I am blameless in character. I am of good report.” Another revealing response was that only two strongly agreed with the statement, “I have a significant influence on my fellow church members.” Five agreed with this statement, and nine marked uncertain. I will report on their survey responses more in chapter 5, but these responses helped inform my lecture on *ethos*.

We spent the remainder of our time discussing each of the qualifications given in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. I referenced my exegetical work from chapter 2 and even handed them a copy, in order to thoroughly explain the scriptural criteria. Each characteristic was thoroughly explained with time for questions. Finally, they were challenged to reflect on their practice of spiritual disciplines as a homework assignment (see appendix 10).

#### **Session 4**

I began the second section of *ethos* with prayer, followed by a quiz on our gospel outline. We also allotted time for testimonies and found that two of the men had actually begun conversations with persons with whom they left gospel tracts. A handout

with a brief outline (see appendix 11) served as a guide for our final focus on *ethos*. Using Aristotle's thoughts concerning a speaker's credibility as a catalyst for our discussion, we focused on Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges' contrasts of EGOs.<sup>13</sup> This tool helped us to talk about the deep need in our lives to "Exalt God Only instead of Edge God Out." The preponderance of the session was spent on answering the question, "How do I secure a life of 'Exalting God Only' and a Christlike character instead of 'Edging God Out?'" All answers were categorized under the role of Scripture in our lives and the role of Christian community, or church. The participants and I discussed the following Scriptures in relation to the corresponding topics under Scripture intake:

1. Quiet Time (Ps 119:147; Matt 4:1-11; Matt 14:13, 23; Mark 1:32-38; Luke 6:12-13)
2. Scripture Memorization (Ps 119:9, 11, 153; Matt 4:1-11; Eph 6:10-17; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
3. Scripture Meditation (Ps 1:2-3; Ps 119:70-72; Acts 17:11)
4. Prayer (Luke 11:1-4; 18:1-8)
5. Intentionally Yield (Rom 6; Eph 5:18; Col 3:16)

Finally, we discussed how God builds our character through Sunday school. Although not specified as such in Scripture, Acts is prolific with small groups living out God's Word together. We discussed corporate worship, pastors equipping the saints, and one-on-one mentoring as ways we exercise ourselves toward godliness. I gave all participants seven questions to ask when studying the Scripture, six of which were from Adrian Rogers' book *What Every Christian Ought to Know*. The questions are:

1. Is there a promise to claim?
2. Is there a lesson to learn?

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<sup>13</sup>Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons for Everyone from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 63-64.

3. Is there a blessing to enjoy?
4. Is there a command to obey?
5. Is there a sin to avoid?
6. Is there a new thought to carry with me?<sup>14</sup>

An additional question that I added was, How does this verse relate to Jesus?

## **Session 5**

We held session 5 immediately following a Sunday evening worship service. By design, it was brief and characterized by a spirit of solemnity. I gave each participant a handout explaining our adaptation of Aristotle's idea of *pathos* in oratory to a *pathos* of influence through humble service (see appendix 12). I emphasized that the motives of the session were not to show off my Christlikeness, but to show off Christ by illustrating His teaching on service and humility. Without any prior notice, I began to call men, one at a time, to the front of the room. I affirmed each deacon by expressing my love for him, and how honored I was for having the privilege of serving Jesus with him. I then removed each man's shoes and socks, bathed his feet with warm water, and dried them with a towel. There were tears, expressions of love and gratitude, and a sense of passion for our church. A few commented that it was their first foot-washing service. Others expressed how much it meant and how the Spirit of God manifested Himself.

## **Session 6**

For the final classroom training session, I taught a lesson on words. The main text was Ephesians 4:29-32, which commands,

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit

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<sup>14</sup>Adrian Rogers, *What Every Christian Ought to Know: Essential Truths for Growing Your Faith* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 239.

of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

From this passage, we reviewed how we were applying Aristotle's threefold idea. I reiterated how Stephen's wisdom could not be resisted, and how Philip guided the Ethiopian eunuch, as well as how he preached in multiple cities. I then reminded the men that many pastors have a strong *logos*, but not a strong *ethos*. I gave them an example of a pastor who reallocated some money, which caused him to lose his credibility and his pastorate. I also explained that pastors and deacons could have great *logos* and *ethos* while seeming to be out of touch with the people to whom they minister.

We segued to some statements Solomon, Jesus, and James made on words. Volunteers read aloud Proverbs 15:1, 23, which states, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (see appendix 13). I admonished all of us to speak at the right time and in the right way. Then we read from Luke 6:45: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." I cautioned us in reference to our speech revealing our hearts.

Finally, we read aloud James' words in chapter 3, about the power of the tongue.<sup>15</sup> I told the men a story I heard from a pastor about his frustration with a deacon.

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<sup>15</sup>James 3:1-10: "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world

The deacon would help the pastor do hospital visits, but he would allude to the fact that, while he himself was there, the pastor was absent. He, therefore, would express his love for the patient, while implicitly questioning whether or not the pastor really cared. The above Scriptures and this story illuminate the importance of deacons using their words to bring unity, confidence, and encouragement.

The second half of our session time began with the men's eyes closed. I read a list of seven tragic circumstances that seven of our church families were facing. Without using names, and while insisting this was a confidential meeting, I described each situation. Some of the deacons knew of whom I spoke at times. My purpose was to demonstrate people's great need for our church to be in touch with them. Just as the first deacons reached out to the neglected widows who were suffering, we need to look out for the flock in which God has placed us. To finish, I gave a list of 'one another' commands compiled by John Egleston (see appendix 14).<sup>16</sup> I gave the men three minutes to look over the commands. I then challenged them to reach out to a hurting person the following week and bring a report later. Seven participants turned in reports either by hard copy, e-mail, or phone message. This action was the first part of their ministry deployment following the classroom training. Before closing out the final session, I tested the men's gospel outline with a short test (see appendix 15).

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of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

<sup>16</sup>John Egleston, "New Testament 'One Another' and 'Each Other' Commands," InterVarsity Christian Fellowship [on-line]; accessed 14 September 2012; available from <http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/4511>; Internet.



## Ministry Deployment

After assessment and classroom training, it was time for a learning approach that thrust the participants into a ministry setting. The men made their ministry contacts and I received at least seven reports back via e-mail or face-to-face testimony. The reports varied from members who were shut-in and experiencing health problems to those whose attendance had been sporadic. Many of the deacons simply continued participating in their normal outreach and visitation, but at least two went out of their way to make ministry visits with younger people they knew needed encouragement.

The second phase of the ministry deployment was a field trip to the Warrior's Center, which is a Bible-based, militaristic drug and alcohol rehabilitation center for men. We took two nights so that every man would be able to attend, and all but three made the trip. We arrived and I told the men that they could share from the pulpit at the meeting time or speak to the clients one on one. I preached the gospel both times to around 40 clients of the Warrior's Center. Both times, I used the same outline the deacons had been learning, and some of the deacons shared with individuals. One deacon sat down and intentionally went through the entire gospel presentation, which he had learned in the *logos* classroom training. The Warrior's Center client affirmed that he had already come to know Christ. Also, around seven men professed Christ each of the two times I preached. In addition to the one-on-one interaction, two of our deacons stood and shared encouragement and testimonies with the recovering addicts.

God blessed the deacon team those nights with His presence and with a feeling of great unity as most of us rode the church bus to the Warrior's Center. The benefits to a field trip of this nature are at least threefold. First, the men had the opportunity to bond with one another and their pastor in way that can only happen while doing ministry

together. Second, they heard the same gospel presentation they had learned in the *logos* section of their classroom training. This experience demonstrated to them the power of the gospel as they were able to see a public response to the gospel. Third, the men were able to connect with hurting people, which made each deacon's burden for the lost more acute. Other benefits would include hands-on opportunities to share the gospel, identification of a possible ongoing ministry for some of them, and a broadening of many of their concepts of local missions. Almost all of the men readily agreed to be involved in either the Warrior's Center ministry or other evangelism and mentoring opportunities. I will give the final results of participants' new involvement in chapter 5.

### **Reassessment and Enlistment**

Following six weeks of classroom training and three weeks of ministry deployment, I reassessed the men using the original survey instrument. Most of the results were similar to the first survey, but there were some variations. I will discuss in the concluding chapter of this project the reasons for little variation and the significant changes.

I used the final two weeks of the project to secure the final surveys, enlist the men in future ministry, allow the men to report on their journey to the church on a Sunday night, and ask for some personal feedback from two of the participants. The men were quick both to re-take the survey and to share with the church their experience. Some of what was shared proved to me that I had not been totally effective in my teaching on *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, but it was certainly a small minority of what was shared. Most of the men's public testimony confirmed they had listened, learned, and followed with their heart what I was trying to accomplish.

Almost all of the men expressed gratitude for the journey. A few demanded that we train every deacon with this method. Two expressed their regret at not having learned the New Testament role of deacons years ago upon their ordination. Words cannot express the unity, the passion, the love, and the readiness that most of the participants exuded after this process. I was told numerous times, especially during the foot-washing service, “I love you, Pastor.”

At the end of the project, I received many verbal commitments that participants wanted to be more involved in ministry. I followed up a few weeks later in order to solidify those commitments, which will be outlined in chapter 5.

### **Personal Development**

Upon beginning this Doctor of Ministry, I thought I wanted to sharpen my weaker leadership and administration skills. By the time I began the project writing phase, I was placing a higher value on relationships, realizing that leadership is essentially influence. Two retired professionals in their late fifties became my primary advocates, strategic support, and co-laborers from the beginning of my tenure at Ridgeway Baptist Church. I enlisted Howard Locke and Dennis Colley to monitor and assess my personal growth as a leader through both the fifteen-week project and since the beginning of the project writing stage. I have summarized their comments at the end of the project evaluation in chapter 5.

### **Conclusion**

As a pastor wanting to add value to my church, and as a leader searching for unity in the pastor-deacon relationship, I both deeply enjoyed and seriously engaged this process. Although results varied, I will demonstrate in chapter 5 that the synergistic

approach of classroom training, ministry deployment, and other exercises yielded positive results and met the primary goals of the project.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

After working with nineteen deacon participants for fifteen weeks, I see more clearly the worthiness of this project's purpose of developing biblical deacons. This final chapter consists of an evaluation of this project, an evaluation of my own personal growth, and recommendations toward adapting this project to other church applications, as well as some theological reflections on sanctification.

With any sermon or instruction, there is either an explicit or implicit call to respond. The participants wanted to respond to what they were learning because they were faithful to attend. The few who had to miss made up the sessions via audio recording. The fact that no one dropped out and no problems occurred is encouraging. The deacon participants have responded well; likewise, churches will only benefit from training their ordained men to model themselves after Jesus, Stephen, Paul, and Philip. Nevertheless, the purpose of chapter 5 is to evaluate and improve this training plan for deacons.

The first evaluative section includes (1) a presentation and evaluation of the survey instrument results, (2) a report and analysis of new deacon ministry activity, and (3) a review of the project goals, which references the data in order to discern movement toward objectives. The second evaluative section includes a subjective report on my personal growth, along with a restating of what my two participant-evaluators said regarding their observation of my growth as a leader.

## **Presentation and Evaluation of the Survey Instrument Results**

Appendices 4 and 5 present the survey instrument results both before and after the training. The participants' responses indicate that the project, while not flawless, largely achieved the goals set forth.<sup>1</sup> I chose not to record results from four of the participants because they did not return the post-training survey.<sup>2</sup> Also, there was a discussion portion of the survey that I utilized for an additional reference point on each participant's understanding. I will highlight some important developments in a few of the participants' surveys from this section, but I did not record all that everyone wrote in this section of the survey.<sup>3</sup>

### **Weaknesses in the Survey Instrument**

Three weaknesses in the survey became apparent during the project. The fact that these deacons were willing to commit to six training sessions, homework, and two ministry deployments demonstrates their general demeanor toward me and the training and proves the seriousness with which they take their deacon responsibility. Surely this goes beyond their church position and infers an authentic relationship with Christ. The agreeable spirit of these men insured that changes occurring as result of the training would be less than radical. A possibility for future deacon training might be to use a

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<sup>1</sup>The first goal was to develop the character of ordained men by increasing both their understanding of a biblical *ethos* and the practice of spiritual disciplines. The second goal was to develop an orientation of service for deacons by teaching the necessity of a Christlike pathos. The third goal was to equip deacons with a *logos* closer to that of Stephen and Philip as seen in the biblical record (Acts) of their preaching the gospel. Personal growth as a pastor in both maturity and influence was the final goal.

<sup>2</sup>Although the training was most likely helpful to these, I could not measure movement in their thinking and actions as with the other men; therefore, I disincluded them for research purposes.

<sup>3</sup>Many answers in this section were unchanged or not changed significantly from the first application of the survey. My choice was purely subjective based on how impressed I was with a change in depth of understanding of the discussion section topics.

control group participating in the survey instrument, which did not commit to the training journey with the pastor. This would give an additional measurement reference point.<sup>4</sup>

The other two weaknesses came in the middle section of the survey instrument instructing participants to circle all that apply (see appendix 3). There are nine tasks listed following the statement, “To be instrumental in augmenting the ministry of prayer and the Word, a deacon must. . . .” The first statement is, “Vet the decisions of the pastor.” At least two of the men asked me what *vet* meant, and at least two others circled it as a must on the post-training survey, but not on the first survey. Upon questioning one participant, he clearly indicated he did not believe a deacon board should analyze and approve the leadership of the pastor. One even circled statement 1 in the post-training survey and, when I questioned him later, he said, “I thought it meant carry out the pastor’s decisions.” I intended the statement to reflect the idea that deacons are to act as a review board for what the pastor intends to do or has done already. The *Merriam Webster* dictionary gives the first meaning of *vet* to be short for veterinarian or to check an animal, but the second definition is: “a. to subject to usually expert appraisal or correction <*vet* a manuscript>” or “b: to evaluate for possible approval or acceptance <*vet* the candidates for a position>.”<sup>5</sup> In the future, I will choose a different word that is both recognizable and less associated with politics. A new statement might read, “A deacon must help to manage the pastor and staff, through allowing the pastors to present decisions to the deacon board for

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<sup>4</sup>The control group would demonstrate a possible dichotomy between deacons willing to train and those unwilling. It might show an identical or larger difference between the participants’ first survey responses and nonparticipants’ survey responses in comparison to the differences in the two sets of responses from the participants. This would, more than anything else, undergird the need for training the entire congregation on deacon selection and possibly mandating a pre-ordination training.

<sup>5</sup>*Merriam Webster* [on-line]; accessed 16 October 2012; available from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vet>; Internet.

review and approval.” Most, however, did understand what I was intending because most did not circle the statement either time.

Second, statement 6 reads, “A deacon must represent the complaints of the members.” I intended this statement to convey a deacon office that had the nature of a political representation of people upset with the direction of the church.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the deacon gives the complainers a voice on the board, which, in turn, addresses the complaint from a position of authority. This intended meaning, while gleaned by most, was certainly not understood in a uniform way. After saying so much about the Greek-speaking widows who were neglected, this statement was probably understood in a more positive way after the training time. After asking one participant as to why he circled it, he conveyed an idea more akin to ministry rather than a voice to offset the authority of the pastor. In retrospect, I would reword the statement, “To be instrumental in augmenting the ministry of prayer and the Word, a deacon must champion the complaints of disgruntled members in order to offset any questionable leadership from the pastors.”

Another observation at this juncture is the participants’ responses to the last two statements in this section, which read, “A deacon must be ready to preach,” and “A deacon must be gifted to teach God’s Word.” While I covered the differences from the standpoint of a bishop’s versus a deacon’s qualifications as stipulated in 1 Timothy 3, 5 participants circled the latter statement after the training, versus 4 on the pre-training survey. After highlighting Stephen and Philip, I estimate these two deacon-heroes’ preaching ministries were in their thoughts as they circled the latter statement. All but one of those who circled the latter statement also circled the former in the post-training survey.

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<sup>6</sup>See my discussion of the role of deacons in chap. 2.



## Interpreting the Data

In keeping with the utilization of Aristotle's threefold idea, I have grouped any data-supported movement in the deacon-participants' concepts based on the idea of a biblical deacon as one possessing a strong and biblical *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. Figures 1-4 demonstrate the group participants' movement based on a comparison of their pre- and post-survey answers. Survey statements corresponding to the pastor-deacon relationship are grouped under *logos* since this would best reflect each deacon's ecclesiology. In addition, I have measured their ministry participation based on volunteerism, reports of ministry to me, and a sign-up opportunity offered to them at the end of the fifteen-week training period.

In order to present changes in the participants' beliefs, behaviors, and understanding of a New Testament deacon, I took the changes in their survey answers from Section 2 and demonstrated with a bar graph the group's movement toward a more biblical view of a New Testament deacon versus the culture at our church (see figure 1). Especially noteworthy are statements 8 and 9. Although statement 9 moved the wrong way theoretically, both statements taken together demonstrate that the deacon participants, as a whole, are now inclined to think of themselves as needing to be able to convey God's Word through preaching or teaching. The following are the key statements describing the role and responsibilities of a deacon used in the survey:

- S1 – Vet the decisions of the pastor
- S2 – Serve Christians with practical needs
- S3 – Manage the business side of the church
- S4 – Free the pastor for ministry
- S5 – Share my faith boldly
- S6 – Represent the complaints of the people in my church
- S7 – Help bring unity in the church by meeting needs
- S8 – Be ready to preach
- S9 – Be gifted to teach God's Word

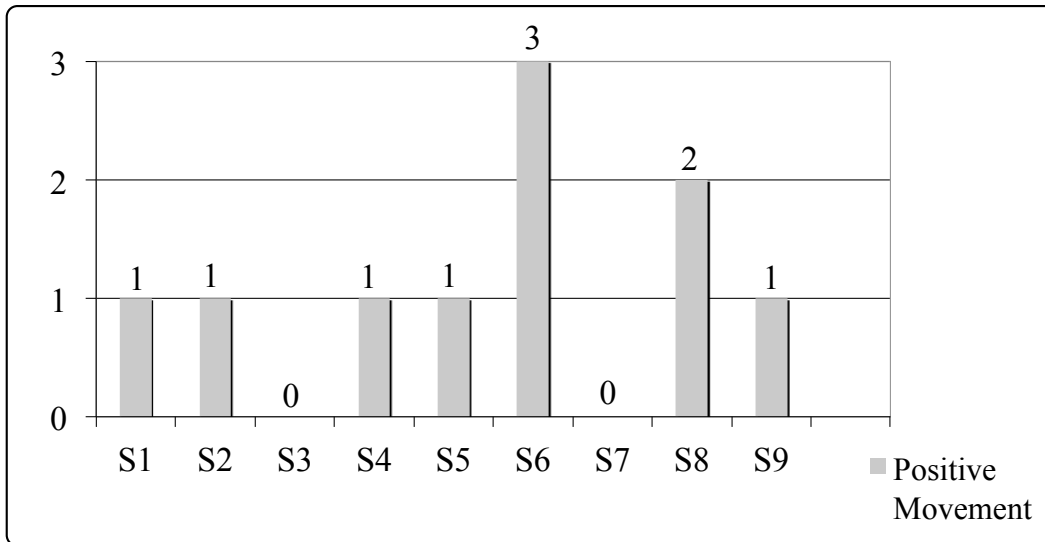


Figure 1: Relative movement from *cultural* belief and behavior to *biblical* belief and behavior of a deacon

Figures 2-4 are bar graphs that indicate improvement in belief (*logos*), character building (*ethos*), and ministry (*pathos*). In order to portray clearly the contrast between the pre- and post-survey answers, the number of participants giving a certain answer was multiplied by that answer, producing a weighted average. For example, 5 participants strongly agreed with statement 1 on their post-training survey. When multiplied, the result is 5 points. Ten chose 2, or agree, which yields 20 points. When all the points are tallied into an aggregate and divided by the number of participants (25 divided by 15), the result is 1.7. This is indicated in figure 3 as a contrast with a weighted average of 2.7 for the first time they engaged the statement. In addition, instead of the participants marking five different answers as on the pre-training survey, there were only two, which shows a tightening of the group's understanding. As stated in chapter 4, *blameless* was understood as *sinless* before the training by some. Figure 3 demonstrates

movement toward a more biblical understanding of blamelessness, as well as, hopefully, an honest confession of a clear conscious on the part of the participants.

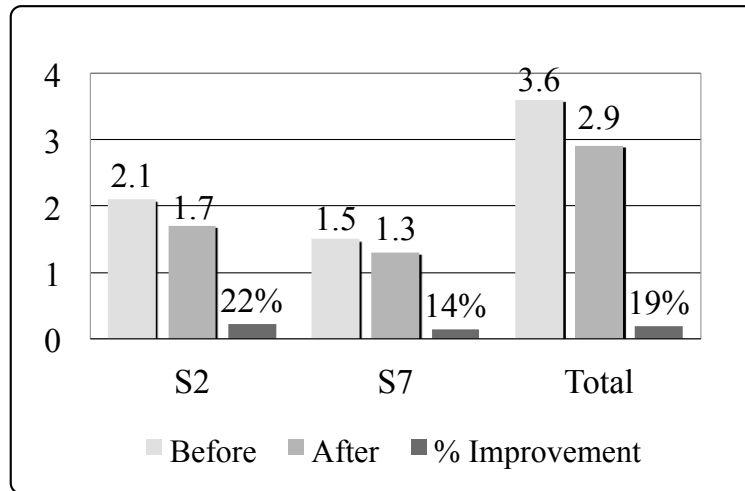


Figure 2: *Logos* improvement

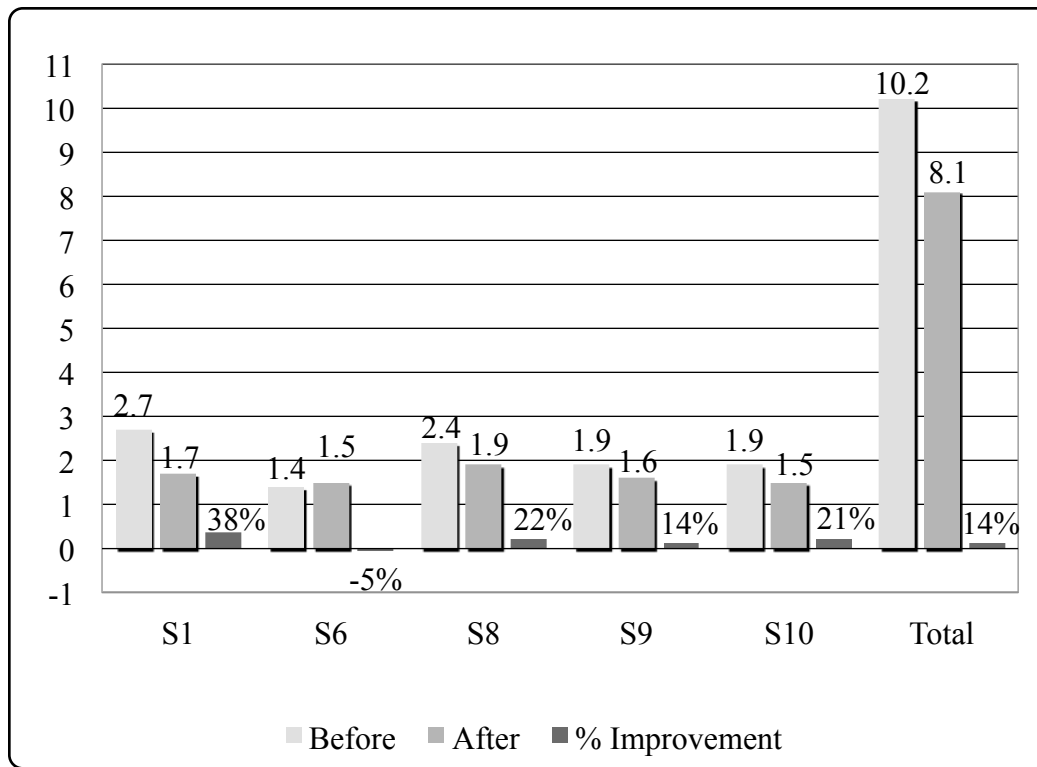


Figure 3: *Ethos* improvement

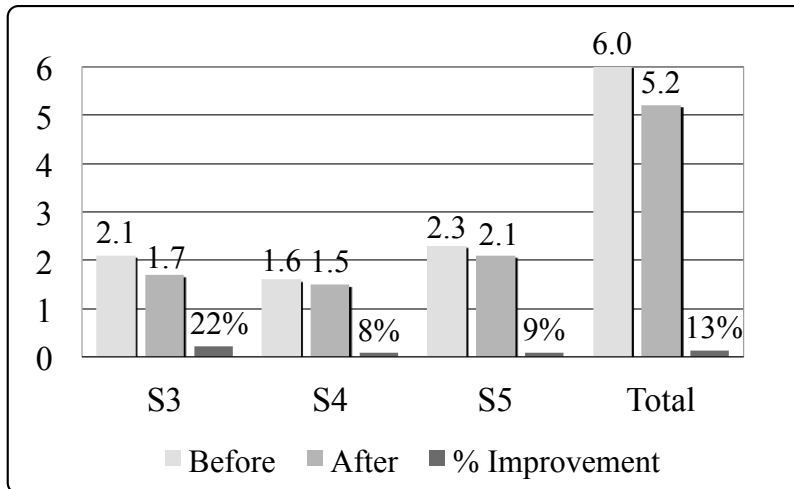


Figure 4: *Pathos* improvement

Because the statements were written in such a way as to make a 1, or strongly agree, the optimal answer, an almost uniform decrease in the weighted averages demonstrates that the project goals were achieved to some degree. The only exception was statement 6. The answers for “I tithe” remained the same except for two participants. One went from a 1 to a 2, the other from a 4 to a 3. The respondent who went from a 1 to a 2 is known by me to be a most generous giver, so I do not know what prompted him to only agree the second time instead of strongly agree. This answer change was not offset by the respondent who went from 4 (disagree) to 3 (uncertain), therefore statement 6 shows negative 5 percent. The following are the key statements with which the participants interacted before and after the training:

*Logos* Statements

- S2 – I feel confident in sharing the gospel.
- S7 – The pastor, under Christ and His Word, is my spiritual authority.

*Ethos* Statements

- S1 – I feel I am blameless in character. I am of good report.
- S6 – I tithe.
- S8 – I have a significant influence on my fellow church members.

S9 – I intentionally seek to have a regular devotional time with the Lord by reading the Scripture and praying.

S10 – The church chose me to be a deacon because I met the biblical qualifications.

*Pathos Statements*

S3 – I am active in some form of member care.

S4 – I come forward for invitational counseling.

S5 – I do hospital visits.

**Deacon Ministry Expansion Volunteers**

In addition to seeing a progression toward more biblical deacon practices and roles, there has been an increase in deacons who want to share their faith and disciple others. I had our deacon chairman send the options listed below to the participants. Two of the participants are elderly and do not communicate well through e-mail. Out of 17 who received the e-mail, 10 responded and 8 signed up to further their ministry as a deacon. The following were their options:

1. I am willing to mentor a younger Christian man on a regular basis.
2. I am willing to preach, teach, or share at a ministry point once a month.
3. I want to do both mentoring and a monthly ministry point.
4. I cannot commit at this time, but will continue with hospital visits, monthly visitation, and needs as they arise.
5. I would be willing to do either number 1 or number 2.

Specifically, two men said they would mentor and preach as needed at a ministry point each month. A ministry point was defined in our training as a retirement home, drug rehabilitation center for men, or any place where people gather to hear the Word of God outside of church. Three of the participants indicated they could not do both, but would either take on a mentee or preach at a ministry point, while one indicated strongly that he desired to preach where there was an opportunity. Two others responded

that they could not commit at this time, but that they would be active in our new visitation ministry, which included invitational counseling, monthly visitation, and hospital visits.

### **Gospel Presentation Measurement**

After the two weeks of training devoted to *logos*, I continued to encourage the men to memorize their outline. I gave three quizzes in order to hold them accountable and measure their progress. On the first quiz they were to give an introductory question and the two diagnostic questions (see appendix 15). Ten out of the 14 men who took the quiz demonstrated they knew the material. The final measurement included the illustrations as the primary part of the quiz. Seven out of 11 participants on this quiz explained the illustrations adequately. The quiz results reflect the post-survey instrument, which had an aggregate movement of one point regarding the statement, “I feel confident in sharing the gospel.”

### **Other Measurement**

As mentioned earlier, I did not assimilate the written section of the survey into any measurable data, but I did have some significant, encouraging indicators on that portion of the surveys. One deacon explained the phrase *full of the Holy Spirit* the first time as, “More of Him and less of self.” The second time he stated, “Allows oneself to be more of Christ and less of the flesh. Actions reflect a change in behavior since salvation and a desire to be more like Jesus.” This deacon at least was not repeating a pithy phrase as before. One also responded to *full of faith* the first time with, “Believes God is in control and walks each day seeking to do His will.” The second time he said, “Believes in the Trinity, despite not fully understanding all there is in Scripture. Seeks Christ’s will and allows conflicts and issues to draw him closer to Christ.” This deacon

had comprehended our discussion on being full of faith.<sup>7</sup> These changes of thoughtful reflection are representative of most the group. Answers tended to get longer, and the men captured at least some of what had been explained concerning the seven deacons in Acts.

### **Self-evaluation**

Throughout the process of designing, carrying out, and writing this project, I experienced constant reminders to remain humble and teachable. My own exploration of deacons in the New Testament produced new vantage points from which I can more effectively see how to lead. There is something about spending so much time in only a few texts that crystalizes one's understanding of principles long touted, but understood on merely a surface level.

Two indicators emerge as measures of my personal and leadership growth throughout this process. First, the deacons cover many of our ministry needs. To a certain extent, deacons visited prospects and shut-ins before, but now there is a steady rotation in which up to three deacons make calls, visit prospects, and do ministry and hospital visits each week. Previously, we had certain deacons that did certain things, but now the ministry is more organized and shared. This broader participation indicates to me these deacons want to free me for ministry and, therefore, I have grown in my influence in relation to the deacons. Because of this increase in deacon responsibility and reciprocating activity, I am experiencing a freedom to choose the more important tasks of ministry, ergo preaching and evangelism are set to receive more and more of my somewhat divided ministry attention.

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<sup>7</sup>In chap. 2 and in discussions, we likened being full of faith to Stephen being one who was willing to die for what he could not see. He believed the Word of God.

Second, I have experienced such love and support from these deacon participants that I have begun to see them more as fellow strugglers than simply officers in an organization. The thesis of this project essentially states there must be spiritual maturity in order to produce harmony and, therefore, growth. In my own journey, I am finding that prioritizing spiritual growth, both for myself and those who follow me, prevents a myriad of problems. I am grateful this process reminded me that each of my church members is Christ's precious lamb. I want to lead strongly as much as ever, but I also want to lead gently and wisely more than ever.

### **Participants' Review of Pastor's Growth**

#### **Reviewer 1**

Reviewer 1 has always been extremely candid with me. He supports me in a way that brings counterbalance without countering his leader. The nature of our relationship is both pastor to deacon and friend to friend. His comments can be summarized by three overarching statements.

First, reviewer 1 pointed out that through this process I have learned I am not meant to try to do everything myself; I have the deacons to help. He believes my leadership grew more reflective of this principle as I trained the deacons. In other words, as I clarified the role of the biblical deacon, I clarified my own role as a pastor. Second, he conveyed a perceived development of my ability to train the deacons, not just teach them. He has generously credited God's leadership through me in changing the deacon culture in a 140-year-old church. Finally, reviewer 1 cited his thirty-year involvement as a deacon with Ridgeway and sees the deacon training plan as having potential for much broader leadership training. He believes me to be at a place in my leadership where I can



pass on to other leaders the biblical principles of leadership as captured in this project's presentation of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.

## **Reviewer 2**

Reviewer 2 is also a friend and a deacon who went through the process. He, too, is direct in his advice to me, although submissive to me as his pastor. For eighteen years, he has served as a deacon at Ridgeway.

Reviewer 2's assessment of my development was threefold. First, reviewer 2 observed that I became slower to speak and quicker to listen as I led the deacons on this journey. He referenced my dependence on godly counsel, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit as part of this more cautious leadership approach. Second, he felt that I became more confident as a leader, while challenging the deacon participants to be an extension of my ministry. Last, reviewer 2 sensed my growing more dependent on the Lord. Specifically, he conveyed that I grew more dependent on the Lord to change the men as I tried to lead by example.

Receiving all the complements from these gracious men is humbling. They have supported me greatly, which extends my leadership well beyond my personal skill set. As I grow and attempt to lead others to grow, I notice that a teachable spirit is one of the key factors in allowing me and others to grow in influence. This project process was no different. Throughout the process, most of the men were amicable to learning and being challenged. Also, the process reminded me of how I need to remain teachable until the very end of life.

## Broader Application Possibilities

Using Aristotle's threefold idea helped the deacon participants clearly see a holistic and biblical portrait of a leader. If *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*-focused teaching and training aided the deacon journey with the pastor, it could be used for other leadership training applications. Already, one of our deacons has suggested I take the Sunday school teachers through the training.

In addition to thinking about specific groups that could benefit from some modified form of this fifteen-week project, there are other implications for churchwide strategies. For example, after writing this project and experiencing the fifteen-week training journey, I am inclined to think about Ridgeway's entire discipleship process in terms of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. Two and one-half years ago, we began a bi-annual equipping ministry we dubbed Ridgeway University (RU). RU is an eight-week Wednesday night study during which participants choose a class according to their need for being equipped for ministry. The classes are layered from the introductory class, which covers assurance of salvation and other basic Christian-walk topics, to a *Baptist Faith and Message* doctrinal class, to a class on understanding cults and world religions, among others. As I look at RU, it seems to cover the *logos* area very well, the *ethos* area somewhat well, but the training intersects with *pathos* very little. Moving forward, I will engage all three facets that give people influence.

Finally, in doing the pre- and post-training survey, as well as hearing verbal affirmations about certain aspects of the journey with the pastor, I sense the need for a fully orbed learning experience, not simply lecture style, for RU. I will add critical incident questionnaires to the classroom training. A Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ)

is a short survey of questions about the learning experience of each student.<sup>8</sup> Stephen Brookfield, in his book, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, explains,

The CIQ helps us embed our teaching in accurate information about students' learning that is regularly solicited and anonymously given. It is a quick and revealing way to ascertain the effects your actions are having on students and to discover the emotional highs and lows of their learning. The CIQ provides you with a running commentary on the emotional tenor of each class you deal with.<sup>9</sup>

So, not only will RU students be challenged in their *pathos* by more classes that include on-the-job training, but also the teachers will gauge how class participants are emotionally buying into the material presented. This type of awareness should keep us from the unfortunate human shortcomings that make the splendid doctrines of the Bible seem boring, misunderstood, or unclear. Insofar as we connect with the saints we are attempting to equip, we will see a membership of ministers instead of spectators who eventually lose interest.

### **Theological Reflection**

For training deacons, there exists a myriad of motives. Pastors may want to ensure cooperation on the part of entrenched leadership, or they may have the good motive of desiring the growth of the church. Ultimately, however, the motive must be the glory of God. As a consequence, this deacon training plan's purpose of leading men to be biblical deacons for the sake of church health and growth is elevated to oneness with

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<sup>8</sup>Example questions include "1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening? 2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening? 3. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful? 4. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing? 5. What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you)." Stephen D. Brookfield, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 115.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 114.

Christ. Theologically, this implies that the process of sanctification is at the root of all refinement and training done in the local church.

This biblical doctrine of sanctification must undergird any and all training. In John 17, Jesus prayed that God would set them (His followers) apart by God's truth; then he affirmed, "Your Word is truth" (John 17:17). Christ's prayer, in which there is supplication for future followers, points to the highest aim and the highest command—glorifying and loving God. Moreover, sanctification is an integral part of how Christ is glorified by the Father because it is God having his will formed in us as the Christian life continues.<sup>10</sup> Pastors and theologians can argue the merits of differing ecclesiological structures, but the most accurate reflection of New Testament church government will only be as effective as the leaders involved. While no one should minimize the undisputable patterns of leadership displayed in the New Testament, a man's *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* are most important.

In fact, the Father answers the Son's prayer as he sanctifies persons in Christ's church by His grace. Paul stated, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10 ESV). Certainly, it would be dangerous to assume that we could set the church structure according to our own pragmatism, while ignoring the teaching of the New Testament on elders and deacons. Just as errant, however, is thinking we can rely on good ecclesiology, while ignoring soteriology; namely, sanctification. Jesus' high priestly prayer indicates that it is God's will to save people, calling them out from the world for eternity.

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<sup>10</sup>Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 1052.

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. (John 17:20-22)

The church is the bride of Christ. Any effort to look into God's Word and yield to His Spirit should conform His children more to His image. Poignantly, training those the church has set apart as deacons is ultimately a ministry to Jesus Himself; it is a display of love to the One who takes joy in us.

Furthermore, it is only a love relationship with Jesus that bolsters us to reflect, study, train, and desire that His body be more unified and complete. As Jesus epitomized the ideal of a man with the perfect *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, any deacon training that narrows the deacon's role to conform more to Scripture should have the underlying purpose of sanctification for the glory of God. While attention to the deacon's job description is important, Luke and Paul spend much more time defining or displaying what I have identified as their *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. If a group of deacons and their pastor experience oneness with Christ, their experience of Him being firmly rooted in the written Word, they will serve His body, the Church, rather than themselves. One implication is the deacons' submitting to the bishops of the church. If these deacons are submitted to Christ, they will submit to the under-shepherds. Serving is about dying to self. The author of Hebrews mentions Christ's suffering "outside the gate" in order to sanctify the people (Heb 13:12). Then he admonishes,

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. (Heb 13:15-17)

The tenor of this entire passage is that God’s grace, operative in a Christian’s life, yields a sacrificial and submissive servant. John MacArthur explains,

Just as church leaders are to rule in love and humility, those under their leadership are to submit in love and humility. . . . When a man is placed in the rule of a local church, our submission and obedience to him is equivalent to submission and obedience to Christ. When you do not have Spirit-filled leaders who rule well or submissive people who follow well, you have chaos and disunity in the church and open the doors to all sorts of spiritual problems.<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, any group of people, whether elders, deacons, or a committee, has the potential of mirroring the godly service demanded by Scripture or something less. Applying these thoughts to theology, you cannot divorce ecclesiology from soteriology in the lives of men and obtain biblical church offices. As the deacon participants and I studied the Scripture, examined our hearts, and reached out to people, we were left humbled as we saw our opportunities to fulfill our biblical roles in serving Jesus.

### **Conclusion**

Having analyzed data from the survey instrument, the increase in deacon ministry, and the testimonies of their learning, this project did move participants toward a more biblical understanding of the New Testament deacon. Efforts toward developing their *logos* proved successful through their attentiveness to misunderstandings of Christology, survey responses that dealt with the sharing the gospel, and their role in volunteering for opportunities to evangelize and disciple others. *Ethos* became of great concern to the participants as a whole. They indicated, both on the post-training survey and at other times, that they were vigilant about the spiritual disciplines of personal quiet time, church attendance, and tithing. One participant told me, “It’s time to be honest with

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<sup>11</sup>John F. MacArthur Jr., *Hebrews: Christ—Perfect Sacrifice, Perfect Priest*, *MacArthur Bible Studies* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), 445.

myself so I answered the survey honestly.” The men shared with the church their love for the church and ministry during a deacon testimony night. They are linking up with other members and Sunday school classes in order to do ministry. These activities, along with their post-training survey results, indicate a growth in their leadership through *pathos* as well.

As mentioned above, my personal goals were met more in the way of deepening my understanding of leadership than in having more time for prayer and the Word. Hopefully, a more prioritized ministry will come both through wise delegation to biblical deacons and through my own improvement of time management.

## APPENDIX 1

### PRE-PROJECT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Deacon,

I would like to honor you and inform you of a challenging ministry opportunity. You mean so much to our church. I, therefore, cordially invite you to a fine meal with your church staff on Monday evening, May 21, at 6:45. All wives are invited as well! We will have a great time and there will be no tasks involved. Other than a brief devotion, we will simply relax and enjoy Christian fellowship. We will let you know the menu through church-announcement as soon as possible.

Please RSVP by Wednesday evening the 16th by e-mailing or calling my assistant.

Yours and His,

Bro. Ashley Ray



## APPENDIX 2

### OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS AND PROJECT CALENDAR

#### **Outline of Chapters**

##### Chapter

- I. Training Deacons for ministry (20-25 pages)
  - A. Presentation of the purpose of the project
  - B. Presentation and Explanation of the five goals of the project
    1. The first goal is to develop the character of ordained men.
    2. The second goal is to develop an orientation of Christlike service within the office of deacon at Ridgeway.
    3. The third goal is to equip deacons with a *logos* of the gospel like Stephen's and Philip's as seen in Acts.
    4. The fourth goal is to further the leadership influence of the office of pastor, developing as a leader through this study on the biblical deacon, while interfacing with the men with whom I serve.
  - C. The church context
    1. The context of Ridgeway shows possible growth barriers as opportunities that deacons can remedy.
    2. The context of Ridgeway includes a 30-year decline.
    3. The context of Ridgeway includes how deacons function during church conflict.
  - D. The project rationale
    1. Church conflict involving deacons and pastors can be a problem among congregationally governed churches.
    2. Many pastors are attempting to introduce the office of lay elder in order to remedy the problems caused by deacon boards functioning as elders and overseers.

3. Ridgeway Baptist Church has experienced several protracted periods of church conflict in which deacons, both individually and corporately, have attempted to address the conflict.
4. This project seeks to foster a robust understanding and deportment of a biblical deacon among Ridgeway deacons by creating a training process that will equip deacons with a biblical *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.

## II. Biblical and theological foundations for the office of deacon (20-25 pages)

### A. The New Testament has several passages that either describe specific deacons or prescribe qualifications for deacons.

1. Acts 6 presumably describes the first deacons. This narrative reports both the events that necessitated the office of deacon and the qualifications for the office
2. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul addressed the offices of both bishop and deacon, enumerating the prerequisites for each office of the local church.
3. In Acts 7-8, Luke described events in which two of the first seven deacons were involved. Both Stephen and Philip have observable behaviors concomitant with the aforementioned criteria in Acts 6, as well as Paul's prescriptive qualifications in 1 Timothy.

### B. The Bible is our only authority for faith and practice within the local church. Churches that wish to function efficiently and effectively for the spread of the gospel will only be impeded by erring from the church government principles found in the New Testament.

1. Acts 20 gives a picture of three functions for one office. Upon examination of the original language, there is no reason to see more than two offices in New Testament ecclesiology.
2. Philippians 1:1 references two offices within that local church, which yields further support for the two-office model.
3. 1 Timothy 3 gives qualifications for only two offices. These qualifications are distinguished from one another primarily by the phrase "able to teach," which refers to bishops.

## III. Theoretical and practical issues of spiritual authority and leadership (20-30 pages)

### A. Leadership principles found in the life of Christ are being used by secular corporations, which have cultures that necessitate changing for productivity. The church, before any corporation, should access and apply these principles.

1. The influence factor of godly deacon leadership does not threaten the authority of the pastor, but extends it.

2. Learning to build godly relationships starts with the pastor and deacons.
  3. Saying deacons should not have authority, yet entrusting them with ministry and requiring they meet the scriptural qualifications, is an oxymoron. They do have authority incumbent upon anyone who is an authentic servant of God, but not authority over the pastor or elder.
- B. Structure is not the main issue for church harmony; spiritual maturity is. Deacons should not be made to qualify after they are selected but should be selected based on their current qualification.
1. A case study of some current models of deacon selection that are practiced in churches will be presented.
  2. Ordination is a serious and spiritual practice in churches today. The basis for the ordination council will be explored biblically and practically. There are traditions that may need to change in order to safeguard the office of deacon.
- IV. The practicum used to implement the project (15-20 pages)
- A. Three-Week Preparation
1. Participants will be recruited based on said criteria utilizing a commitment service.
  2. Participants will be surveyed as to their concept of the biblical role of deacon and their concept of character traits listed in Acts 6-7 and 1 Timothy 3.
  3. Participants will be surveyed on their current practice of spiritual disciplines.
- B. Six-Week Training Class
1. There will be a study of six basic Christian disciplines, including Scripture reading, prayer, tithing, corporate worship, evangelism, and fasting (*ethos*).
  2. There will be a study of the six leadership characteristics of Christ adapted from Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges in *Lead Like Jesus* (*pathos*).
  3. There will be training for basic gospel presentations and sermons each of the six weeks (*logos*).
- C. There will be four weeks of deployment for Sunday school augmented in-reach and outreach, preaching opportunities at local missions, and service projects.
- D. The remaining two weeks will be utilized for reassessment of the participants' concepts of the role and office of deacon, as well as a tabulation of ministry that was done throughout the project.

- V. A final analysis, tabulation of results, and reflection on the effectiveness of the project will be presented (10-15 pages).
- A. Introduction
  - B. Evaluation of purpose
  - C. Evaluation of goals
  - D. Evaluation of practicum
  - E. Strengths of the project
  - F. Weaknesses of the project
  - G. Theological observations
  - H. Personal reflection
  - I. Conclusion

#### **Project Calendar**

Date to submit chapter 2	November 2011
Date to submit chapter 3	January 2012
Spiritual commitment service	February 3, 2012
Pre-training questionnaire	February 3, 2012
Begin training	February 17, 2012
Conclude classroom training	March 28, 2012
Conclude deployment	April 2, 2012
Post-training questionnaire	May 9, 2012
Submit chapter 4	June 2012
Submit chapter 5	July 2012
Revised copies sent	August 2012
Oral examination	September 2012
Graduation	December 2012

## APPENDIX 3

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

#### **Research Instrument**

Pre- and post-training questionnaire for class-training participants

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to ascertain your concept of the biblical office and role of deacon. This research is being conducted by Ashley Ray for purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will simply answer the questions before we begin training and you will answer the same questions after we complete the training. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this questionnaire, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

- I agree to participate  
 I do not agree to participate

#### **Section I**

The first section of this questionnaire will obtain some demographic information about the men taking this training.

1. Please write your name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Circle the number of years since you came to faith in Christ:  
1-5 years      6-10 years      11-15 years      20+ years

3. Age
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25-30
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 31-40
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 41-50
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 51-60
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 61-70
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 70+

4. How many years have you been a deacon? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many years have you been at Ridgeway? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section II

The second section of this questionnaire deals with your concept of what the role of a deacon is.

1. Name at least one deacon out of the New Testament and describe something attributed to his ministry.

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2. Circle all that apply: To be instrumental in augmenting the ministry of prayer and the Word, a deacon must:

- 1. Vet the decisions of the pastor
- 2. Serve Christians with practical needs
- 3. Manage the business side of the church.
- 4. Free the pastor for ministry
- 5. Share my faith boldly
- 6. Represent the complaints of the people in my church
- 7. Help bring unity in the church by meeting needs
- 8. Be ready to preach
- 9. Be gifted to teach God's Word

Using the following scale, please write the number that best corresponds to your feelings in response to the following statements:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
_____	1.	I feel I am blameless in character. I am of good report.			
_____	2.	I feel confident in sharing the gospel.			
_____	3.	I am active in some form of member care.			
_____	4.	I come forward for invitational counseling.			
_____	5.	I do hospital visits.			
_____	6.	I tithe.			
_____	7.	The pastor, under Christ and His Word, is my spiritual authority.			
_____	8.	I have a significant influence on my fellow church members.			
_____	9.	I intentionally seek to have a regular devotional time with the Lord by reading the Scripture and praying.			
_____	10.	The church chose me to be a deacon because I met the biblical qualifications.			

Explain what you understand the following phrases to mean:

Good reputation:

Full of wisdom:

Full of the Holy Spirit:

Full of faith:

APPENDIX 4

PRE/POST-PROJECT SURVEY RESPONSES

Table A1. Pre/post-project survey responses

Statements	Pre-Affirmative	Pre-Negative	Post-Affirmative	Post-Negative
1. Vet the decisions of the pastor	2	13	1	14
2. Serve Christians with practical needs	14	1	15	0
3. Manage the business side of the church	0	15	0	15
4. Free the pastor for ministry	14	1	15	0
5. Share my faith boldly	14	1	15	0
6. Represent the complaints of the people in my church	1	14	4	11
7. Help bring unity in the church by meeting needs	15	0	15	0
8. Be ready to preach	7	8	9	6
9. Be gifted to teach God's Word	4	11	5	10



APPENDIX 5

PRE/POST-PROJECT TRAINING RESPONSES

Table A2. Pre/post-project training responses

Statements	Answers: Pre/Post				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I feel I am blameless in character. I am of good report.	0/5	8/10	5/0	1/0	1/0
2. I feel confident in sharing the gospel.	2/5	10/10	2/0	1/0	0/0
3. I am active in some form of member care	1/5	11/10	3/0	0/0	0/0
4. I come forward for invitational counseling.	7/8	7/7	1/0	0/0	0/0
5. I do hospital visits.	5/7	6/4	1/1	1/2	2/1
6. I tithe.	12/11	1/2	1/1	1/1	0/0
7. The pastor, under Christ and His Word, is my spiritual authority.	9/11	5/4	1/0	0/0	0/0
8. I have a significant influence on my fellow church members.	2/4	5/9	8/2	0/0	0/0
9. I intentionally seek to have a regular devotional time with the Lord by reading the Scripture and praying.	6/8	7/6	0/0	2/1	0/0
10. The church chose me to be a deacon because I met the biblical qualifications.	4/9	9/5	2/1	0/0	0/0

## APPENDIX 6

### *LOGOS* EVANGELISM OUTLINE

#### Introductory questions:

“Do you ever think about spiritual matters?”

“Do you regularly attend church?”

“Have you had a salvation experience?”

#### Diagnostic questions:

1—“Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for absolute certain that if you were to die, you would go to heaven?”

2a—“If you were to die and God were to ask you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ what do you think you would say?”

2b—“In other words, what do think it takes for a person to go to heaven?”

#### Transitional statement:

“Could I share with you how I understand the Bible to answer this last question and how I personally know I would go to heaven?”

#### **Salvation Needed**

Fact of sin (Rom 3:10, 23)

Consequences of sin (Rom 6:23; Isa 59:2)

Illustration (paper between the fingers)

Illustration (standing before a human judge after having committed armed robbery)

## **Salvation Provided**

John 3:16

Who is Jesus to you?

Expansion: *He is the Son of God* (Matt 3:17), *He is the God Man* (John 1:1, 14), *He lived a perfect life* (2 Cor 5:21), *He died for our sins* (Rom 5:8).

Isaiah 53:6 illustration (book of my life)

Transitional statement:

“A person can know all of this and still die and miss heaven. Christ must be accepted...”

## **Salvation Accepted**

Acts 20:20-21

Ephesians 2:8-9 (friend’s gift illustration)

Ask them to trust Christ! Say, “Would you like to transfer your trust to Jesus and Him alone by accepting Him as your Savior and your Lord?”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. Gray Allison, *Winsome Words for Willing Witnesses* (Memphis: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1970), 6-11.

## APPENDIX 7

### SESSION 1 HANDOUT A

#### **Marking Your Bible for Witnessing:**

- 1—Find Romans 3:10.
- 2—Write the page number in the front fly leaf of your Bible.
- 3—Find Romans 3:23.
- 4—Write the page number beside Romans 3:10.
- 5—Continue writing the “next” page number beside each preceding Scripture.
- 6—If using a New Testament, write out OT verses in the fly leaf with the page number for the next verse to be used at the bottom.

#### **Remember 5 Things above All Else:**

- 1—We never fail if we witness.
- 2—God is the one who saves.
- 3—Share as a dying man to a dying man.  
(You are dying physically and they are dead spiritually while dying physically)
- 4—Leave the door open to follow-up later.  
(Don’t try and win an argument, for you might lose the person!)
- 5—Deal with only one individual at a time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>B. Gray Allison, *Winsome Words for Willing Witnesses* (Memphis: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1970), 1-5.

## APPENDIX 8

### SESSION 1 HANDOUT B

#### Salvation Provided Background

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of God cannot be understood apart from the holiness of God (Isa 6:1-7).

2. What do the following verses have in common?

Ephesians 1:7

Acts 4:12

John 14:6

False teachings that cripple evangelism:

3. \_\_\_\_\_ teaches that all religions have truth in them and can lead to God.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ teaches that everyone will eventually be saved anyway due to God's love.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ teaches that those who die without Christ will be destroyed but not spend eternity in hell.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ is a phrase that describes the view that a person can live a good life and get themselves into heaven.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ is a term that means anti-law. People who hold to this outlook prove that God's grace is cheap and that their lifestyle does not matter.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Answers: 1–love, 2–the exclusivity of Christ in salvation, 3–pluralism, 4–universalism, 5–annihilationism, 6–works-righteousness, 7–antinomianism.

## APPENDIX 9

### SESSION 2 QUIZ

Read the statement and corresponding Scripture, if given, carefully. Write T or F for True or False.

True or False:

- \_\_\_ 1. According to Colossians 1:15, Jesus was the first thing God created.
- \_\_\_ 2. According to Philippians 2, Jesus was God who only appeared as a man. He was not really a man like we are.
- \_\_\_ 3. Christ became a man when he was conceived by Mary.
- \_\_\_ 4. Christ created the World.
- \_\_\_ 5. We worship one God who expressed Himself in three different modes (Father, Son, and Spirit).
- \_\_\_ 6. Jesus became our sin on the cross, receiving God's wrath in our place.
- \_\_\_ 7. Jesus literally, bodily rose from being literally dead.
- \_\_\_ 8. Jesus is literally, bodily coming back to earth one day.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Answers: 1. F, 2. F, 3. T, 4. T, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T

## APPENDIX 10

### SESSION 3 HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Write your basic understanding of the following spiritual disciplines prior to our discussion next week.

- Bible Reading and Meditation
- Prayer
- Worship
- Evangelism
- Stewardship
- Fasting

## APPENDIX 11

### SESSION 4 HANDOUT

#### **Journey with the Pastor Session 4 (*ethos*, part 2)**

From the book *Lead Like Jesus*, Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges give us two options for our egos.<sup>1</sup>

Option 1: **E**dging **G**od **O**ut

Option 2: **E**xalting **G**od **O**nly (see page 64 handout from *Lead Like Jesus*)

How do I secure option 2 and establish a Christlike character instead of option 1?

1. Scripture Intake (personal worship, prayer, and discipleship)
  - a. Quiet Time (Ps. 119:147, Matt 4:1-11, Luke 6:12-13, Matt 14:13, Matt 14:23, Mark 1:32-38)
  - b. Scripture Memorization (Ps 119:9, 11, 153, Matt 4:1-11, 2 Tim 3:16-17, Eph 6:10-17)
  - c. Scripture Meditation (Acts 17:11, Ps 1:2-3, Ps 119: 70-72)
  - d. Prayer (Luke 11:1-4; 18:1-8)
  - e. Intentionally Yield (Rom 6, Eph 5:18, Col 3:16)
    1. Is there a promise to claim?
    2. Is there a lesson to learn?
    3. Is there a blessing to enjoy?
    4. Is there a command to obey?
    5. Is there a sin to avoid?
    6. Is there a new thought to carry with me?<sup>2</sup>
    7. How does this verse relate to Jesus?
2. Christian Community (includes corporate worship)
  - a. Sunday school (Acts)
  - b. Corporate worship (Acts, Heb 10:25)
  - c. Ridgeway University (Eph 4:11-15, 2 Tim 2)
  - d. One-on-one (2 Tim 2:2)

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<sup>1</sup>Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons for Everyone from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 63-64.

<sup>2</sup>Adrian Rogers, *What Every Christian Ought to Know: Essential Truths for Growing Your Faith* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 239.



## APPENDIX 12

### SESSION 5 HANDOUT: *PATHOS* PART 1

#### **Journey with the Pastor Session 5 (*pathos*, part 1)**

##### **Thoughts on Pathos:**

Essentially, leadership is influence.<sup>1</sup> Something persuades people to follow leaders. In rhetoric, Aristotle identified three vital elements affecting the speaker's ability to persuade. First, *ethos* is derived from the character of the speaker when he has shown himself to be trustworthy. Second, the *pathos* of the speaker stirs the emotions of his audience, and, third, *logos* is the argument itself.<sup>2</sup>

While Aristotle's application was to oratory, his understanding of human influence has pervasive implications for broader applications. For example, the Greek-speaking widows mentioned in Acts were unhappy due to neglect. The men chosen to remedy the problem were required to meet certain qualifications (discussed in chapter 2 of this project). The apostles explicitly stated criteria that can be explained using Aristotle's threefold idea. The foundation of the congregation's choice of the servants in Acts 6 was their character, or *ethos* (good reputation, etc.). Although used in a much different sense, *pathos* (awakening emotional response) issues implicitly out of the Acts 6 narrative because the men were now to be servants of needy women. Finally, Luke records sermons of great *logos* (well-reasoned argument). Subsequent to their platforms of ministry to widows, Stephen and Philip communicated with scintillating clarity and with the underpinning of the Old Testament the identity of Christ and His gospel. While careful not to insinuate a connection between Aristotle and the Hellenist widows, observations in Acts of key characteristics, as they relate to leading as servants of the church, can be organized under Aristotle's threefold idea.

Furthermore, for the sake of such traits made binding upon the lives of deacons, it is logical and helpful to trace these qualities in the lives of Paul and Jesus. Paul should be studied because he is the prescriber of ordination qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Jesus because He is the root of all of Paul's ministry and identity. Also, Jesus is the only infinite God-Man, which makes Him alone the perfect example for deacons today.

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<sup>1</sup>John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 13.

<sup>2</sup>George A. Kennedy, *Aristotle on Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 14.

### **Note from the Pastor**

**Tonight is not meant for you to be impressed by me.** Tonight is meant for you to be impressed by Jesus and further understand a principle. Will Ridgeway members follow us just because we make sense (*logos*) and we have strong Christian character (*ethos*)? Jesus was the *Logos* of God! Jesus was perfect in His character. But, His disciples followed Him with some wrong motives (which of us will be greatest in the Kingdom?). In John 13, Jesus connects with them in a different way. He is the epitome of a servant leader. “Do as I have done” (John 13:15b). Those who would influence the world had to first cherish one another. Our deacon body must so cherish people that they sense it and connect with the deacon. By *connect*, I mean emotionally connect with the deacon by having the inner conviction that those who are serving actually care. Humility will always win the day because it enlists God as our help. Pride will never win. **May we be men of humility creating a passionate response to our service. People will not be coerced to follow; they will follow out of love.**

APPENDIX 13

SESSION 6 HANDOUT: *PATHOS* PART 2

**Journey with the Pastor Session 6 (*pathos*, part 2)**

**Using Words to Minister Grace**

**Ephesians 4:29-32:**

**“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace (bring pleasure or profit) to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”**

Solomon on Words:

Proverbs 15:1, 23

Jesus on Words:

Luke 6:45

James on Words:

James 3

**Homework: Please review your *logos* (the gospel presentation), allow God to build your *ethos* (have your quiet time), and write one encouraging note to someone who needs it (*pathos*).**

## APPENDIX 14

### SESSION 6 HANDOUT: “ONE ANOTHER” COMMANDS

#### **New Testament “One Another” and “Each Other” Commands<sup>1</sup>**

The 55 sentences listed on the attached page were culled from the *New International Version* with a search for “one another” and “each other.”

Keep in mind that this is a subset of the biblical injunctions and principles for Christians’ relationships. These are important commands, but not a comprehensive or necessarily balanced catalog.

Also remember that many “you’s” in our English New Testament are plural – as in Elizabethan “ye” or Southern “y’all.” You can usually discover such plurals from their context if a “yourselves” (instead of “yourself”) or other clue is not present.

New Testament letters and sermons usually had groups of Christian disciples for their intended audiences. Thus, the commands listed below are concentrated in the Epistles, with a few from Jesus’ gospel discourses.

As you read these commands (in their contexts, if possible), what similarities do you notice?

What reasons or other motivations are offered for obedience?

Love must be more than an emotion for Jesus and His apostles to make sense when they command it.

What characterizes the love they have in mind for Christians to practice?

Which commanded choices and actions put Christians on the receiving end of such love?

Which commanded choices and actions put Christians on the giving end?

Use the margins to note how each command helps flesh out the common theme of love.

Which commands seem different from love – or go beyond it? How many are prohibitions (“don’ts”)?

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<sup>1</sup>John Egleston, “New Testament ‘One Another’ and ‘Each Other’ Commands,” InterVarsity Christian Fellowship [on-line], accessed 14 September 2012, <http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/4511>; Internet.

In which commands do you and/or your fellowship already excel? Which need more work?

Are there any that were totally new to you? Any that do not yet make sense to you?

What are you going to do about what you have so far seen here?

Mark 9:50 “Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

John 13:14 “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”

13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

15:12 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

15:17 “This is my command: Love each other.”

Rom 12:10 Be devoted to one another with mutual affection. Honor one another above yourselves.

12:16 Live in harmony with one another.

13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.

15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Cor 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

11:33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

12:24-25 But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

16:20 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Cor 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Gal 5:13 But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Eph 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5:19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Col 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1 Thess 4:9 Now about your mutual love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

4:18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

5:13 Live in peace with each other.

5:15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

13:1 Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.

Jas 4:11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another.

5:9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged.

5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

1 Pet 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere mutual affection, love one another deeply, from the heart.

3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

5:5 All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

1 John 3:11 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

3:23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

4:11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

2 John 1:5 I ask that we love one another.

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APPENDIX 15

SESSION 6 QUIZ

**Quiz on *Logos***

1. Write a good introductory question and the two diagnostic questions.<sup>1</sup>
2. If you were going to share with someone how to be saved, whether an individual or a group, you could divide your presentation into an introduction and three additional parts. These three parts all begin with the word “salvation.” What are they?  
Salvation \_\_\_\_\_, Salvation \_\_\_\_\_, and Salvation \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>2</sup>

3. Explain the following illustrations:

**Paper between fingers.**<sup>3</sup>

**Standing before a human judge after having been cited for going 100 mph in a 55 mph zone.**<sup>4</sup>

**A record book of your life** (hint: Isa 53:6).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Answers: Do you ever think about spiritual matters? Have you come to the place in your spiritual life that you are absolutely certain that if you were to die that you would go to heaven? What do you think it takes for a person to get into heaven? Or How would you answer God if He were to ask you, “Why should I let you into my heaven”?

<sup>2</sup>Answers: Needed, Provided, Accepted

<sup>3</sup>Answer: While placing a piece of paper between two fingers, ask, “What must I do to get my fingers to go together?” he respondent should answer, “Remove the paper” or he should literally remove the paper. This demonstrates that the separation of sin must be removed in order to have a relationship with our Creator.

<sup>4</sup>Answer: Would a judge be just if he let you go unpunished for going 45 mph over the speed limit? No! He would be encouraging speeding. So, God would be encouraging sin if he did not punish the one committing the sin.

<sup>5</sup>Answer: Having a New Testament in your hand, explain that it is a record book of your life with your birth certificate in the front and a blank death certificate in the back. Contained in this book is every thought, word, and deed. While there are good things, there is sin recorded in the record. Indicate that one of your hands represents you and one God. Put the book inbetween and quote Isaiah 53:6. Before finishing Isaiah 53:6, explain that the hand that represents God is Christ on the cross. Lay the entire Testament on “Christ” when you quote, “And the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:6b). Now ask, “Do you see how nothing is left to keep me separated from God?”

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## ABSTRACT

### TRAINING DEACONS FOR MINISTRY AT RIDGEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013  
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The project details the office of deacon as presented in Acts and 1 Timothy. The project seeks to design training processes that develop a biblical understanding and deportment of the office of deacon among deacons in a local church context. Methods include a synergistic approach to training in evangelism, character development, and leadership through service. Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and delimitations of the project.

Chapter 2 formulates the biblical and theological basis for the local church office of deacon as set forth in the project. The chapter contains an exegesis of Acts 6-7, 1 Timothy 3, and numerous passages related to service and leadership. This chapter proposes that biblical deacons, theoretically, both free pastors for the ministry of prayer and the Word and exemplify Christlikeness to the church in meeting needs, which translates into local church harmony.

Chapter 3 examines the scriptural principles of spiritual authority and leadership in reference to Aristotle's threefold idea of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. The lives and teaching of Jesus and Paul stand as exemplary patterns for the servant-minded today.

Chapter 4 presents the curriculum and practicum administered during the course of the project. Each portion delineates the process so as to enable someone else to provide the same training in another setting.

Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the effectiveness of the project. This evaluation provides changes that could make the project more successful for future implementation. This project demonstrates the nature of the office of deacon and how deacons today can seek to reflect the biblical model.



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