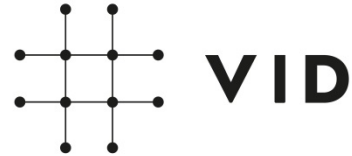




DET TEOLOGISKE
MENIGHETSFAKULTET



Once a deacon always a deacon?

What understanding do priests in the Church of England have of the diaconate, and their identity as a deacon.

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Abstract

The Church of England is proud of its threefold ministry. The sentence “once a deacon, always a deacon” is regularly used. Reports have been written on the diaconate, agreements with Porvoo and the Lutheran churches have been made on the diaconate. And every couple of years someone writes about deacons in the church times.

But the visible diaconate in the local churches seems absent, there is no talk about the diaconate in the local churches. The diaconate seems to be neglected in daily life.

This research was designed to find out how Church of England priests at parish level think about their diaconate. What is their understanding of their first ordination?

The context is the Church of England. Eight priests were interviewed to find about their knowledge of the diaconate, what their own understanding is on the subject. Do they still have a deacon identity after their ordination to priest and can we find the diaconate at grass root level in the Church of England. The priests interviewed were all first ordained after 2001, and had all been in the ministry for more than 5 years.

Through literature the doctrine and the theology of the Church of England were researched and this was used as a theoretical framework to set the interviews in a context, as well as to gain insight in the current understanding of the Church of England of the diaconate.

The diaconate has gone through changes since the first deacons were appointed in the early church. Understanding of the Greek diakon-words have changed, especially in the last 20 years. Has the church changed its views and understanding as well?

The method used was qualitative interviews. Eight interviews were held and the answers were used as data in the research, seen in the background of the literary framework. This is a limited research, but the findings showed a lack of understanding and knowledge of the modern diaconate. There lies a great opportunity for the Church of England to work towards change.

There was however proof of the diaconate in the church. Many of the activities in the churches can be classified under diaconal activities, but an awareness around the subject is lacking.

It is my hope that this thesis will help open up a dialogue and further research on the subject

of the diaconate within the Church of England. With better training, education and more awareness on the subject of the diaconate, a priest could truly be a deacon for life, as well as a priest.

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This thesis would never have seen the light of day without the help of some very key people.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALIC Anglican-Lutheran International Commission

ASB Alternative Service Book 1980

BCP/1662 Book of Common Prayer liturgy 1662

CofE The Church of England

CW Common Worship liturgy 2001

DDO Diocesan Director of Ordinands

IME Initial Ministerial Education

WCC World Council of Churches

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1 Introduction to the research

Once a deacon always a deacon?

What understanding do priests in the Church of England have of the diaconate, and their identity as a deacon?

1.1 *Introduction*

This chapter outlines the research of this thesis and will look at the research questions, initial hypothesis, objectives, background and motivation, and the relevance of the research, as well as the personal reasons of the researcher to choose this subject.

1.2 *Research question, research hypothesis*

This thesis will through the analysis of qualitative interviews describing how priests understand their own diaconate in the Church of England.

- What knowledge do priests have of the diaconate?
- What understanding do priests have of their diaconate?
- Is diakonia found in the Church of England at grass-root level?
- Are priests still deacons after ordination to the priesthood? Do they still have a deacon identity?

This thesis aims to answer these questions through the qualitative interview of eight priests that have been ordained deacon after 2001 in the Church of England.

The saying “once a deacon, always a deacon” on the diaconate seems to suggest that the diaconate is a fundamental ministry in the church, but the researcher doubts the reality of this in the ordinary daily ministry of a priest.

This thesis focuses on the understanding of the priest in the Church of England of his or her diaconate and the visible reality if this in their ministry.

Through literature research, the understanding, the doctrine and the theology of the diaconate, and specifically the diaconate in the Church of England, will be expanded on in order that they can be tested against reality in the data collection from interviews with eight priests.

1.3 Objectives.

Objectives of this paper are to set a theoretical framework of the diaconate in the CofE and from there - with the use of interviews - to be able to describe how the interviewed ordained ministers understand their own primary ordination as a Deacon. This to gain an insight in the current understanding and daily practice of the diaconate in the CofE.

There are limitations to this research, mainly in size and scope, as a master thesis is limited in the extent of research that can be incorporated, the amount of data that can be retrieved and the number of words that can be used.

1.4 Background and motivation

As a confirmed Anglican as well as an employee of the Lutheran church, studying at a Lutheran university in a Lutheran context, I became more curious about the diaconate in the Church of England.

To me it seemed that there wasn't really a diaconate in the CofE. I had heard about a woman deaconess in our church that decided not to become an ordained priest when women were allowed to become priests, but she had long since retired and there was the knowledge that our curates had to wait a year before becoming priests, but the diaconate wasn't visible to me.

In the last fifty years - and especially after the Porvoo agreement - the distinctive diaconate has received more interest in the Church of England, but the fact that all ordained clergy in the CofE are ordained deacons first seems to be quickly forgotten and ignored. My paper aims to research the understanding of priests in the CofE precisely at that point. What understanding do priests have of their first ordination, and do they have an identity as a deacon.

1.5 Relevance

Deacons have been ordained in the Church of England for hundreds of years. For most deacons in the last few hundred years of the Church of England, this was a transitional phase until ordination to the priesthood a year later.

Little has been written about the understanding of the diaconate and the value of this time as a transitional deacon for the priests involved and the church as a whole.

This subject is relevant as little research has been carried out into this subject.

Many reports have been written on the distinctive diaconate, but little seems to have changed. The distinctive/Permanent/Diocesan diaconate does not seem to be a very active or well-known ministry. Only two dioceses have or are starting to set up a college of deacons. (Exeter already set up, York is working on this). The organisation “Dace” (diaconal Association of the Church of England) was closed in 2016.

Since there are so little distinctive/Permanent/Diocesan deacons, it is even more important that the priests, who will always be a deacon first, have an understanding of their diaconal ministry.

It is not clear whether they are aware of this distinct part of their ministry, hence the research in this thesis.

As recently as May 2016, an article appeared in the Church Times about priests needing deacons to accompany them. One might presume that the writer was aiming at the fact that priests need more manpower in the ministry, but the fact that the diaconal ministry of the priest seemed to be completely ignored was interesting and shows the lack of understanding of the diaconate as a permanent ministry, not made redundant by priestly ordination.

At the same time, the responses over the following weeks comprised Readers endorsing the ministry of the lay, Distinctive Deacon wanting attention for the little-seen ministry of the Distinctive Deacon and the difficulty of finding ordained ministers, but nothing on the diaconate of the ordained priest. This subject seems to be lacking, both in literature and working knowledge in the church.

This thesis aims at opening up discussion on the subject.

1.6 *Structure of the thesis*

This thesis is structured in the following way:

Chapter 1 Introduction to and overview of the thesis

Chapter 2 This chapter gives the context for this thesis, by giving an outline of the Church of England.

Chapter 3 In the third chapter the theoretical framework is given, on which the entire thesis is built. What is diakonia, what is the diaconate, and how can we see it within the aforementioned Church of England context. It provides an insight into the general understanding the Church of England has of the diaconate.

Chapter 4 This chapter gives us the methodology - the way - we have researched the subject. The qualitative method used for this research as well as research strategy and instruments of data collection. Target groups for data, limitations, challenges and keywords.

Chapter 5 In the fifth chapter the empirical data from the interviews is presented in a thematic fashion.

Chapter 6 The data from chapter 5 is set into a context of theory and literature and discussed in light of the theory from chapter 3.

Chapter 7 The main results and conclusions of the research are presented in the last chapter. Possible topics for further research and questions provoked by this research are discussed.

2 Background and context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide context to this thesis, the setting of the Church of England, as a historical and cultural church. As this thesis is written as part of studies aimed at the Lutheran church, it is important to supply a context for this thesis.

Both the historical overview of the church itself and the route to becoming a priest have been mentioned, as they are of value to our data analysis and discourse of data in the research.

2.2 The Church of England, a historical overview

The Church of England, a national church in the English Part of the Anglican Communion. The CofE is seen as the mother church of the Anglican Communion. The CofE is structured into 42 dioceses, and 2 archdioceses; York and Canterbury. The British monarch is still officially the defender of the faith and supreme governor of the Church, although this is mainly a formal role.

They day-to-day leadership of the church is a local responsibility. Clergy with the Parish Church Council have responsibility for the normal course of business. In general most administration and daily responsibility for the managing of the parish lies with the priest. They are supported by the diocese and seven national church institutions.

Historically, the source of authority in the Church of England is said to be based on the threefold of Scripture, tradition and reason.

After the break with the Roman Catholic church in the 15th century, there was a greater emphasis on scripture, but still tradition is very important. An example of the tradition factor is the structure for ordained ministry, which has remained unchanged since the 16th century (Pädam 2011:49).

Influences within the early Church of England have not only come from the Roman Catholic church, but also from the Celtic traditions coming down from Ireland, associated with saints like St Aidan and St Cuthbert. Even though the Anglican Church through Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher claimed to not have its own doctrine, it has an Anglican identity, and a very English way of doing things. Stephen Sykes, in his book “Unashamed Anglicanism” claims

that “*an Anglican doctrine does exist*” (Sykes 1995:113). The Anglican church still sees itself as part of the catholic church. Not the Roman catholic church, but the worldwide catholic church, as set forth by the early church and church fathers. Stephen Neil in his book “Anglicanism” writes the following:

The Church of England is the Catholic Church in England. It teaches all the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, as they are found in Holy Scripture, as they are summarised in the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, and set forth in the dogmatic decisions of the first four councils of the undivided Church (Neil 1965:400).

Avis in his book “Identity of Anglicanism” answers Sykes by stating that they had no own doctrine, but that they had the intention to stay close to the fellowship and the early church fathers. For them the Reformation was to re-identify with the primitive church (Avis 2007:43).

The Anglican distinctiveness is often talked about, but sometimes hard to really pinpoint. Avis claims that if Anglican distinctiveness is not found in the material content of the credal faith, perhaps it is found in the code, the “*church's accepted way of doing things. Its rules for worship and ministry [...] expressed in canon law, and statements made on authority*” (Avis 2007:49). Canon Law is the rule book of the Church of England, and though regularly revised, major parts have remained unchanged since the reformation. The 39 articles form a historic document from 1571, to which all those to be ordained or presented to a benefice subscribe.

The Church of England is proud of its apostolic succession. Succession is continued through ordinations today. At an ordination, all deacons, priests and bishops have to sign a declaration of assent, which is considered part of the church’s doctrine. This is the following.

I, A B, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon (CofE 2000 Common Worship: Ministry).

2.3 The Church of England today.

Though still a majority church in England, the CofE is very much under decline: the Church of England is under pressure from what Avis calls: “*the three modern phenomena that go under the catch-all names of secularisation, privatisation and pluralisation*” (Avis 2013a:4). It is likely that the Church of England will grow smaller in the future and will have to change its organisation for a future as a minority religion. This is a recognisable trend that we see in churches in most western European countries.

Callum Brown is quoted in the report “Mission and Ministry of the whole church”:

“What is taking place is not merely the continued decline of organized Christianity, but the death of the culture that formerly conferred Christian identity upon the British people as a whole. If a core identity survives for Britons, it is certainly no longer Christian. The culture of Christianity has gone in the Britain of the new millennium.” (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:87)

The CofE has gone through many cultural changes in the last 500 years, but this seems to be the most radical; with implications for all parts of the church.

2.4 Ordination in the Church of England

In order to understand the diaconate in the CofE, we need to look at the process of ordination and training.

Selection

Selection for ordination into the Church of England is a discernment process.

The normal procedure would be the following:

A sense of vocation in either the candidate or someone around him/her, which makes the person aware of a possible vocation. This is followed by interviews with the local clergy and by the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) who will assess the candidate.

There is a set of nine requirements for any person wanting to be put forward for selection (CofE, House of Bishops 2014:5-13). The basic selection criteria are the same for anyone wanting to enter ministry within the Church of England.

In 2014, the Church of England set formation criteria for selection and initial ministerial education (IME) in their “formation criteria for ordained ministry”. This consists of three sets

of criteria;

Selection, the criteria future ministers should meet or have the ability to meet.

IME 1 Criteria that should be met or so-called “development goals in the period up to ordination and

IME 2, Criteria that should be met or aimed to be met during the 3- or 4-year curacy period. (CofE, House of Bishops 2014:3-15)

If the candidate is deemed suitable for ministry through a selection conference, the DDO in collaboration with the candidate will decide the most suitable route to formation, at one of the approved universities or at a regional course. Depending on age and completed education this could be a 2- to 4-year route ending with a diploma, bachelor, master or PhD in Theology.

Followed by a 3-4-year Curacy, being an incumbent in training.

Ordination training

The training an ordinand will receive is completely dependent on his/her age, as well as the diocese he or she is assigned and the university where training will take place.

There are formation criteria, but these are fairly general. When the European diocesan Director of Ordinands, William Gulliford was asked in an email he replied:

The Church of England has its selection criteria and learning outcomes. It is less good on setting a programme of study. It expects the Theological Colleges to structure this, while incorporating the learning outcomes (private email to researcher 2016).

The Church of England has laid down goals for their initial ministerial training (IME). In IME phase 1 and 2 the criteria are diverse, but none of the criteria aim for a clear academic goal. Although the church gives the choice between a diploma, a bachelor or a master in theology as part of their academic formation, there are no criteria for the content of these degrees in relationship to future church ministry/leadership (CofE, house of bishops 2014:3). This seems to be a serious shortfall. While the church itself cannot stipulate the knowledge a priest should have, it mostly sets its criteria within the personal development which are tethered to the theological visions of the different training colleges, and therefore the outcome could be different from all different training colleges. It might be an advantage for the CofE that ministers come from different churchmanships, but one would need to have a certain control over the theoretical knowledge a minister ends up with.

Curacy

After ordination training, it is usual for an ordinand to enter curacy for up to four years. A curacy is a training post, where the ordinand will serve under an experienced clergy person. Besides practical work in a parochial context, the ordinand will receive academic training either from the diocese or a chosen university commissioned by the diocese.

After the curacy, the ordinand is usually allowed to work and lead his own parish independently, although some clergy choose a second curacy. During this time, it is expected that they achieve the criteria set out in IME 2 in the formation criteria for ordained ministry (CofE, house of bishops 2014:3).

Every diocese has their own IME phase 2 handbook, which are all based on the IME 2 criteria set out by the CofE nationally, but are different in content.

As an example, York diocese has days for deacons where they work on the subject “on being a liturgical deacon” (Diocese of York, 2018:14). The diocese of Peterborough has included a review at the end of the diaconal year, but in its goals mentions nothing about the diaconate or being a deacon specifically (Diocese of Peterborough 2018:54-56). The diocese of Southwark has a clear reading list for their Deacons to use when writing their Deacon’s Essay (Diocese of Suffolk 2017:9-10) while the Diocese of Southwark has one book on the diaconate on its literature list, versus 7 on the priesthood (where those on the priesthood refer to the diaconate little or not at all) Southwark has the diaconate as a subject on the IME year 4, but very little specific reference to the diaconate in learning goals or essay work. (Diocese of Southwark 2018:22,99). An ordinand training for the priesthood will usually spend one year of this curacy under deacon’s orders, before ordination to the priesthood. They receive training under diocesan responsibility in IME phase 2 or year 4 to 7 while in their curacy.

2.5 Lack of numbers

The Church of England does not keep national statistics on numbers of deacons. It rates deacons as part of the stipendiary/non-stipendiary/Self-supporting or Parochial/non-parochial clergy. Therefore, it is difficult to know how many distinctive or transitional deacons there are in the CofE. There seems to only be a diocesan administration of numbers. The now discontinued organisation for deacons in the CofE, DACE used to collect national numbers, but their website, and with it, their information, has disappeared.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the contextual setting of the Church of England has been considered; in order to set the scene for the theoretical framework it is important to know the specific church one is writing about and to understand the route ministers have taken in their selection and ordination process to set a clear picture of the context for the data collection.

The information on the lack of numbers shows how difficult it can be to find data on the subject of the diaconate.

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 *Introduction to theory*

The theory in this chapter includes a general definition of diakonia and the diaconate, as well as a more specific meaning within the CofE context.

This theory will be used as a theory concept so that the researcher can get a perspective on the situation based on facts and theory and not personal bias (Creswell 2009:67). The main aim is to look at both the diaconate as an independent ministry and the diaconate for the priesthood.

3.2 *Definitions and word use*

Anglican Communion, defined in 1930 as a fellowship of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury (Anglican Consultative Council 2005:16).

Church of England, Provinces of Canterbury and York within the Anglican Communion, called CofE for short (Anglican consultative council 2005:16).

Diaconate: The office of the deacon, the official body of deacons. As well as the diaconal work in practice, exercised by others than the deacon.

Diakonia: As per Kuhrt's definition diakonia is a flexible concept that embodies being commissioned by God or the church to the service of the kingdom. Therefore, all ministry is commissioned to have this connecting bridging role, reaching out in the name of Christ, whatever else it may be called to be and to do (Kuhrt 2001:231). See also later in this chapter.

Distinctive Deacon: permanent deacon, vocational deacon, words that describe the same thing, an ordained deacon with a distinct attention for the diaconate in his/her work. Not ordained priest after a year, but called to be a deacon for life or at least a longer period of time.

Reader: Licensed Lay minister, sometimes called lay-theologian, with permission to lead morning and evening prayer and - depending on licence from the bishop - to take part in other lay ministry in the church.

Stipendiary: Clergy and lay-people paid by the Central Church payroll. Normally licensed church wide (Church of England 2011:definitions, no longer on the website).

Non-stipendiary: Clergy and Laypeople that are not on the Central Church Payroll, they can be locally sponsored or self-supporting. They often hold a diocesan licence with a role in the parishes (Church of England 2011:definitions, no longer published on website).

Transitional deacon: normally ordained priest after a year of serving as a deacon. Being a transitional deacon is part of the training for the priesthood.

3.3 Diakonia definition

The most general translation of the diak-words is ministry. In the light of the New Testament, the earliest definition or basic meaning was service, menial service, at a table or elsewhere (Beyer cited by Gooder 2006:34) providing for sustenance. With this the role of the deacon has been interpreted as service, and mostly as menial service for many years (Gooder 2006:46).

The relatively new interpretation by John N. Collins not only translated the diak-words, but interpreted them in both a classical and a biblical context, which was a new direction in the understanding of diakonia.

Before Collins, Georgi already emphasised the role of deacons as proclaimers, where the deacon stands in a hierarchical relationship to the bishops and presbyters (Gooder 2006:37).

Collins emphasises that the diakon in the first instance does not respond to the person's need, out of benevolence, but in *"response to the person who has authorised the diakonia"* (Collins 2003:87); Gooder adds to this: *"the answer that Collins gives is that they carry out their mission, their duties and their calling, to which I would add that they do it to serve their master, whether this be God or someone else"* (Gooder 2006:43).

This according to Gooder changes the *"primary motivation of ministry which is the fulfilling of God's calling [and] not just the care of one's neighbour"* (Gooder 2006:54). This changes the emphasis from servitude to ministry.

The word diakonia is connected to a number of Bible passages. Some, but not all will be mentioned here.

Mark 10:45, 2 Corinthians 3:7-9, Colossians 1:23 where diakonia is described as a ministry, mediation, go-between. Matthew 22:13, Luke 17:8 and Acts 6:1-4 where diakonia is described as menial service, serving at the table. In "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church", Collins' work has interpreted such to

“what unites these different contexts is the carrying out of a mandated task, whether it be waiting at table, because that is what the master requires, or going on a high-level embassy with an important message from someone in authority” (CofE Faith and advisory group 2007:21).

To give a short and concise definition of the work diakonia is almost impossible, one can give a translation of the biblical Diak-words, but as with any concept, the definition evolves as people take the word into practice in a changing world and church.

Diakonia is deeply rooted in Scripture. From the beginning it has been an essential part of discipleship and Christian identity (Lk 4:18–19). Diaconal ministry is grounded in worship, in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and lived out in discipleship (ALICIII 2012:19).

3.4 *The diaconate in general*

The diaconate is the place where Diak-Words are put into practice. The diaconal ministry is where we see that best.

Diakonia is a flexible concept that embodies being commissioned by God or the church to the service of the kingdom. Therefore, all ministry is commissioned to have that connecting bridging role, reaching out in the name of Christ, whatever else it may be called to be and to do (Kuhrt 2001:231).

What we call diaconate is the ministry in the church that implements or executes the diak-words. This is both within the ministry of all believers as well as specifically within the ordained ministry.

The New Testament gives no clear answer for a universal pattern of ministry. A threefold ministry developed in the early centuries, but there are no clear lines of development from New Testament times to today (WCC 1982:21-22).

As per the report "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church", the New Testament, and first century meaning of the word Diakonos, it is and should be completely leading in how it should be practised today: That deacons should be understood in the same way today as in the first century, at the same time we cannot ignore the knowledge we have today. Both new understanding and old practice shape our diaconate today (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:45).

Churches have used many different forms of the diaconate. We will look at some of them to get a limited overview of some of the possible forms.

3.4.1 The diaconate in churches outside the Anglican Communion

Different churches have adopted different approaches to the diaconate.

Dutch Calvinistic church (Protestantse kerken in Nederland)

Calvinistic churches have adopted the ministry of all believers and a single ordained ministry for the presbyter/priest/elder. Deacons are lay people and often appointed to jobs within diaconal institutions or voluntarily within the church to look after the poor, sick and needy. Both women and men can work as deacons. Deacons are not ordained.

Scandinavian Lutheran churches

Within the Lutheran church there are different approaches.

The Norwegian Lutheran church (Dnk) has a well-developed diaconate. Both women and men work within the church in ordained positions. In theory, it is a ministry equal to the ministry of priest, although there is a question mark whether this ordination is equal to the ordination of the priest (Pädam 2011:63-64). Dnk had 214 deacons in 2014 (Numbers from Kirkerådet kirken.no). In Dnk the diaconate is seen as a ministry of all believers, and the deacon is seen as the person to lead the ministry within the local church. DNK has its own diaconal plan for the whole church, which was approved in 2010. *“Diakonia is the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbour, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice”* (LWC 2009:87 cited in Fagerli 2016:148).

The Church of Sweden (Svenska Kyrkja) has three ordained ministries, deacon, priest and bishop. *“There is no theological hierarchy between the three commissions”* (Persenius in Fagerli 2016:129), instead all are of equal importance to the church.

The church had 1036 deacons employed within parishes in 2016 (Svenska kyrkan) *“Diakonia is defined, along with worship, mission and education as one of the four fundamental bearers of the Church of Sweden”* (Pädam 2011:67).

3.4.2 The diaconate in churches in the Anglican Communion

Within the Anglican Church there are great differences. Unlike the Lutheran churches, there is a great emphasis on the organisational structure of lay ministry. The Reader ministry in particular is extensive. At the same time there is a struggle to define and explain the ministry of the deacon, particularly the distinctive deacon. In the liturgy a Lay Reader has almost the same duties as a deacon. This might seem confusing.

All Anglican churches maintain the threefold ministry, where an ordination to the diaconate is the foundation for priesthood and episcopate.

Some Anglican churches have managed to develop a distinct diaconate, like ECUSA, in spite of the focus on (Licensed) lay ministry.

ECUSA

ECUSA, the episcopal church in the USA has worked on the diaconate extensively. There seems to be a picture of what diakonia/ or the diaconate means for the church, a definition of the diaconate was established and accepted in the eighties, followed by an interpretation of the diaconate in the church. Epting writes:

“we’ve claimed our charge from the church to be interpreters in ways that have been unexpected but critical. We have moved away from an understanding of servanthood that means “reaching down”, to one that reaches out and under the issues we face in the world today” (Epting 2015:124).

It does still seem to be a work in progress, with some dioceses more aware of the diaconate than others.

The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC)

The SEC - in likeness with other Anglican churches - shares a threefold ministry.

In 2001, there were 20 vocational deacons, and in 2012 there were only 12.

There seems to be an awareness of the diaconate: between 1957 and 1987, 3 reports were written about the distinctive diaconate, but at the same time, the development of lay ministry seems to be a higher priority like in many other Anglican churches. (Pädam 2011:56-58)

It is said about the SEC that “*we do not talk the talk of diakonia but we do walk the walk*” (Scottish Episcopal Church 2012:8). There is little literature to be found to back up this claim.

3.5 *Diakonia in the Church of England*

3.5.1 The threefold ministry

The Anglican Church is special in the way that it has kept the system of threefold ministry throughout the centuries.

The threefold ministry has gone through major changes from the early church, through the reformation into modern times, but the basic idea is still the same.

Although the Church of England believes in the ministry of all believers, its Holy Order is based on the three ordained ministries of Deacon, Priest and Bishop.

The three ministries are not individual ministries, Avis in his revision of the ordinal described them as follows:

“Deacons have an assisting, not a presiding, ministry in relation to this threefold mandate. They assist the priest and the bishop. They have a sacramental ministry, but not a presidential one. Priests have a full triple ministry, but exercise it in collegiality with the bishop and under episcopal oversight and not simply on their own authority” (Avis 2005B:103).

With a sequential ordination, of first deacon, followed by priest and thereafter by the episcopate, it means that none of the earlier ordinations are left behind when going up to the next stage, but they do, as Avis says in his article “wrestle with the diaconate”:

But this raises the question quite acutely: what is distinctive about the ministry of a deacon? What is diakonia? Tradition and much current practice answer this question in terms of servanthood, or humble service, which deacons are meant to model for the Church. But this is seriously inadequate (Avis 2009:3).

Avis refers to how for Paul “*diakonia stands for his fundamental commissioning as a minister of the gospel of Christ* (Avis 2009:5).” This would then lead to the understanding that the diaconal ministry is not an independent ministry but should be integrated in the ministry of the word, the sacraments and pastoral care (Avis 2009:5).

3.5.2 The diaconate in the Church of England

The Anglican church seems to have been refraining from using the Diak-words in most of their theological statements.

Gibson writes in his "Berkeley statement":

“In summary, although Anglicans have not used the language of diakonia, their ecumenical work is informed by an awareness of the need to participate in God’s mission by working to transform unjust structures and heal the wounds of the world (Gibson 2002:15).

There is however a strong connection with using words like social practice within the church. Therefore instead of putting focus on the Diak-words, emphasis is laid on the diaconate as a whole, both in understanding and practice.

Paul Avis, in his "Ministry shaped by mission" from 2005 uses Collins' new definition to place emphasis on the fact that the diaconate is widely misunderstood among Anglicans. He calls for an understanding in much more than functional terms, Deacons are sent with authority, as an ecclesiastical sign of what the church is. Avis calls their bridging, go-between role significant, linking the divine liturgy to the needs of those in the community. He writes: “*The diaconate stands for the commissioned, mandated character of the whole Church as ‘sign, instrument and foretaste’ of the Kingdom of God*” (Avis 2005:112).

The report "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" from 2007 says this: “*The meaning of diakonia here seems to have more to do with mediation than with humble service*” (CofE faith and order advisory group 2007: 19).

But if we look at diakonia as the church’s social practice, we see that the Church of England clearly developed its own social practice from 1861, when the order of deaconesses came into existence; we notice a strong sense of social practice, also manifested in other church-related organisations, like the Church Army, the Parochial Women Missionaries and Lay Pastoral Assistants.

The order of Deaconesses has always had a strong social side. In contrast to their male counterparts working within a church setting, they were not seen as ministers in the ordination sense of the word. “*Early deaconesses complained that the deacons were not really diaconal and that they had not grasped their responsibilities of care and social work*” (ALIC III 2012:26).

When we look at the situation today, there is a number of lay functions within the Church of

England which practises diakonia. We find accredited lay workers, lay pastoral assistants, Readers, Church Army workers, Counsellors, Sunday School Teachers. Mostly voluntary positions, with unclear job descriptions, but appointed by the church to exercise diakonia.

As early as 1988, the “Deacons in the ministry of the church” report calls the picture of the diaconal ministry in the church an untidy one. *“There is a variety of categories, lay and ordained, professional and non-professional, stipendiary and non-stipendiary, local, diocesan and national, full-time and part-time, with or without training”* (Church of England 1988:51).

What is lacking is an identity to the diaconate. Avis describes that the meaning of the ministry is dissolved because of this (Avis 2013:2.1).

Without a clear identity the diaconate is difficult to recognise as such. Without a clear identity we cannot expect the ordained to have a clear identity in their ordination to the diaconate.

3.5.3 The diaconate as the ministry of the deacon

The diaconate has for many years been a necessary step to become a priest. From the time of the reformation until today, this has been the only way to the priesthood within the Church of England. (Gibson 2002:5).

After 1987, the diaconate opened up for women and it ended up as a waiting room for women who wanted to be ordained priests, which was finally allowed in 1994.

There has been a clear turning point in both the interest for and the development of a clearer description of the diaconate within the Church of England in the late 20th century.

According to Young, the change in thinking occurred because of the admission of women to the deacon’s order in 1987 (Young 2015:121). Even though this event is part of the change of thinking, I disagree with Young as this being the only factor: there were several more.

Leading up to the change, there was a considerable influence from Vatican II where lay people were given greater opportunities to take part in practical activities within the church and this was reflected in the Church of England. The emancipation of women throughout western Europe created a change inside the church as well.

During both the eighties and the nineties of the 20th century, a number of things happened. From 1987, women were allowed to be ordained deacon, a formerly “male” order. Before 1987 women were only allowed to be part of the order of deaconesses, but not ordained in the

ministry of the Deacon.

Documents like "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" 1982, working towards a Porvoo Agreement (1996), the consultation on the diaconate, finalised in the "Hanover Report" in 1996 and later the "Jerusalem Report" in 2012 have pushed both the Anglican Communion as a whole and the Church of England as an individual church to reconsider the diaconate.

Particularly "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM) from 1982 spurred on reformation; it mentions specifically the lack of deacons in the diaconal witness within the church. Deacons have according to BEM been reduced to the role of assistant in the liturgy (WCC1982:24 point 21).

With the BEM document in hand, the road to a Porvoo agreement was not long, but the Deacons proved to be an obstacle on the road, and one of the commitments the churches of Porvoo signed up to is to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry (Porvoo 1993:58 b VII). This culminated in the "Hanover Report" in 1996 and in the "Jerusalem Report" in 2012.

In the literature of the Church of England, the diaconate is not often mentioned. It seems that the Church of England has taken its tradition more serious than its theology in the past centuries. It seems that only as challenged by ecumenical partners and women in ministry, there is a deeper search towards the diaconate.

We see that as a result of the Porvoo agreements, working parties are set up to consider the diaconate. First "For such a time as this", a report to the general synod of the Church of England. The report which considers a renewed diaconate for the Church of England was not accepted by Synod, since they found it lacking in consideration of lay ministries towards the diaconate. It was allowed to be used as a leading document for further work with the diaconate. The document whilst not being accepted did give the starting point for a theologically based discussion (Scottish Episcopal Church 2012:4). Avis states that it was this document that lay a base for the rethinking of the diaconate and in the end the revised ordinal (Avis 2005b:107).

The Diocese of Salisbury created a report to the board of ministry in 2003, based on "For such a time as this", which focusses on the Distinctive Diaconate. But this was not taken on nationwide. Although it is part of a short paper which advises about discerning the diaconate which is used church wide (Church of England 2017:1-3).

In 2007 The Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England came with the "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" report, which looked at ministry in today's church and society, and is largely dedicated to the issue of how the ministry of deacons should relate to that of Readers and other recognised lay ministers.

As in "For such a time as this", there is no recommendation that the lay and ordained ministries should be seen as equal, rather that there should be a consideration with a number of Readers, that maybe there is a calling to become deacon which has been wrongly identified as a calling to be reader and should be reconsidered (Church of England, faith and order advisory group 2007:148).

The question whether readers should become deacons is raised many times, in both "For such a time as this" and "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" it is negatively answered. The book "Reader Ministry Explored", raises the same question, but refuses to answer (Rowling and Gooder 2009:152).

The same discussion has come up in 2016, as this is the 150th anniversary of the Reader, or Licenced Lay minister (LLM) as they are now called in some dioceses.

"For such a time as this", describes clearly in theological and practical terms the ministry of the Deacon and its importance as a kind of baseline for all other ordained ministries. It calls for a greater emphasis on the transitional diaconate, as does Avis in a "Ministry shaped by mission".

Mission and Ministry in the church defines deacons in the following way:

“Deacons in their ordination receive the fundamental commissioning of Christ to be ministers (diakonoi) of the gospel. They are sent by Christ, through the church as bearers of the Good News to the world, and in this role they have a special compassionate care for the needs of the sick, the lonely and the oppressed... A ministry related to the Word, the sacraments and pastoral care, in an assisting, not presiding role” (CofE faith and order advisory group 2007:130).

In spite of all those reports there are still uncertainties about the understanding of the diaconate, and the Porvoo consultation on the diaconal ministry in 2009 encourages the Church of England - in further work recommended for our churches - to do the following: *“To develop an understanding of the diaconate that is not automatically associated with junior ministerial status” and “To recognise and affirm the diaconal aspect of the vocation of*

presbyters, and describe it explicitly” (Porvoo 2009: Further work recommended for our churches).

In literature up to 2018 we still see little change in the day to day understanding of the diaconate in the CofE.

3.5.4 The distinctive diaconate

Although the main emphasis in this thesis is on the transitional diaconate, the distinctive diaconate is of great importance to the research. Although a minor ministry in number, it is the part of the diaconate that has most interest of the church and has been the focus of most literature on the diaconate.

There were only 125 distinctive deacons in the Church of England at the start of 2016, in comparison in 2011 there were in total 11516 clergy (stipendiary and non-stipendiary). Of these, only 125 were distinctive deacons. Of non-ordained lay-people in Reader and church Army positions, there were 10284 in total (Church of England statistics 2010-2011). This puts a perspective on the number of 125. None of these are stipendiary, although a few deacons work in paid positions within the church.

All in all, it shows a failing from a church that has been calling for attention for the distinctive diaconate since the late eighties.

Is there a need for the distinct diaconate? The report "Deacons in the Ministry of the Church" from 1988 seems to think so:

“True diaconate is not an emasculated presbyterate and a primary reason for having distinctive deacons is to ensure that the Church takes seriously its responsibility to society. For the priest’s time and energies are unavoidably spent chiefly in ministering to the Christian community, whereas the deacon’s normal sphere of ministry is towards the wider community (Church of England 1988: §326).

This opinion was reflected in an article in the Church Times the 13th of May 2016 by The Revd Dr Stephen Spencer, Vice-Principal of the Yorkshire Ministry course. Spencer claims that *“the priest needs the deacon in order to remind the people to “Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord”*. He wishes for every parish to have a deacon as well as priest, in order to bring long-term revival to the church (Church Times 13th of May 2016:14).

Responses in subsequent Church Times’ papers were mostly negative with a view that

preferred Lay Readers in this position, though a small percentage of responses saw the point of having deacons, but thought it impossible to attain (Church times 20th and 27th of May 2016).

3.5.5 The diaconate as the foundation for the priesthood/transitional diaconate

The CofE has a permanent diaconate as part of its threefold ministry. The ordination to deacon is a permanent ordination. It is not made irrelevant by or subordinate to the ordination to the priesthood. This is reflected in the fact that the Anglican Communion has changed its vocabulary from permanent diaconate to distinct diaconate for those wishing to remain deacon and not be ordained priest. (Nordstokke in Fagerli 2016:146) As such, a permanent diaconate is for all those ordained deacons. Whether they are a deacon, priest or bishop within the CofE.

But the CofE does not seem to acknowledge the diaconate of those intending to become priests, it puts the focus on the distinct diaconate and seems to ignore the all others.

As long as all deacons are ordained under the same orders, their ministry should have the same content and aims. It is as Avis refers to it, a flagship ministry:

Diaconal ministry embodies the fundamental commission of the Church in the service of the Lord. In this sense, it is representational of the commissioned, apostolic character of the whole body of the baptised. It is, so to speak, a flagship ministry with significance for all Christians. It is on this fundamental commission that priestly and episcopal ministry (for those who are priests and bishops) rests (Avis 2005:113).

The priestly ministry in the CofE is based upon the diaconate as a necessity. We have to therefore take the theory aimed at the distinct diaconate and apply that in the same degree to deacons intending to be priest in addition to their diaconate, as they are permanent deacons in the literal sense of the word. Once a deacon always a deacon means exactly that.

3.5.6 The shape of diaconal ministry

When we look at the specific tasks of an ordained deacon, transitional and/or distinctive, we do not find clear guidelines aimed at the transitional deacon, except for the description of liturgical responsibilities; all other literature is aimed at the distinctive deacon. As already stated in the last paragraph, as a deacon will always be a deacon, we cannot make a difference

between the transitional and the distinctive diaconate and will therefore be seen as one.

According to Brown in 'Being a deacon today' and the 'Distinctive diaconate' report from the diocese of Salisbury there are three main areas for the deacon's tasks. Liturgical, pastoral and catechetical, as well as a minor area of administration.

A clear list with tasks is not found, but Brown's in 'Being a deacon today' is the most specific and will be used as a guideline.

In short, Brown writes

“If the role of the deacon in liturgy lies in helping people to worship and to connect world and worship, and the role of the deacon in pastoral care is to be a person of compassion and service, what of the deacon in catechism? Here he or she is called to help people (met in church or in the midst of daily life away from the church) to grow in the knowledge and love of God so that they mature in the faith and live out their baptismal vocation” (Brown 2005:74).

In recent literature on the diaconate the term go-between has been mentioned multiple times, therefore in the following categories, the researcher has added one category in addition to the four that Brown names. This is the go-between factor, added to get a more rounded and contemporary as well as complete picture of the diaconate.

Liturgical

In the liturgy the deacon is most recognisable, with a stole worn from the left shoulder to the right waist. It is in the liturgy too, that the clearest guidelines about duties for the deacon are written.

"Common Worship" says this about the deacon in the liturgy:

Liturgically, the deacon is the assistant to the priest in the service. The deacon calls to confession. It is he who after the priest has introduced the sharing of the peace, calls to give each other a sign of the peace, prepares the table and assists the priest in communion (CofE Common Worship 2000: general notes communion service).

With no priest in attendance, the deacon is allowed to lead the service from the start.

However the deacon has no authority to bless, give absolution, and can therefore not perform a complete wedding service, or preside at communion. But they can share the reserved sacrament, baptise, anoint with oil and lead funerals when so fitting. (Church of England, Common Worship 2000: general notes communion service)

The prayers within the service are a specific concern for the deacon; as the go-between for community, church and God, he is the right person for the job. Especially the prayers give an excellent opportunity to link community to God in the church (Brown 2005: 49).

Besides the prayers and assisting the priest, there are other liturgical tasks for the deacon. The preparation of the altar for communion, bringing in and the proclamation of the gospel, and the dismissal.

It is interesting how most transitional deacons place great emphasis on the liturgical part, while distinctive deacons often have only little liturgical responsibility and most of their tasks are outside the church: in the community. Readers often perform the duties of the deacon in the service, where there is no deacon in place.

Pastoral

“Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church and in leading God’s people in worship” (Church of England, Common worship 2000: Ordinal). The ordinal gives an indication that an important part of the diaconate lays focus on pastoral ministry.

The deacon is called to be the servant of Christ, sent by Christ into the world. As a go-between, and therefore alongside the people. Like Christ on the road to Emmaus, the deacon goes alongside people, sharing in their lives, telling them gently about God, and giving them the support they need along the way.

This can be expressed in many different ways. Within the preparation of weddings, baptisms, and not least funerals. As well as in counselling and spiritual guidance.

Catechetical

Some of the duties of a deacon are in the catechetical field, the religious instruction and in preparation for baptism, confirmation, weddings and funerals. There can be a very thin line between liturgy, pastoral care and catechetical instruction, and in theory the deacon can link these together. Bible studies and youth groups would be considered catechetical in many churches.

Brown writes that this role of catechist is not only among Christians, but that there is a responsibility to lead people to Christ from the boundaries (Brown 2005:75).

“Go-between”

Not mentioned by Brown as a separate part of the diaconal ministry, but indicated in many documents and very integral is the Go-Between function of the deacon.

In the CofE document "Discerning the Diaconate", aimed at vocations in the diaconate, it is written that a deacon *“Is a two-way go-between or agent between church and world, straddling the boundary and helping others to cross it”* (CofE 2017:4).

The "Hanover Report" calls it the “go-between” role of diaconal ministry which operates in two ways *“from church to the needs, hopes, and concerns of persons in and beyond the church; and from those needs, hopes, and concerns to the church”* (ALIC 1996: §51).

Avis calls this the *“linking of divine liturgy and the needs of the unchurched out in the wider community”* (Avis 2005b:107) both speak of the same assignments and duties within the church and community.

Here one can see the deacon as the face of the church in society. Church is not just for those that come into the four walls of the building, and the diaconate has its focus on the part outside of these four walls. Bringing God outside the building and bringing the community inside the building, physically or in the form of prayer to God and petition to the people.

3.5.7 Ordination to the diaconate

The Ordinal shows clearly how the understanding of the diaconate has changed from Inferior office to go-between leading God's people.

Whereas the "Book of Common Prayer" (BCP 1662) calls the diaconate “an inferior office” and puts focus on assistance with the liturgy, the "Alternative Service Book" (ASB 1980) has grown to the humble servant theme, and finally in the recent "Common Worship" Ordinal we see a change towards being an ambassador for Christ. Working with the bishop and priest and serving the community. They share in the pastoral ministry and in leading God's people as a link (go-between) from the church to the community in which they are set (CofE 2007Common worship: ordinal).

From "Common Worship", ordinal for the ordination of deacons:

“Deacons are called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom. They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as

agents of God's purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible” (CofE 2007 Common worship: ordinal).

Other duties include accompanying those searching for faith and bringing them to baptism. Assisting in administering of the sacraments, distributing communion and ministering to those who are sick and housebound.

The Ordinal is clear that deacons should seek nourishment from the scriptures; show faithfulness in prayer.

In most cases ordination to the priesthood follows one year after the ordination to deacon for those wanting to become priests. Ordinands are assessed both before ordination and at the end of their curacy by the DDO, to see if they have achieved the required formation criteria for Ordained ministry.

In Canon C3 the length of time one should be deacon before being ordained into the priesthood is determined:

A deacon shall not be ordained to the priesthood for at least one year, unless the bishop shall find good cause for the contrary, so that trial may be made of his behaviour in the office of deacon before he be admitted to the order of priesthood (CofE Canons C3).

It is interesting that the canons here give as a reason to wait at least a year so that the behaviour may be assessed. No other place states reasons for the fact a priest should first be deacon before being ordained priest. With the exception for the historical reason; that it has always been like this.

3.5.8 The diaconate as the ministry of all believers

The diaconate stands for the commissioned mandated character of the whole church as a ‘sign, instrument and foretaste’ of the Kingdom of God. Diaconal ministry embodies the fundamental commission of the Church in the service of the Lord (Avis 2005:106-107).

It is therefore the responsibility of the whole church and a ministry of all believers, not just ordained deacons. A lay person can represent Christ in different ministries in the church, but

the final responsibility for the overall ministry in the congregation will be positioned with an ordained person. *“By ordination recognised as a representative holding a public office and exercising the church’s authority”* (Brown 2005:vii).

There are different grounds for a changed scene in the church. Cultural changes, like hierarchical structures in society having broken down, which have created an open door for laypeople in the church. And a change of religious affiliation, where society no longer equals parishes. More mobility, where parish boundaries are no longer the congregational boundaries (Croft 2008:10).

This, together with a reduced income for the church, has led to the emergence of lay ministry. Over the last century the number of lay ministers has grown dramatically.

As stated before, there is an area of tension between the Lay ministry and the distinct diaconate. Liturgical duties seem to have a great overlap, which makes it difficult to define the diaconate, as it seems that the Lay Ministry feels threatened by a clear definition that overlaps the Lay Ministry.

In Mission and Ministry for the whole church it is written:

For some people, the obvious fact that there is overlap of function between the various ministries of the Church, ordained and lay, poses a difficulty. Perhaps they look at deacons and at Readers and see that they carry out very much the same set of tasks: preaching and teaching, assisting with the sacraments, bringing pastoral care. Ordained ministry overlaps with lay ministry. This need not present a problem, provided there is clarity about what the Church expects from its various ministers and provided its ministers work in a collaborative and collegial manner. Overlap is inescapable because the mission – the cluster of tasks – entrusted to the Church is an integrated and structured whole, not a random assortment of discrete functions. Ministries are distinctive but not mutually exclusive (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:146-147).

It is important too that clarity is provided for both ministries. To define the ordained versus the non-ordained ministry and the importance of both within the church. Similarly, the difference and the overlap between the ministry of Reader, both to strengthen the role of the deacon and the ministry in the church in general.

Though most lay Readers seem to appreciate that their ministry will remain a lay ministry and not ordained, there seems to be a fear for a well-established diaconate.

There is a wide scope of task within the diaconate that can and should be carried out by lay

people. “Diakonia as the ministry of all the baptised, with the ordered ministries of the church as supporting them” (ALICIII 2012:7).

As there is a lack of clergy, both permanent deacons and priests, the fear that deacons will push out Lay Readers is ungrounded. *“by the end of the century there were over 10,000 Readers, which meant that there were more Readers than there were stipendiary clergy”* (CofE, Faith and Order advisory group 2007:76).

It is important to remember that tasks executed by a lay minister will have to be under the leadership and authority of ordained clergy.

The report "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" gives two recommendations in this area:

The Church of England is extremely fortunate in having as lay ministers the large, well-trained and dedicated body of Readers, who (like self-supporting clergy) give their services voluntarily. They are the mainstay of many a parish (...). We also believe that some Readers, again with the appropriate aptitudes and gifts, should be encouraged to have their vocation further discerned with a view to further training for ordination as deacons. (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:159)

It is clear that the office of Reader is an important office, in some case bearing the local church ministry. This needs to be applauded, but simultaneously we need to be careful that it does not overshadow other ministries of equal importance for the church.

If the CofE wants to develop its diaconate it needs to see to the relationship between Reader and Deacon.

3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the diaconate is discussed, as a diaconate in all churches and specifically the diaconate in the Church of England, which has its own way of seeing the diaconate in both ecclesiological and practical ways.

The CofE has a permanent diaconate for all those ordained deacon, not subordinate to a later ordination to the priesthood or episcopate.

We have seen the different forms the diaconate can take, distinct, transitional and at the same time permanent, as well as the ministry of all believers.

The office of Reader has been acknowledged and viewed in relation to the diaconate.

4 Methodology and Data analysis

4.1 Introduction

The research topic aims to research the understanding of priests in the Church of England of the diaconate and their identity as deacon.

This chapter will describe and expound on the chosen methodology and the way this research has been conducted.

It looks at the data collection, the limitations of research and the challenges encountered.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Purpose statements

The purpose of this study is to describe the understanding that priests in the Church of England have of the diaconate and their identity as a deacon. This will be attained by a qualitative study where a small sample of data will be collected through interviews with participants. The examination of theory was important in order to identify the Church of England's position of the diaconate. This was then used as a basis for the interviews.

4.2.2 Qualitative method

This study researches the personal ideas, experiences and opinions of priests within the Church of England.

Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen state that the method used is dependent on the subject that is researched (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen 2010:99). They also stated that:

the qualitative method is particularly appropriate if we are to investigate phenomena that we do not know particularly well and where little research has been done and when we investigate phenomena we want to understand more thoroughly (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen 2010:32).

In my opinion a qualitative method is most suitable in this research. Qualitative research has the option to go deeper and give a more comprehensive understanding of the subject; it is possible to ask the interviewee to elaborate and explain better than could have been done in a quantitative interview. It does though expect a deeper knowledge of the subject from the

interviewer (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen 2010:369).

This research will centre around the personal experiences and understanding of ministers, and the method used is individual interviews. 8 participants were interviewed.

4.2.3 Theory in qualitative research

A broad theory base is used to give a theory lens, an understanding of what the Church of England thinks of its diaconate in theory, so that the data can be shown in the light of this theory (Creswell 2009:64).

The theory shows the presuppositions that the researcher is working under. In this case the theory is focussed on two separate but joined themes. What the diaconate is in general and the understanding that the Church of England has of its own diaconate according to written data. The theory helps the researcher to get a perspective of the situation that is based on facts and theory and not personal bias (Creswell 2009:67).

In this case, the theory helps to see how the church sees its diaconate in theory and, in the research, this can be paralleled with the experiences and understanding of those interviewed. Conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from a combination of theory and interview analysis. The theory will also be used to check the qualitative validity of the data collected.

4.2.4 Validity and credibility

There are a number of factors that might have an influence on the validity and credibility of the research. The researcher must be aware of the bias she can bring into the study. This can only be averted by being self-reflective, open and aware of presuppositions and by using a theoretical framework as a basis (Creswell 2009:191).

Creswell encourages the use of triangulation to examine evidence from different data sources. He advises to present all finds, including the negative or discrepant finds to make the research more valid (Creswell 2009:192).

It is important to be aware that a limited qualitative research is only a sample. Creswell quotes:

In fact, the value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site. Particularity rather than generalizability (Greene & Caracelli, 1997) is the hallmark of qualitative research (Creswell 2009:193).

One must be aware that there will always be some level of subjectivity in a one-person research and one-person interviewer and data analyser. Therefore, the researcher needs to be aware of her own subjectivity. This awareness will help to maintain near-objectivity in the research.

4.3 *Limitations of research*

There are many limitations to this research. The subject is incredibly wide.

The research will not compare the Anglican church with the Lutheran church, but will look solely to the Anglican church.

As this thesis is written as part of studies at a Norwegian university, aimed at becoming a deacon in the Norwegian Church, the choice was made to include a background and context chapter, where the Church of England as a church is described to set a context for this thesis. For reference's sake there will be references to other churches and documents from Porvoo and Lutheran-Anglican dialogue will be included, since part of the diakonia development in the Church of England initiated from there. This thesis is about the diaconate of the priesthood, not about the distinctive diaconate, or the diaconate of all believers, although these are important and will be named in context of the diaconate of the priesthood.

4.4 *Research Strategy*

4.4.1 *Research and literature known on subject*

There is little research and literature about deacons in the Church of England.

In this research there is a long literature list, this is mainly down to the fact that there is little written about the diaconate. In most of the books mentioned, only a small part is dedicated to or refers to the diaconate.

There are some books completely dedicated to the diaconate, although they look at the distinctive diaconate, not the diaconate in general.

The most recent book is by Francis Young who wrote 'Inferior office? A History of Deacons in the Church of England' in 2015. His book looks mostly at the permanent diaconate in a historical context but gives good information about the diaconate in general.

Before that we have 'Being a deacon today' by Rosemary Brown from 2005, which looks at

the distinctive diaconate.

Within the Church of England there have been working parties which delivered the following reports: a report in 1988 on the "Deacons in the Ministry of the Church" and "For such a time as this" (CofE, renewed diaconate working party 2001). "The mission and ministry of the whole church" (Church of England, faith and Order advisory group 2007) are results from that working party. They will have to be included in this study.

Within the diocese of Salisbury there has been a report to the board of ministry in 2003 called "The Distinctive Diaconate" (Diocese of Salisbury 2003) which had as its brief: "*To clarify our theological and practical understanding of the diaconate in order to focus ministerial policy for the next ten years*" (ibid p1). This document especially has many practical recommendations for the church.

The CofE has very little updated info on its websites on the calling to be a distinctive deacon or the diaconate in general. Statistics are either old or non-existent. In some cases, the choice has been made not to research newer statistics as this would not make the outcome of the research any different.

On the Church of England main site on vocations we read only this about deacons:

As a deacon you are able to do weddings and baptisms, but you must be ordained priest before you can preside over Holy Communion. You will most likely be ordained a priest by your bishop after a year of curacy, provided this is the type of ministry you have been training for (<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations/exploring-ordained-ministry> 15th December 2017).

Within the World council of Churches there have been some documents, most notable "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" from 1982.

This was followed by a number of documents leading to the foundations for the Porvoo agreement from 1992, and further collaboration and studies on the diaconate to come to a better understanding and shared ministry between the Lutheran and Anglican churches of Northern Europe. There have been working parties, Porvoo, with "The ministry of the deacon" 1 and 2 (Borgegård 1999 and 2000). and several ALIC documents.

Also, an unpublished master thesis from 2008 on the Permanent diaconate by RP Clement from Ruskin Anglia university, which is partly quoted in "Inferior Office".

In addition, a doctorate thesis on "The ordination of the Deacon", 2011 by Tit Padam which

goes deeper into the Ordination of deacons in the churches of the Porvoo Region, but not into the practice of diakonia in the church (Padam 2011).

There is little to none about how the diaconate influences or should influence priests in their ministry.

4.5 Data Collection

Data will be collected through interviews, where a number of priests will be interviewed about their ministry and their thoughts and ideas about the diaconate.

There are no ethical issues here that would need approval from an ethical committee.

An “informed consent” form (Creswell 2009:89) with information for the participants has been sent in the information letter.

All interviewees gave their consent at the start of their interview.

The questions in the interview are worked out in an interview guide (Creswell 2009:183) so as to be unbiased.

Interviews were recorded to remember quotations correctly. Recordings and transcriptions need to be handled with care and coded in those cases where the person interviewed wants to be anonymous.

All data will be stored under password protection on a local hard disk without internet access and destructed after completion and assessment of the thesis.

4.5.1 Target group for data

The target group for data collection is priests ordained after 2001, with a more than 5-year ministry after deacon ordination. They have been in ministry for 5 years or more and have trained for the ministry after 2001. This last aspect to ensure that they have a good oversight of their ministry and should be aware of Collins’ new definition of diakonia. After 2000, the ordinal of "Common Worship" came with a slightly altered definition of the diaconate in comparison to older liturgies.

8 priests were interviewed. This number was guided by the need to have a diverse group of individuals to produce data. Constraints of time and resources set limits to how many interviewees could be asked. In this case quality of data was chosen over quantity. The researcher is of the opinion that this number is adequate to analyse at the level of a master

thesis.

Initial consideration was to obtain interviewees by contacting the diocesan office or local deanery, but this was considered too time-consuming, both in waiting time and in follow-up. The process was shortened by using other methods directly available to the researcher instead of being dependent on others.

Priests were selected by geographical area. Two areas were chosen, mostly for practical purposes, so that it was easy to interview them in person. Within these areas there was a wide range of different churches and priests.

The Church of England, “find a church nearby” internet search facility and the diocesan online personal directory were leading.

The second selection was through ordination year. The Church Times archive was leading in this case. Most Ordinands are listed in this Church of England newspaper.

4.5.2 Qualitative interviews

The interviews have been carried out largely in person. One interview was done over the telephone due to illness at the time of the initial appointment and geographical and time constraints to make a new appointment. The interviews were semi-structured, recorded and later partly transcribed.

The interviews have been taken in different settings, churches, private homes, and catering establishments. These settings were mostly chosen by the interviewees from a practical point of view. Settings were easy to get to for both parties.

There has been the consideration of focus group interviews, but a one-on-one situation will create more openness in the interviewed person. And gives more freedom to ask deeper questions where there is need for more information, as well as making it easier to meet up with the different priests.

The interview guide was leading, though there was the option to go off script in a semi structured interview, which happened in most cases. Interviews were recorded on Dictaphone and notes were taken manually during the interview.

There are many other things that could be studied in this context, but there is just no room within a master thesis to go deeper into this subject or other related subjects.

The data acquired will never give a whole picture of the truth, but it will be an observation of the truth, experienced by the people interviewed and as interpreted by the researcher (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen 2010:36).

Soft data (myke data as Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen describe it) is characterised by being people's opinion and their interpretation of the truth. It is both a direct detectable reality and a diffuse reality that I will be researching (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen 2010:37). The direct detectable, the facts and numbers and diffuse, the opinions of the people involved

A thorough literature search is recommended prior to the design of the interview guide (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen, 2010:261).

The interview guide was based on the theoretical framework.

4.6 Data Analysis

Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen are clear that qualitative data needs both analysis and interpretation (Johannessen, Tufte, and Kristoffersen 2010:164). In the analysis the data will be ordered and patterns will become clear.

In the interpretation the data will be seen in the light of the aforementioned theory and conclusions can be drawn from the understanding of the interpreted data.

But with only 8 interviews we need to be aware that it is impossible to find an absolute truth, it will only be conjectural (Creswell 2009:7).

4.7 Responses to the interviews

Eighteen people were selected in a random manner, to be approached with an interview request. Eight of these answered positively, some after a follow up call.

The interviews took between 50 minutes and two hours, depending on the conciseness of the interviewee and the time frame available.

The interviews were carried out in a timespan of two months. None of those taking part have had contact with others in the data collection group. They all worked for different church communities. None of the interviewees were paid, but they were given a gift of chocolates and sweets as a sign of gratitude.

4.8 Challenges Encountered

Priests are generally busy and fitting in with their schedules wasn't easy. Some of the email requests ended up in the spam-box, and it took two emails to most before a positive or negative answer was given. Some never answered the requests.

After the positive answer, an appointment had to be made, the one telephone interview was originally an interview in person, but had to be postponed due to illness.

Taking Dictaphone recordings in public settings can be challenging, but in this case all recordings were clear enough to transcribe with the help of the notes taken during the interview.

With a semi structured interview, one is dependent on the vocabulary and individual descriptions of situations from the individual's point of view. This is not always easy to transfer into objective data.

It is important to remember that in an interview one is dependent on the memories of the interviewee. That means that if an interviewee doesn't remember something being a subject at training college, that this is not necessarily the case. It might be that it just wasn't remembered. As this research is about the understanding of priests of their diaconate, this is not a problem, had we been researching training colleges it might have been.

4.9 Personal Reflection

The interviews were very interesting. Though some were very wordy and took more leading through the interview, or back to the interview questions, others were very concise and needed help to expand on their thoughts.

I had some expectation of what kind of answers to expect. But fortunately, during the first interview I was shown that I might be prejudiced.

That made me more expectant and open in the following interviews.

For me it was very enjoyable to talk to these priests about their diaconate, and I hope it has inspired them to mull over the subject more in future.

4.10 Keywords

Keywords in searching, deacon, diaconate, diakonia, transitional deacon, distinctive

deacon, distinctive ministry, ordination, formation, Church of England, Anglican, threefold ministry.

4.11 Theory base

Anglican Ecclesiology by some of the leading ecclesiolgists within the Church of England. Like Paul Avis, Steven Croft and Paula Gooder.

Also, studies on the diaconate in General by John Collins, Brown, The Church of England and working parties and Frances Young.

World council of churches and Anglican-Lutheran working party documents have been taken along too.

Specific attention has been given to a document called "Discerning the Diaconate" which surveys "current thinking" about the diaconate, based on the "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church", "The distinctive diaconate" and "Common Worship". This because it is the only recent document on the diaconate found in the CofE.

4.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a short reasoning for the chosen methods of research. It describes the qualitative way of data collection, how the interviews have been organised and a personal reflection on the research.

It describes the research strategy, limitations and challenges.

5 Presentation of interviews

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results from analysis of the data from the interviews will be presented.

First the interviewees are presented to have a background on where the data come from.

The data are presented based on themes, where the questions from the interview guide are used as a guideline. In most cases the findings are presented in keywords, except in some cases where whole sentences or definitions are quoted to show context or totality.

The questions are grouped in 4 main subjects, firstly the diaconate in general, then the training and preparation to the diaconate, being a deacon and lastly the diaconate in the church today.

5.2 Presentation and background of interviewees

Eight people were interviewed. Seven of them in person, one over the telephone.

All interviewees were ordained deacon between 2003 and 2013. This was in accordance with the selection criteria, which stated that all interviewees would have to be ordained after the year 2001.

All were ordained deacon successively, although one candidate remained deacon for nine years. All had five or more years' experience in ministry in the Church of England after ordination. According to the selection criteria all worked or had worked as a priest in the Church of England.

Interviewees came from different backgrounds, both socially and academically. They were between 30 and 66 years old. Three were women, five men.

Seven had work experience from other workplaces than the church, one had only experience in church work.

There is no necessity to disclose age, education background, because after analysis of the data, it was found that these facts have no direct relationship with the frequency of specific answers given in the interview about the diaconate.

There was little to no overlap in answers from interviewees from the same training college and selecting diocese to conclude that this will have no clear effect on results. Neither has

there been clear coincidence of answers to the extent that these factors can give us an indication of differences between training colleges or dioceses.

In order to keep interviewees anonymous, the choice has been made not to number the interviewees nor to disclose the exact age, education and working background before ordination, and the diocese interviewees work in today, this was found to be of no relevance to the outcome of the data.

There was a wide spread of congregations represented: High church, low church, somewhere in the middle. High education level in the congregation, to almost none. Small congregations, big congregations, pioneer congregation, long standing traditional congregations. a great variety. The CofE has a wide spread of different congregations and priests, many of those are represented in some way in this research.

Age categories, backgrounds and training colleges give a good visible representation of the diversity in the CofE today.

There where a churchmanship background seemed to be of importance, it is mentioned (Evangelical/Catholic).

In one of the interviews we found an interviewee who had a special interest in the diaconate for personal reasons. His answers stand out. These answers do not impede on the results of the research. In all areas of life there will be people with different interests. One of the reasons to select interviewees from a range of backgrounds without prior knowledge is to get this spread in the scope of those interviewed.

The interview guide is attached as an appendix.

Interviewees were not given an interview guide, it was used for the interviewer to lead the interview. As it was a semi structured interview, there were no given answers, all interviewees phrased their own answers.

At the start of the interview the interviewees gave their consent for their participation in the research and interview. Overall the spread of interviewees will give a reflection of the Church of England in general. As with all qualitative interviews, this will only give an indication and not a complete picture of the situation in the Church of England today.

These were interviews about the personal understanding of individual priests. But with eight interviews only a generalised indication can be given of the situation in the whole of the Church of England.

All interviewees were given the same description of the diaconate. Initial plan was to only give this if the interviewee wasn't aware of a workable definition for diakoni/the diaconate, but the interviewer decided that answers to the other questions would be more reliable if all worked from the same understanding.

The description used was given by a deacon from South Africa in an interview in 2013:

As a deacon I am a representative of God making the servant ministry of Christ present for God's people. I am a 'go-between' taking the church into the community and bringing the concerns and the needs of the people to God. I build bridges and facilitate linkage between church and culture. It is primary my role to help the congregation make the fundamental connection between worship and service (unknown deacon cited by Jordheim 2014:195).

All interviewees were read this description at some point in the interview, normally after they answered the questions of their thoughts/associations when hearing the word deacon and their own definition of diakonia/the diaconate.

None of the interviewee had contact with each other before the interview.

5.3 *Diaconate in general*

In order to get a sense of the understanding of the diaconate, interviewee were asked several questions on the diaconate. There is an overlap in the questions, to ensure that a complete picture of their understanding of the diaconate evolves.

After the first two questions in this category, interviewees were given the description of the diaconate that was printed in the interview guide and earlier in this chapter.

In the first instance the word diakonia was used, but it soon became apparent that this word wasn't a word familiar to all of the interviewees. Therefore, the words deacon and diaconate were used instead.

5.3.1 First thoughts / associations when hearing the word deacon:

At the start of the interview, interviewees were asked their first thoughts or associations when hearing the word deacon. Interviewees were asked to come up with some short words or

sentences. No explanation necessary, just first thoughts or associations. Here there were three types of answers. First off *servant* and *service* both came up three times as a first thought. In connection with being a servant “Love in action” and self-sacrificing were mentioned.

As a good second there is *apprenticeship* or *L-plate period*, the trial period before becoming a priest. Thirdly *an office entered into, ministry and calling*. Where it was seen as an employment or service to the church.

5.3.2 Definition of diakonia/the diaconate in your own words

In order to find out what the interviewees’ knowledge of the diaconate was, they were asked to give a definition of the diaconate in their own words.

Interviewees were not prepared for this question beforehand, so it was an on the spot definition. Within the answers we see a reflection of the first thoughts on the word deacon. Here the choice was made to write out a shortened version of all eight definitions to get a good picture of the understanding of the diaconate.

The definitions roughly fit into three categories.

1. being a servant to God, doing the less favourable jobs, humble/self-sacrificing:

- *God’s calling to us to be servants, and to do something like Philippians 2 to humble myself and to be ready to love and serve the people.*
- *For me the obvious word is service. And the image to go alongside that is Towel, the practical service and all that. Someone on the edge of the church, the interface to society.
Serving Christ through the serving of others, the picture from John 13, image of Christ, secure in his identity.*
- *Washing up, making sure that the table is clean, making sure there is food.
Liberating theology and the gospel as service. God revealing himself in Christ Jesus. Acts 6.*
- *Service, serving others, self-sacrificing servant leadership. Practical outworking, never too important to move chairs around.*

2. going out into the community, reaching those outside

- *Going to the dark places and finding the most vulnerable.*
- *Ministry on the edge, service to others, service of the church towards each other and the wider community, being the local representative of the local community to the church and vice versa.*
- *To actually walk alongside folk in the community.*

3. A liturgical and pastoral ministry in the church.

- *the definition goes two ways, partly liturgical assistant to priest, partly pastoral assistant, preacher and do other things besides waiting at tables.*
- *An apprenticeship where you are partly in the role of priest, before you step into the fullness of the role.
The sense of calling of being set aside. Being more pastoral than it is sacramental.*

6 out of 8 interviewees had a clear emphasis on the serving role of the deacon, both through being the humble servant as well as the servant who actively goes into the community.

2 interviewees put emphasis on the ministerial and ecclesiastical context of the deacon within the church service.

5.4 How should the diaconate be visible in the church today (in an ideal situation)

After having been read the aforementioned description of the diaconate, the interviewees were asked about how they thought the diaconate should be visible in the(ir) church today.

In contrast to the earlier two questions, the interviewees were given more time and space to discuss the subject more extensively and use more words to explain their thoughts.

One interviewee acknowledged the fact that he had not reflected on this sufficiently, this interview inspired him to think more about the subject. But he did mention feeding the poor, and the sentence from the ordinal: “*searching out for the lost and bringing them home*” (CW ordinal 2001) He imagined here the “bridging” between church and society. Reaching out in service that blesses communities, brings in the kingdom of God. To lead the congregation, connecting and building bridges, this could be done in the intercession, turning outwards and praying.

His answers and the other answers given here, produce a wide range of examples of how the diaconate should be visible in the(ir) church. They have been categorised in the same three categories as the last paragraph.

Where in the definition only 2 mentioned the third category, here 6 out of 8 mentioned different examples classified under this category. Whether this is because of hearing the example description of the diaconate which is stronger on ministry and the connection

between worship and service, or the fact that they had more time to think, is unclear.

1. being a servant to God, doing the less favourable jobs, humble/self-sacrificing:

This could be through doing *menial jobs* or *showing the willingness to do these menial jobs*, the *washing of dishes*, *moving of chairs* and *being humble*. *Willing to do dodgy things*.

As well as the *servicing of others: Servicing Christ through servicing others*.

2. going out into the community, reaching those outside

Serving through *food bank* and other means of *feeding the poor*. Serving the people in the community with a servant heart, by listening to people, seeing people and loving them.

Being out in the community, with people. Searching out the lost and bringing them home.

Going into the dark places, by walking and learning alongside people.

3. A liturgical and pastoral ministry in the church.

In the liturgy:

Four mentioned the intercessions as the visible sign of the diaconate in the service.

They called this a way of communicating the faith, making the diaconate visible through intercessions, and through forms of outward-reaching prayer.

That the diaconate was “*visible through the proclamation of the gospel and revealed in the unpacking of the word*” was stated by two of the interviewees, one of them in these exact words, the other in different but similar words. A third mentioned the Gospel starting in the mass, and going out from there.

Pastoral care:

Pastoral care was mentioned by three of the interviewees, a fourth called it listening to people.

Possible means mentioned to do this: Hospital and prison visits, going into dark places with the love of Jesus.

5.4.1 Lay ministry versus ordained ministry and deacon roles.

In two interviews the interviewees mentioned at this part of the interview that if the (permanent) diaconate was important, it should have its own training and apprenticeship within the church. That there should be a good definition and description of the diaconate and there should be clearer boundaries between reader and deacon.

“the diaconate is formed by the threefold ministry, and we say that clearly, but we don’t really

make a great deal of the diaconate, seen as just a year before being a priest.”

“There are unclear boundaries between the ordained ministry and lay ministry.”

One of the questions asked was about deacons in the church. None of the interviewees had a deacon in their churches. But half of them had Lay readers or other lay ministers.

In three interviews, the fact that there are unclear boundaries between lay reader and deacon were mentioned. This led to confusion and misunderstandings. It made them wonder what a deacon really is, or the worth of the ordination vs lay ministry.

It was mentioned three times that interviewees felt that Lay readers were taking the place of the deacon in the service and sometimes in ministry.

This led to comments about unclear boundaries between lay and ordained ministry, and no clear definition about what ordained ministry entailed.

One mentioned: *“Certainly in the way that many readers I know operate like pseudo clergy in particular because they've often been there longer than the ordained clergy.”*

The diocese of York was mentioned twice, where lay-readers were given the option to take a fast-track to becoming deacons if they should wish so.

The lack of proper information about the diaconate for people feeling a calling to ordination was mentioned too. Three of the interviewees mentioned that they had not been given any information about the diaconate before they went through the ordination selection and two wondered how they could inform people today who felt a call to ordained ministry.

At the same time, it was mentioned how important the Lay reader ministry is, in spite of it being relatively “vague”. Lay people are trained to do a job in the church, not set apart in the same way as clergy are, and therefore freer to do the things that need doing. It was said that it made being a priest less lonely and it was very helpful to be able to call on other people.

5.5 Training and preparation to the diaconate

For a priest to have a good understanding of the diaconate it is necessary to be educated about this diaconate. These questions are aimed at finding out what kind of education the priests were given on the importance, meaning and significance of the diaconate in general and in their ministry.

5.5.1 The diaconate subject at training college?

When asked about this the interviewees in general had to have a little ponder before being able to answer.

The word diakonia was something that reminded most of the interviewees of their Greek classes. And for some New Testament classes.

Only one interviewee distinctly remembered the diaconate being part of the curriculum in a clear way.

There were two interviewees that had a memory of having someone training for the permanent diaconate in their study group. One at training college and one in the training group within the diocese during their curacy. Only one remembered this making a difference in the way they talked about the diaconate.

The other interviewees did not remember the diaconate being a specific topic at training college. Three mentioned that they remembered the ministry in general being the main subject.

The question that can be asked here is whether the diaconate was a subject at all training colleges, but that it wasn't relevant for the interviewees, so that they don't remember, or whether it was lacking at some or most training colleges.

The one person who remembered clearly that the diaconate was part of the curriculum has a special interest in the diaconate. He clearly had a reference framework where this was flagged. It is generally known that the memory can be selective.

There seemed to be no difference between those most recently ordained and those ordained longer back in time. Just the one person standing out.

This person did tell of the special interest in the diaconate at the start of the interview.

Two of the interviewees are part of selection procedures. One of them talked about the new policy where every candidate now needs to explain why they want to become a priest and not a permanent deacon. This would help the awareness of what the diaconate enfolds.

The other told about how he didn't know much about the (distinct) diaconate, but how being part of the selection procedure, which includes selection to the distinct diaconate, has made him more aware of the diaconate as a separate ministry.

5.5.2 Preparation specifically for the diaconate before ordination?

The impression given by the interviewees was that there didn't seem to be any specific preparation for the diaconate before ordination.

Besides the instruction that blessings, absolution and presiding at the Eucharist were three things that were not allowed for a deacon. There was preparation for the ministry in general. Preparation for preaching and teaching, mentoring and the things one can't do yet as a deacon.

One person said it like this *"It wasn't touched upon, leaving people wondering what they would do in their year as deacon"*.

"There was obviously the ordination itself. It was said once a deacon always a deacon and that ministry of service as Christ served, reflecting on Peter receiving from Christ first: "unless you allow me to wash you, you have no share in me", that kind of stuff in that sense of serving God rather than other people."

In all there weren't any answers indicating specific diaconal teaching.

5.5.3 How did you find out about tasks and duties as a deacon?

Most interviewees found out about their tasks and duties on the job as a curate. In some cases, they were liturgical tasks, in other the tasks and duties of the deacon were more or less the same as they did during their whole curacy.

Though it was mentioned that during IME phase 2 in Southwark there was a 3-4-week period which was spent on "what does it mean to be a deacon?" As well as having a permanent deacon in the group, quite some focus was put on the diaconate according to one of the interviewees. But this seemed to be an exception. Again, this was remarked by the same person that remembered the diaconate coming up in at least different subjects at training college. Again, the question comes up about selective memories and reference frameworks, that make people remember different things.

One of the interviewees talks about how she was asked to act as deacon of service in a service with the bishop. She had no idea what the specific deacon's role in the service was at that point.

5.6 Being a deacon

Here the interviewees answered questions about their personal experience of being a deacon. These central questions shed light on the awareness of the diaconate, both when ordained deacon and today. The first two questions were quite similar, so therefore the questions were merged in the description here.

5.6.1 What was the importance of your time as a transitional deacon for you? Did it distinguish itself from your time as a priest?

One of the interviewees was very enthusiastic about his time as a deacon *“Yes it was very formational and it was lovely to do it in a very official sort of way to go and put into practice the St Francis stuff and the servant, the acts stuff and Isaiah stuff and reflect during that year.”*

For the others it was a time for preparation to either specifically the priesthood or ministry in general. *“For me it was a time where I could prepare myself for the role of priest. With less responsibility.” “I felt more like a curate, than a priest or deacon.” “It was a natural growth process into becoming a priest.” “It felt like an apprentice stage. Waiting for the next stage.”*

One of the interviewees mentioned that for him this time as a new curate, moving to a new area, doing a new job, together with a growing family made him not very much aware of the diaconate as such. The ordination to deacon was just one of the things in a chaotic period. His advice was that the church could change ordination dates to after the summer (instead of Pentecost) so that new curates could get used to their new workplace and living area, and then could concentrate on their first ordination.

5.6.2 What witness does your time as a deacon bear in your work today?

Most interviewees felt that their time as a transitional deacon didn't bear any witness in their work today, but two spoke out about what it meant to them.

“Here I am to be a servant and that's wonderful absolutely. Having a permanent deacon in the IME meant that we could focus properly on what it means to be a deacon, and not just a

transitional phase, but being a deacon as well.”

“It makes me feel closer to the laity.”

The fact that 75% answered negatively here, gives a clear answer to this question.

5.6.3 What difference did it make to you to become a priest? (If there was a difference)

Three spoke about there not really being a difference. All of these came from an evangelic background, where the Eucharist doesn't have a central position. For them the first ordination was in a way the most important one, compared to the second. There was no physical difference, the same clergy dress, collar and no visible difference. (Evangelical church, no robes)

“It was a strange scenario, this second ordination, the first was emotional, the result of years of calling, training and others sacrificing on my behalf.”

Another said: *“I really wondered how important that second ordination was, all friends and family had come to the first ordination, would I have to invite them again, and go through all the travelling and expense, for something which was not very different from the first one.”*

The opposite was said by another from a catholic background, who spoke about the big difference after being ordained priest in the sacramental role, being the presence of Christ in the Eucharist; there being a real difference to the person he was.

Another spoke of there being different duties “allowed to bless stuff” and preside at the Eucharist.

Another spoke about how he felt a greater level of spiritual empowerment after being ordained priest.

And the last mentioned how special it was to preside at communion and not having to depend on other people all the time.

The difference in becoming a priest was clearly felt by more than half of the interviewees in some way or another.

5.6.4 How would you feel about going back to being just a deacon today?

This question was not asked but came up in four interviews: Two mentioned how they could very well go back to being a deacon. It would require some more organisation to get someone in for the communion services, but otherwise not make much difference to their ministry.

Two others were very clear that being able to preside at the Eucharist was a major part of their ministry today that they couldn't do without.

5.6.5 Do you ever consider the fact that you are a deacon first? What does this mean for you in your ministry?

This question is vital to how priests understand their diaconate and the phrase "once a deacon always a deacon" and how they are aware of their own diaconate.

Five interviewees answered a direct "no" to this answer.

The other three however had thought a little more about their diaconate.

One found it helpful to remember his diaconate in order to feel humble, because that's what Christ was, and that should be what he was about too.

The others called being a deacon being a representative of the public ministry and one considered being a deacon the heart of being a Christian and therefore central to their ministry.

One of the interviewees recognised herself in this description from a Methodist priest:

"the deacon and the priest working hand in hand being at the church door but the deacon was looking outwards at the wider community and the priest would be looking inwards and doing the communion and things like that and the intercessions for the whole people of God. And I rather like that definition. But I think that definition leaves out the fact that the priest is to the deacon as well. And when you see the priest as being a deacon we see those people becoming one."

More than half of the interviewees thought little about their diaconate. This is not only the case with the interviewees. It seems that the awareness of their diaconate is missing in many priests.

One of the interviewees recalled a chrism Eucharist, which is also a renewal of commitment

to ministry, where he noticed that many priests were not aware of their diaconate.

“Here first bishops are asked to stand, after that priests, so deacons, there were words to say, but the number of people who didn’t say the words for a deacon, even though they were a priest or a bishop was always interesting. And then there were a few who got it and knew the point I was trying to make. who did get it.”

5.7 *The diaconate in your church today*

In order to get a good overview of the diaconal work in the parish, the question has been divided into three parts, both for the interviewee to easier remember different activities and for the interviewer to get a better overview of the work being done in the churches.

The choice has been made for three central areas within the diaconate which the researcher considered the clearest examples of the diaconal work in the church. Within each area there were some questions to lead the interviewee into the area.

In this case the question was not how much did the interviewee know about diaconal work, but how much diaconal work is there in the parish. The interviewees were given help to find these activities, both in the questions and the interviewer had checked websites to see what was listed there, to help the interviewee get as many activities as possible that are related to the diaconate on the surface. The aim was to find out about the diaconal activities, to see diaconal work in practice. A multitude of examples of diaconal work were mentioned. They are listed below. Some of the examples fit under more than one category, these are listed where they were mentioned by the interviewee.

5.7.1 Pastoral care

Pastoral care is the category most mentioned when asked about diaconal work, and often a very clear category in the practical work of a parish/congregation.

Here most interviewees came up with a long list of activities. A lot of these activities were under the care of special groups or parishioners, showing the priest as the leader/administrator of the diaconal work, but not the one carrying out all the practical work. Although most had some counselling as part of their personal responsibility.

There were many activities, reaching a wide range of people. Both the congregation, but also those partially or entirely outside the regular congregation, like homeless, asylum seekers,

refugees, LGBT community, the poor. This was achieved by way of opening churches with cafe's, night shelters, meals, food banks. There was also a focus on the regular congregation with visitors, pastoral care groups, teenage activities, prayer groups.

One of the interviewees, working in a big church, talked about how they took pastoral responsibility by setting systems in place, where lay ministers and other volunteers could take on the work, which the priest with the more managerial role couldn't. Youth worker, student workers, counsellors. The priest was very clearly the person leading and administering this work.

Funerals and pastoral care after the funeral were mentioned. One of the interviewees mentioned especially the adjustment of the service to the mourner being a part of pastoral care, instead of the mourner having to adjust to church rules and regulations.

One of the other things mentioned was the pastoral care that went out from the sermon, where the teaching was aimed at building up the congregation to go out and do this work.

There was pastoral work in all the congregations connected to the priests interviewed in some form or other. Smaller congregations with only one priest were not always able to achieve as much as the bigger congregations, but many priests were good in sharing the workload with key people in their congregation, and some had managed to set up support systems.

5.7.2 Catechesis

Catechesis is one of the areas mentioned often in connection with the diaconate. In the CofE it is even mentioned more clearly as specific for the deacon than in other churches, so it was natural to ask about this part of the diaconal work. Catechesis is officially the religious instruction, mostly in connection to baptism, confirmation and weddings, but also outside of those occasions.

It is clear that the rate of baptisms and confirmations is going down, but those priests that still had a number of these used the opportunity to have contact with the people involved.

Confirmation classes, or the renewal of baptism as it is now called in some churches doesn't happen every year in big groups any more, so has become more of an individual preparation and instruction.

In some congregations, baptism preparations were done in the living room on the sofa with the telly on, as that was the only way to reach people in their busy family lives.

Most of the congregations had bible study groups in some form or another. Some had monthly theology nights, or themed retreats with the aim of teaching the Bible and providing explanation.

There were some groups for teenagers and students, as well as alpha courses, and sermon series. In other churches a sermon series wasn't always possible, but there was a focus on the Sunday sermon as a teaching base.

5.7.3 Go-Between

Go-between is one of the words growing in importance in the recent definitions of diakonia. It is also clearly described in the literature of the Anglican Lutheran Working groups "Hanover Report". Similarly, it was mentioned in the definition that our interviewees were given.

"I am a 'go-between' taking the church into the community and bringing the concerns and the needs of the people to God. I build bridges and facilitate linkage between church and culture." (unknown deacon cited by Jordheim 2014:195).

The interviewees did grasp that part of the definition, and found quite a lot of things happening in their congregations that fell under this category.

There was one thing scoring with all interviewees, which was the prayers for the community and area around the church. Taking prayer seriously, visualising the community, council and area in the intercessions, but not just in the intercessions, also by taking in local considerations in the sermon.

Many of the buildings were used in practical ways.

Community Cafe, toddler groups and other low threshold activities, that are church activities, but open to everyone. One church has a mission weekend, with family football, film evening and pet blessing service that made families come to church.

Other churches were open when activities/festivities were taking place in the neighbourhood.

And the opposite, opening the church building for community activities, and with that creating a link with the church and making it easier to come to church or call in the help from the church.

Links with other churches and religious groups in the community. Being on the board of local charities and as such, resourcing them and enabling them to do their work.

There were clear “going out” initiatives, by serving the city through social action and other “bless the neighbours” initiatives. Organising food banks, or meals for everyone interested. Student ministries, by going out to universities, working together with other local churches.

A number of priests had links with local schools, where they held assemblies and sat on school boards.

Church coffee after the service where others were invited. As well as the sending out of the local congregation from the Sunday service into the community by preaching Jesus and his way (WWJD) in the service and getting the congregation to go out with the message and conduct in the community.

There is also pastoral work, which could be counted as go-between, like visiting prisons, hospitals and taking communion home to people unable to come to church.

Down on a practical level there was a great range of activities within the diaconate.

5.7.4 Other

Four of the interviewees mentioned how being a priest and the priestly tasks as well as managing congregations took so much of their time, that it was difficult to keep an eye on the pastoral care and how they wished they could have more time for people. Two mentioned how they liked being a curate, where they had more time, while the incumbent had most of the responsibility for things like economics, personnel, fixtures and fittings and politics.

5.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the data generated from the interviews is outlined. They include the definition of the diaconate by the interviewees, their training and education in the diaconate and their awareness of being a deacon. It appeared that knowledge on the diaconate was limited.

In the second part we look at the practical side of the diaconate in the congregations of the interviewees. It was clear that there is a visible part of the diaconate in the practical work of the church, although there is no clear link to the diaconal ministry of the priest.

6 Discourse of data

6.1 *Introduction*

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data from chapter 5 and put it into a general context to be seen in the light of the theory given in chapter 3. The researcher's interpretations and opinions will be stated in relation to the research questions. The consequences of the outcome of the data will also be discussed.

The structure follows the same order as chapter 5.

6.2 *The interviewees*

There was a spread in the interviewees in both age, churchmanship and background.

Even though there was a spread in the interviewees it was soon clear that one interviewee had a much clearer view on being a deacon than the seven others. His memory of the diaconate being a subject in training was very clear in contrast to the others.

The question is whether his interest in the diaconate made him experience or see things clearer, or that he in his training did get more teaching about and training in the diaconate. We need to ask ourselves questions with any interview. What are facts? What are memory lapses? But within qualitative research we have to base ourselves on the facts presented to us by the interviewees. Those are our data. The odd one out, will make the data even more reliable, as there is always one person with a specific interest. To have been lacking this person in the research would have been lacking a part of reality.

6.3 *Diaconate in general*

6.3.1 Understanding of the diaconate, First thoughts and short definitions

It must be said that both describing and defining the diaconate are tasks almost impossible. None of the literature used for this thesis managed to give a short, concise and complete definition of the diaconate. Most theologians write whole articles or even books trying to define the diaconate.

Asking priests for this is therefore asking for the impossible.

The decision was made to ask the question nevertheless as it gives a very good indication of the understanding of the width of the term.

We should be clear that the answers given here will never be complete or covering the whole wide subject.

Both the first thoughts and the short definitions of the diaconate show a basic understanding of the diaconate, which seems very much based on the older and mostly reigning definition of diakonia, the humble service to the other person.

The understanding of the diaconate was general and basic. Partly based on the NT Greek lessons with a literal translation, as humble servant is still the most used literal translation, which "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" calls "*a limited and ambiguous translation of diakonos*" (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007: 130).

Some Bible verses were mentioned. Acts 6 was mentioned several times, especially verse 2 where waiting at tables (humble service) and distributing food is used in most English translations. This is one of the bible parts central in the understanding of the diaconate, with the Greek Diakon-word mentioned in verse 1, 2 and 4 (Strong's exhaustive concordance 1248: Diakonia).

The drawback here is that most Bible translations talk about serving tables in this bible verse. Which is something that seemed to have lodged itself into people's heads. The fact that one of the most well-known deacons goes on in acts 6 to do signs and miracles as part of his ministry is a less observed fact.

Avis says: "*The passage in Acts 6 is highly complex: the only thing that we know of the Seven (and we hear afterwards only of Stephen and Philip) is that they were gifted evangelists*" (Avis 2009:4).

Philippians 2 and John 13 were mentioned as well, and although they mention servants, it is derived from the Greek Doulos and not Diakonos. Both words can be translated servant, but have a different meaning when looked at closer. Doulos is the word for slave, a servant owned by another person (Strong's exhaustive concordance 1401: Doulou). They might give good examples of what being a deacon means, but are a practical working out of the ministry, and not a central term in the definition of the diaconate.

One of the other translations in the bible for the diakon-words is ministry. Which was mentioned by the interviewees as well. Avis observes that the NT term interpretation of

diakonia as ministry is too superficial and not complete and mainly emphasises the functional side of the servant ministry (Avis 2005:50). I agree with Avis that the diaconate should be understood in much more than just functional words. The diaconate should be a sign of what church is. The diaconate should be the bridging between church and (unchurched) community (Avis 2005:112).

The first thoughts and associations give a partial, an incomplete picture of the diaconate. In the short definitions a marginally wider picture is given, here it is elaborated with some words of the ordinal “They are to serve the community“, “reaching into the forgotten corners of the world,” and “They are to seek out those who are lost and lead them home with rejoicing” (CofE 2000 common worship: ordinations of deacons).

In both the associations and the short definitions, the apprentice role of the deacon comes back. It is clear that for many the diaconate is only a year within a curacy, where they are in a lower function on the way to becoming a priest. Rather than an independent ministry which will last a lifetime.

Already in 2007, the report "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" wrote down that this was one of the things that needed change *“thus to correct the prevailing assumption that the diaconate is merely a transitional year before priesting, an apprenticeship for the priesthood, and that it is the latter that really matters”* (CofE faith and order advisory group 2007:161).

Both Avis and Collins do agree that the deacon’s ministry can be a servant’s ministry to the needy, but only in a secondary understanding. The primary being the service in the commission of God. Which may or may not include the needy (Avis 2005:105/Collins 1990/125).

It seems that the Church of England in its literature has tried to change the view on the diaconate, but that this has not seeped through to grass root level.

From these interviews we see an outdated version of the diaconate. It is clear that in the last ten years not much has changed down at grass root level. In spite of reports and books.

In my opinion a knowledge of NT Greek is not enough to be able to define the diaconate. This needs an ecclesiastical approach. In literature there is an interest in the diaconate, but besides Avis most interest goes out to the distinct diaconate as a niche ministry. Avis seems to be the

only one that approaches the diaconate as a ministry for the whole church of the CofE theologians. Croft comes near in his ministry in three dimensions, but sees the diaconate still as a short-term ministry before ordination to priest. And if it would be permanent, then mostly in pioneer ministry, not mainstream ministry.

Literature from other churches has taught us that the diaconate is a permanent church wide ministry. But this has not reached the Church of England as a whole. In spite of Porvoo and ALIC encouragements, little seems to have changed in the CofE these last two decades at least at the researched grass root level.

One could conclude that a modern diaconal understanding was lacking. At the same time, we could wonder if this was caused by a lack of knowledge of diaconal ecclesiology as well as a lack of diaconal vocabulary or by a lack of education on the subject.

The CofE as a whole would profit from a clearer diaconal ecclesiology.

6.4 *How should the diaconate be visible?*

After reading the description of the diaconate from the article by Jordheim (See interview guide), interviewees were asked about how they thought the diaconate should be visible. When we asked this question, we saw a change, from theological words, as we saw in the last paragraph, to a visible ministry in the church, with practical implications to being church.

With the three categories of answers we get a clearer view of how the interviewees see the diaconate.

1. being a servant to God, doing the less favourable jobs, humble/self-sacrificing.

It was interesting how the attitude of a deacon should be so clear for almost all interviewees, while they themselves were clear on the fact that their awareness of the diaconate wasn't adequate.

Again, being humble and doing menial jobs scored high, and although washing up and stacking chairs can be a good way to go alongside people, the fact that this is the most mentioned part of a visible diaconate shows us that there is something lacking in understanding of the diaconate.

It seems very much a theoretical attitude towards the diaconate with nice words, but what does that mean in practice? Besides being willing to wash up and stack chairs?

Still when reading the reports and articles that have been written, we see time and time again,

that the diaconate is defined by words and attitudes and very little clear activities and boundaries, which makes it a very difficult subject to grasp for all. Both leaders in the church and those working at grass root level.

Fortunately, when it came to going out into the community, reaching those outside, more practical.

2. Going out into the community, reaching those outside.

More tangible activities were mentioned than the former category yet feeding the poor, seeing people and loving them and going out in the dark places are very theoretical subjects.

Though the mentioned food bank is more of a practical working out of the diaconate.

3. A liturgical and pastoral ministry in the church

In this third category, we see a more practical approach to the theory.

In the liturgy, a clear priority for intercessions, proclaiming the gospel and making the mass/church a starting point for going out. The liturgy is the only area of church life, where there are clear instructions about the activities of the deacon.

As for pastoral care, this is often the practical outworking of the going out into the dark places and finding the lost and bringing them home.

Where hospital and prison visits as well as other pastoral care are mentioned as to how the diaconate should be visible in the church.

It is clear that the limited definitions and understanding of the diaconate leads to a limited vision on the diaconate. There are many good suggestions and ideas, but it only shows the diaconate to a limited extend. After having been read a definition of the diaconate they did give a wider description of the diaconate than before.

More about the practical working out of the diaconate will be written about when it comes to the diaconate in the(ir) church.

6.4.1 Lay ministry vs ordained ministry and clear deacon roles

It was interesting that two interviewees brought up that the importance of the diaconate should be visible through its own training and apprenticeship. They mentioned that clearer boundaries between reader and deacon would make it more visible and make both ministries stand out more clearly.

The report "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" centres about this subject, how the

diaconate could be more visible, and there should be clarity about what the church expects from its various ministers. And with that clarity they see no problem in the overlap between Lay readers and ordained deacons. They call the ministries distinctive, but not mutually exclusive. Ministries interpenetrate because they all serve a common goal (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:146-147).

In the researcher's opinion the overlap is not necessarily a problem, but the lack of defining of the diaconate and lack of education on the subject is. As long as the diaconate, in both distinct and other forms, lacks a clear definition and boundaries, as well as attention, it will stay as invisible as it is today.

6.5 Training and preparation for the diaconate

From the answers given it is apparent that the preparation for the diaconate is something which is either lacking or an area without special focus. Seeing that 7 out of 8 did not seem to remember much more from the preparation except "once a deacon, always a deacon" there is either a real lack of teaching on the different aspects of the diaconate, (definition, practical understanding, ministerial understanding) or there is a lack of emphasis on this teaching, so that it might be going under the radar for many, and is only noticed by those whose reference framework picks up on the theme, like with the one interviewee.

This is consistent with what Avis writes in a "Ministry shaped by mission":

But the shortage of a decent theology of ministry and ordination, to resource the training that Ordinands receive both before and after ordination, no doubt plays it parts. In turn, that training may be hampered by an unwillingness on the part of the students to access what there is. (Avis 2005:X)

Not just at training colleges, but in local training the diaconate seems to be a secondary subject, with little to make the ministers aware of the fact that this is an important basic continuous ministry, not just a training year while being a curate in training to become a priest.

As already written in the chapter on theoretical framework. Training colleges and dioceses are not given any clear knowledge requirements in IME phase 1 and 2. Most dioceses have their own handbook for phase 2 and these can be quite different from each other.

When even the interviewee training to become a permanent deacon does not remember much

about specific diaconal teaching and interest, the Church of England might have to reconsider its requirements to training both in training colleges and dioceses.

As there was no information found in the context of this research about the specific content to subjects taught at training colleges, no more can be said about this, except that this might have to be looked at by the CofE in general.

One thing most interviewees were clear about what that they were taught about what they were not allowed to do as a deacon, namely, Blessings, absolution and presiding at the Eucharist. This limits the understanding of the diaconate even more, if only the limitations are shown and not the foundation and width of ministry. And may even result in a negative feeling towards the ordained diaconate, as a minor ministry.

The formation criteria for ordained ministry might be a good way to record the personal growth of an ordinand, but they do not seem to give clear guidelines in training/educating on the diaconate.

6.6 *Being a deacon*

The awareness of being a deacon is at stake here. How do the interviewees see their diaconate? How important is this part of their ministry to them, and are they aware of this key part of their ministry at all? Those are the questions looked at in this paragraph.

6.6.1 Importance of time as a transitional deacon

When asked about the importance of their time as a transitional deacon there was a spread of answers, but only one who experienced this time as a deacon, rather than a time in training to become a minister/priest.

A year is a short time, especially when one has just started in a new job in a new church. One of the interviewees commented on this too, and suggested to start with another ordination time. For him Petertide, (the weekend nearest the 29th of June) was too near the end of the academic year and with all the changes in life with moving from studies to another parish, a new job, house and daily tasks together with an ordination became too much. It is interesting Michaelmas at the end of September used to be a popular time for ordinations, but seems to have lost to Petertide these days. There is much to say in favour of Michaelmas ordination, if that means that the ordinand can prepare better and is more aware of the importance of his or

her ordination. But that would not be enough to change attitudes.

We might have to look at the length of time as a transitional deacon, as this year of changeover, between academic living and practical ministry, with moving and often family changes, seems to be too short to be aware of the importance of being a deacon within the ministry.

Avis suggests in a "Ministry shaped by mission" that the transitional diaconate should be considerably longer than one year "*to experience and know what it is to be a deacon*" (Avis 2005:118).

If it is as Croft says in "Ministry in three dimensions", that this is the first dimension of the ordained ministry both in sequence and priority (Croft 2008:45), then there should be a greater acknowledgement of the ministry.

This all depends on the importance the church gives to the diaconate, if it as it is mentioned in the Canon is just a time of trial of behaviour (CofE, Canon C3:8) one might give the diaconate a completely different level of importance than when one says that the diaconate is the base on which all ministry stands, as Avis claims

"if the episcopate builds on the presbyterate the presbyterate in turn builds on the diaconate. Diakonia is the sine qua non of Ordained ministry because in the ordination of deacons the divine commission that is the essence of the apostolicity of the Church is signified sacramentally"(Avis 2005:114).

What emerges here is that the church does not seem to be able to make up her mind, or at least is not clear in her central guidelines and literature, about what the meaning and the importance of the diaconate is for her.

6.6.2 What witness does your time as a deacon bear in your work today?

There were only two interviewees that could give an answer to this. It is clear that the diaconate as a permanent ministry at the base has not been given much attention.

This is not the fault of those working as priests in the church, but a sign of a bigger issue in the whole of the CofE. There are a number of books and reports written about the diaconate and threefold ministry over the last decades. In spite of this it still seems very much a theoretical issue.

6.6.3 What difference did it make to you to become a priest? (If there was a difference)

It is interesting that the three interviewees that mentioned that there was no difference becoming a priest, came from an evangelical background. For them the ordination to the ministry was the greatest ordination. In a church setting where communion, dress and liturgy are of less importance than the preaching of the word, the difference between a deacon and a priest would be less visible. Already with their first ordination they would have been able to practice the ministry almost as they would continue after their ordination to the priesthood.

For another interviewee from a catholic background the priests ordination felt like the greater of the two, for it was only then that he could exercise the ministry he was called to, as he was called to.

For the others the fact that they were now where they had been working for, that they were now allowed to do “everything” and one even spoke of a greater level of spiritual empowerment has more to do with culture than ecclesiology and theology.

As long as the CofE sees the threefold ministry as stepping stones to the top, there will be a ranking or picking order, making the diaconate the least important of the three. As the episcopate is not attainable for all, it makes the priestly ministry the main ministry and the diaconate subordinate to that.

The report "Mission and Ministry of the whole Church" describes it such:

We believe that the diaconate should be taken much more seriously in the light of the theology summarized in this report. We need to locate the diaconate more centrally in the overall mission of the Church and thus to correct the prevailing assumption that the diaconate is merely a transitional year before priesting, an apprenticeship for the priesthood, and that it is the latter that really matters. (CofE, Faith and order advisory group 2007:161)

6.6.4 How would you feel about going back to being just a deacon today?

As this question wasn't asked to all the interviewees it cannot be taken into the conclusions, but it was an interesting side track. Only four have spoken on this theme. With two seeing this as a possibility with only small practical implications, while two others were very clear that

the things that a deacon wasn't allowed to do, were very central in their ministry, namely presiding at the Eucharist and blessing people.

In this question the widespread of the CofE is expressed in a way, the low/evangelical church, where the Eucharist and Liturgy are of lesser importance to the word, and the high/catholic church where the Eucharist is central and of great importance.

Both these views show a one dimensional ministry, which Croft describes as inadequate: "*As we have seen in previous chapters, this one-dimensional view of the ministry of the ordained is no longer adequate either for the missionary task which faces us or for the clergy's own self-understanding* (Croft 2008:40-41).

And this is what we see prove of in the answers given by the interviewees in this research.

6.6.5 Do you ever consider the fact that you are a deacon first? What does this mean for you in your ministry?

Five interviewees answered negatively to this question, which could mean that a majority does not have the awareness in daily ordained ministry of the base of their ministry. Again, as stated before this is no fault of these ministers but a sign of a greater issue in the church itself. Croft calls for a change:

Instead we need to recover and reflect upon our three-dimensional ordained ministry. The vicar needs to have a diaconal dimension to his or her ministry, so ministry proceeds from an attitude of service and Christian leadership can be seen to involve many basic and practical tasks; a presbyterial dimension focused around the service of the word and the sacraments; and the dimension of episcopal ministry (Croft 2008:41).

The fact that three did consider their diaconate, as a first ordination, is very positive, but still in the light of what we have seen earlier, we need to question their understanding of that diaconate.

The comment made about the priests and bishops not joining in with the words for deacons in the Chrism Eucharist, which is also a renewal of commitment to ministry (CofE CW 2000: Passiontide and Holy week, resources for Chrism Eucharist) gives a good indication of the diaconate not being recognised as a permanent ministry by others besides the interviewees.

6.7 *The diaconate in your church today*

In spite of the little attention given to the diaconate in general and a limited understanding of the ministry, there are many activities in the churches of our interviewees which could be classified as diaconal ministry. These are clearly a part of the ministry of all believers, the general diaconal ministry of the church. Not the specific diaconal ministry of the deacon.

It seems that the diaconal ministry is incorporated in the general ministry of the church. But we need more awareness and understanding of the specific ordained ministry of the deacon. Most of the activities mentioned could probably be placed under either teaching or mission. We can question ourselves here, whether there is any diaconal ministry at all, and if there is, how it came by; out of conscious planning, or out of coincidence. In my opinion it is difficult to divide between the different categories. They are all part of the “Missio Dei” the mission for God. Where all from bishop to lay people are involved in the same collective ministry (CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:123).

In spite of the above, the choice has been made to look at these activities as diaconal activities and will reviewed as such.

6.7.1 Pastoral care

The activities mentioned by the interviewees are all good examples of Pastoral care. Most interviewees came with examples reaching out to both within and without the congregation. Many of the congregations had activities reaching out to those as the ordinal calls it: “*searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible*” (CW: ordination of deacons).

Pastoral care is not only a diaconal subject, it is part of the ministry of the whole church. Even though it often is seen as a specific part of diaconal ministry. In other churches it is often the deacon leading and doing the major part of the pastoral work. In the CofE this is seen as the whole church’s ministry, as specified in the ordinal: “*Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church*” (CW: ordination of deacons) but at the same time it is specifically mentioned in books like *Being a deacon today* (Brown 2005) and the report *The Distinctive Diaconate* (Diocese of Carlisle 2003) as specific to the deacon’s ministry.

One of the things mentioned is the pastoral work going out from the sermon. Where the

sermon is used to educate and motivate the congregation to go out and do pastoral work. The other mentioned was where the pastoral responsibility was layed with the lay ministers and volunteers, but lead and set in place by the leadership of the church. One of the duties of the ordained minister is to be the leader of the ministry, helping the church in the ministry of all believers to be build up to do the work.

The fact that all the interviewees have a working pastoral ministry is very positive.

6.7.2 Catechesis

“They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God’s purposes of love”
(CW: ordination of deacons).

Most of the catechetical work in the congregations to the interviewees is aimed towards those in the congregation. But with the rate of baptisms and confirmations going down, many interviewees have been creative. There are many ways to teach the gospel, and some of the interviewees were quite open how they had to adjust to the situation of those receiving the teaching. With age related groups, theology nights, themed retreats and student groups they reached a wide range of people.

Brown in “Being a deacon today” is clear that she thinks that the sermon is a good place to teach, and many of the interviewees used sermons, sermon series and the likes for their religious instruction (Brown 2005:80).

6.7.3 Go-Between

When it came to the go-between part of the diaconate, although the interviewees had not thought this subject through, it opened a treasure of activities in their congregations. In spite not being mentioned in the books on the diaconate, the go-between function is clearly in the ordinal: *“They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people and bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession”* and *“they accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism”*
(CW: ordination of deacons).

Again, certainly part of the “Missio Dei” but at the same time a diaconal concern.

This part of the diaconate is important to the church, Especially in a time where the CofE is no longer a majority church. No longer a natural place for people to come to. With the church

reaching out it gives people in the community the opportunity to meet the church and God in their own surroundings.

6.7.4 Other

Diakonia or the diaconate is definitely not a ministry only for the ordained, it should be central in the ministry of the whole church, of all the baptised. Croft calls it a calling of all baptised Christians and the *"Mission and Ministry of the whole Church"* calls diakonia one of the gifts of the spirit for the whole church (Croft 2008:67 / CofE Faith and Order advisory group 2007:46).

What we need to remember is that in order to lead the diaconal ministry, we need ordained ministers that are aware of the diaconate of the whole church and their own diaconate. Croft calls it the *"particular calling of those who are ordained"* (Croft 2008:67). This is one of the things lacking in the Church of England. There are no leaders coming with clear messages about the diaconate as a whole. There seem to be dreams and wishes to have a distinct diaconate ministry, but without a clear vision on the diaconate in general, the diaconal ministry will not receive the place in the church it deserves.

In response to the interviewees that mentioned management issues taking up a lot of their time, It would be wise for the CofE to reconsider what they expect from the ordained ministry and what a minister should or should not be doing. If ordained ministers are used for organising the cleaning of the church, the fund-raising for the roof and repairing the toilets, one might wonder when and how they could prioritise the ministry to the people. The sharing of the gospel and leading the congregation in worship, as well as leading the diaconal work in the parish.

6.8 Chapter Summary

What we have discovered in this chapter is that knowledge of the diaconate in the light of literature and reports of the last 20 years is limited. Understanding of the diaconate as a permanent ministry and ordination is lacking.

The limited understanding gives that the vision of the diaconate is not complete either.

At the same time, it was clear that the diaconate in its practical form of ministry was very much alive. Although it seemed to lack a theological and ecclesiological base.

With more knowledge, education and understanding, the diaconate could be strengthened and take more active leadership in its particular ministry and with that could a more complete ministry within the whole church be effectuated.

7 Summary and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

In this last chapter conclusions from the former chapters will be summarised in connection to the research questions that were the base for the research, it will also lift up questions that could be researched further.

7.2 Conclusions

In the conclusions the research questions will be used to categorise some conclusions. The conclusions can never be final, as the subject is too wide to come to final decisions without researching many other important issues within the subject, but these are conclusions in the light of the literature and data from the interviews.

7.2.1 What knowledge do priests have of the diaconate?

Diakonia is not a very current topic for most priests, the word diaconate was used in the interviews when we found out that the diakonia word was too foreign. There seemed to be a knowledge of the straight translation of the diakon words in the bible, as humble servant, but a deeper and more comprehensive understanding is lacking.

Also, the diaconate was not a subject which was current for 7 out of 8 interviewees. There was only one interviewee who had thought about his diaconate and was aware of it.

Most interviewees had no or little recollection of the diaconate being a subject in training. This seems a serious lack in preparing ministers for their ministry in the church, as the diaconate is the first and longest lasting step in the process.

There seem to be no knowledge-based requirements to the training colleges (IME phase 1) and to the training for curates (IME phase 2) on the subject of the diaconate, most dioceses have the subject on their IME Phase 2 plan, but more in a general way and not ecclesiologically or theologically based.

A limited understanding and education on the diaconate will lead to a limited vision of the diaconate.

A negative vision of the diaconate as many priests seem to have, as they only know what a

deacon is not allowed to, will lead to seeing the diaconate as a minor ministry. With the priesthood being superior to the diaconate.

7.2.2 What understanding do priests have of their diaconate?

Most priests do not seem to consciously consider the diaconate part of their ministry as a priest, but it is part of the ministry of the church, seen mostly in practical diakonia.

There is little knowledge of the diaconate. With a lack of the knowledge and understanding of the diaconate, the value and content of the diaconate is dependent on random coincidence, and cannot be developed in a deliberate way.

As long as the Church of England in its Canon C3:8 cannot give better reasons for the transitional diaconate than trial of the behaviour in office, we cannot expect the priests at grass root level to have a greater understanding of their ministry. It is clear that if the CofE wants change, she needs to work on an awareness process within the church at all levels.

For many the diaconate is just the one year, a learning year, not a lifetime of ministry. If the CofE wants to see a change in the attitude of its ministers, it will need to change both education to priests in training, to those established in the ministry and to the church in general.

7.2.3 Is diakonia found in the Church of England at grass-root level?

The Church of England uses little resources to the diaconate, this leads to the diaconate being unknown and misunderstood among priests. They lack the knowledge and understanding about this special role and do not realise that this is a continuing ministry also after their ordination to the priesthood.

There is little to none information about the diaconate for those in formation. Literature based on CofE practice is lacking, as seems to be the teaching on it in training colleges.

There seems to be a growing awareness in selection to the ministry that the diaconate could be a distinctive ministry, but not as a part of the ministry of the priest.

“Once a deacon, always a deacon” seems to be the level of knowledge many priests have about the diaconate, just a sentence repeated. There lacks a deeper understanding of the

concepts of the diaconate.

Reports and recommendations from Porvoo and the Anglican Lutheran international commission have concluded likewise.

Even though the theoretical knowledge and understanding of the diaconate is lacking. There are many diaconal activities in the churches of our interviewees.

7.2.4 Are priests still deacons after ordination to the priesthood? Do they still have a deacon identity?

Yes, priests are still deacons, but most of them are not fully aware of this, and have therefore not developed an identity in this part of their ministry. Most priests see their diaconate as a training year before becoming priest and are not consciously aware of their “permanent” diaconate.

There seems to be a lacking self-understanding of the whole Church of England of its diaconate. It is vital for the CofE to help their deacons to be deacons, both in the distinctive and general diaconate.

For the diaconate to develop within the church at all levels, from grass root level to national level, training requirements need to change both in pre-ordination training and in all following training. The whole church needs to be taught on the subject.

One of the problems mentioned is the lack of time for priests. They lead parishes, and are responsible for the daily management of the buildings and other leadership tasks. This takes time away from the main responsibilities as priest and deacon. The diaconate seems to be the first area to be neglected when there is a lack of time and one needs to prioritise.

7.3 Further research/recommendation

It is important that training requirements that the CofE demands from training colleges are clear on the subject of the diaconate and all forms of ministry. This requires the Church itself to be clear on what they see as the diaconate. Porvoo and Lutheran Anglican reports can be helpful here as well as literature by Avis.

It would be helpful to know what kind of curriculum the training colleges have. Right now, there are no clear requirements on this subject as far as the researcher could find. Emails to

six training colleges on the subject were not answered.

It could be interesting to interview curates that have just finished their basic theological training to get a clear picture of how much knowledge they have after leaving training colleges today. All interviewees in this research has left their training colleges over 5 years ago.

There are some books and reports on the subject where it seems that the CofE has a clear idea where it wants to be going with its diaconate, but except for the literature by Avis, most other Anglican authors don't seem to link the diaconate to the priestly identity and ministry. Neither has this literature reached the people. The CofE needs to develop a better self-understanding on the subject and share it with the whole church.

The researcher's recommendation is that the Church of England at all levels uplifts the diaconate as a permanent ministry for all deacons, priests and bishops. This would involve ecclesiological, theological and practical teaching in the subject. A clear definition on the ordained diaconate should leave both deacons and the Lay Ministry with a clearer defined ministry.

Finally it was good to see that the interviewees had a diaconal ministry in their churches, in spite of lacking a knowledge and understanding of their own diaconate.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: "Discerning the Diaconate", vocation discernment for the permanent diaconate

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"Discerning the Diaconate"

This short paper is designed to help Vocations Advisers, DDOs and Bishops' Advisers in their discernment of candidates with a vocation to the distinctive diaconate. It surveys some of the current thinking about the diaconate within the Church of England, but it does not attempt to be the last word on the subject.

1. What is a Deacon?

In discerning a vocation to the diaconate, we need first to be clear what a deacon does and is. There are in particular three sources of reference which are helpful in this regard: The Ordinal in "Common Worship"; the report *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church* produced by the Church of England's Faith and Order Advisory Group in 2007; and the report *The Distinctive Diaconate* produced by the Diocese of Salisbury in 2003.

The Ordinal

In the Common Worship Ordination of Deacons, the Bishop addresses the congregation in the following words:

Deacons are called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom. They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world that the love of God may be made visible.

Deacons share in the pastoral ministry of the Church and in leading God's people in worship. They preach the word and bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession. They accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism. They assist in administering the sacraments; they distribute communion and minister to the sick and

housebound.

Deacons are to seek nourishment from the Scriptures; they are to study them with God's people that the whole Church may be equipped to live out the gospel in the world. They are to be faithful in prayer, expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as he reveals his kingdom among us.

The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church

The report of the Church of England's Faith and Order Advisory Group *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church* (2007) has this to say about the work and role of a deacon:

The first thing to say about deacons, in the light of the pivotal use of the terms diakonia and diakonos in the New Testament, especially by St Paul, is that deacons, in their ordination, receive the fundamental commissioning of Christ to be ministers (diakonoi) of the gospel. St Ignatius of Antioch calls them 'deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ' (cf. 1 Corinthians 4.1). They are sent by Christ, through the Church, as bearers of the Good News to the world and in this role (as the classic Anglican Ordinal of 1550/1662 particularly emphasises) they have a special compassionate care for the needs of the sick, the lonely and the oppressed. Together with all Christians and all ministers, theirs is a life of compassionate service in obedience to Christ's command and example – service primarily of Christ and under his authority, secondarily of those who are Christ's and to whom he imparts his authority.

Deacons, like priests and bishops – and lay ministers too, for that matter – are related to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care: they receive the full ministry of the gospel. But they have an assisting, not a presiding role in relation to these three central tasks of the Church's mission. Deacons assist the priest and the bishop and carry out the duties deputed to them in relation to this mandate. They preach, teach and give instruction in the faith. They lead the people in worship and assist in the celebration of the sacraments by bringing candidates, whom they have sought out and prepared, to baptism and (as the 1550/1662 Ordinal says), baptising them in the absence of the priest, and by assisting the president in the Eucharistic liturgy and leading the people in their participation.

Deacons are ministers of pastoral care on behalf of bishop and priest; they carry Christ's compassion to the forgotten corners of society and ensure that the needy receive practical help. Through their role in the liturgy, deacons bring the concerns and petitions of the wider community, within which they minister day by day, to the heart of the Church's worship, in

order that these concerns may be laid upon the altar and placed at the foot of the cross (Common Worship spells out the role that it is appropriate for deacons to take at the Eucharist). Deacons can cross boundaries, from a parish base, into the ‘fresh expressions’ dimension of the mixed economy church. Deacons thus share in the apostolic ministry, being sent by Christ, through the Church as missionaries to carry forward his saving work.

This is an inward calling that may be discerned by the bishop and his advisers where a candidate has a calling and aptitude for a life-long ministry that is inextricably related to the word, the sacraments and pastoral care, but is suited more to an assisting than to a presiding role in relation to both the sacraments and the leadership of the community. The distinctive diaconate is particularly appropriate where an individual feels strongly drawn to the missionary, go-between ministry, seeking out the lost sheep and bringing both the message of the gospel and the practical care that goes with it to the unchurched and, therefore, may be reluctant to proceed to priesthood with its additional responsibilities and constraints. The distinctive diaconate appears to be suited to those with an evangelistic gift, provided this is clearly related to the three basic dimensions of ministry, tied into the liturgy and directed towards the full sacramental initiation of new converts. As those who cross boundaries, make connections and bring people together, deacons are well placed to move into the challenging new contexts, with their network relationships, of mission and evangelisation.

Drawing on the fresh interpretation of the New Testament language of diakonia and diakonos ... we can say that diaconal ministry, like all ministries, embodies God’s saving purpose in the world, that is to say, becomes an agent of the kingdom of God. The deacon is invested with authority from Christ in his or her ordination. The deacon is not set apart for humble service any more than any other Christian, lay or ordained, and is not expected to exhibit humility more than anyone else! ... But a deacon is a person on a mission, a messenger or ambassador – making connections between liturgy and pastoral need, building bridges between the life of the Church and those who are not yet within it. The ministry of the deacon says something important about the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ and is indeed a sign of what the whole Church essentially is and is called to become more and more. Picking up the language of the House of Bishops’ report on Eucharistic Presidency (1997), we can say that the diaconal ministry, like the ministry of the priest and the bishop, ‘promotes, releases and clarifies’ what is true of the Church as such. The ordination of a deacon may be regarded, therefore, as an ecclesial sign – a visible sign of what is true of the Church, of its essential

calling, and is carried out in many ways by all the faithful and particularly by those who are called to a recognised ministry, lay as well as ordained. In ordination the deacon receives a distinctive identity from God through the Church. That identity relates to the kingdom or reign of God that has dawned upon the world in the mission of Jesus Christ, but remains to be fulfilled, and it points to the role of the Church in the coming of God's kingly reign.

The Distinctive Diaconate

The report *The Distinctive Diaconate* was produced by the Diocese of Salisbury in 2003. The report proposed an alternative way of describing the ministry of the deacon - focussing not so much on its content as on where it takes place. The report highlighted the following strands of diaconal ministry:

The deacon in the church:

- Has a non-presidential, representative ministry, representing Christ's own diaconal ministry
- Participates in the liturgy
- Proclaims the word of God and preaches where this is necessary or pastorally appropriate, recognising that some but not all deacons are gifted in preaching
- As a person with a ministry that is pastoral, catechetical and liturgical, helps to make connections for the children between their age-appropriate teaching and their inclusion in the liturgical life of the church
- Shares the participation of people for pastoral or liturgical rites, including baptism, confirmation and marriage and accompanies those concerned when they come to the church, sharing in the liturgy as appropriate, perhaps presenting them, or baptising them
- Has a prophetic role in drawing the church's attention to peace and justice issues that the church is overlooking
- Shares in the pastoral care of those who look to the church
- Brings and interprets the needs of the world to the church's worship and pastoral care
- Helps to order the church in administration, perhaps at a deanery rather than just a parochial level.

The deacon in the world:

- Is equipped to see Christ in the midst of the life of the world, whether locally or internationally
- Has a prophetic role in the world where need or injustice exist
- Brings the church's ministry of peace and justice to the world, either directly or by facilitating the ministry of others in the church
- Brings the pastoral ministry of the church to people in need, seeking out the lonely, the forgotten, the marginalised, the sick, those in trouble
- Makes the invisible ministry of the church visible
- Is the eyes and ears of the church in the local area

The deacon on the boundary:

- Is at the door of the church to greet people, particularly those encountered in ministry in the local area, helping them to cross the threshold into worship
- Is in the prophet's place on the edges and boundaries of society
- Is a two-way go-between or agent between church and world, straddling the boundary and helping others to cross it
- Brings the needs of the world over the boundary into church and interprets them in intercession
- Sends people out from worship into the world, in peace and for service
- Is a catalyst for Christian discipleship in the mission space between worship and the world

2. What is the Church looking for in Candidates for the Diaconate?

The Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England are applicable to candidates for both the diaconate and the priesthood. However, there are particular aspects of the Criteria that should be accentuated when a vocation to the diaconate is being discerned. The additional points to consider in assessing a candidate for the diaconate are taken from the

report The Distinctive Diaconate.

A Vocation

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

- .the support of the local church, and perhaps wider community, for their vocation
- .a strong sense of vocation to the ministry of the deacon, not a failed or thwarted sense of vocation somewhere else
- .a sense of a life-calling from God, not a potentially passing desire to engage in the church's ministry

B Ministry within the Church of England

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

- .engagement with a servant ministry, a responsible behind the scenes person, able to be hidden, to get on with things out of the limelight, to oil the wheels
- .Being comfortable occupying space on the boundaries, a liminal person who is at ease alongside people on the edges of the church and of society yet who is also secure and centred for themselves

C Spirituality

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

- .liturgical sensitivity and presence that enables others to worship, brings the needs of the world into worship and interprets them for the Christian community
- .a rooted Christian spirituality, grounded in a life of prayer and immersion in God's word, attentive to God's presence in the world in its majesty and its misery
- .a passion for God and for life, and a refusal to allow stagnation to set in, personally or in the Church

D Personality and Character

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

- .an attitude that reflects a vocation to be a servant without being a doormat
- .sensitivity, expressed in an ability to listen and appropriate body language that welcomes

others whilst respecting their space

.an outgoing, risk-taking, world-orientated perspective

E Relationships

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

.evidence of ability to relate to people of different ages and social contexts

.an instinctive ability to get alongside people and speak their language

.pastoral skills that point to an ability to care for others appropriately

F Leadership and Collaboration

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

.the ability and willingness to work in a team

.leadership gifts that reflect a willingness to be a leader who assists rather than always takes the lead, and does not unsettle or unseat others who have either long term or short-term responsibilities

.a person who is capable of being a public representative person for the church, who is competent and comfortable in the public eye, whether in liturgy or the life of the world

.organisational gifts that equip and free others to do their work well

G Faith

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

.communication skills that enable the person to preach the gospel in deed and in word

.teaching gifts, expressed in various and appropriate ways

H Mission and Evangelism

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

.evidence of engagement with and in the local community, and awareness of what is happening in the wider world

.evidence of a life of service within and outside the Christian community

I Quality of Mind

Distinctive points to consider in assessing a candidate for the Diaconate:

- .a quality of mind that reflects a thirst to know more of God and an ability to interpret what is known for others
- .a creativity and imagination coupled with stability and common sense

Short Reading List

Avis, Paul, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (T&T Clark, 2005)

Brown, Rosalind, *Being a Deacon Today* (Canterbury Press 2005)

Collins, John N., *Deacons and the Church* (Gracewing, 2003)

For Such a Time as This (GS 1407, 2001)

‘The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church’ (GS Misc 854, 2007)

Appendix 2: Interview guide (For interviewer only)

Introduction to interview.

Info on who I am, university I am studying at and what I subject I am writing about.

None of the questions I am going to ask are of judgemental character, there are no rights and wrongs.

Consent for participation

- Have you received information about the project and are you willing to participate in this interview?

Background of the priest:

- name, age, education and work background before becoming an ordinand.
- accepting diocese, training college and education level after becoming ordinand.
- date of ordination deacon, priest, (length of time as deacon).
- parish, diocese, size (country/town/inner city and prosperity level?)
- Other stipendiary and non-stipendiary, ordained and lay staff in the parish?

Diakonia/diaconate in general:

- What are your first thoughts/associations when hearing the word “Deacon”
- What is your definition of diakonia? - What is for you the definition of a deacon /diaconate?
- how do you think diakonia /the diaconate should be visible in the church? (in an ideal situation)

Training and ordination to deacon

- do you remember the diakonia/the diaconate being a subject at training college?
- What kind of preparation specifically to the diaconate did you receive before your ordination to deacon?
- How did you find out about your tasks and duties as a deacon?

Being a deacon

- What was the importance of your time as a transitional deacon for you?
Did it distinguish itself from your time as a priest? If so, how?
- Does your time as a deacon still bear witness in your work today?
- What difference did it make to you to become a priest? (If there was a difference)
- do you ever consider the fact that you are a deacon first? What does this mean for you in your ministry?

Your church today:

- Is there a distinctive or transitional deacon in your parish? If so, what are the tasks of this deacon?

Diaconal work in the parish:

Pastoral care

- Can you describe the pastoral care offered by your church? Who is responsible for this?
- What kind of care offers your church to non-church goers?
- Does your church offer counselling? Also for non-church members?

Catechesis (religious instruction given to a person in preparation for Christian baptism or confirmation, typically using a catechism)

- Do you offer baptism preparation, confirmation preparation, wedding preparation, of so, who has responsibility for these activities?

“go-Between”

- what kind of links do you see between the church and the community around it?
- How do you recognise the community in the church(service)?

Summing up:

- Are there any other diaconal tasks/services?
- Is there something you would like to add to that we have talked about?

If the interviewee does not know a workable definition for diakoni,/the diaconate I will give a short version here. This definition was given by a deacon from South Africa in an interview in 2013:

As a deacon I am a representative of God making the servant ministry of Christ present for God's people. I am a 'go-between' taking the church into the community and bringing the concerns and the needs of the people to God. I build bridges and facilitate linkage between church and culture. It is primary my role to help the congregation make the fundamental connection between worship and service (unknown deacon cited by Jordheim 2014:195).

Appendix 3 Letter of invitation to participate in research project

Request for participation in research project

"Once a deacon always a deacon.

Topic: what understanding do priests in the Church of England have of the diaconate, and their identity as deacon."

Background and Purpose

This is research for a master thesis as part of a Master in Diakonia study at the VID specialised University in Oslo.

Purpose of the Master thesis and research is to research the understanding of priests in the Church of England of diaconate and their identity as deacon.

The aim is to interview 8 priests that have been ordained deacon after 2001, under the Ordinal of Common Worship.

They will preferably have been in ministry more than 5 years. Educated and working within the Church of England in the UK.

Information about possible participants will be collected through the Church of England, the diocesan office or local dean.

What does participation in the project imply?

Main feature of the research is data collection through both literature review and interviews. As participant in the project you will take part in a 1,5-hr. interview. As this research is about your experience and understanding as priest, you will not need to prepare yourself in any special way.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. The interview will be audio recorded. Audio recording will be done by dictaphone and notes will be made. Data will be stored on my personal computer protected by password. Personal data will be anonymised in official writing (read Master thesis) and any recorded and stored data will be destroyed after finalisation and grading of the Master Thesis.

Participants will be anonymised in the publication. If candidates have any concerns or questions about the information, or any specific facts that might compromise their anonymity I am willing to accommodate a good solution.

The project is scheduled for completion by 15th of November 2018. Data collection is scheduled for completion by the end of March 2018.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be anonymised.

Consent for participation in the study

Consent will be attained verbally in the interview itself.

About the researcher

My name is Emy Benjamins, I am both a part-time student and a Church Youth and Children's worker in the Norwegian Church. I have the Dutch Nationality, have lived in the UK, Netherlands and Norway. And used to be a confirmed member of the Anglican church before moving to Norway 13 years ago.

The Diakoni Master I am studying is part of the Church of Norway's recognised study to become a distinct deacon in the Church of Norway. I am almost ready with my studies, only a placement and the Master thesis remain.

I will be in Leeds from the 7th of March until the morning of the 12th of March, before starting my placement at Scargill House and hope to interview in that time.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Emy Benjamins at emy@hososs.net or 0047 92 64 78 55. You can find me on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Student Supervisor is Rev Prof Dr Stephanie Dietrich, VID Specialised university, Campus Diakonhjemmet Oslo. stephanie.dietrich@vid.no, 0047 22 96 37 82

Yours sincerely,

Emy Benjamins

Master Student VID university Oslo