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The role, identity of deacons and the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi: How is the deacon's ministry understood and how does this affect the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi?

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Abstract

While churches in Europe, America and other parts of the world have witnessed a growing interest in the renewal of the diaconate, the Anglican Church in Malawi has done little if anything to capture the growing interest in the diaconate. Deacons in global Anglicanism have been perceived as partial clerics on their way to full participation in ministry as priests. In this perspective their roles have mainly been as liturgical assistants. In recent years there have been attempts to recover the historical view of the diaconate especially in the early apostolic and post apostolic church. These attempts, evident in other parts of global Anglicanism, as well as Lutheran, Catholic, reformed and orthodox traditions, are yet to reach the Malawi Anglican Church.

This study aims at opening such a debate. The starting point is to explore the perception of the diaconate in terms of identity and roles, and the influences this has on the diaconal ministry (diakonia) of the church. Through empirical research propelled by qualitative and latent thematic methodological principles of collecting and analyzing data, and an inductive use of theories, this paper has interpreted and discussed the views of lay members, deacons, priests and bishops with regard to the subject matter. Ecclesial theory from Koinonial and organic perspectives and a diaconal theory including biblical and historical models have been used to discuss the empirical findings. In addition, from a contextual perspective owing to the fact of European origin of Malawi Anglicanism, the paper has also considered the need for a contextual approach to the question of diaconal renewal and practice of ministry.

The findings show that despite there being structures of diakonia in the church, there are gaps in relating there structures and programs the ministry of deacons, as well as relating them to the nature and purpose of the church. A dichotomous view of the diaconal structures and the spiritual being of the church reveal this. It is my anticipation that the study will assist the church to review its understanding and practice of the diaconate.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Tibeye and children Chipiliro (Perseverance) and Mayamiko (Thanksgiving). It was because of your support morally and spiritually that I was able to stay away from you for the two years of my studies. I left Mayamiko 4 months old, you have been strong not only for yourselves but for me too. Tibeye you deserve more than a pat on your back! I love you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC:	Anglican Consultative Council
ACM:	Anglican Council in Malawi
ALIC:	Anglican-Lutheran International Commission
CHAM:	Christian Health Association of Malawi
DNM:	Diocese of Northern Malawi
MCC:	Malawi Council of Churches
NSD:	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
PAC:	Public Affairs Committee
UMCA:	Universities Mission to Central Africa

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<div align="center">**CHAPTER ONE**</div>

<div align="center">**1.0.   INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**</div>

The role, identity of deacons and the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi:How is the deacon's ministry understood and how does this affect the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi?

1.1.   Introduction

This chapter provides the general outline of the research and states the background and research questions in relation to the research topic. It also introduces the main concepts that are fundamental to the study and has problematized the issue of Anglican practice of the ministry of deacons, with focus on the Anglican Church in Malawi.

1.2.   Research Question

This paper focuses on the understanding of the identity and role of the Diaconate in the Anglican Church in Malawi and explores how this affects the diaconal ministry of the Church. It seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does the Anglican Church in Malawi, i.e. ministers in training, practicing deacons, priests, bishops and the laity understand the identity and role deacons?
- How does the church understand its diaconal function?
- How does the conception of the role and identity of the deacons affect the practice of diaconal ministry in the church?

My assumption is that the diaconal ministry of the church is closely linked to the diaconate and vice versa. There is a saying that 'once a deacon, always a deacon' (Barnett 1995: xi) which underscores the fact that the diaconal calling is indelible, in the exercise of ministry, whether one remains a deacon or becomes priest or bishop. In the Anglican Church, deacons, priests and bishops are (considered) the main functionaries of the ministry of the church, as representatives of the faithful in carrying out God's mission in the world. This implies that the conception of each of these offices has implication for the practice of ministry in the church. This paper focuses on the diaconate, and explores how the understanding of the diaconate affects or influences the practice of the diaconal ministry in the mission of the church in Malawi.

As used in the paper, the term *Diaconate* refers to the ministerial office of deacons whether ordained or not. *Diakonia* or *Diaconal ministry* refers to the ministry carried out by the deacons, or the ministry congruent to the ministerial office of the deacon. It shall further, as context will so show, be used to imply the ministry and work of the deacon and the whole church in response to the needs of the people within and without the church realm. *Diakonia* is used to imply ministry of the church of care and support for the needy. Where Diakonia is used to imply its professional nature, the researcher will make efforts to indicate this. At times *Diakonia* is used interchangeably with *diaconal ministry*. The Anglican Church refers to the global Anglican Communion, and where it applies to the Anglican Church in Malawi that particular context will be indicated. The language of diakonia and diaconal ministry is not used in Malawi Anglican ministerial language instead it is related words like charity and development that are used. I use *diakonia* and *diaconal* terminology in such places where charity would rather be used. This is the case because I am of the view that the church needs to employ the diakonia language into its system. Biblical and diaconal readings will show that diakonia is central in the church's language.

This paper pays attention to the understanding of the diaconate and diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi, and does not intend to provide an exhaustive picture of the diaconate or diakonia in the global Anglican Church. The context chapter provides a global structure of the Anglican Church for the purpose of linking the Malawian practice to its ecclesial heritage in global Anglicanism.

1.3. Background and motivation

I was ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church in Malawi, in the Northern Diocese on November 21, in 2007 in the popular Cathedral of St. Peters on the Island of Likoma. After eleven (11) months I was ordained into the priesthood. I recall how much I anticipated the day I would be priested and keenly observed and mastered the services and roles that I would perform upon taking up my priestly office. My pastoral roles as a deacon included visiting the sick in homes and hospitals, distributing Communion to elderly people who could not make it to church and leading services as well as assisting the Priest in the parish in the liturgy. The conception of this ministry was also limited to a spiritual dimension, and had less focus on a social perspective. My exercise of these duties was to a great extent within the perspective of training in preparation

for my priestly roles in the following year. Clearly there was lack of diving into the depth of the diaconate ministry, in view of the focus on the priesthood. After all, my theological training was for the purpose of priesthood, and had little focus on the diaconal ministry. Looking back, I realise that I did not fully understand or practice the diaconate and consequently this in one way or another had an effect on my concept of ministry.

The diaconate is an essential office in the life of the church, as it reminds the church of its servant character, and call to service. While all the believers by their baptism are called to feed the hungry, offer drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit those in prison (Matt 25:31-46), deacons are specially charged with the task to be models, enablers, leaders and motivators for all the faithful. They are meant to reveal the presence of Christ among the needy and helpless, and reveal this to all the people of God (Plater 2004: 111). This picture reveals the pivotal role deacons play in the ministry of the whole church. Deacons are called to be signs and animators of the Christ-like service of the whole people of God in the world.

This perspective of the church describes one ecclesial aspect of the nature and being of the church. The Church as a fellowship (koinonia)of believers with God, and believers with one another and the world and the functionality of this *koinonia* is expressed through *leiturgia*, *diakonia,* and*marturia*(Fuchs, 2008). This sets the diaconal work in an ecclesial perspective. Seeing diaconal calling as intrinsically bound within the church's purpose and self-understanding (Dietrich: 2015) means the conceptions of the diaconal practice influences the self-image of the church. The diaconate offers the church an opportunity to explore its self-image and define its ecclesial standing. Apart from exploring the identity and roles of the deacons, and the understanding of diaconal ministry of the Anglican Church in Malawi, the paper will discuss some of the factors that contribute to the church's image of the diaconate and explore the contextual aspect of ministry in view of the European origin of Malawian Anglicanism. Motivated by this, I desired to look back into the diaconate and the way the church in Malawi perceives the office and how this is played out in the entire ecclesiological outlook and practice of diakonia in the church.

1.4. Dissertation Structure

Chapter Two

Chapter two contains the methodology of the research. It describes the qualitative methodology used in collecting and analysing of empirical data. Main headings include research design, data collection instruments, sampling procedures and sample size.

Chapter Three

This chapter outlines major theories and concepts used in the project. The said theories and concepts will be defined and their operational usage stated. I have employed ecclesial, diaconal and contextual theoretical perspectives to inductively relate the empirical data in the main discussion.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents the context of the paper, outlining the Global and local Anglican contexts. It also includes the context of Anglican mission and ministry from a global perspective and a local practical exercise.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents the empirical data collected from three of the four Dioceses of the Anglican Church in Malawi. The data collected is presented under main themes extracted on the basis of latent analysis and relevance to the research questions.

Chapter Six

In this chapter the paper presents the discussion of the themes stemming from the analysis process. This chapter will engage with the findings in order not only to gain deeper understanding of the subjects' understanding, but also to weigh the findings by applying the theoretical framework of the research and other literature.

Chapter Seven

This concluding chapter highlights the main arguments and issues in the entire paper, and draws conclusions thereof. It also puts forward recommendations pertaining to the theme, and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0.   METHODOLOGY

2.1.   Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological decisions and choices made, and the instruments used in the data collection and data processing. It includes research design, thematic analysis as the analytical method used, sampling procedures and sample size and data collection instruments. It also spells out the limitations in the course of the paper, and the ethical considerations pertaining to the data collection, processing and reporting.

2.2.   Research design

The question being investigated in the research concerns the link between conceptions and the practice of the ministry of deacons and diakonia of the church in the Malawi Anglican Church. By its nature it is a study that aims at describing and interpreting experiences of sampled informants in connection to the subject matter. In order to achieve an in-depth apprehension, the research has used a qualitative research method. The aim was to achieve a deeper understanding of the mentioned phenomenon and to establish the linkages between different dimensions of what makes the Anglican conceptions and practice of diaconal ministry. Through a qualitative method the researcher gains in depth knowledge of the complex social dynamics at play in various programs and processes, in this case the Anglican diaconal ministry conception and practice (Yin: 2014). A qualitative design was relevant because qualitative methods offer ways to gain insights into individual experiences and the construction of meaning (Patton 2002). Qualitative methods are ideal for exploring topics where little is known, making sense of complex situations, gaining new insights into phenomena, constructing themes to explain phenomena, and ultimately fostering a deep understanding of the phenomena (Morse and Richards 2002). As is the case with qualitative research this paper has adopted methods that are interpretative and focus on meaning (Morse and Richards 2002).

Like most qualitative researches this paper is generic, a term that refers to groups of methods and ways of collecting and analyzing data that are distinctly different from quantitative methods because they lack quantification and statistical analysis. It is also generic in the sense that the research has not claimed full allegiance to any one established methodology. This means despite the description of an established methodology attached to the research, I have not strictly held on

to its intent, rules, or guidelines but allowed for flexibility especially due to the fact that the phenomenon being investigated is not only a social phenomenon but a theological one as well. (Lim, 2011; Litchman, 2010; Merriam, 2002). Of the three overall purposes of qualitative methods-understanding the use and meaning of language; describing and interpreting participants' views; and developing theory (Tesch 1990), this paper uses description and interpretation of participants' views. Description and interpretation of participants' views are used in qualitative approaches, such as phenomenology, qualitative content analysis and *thematic analysis*, and are common methods for exploring experiences. The overarching aim is to understand the unique meanings that people attach to the ecclesiastical notion of deacons and diakonia of the church within a contextual setting of the Anglican Church in Malawi, and to explore their significance in the research.

The researcher is aware of the problems that are pointed out by some scholars of the usage of a generic and flexible approach to research. The mixing of a number of aspects and methods often has no clear rationale resulting in incongruence between a study's aims, design and data analysis (Paley 1997, Sandelowski 2000). However, this approach has advantages, which this research has built on. A generic qualitative research approach can help to ensure data collection methods and analytical strategies best suit the research question posed rather than trying to fit the question to a particular philosophical stance (Morse and Richards 2002, Patton 2002, Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

2.3. Thematic analysis

Methodologically this research has used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes data set in detail. It also goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is widely used, but there is no clear agreement about what thematic analysis is and how one goes about doing it (Attride-Stirling,2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Tuckett, 2005). It can be seen as a very poorly branded method, in that it does not appear to exist as a named analysis in the same way that other methods do (e.g., narrative analysis, grounded theory). However as is argued by other scholars, despite the diversity of approaches and terminology used to describe methods of data analysis, thematic analysis is the most widely used analytical method in qualitative research (Braun and Clark

2006). Braun and Clark (2006), state that thematic analysis should be seen as a methodology in its own right. The adoption of this methodology as a guiding principle in this research is done among other reasons in order to ensure research credibility. Adopting a specified theoretical methodology has been described as an attempt to seek 'epistemological credibility' (Thorne et al 2004). The researcher has therefore, in keeping with the thematic analytical model, aligned themes in the process of data analysis and interpretation. The data has been presented in categories and themes that are connected to the research question and the interview guide that was used to collect the data.

This involves a coding process where data is aligned or grouped along overall themes, and sub-themes. Identification of themes has depended on their relation to the research questions and not necessarily their quantifiable value. Identifying themes based on their relevance to the research question means not only that it does not depend on how many times the themes appear but rather how relevant they are in view of the research questions (Clarke & Kitzinger, 2004). This does not mean that other themes are not identified based on their prevalence, but that prevalence is not the main classification method used to identify the themes (Riessman, 1993). The data analysis to generate themes has been done inductively, meaning from bottom up, and not theoretically. This means the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990).

In terms of the interpretation the latent level other than semantic has been employed. A thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. The aim is to engage with the data in a manner that will provide for critical assessments of the views and the conditions within which the said view arise before classifying the data piece to a particular stratum.

2.4.   Sampling procedures

In terms of sampling, the research has used purposeful sampling. In this process participants were picked based on their relevance, positioning and ability to understand the subject matter and provide the required information (Miles and Habermann: 1994). The research ensured a

spectrum of informants that could well articulate the diaconal perspective and practice and consequently inform the project at hand (Cresswell: 2007).

2.4.1. Target and Size of sample

The research is within the context of the Anglican Church in Malawi. The Malawi Anglican Church which is divided into four dioceses within the same province is fundamentally under the same theological and ecclesiological premises. The research therefore targets the whole Anglican population in Malawi, in the said four dioceses.

The decision about sample size was guided by the need to reach as many relevant sources as possible. However it was also limited by resources and the time factor. Most researchers set theoretical saturation as the point of determination for sample size (Kuzel: 1999). This works hand in hand with iterative data analysis procedures. The researcher believes, in agreement with Sandelowski (1995), that sample size is also a matter of judgement. Quality and relevance to the research question of the collected information are key guiding factors in size determination. In the light of this, the research did continual cross checking at every interview level that the collected data was in line with the research problem which in turn guided the subsequent interviews. Apart from the recordings the researcher took note of main points which made this possible.

The researcher has interviewed a total of thirty four (34) participants. These were distributed in four (4) groups, and nine (9) individual units. These add up to a total of thirteen (13) interview units, as shown in tables 1 and 2 below

TABLE 1 GROUP DISCUSSIONS

COMPOSITION	DESCRIPTION	CODE	LOCATION
Theological Students (6)	First Year 1	TST1	Zomba
	First Year 2	TST2	
	Second Year 1	TST3	
	Second Year 2	TST4	
	Third Year 1	TST5	
	Third Year 2	TST6	
Lay members Group 1	Congregation 1, urban		Zomba
	Female lay member 1	FLM1	

	Female lay member 2	FLM2	
	Female lay member 3	FLM3	
	Male lay member 1	MLM1	
	Male lay member 2	MLM2	
	Male lay member 4	MLM3	
Lay member Group 2	Female lay member 4	FLM4	Mzuzu
	Female lay member 5	FLM5	
	Female lay member 6	FLM6	
	Male lay member 4	MLM4	
	Male lay member 5	MLM5	
	Male lay member 6	MLM6	
Lay member Group	Female lay member 1	FLM7	Zomba
	Female lay member 2	FLM8	
	Female lay member 3	FLM9	
	Male lay member 1	MLM7	
	Male lay member 2	MLM8	
	Male lay member 3	MLM9	
	Male lay member 4	MLM10	

Table2 individual interviews

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	CODE	LOCATION
Deacons	Deacon in service 1	DCN1	Zomba
	Deacon in service 2	DCN2	Likoma
Priests	Priest 1	PST1	Likoma
	Priest 2	PST2	Likoma
	Priest 3	PST3	Likoma
	Priest 4	PST4	Likoma
	Retired Priest	RPST	Zomba
Bishops	Bishop 1	BP1	Blantyre
	Bishop 2	BP2	Zomba

2.5. Research Instruments

Qualitative interviews and document analysis are the two data collecting instruments used. Qualitative interviews have a capacity to trigger narrative responses that address the research question (Silverman 2011). As is the case with qualitative interviews, unstructured and mostly open ended questions were used to generate views and opinions from participants (Creswell 2014). This allowed for an ability to explore not only the ideas and perceptions of the informants

but also the multifaceted processes, aspects and dynamics that influenced the recurrent diaconal perception and practice (Magilvy and Thomas: 2011).

2.5.1. Document analysis

This includes documents in the form of books, manuals, and other publications. This is both at the data collection and data analysis levels. With regard to data collection this applies to the liturgical manuals and other doctrinal documents that are to do with the ministry of deacon and diaconal ministry. The researcher was given access to the documents that form part of the ordination Liturgy of deacons namely 'Bishop's Charge' and the actual liturgy for the ordination and licensing of deacons.

The researcher is aware of the challenges that are connected to text analysis, and generation of verbal data through interviews. Interpretation of documents and respondents' statements are subject to subjectivism and biases. Interviews, being interactive, the research undertook to keep conversational biases in check (Silverman 2011). The researcher made sure to strive to ensure proper asking of questions and creation of an environment for the respondents to provide answers to the questions without being guided to precepts as one way to keep biases in check (ibid).

2.6. Validity and Credibility

In the first place the researcher was aware of the possibility of presuppositions, subjectivity and sympathizing with the investigated realm (Aldag and Fuller 1993; Drapeau 2002). The researcher hails from the Christian tradition under investigation, and is known by most of the respondents. This then has a potential for triggering biases and presuppositions and failure to engage critically with the views being investigated. However, there is no prohibition in the scholarly world with regard to the realm one can or cannot investigate based on their connectedness to the same. Moreover scholars give guidelines for a work that can stay away from biases and presuppositions and the said challenges. The researcher did all the necessary steps to ensure that participants had freedom to express their views without being hampered by their knowing the researcher. This will be confirmed in the data that will be presented later on in the paper. Scholars also indicate that in doing a study some level of subjectivity is acceptable, but researchers are advised to maintain subjectivity to the near zero, which was done by making sure that the discussion stuck to the subject being discussed during the interviews and during the

analysis process (Mucchieli 1979 cited by Drapeau 2002). Further, some researchers suggest making use of subjectivity and drawing on one's inner experience in order to better understand the subject of a study (ibid). For them, distancing oneself from the subject through the use of standardized or semi-standardized methods only keeps the subject at a distance (Patton 1990 cited by Drapeau 2002). This therefore assures the researcher that his connection to the research field and participants are by no means threats to the credibility and validity of the research results and interpretation.

In addition to the above, a generic qualitative approach used in this research can enhance the credibility of a study's findings. This is mainly because the researcher has made efforts to be concerned with accurately describing participants' experiences, staying close to the data, and ensuring interpretations are transparent, other than adopting a theoretically based approach (Sandelowski 2000). Sandelowski (2000) reiterates that the credibility of a research will depend on obtaining an appropriate sample; ensuring data collection techniques are consistent with the purpose of the study and having clear strategies for data analysis. The researcher has made efforts to follow through with these guidelines in order to ensure credibility and validity of the research.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

The project ensured consideration of ethical issues with regard to anonymity, confidentiality and rights of access. The researcher subscribed to principles of consent seeking before involvement of interview respondents. (Somekh and Lewin: 2011 & Creswell 2007). Letters of introduction were dispatched to those electronically accessible while those not, through a colleague based in Zomba Malawi. Full consent was sought before the interviews began and participants were informed they were free to withdraw if anyone so wished. They were also given contact details of the researcher informed that they were free to call for findings before final publication in order to confirm that their views were correctly represented and interpreted. This is in keeping with the guidelines the researcher received from the Data Protection Official for Research- Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). The Index provides the introductory and consent seeking letters as well as the recommendations from NSD. The researcher made an effort to find the participants in their natural localities. This means the bishops were interviewed from their offices, deacons and priests in their church premises, same as the laity. Theological students were also

interviewed at the college. This was mainly to avoid making respondents travel distances that would make them tired but also to avoid financial complications. The researcher provided refreshments for the participants where necessary.

The interviews conducted did not involve direct personal data. However some background information may enable identification of the respondents. The nature of the research, a doctrinal issue of the Anglican Church may not be highly sensitive. Therefore the traceable background information may not be problematic in the process. However, the researcher ensures some level of anonymity and confidentiality in connection to data handling. For this reason also, the research was reported to NSD. The notification form for NSD reporting was filed on May 13 2015 and the feedback of their receipt of the same-was given on May 18th 2015. NSD on 18 June 2015 certified the project and gave recommendations following my application (see appendix).

2.8. Limitations and challenges

The researcher reached most of the participants targeted at the introduction of the research. However in some circumstances some informants were not available and the researcher was compelled to reschedule or find alternative participants to attend. Financial and time constraints hindered the possibility of interviewing other relevant informants. Language was another problem in the case of the interviews that involved non-English speakers. This means some concepts and questions were not easy to be articulated in the vernacular. Owing to the fact that the respondents knew the researcher, it took more effort to make some of the participants open up as they felt like they could not articulate sensible responses. In some instances, especially where the interview involved theological students who had been my students before, they held back as they still had feelings of teacher-student environment other than discussion group or interview session. The understanding of the word interview too created an examination kind of feeling. I think scholars will have to find another term to describe this important interactive discussion that informs or seeks data for research.

This study investigates the issue at hand in the church in Malawi for the first time. It is a matter that has not been written on in the context given. As such the researcher seeks to address a specific area of interest though is aware of the vastness of the same study area. The reader is therefore advised to refer to the context and understand the research within the context and

boundaries. Though the researcher has touched on some parts other than the ones where specific focus draws, it does not assume an ambition that is beyond the scope of this research, which is to view the Malawi Anglican understanding of the identity and roles of a deacon, and explore how this affects the practice of diakonia in the church. Even where the researcher has given information on diakonia and diaconal ministry of other parts of the world as outline by different scholars, it only does so, so as to provide background, comparative understanding as well as theoretical premise of the themes under investigation.

2.9.   Chapter Summary

This chapter has given an outline of the research design, methods and techniques used in order to respond to the research questions. This design has also been done in order to allow for the research to flow in a scientific and scholarly manner. This chapter does not explore all the arguments that go with the chosen techniques and methods as that would exhaust a vast amount of space.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1.   Introduction

This section contains three theoretical concepts that are being used in the research. The theory of ecclesiology outlines the theological context in which the research discussion is developed. The diaconal theory includes biblical and historical models of diaconal ministry and lastly contextualization theory. These concepts provide the theoretical lenses and ground for discussing the subject being investigated in the research.

3.2.   Ecclesiology

The doctrine of the church technically referred to as ecclesiology deals with the definition, nature and purpose of the church (Greek *ekklesia*). Attention will mainly be paid to the nature/being and purpose of the church. Church in this paper is understood with reference to the visible institution of the church as well as its self-understanding in spiritual terms, and at times will refer to specific denominations. Ecclesiology is a huge theme but this paper considers two main dimensions of church, which are church as kononia and the organic nature of the church. Many scholars have written on church as koinonia, but this paper focuses on an ecumenical perspective presented by Lorelei Fuchs (2008) and an Anglican perspective as presented by Paul Avis (2013). The organic nature of the church is based on James Barnett's discussion in his 'The Diaconate, a full and equal order' (1995).

The church is both a divine and human entity. It is a divine entity in that it is a creation of God's Word and of the Holy Spirit (*creaturaverbietcreaturaspiritus*). The church is a gift of God and exists neither because of, nor for itself, but of God. Of its very nature it is missionary, for it is not only called but also sent to serve, as an instrument of the Word and the Spirit, witnessing to the Kingdom of God. Those that have encountered God through the Word and respond to the God who calls them form the communion of the faithful (WCC Faith and Order Paper No.198: 2005; Kariatlis: 2011). It is a communion with God and with one another. It is their common partaking in the life of God (2 Pet 1:4), who is both the source and the focus of all communion (ibid). Among the images of the church is the concept of *koinonia*(communion), which defines its fellowship with God and with one another. Ecumenical studies of *koinonia* are within the

perspective of the unity of the church in view of schisms and variations in terms of theology and structure of denominations. However this paper focusses on two aspects of *koinonia*, as a fellowship of believers and the functionality of the *koinonia* concept expressed through *liturgy* and *diakonia*. Koinonia expresses the union that believers share with one another and with God, which Fuchs calls 'directional' and 'relational' *koinonia*. In directional or horizontal koinonia, members of the same reality share with and in one another's life, while in relational or vertical koinonia the members are in communion with God. The triune God is the basis for the directional koinonia, which is derived from or made possible and enforced in the human world through the incarnation. Believers by participating in directional koinonia also at the same time participate in relational koinonia, or the koinonia of the triune God (Fuchs, 2008: 30). At the centre of this reality are the two services, of liturgy and diakonia. These are dynamic directional koinonia as being and action. The divine service of liturgy signifies the participation and experience of the believers' sharing in the koinonia with the triune God, while the human service of diakonia signifies the sharing in koinonia with one another. This sharing is at the same time a sharing in communion with the Triune God.

> "In leitourgia believers are gathered in the worship of the triune God, by whom they are scattered by diakonia to church and world. Being together with God in the liturgical act is the sustaining force of vertical koinonia, of the God-given gift to participate in his koinonia. Being sent from that service to the ministerial service of witness and mission is the driving force of horizontal koinonia, the God given call to share that koinonia with the church and world communities, only to return again from diakonia to leitourgia" (Fuchs, 2008: 31)

Fuchs' argument captures the very nature of being church in that it seeks to relate to its divine origin and realize its spiritual entity, while at the same time to live its purpose in the community of believers and the world at large. The relationship between God, church and the whole of creation is a fundamental theme of Scripture. God creates man and woman in his own image. The created man-kind bears an inherent capacity and longing for *koinonia* with God, with one another and with creation (cf. Gen 1-2). God's mandate to the created man is to be the caretaker, the steward of creation. Thus, the whole of creation has its integrity in *koinonia* with God.

In Anglican studies koinonia ecclesiology emphasizes the need for recognition of churches to share and participate in communion, but also recognizes the need for structures that help to order

the life of the church. This koinonia is brought into reality by the act of baptism through which God calls into being the members who form the ecclesial reality. The life of the community is expressed through its liturgy and the sacraments and service for one another and in the community. For this to function, the church sets apart some members of the koinonia community who are ordained to represent the community of believers in their ministry and mirror the priesthood of all (Avis 2013). In keeping with this concept, Anglican ecclesiology exercises the threefold ordained ministry of deacons, priests and bishops. This section is not meant to present the rationale or theological details of each of the positions, but to link *koinonia* ecclesiology to the structure of the church whose mission is carried out by all the baptized and special ministries.

The Faith and Order World Conference held in Montreal in 1963 affirmed an ecclesiology in which the whole people of God participated in ministry and was bound together with the special ministries of the church. From this time on, trends in the WCC have seen an increase of interest in the diaconal mission of the church as well as the role and importance of the ministry of the Deacons. The same was manifested in 1993 when the Faith and Order World Conference observed the role and significance of the Diaconate (Borgegård& Hall: 1999). In dealing with ecclesiology therefore, diakonia and the diaconate cannot be disconnected in keeping with the concept of the being and mission of the church. It is in this context that the study seeks to explore the conceptions of the Anglican Church in Malawi with regard to the *diaconate* and the church's *diakonia*.

The above presentation focusses on the nature of the church as community, which leads us to Barnett's argument on the organic nature of the church. Barnett argues for a corporeality of the church and argues that this corporeality has been lost or obscured in the church over the centuries because of clericalism. This happens, when the church thinks primarily and puts its primary focus on the hierarchy rather than the communion of the whole people of God. Referring to the New Testament, Barnett argues that the church did not put emphasis on particular sacred places or sacred persons, or rank, primacy or dignity of an office. They all existed as the *laos*, the people of God, expressed in the image of the 'body of Christ'. This organic analogy is expressed in Paul's statement in Ephesians 4: are called into one body and one spirit. Baptism is the means through which one is grafted into this body and becomes a member of it. The sacrament of the Eucharist expresses the church's organic union with Christ and in Christ. The Eucharistic bread

represents the body of Christ and by sharing in it the members affirm their union with Christ and with one another (Barnett, 1995). Barnett argues that the church today lacks this sense of organic unity, in which all the faithful realize their place as an integral part of the whole, which needs each member's participation in order to be whole. This organic nature of the church argues for the need for all people of God, for all the koinonia to seek sharing with each other, rather than an emphasis on the hierarchical nature of the ministry, which problematizes independence and interdependence of each member of the body. The koinonia of the church, the organic nature of the church both argue for the engagement of the church in the wider community and call for a corporeal expression in the ministry of the church which includes the laity and the ordained.

3.3.   The Diaconal Theory

The diaconal theory basically speaks of the social action of the church. It is grounded in the nature and being of the church whereby the church seeks to be aware of the needs of the society both within its walls and the community at large. Diakonia is the call to which the church responds in keeping with its allegiance to its head, Jesus Christ (Dietrich: 2014; Boettcher: 2006). Diaconal ministry is the task of the whole church, and at the same time it refers to the specific call of the deacons (Brown: 2004; Jordheim, 2014; Nordstokke: 2011). This paper uses diaconal ministry to refer to the work of deacons as well as to the diakonia of the whole church.

Diaconal ministry operates both inwardly and outwardly; in the church and at the same time linking the church to its societal and entire human context. A document published but The Anglican Consultative council and the Lutheran World Federation, the Hanover report, state that:

> "The social services so central to the diaconal communities and ministries founded in the 19th century continue to be a vital aspect at the church's witness and ministry. These services were rooted in a rich worship and community life. The integration of worship and service remains a concern for the various diaconal ministries of the church." (Hanover Report: 1996: C28)

The Jerusalem Report of the Anglican–Lutheran International Commission (ALIC III) gives an outline of the grounding for Diakonia in worship, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist and follows up with different aspects of the call to work for the good of humanity in diverse contexts. It then sees diaconal ministry as a ministry that seeks "*to support individuals in*

*particularly vulnerable life situations and also to address those conditions that **create vulnerable life situations and to work to change them"** (ALICIII, 2012: 12).*

Diaconal ministry is carried out not only by designated personnel, the deacons but also by all the baptized. Hence the diaconate is understood as the representative of the church's call to the needs of the people (Barnett: 1995). The Hanover report indicates three basic aspects of the ministry of the diaconate, in liturgy, witnessing and the Diakonia of the whole church (Hanover report: 1996: §24). Diaconal ministry is therefore the ministry of all believers. It is a ministry through which the church expresses the call to be present in the lives of the people as the body of Christ (Dietrich: 2006). Diaconal ministry is rooted in the very nature, and being, and life of the church. It is as important as the life of worship and sacraments of the church (ibid). It is the mission of the church, as an 'all-embracing task of the church' (Nordstokke: 2011: 108).

Diaconal theory is based on an interpretation of the Greek *diakonia* and related words. Historically, diakonia or service has been closely linked to the ministry of deacons which means the conception of service also affected the identity of deacons. Scholars state that the understanding of diakonia as service influenced a construction of theology of ordained ministry as well as ministry of the church that centered on service (Collins, 2002; Barnett, 1995). Mostly service was understood as selfless, caring and loving service to humanity (Collins 2002). Renowned theologians like Hans Kung (1967) and Edward Schweitzer (1961) underscored this service concept of diakonia. The theology of ministry therefore was influenced by this service theology and the deacons have been perceived as servants offering menial, lowly, selfless, caring and loving service. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, in the churches both in Europe and America, in the Anglican Church, the Catholic and the Lutheran traditions, the underlying theology of diakonia has still been menial or lowly service. This direction has changed with the coming of the work of the Australian John Collins in 1990, which argued that the term *diakonia* carries senses of message, agency and one who attends to another in a household, putting emphasis on the authority of the servant because of the one who sends him (Collins 1990: 125; 335).

This move resulted in reinterpretation of diakonia and other service delivery work. In the new perspective, the deacon's identity carries connotations of diplomatic messenger, and as a professional worker, the image and role have seen a kind of upgrade. Nordstokke and Collins,

(cited by Korslien, 2015) state that the diaconal actors become more of enablers and facilitators as opposed to simply being employees or servants that carry out responsibilities assigned them. This, Korslien claims connects to a kind of 'new authority', shift from a sense of 'servility and silent service' to focus on praxis and action oriented diakonia, enshrined in prophetic diakonia (Korslien, 2014: 205). Dietrich connects the paradigm shift to the aspect of mutuality and autonomy between the care givers and care receivers. Though she speaks in the context of donors and aid, autonomy and mutuality can also set relationship between the deacon and the people with and among whom he works, better than the kind or servile and menial sense (Dietrich, 2014). Jordheim describes the deacon as more of a go-between, and a 'bridge builder' (Jordheim, 2014: 196-197), not necessarily an inferior player in the ministry as was the perception of my respondents.

3.3.1. Biblical model of diaconal ministry

The New Testament is usually the reference point for practice of diakonia and the diaconal ministry. Recently scholars have contended that the New Testament passages that have been traditionally understood to be the basis of the diaconate do not necessarily refer to the term. Erik Heen (cited by Boettcher 2006: 14) contends that the three classical passages in the New Testament that are used to refer to deacons do not necessarily do so. Acts 6 is in his argument not an installation of deacons, but rather a reflection of conflict between Hellenists and Hebrews. In Philippians 1:1, Paul uses the term deacon without further details, and in 1 Timothy 3 refers to deacons and bishop and does not clearly spell out the difference. Other scholars argue that the 7 men in Acts 6 are not called deacons and were in fact minsters of the word among Greek speaking Jews (Fee cited by Strauch: 1992). The New Testament does not present a clear cut model of the diaconate as an established order (Nordstokke: 2011). The different word forms as they appear in the New Testament do not always refer to the diaconate as it is understood today (Collins: 2002).

Strauch (1992) argues that the missing of the name deacons in for example Acts chapter 6 does not necessarily imply the missing of the concept. He is of the view that the New Testament uses the words *diakonia* and *diakoneo* in general as well as in narrower and technical sense, referring to people's physical sufferings and material needs. He argues further of the likelihood that the usage of the noun *diakonos* in Philippians 1:1; and 1 Timothy 3: 8; 12 should be seen as

corresponding to the specialized use of the noun *diakonia* and the verb *diakoneo*. C. E. B. Cranfield quoted in Strauch's argument writes:

> "…there is in the New Testament a specialized technical use of *diakonein* and *diakonia* to denote the practical service of those who are specially needy in 'body' or 'estate', and that it is highly probable that the specialized technical use of *diakonos* also has the same reference" (Strauch, 1992: 48).

Strauch supports that traditional view that the men chosen in Acts 6 can be considered deacons. He draws this conclusion based on the argument that the men were chosen to assist in meeting the needs of the poor which is what the word diakonos is all about. Further he thinks the book of Acts should be read in light of Pauline letters where Paul mentions the so called *diakonoi*, in which case the Acts 6 only serves as a background to clarify the origin of the position.

Whether the position of the diaconate can be constructed from the New Testament remains an issue of argument among scholars. What has no need for argument is the existence of the diaconal ministry of the church in the New Testament. It is the ministry that is seen in the life of the Lord Jesus and a ministry that the early church sought to carry on. The need of an established structure that would follow through with the diaconal identity of the church cannot be incompatible with the New Testament's literature relating to the ministry. Scholars agree about the need for the diaconate as a means for the practical organization and response to the needs of the people by the church. While others think the diaconate cannot be taken as a biblical term (Nordstokke: 2011) some insist it can still be considered a biblical term (Strauch: 1992). What is important is that both sides agree that historically diaconal ministry has always been part of the ministry of the church. In this paper the researcher believes that the diaconate is intrinsically related to the diaconal ministry of the church.

3.3.2. Historical model

This model outlines the development of the diaconate and diakonia in the church from post apostolic times to the modern era. It is not possible to give an exhaustive picture of the historical outline. I will therefore concentrate on selected portions of the post-Apostolic period, the Reformation and post-Reformation, and the 20th century. The intention is to provide a picture of the place of deacons in the church during these periods. Barnet (1995); Plater (2004) and Olson

(1992) have provided a historical outline of the ministry of the diaconate from the post apostolic times. During the first five hundred years (500) of Christianity deacons in the church grew in importance. They oversaw pastoral ministry, had significant liturgical roles and were in-charge of the diakonia of the church. The church considered them as a great symbol of the servant calling of the church. They also had an important assistant position to the bishops and they sometimes succeeded them (Barnet 1995; Plater 2004). Deacons were able to baptize, and were set as overseers of smaller congregations, but it is argued that there is not enough evidence to support the idea that they preached (Barnet 1995). The influence of the deacons had grown so high that as Barnet states, there are records of boastfulness of deacons and that deacons could even recommend the ordination of presbyters (priests). During this period, there lacked a clear distinction of the roles and functions of deacons from those of the presbyters. This coupled with the rising influence of the deacons contributed to the subsequent decline of the diaconate.

After the fourth century the diaconate began to shrink as Plater calls it, 'in permanence as well as substance' (2004: 25). This was a result of the growing emphasis on the Eucharist and consequently the presbyters or priests who celebrated the sacrament. As presbyters became parish overseers and bishops oversaw dioceses, a sequential ordination practice (ordaining clergy to prior office in preparation for higher order) followed. Deacons became clerics in transit to priesthood, and were scattered into parishes leaving a few influential deacons (Plater 2004). They became detached from the bishop; their position became a lesser one to the presbyter and their functions limited to liturgy. This change resulted in the distancing of deacons from the bishops, which is still seen in the church today.

By the reformation time, the diaconate had become a transitional post, and duties limited to liturgy, reading the gospel and the epistle. The diakonia of the church was thus carried out by priests and bishops who had greatly risen in power. Martin Luther argued that priests and bishops were meant to concentrate on preaching the word, and that deacons' work should not have been limited to reading the gospel and the epistle. Luther argued that the purpose of the diaconate was to distribute aid to the poor, so that the priests (and bishops) could be relieved of their burden and concentrate on preaching the word and administering the sacraments. Despite Luther's criticism, Olson observes that this did little in the Lutheran tradition as deacons remained significantly limited in functions, and not every parish had a deacon. It was not only Luther who

argued for a change of practice on the diaconate. The German reformer Martin Bucer argued in similar connotations. Bucer's argument was that ministry of the church was composed of the word, sacraments and discipline, which was meant for bishops and priests, and the ministry of care for the needy, which was given to the deacons. This setup of ministry in which the diaconate offers an opportunity for the priest's office to be less occupied and concentrate on the word and sacraments is observed by Echlin (Hall, 1992) as a need worthy of consideration in church ministry. The above represents the Protestant tradition, and through Martin Bucer the attempts reached the Church of England. However, this movement, before coming to fruition was affected by the death of the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer in 1556. Yet despite the talk, changes to accommodate this view of the diaconate did not come immediately (Olson 1992). As the 16th century came to a close, there was no meaningful progress in the church with regard to the functions of the diaconate, both in the Protestant and in the Roman Catholic traditions, including the Anglican Church.

In the 19th century, we notice the growth of priesthood within professional practice. The industrialization of this period resulted in a growing awareness of huge pastoral needs in urban parishes. As a result, the diaconate became a probationary period during which the priest learned his priestly duties under supervision. This affirmed the transitional model, which has been maintained to the present. The diaconal movement in Germany of the 19th century gave a new impetus to the debate and interest in the diaconate. There were established fellowships of deacons and deaconesses who were trained as social workers and nurses, mostly to respond to the growing suffering as a result of industrialization and the rising marginalization of the poor (Nordstokke; 2014). This movement first occurred at Kaiserswerth in Germany and was pioneered by Theodore Fliedner and Johann Hinrich Wichern. The Lutheran Church in Germany and other protestant churches elsewhere responded to the call by advancing diaconal work and setting apart men and women to the diaconate. The Church of England did respond to this movement with the establishment of a community of deaconesses though this did not last and most of the remaining members at present are elderly.

The Anglican Communion's Lambeth conference recommended that dioceses would consider ordaining men and women remaining in their secular callings (Lambeth Conference 1968 Resolution 32). The Episcopal Church in America intended to restore the classical diaconate of

the early church and ordained deacons with the intent that they remain so. Despite these developments, it was not clear as to the exact function and description of the diaconate and as Plater reports many were confused as to where they belonged (Plater 2004). The Alternative Service Book of the 1980 came closer to the historical model as it emphasized the caritative role of the diaconate and its being a symbolic order of the servant ministry of the whole church. Despite there being the desire to renew the diaconate, the roles were not clearly outlined and they were limited to liturgical responsibility. This shows the failure by Anglicanism to conform to the historical diaconal model of the early church with respect to social responsibilities.

3.4. Contextualization theory

The concept of contextualization refers to the perspective of living and relating the gospel to culture and context. This sense goes back to ancient times, to the early beginnings of the church as it broke from the Jewish culture and traditions. But in recent usage the word has been in Church literature since the 1970s, a time that has seen increased scholarly work and thought about contextualization (Whiteman, 1997; Schreiter 1985; Ukpong, 1987; Antonio, 2006). Having originated from the Church of England, Anglicanism in Malawi faces two cultural realities, the western and the African culture. This also applies to the theological and structural nature of the church. The Anglican Church has maintained the heritage of the English church. The liturgy, the theology and the structural organization are adopted from the western Christian tradition of the Church of England. I am of the view that this has affected the concept of the diaconate as well as the practice of diaconal ministry.

Contextualization aims at the practice of the church in word and deed, in ways that make sense to the local community in their local culture. It demands the church to be presented in the manner that penetrates the people's worldview so that they can be true to Christ in their own culture. This will have an effect in the end of deepening the commitment and effectiveness of the teaching and practice of faith. Contextualization has a reverse function in that it enables the church in one locality/context to learn from other cultures how to serve God in ways not known before because it develops contextualized expressions of the gospel.

Darrel Whiteman (1997) discusses the theory of Contextualization, the gap and the challenge and outlines three main functions of contextualization. The first is to help to present the gospel to

different cultural contexts in ways that allow the recipients to experience the gospel while remaining true to their cultural identity. Whiteman contends that the western churches have often confused in thinking that the culturally conditioned gospel they presented to the world was actually the Gospel, and equated these versions of the gospel to the Kingdom of God. Consequently, in the mind of the gospel recipients, being Christian was almost synonymous with being European minded. The critical approach in post-modern and post-colonial studies shows us that this approach has not been a correct path for propagating the gospel of the Kingdom.

The second function of Contextualization is to offend in what he calls "*for right reasons and not for the wrong ones*" (3). He argues that when the gospel is presented along 'appropriate cultural patterns' it has an effect of exposing and challenging the cultures of their wrong, oppressive behaviours in light of the Word of God. This works both ways; it challenges the cultures of the missionaries at the same time as the native cultures. Failure to contextualize the gospel, or poorly contextualizing it, results in turning away the people from seeking a fruitful commitment to the faith, and the new faith continues to work as a foreign faith which has no roots or grounding in the native soil. Whiteman's argument underscores what Antonio (2006) expresses in the encounter between the West and Africa in colonialism and Christianity. Antonio observes that Missionaries strenuously made efforts to make converts and civilize the natives. This often required them to set aside their social and cultural modes of being in order to become Christian and to become civilized. The missionaries' attitude was a combination of the colonial cultural imperative as well as the drive to Christianize the Dark Continent. In the end this produced a cultural transformation which lacked the roots of the gospel on the part of the natives.

The third function that Whiteman describes is in reverse form, in which contextualization enables the experience of the gospel in one particular setting, to have an impact on the universal heritage of the gospel. Whiteman argues that this presents the challenge to create communities that are true to their cultural identity while at the same time true to the universal Christian heritage. Peter Schineller(cited by Whiteman, 1997: 4)calls it maintaining links "with other communities in the present around the world, and with communities of the past, through an understanding of Christian tradition". Whiteman observes further that the colonial encounter of the missionaries and African Christianity created some kind of ecclesial hegemony which in the end has challenged contextualization efforts. Political and economic domination have given rise

to ecclesial hegemony. This in the end hampers the ability of the gospel to permeate the culture and it produces communities that are either unwilling to explore more of Christianity or exercise syncretistic tendencies. Through contextualization the evangelizing culture has a chance to learn new ways of expressing the gospel, while the evangelized culture has the chance to produce a rooted and meaningful practice of Christianity.

A contextual approach which recognizes the context of the mission of the church can lead the church in Malawi to find ways of having a well-grounded sense of the diaconate and the ministry. The contextual approach provides a chance to assess the positive aspects of the host culture, in this case the Malawi culture, which may assist the church to exercise a more rooted Christian faith. In this process there are both positive and negative notions of the African culture, which means the contextual approach as argued by Whiteman (1997) will both offend and recommend. For instance the African concept of the spiritual and the physical world tied together as opposed to the dichotomous view of separating the two.

African contextual religious heritage does not have a dichotomous view of the sacred and the secular. As observed in by Steyner (1990) in Contextualization theory, African culture closely links the spiritual with the physical worlds. The detachment of these two is mainly a European influence planted by missionary outlook. The church therefore needs to assess such strengths and interpret them within the Christian message to give a meaningful and rooted understanding of its diaconal mission, and produce an African Diaconal perspective.

3.5.   Chapter summary

The diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi needs to be modelled not only on the ecclesial, historical and biblical foundations, but also on the contextual culture, in order to produce a well-founded diaconate which is well rooted. This will have the advantage of providing the church with a ministerial practice which appeals to the community and is in keeping with the church's purpose to serve as an instrument of the love of God in its community; to be a *koinonia* based on being and action, and thus to represent God in the world. These theoretical insights are used to discuss the data and from which to make recommendations in view of the research question.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0.   BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4.1.   Introduction

This chapter outlines the context within which the research was conducted. It gives a selected historical context of the Anglican Church in Malawi, and the context of the mission and ministry of the Church and a brief global Anglican structural context.

The Christian population in Malawi is estimated to be at 82.7% (National Statistics 2008). The rest of the population is Muslim (13.0%), 1.9% other religions and 2.5% who do not identify with religion. The Christian population is distributed in the following denominations; The Roman Catholic, The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP); the Anglican Church (Church of the Province of Central Africa); The Baptist; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi; The Seventh Day Adventist; and numerous Pentecostal churches that are on the rise at present. It was not possible to establish the Anglican Church's population in Malawi. Estimates that were given were more than a million members. This however presents a problem because the Anglican Communion website puts the population of Anglicans in the whole Central Africa at Six Hundred Thousand (600 000). I therefore choose not to state the actual population of the Anglican Church in Malawi.

4.2.   Global Anglican Context

A global Anglican Context is presented for two reasons. First to highlight the origin of the Malawi Anglicanism and second to show that the Church in Malawi maintains links with the Global Communion, and that in terms of mission and theology it is not detached from the Global Anglicanism. This is made possible through the work of instruments of Global Anglicanism listed below. Anglicanism originates in the mid-16th Century AD, at the onset of the English Reformation (Chapman, 2006). For many historians, this begins with the declaration of King Henry VIII (1509-47) known as *the Ecclesiastical Appeals Act of 1532* or *the Act of Appeals* in which he forbade all appeals to the Pope in Rome on religious or other matters[1]. This meant that

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[1] Pope Clement VII refused to approve the annulment of King Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Following this, the English Parliament, at Henry's insistence, passed a series of acts that separated the English Church from the Roman hierarchy, and, in 1534, made the English monarch the head of the English Church. King Henry intended that the English Church would remain Catholic, though separated from Rome.

the Pope could no longer have authority on faith and any other matters in the English territories. Consequently this meant the King was the final legal authority in all such matters in England, Wales, and other English territories marking the beginning of the Church of England or the Anglican Church. With the advent of British colonization, the Church of England was established on every continent. In time, these churches gained their independence, but retained connections with the mother church in the Anglican Communion[2].

Today the Anglican Church constitutes a grouping of 38 Provinces and around 550 Dioceses scattered around the world, with an estimated population of 85[3] million members in national or regional Churches that call themselves Anglicans (or Episcopalians in the USA) which collectively are known as the Anglican Communion, mostly in the places where the British Empire's influence extended. The word Anglican itself originates in *ecclesia anglicana*, which is a Medieval Latin phrase, dated at least 1215 and again in 1534. The phrase means the '*English Church'*, but in the past two centuries the tradition has been adopted around the world. The term was used to mean the Church of England in its distinction from the Roman Church since the 19th century (Chapman 2006). Anglicans (Episcopalians) in different parts of the world share aspects of their history, tradition and ways of worshipping. This does not imply uniformity since diversity is clearly seen within dioceses, between provinces and between countries. In Africa Anglicans constitute more than 50% of the worldwide Anglican membership, with central Africa estimated at 600, 000 members. Finding reliable figures for the Malawi Anglican members proved difficult.

4.2.1. The Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion refers to a group of national churches through-out the world, a majority of whom trace their origin from the Church of England (Chapman 2006). The global Anglican Church owns a common heritage, in terms of doctrine, liturgy and structure. It is known as a communion because of this common heritage and theology. John W. Howe and Sam C. Pascoe (2010) state that this communion implies full sacramental fellowship and mutual

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[2]The 1930 Lambeth Conference described the Anglican Communion as a 'fellowship, within the one holy catholic and apostolic church, in communion with the see of Canterbury.'" – (Anglican Communion Resolutions Archive from 1930: 2005, P16)

[3] Other sources dispute the figure and estimate it to be at 61,876,438 of which 80% is in the global south. (https://frbkirk.wordpress.com/2010/04/24/anglican-membership-numbers-worldwide/)

sharing and participation in ministry of its clergy. At an international level the Anglican churches in fellowship are organized under an episcopal structure, which for Howe and Pascoe provides an international identity. In terms of government these regional Anglican churches are self-governing and are expected to express the common heritage in their own cultural contexts. The communion has no central authority figure or body, as is the case in the Roman Catholic Church. Each Member Church of the Communion makes its own decisions in its own ways. In terms of decision making, the Lamb eth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates meetings, and the Archbishop of Canterbury provide recommendations upon which the member churches are meant to build their decisions (University of Wisconsin 1954). These instruments however are not intended to impose decisions on the members. The Secretariat, which is also known as the Anglican Communion Office is based in London England. Its main purpose is to offer support to Anglicans and Episcopalians worldwide to carry out any requests from the Instruments and work to enable members of the Anglican Communion to fulfil their calling to be God's people in the world.

4.3.   The Anglican Church in Malawi

Tengatenga (2010) is my main source in this section. African Anglican propagation was going to be in the wake of the great mission second half of the 19th Century. By 1853 the church had been planted in South Africa, in the Natal region as a result of white settlers in the region. Bishop Colenso of Natal returned to England in a bid to recruit more people for mission in Africa. Among the people that volunteered was Charles Frederick Mackenzie. He would later be the consecrated bishop and lead a team to Nyasaland which marked the arrival of Christianity and the Anglican Church in Malawi. Mackenzie is considered the pioneer of the Anglican Church, being the first English man to bring Christianity to the then Nyasaland. He came in the company of Dr. David Livingstone, a Scottish Presbyterian, who had been to Southern part of Africa under London Missionary Society, whose lectures at Oxford and Cambridge Universities gave birth tothe Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) was born. Charles Mackenzie was chosen to lead a mission team sanctioned by the committee, representing Cambridge and Oxford. Mackenzie led a team comprising of medical men, industrial and agricultural workers, and after a stop in South African they entered Nyasaland in 1861. The mission was to plant the faith,

introduce commerce and agriculture and abolish the slave Trade which this time had impoverished the area south of Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi).

Mackenzie and team arrived at a place known as Magomero which is remembered to this day as the birth place not only of the Anglican Church but also Christianity in Malawi. The mission was later relocated to Zanzibar by 1863, because of the bad climate and hostility in the area, returning to Nyasaland by 1888. This time they settled on Likoma Island which became the mission headquarters. From this place the church was planted around the coast of Lake Nyasa and a diocese of Nyasa was established. A succession of English Bishops reigned until towards the end of the 19th Century. The Diocese of Nyasa, which became the Diocese of Malawi at the dawn of colonial independence, was part of the Central African Province. From the one Malawi Diocese which covered the whole country have now come four dioceses of Northern Malawi, Lake Malawi, Upper Shire and Southern Malawi.

The missionaries had come to a land that was defined as the Dark Continent (Mc Laughlan, 2012: 6). They came to free the uncivilized people, break them free from the slave trade that had torn villages and turned them against each other. They came to educate the savage natives, and they brought the faith. Africans were indebted to the white missionaries, who came to deliver them form their uncivilized ways and brought the Word of God. In this picture the missionaries are pictured as saintly figures that overcame the evil African world. A critical view has however come up since mid-20th century in which the missionaries are considered arrogant and greedy imperialists, imposing their imperial ideologies on the defiant natives (Edward, 2010). They were in a way, used as agents of state expansion and colonial invasion. The nature of the church and its identity would have to undergo radical mutation in order to shake off the negative picture of the colonial origin of the church and its communion with the mother church. These readings provide a background to the discussion of contextualization in the light of the origin and practice of Malawi Anglicanism.

Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing areas covered by the Anglican Church in the Four Dioceses

The diocese of Malawi at the dawn of independence in 1964 was under the leadership of Bishop Donald Arden, a British cleric. Arden's arrival to take leadership of the Malawi Diocese is viewed as being a significant step in church leadership as well as in relating the church to the state and its social context. Being the last white Bishop to lead the Malawi diocese, Donald came at a time when the church needed to hand over power to the locals. This also, in the political environment, was supported by the independence struggles that the nation was going through, leading to the 1964 declaration of Nyasaland as a sovereign State. Arden was made bishop in 1961 and took the Malawian church leadership in the same year. It was the time when the Federation of Nyasaland (Malawi) and Rhodesia (Zambia and Zimbabwe) was dissolved.

4.4. Anglican Mission and Ministry

"Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM) defines the word ministry as the service to which the whole people of God are called, as individuals, local communities, or the universal Church as a whole. It also refers to particular institutional forms which this service may take. The appointed sets apart certain people and through laying on of hands these are ordained for service as leaders and representatives of the ministry in the church and the whole world (BEM; Ministry, II: 7&8).

Anglicans understand mission as the outworking of a life lived for God in sacrificial service for others and a desire to share Jesus Christ's invitation to follow him. It is mission when one takes part in the activities that are inspired by this. The mission does not belong to man, but it is God's mission in the first place an expression of his desire to reconcile human beings with himself and with one another. Anglicans initiate and participate in activities that aim at promoting reconciliation of all kinds, meeting people's basic needs, telling the story of the good news of Jesus Christ, and equipping his followers to do all these things.

Paul Avis, an Anglican priest and theologian, indicates that the tasks of ministry which are the ministry of the word, the administration of sacraments and the exercise of pastoral care, are the core of the mission of the church. The mission of the church is exercised towards God in acts of worship and towards humanity in acts that aim at bringing the good news to humanity as well as service for the betterment of humanity (Avis 2003 & 2005). These tasks are carried out by the church through ordained ministry as well as the ministry of the lay people. The mission is the mission of God since the task of the Christian faith flows from God's salvation plan for the world. Members of the Anglican Communion worldwide, share in what they call 'Five Marks of Mission'. These guidelines and descriptive statements have been endorsed by Anglicans and Episcopalians around the globe. The Five marks of Mission are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers

- To respond to human need by loving service

- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

These marks indicate the holistic nature of the ministry that the church is called to foster. It is mission that follows through on the very identity and purpose of the church. Like Ian Mobsby (2012) observes, the church has not been equally sensitive to all of the above. Sometimes the church has emphasized more on the first two and neglected the marks 4 and 5. However it is necessary that the mission of the church is overarching in its approach. The exercise of mission

in the context of Malawi has structures and programs that can be aligned to the above marks. The church runs hospitals, schools, orphanages and other programs that address different aspects of human need, and seek to eradicate social evils. These diaconal programs are run in all the four dioceses of the Malawi Anglican Church. They represent the livelihood of the diakonia of the church. However the question this paper faces is, how do the different groups, namely: lay people, theological students, deacons, priests and bishops understand and participate in this aspect of mission? And how is this diaconal mission dimension linked to the ministry of the diaconate? In order to get a glimpse of how these questions can be explored and answered, it is necessary to consider the ministries in the church both ordained and lay.

4.5.   Ordained and lay ministry

Howe and Pascoe (2010) state that ministry occurs in four orders namely; lay people, bishops, priests and the deacons. This follows from the fact that the whole people of God participate in the mission of the church. The Anglican Church recognizes this structure and orders and its mission is carried out by involvement of these four dimensions. Of the above orders the last three are ordained in that they are set apart for special place in the mission and ministry of the whole church. Thus the Anglican Church in Malawi does not only have the three fold ordained ministry of Bishop, Priests and Deacons, but also recognizes the full participation of the lay ministries in various structures. Although in the New Testament ministry existed in different forms, by the second century three ministerial offices were distinguished and these became the universal form (BEM, III: 20). The Bishop is the chief pastor and leader, and he guides the direction of the church in a diocese. The Anglicans have maintained the medieval apostolic succession through the office of the Bishops. The bishops are in the apostolic office of the church, taking charge of the ministry of oversight in the church. They are assisted by Priests and Deacons. They in turn are responsible for selection of people to be admitted to the other ministries of Priest and Deacon (Puglisi, 1998). The Priests are usually responsible for the running of parishes where they may or may not have an assistant Priest, and/or a Deacon.

In recognizing the 'priesthood of all believers' in which all Christians are called to be minsters of one to another and of the whole world, lay ministry is the means by which lay people exercise this. Lay people participate in special licensed positions as catechists (or teachers), Readers, Sub-deacons, special guilds (like the women's guild, father's guilds), youth groups, religious parties

and others who take part in developmental committees. These are present in all the dioceses in the church in Malawi. Dioceses also have lay training centers, places dedicated to equipping laity with the knowledge and skills of Christianity and growth in discipleship (Tengatenga 2006). Thus like Howe and Pascoe (2010) argue, the lay people are the most important and foundational office and they are a majority in the church. They are the limbs of the church and there cannot be ministry in the church without the lay involvement.

In the dioceses in Malawi the lay and ordained participate in leadership at different level. They are part of diocesan synods. A synod is a legislative body of a Diocese with full power and authority to pass Acts, regulate mission, and make provision for the good government and efficiency of the Diocese, in line with the Constitution and Canons. The synod is the highest body and it meets every two (2) years. They are also part of diocesan Pastoral Committee, responsible for keeping arrangements for pastoral work and making recommendations to the diocesan bishop (ACM: 2010)

With relation to the synod, some commentators have critiqued that sometimes the synod only acts to rubber stamp decisions already made elsewhere by the bishops and influential people in the diocese. Despite these observations, synods are still effective means of expressing views on church issues and deliberating on policy and coordinating the work of the diocese (Church of England Standing General Synod Committee: 1997). A well-functioning synod is a powerful tool in coordinating the mission of the church, and ensuring participation of lay and ordained in mission and governance (Smith 2008).

The Acts of the Dioceses provides for other committees which have representatives from both the clergy and the laity. The Diocesan Standing Committee acts between sessions of Synod and carries out all the functions delegated by Synod. It is an implementing body together with the bishop and the diocesan officers, and representatives from the house of clergy and lay members from each parish. These and many other committees at the diocesan as well as parish levels show the mutual involvement of the ordained and the lay in mission. The dioceses have diaconal structures and these committees are a means through which both lay and ordained can participate in the mission as stipulated in the five marks. The lay and the ordained participate in the propagation of the gospel of the Kingdom, in nurturing new believers, in loving service for the needy, transformation of unjust societies and caring for the creation, if the programs in the

church are faithful to these marks. However these structural provisions are one thing while the actual or practical participation of the lay and the ordained depends on their understanding of the mission and how much the church leadership provides for their participation. Further, the diaconate in the church in Malawi has very limited chances of participating in these missionary activities because they are not in the structure. This context sets ground for the paper to investigate the diaconal ministry in the church and its relation to the diaconate.

4.6. Diaconal structures

I refer to them as diaconal structures for the reason that they address aspects in the working definition of diakonia. This is the case despite there being no diak-language in the church in Malawi, apart from its reference to the deacons. I am of the view that the church needs to introduce the diak-language as it captures the essence of the ministry even from a biblical and historical points of view.

In terms of health, the church has three main hospitals that are among the well recognized hospitals serving majority of locals in the areas in which they are situated. One of the hospitals run by the Diocese in the Northern part of Malawi (DNM) is the only hospital on the Islands of Likoma and Chizumulu. Apart from the three main hospitals, three of the four dioceses have a total of seven health centres that offer health services. The church runs HIV and AIDS programmes, Malaria programmes that are coordinated by a central body known as the Anglican Council in Malawi (ACM).

In terms of education, the four dioceses run a total of 151 primary schools. The schools are run in partnership with the government. The church provides infrastructure and teachers in some cases, while the government pays for teachers as well as infrastructure where possible. The church also has Government Secondary Schools, Community Day Secondary Schools as well as Private Secondary Schools. In tertiary Education the one diocese has a nursing School; another has recently opened a university with faculties of Education, Commerce, Theology and Nursing.

Chaplaincy work is also done through participation in the Malawi Defence Force where the Church has a dedicated Chaplain. Two more chaplains work in the Malawi Police, and Anglican Priests and lay members have taken part in University chaplaincy work over time. In hospitals and prisons the church too provides chaplaincy work on both regular as well as irregular bases.

In ecumenical relations, the Anglican Church in Malawi is an active member and among the founders of ecumenical bodies that operate in the country both for developmental and for other religious calls. Dr. James Tengatenga (2010) argues that ecumenical involvement was almost natural in the life of the church at its very establishment in the country through the missionaries. He recalls how the church missions were able to coordinate and aid each other in difficult times, especially between the Anglicans and the Presbyterians whose missionaries were from the Church of England and the Church of Scotland respectively. These ecumenical initiatives and relations can be seen in bodies like the Malawi Council of Churches (MCC), of which the Anglican Church was among the founding members. The MCC, a grouping of more than nineteen churches, has been chaired by Anglican Bishops, in the Eighties as well as in the Nineties. Both Priests and Lay members have also been prominent members of the council as secretaries, administrators and finance managers of the council. To this day the church is an active member of this council and each diocese has dedicated officers to oversee ecumenical relations. There are other ecumenical bodies that deal with development like the Christian Service Committee, a developmental body which consisted of the Malawi Council of Churches members including the Roman Catholic which is not represented in the MCC; Chilema Lay Conference Centre which is a Lay Training Centre for Anglicans of the Diocese of Upper Shire, the Presbyterian Blantyre Synod and the Church of Christ. The church also is actively involved in the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) which coordinates Christian Hospitals in Malawi.

In advocacy the church has participated in other ecumenical bodies like the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) which was initiated by MCC in the wake of the transition from one party rule to multiparty democracy in 1992. Ironically, the Church, which was thought as responsible for colonialism,[4] was also challenged to take part in redeeming the country from the autocratic rule of Dr. Kamuzu Banda. PAC has since its institution been an active body that first established dialogue with the pre-multiparty Malawi Congress Party regime and the governments that followed. It has challenged the government many a time and raised the voices of the masses. The Anglican Church was actively involved in its inception and the very first Executive Director of the body was an Anglican lay member. Over the years a number of Priests as well as Lay

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[4] In countries like Malawi where the coming of colonial government was at the invitation of missionaries, the missionaries were taken as collaborators with the colonial rulers

Anglicans have served in various capacities of the body (Tengatenga 2010). Dioceses also individually run several other programs that address different developmental needs, from agriculture and environment to education and stewardship. The church is and has always been present and available in the life of the communities as an advocate and as a development partner with government in various ways as seen above.

This illustrates how it is almost impossible to have mission that does not involve both lay and the ordained. It also shows how the church cannot be present in the community without participating in the life of the community. Several questions arise however, which are the ground for this paper. How much power do the laity have in these missions and programmes, which can affect the output of their work? Where do the deacons fit in all this structure? How does the church understand its call, nature, mission and life in light of such programmes that aim at lifting the human condition and making the world a better place for all? Does the colonial link to the church in its beginning have a connection to the way the faith and exercise of power are perceived and practised, and does the African cultural power relations have any bearing on the exercise of power by the officers in the church whose actions and practices have a direct impact on the perception and practice of ministry? The church's theology of ministry involves four categories, of the Lay, the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon; which calls for meaningful and clear participation of all the four categories in mission. This paper however is mainly interested in the place of deacons in this connection, and how the scenario interprets the church's concept and practice of diaconal ministry.

4.7.   Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented the contextual grounding for the study in terms of the global Anglican structure, the Anglican Church in Malawi and the mission and ministry context in the Anglican Church. I have also presented a diaconal structure of the church in Malawi. The aim is to give the reader a picture of the context within which the questions that this paper raises arise. This is with the main focus on the ministry of the deacon and the practice of diakonia in the Malawi Anglican church.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0.   PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1.   Introduction

In this section I have presented the findings resulting from analysis of the collected data. It presents the responses generated from the research respondents. These findings are presented in thematic form, based on the themes extracted out of the analysis of the responses. These findings have been taken from the interviews carried out with theological students, Deacons, Priests, Bishops and lay members of the Anglican Church in Malawi. The responses are in respect to questions that were a break-down of the research question. The themes extracted from the interviews are not necessarily results of frequency of appearance but relevance of the themes to the study scope and focus. The main focus is on the identity of deacons, the roles of deacons, the understanding of diakonia and diaconal ministry in the church. In order to support the findings and to highlight explanations of the findings, quotations are used. The quotations are rendered verbatim and italicized. Sources are mentioned using code names as are provided in the method chapter.

5.2.   Identity of deacons

Respondents had a varied understanding with regard to the identity of deacons. The responses were generated from bishops, priests and deacons, theological students and lay members. Of these, lay participants were the least well informed on each of the identities presented below.

5.2.1. Deacon as servant

The ordained ministers and theological students referred to the deacon as a servant, while only a few number of the lay respondents were able to articulate the concept. The deacon is a servant who serves their superiors and superior, in this case refers to God, Bishop, Priest or the people being served. The servanthood in connection to God and the church was clearly articulated by the ordained while the lay respondents were not clear to whom the servanthood reflected.

> (DCN1): "…*he is servant meaning one who looks after his or her boss in various activities, for example he can be given a task to perform by the master to the master or to another person. In terms of master, we are talking about God and the church.*"

Lay respondents indicated that they thought the deacon is like a servant not only of the church but also of the Priests with whom they work. This is because the Priests can send the deacons where they want and one mentioned an instance in which a deacon was taken by one hosting priest as a domestic servant. The instance had previously occurred in one of the parishes.

> (MLM4): *I heard that deacons are like servants when they are in priests' houses, because in one parish a Priest that I know but cannot mention their name was actually sent to do house chores like making firewood. The padre was saying that he was his servant, that as a deacon he was called to serve.*

Although the servant picture was understood, there was a difference in the identity of the master to whom the deacons offer service. However despite these differences, generally the respondents both lay and ordained viewed servanthood in terms of humble and menial servility.

> (BP2): "*I think for me I will say we have wrong picture. Even the people (deacons) themselves do not think of diaconate as a distinct office directed towards the church. They always think of it in connection to priests, simply because we take servanthood nature of the deacons to mean it is as a lowly position, like a slave or domestic servant*"

This bishop respondent observed that the deacons can humble themselves to that point because they fear the priest would write a bad report of them which would affect their ordination to Priesthood. For this reason they allowed themselves to be taken as personal attendants because they are told that they are servants.

5.2.2. Deacon as an Assistant

As assistants, deacons render assistance to offices of Priest and Bishop. They assist during mass by preparing the table, cleaning the vessels, distributing the Communion and pronouncing dismissal after service, and at the end of the service they send the people to go out and serve. Lay respondents based their answers on what they observe deacons do in their local churches.

> (FLM 2): "*…The way we see the deacons in our parishes they help the priest during service and in daily works at a parish like taking communion to sick and elderly people and similar duties at a parish. So I think a deacon is an assistant to the priest in order to lessen the burden of his work. The Priest can also delegate him where necessary to represent him in various activities since he is like his assistant.*

Priest respondents did not refer to this identity in the same way bishops did. For the bishops this identity is expressed in the ordinal, and it is in connection to the understanding that the bishop represents the church. Deacons therefore assist him in ministry as a chief pastor.

> (BP2): *the ordinal tells that the deacons assist us as bishops, and the priests. This is because we believe me as a bishop I am a chief pastor, and the deacons are meant to assist us in our ministry. Even historically in the early church, the deacons we hear that they were more like assistants to the office of bishops.*

My respondents looked at this identity in terms of an auxiliary position that only supplements the other ministries especially that of the priests.

5.2.3. Priests in the making

Deacons were also understood as priests in the making. After three or four years of college training, the deacons will be on probation for one year before being priested. During this time as was indicated by one deacon, they will have to do their best to qualify to be ordained. They must observe the priest and serve in order to gain experience. This is because the diaconate is transitional in the church. The transitional nature of the deacons obscures their office and it only acts as a stepping stone.

> (DCN2): *"for me I think the Anglican Church understands the diaconate as a gateway to priesthood after serving in his office as a deacon for one year or more than that depending on his performance. This means that somehow the deacon is neither considered as clergy nor as laity, but he is somewhere in between..."*

This was also the picture that theological students had, of the diaconate as a gateway. It was agreed by respondent bishops that this was the status quo in the minds of the people.

> (BP2): *"Most people look at deacon as priest in making and not as a distinct officer because it is transitional. Both the deacons themselves and the lay members have this conception"*

This is not a time that deacons mostly enjoy. They look forward to pass through the period because it is not desirable as a transitional period. One deacon stated that since deacons are not respected, they always look forward to finish their probation, as was stated by one deacon *"deacons are not respected. We just want time to pass as quickly as possible so that we can*

become priests"(DCN2). For lay members too, a deacon is a learner, not necessarily someone who is serving in his own ministry, but rather someone who is continuing their priesthood training.

One bishop admitted that this was unfortunately the case, but it shouldn't be so. He observed that deacons are not to be perceived as on probation or continuing their training. He was of the view that at a parish the deacon is service. His training is at college and not in the parish.

5.2.4. Ordained by Bishop to Serve in the Church

The deacon is ordained by the bishop to serve in the church. Emphasis was on the aspect of being ordained, especially because at this point the Anglican Church only recognizes ordained deacons in the ministry. According to one bishop respondent, by being ordained the deacons receive power and mandate to serve in the church in their designated office. The ordaining ensures this authority and mandate to do the service: (BP1)*"…a deacon is ordained by the bishop in order to pursue a ministry of caring in the church of God on behalf of the bishop and the church"*

The aspect of being ordained by the bishop raised the question of authority. Whose authority does the deacon go out in and serve under? And to what extent does this authority influence their work and self-understanding? Because the bishop ordains the deacons to themselves, some respondents were of the view that the deacons belong mainly to the office of the bishop, although they could not show how this is practically expressed.

5.3. Theological concept of deacon

The general theological view of my respondents was that deacons are called by God to a ministry in the church. They are called to be servants of God, and are supposed to serve the church and the people in general. It comes from the New Testament where the apostles laid hands on the first deacons in order that they should serve the people. They are also called to preach the gospel just like Stephen did in Acts 6:8. This service is understood mostly within a spiritual and ecclesiastical frame. It was indicated that the call of the six in Acts 6 was a reminder to the church to the presence of the needs of the people.

> (DCN2): *I understand that theologically deacons are servants of God who are called to serve in the church. This is because when the first deacons in Acts 6 were given mandate to serve in the*

caring ministry, the bible tells us that the deacons helped in distributing the daily needs to the people. Therefore the church ordains the deacons on behalf of God so that they can work in this position. It is, in my view, an office instituted by God through the apostles. The deacons therefore I think represent this servanthood of our Lord Jesus.

The aspect of Jesus as a chief servant led to the understanding that deacons are supposed to be reminders to the churchof the servanthood of its nature and call. The word 'supposed to be' was used because admittedly this picture is not present as it stands now in the understanding of the identity and work of the deacons in the Malawi Anglican Dioceses, as one respondent acknowledged:

(BP1): "*Everyone in the church is a servant, or I can say is a deacon. This is because we are all called to be servants of God like our Lord Jesus. This servanthood is to be lived as an example for all of us by the deacons. However our diaconate at present is that the deacons are taken as servants not of God and the church but as servants of the priests. If we can look carefully you will find that they do not actually serve as deacons, but they are learning to serve, and, who do they serve in the learning process? They serve the priests.*"

My respondent bishops indicated that this theology is expressed in the ordinal. The deacon is meant to pay particular attention to the needy and the weak of the community, which is an expression of the calling of every believer. The deacon is called in a special way (Chewa word used is *mwapadela*)[5] to work to remind the church through the bishop of the needs of the people in line with the office of the Lord Jesus in which the deacons serves.

(BP2): {reporting from Local Ordinal}: "*My brother in God, you know that every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ in serving God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. God is now calling you in this ministry in a special way, to serve all people, especially the poor, the weak, the sickly and those without ………and remind the church and its members of the love of Christ through word and deed…*"

There was a clear missing of theological embedding of the diaconate from the lay members.

5.4.   Roles of deacons

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[5] The vernacular used in the local ordinal has a strong emphatic notion of specialty of the subject. It is used to indicate that something is identified among other things while at the same time retaining a special distinction. Common yet particular

The roles of deacons that were expressed are in terms of both the ideal or theoretical roles as well as the roles that are practically observed.

5.4.1. Liturgical Roles

Liturgical responsibilities of deacons consist of assisting during services, preaching, distributing Communion, baptizing where possible; taking communion to elderly and to the sick people

(BP1) "…*Deacons have liturgical roles, to assist the priests during service in church especially during worship. They help the priest as he celebrates the communion.*"

Lay respondents revealed knowledge of this role although I observed that it is closely I connection with learning to become priests. They thought that deacons only serve at the altar so that they can learn the ordinances and practices.

5.4.2. Pastoral Roles

The respondents understood pastoral roles of the deacon to include looking after the weak, the sick, the poor and the elderly. For bishop respondents, the ordinal states that he looks out for the weak and alerts the church of the same. He brings to the church those lost among the faithful. They stated also that the deacon takes part in teaching catechumen and those undergoing discipline prior to penitence.

> (BP2): "*The deacon is called to give pastoral care to the people who are needy, the weak people and those who are lost. He is supposed to gather them and give them hope where there is no hope. He shares in the pastoral calling of the Priests in the parish where he serves….*"

In addition the deacons also indicated their participation in teaching and preparation of catechumen. (DCN1):"*In my work sometimes I help to teach the candidates for baptism and confirmation, […] those to get married* "

I observed that most of the respondents, both the lay and ordained could not state how the deacon's pastoral roles can be differentiated from priest's pastoral role. Surprisingly, one respondent highlighted that the difference is in that the deacon's work is more of an outgoing ministry while the priest's is more of internal pastoral work.

5.4.3. Social Roles

In relation to social roles of the deacons, my informants expressed varied ideas. Most of the lay members and one deacon expressed no clear rationale of the deacon's role in social responsibility. Bishops and priests articulated the social aspect of the deacon's work but only theoretically. The roles were mostly seen from spiritual, liturgical and pastoral perspectives. The social dimension of the ministry was not very much in picture.

> (DCN2): *"deacons are ordained to look after the weak people. The weak people are those people are those people are those Christians or a group of people who need help in their lives. For example people who until now have not heard about God, or have heard but do not believe. So the deacon helps them to know about God and believe."*

In this perspective the deacons expressed what they have seen in practice; that their roles are in terms of evangelistic and spiritual aspects, not in social responsibility. The few social activities that were mentioned were only limited to relief in reaction to disasters if the parishes where they are attached are engaged in the same process. Social issues like political, social-economic and social development were not understood as part of the deacons calling. These dimensions could not be linked to the diaconate because it is for a short period that one is a deacon and cannot therefore engage in such responsibilities. The diaconate is also a continuing ministry in priests and deacons as one bishop said, "Once a deacon, always a deacon. We continue to serve as deacons even if we are not deacons as such" (BP2). The bishop was of the view that these responsibilities can still be seen as done by the church though not necessarily by deacons.

5.4.4. Officers of the Bishop

The Bishops and deacons interviewed reiterated that their roles are to work to assist the bishop in his office, by being his eyes. They are expected to be at the bishop's disposal and do what he sends them to do. They are meant to report back to the bishop the challenges in the parishes and report on the needs of the faithful.

> (BP2): *"The reason we ordain deacons ourselves as bishops (because deacons are ordained by bishops alone, no one participates in their laying on of hands) is that they work in our office. They are officers of the bishop, and are supposed to be closely in touch with us"*

There was no clear explanation as to how exactly the deacons are perceived as working in the bishop's office. The experience shared revealed that in normal cases the deacons were meant to

be closer to the bishop. Yet what happens in practice is that they are attached to the priest which practically makes it difficult for them to be closer to the bishop. Closer to the bishop should be understood in terms of access, as well as regular follow up and communication between the bishop and the deacons.

When asked how this concept is actuated, the response indicated that the priests work as intermediaries. They are in practice ones that have closer access to the bishop than the deacons even when the opposite is the intended.

5.4.5. No clear roles

No clear roles especially in relation to priests. A good number of especially lay respondents indicated that they do not see any clear difference between the deacon and the priest except that deacons do not preside over mass. They thus expect that a deacon is mostly a position that has to do with training as a priest rather than a distinct office.

> (MLM3): *"for me there is no difference between the deacon because what they do are necessarily what the priest does, only that the deacons I think is trying to gain experience before he becomes priest"*

It was clear from some of the respondents that it is not easy for them to understand the office of the deacon as a distinct office with roles that are significantly identified with the office that it can stand out alone. For some this mix-up led to an impression that the office does not have a clear relevance though it is there in the church set up. Ironically, some respondents indicated that the deacons cannot be differentiated from the lay leaders, because they do almost everything that the deacons do. It has been stated earlier that for some it gave an impression that deacons are neither clergy nor laity, but somewhere in between. They

5.5. Deacons in the church hierarchy

Interviewees especially deacons themselves stated tensions rise in the process of their work because of the hierarchical nature of the threefold order of ordained ministry. They stated that they are at the lowest level and that there is no meaningful recognition accorded to them. Sometimes it is like they do not exist. Respondents indicated differing views again in respect to theory and the practice. In this discussion it was observed that sometimes it is not clear whether

the deacons are among the laity or the clergy. Some respondents indicated that although they can attend clergy meetings, they are not expected to contribute to decision making. At diocesan synods they are in the house of clergy yet they cannot make contributions but rather they just observe. This for deacons leaves them thinking that they are not considered part of the clergy, and therefore they desire to attain the well recognizable office of priest.

> (TS6):"*I think most people do not understand who the deacons are. Sometimes they are taken as laity, sometimes as clergy, especially because they put on {clerical} collar but not because of ordination. I also think that because deacons do not participate in decision making it is not possible to be taken in the same way as clergy (priests) […] the people do not take deacons as important because they are the lowest in the rank. .....the priest themselves take deacons as their students which makes it difficult for the laity to see them as important in the church*"

There was also observed to be power problems in relation to priests and deacons, and deacons and bishops. The deacon does not share in the power grid of the church. His position despite ordination is practically no different from the lay and theological graduates. It was observed, as indicated elsewhere, that sometimes deacons are forced into subjugation for fear of being declared unfit for priesthood.

Some respondents could not see the difference between deacons and catechists. In the Malawi Anglican Church there are officers known as catechists whose main task is to help with services in church and the instruction of catechumen. They work in congregations which are. Most of the things that deacons do, with the exception of baptism, the catechists do also. Lay respondents indicated that they do not feel a gap in the ministry hierarchy because such people functionally fill the gap of deacons.

> (MLM9): "*We have catechists who do the works of deacons. They are very helpful in congregations that are distant in our parish. They visit the sick, the elderly, they help the priests when the go there during service, and they also help during funerals since the priest stay far. Frankly most of us do not even have clear knowledge of deacons because we rarely see them.*"

In some instances they were confused with ordinands. Ordinands are theological students who are sent to parishes for practical work at the end of each academic year. In one group some respondents indicated ignorance of the identity of deacons. One member claimed they have had no deacon stationed there, or just visiting them. However in the course of the discussions it was

revealed that some deacons have visited the congregation, sent from the main congregation in the parish, but they could not identify them as deacons.

5.6. Transitional deacons

All the dioceses in Malawi currently have transitional deacons. Recently, one of the dioceses has ordained some catechists to the diaconate. There are indications that some of them may remain deacons while the rest will eventually be ordained as priests. Apart from this the diaconate is transitional. As probationer, a deacon is being prepared for priesthood. As a result of this it is not taken as an independent or full office. It is an office that serves a higher office.

> (BP1): "*I think that in our setup, the ministry of deacon is not an independent or a full office just because it is a transitional office. It is a time where the said deacons are preparing to be ordained as priests. They have been trained in theological stuff and now they have to do a practical part before finally becoming deacons.*"

One deacon (DCN2) indicated that this poses problems. Deacons work to impress the authorities in order to secure ordination as priests. He thinks that as a result of this, one does not serve their full potential, because they will only be in the office for months or a year and some months in most cases. The transitional nature of the diaconate also means the church does not have a diaconal experience that in itself express the depth of the office. This is because no deacon has lived as such for a long time so that they can portray the depth of the office as an independent office. It is a ministry that is very much in the shadows of priesthood and the office of the bishop.

The shortness of the time they stay in office means that the deacons have no time to explore the other aspects of their ministry, apart from the liturgical and pastoral responsibilities. Said one of the Priest respondents:

> (PST3)**:** *"I know that the ministry of diaconate is beyond what we do. It is supposed to be social work not only for the church but the community, but here in Malawi at what time can one see this when we only stay in the office for short time then move on?"*

Some respondents observed that since most of the things that deacons would do are done by other people, it cannot reveal any problem with the transitional nature. Lay people participate in

ministry of the needy and the sick or. The liturgical and other pastoral duties are carried out by priests.

5.7. Theory and practice

Responding to the question whether we have a deficiency in the concept of deacons and the ministry of deacons, respondents indicated that it may not only be lack of theoretical knowledge but also failure to translate the available knowledge into action. That which is known through the ordinal and theological knowledge, despite being inadequate by biblical and historical standards, does not fully correspond to the exercise of their office in practice. As to why this is the case respondents gave differing views. These varied from lack of proper motivation, lack of support from both the bishops and priests, to suspicious actions by priests who host deacons in their parishes. The deacons themselves are said to have no freedom to fully live their call because they do not want to differ with their host. Given that they are sent to work under the supervision of a priest, they have to wait for instructions from the priest, which usually means the tasks that he wants an assisting hand with. This limits their area of operation and consequently affects the practicality of their work.

> (BP2): "*I think as church we have not been able to put into practice what we know about deacons' ministry. We have not been able to coordinate the office of deacons and the ministry of diakonia which the church does. So I can say we have no practical expression of their work as indicated by the ordinal and the cannons.*"

> (BP1): "*simply put the charge that bishops announce to the deacons when ordaining them is not translated into action. Because I think if it was translated to action people would have seen the relevance in independence and importance of the office of deacons*"

Similar sentiments were expressed by one of the deacons interviewed. When asked to give a picture of what he knows as his roles and identity, he indicated lack of room for the practical expression of his real duties. In the end he follows the same ideology that he was only serving to prepare for his ordination as a priest.

5.8. The church and Diakonia

The actual word diakonia was new to some respondents though they could identify with the term diaconal ministry. Respondents referred to development, charity, or relief services, in connection to diakonia. Responding to a question on their understanding of diakonia (or diaconal ministry) as a ministry and the calling of the church in general and deacons in particular, respondents expressed views that were both narrow and wide. Bishop respondents and some priests referred to an holistic approach to mission and ministry while others understood mission in terms of the spiritual, or evangelization, to make disciples. For such participants, development, charity, relief or diakonia were viewed outside the calling, but necessary for the building of the community. Those who argued for an holistic approach indicated that we cannot separate the ministry of physical needs while preaching the gospel that feeds the spirit. Said one respondent:

> (PST3):"*I believe traditionally deacons looked after welfare, both spiritual and social. I am talking about the welfare of human beings, who are both spirit and flesh…..it started with the men of God in the Old Testament. I think David was both king and spiritual leader because he looked after welfare of the people in both ways….. Even the people of Israel were given instructions to look after the needy. All that I think is diakonia. Just like what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did was all diakonia, he came to give freedom to those who were bound, to feed the hungry and to heal the sick……So in my view we as the church we have task to continue this in the church through the diaconal work.*

While this can be understood as a wider view of diakonia, some respondents expressed lack of clarity on the ministry of the church that can be referred to as diakonia, as one respondent said:

> (FLM3):"*For me I take the work of the priests and the deacons to be preaching to us, to pray for us when we are sick. Some priests who have a gift do development work. They can start Home Based Care Organizations in the parish; some can plant maize mills to generate money for the parish. But I think development is the work of the diocese. The diocese also gives us relief when there are some floods like maize and blankets. This work is done by them as extra, but as church I think we preach the gospel only.*"

Asked further to explain what Gospel stands for the respondent said:

(FLM3):"*….Hmmm Gospel for me is that we have to follow Jesus and have faith in him in our lives because if we follow Jesus we have hope that we will be with him in heaven. This is the work that I think the priests and the deacons and the whole church has….*"

There appeared to be a big gap between the clergy and the laity in their expressions especially on the aspect of diakonia and the question that follows to do with the extent of diakonia or diaconal ministry of the whole church. The differences could be attributed to a number of reasons but as one clergy respondent indicated "*I think the issues of our calling as church there is lack of proper teaching. In this case the minds of the people are only concerned with the spiritual calling but not the social calling*" (RPST1).

5.8.1. Extent of Diakonia

To what extent is the diaconal calling of the church to be perceived? This question aimed at extracting a projection of the level at which the church understands its calling, within and without the faith community. Again the leaders (with few exceptions) portrayed a picture that put the roles of the church wide enough. They reiterated that the church must understand itself in terms of being placed in the world, that the issues affecting society, be it economic, political and developmental affect the faithful. Therefore the church's diaconal calling should also be understood to reach as far as it can to holistically serve the people.

> (BP2):"*If you read yesterday's news, you will find there that I have commented on an issue to do with population. I advocate that Malawi should brace for 2 children per family because at the rate we are moving in 50 years we will have more delicate troubles than now. That is diakonia isn't it? I believe as a leader that we have a task that far, to be in front on social and even political issues.In our diocese we have programs that are run to empower people economically and otherwise. I think that is our diaconal responsibility to. It is part of what the Lord Jesus did.*

The respondent was asked then to explain if the programs that are being run in the mentioned diocese were necessarily understood as part of the calling of the church, in the same way preaching the gospel was, or simply as an extra responsibility. It was indicated that due to the fact that different people led different programs based on the skills they had, it was not easy to establish if the sense of calling was indeed evident in their dealings.

In line with this thought, it was expressed that making full use of the deacons in the church, and giving them their full potential could maybe help to bring this lost sense of the extent of the holistic ministry.

5.8.2. Examples of Diaconal Structures and programmes

I asked my respondents to give examples of diaconal structures that the church has. It was indicated that in all the four dioceses of the church there are hospitals, schools, orphanages, Home based care programs, HIV/AIDS programs, Malaria programs, Conservation/Agricultural programs and adult literacy programs. It was observed that most of these institutions were established in the time when the church was being led by whites and few have been planted after they left. Deacons and priests observed that mostly these institutions are headed by lay members, which underlines the problem of detaching the projects from the call of the church. Deacons have only been involved to an extent of visiting the sick in such hospitals, but there is no record of deacons that have had closer involvement in these programs. One of the deacons wondered if it was even possible and important that the deacons could go as far as working to coordinate such programmess.

Structurally the church has in place a framework so that it can fully live its diaconal calling. From the discussion it was observed that the problem may be how the structures are put to use, and a lack of coherency in these two aspects of the calling, spiritual and social.

5.9. An absent ministry?

Given the apparent lack of a fully developed sense of the office of the deacons, owing to the absence and narrowness of the concept and work of deacons, I asked my respondents whether or not the office is available in practice. One bishop stated, "*I think there is no proper understanding, so we can say the office is almost none existing in practice*" (BP1). This was expressed especially because of the observation that mostly the deacons stay in office for a short time, and that most of this time they are learning not serving. They take themselves as such, and people take them as such too. (PST4). "*Probably that is a learning window, while we prepare to work in the office of the priest*"

Said one bishop participant;

> "*They are ordained not to be at school again, but to serve. They already went to college for lessons and they did practical work. When the bishop ordains them, it is so that they can serve as deacons. But if the deacons are there to practice before priesthood then I think we have a serious problem. It means we do not in a way have deacons, we only have priests in training*".(BP2)

This conclusion was also carried further as another observed;

"….I cannot say that we do not have diaconal ministry, because other people do the diaconal work…..However, since we believe in the threefold order of ministry, and because we ordain three officers in the church, it means all the three must be functional. If one does not function then it is like we are saying we don't need one of the three offices….in the end it is a theological issue, but also questions our ecclesiology…"(BP1)

This does bring a serious question of the influence of the perception that people have on the office of the diaconate to the diaconal calling of the whole church. Apart from the observation made above that it leads to a vacuum ministry of the diaconate, some respondents indicated that the vacuum has created a leadership vacuum as well when it comes to charity or diakonia of the parishes. This results from the understanding that a complete diaconate would ensure coordination of the diaconal tasks done by other church guilds. Those guilds could work better and more meaningfully if they understood their work as sharing in the ministry of the ordained.

"…I can say that if we had the deacons working the way they should work I think it could help us lay members to know that it is not just charity but we are serving God. Sometimes we lack support from our leaders. So maybe if we had deacon who is ordained by bishop to coordinate us, I think our work could carry meaning" (MLM3)

5.10. Chapter summary

This section has outlined the main themes generated from the interviews and discussions. The main findings in this paper include the identity of deacon as servant, a priest in training and as an assistant to priests. In terms of roles the research found that deacons in Malawi participate in liturgical roles, pastoral roles, but are not included in social roles. Theologically the research found that respondents understand the diaconate as originating in the ministry of care portrayed by the Lord Jesus and as exemplified by the apostolic church in Acts. The research also found that in the hierarchy of ordained ministry, deacons are considered unimportant in terms of their participation in leadership or power position in the church. The transitional nature of the diaconate was understood to be part of the causes of the limited view of the office of deacon in the church. It was observed that diakonia is practised in the church albeit in a limited view, and is not linked to the deacons' ministry in actual sense.

CHAPTER SIX:

6.0.   GENERAL INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1.   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to state my interpretations and opinions, and to explain the implications of the findings presented above. It aims at answering the research questions posed earlier in this paper. Further it explains how the results support the answers and attempts to relate these answers to the existing body of knowledge relating to the diaconate and diakonia in the church with focus on the Anglican Church. In this task the paper relates to the theoretical framework presented earlier in the paper. The discussion follows the themes as were presented in the preceding chapter. Structurally, the first part (6.2), in relation to the first two research questions deals with the identity and roles of the diaconate. The second part (6.3), deals with the diaconal function of the church; and the final part (6.4), deals with the relationship between the diaconate and the diakonia of the church.

6.2.   Identity and roles of a deacon

In terms of identity, the research findings indicated that the deacon is understood as a servant, by all respondents who had knowledge of the diaconate. Apart from being servant the deacon is an assistant to a priest and is on probation or transit to priesthood. The deacon is also ordained by a bishop in order to serve in the church. In relation to the roles, the respondents see the deacon's roles first in terms of liturgical, pastoral and social roles in the church and in the community.

6.2.1.   Deacon's identity as servant

The servant picture of the deacon was cited by both lay and ordained respondents. The understanding is that the deacon is called to service in the church and community. He offers service to God, to other people more especially to the bishop, the priest and the congregation where the deacon is sent. The nature of servanthood stated is lowly and menial. He or she portrays humility by readiness to perform the duties assigned by the priest hosting him or the bishop in the diocese. The services he offers are in connection with the roles which will be discussed below.

The respondents' understanding of deacons as servants is based on the translation of the Greek words *diakonos* and *diakonia* as *servant* and *service* respectively. In diaconal theory, the identity

of deacons reflects the conception of the term service. In historical and biblical diaconal models the servant identity of deacons especially as humble servants, often offering self-less, servile and menial services is a result of the understanding of diakonia as humble service (Collins 2002; Barnet 1995). Three questions to consider. First, how does this understanding of diakonia as service and deacons as servants distinguish deacons from the rest of the members of the Christian community who are called to service as well? Secondly, does this understanding of servanthood mirror the service and servanthood portrayed in the New Testament? Thirdly, what effect does this have on the church's concept and picture of deacons and the diaconate?

The first question considers why ordain individuals to a specific ministry as servants, charged with service, something that every member in the church performs? Barnett, states that the church has rightly maintained diaconate as a ministry of service. It does not imply collision of services which everyone in the church is called to, but the diaconate as service rather works to empower the rest of the ministry or service of the faithful. This however is possible through the restored diaconate. The church's call to serve can be fully and more readily seen for what it ought to be as service or diakonia (Barnett 1995). It implies therefore that understanding the diaconate as service and deacons as servants is within the right perspective. It is the nature of service and servanthood that matters, which is discussed below.

With reference to the second question, the diaconal theory at the end of the 20th century has shown that the concept of *diakonia* as service in the sense of menial and humble servility was not a correct reading of the New Testament use of the *diakon-words* (Collins, 1990). Collins' argument states that the term *diakonia* carries senses of message, agency and one who attends on another in a household, putting emphasis on the authority of the servant because of the one who sends him (Collins 1990: 125; 335). This dimension challenges the conception of deacons' servanthood expressed by the respondents, being humble, servile, menial and selflessly offering service. Coupled with other views, this dimension leads the faithful not to realize the full diaconal functionality. The new dimension following Collins argument brings new insight to the identity of the deacons. Deacons become enablers and facilitators as opposed to simply being servants that carry out responsibilities assigned them. They are not just servants but have a sense of 'new authority', which shifts from a sense of 'servility and silent service' (Korslien 2014:

205). Further, a deacon is more of a go-between, and a 'bridge builder' (Jordheim 2014: 196-197), not just an inferior player in the ministry as was the perception of my respondents.

The third question seeks to consider how the conception of servanthood affects the conception and picture of the diaconate. For my respondents, in all the categories of lay and ordained, the diaconate is a position that renders humble and menial service. Deacons interviewed in this study stated that their being conceived as menial and servile servants leads to lack of proper respect for them both by the lay members as well as priests with whom they work. They cannot meaningfully contribute to the ministry as they have limitations based on their inferior identity. Consequently, they wish to move on to the next stage as priests which in the end limits their participation in the office as deacons, since there is no motivation. Because of the inferior nature of their ministry they do not participate in decision making. This is also closely linked to the other perceptions of deacons as assistants as well as priests in the making.

While the Church of England, and other Anglican provinces in the Episcopal Church and even in South Africa have to an extent recognized the change in the dimension of the diaconate, the Anglican Church in Malawi and as well as Central Africa has not picked up this new understanding (Faith and Order Advisory Group, 2007; Plater, 2004). The deacons are passive actors, as one respondent indicated *"they themselves do not know what their responsibilities are, so they are passive…"* (BP2). I am of the opinion that there are three main factors that may be responsible for the failure by the church to realize the new dimension of the diaconal servanthood. Two of these factors are discussed towards the end of the chapter. These are failures to contextualize the practice of ministry by the church in Malawi and the influence of the hierarchical exercise of ministry mixed with the hierarchical African leadership. The third factor is lack of contemporary insights in the theological stream of the church. This third factor is witnessed by the absence of this new concept in the theological training system, as theological students articulated a diaconal theory which is not compatible with this new paradigm. It implies that there is possibly no awareness of the current perspectives in the training system.

In conclusion, in my opinion, the readings of the New Testament diak-words are not enough to form a comprehensive theology and practice of the diaconal ministry. Diakonia must take into account ecclesiological reflections that offer insight on the nature and practice of ministry (Dietrich 2015). Further, the concepts of service and humility in relation to the interpretation of

the word diakonia and all other related prior descriptions do not necessarily fall apart with the coming of the new interpretation. This is the case considering that service and humility were important even in the very ministry of the Lord Jesus and has through centuries been important in the ministry of the church (Barnett 1995).

6.2.2. Deacon as Assistants and Priests in the making

My respondents take deacons as assistants and priests in the making for three reasons. First, they practically see deacons working to assist the Priest in the parish during services and other pastoral duties. In parishes where deacons are posted they are viewed as dependent ministers attached to the priests in the parish. Secondly deacons are charged with a duty as assistants at their ordinations, assisting the bishop as well as the priests. Lastly, the transitional nature of the diaconate results in them being viewed and view themselves as being in a position for the sole purpose of learning the details of the next higher office of priesthood.

The Ordinal used during the ordination service derived from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer tells the deacons to assist the bishop and the priests. The vernacular translation used has an emphasis on the assisting notion, "you will be assisting the bishop and priests in prayer and in the ministry […]" (*muziwathandiza a bishop ndiansembemmapemphero, muutumikiwao*). In the episcopal leadership the bishop is the chief pastor. The rest of the ministers work in his office, and thus the deacon from this angle can be understood as an assistant (Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England, 2007). A problem arises if the fact that the deacon is an assistant results into absence of a clear identity of the diaconate which can mirror the whole picture given in the ordinal and other sources of the church's theory of the diaconate. The ordinal does outline various aspects and uses words that are able to create a picture of the diaconate that stands out on its own, even when it is viewed as an assistant to the priest and the bishop. The ordinal contains other words that imply that deacons are co-servants or co-workers of the said ministries. Thus the aspect of assistant must not cause obscurity of the other important pronouncements in the ordinal and the distinctiveness of the office of the diaconate. Since Anglican Ecclesiology recognizes the three orders of ministry, Deacon, Priest and Bishop, having one office as merely auxiliary and as an assisting office to another in such a way that does not clarify its responsibilities and identity also puts into question the ecclesiology articulated (Church of England, 2001).

The deacons are taken as being priests in training as a result of the transitional nature of the diaconate. Respondents claimed that owing to the fact that deacons are ordained and stay as deacons for a short time before becoming priests then it means that the office is mostly on probation. Thus words like '*gateway to priesthood*' (TS2); "*Priest in making*" (BP2) and "*stepping stone*" (DCN2) were not uncommon and interestingly from the laity, the deacons, priests, ordinands as well as bishops. If the diaconate becomes merely a stepping stone, it tampers with the integrity of the office of the deacon. Because of this (mis) understanding priests take deacons as premature trainees that are to be ushered into priesthood depending on how they perform during the year they bear the name 'deacons'. As a result the diaconate may not be identified independently as an office, and his ministry is confused with that of the Priest. In the historical model of the diaconate, this is the phenomenon that Hall describes of the 19th Century that the Diaconate as it became a step into priesthood was important only as a way of preparing candidates to the priesthood for their further duties. The end result was that distinctions between deacon and priest were blurred, and the idea was reinforced that the deacon was merely a priest-in-waiting (Hall 1999).

The identities that respondents gave were a result of the roles that they see the deacons performing. This was the case especially with the lay respondents, while theological students, priests and bishops either referred to the historical diaconate and the biblical model of the diaconate or referred to the ordinal charge. I will combine liturgical and pastoral roles while the social roles will be discussed separately.

6.2.3. Pastoral and Liturgical roles of deacons

My respondents' views of pastoral roles of deacons constituted giving support to the members who are needy, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They are to show love to the community of believers since they, the deacons, are like 'agents of God's purposes of love' (BP2). This leads to the question of the holistic ministry of the church. Here some respondents showed awareness of the holistic nature of ministry, while others expressed a dichotomous view of ministry. The latter was the case in responses that indicated the deacon's pastoral responsibility centered on offering prayers for the sick and the weak (spiritual support). This was especially indicated by lay respondents as well as some theological students. As argued by Elaine Bardwell, pastoral care refers to the care and concern for others, as derived from the picture of the shepherd caring

for sheep. Being a shepherd has connections to leadership and in the episcopal setup it is the Bishop whose office is explained as shepherd. Bardwell argues that this shepherd image is not exclusive to bishops, as both deacons and priests signify the shepherding responsibility (Bardwell, 1999). With this in mind, it is difficult to see a pastoral picture in the views of the diaconate given by the respondents. The deacon's pastoral exercise is limited because of factors like servanthood and his being an assistant and in transit to a higher office.

In their liturgical roles, deacons lead services, proclaim the gospel as well as assist during the celebration of the Holy Communion. Where there is no priest the deacon leads in worship without consecrating the Holy Communion. They assist in administering the sacraments; they distribute Communion and minister to the sick and those who cannot make it to the meeting place for Communion. However, it was observed that the basis for this role for lay respondents was the fact that the deacons were undergoing their preparations for future priesthood. The clergy respondents (Priests, Deacons and Bishops) recited the ordinal and the historical diaconate as the basis for and a starting point for understanding the liturgical and other roles.

The pastoral and the liturgical roles of deacons mean more than what was recognized or articulated by the subjects in this research. Ecclesiological concepts show that liturgical roles are connected to the very nature of the worshipping community. Liturgy gives expression to two of the three main functions of being church, *Leiturgia* (Liturgy), and *Diakonia* (service). It sets the deacon, according to Brown, as a reminder to the church of the connection between its worship and the life outside the church building (Brown, 2005). Liturgical roles that were expressed by respondents are in a way seen in line with the deacon's inferior nature, since he cannot perform fully the duties of a priest. This in the end portrays a liturgical role that is lacking in understanding. This in line with the diaconate especially of the 17th century as it depicts an inferior office with emphasis to the liturgical roles, under the presbyters and being a stepping stone to priesthood (Hall, 1999). The liturgy is central to the life of the church, as it represents a vertical relational koinonia of the church in ecclesiology, where the church communes with the triune God and is prepared to be sent into the world, where it lives its 'call to share that koinonia with the church and world communities' (Fuchs, 2008:31). This calls for the church to ensure the realization of the deacons' role in liturgy and unhook it from the attachment to its inferior understanding.

Celebration (leiturgia)

Communion
(*Koinonia*)

Proclamation (kerygma)   Service (diakonia)
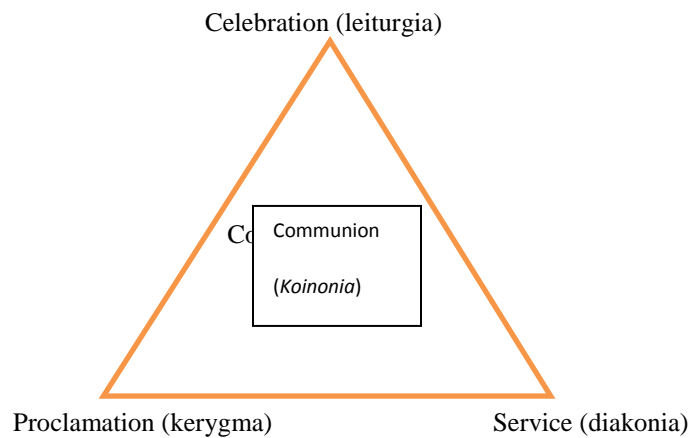
6.2.4. The social roles of deacons

My respondents differed with respect to the social dimension of the deacon's work. I have earlier mentioned one aspect of limitations of the extent of the deacon's responsibility, in that it is viewed in light of spiritual support. The community of the faithful was the natural habitat of the deacons pointed out. Few respondents linked the deacon's work to the wider community, without the aspect of evangelism and that the deacons are called to work in an holistic manner. This question goes hand in hand with the concept of church or ecclesiology that a particular subject holds. Those whom church is about the spirit and heaven limited the roles of the deacon to spiritual help and within the faith community but not in the society and in social issues. One respondent, as pointed out earlier in 5.4.3 (DCN2), indicated that the social roles were not closely linked to the intrinsic identity of the deacon. They however could involve themselves in social roles but not as a priority.

However a closer look at the pastoral roles and the designations indicated about the deacons points to the social responsibility. A clear example is that the deacons are to work with and among the poor. Centering on spiritual support, it is difficult to incorporate such themes as poverty in the work of the deacons. The ordinal points to such needy people as the poor, but it alone does not exhaust how this responsibility should be carried out. Further, there does not seem to be a clear understanding from the respondents themselves as to how they participate in such responsibilities without a clear social link to the deacon's work. Though senior ordained respondents could articulate that the deacons have a social responsibility they agreed that this is not realized in the context of Malawi, partly because the diaconate admittedly is not fully utilized.

Both historical and biblical readings of the diaconate indicate social dimension of diaconal work and the deacon's responsibilities as argued by Plater, (2004); Barnet, (1995) and Brown (2005). Plater states that the diaconate's functions included but was not limited to social care responsibility, a notion that becomes clear after the 3rd century as the diaconate evolved in the early church. From a biblical point of view the diaconate is closely linked to the ministry of Jesus, which upon scrutiny was social and also performed outside the community of faith sometimes. Jesus identified with the poor (Luke 4:18ff); he fed the hungry (Mark 6: 30-44) and defended the weak who were not member s of the believing community (John 8: 2ff). The lack of clear link of the diaconate and social roles may therefore point to a gap in the practice of the diaconate as well as diakonia of the whole church.

6.3. The Church, Diakonia and the extent of Diakonia

The research found that the church as a whole does not lack diakonia though the vocabulary of diakonia was only known to a few of the respondents. As pointed out elsewhere, introducing diak-language is of necessity to capture the holistic nature in the ministerial language. It was discovered that though parishes may not have deacons, the structures exist which take care of the work of diakonia. Structures like women's and youth guilds, the men's guild, religious parties in the name of St. Veronica, Daughters of the King, and a community of nuns in one diocese, carry out diakonia by looking after orphans, the sick, the needy and the poor. In one group discussion lay respondents pointed out that lay positions available serve in the same place as would the deacons had they been present. The church also runs various projects aimed at empowering the poor and enhancing the social, political and economic welfare of the people. In education and health all the four dioceses run services that deliver health and educational care to society. A gap however was on the link between these activities to the calling and identity of the church. The developmental, charity or diaconal responsibilities were mostly viewed as extra tasks that the church does, but not as an intrinsic part of its call and identity. This was especially the case among the laity.

As argued by Tengatenga (2006) the church has always perceived itself in relation to its presence in the community right from the introduction of Anglicanism in Malawi, being involved in political and social economic issues since then. He argues that what we have lacked is a theology of the relationship that the church has in its wider community. Basing on this argument and the

discovery made in this paper, the church in Malawi does not lack diakonia. It is for this reason that some respondents argued that we cannot divide the two realms of humanity, spiritual and physical.

Many of the institutions that the church carries out in its diakonia were either initiated by English church leaders, or are projects that have been initiated by donors or with donor money, and the church in Malawi participates in them. This may point to assumptions that the church has not owned the diakonia by not taking the work started by missionaries even higher, but has rather simply maintained the structures of the missionary church.

Two problems can be observed. One, though the church has diaconal structures, there does not seem to be a link between the work of deacons and the diakonia of the church. In all these social structures the deacon does not seem to be anywhere linked. Not only on diocesan levels but also on parish levels, the deacons indicated that they do not participate in social-economic and developmental issues. This was despite the knowledge and reference by some of the priests that the early church's deacons had social roles.

6.4.   The diaconate and diakonia in the Anglican church in Malawi

The Anglican Church in Malawi has deacons, who are on a transitional basis. The deacons identity, role and practice as has been observed creates situations whereby the theology of the church as expressed in the ordinal and the teaching of the church, does not have full expression in the actual ministry of the church. The deacons, it can be argued are functionarily non-existent, a statement that one of the respondents agreed with (BP2). This is the case because the deacons exercise their duties chiefly to become priests. They therefore work to impress their supervising ministers and learn the details of their work when they become priests. Their hosting ministers as well as the laity see them as such; priests in the making. All dioceses ordain deacons on a transitional basis. One diocese (DNM) has ordained former catechists as deacons and hopes to keep them permanent. These newly ordained were previously working as catechist, and their roles are likely to be no different from what they carried out before their ordination. It is not clear if the decision to keep them as deacons is based on the desire to have permanent deacons, or because they do not have what could be the necessary qualification to priest them. This is so because some of the catechists ordained as deacons will eventually be ordained priests as they possess the academic qualifications to be priested. It is also observed that there is a lack of

proper knowledge of the diaconate and diakonia in general especially among the laity which explains the lack of coherent relationship between the diaconate and diakonia, and diakonia and the identity of the church.

Two possible reasons may explain the cause of this gap. Firstly, lack of proper teaching of the laity of the Anglican theology of ministry and secondly the effect of the transitional diaconate. Lack of proper teaching in part explains the failure of the laity to articulate the concept of the diaconate well. The transitional diaconate too has contributed in that it limits the scope of operation of the deacons and obscures their real identity since they are already viewed as Priests and not as deacons.

It was observed earlier in relation to the identity of the deacon as a servant that despite the other parts of the Anglican Communion especially in America, the United Kingdom having acted on the call to renew the diaconate, the church in the Province of Central Africa to which Malawi belongs has done little if anything to relate to this renewal. This is the case despite the Lambeth Conference having given recommendations that the churches should find ways as they see fit to renew the diaconate, remove its conception as an inferior office and allow women to be ordained to the order (Lambeth Conference 1968, Resolution 32). These recommendations are further meant to be considered by each province and effected if necessary.

The nature and purpose of the church in ecclesiological theory reveals that the church is in itself meant to be diaconal, a serving church. This means diakonia is not only a requirement but it cannot be detached from the very nature of the church (Dietrich, 2015). Viewing ecclesiology from a *koinonia* perspective puts diakonia and diaconal ministry at the very centre of the ministry of the church, of word and sacrament. The church has to be an instrument of God in service in God's creation. Lack of the proper link of the diakonia and the nature of the church questions not only the theology of ministry, but also the entire ecclesiology as indicated above. This then calls for the church to seek to become more diaconal, yet mindful of context and seek to be diaconal in an African way. Contextualization discussed below is one threshold that offers the church an opportunity to be more diaconal in view of the ecclesiological reflections and the new dimension of the diaconal theory.

6.4.1. How does the conceptions of the diaconate influence the diakonia of the church

It was not easy to find a clear link between the respondents' view of the diaconate and how this affected the diakonia of the church. Some respondents could not see how the concept they have was in anyway connected to the diakonia of the church. However in the discussions three things came up. First, a limited view of the diaconate revealed a limited view of the ministry of the priests as well, which in turn brings into question the scope of ministry that parishes carried out. For instance, the respondents saw the deacon as a servant who carried out menial and humble service and as an assistant to the priest. This implies that the identity and the roles reflect the kind of work he would do when they become priests. It is unlikely that these limited scopes of ministry would change when the deacons becomes priest. The historical diaconate reveals that the awareness of the church of its social responsibility has consequently given rise to the necessity of the diaconate. According to Echlin, the scope of the Priests responsibility in the parish is so wide that honestly he cannot combine his roles with those of the deacon. Echlin writes of an identity crisis that priests have gone through owing to the fact of their neglecting of their fundamental call, which is preaching, and undertook administrative and social roles. He argues that absence of deacons affects the work of the priests and consequently the life of the congregation (Echlin, 1992). The early church as observed by Strauch revealed this pattern by appointing specific men to take charge of diakonia of the table so as not to compromise the diakonia of the word. In line with the historical diaconate, it can be noticed that the church at many times saw the need to allow the diaconate be a ministry of the needy, while the priests and bishops oversee the ministry of the word, sacraments and the discipline of the church (Olson 1992; Plater 2004).

Secondly, participants revealed that there is lack of coordination between the ministries done by lay groups in the church. Barnett argues that the diaconate is a symbol that in the end enhances the other ministries. The diaconate is a symbol of the ministry of the church embodying the servant character revealed and practiced by the Lord Jesus. Barnett's argument is based on understanding the diaconate fundamentally as a call to be, and not necessarily a call to do. As a call to be, the deacon then should be focused on holding diakonia as central to the identity and mission of the church (Barnett, 1995). This is a question of ecclesiology as well. It shows that diakonia and diaconate are integral parts of being church.

Thirdly, one respondent argued that because of the lack of an all-time diaconate and because of the absence of deacons in the main diakonia structures of the church, there is a disconnection between the call and mission of the church, and the projects that the church runs. Lay members especially did not recognize the projects and institutions that the church runs as an integral part of ministry. Coupled with the fact that most diocesan workers in social projects are lay and even non-Anglicans, some respondents felt this reduces the sense of mission as those who work in those posts consider it a profession more than a calling.

6.4.2. The diaconate and Hierarchy

The position of the diaconate is understood to be inferior by my respondents, because it lies at the bottom of the power radar in ordained ministry. It is inferior not only in the theoretical setup by being the lowest of the three orders of ordained ministry, but also in its exercise of ministry. The deacons are excluded from some sacraments, which to my respondents (wrongly) symbolizes that they are not yet matured to come into full ministry and they therefore only participate in roles that correspond to their level in the ministerial hierarchy.

Due to the Anglican Church's Episcopal government which is hierarchical (Merkel, 2008) the diaconate is not necessarily present in the power divisions and therefore not an office that is fully realized in practice. This is the case because of a combination of several factors which are the hierarchical nature of church leadership, the image of servanthood of the diaconate, the practice of transitional diaconate and the hierarchical nature of the African social system. In the respondents view, the diaconate as a position does not necessarily have authority, in the same way the bishops and priests do. The clerical or order hierarchy in ordained ministry puts the diaconate on the lowest of the ranks of bishop and priests (Merkle, 2008). Because the functions of the diaconate are limited it translates into a powerless position. Although the ordinal at present does not have the phrase 'inferior office' the Anglican Church in Malawi still holds this notion in practice.

The patriarchal African hierarchical social organization as well as post-colonial system are said to create a concentration of power in the ordained and class-divisions between the ordained and the laity (Fiorenza, 1994; Nichols, 1995). Hierarchy in itself does not infer autocratic use of power, or subjugation of others below the ladder, but as argued by Nichols, it is the abuse of hierarchy that is the problem (Nichols 1995). Hierarchy can still exist positively, when the

leaders exercise the integrative approach to hierarchy (Nichols 1995), which corresponds to the organic nature of the church (Barnett 1995). This approach can help the bishops, priests, deacons and the laity to realize the importance and independence and interdependence of each of their positions in the exercise of ministry. Each will be considered equally important although not at the same rank in authority. This can in the end enable the church to be more diaconal, and more African, wielding on the advantages of the hierarchical system and the organic nature of the church.

The Anglican Church is supposedly meant to practice power in the principle of subsidiarity, which is closer to the integrative model expressed above (ACC: 1997). In the ordained ministry this implies that there is empowerment of the lower rank, which does not seem to be the case in the interplay of ministry between the deacons and priests, deacons and bishops and deacons and the laity. The picture given by the respondents is that deacons are in a position where they are commanded in carrying out their work, and not participating in an office that is distinct and can stand out without being obfuscated by the higher offices.

In the hierarchical order of ministry, this has a potential to create class and power asymmetries between the deacons on the one hand, and priests and bishops on the other. The result of this is not only the restriction of the diaconate, but also the desire to aim at achieving a higher position of power which is the priesthood. The diaconate therefore is more or less an absent ministry since those who are admitted to the position are fundamentally already priests by practice. This is confirmed by a statement by one of respondents "a deacon is not respected, that is why we just want to serve for one year and proceed to priesthood" (DCN2). Further, hierarchy is a factor that may have contributed to the failure by the church to adopt the new paradigm of the diaconal identity. This is possible considering that the diaconate is overshadowed by the hierarchical structure and therefore there has been no attempt to review its conception.

6.4.3. Diaconate, diakonia and contextualization

I have included this section in order to consider a contextual approach to the diaconate and diakonia in the Anglican Church in Malawi. Respondents see the practice of the diaconate at present in view of its missionary heritage. The Global Anglican Church has responded in different ways to the call for the renewal of the diaconate and the mission as diakonia, but this is not realized in the Malawi context. My interviewees see the Malawian Anglican heritage as

imbedded in its connection to the missionaries as well as continuing communion with the Church of England. There is a tendency to assume that the nature and structure of the Church in England is the normative model of the church in Malawi. This contextual application is therefore meant to assess the ways in which the diaconate and the call to the renewal of diakonia can be meaningful in its application in Malawi Anglicanism.

Commentators of African missionary work argue that it created a kind of colonizers-colonized relationship, in which the worldviews of the colonisers are imposed on the colonized, such that even when the colonized act, they do so in an illusion of acting, yet only through the actions of and as defined by the colonizers (Whiteman, 1997; Freire 1970; Antonio 2006). Following these arguments, the missionary churches are considered capable of exercising imperialistic tendencies which as Freire observes makes the local actors to act without realizing that they only act on the same principles of the colonising culture. It is in the wake of such that contextual mission studies aim at a theology that will make Christianity relevant to the local people, that the local communities can be empowered to deal with their social-political problems of poverty, colonialism, neo-colonialism, injustice, political instability, climate change related challenges like, drought, hunger, incurable diseases, and many more. They aim at a theology of mission that can locally provide the means to achieving growth into full humanity within the African cosmology and worldview (Martey, 1993).

There are three things to point out on the nature of Anglicanism in Malawi in relation to the colonial missionary heritage. First, the imperialist tendencies in the practice of ministry by the higher ordained ministry, which in turn affects the diaconate and the lay ministries. Second, imperialistic tendencies that subtly characterize the relationship between the Malawi Anglicanism because of its historical and continued ties with the mother church, especially when coupled with the view that the faithful have of the kind of partnership that exists among the European and the local congregations. Lastly, a separation of the secular from the sacred, which seems to be a product of the missionary encounter; as missionaries did not recognize the context of the African people. The relationship that exists between the bishops and priests, bishops and deacons, bishops and the lay ministries in Malawi has a potential of portraying imperialistic tendencies that are descriptive of the first missionaries in the way they interacted with the locals. This may be a product of two influences, the colonial behavior in the missionaries which might

have been subtly carried on by the African leaders, and the submissive nature of the African hierarchical system. In the end it affects the practice of ministry in one way or the other, as it can inhibit full participation of the weaker party in mission, therefore failing to realize the organic hierarchy observed earlier.

In relation to the second point, it was observed earlier that the Church in Malawi remains in communion with the Church of England. Despite global Anglicanism calling on the local churches to contextualize their Christianity, it is evident in this studies that the church in Malawi has not made efforts to make its own application and practice of mission and ministry but rather simply carried on the missionary heritage. By being dependent economically on the western and American sister churches, the church also risks carrying out a mission that is fundamentally European, and not contextually defined in local terms. As a result the church's practice of mission is within the confines of a European culture and has no appeal to the Malawian culture and local life. The result of this is not a Malawian diaconal ministry, but rather a European diaconal ministry on the Malawian cultural platform.

The third point comes in view of the failure by some respondents in the research to see the connection between the projects that the church runs and the mission and calling and the spiritual life. African traditional religious heritage does not have a dichotomous view of the sacred and the secular. As observed by Steyne (1990) in Contextualization theory above, African culture closely links the spiritual with the physical worlds. The detachment of these two is mainly a European influence planted by missionary outlook. The church therefore needs to assess such strength and interpret them within the Christian message to give a meaningful and rooted understanding of its diaconal mission, and produce an African Diaconal perspective. This is one aspect that in the desire to revive the diaconate the church may need to explore in order to give meaningful rooting in the ministry and produce a contextually meaningful diaconate. Failure to create a diaconate that is contextually meaningful may result in a failure to achieve a lasting solution.

6.5.   Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the themes as were generated from empirical findings, with the main focus on the roles and identity of the diaconate, the concept and practice of diakonia, and the aspect of contextualization in the diaconal perspective. It has been observed that the Anglican

Church in Malawi views the diaconate as an inferior office practising humble and menial services, often under the direction and command of the hosting priests and bishops. This model is not in line with the recent theological view of the diaconate. It was also observed that the church has diakonia, but does not link it to the diaconate, which in turn affects the very view of mission and diakonia. Some respondents failed to connect diaconal activities taking place in the church to the intrinsic nature of the church, viewing the activities as separate projects. Lastly I have considered other factors in play, in the name of hierarchical nature of government of the church and contextualization. For the efforts of the diaconate and diakonia to be meaningful, it is important to consider these factors.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER SEVEN**</div>

<div align="center">**7.0.   CONCLUSIONS**</div>

7.1.   Introduction

This chapter is a summation of the key findings in the study and outlines the main conclusions drawn from the findings and discussion. The chapter also presents recommendations in view of the results of the study and the observations made in the discussion, and lists recommendations for possible further study in relation to aspects that this paper could not exhaust/tackle. In addition the chapter makes assessment of the research question to indicate that the research question was dealt with adequately.

7.2.   Summary of findings

This study has documented the conceptions of the identity and roles of the deacons in the Anglican Church in Malawi. Based on empirical findings drawn from qualitative interviews conducted in three of the four dioceses of the Anglican Church in Malawi, a deacon is understood in different ways. The study indicated that deacons are commonly understood as servants, assistants to priests and bishops, as well as priests in making. As servants they are expected to offer and submit to humble service, with a menial and servile sense, which in the end diminishes their importance and authority. The study revealed that viewingdeacons as being assistants and priests in the making results in obscurity of their office, as they do not fully serve in the capacity of their office. Their office is confused with that of priests, mainly because deacons in the Church are mostly transitional. The one year or less during which they serve as deacons is spent instead on preparation for the next office which limits the chances of cultivating their diaconal understanding and practice. This means the transitional Diaconate in part contributes to a distorted picture of the diaconate. In terms of their roles the research found that deacons are charged with liturgical and pastoral roles. In addition, deacons may carry out social responsibilities but this is not obvious in practice. The research found out that the practice of the liturgical and social roles of deacons are all limited due to the menial and servile conception of their being servants.

The study revealed a detachment of the deacons, from some aspects of diakonialike the social and developmental. Although the church has diaconal structures beyond the liturgical or pastoral,

deacons' participation in those structures is lacking. Further, these diaconal works are detached from the main call and mission of the church, especially among the lay respondents. Despite having health providing structures, education structures and other care institutions, respondents especially lay and some ordained, could not articulate how these are connected to the purpose and being and call of the church. This implies not only a lacking in the diaconal theory that could engender an holistic ecclesial picture, but also lack of translation of the available theory into practice. As was shown, the deacons' ordination especially indicates an holistic picture, which is not translated into the mission perspective and practice of the deacons. This in part is as a result of the conception of the diaconate that the church in Malawi as well as its clergy has. A saying that: "once a deacon always a deacon" (Foshee, 1975), which underlines the indelible nature of the diaconal calling can also mean that one's diaconal picture influences their view and practice of their mission. Consequently the church's practice of diaconal ministry is defined by their diaconal view.

From a contextual perspective, the paper had drawn out the influence of the European culture under the colonial imperative together with the influence of the African hierarchical trends on the inferior perception of the deacons' position. It has also argued as to the need for the church to build on African cultural strengths, for instance the unified sense of the physical and the spiritual worlds, as opposed to the dichotomous view which is a product of the European cultural influence. The contextual approach is vital in helping the church to realize a well rooted sense and practice of mission, which in the end can make the diaconal practice meaningful. These findings, seen within the ecclesial, diaconal and contextual theories shows that the Anglican Church in Malawi has a task to reconsider the position of the deacons, which is a question of the ecclesiology.

7.3.   The research question

The question this paper set out to investigate is "How is the deacon's ministry understood and how does this affect the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi?" in addition this question was broken down into further guiding research questions as follows:

- How does the Anglican Church in Malawi, i.e. ministers in training, practicing deacons, priests, bishops and the laity understand the identity of the deacon?

- How does the church understand the roles of the deacon?
- How does the church understand its diaconal function?
- How does the conception of the role and identity of the deacons affect the practice of diaconal ministry in the church?

Chapter five of the paper tried to engage with these questions and as finding show, I feel the research has attempted to address these questions. However, due to space limitations the paper has not extensively dealt with some relevant aspects which would need exhaustive address, as is indicated in the suggestions for further studies below.

7.4. Recommendations

I would like to make the following recommendations in light of the above discussion appertaining to the gaps that exist in the diaconal concept of the Anglican Church in Malawi. It has been argued that the church has an inferior picture of the diaconate, which has an effect on the practice of the ministry, by the deacons as well as the entire church. In the light of this, the church needs to engage in teaching and training of its faithful in order to correct the current view of the diaconate. This training should also be directed towards ministerial students, who must learn that when they serve as deacons, it is not simply preparation to become priests, but rather that they are serving in an important position as enablers , reminders and motivators of the church's diaconal calling, towards the needy and the weak.

In the light of the transitional diaconate being in part a contributing factor to the gaps that exist in the diaconal ministry, the church may need to consider ordaining people to a permanent or distinct diaconate. In order to do this, the church needs to consider ordaining those with a sense of vocation to the diaconal calling while they remain in their secular jobs. In the same way, the church may also need to incorporate deacons in its projects as actors, on parish as well as diocesan levels. This will help to provide a visible example to all the faithful which would eradicate a view that the diaconate is a powerless and inferior position.

7.5. Suggestions for further studies

There are two important things that I believe require particular and extensive scrutiny, for which this paper could not provide the space. Firstly, there is the need of more empirical studies focusing on contextual and cultural strengths and weaknesses that can improve or negatively

influence understanding and practice of ministry. These contextual studies need to take into account perspectives of African as well as European cultural influences on mission and ministry. This will grant the church insight on the practice of ministry in word and deed, in ways that make sense to the local community in their local culture and present the gospel in the manner that penetrates the people's worldview that they can be true to Christ in their own culture. Secondly, there is need to explore more on diaconal institutions in the church, their self-understanding in relation to the mission of the church and the values and methods they use in their discharge of services. This will provide the institutions and the church not only with feedback, but also with insight on being institutions that are not detached from the entire image of the Church.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

i. Interview with Theological Students

The questions were designed to understand the views of theological students in line with the diaconate and diaconal ministry, and to relate this to the ministry of the church.

1. How do you explain the identity of a deacon, or who is a deacon?
2. What are the roles deacons do or are supposed to do, in your understanding?
3. From what you answered above, what is the basis of your knowledge of the identity and roles you gave?
4. What do you learn concerning deacons in your theological training?
5. Did you have knowledge about the identity and roles of deacons before you came to college?
6. If yes, what was the source of that knowledge?
7. What is your understanding of the diaconal ministry (diakonia) of the church?
8. Can you give examples of the programs and activities that can be classified as part of the diaconal ministry of the church?
9. What can you say about the work of deacons and the diaconal ministry of the church, are they related?
10. What is your understanding on how deacons relate to bishops, priests and the laity?\

ii. Interview with Deacons and Priests

These questions were designed to explore the experiences in diaconal service of priests and deacons, and understand their views of the diaconate and the ministry of the church.

1. How do you explain the identity of a deacon, or who is a deacon?
2. What are the roles deacons do or are supposed to do, in your understanding?
3. From what you answered above, what is the basis of your knowledge of the identity and roles you gave?
4. During your service as deacons, how did you find your practical work in relation to you theoretical knowledge?
5. Which activities or roles were you (or are you) involved in?
6. What is your understanding of the diaconal ministry (diakonia) of the church?
7. Can you give examples of the programs and activities that can be classified as part of the diaconal ministry of the church?
8. As a priest, have you ever hosted deacons in your parish? If so, how did you relate to them, and which activities did you involve them with?
9. If you have been a deacon in a parish under a priest, how do you relate to your host and the parish in general?
10. How do you relate your work as a deacon to the entire mission of the church?

11. Do you think there is something missing from our understanding and practice of the diaconate? If so, how does that affect the diaconal ministry, and to the purpose and mission of the whole church?

iii. Interviews with Bishops

Bishops were asked these questions in order to elicit their view of the way the church in Malawi practices the diaconate and how it relates to theory as well mission and ministry of the church.

1. How do you explain the identity of deacons?
2. What are the roles of the deacons?
3. What are the sources of our knowledge of the diaconate's identity and roles?
4. How does the practical application of the diaconate in their ministry and the church's action relate to the theology indicated above?
5. What is the extent of the ministry deacons perform in your diocese, in terms of holistic ministry?
6. As a bishop, how does your work relate to or influence the ministry of the deacons, and how does the episcopal structure influence the work of deacons?
7. How do your parishes behave in line with the position of the diaconate, and how do they differentiate it from the Priests?
8. How do you explain the diaconal ministry of the whole church and how does this relate to Anglican ecclesiology?
9. What structure does the church have in its diaconal responsibility, and are deacons, in any way connected to these structures?
10. Does our practice of transitional diaconate have effect on the nature of diaconal ministry and the mission of the church?
11. Are there any gaps in our theology of ministry in view of our image and practice of the diaconate?
12. If yes, how do they affect our diaconal mission and ministry?

iv. Interview with the Laity

Lay interviewees discussed these questions in order to perceive their knowledge of the diaconate based on practical observations and experiences in their parishes. In addition, they were designed to understand their knowledge and view of the church's diakonia and its relation to ministry of deacons.

1. Do you know who deacons are?
2. If yes, what activities are associated with the deacons?
3. Have you had deacons in your parish?
4. If yes, how important is it to have deacons in your parish or not? Do you think there is any difference in the parish if there are deacons or no?
5. How do you differentiate deacons from Priests?

6. What is your understanding of Anglican Ecclesiology?
7. Canyou relate the work of deacons to the work of the whole church?
8. What is your understanding of diakonia of the church, and how is it related to the work of deacons?
9. Which diaconal activities or programs does your diocese have and how do deacons participate?
10. Do you think that the way we understand deacons has an effect or influence on the mission of the whole church?

Appendix B. Introduction and Consent

The interviews were preceded by introduction which consisted of reading of guidelines from National Data Protection Official (NSD).

Informant Consent form

I am Rev. Fr. Limbani Jeromy Juttah, currently a student of Master's Degree in Diakon and Christian Social Practice at Diakonhjemmet University College, in Oslo Norway. As part of my studies, I am writing a dissertation on the Anglican understanding of the diaconate and diaconal Ministry.

In light of this, I will ask you questions (we will discuss in a group) that are going to inform my dissertation. I would therefore like to get your signed declaration of agreement/consent to participate in the interview.

☐   I agree to participate:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C: NSD
Recommendations

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Hans Morten Haugen
Institutt for diakoni og ledelse Diakonhjemmets Høgskole
Diakonveien 14-16
0370 OSLO

Vår dato: 17.06.2015   Vår ref: 43458 / 3 / KH   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 13.05.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

43458	*The role of deacons and the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi: Research question: How is the deacon's ministry understood and how this affects the practice of diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church in Malawi?*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Diakonhjemmet Høgskole AS, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Hans Morten Haugen*
Student	*Jeromy Limbani Juttah*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.10.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering – Kommentar: Prosjektnr: 43458

The participants will receive verbal information about the project and give consent to participation. In order to satisfy the requirement of informed consent of the law, the participants must be informed of the following:

- which institution is responsible

- the purpose of the project / the research question(s)

- which methods will be used to collect personal data

- what kind of information will be collected

- that information will be treated confidentially and who will have access to it

- that participation is voluntary and that one may withdraw at any time without stating a reason

- the expected end date of the project

- that all personal data will be anonymized or deleted when the project ends

- whether individuals will be recognisable in the final thesis/publication

- contact information of the student and supervisor

The Data Protection Official presupposes that the researcher follows internal routines of DiakonhjemmetHøgskole AS regarding data security. If personal data is to be stored on a private computer /portable storage devices, the information should be adequately encrypted.

It is stated that personally identifiable information will be published. The Data Protection Official presupposes that the participants give their explicit consent to this. Further, we recommend that participants are given the opportunity to read through their own information and give their approval before publication.

Estimated end date of the project is 30.10.2015. According to the notification form all collected data will be made anonymous by this date.

Making the data anonymous entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be recognized. This is done by:

- deleting all direct personal data (such as names/lists of reference numbers)

- deleting/rewriting indirectly identifiable data (i.e. an identifying combination of background variables, such as residence/work place, age and gender)

- deleting audio recordings