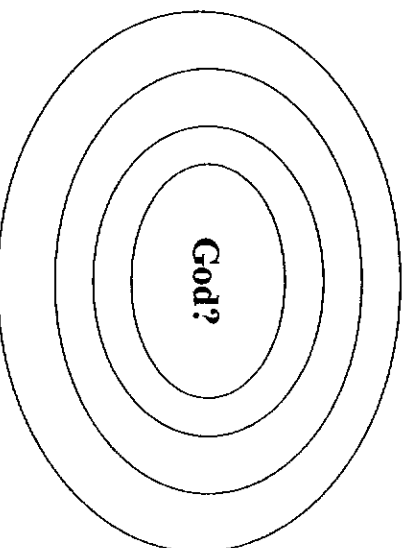

THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION 1.1

A THEOLOGY FOR MERCY AND GRACE

The four “levels” of need – the results of the fall (Gen. 3):

- A. **Spiritual Alienation (Gen. 3:8)**
 - 1. We are cut off from God.
 - 2. Adam & Eve are scared when God comes near.
 - 3. Solar System: All planets agree on the center (God); therefore they do not collide. However, the fall has caused people to make other gods their center and subsequent “collisions” happen.



- B. **Psychological Alienation (Gen. 3:10)**
 - 1. Adam and Eve experience guilt and shame for the first time in their nakedness.
- C. **Social Alienation (Gen. 3:7)**
 - 1. Before sin, Adam and Eve are naked and unashamed; after the fall they hide from each other and from God.
 - 2. They blame each other for the problem.
 - 3. Blame continues in conflicting views on the breakdown of society in political circles:
 - a. Left (“Liberal?”): Oppression, class distinctions, etc.
 - b. Right (“Conservative?”): Family breakdown, selfishness, personal irresponsibility, moral breakdown, etc.
 - c. Both views are right!
- D. **Physical Alienation (Gen. 3:17-19)**
 - 1. We are at odds with the planet – “Through painful toil you will eat.”
 - 2. We physically and mentally age (break down) because of all the other alienations.
 - 3. Everything breaks down because of the results of sin!

E. Reasons for Doing Mercy Ministry

1. Jesus is the great Deacon (Rom. 15:8) who identifies with the poor (2 Cor. 8:9) and pours out his life in service to others (Mark 10:45). Because we are united with Christ, every believer ought to be a deacon and carry out deeds of mercy (Matt. 20:26-28).
2. We need to be renewed and to help others to be so. (Rom. 12:2: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.")
3. A life poured out with deeds of mercy is the inevitable outcome of pure faith (Isa. 1:10-17).
4. God will judge whether you are a Christian because of deeds of mercy (Matt. 25:31-46, parable of the sheep and the goats). If the gospel is REALLY understood (we are sinners saved by grace), it changes your whole outlook and position. (CAUTION: We are NOT saved by mercy ministry, but it is the inevitable outcome of being saved.)
5. The world can only see deed ministry. The only way to show that we are not intolerant is our mercy ministry (Jas. 2:14-26; Acts 6:7: "a large number of priests became obedient to the faith").
6. Acts 4:31-32: After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

HUMAN NEEDS/"FELT NEEDS"

What are "felt needs?" Physical needs (hunger, homelessness, poverty, medical illness, etc.) that even the spiritually undiscerning person can recognize.

Definition of Mercy Ministry: The meeting of felt human needs through deeds and word in the power and love of the kingdom.

All human beings are created dependent beings. We are not self-sufficient, but are created to be dependent spiritually, sociologically, physically, psychologically. When we determine to be our own masters, we become cursed and experience emptiness, frustration and misery in all areas of life. A need is a dependency distorted and aggravated by alienation from God.

Our nation has increasing "mercy" needs due to the following possible causes:

- Population is getting older
- Family breakups/single-parent families
- Increasing prison population
- Increasing immigrant population
- Welfare reform

PRINCIPLES OF MERCY MINISTRY

A. Simple poverty vs. deeper poverty. There is a difference between being "broke" and being "poor." Three causes of poverty are:

1. **Oppression (Injustice).** Example: A government does not allow a particular group of people to be educated. Therefore, this group is able to work only in labor or menial jobs which earn very little money.
2. **Calamity.** Example: A fire destroys a family's home and hospital bills use all their savings.
3. **Personal Sin.** Example: A family is split by divorce. The father has decided he does not want to be a part of the family. He leaves his wife with three children and moves to another country where he does not have to pay child support.

The person who is "broke" is usually so because of one of these causes or because of one event. The person who is "poor" is entangled in a continuous inter-meshing of all three.

The truly poor may develop a whole different worldview (sense of hopeless dependency, entitlement, etc.). It takes far greater time, money and skill to help them.

B. Never separate word and deed.

Jesus came to minister in both word AND deed: He did not separate or prioritize the two. Sometimes he healed first (John 9); sometimes he required faith first. Faith in the recipient was NOT always a prerequisite for his deed ministry. Word and deed must be combined in love (1 John 3:16-17). They must always be connected.

C. Begin with few strings, but add conditions with time.

Grace is undeserved. It comes to us freely, even though we do not ask for it. But once it enters our lives, God's grace demands changes and holds us accountable. Why? Grace intercepts self-destructive behavior. It is therefore neither permissive ("What you do does not matter") nor legalistic ("Shape up or I will stop loving you"). It says, "Your sin cannot stop my concern and love for you," and, "I will not let your sin destroy you."

APPLICATION

A. If aid is continually asked for, request entrance into the whole life.

1. "We certainly are not trying to be nosy, but we really want to help you for the long run, so we need to be let into your whole life."
2. REMEMBER: God is concerned with our whole being -- spiritual, physical, psychological.
3. Keep in mind the three causes of poverty: oppression (injustice), calamity, and personal sin.

B. If aid is abused let mercy limit mercy.

1. Don't try to take revenge.
2. Don't be defensive.
3. Explain your actions: "We are not withdrawing our mercy; we are only changing its form to suit what you really need now."

C. Investigate the need.

1. The basic causes: injustice, calamity, sin
2. The exact extent of the need: evaluate total income and assets, total expenses, liabilities, debts
3. The spiritual condition of the person/family

D. Identify dependencies under the financial need.

1. Physical Dependence: Physical disability that makes it impossible to generate sufficient income for needs
2. Planning Dependence: Lack of budgetary control, unrealistic priorities for spending, other lacks of discipline or discernment
3. Emotional Dependence: Personal problems that make it impossible to bring in sufficient income
4. Skill Dependence: Lack of marketable skills
5. Relational Dependence: Without connections and support
6. Social Dependence: Lack of legal, political power/oppression/racism
7. Simple Financial Dependence: Without other dependencies, lack of a job/income

E. Outline a ministry plan.

1. Break down the problems into parts (like "dependence" categories above).
2. Set a goal for each area.
3. Determine the form of help (e.g., financial, prayer, counseling).

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE FOR MERCY MINISTRY 1.2

THE BIBLICAL HISTORY OF DIACONAL MINISTRY

BY DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

Creation

Adam is told to have dominion over all creation, both the physical and spiritual realms, and to bring it under the order and rule of God (Gen. 1:28). God's servants are, therefore, to be concerned to subdue physical disorder as well as spiritual disorder caused by sin. Both are fundamental to covenant service.

Fall

Sin defaces all of nature. Man is alienated from God (Gen. 3:8), causing guilt and hostility to the knowledge of the Lord. Man is alienated from himself (Gen. 3:10), causing loss of identity and loss of meaning, as well as anxiety and emptiness. Man is alienated from other men (Gen. 3:7), causing war, crime, family breakdown, oppression and injustice. Finally, man is alienated from nature (Gen. 3:17-19), causing hunger, sickness, aging and physical death. God's first redemptive action, the clothing of Adam and Eve, points to the salvation purchased by Christ's sacrifice, but it also meets a deep psychological need (for privacy) and a fundamental physical need (for shelter). In this first deed of ministry, God reveals that His redemption will heal all the effects of sin. We must follow Him in our own patterns of ministry.

Patriarchal Period

Abraham's seed (through Joseph) first becomes a blessing to the nations through a hunger relief program (Gen. 41:53-57). Job, who lived in this period, is aware that God's judgment falls on those who forget the poor (Job 29:15-16, 31:16-23).

Early Israel

God gave Israel many laws of social responsibility. Kinsmen and neighbors were obligated to give to the poor man until his need was gone (Deut. 15:8-10). Tithes went to the poor (Deut. 14:28-29). The poor were not to be given simply a "handout," but tools, grain (Deut. 15:12-15) and land (Lev. 25) so that they could become productive and self-sufficient.

Later Israel

The prophets condemned Israel's insensitivity to the poor as covenant breaking. They taught that materialism and ignoring the poor are sins as repugnant as idolatry and adultery (Amos 2:6-7). Mercy to the poor is an evidence of true heart commitment to God (Isa. 1:10-17, 58:6-7, Amos 4:1-6, 5:21-24). The great accumulation of wealth, "adding of house to house and field to field till no space is left" (Isa. 5:8-9) even by legal means may be sinful if the rich are proud and callous toward the poor (Isa. 3:16-26, Amos 6:4-7). The seventy-year exile itself was a punishment for the unobserved Sabbath and Jubilee years (2 Chron. 36:20-21). In the Jubilee year the well-to-do were to cancel debts, but the wealthy refused to do this.

The Ministry of Christ

Jesus proves to the Baptist that He is the Christ by pointing out that He heals bodies and preaches to the poor (Matt. 11:1-6), even as the prophets said He would (Isa. 11:1-4, 61:1-2, cf. Luke 1:52-53). Jesus teaches that anyone who has truly been touched by the grace of a merciful God will be vigorous in helping the needy (Luke 6:35-36, Matt. 5:43-48). God will judge whether we have justifying faith or not by looking at our service to the poor, the refugee, the sick, the prisoner (Matt. 25:44-46). Jesus, in His incarnation, "moved in" with the poor (Luke 2:24, 2 Cor. 8:9). He lived with, ate with, and associated with the lowest class of society. He called this "mercy" (Matt. 9:13). The Bible demands that we emulate Him in it (2 Cor. 8:8-15).

The Early Church

The church reflects the social righteousness of the old covenant community, but with the greater vigor and power of the new age. Christians are to open their hands to the needy as far as there is need (1 John 3:16-17, cf. Deut. 15:7-8). Within the church, wealth is to be shared very generously between rich and poor (2 Cor. 8:13-15, cf. Lev. 25). Following the prophets, the apostles teach that true faith will inevitably show itself through deeds of mercy (Jas. 2:1-23). Materialism is still a grievous sin (Jas. 5:1-6, 1 Tim. 6:17-19). Not only do all believers have these responsibilities, but a special class of

officers – deacons/esses – are established to coordinate the church’s ministry of mercy. This shows that the ministry of mercy is a required, mandated work of the church just as is the ministry of the word and discipline (cf. Rom. 15:23-29). Paul tells the Ephesian elders in his farewell address that he has taught them the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). It is highly significant, then, that in his very last words, Paul exhorts them to give to the weak and poor (v. 35). Not only did Paul consider mercy to the poor as part of the “whole counsel of God,” but he deemed it so crucial as to make it the very last piece of teaching he gave them.

Summary

The church is not simply a collection of individuals who are forgiven. It is a “royal nation,” a new society (1 Pet. 2:9). The world must see in us the wisdom of God, namely, what family life, business practices, race relationships and interpersonal relationships can be in all their beauty under the kingship of Jesus Christ. We are a pilot plant of the kingdom of God (see Francis Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, Tynedale, 1970, pp. 81-93). The church is to use its gifts and power to heal all the results of sin: spiritual, psychological, social and physical.

THE DIACONATE AND THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

BY DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

The Office of All Believers

Every Christian is a priest (1 Pet. 2:9) offering up deeds of mercy and service as a pleasing sacrifice (Heb. 13:15-16). All of us will have the reality of our faith judged by our mercy (Matt. 25:35-36; Jas. 2:12-13). Therefore, the work of benevolence is not primarily a work discharged by special officers on behalf of the church. It is primarily the loving action of the members of the church toward those in and around the community.

The Special Office of the Diaconate

Christians are qualified for ministry by gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some gifts require formal public recognition for their proper functioning. Such gifts constitute an office in God's calling and in the church's recognition.

It is clear from 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Philipians 1:1 that deacons were officers of the apostolic church along with bishops or elders. (The remaining passage where the noun *diakonos* may refer to such an office is Romans 16:1). Although the Apostle gives qualifications for the office in 1 Timothy and sets it beside the office of the bishop in his address to the Philipians, he does not in these passages describe its function. The term *diakonos* in its general use means 'servant.'

Acts 6

What can we learn from Acts 6? First, that diaconal ministry was an organized ministry of the church, distinct from the ministry of the Word, and second, that diaconal ministry can be given to officers who specialize in its coordination and work. How do we know, then, what the essence of diaconal ministry is? In favor of regarding diaconal ministry as focusing on works of mercy is the constant use of the verb to describe such ministry, often in connection with serving food (Matt. 4:11; 8:15; 25:44; 27:55; Mark 1:13, 31; 15:41; Luke 4:39; 8:3; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26, 27; John 12:2; Acts 6:2; Rom. 15:25; 2 Tim. 1:18; Philem. 13; Heb. 6:10).

When the verb is widened to include the ministry of other gifts, this original force may still be felt (1 Pet. 4:10, 11). In a similar way the noun *diakonia* often refers to ministry to physical needs (Luke 10:40; Acts 11:29; 12:25; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13). This is particularly the case when service to the saints is spoken of.

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE DIACONATE

EDITED BY DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

(Note: This survey is based on a much longer documented article produced by the Study Committee and available to commissioners.)

The Early Church

It can be seen from the earliest writings, such as the "Didache" (A.D. 120), that each congregation had multiple elders/bishops and deacons, all elected by the people. Deacons were ministers of mercy to the poor and widows. They were clearly patterned after "the Seven" of Acts 6, even to the point that many churches appointed only seven. Early deacons visited to find needs and meet them. They cared for the widows and supervised the "agape" fellowship meals. In addition, Justin Martyr tells us they were helpers with the Eucharist and other worship meals, since they took the gifts to the poor. Deacons were also assistants to the elders and especially the bishops. As time wore on, the deacons' main purpose became to serve the bishops as secretaries and helpers. In brief, the function of "helps," which was always a purpose of the deacon, eventually came to eclipse all others. As the Diaconal office became deformed by the mid-3rd century, deacons became nothing more than liturgical assistants.

The Reformation

Luther envisioned a Diaconate in each town carrying on distribution to the city's poor as its main focus. For various reasons, however, the Lutherans did not carry this out and the Diaconate disappeared from the Lutheran scene.

John Calvin was the clearest in explaining the theological connection between almsgiving and worship. He placed almsgiving in the liturgy after the sermon and as part of the Supper liturgy. He stated categorically: "Thus we ought always to provide that no meeting of the church should take place without the word, prayers, partaking of the supper, and almsgiving." (*Institutes* IV.XVII.44)

The Catholic exegetes taught that deacons were primarily helpers who assisted the priest in his work of teaching and worship. Calvin, however, was quite careful to say in his exegesis of 1 Timothy (3:8ff) that the deacon is a representative of the church, not of the pastor. Therefore, the Diaconate has an integrity all its own. They are not mere "domestic servants." For example, the Diaconate should not ordinarily be a stepping stone or trial arena for junior elders. They do not merely carry out orders, but are a holy office in which they look for needs and make decisions. Deacons are subordinate to elders, but they are not the immediate subordinates of the elders, in a chain of command. Calvin allows that deacons are "Levites" and do give assistance to the elders and pastors, but he insists on the primacy of mercy and on the distinctiveness of the office (*Institutes* IV.XIX.32).

Calvin established two orders of deacons. First there were those who administered alms for the poor ("procurators"). They were to receive, dispense, and hold funds, possessions, rents and pensions for the poor. The second order ("hospitallers") consisted of deacons who actually ministered to the sick and to the poor. Their chief work was the administration of a "hospital" in which there were not only those too sick to work, but also the aged, widows and orphans, and "other poor creatures."

Later Developments

Scotland. *The First Book of Discipline* established deacons as the chief financial officers of the church. They supported the pastor, the schools, and the poor within their parishes. Their functions are administrative and financial. Deacons were to care for the poor in their parishes. On the one hand, the *Second Book of Discipline* mentions the Diaconal ministry as being directed to the saints, yet later it speaks of aiding the poor and the strangers within a parish (see Chapters VIII and IX). This indicates that the church's whole neighborhood was envisioned as a ministry area for the deacons.

Deacons were not admitted to church councils and were completely under the Authority of the Session. Mercy was one of their duties along with general administration.

The Netherlands. The Dutch churches spoke more emphatically that mercy was the prime purpose of the Diaconate. At the Synod of Dort (1574) deacons were charged to cooperate with the civil magistrate and others who were seeking to help the poor in their communities. Article 25 of the Church Order of Dort (1618-19) tells deacons to distribute alms not only among the members of the church, but also to the poor among "inhabitants and strangers." The deacons of the 17th century Reformed churches in many cases formed the central social service agency of the city, supporting orphanages, homes for the elderly, schools, several clothing manufacturing shops and bakeries for distribution to the poor.

Deacons in the Dutch churches definitely wielded more authority and oversight over the congregation than deacons in the Presbyterian churches. They sat on the church Council or Consistory with the elders. Thus, deacons took part in the nomination procedure of both elders and had a regulative voice together with the elders in electing a pastor. No pastor could leave a field without consent of the Consistory, which included deacons.

England. Many of the Puritans saw Presbyterianism as the truest Scriptural church order. In *The Second Part of a Register*, deacons are described as those whose office “consisteth only in the oversight of the poor.” Deacons were to be elected in every church. The Westminster Assembly, though it discussed the elder and powers of presbytery for months, spent only one day on the Diaconate, and provided only the briefest of statements. “The Scripture doth hold out deacons as distinct officers in the church, whose office is perpetual. To whose office it belongs not to preach the word or administer the sacraments, but to take special care in distributing the necessities of the poor” (*The Form of Presbyterian Church Government*).

The American Reformed Churches

Presbyterian. The first American General Assembly pronouncement regarding the duties of deacons was that of the 1833 Assembly which stated that the deacons of a congregation primarily were to care for the poor of their own church. Secondly, the “temporalities of the church” (general care, maintenance of property, etc.) could be committed to them. A 1752 Assembly statement allowing for trustees who could handle “temporalities” instead of deacons balanced this latter pronouncement. In this, the Americans followed not the Dutch churches (which made mercy the exclusive purpose of the Diaconate), but the Scottish Book of Discipline, which gave deacons all financial affairs of the church. Giving deacons the trusteeship, however, was definitely an addition to the statement of the Westminster Assembly. Under the influence of Thornwell in the Southern Presbyterian Church, trustees were discouraged and the “trusteeship” duties of deacons became mandatory.

As for the scope of the Diaconate, we have seen that the earlier American understanding was for deacons to care for the poor of their congregation only, not of the neighborhood in general (e.g. Samuel Miller’s “Essay” on the Office of Ruling Elder). This was not the unanimous position of the Old School Presbyterians, however (e.g. Thomas Smyth of South Carolina). By the 1871 General Assembly, however, deacons were charged to give charity to non-Christians “as will aid in...opening the door for more direct spiritual ministrations.”

As for the authority of the Diaconate, American Presbyterians forbade deacons to sit on any church courts. The 1715 Assembly stated that deacons had “no juridical power.” However, in the area of work among the poor, deacons had surprising policy-making power. The 1867 Old School General Assembly answered in the negative the question “Has a Church session any original or direct control over the management and distribution of the fund collected and in the hands of the deacons for the benefit of the poor of the Church?” Instead, they pronounced that the Session “may advise respecting use of the funds.” In addition, it was left up to local congregations whether deacons could officiate the Sacraments.

In the final analysis, it cannot be said that the Diaconate has flourished in American Presbyterianism at all. All the General Assembly pronouncements and guidance on the subject from 1706-1873 fill only a page and a half. Very little unity of mind existed on the function and scope of the office. At no point during the 19th century did the majority of Presbyterian churches have deacons.

Reformed. The Dutch Reformed churches in America maintained from their fatherland a clearer concept of the deacon as *primarily* a minister of mercy. Unlike the Presbyterian Forms of Church government, their Church Order Article on the Ministry of Deacons does not include the duties of Trusteeship at all. And though in some Reformed churches deacons assume the duties of trustees, the prevailing force of all Church pronouncements was to define diaconal ministry as mercy ministry.

As stated above, the Dutch Reformed churches have been much more inclined to encourage the ministry of deacons in their communities as well as their congregation. R.B. Kuyper of the Christian Reformed Church wrote: “Does it not follow that deacons should never extend aid to needy persons outside the fold of the church? The answer must be negative. Did not the merciful Christ heal the daughter of a Syrochenean woman and thus permit a Greek to eat the crumbs that fell from the table of God’s covenant people (Mark 7:24-30)?”

A BIBLICAL PICTURE OF DEACONS/ESSES

Biblical Functions (1 Tim. 3)

The biblical picture of the deacon is painted in broader strokes than the office of elder. This means that there is much freedom for the church to use the Diaconate in creative ways. In Geneva, John Calvin had two classes of deacons: one set up to do business administration and the other to care for the sick and the needy. Multiple models are permitted.

Deacons/esses are to serve under the direction of elders, undertaking those areas of service necessary for the church's functioning that would otherwise prohibit the elders from performing their Biblical responsibilities. No specific ongoing roles are mentioned in Scripture, probably because service needs change, and so the role of deacons should be flexible. (Perhaps this is why qualifications for deacons are stressed rather than specific tasks. In contrast, the function of elders is more stabilized, for spiritual needs are relatively constant).

While there is actual equality between elders, deacons/esses and, in fact, all members of the body, for the purpose of order, scripture indicates that elders, as overseers, are entrusted with the final authority within the local church.

(See Section II for a more detailed explanation of the Biblical role of deacons.)

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN OFFICER 1.3

GIFTS AND CALLING TO MERCY MINISTRIES

Many candidates struggle with knowing if they have the gifts to be an officer. Scripture gives us direction on the types of qualifications to be an officer. It is important to remember there are some reasonable qualifiers to these characteristics:

- Not chronology but maturity
- Not perfection but progress
- Not public speaking but Biblical discernment

An elder at New Life Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, PA has stated, "Most churches make the mistake of choosing for officers people who are competent, confident, and successful, because they think those men and women will be good leaders and shepherds. In reality, what you really want in a spiritual leader is a man or woman who has been broken by a knowledge of their own sin, and then restored by an even deeper knowledge of God's grace."

A. Calling (1 Tim. 3)

1. **Desire** (v. 1). Are you eager for the office? Have you set your heart upon it or do other callings and ministries excite you more? Have you received affirmation from other believers based on faithfulness and fruitfulness?

B. Character (1 Tim. 1-3)

1. **Love of the law** (1:8). Is the law used properly in your own life? On the one hand, are you "free" from the law through rejoicing in the grace and imputed righteousness of Christ? On the other hand, is the law being burned onto your heart by the Spirit as you seek to emulate and please your Lord through the law?
2. **Love of the Gospel** (1:12-14). Can you think of your past, especially the dark parts, in such a way that it leads you to greater and greater praise of God's grace in your life? Has an experience of His mercy overwhelmed your sense of sin and unworthiness so you experience a confidence and boldness?
3. **Acknowledgment of sin** (1:15). Despite this growing confidence, are you continually making new discoveries of the shape and depth of your sin? (Note Paul's present tense: "I AM the worst.")
4. **Life example** (1:16). Is your life an example to others?
5. **Praise life** (1:17). Is there a note of praise in your life? Do you ever break into spontaneous praise to your King? How is your corporate worship? Your private worship? Spontaneous worship?
6. **Perseverance** (1:18-20). Are you willing to suffer persecution for the faith? Are you aware of and reconciled to the fact that Christianity is a fight and more so for Christian leaders?
7. **Prayer** (2:1-8). Do you sense the urgency of prayer (v. 1)? Do you work hard, constantly at specific intercession for all sorts of needs (v. 2)? Do you pray for the spread of the gospel and many conversions (vv. 3-7)?
8. **If you are a man:** Does your attitude toward women have the balance between leadership and initiative (v. 12) and ministry that produces faith and love, not bitterness (v. 15)? If you are married, does your wife respect your leadership? Is it producing love in her?
9. **Relationship to women** (2:9-10). What sort of women do you notice? Do you appreciate above all women of profound wisdom and fruit in ministry? Do the superficial aspects of beauty turn your head? Do you struggle with impure thoughts?
10. **Womanly character** (2:11-15). If you are a woman, can you reconcile yourself with the authority of the whole Bible, including this passage? Have you understood the different callings of men and women? Can you see what things women are allowed to do and what they defer? If you are still single are you able to live without persistent sin, though perhaps with unfulfilled longings? Are you growing in faith, love, and holiness?

11. **Reputation** (1 Tim. 3:2, 4, 8). Are you free from the besetting patterns of inconsistency that would be evident to others inside the church? Is there any charge, legal or otherwise against you that would scandalize those outside the church? Are you free of any addictions such as to alcohol? Are you free of any hint of suspicion about your handling of money?
 12. **Respectable** (3:2, 10). Are you sincere – respected for integrity and responsibility? Are your words and opinion given weight around others? Can you get people to follow you or listen to you? Have you enough Christian maturity and experience under your belt to command respect?
 13. **Family** (3:2, 4, 12). If you are married, are you well married? Is your family life under control? If you are single, are you exercising sexual self-control and, in dating life, are you commanding respect of onlookers with sobriety, wisdom, and responsibility?
 14. **Self control** (3:2, 3). Are you addicted (sex, food, drink, work, spending, TV, etc.)?
 15. **Conflict management** (3:3). Are you gentle but firm under pressure? Do you avoid contentiousness? Are you prone to anger and rash words, decisions, behavior?
 16. **Generosity** (3:3). Are you free with your money to those in need and God's causes? Are you willing to open not just your wallet but your home, life, and schedule to others? Are you approachable?
- C. Competency** (1 Tim. 1 - 2:8)
1. **Protecting** (1:3, 4). Are you ready to protect the flock from false teaching? On the other hand, are you willing to discourage needless controversies? What would you have to do to prepare?
 2. **Nurturing** (1:5). Are you capable of discerning if the fruit of the teaching of God's word in the congregation is love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith? What would you have to do to prepare?
 3. **Reclaiming** (1:6, 7). Will you be prepared to deal with wandering sheep and proud but mistaken "teachers?" What would you have to do to prepare?
 4. **Reaching** (1:9-11). Are you willing and able to make contact with the "murderers, adulterers and perverts," "slave traders, liars and perjurers?" Do you avoid them? Are you skilled at bringing the "glorious gospel" to bear on such people?
- D. Compatibility**
1. Do you fit *strategically*?
 2. Do you fit *organizationally*?
 3. Do you fit *interpersonally*?
- E. Comprehension, Knowledge** (1 Tim. 3:2, 7)
1. Do you know the Scripture enough to teach Biblical truth?
 2. Are you perceived as being experienced as a Christian or are you seen as a novice?
 3. Are you able to be "standard bearers" for a Presbyterian Church?
- F. Grasp of the faith** (1 Tim. 3:9)
1. Though you don't need to be Biblical teachers necessarily, do you have a good grasp of the Biblical faith?
 2. Do you hold it without being troubled by doubts and uncertainties?
 3. Do you have comprehension of the Westminster Standards and forms of church government?