

CHURCH FUNCTIONARIES: THE WITNESS  
IN THE LITERATURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY  
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND CHURCH PERIODS

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A functionary, according to the *Random House Dictionary*, is a "person who functions in a specific capacity, especially in government service, an official. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

A brief summary of New Testament church functionaries can be found in Ephesians 4:11 and I Corinthians 12:28, together with such other New Testament passages as Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 5:17; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:1-6; John 1:49, etc. A further understanding of the meaning of these terms and functions can be obtained by examining their use in other literature and in archaeology.

Since the emphasis of this article is focused upon church functionaries in the New Testament and the early period of church history, and since the church and Judaism found their setting in a hellenistic culture, stress in this treatise will be placed on Greek words and concepts.

Since the idea of church and its functionaries developed from an Old Testament economy, this study will begin by taking these Old Testament concepts into consideration. The LXX words and concepts for religious functionaries examined attest the LXX's understanding of the Hebrew words involved as of about 200 B.C. Inasmuch as the synagogue and its worship seem to have developed out of the Exile and the Return, terms for religious functionaries representing this period as set forth basically in Ezra and Nehemiah will be used as a starting point as it is seen how religious functionary terms were used not only before the Exile but more particularly after in the Intertestamental and in the New Testament and early church history periods.

That in frequently translating the Hebrew *qahal*, assembly, congregation, by *ecclesia* (cf. Deuteronomy 9:10; 23:1) and *eda*, congregation, by *synagoge* (cf. Numbers 27:17), the LXX is using those terms as virtual equivalents is well known.<sup>2</sup> One has but to compare the obvious connections in Judges 20:1, 2; Proverbs 5:14; Hebrews 2:12 and Psalms

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1. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Random House, 1967).

2. See J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), p. 600.

22:22 in both Greek and Hebrew to see the synonymous character of these concepts.

Positing an early date for James,<sup>3</sup> the use of the term *synagoge* in James 2:2 in a Jewish Christian context lends support to the idea that in the middle first century A.D. Jewish Christian community the place of worship could be called a *synagoge* as well as an *ecclesia*. It may be concluded that before the fall of Jerusalem the terms *synagoge* and *ecclesia* were virtually equivalent concepts and were used side by side for the same purposes,<sup>4</sup> but it is to be observed that after A.D. 70, as will be seen below, these two concepts with most of their functionalities begin to become polarized.

#### CHURCH FUNCTIONARIES

A good many terms and concepts for biblical religious functionaries come from pre- as well as exilic and post-exilic times. These concepts translated by the LXX into Greek include the quite frequent use of *archon* and *archontes patrion*, in most cases to represent the Hebrew words *nasa* (chief, prince) as in Exodus 16:22 and Joshua 22:30 (all the rulers of the *synagoge*, or congregation);<sup>5</sup> *rosh* (head, chief) as in I Chronicles 5:24 (rulers of the houses of their fathers); and *sar* (chief, ruler, prince) as in I Chronicles 29:6 (the *chiefs* of the fathers, and the *chiefs* of the sons of Israel). This same Greek term is used for officials in Ezra and Nehemiah, occurring in such places as Ezra 1:5 (rulers of the fathers) and Nehemiah 12:22 (the chiefs or rulers of the fathers). Thus *archon* used in these relationships refers to a functionary who could exercise leadership over the whole assembly of Israel (as in Joshua 22:30) as well as over individual tribes (Numbers 7:2), act as a judge in financial matters (Ezra 8:29) and as a signatory to sacred covenant agreements (Nehemiah 9:38). The *archontes* are to be distinguished from kings and priests in Nehemiah 9:32, 38, but certain kinds of them are spoken as being over the priests in Nehemiah 12:7, possibly anticipating the use of another term in the New Testament period, the *archiereus*, the chief priest.

The official capacity and functions of priests and Levites in the canonical Old Testament is too expansive a subject to be discussed in this article.

The *grammateus* (scribe or secretary) is a fairly common LXX translation for a functionary, being used in such as Exodus 5:6 (for Heb.

3. Cf. J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James* (London: Macmillan, 1892), p. CXXIV, who takes it as having been written between A.D. 40 and 50; on the other hand Reicke rather unconvincingly posits the date to be c. A.D. 90. Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 5, 6.
4. Cf. Paul's departure from the *synagoge* in Corinth and establishing next door what was virtually an *ecclesia* (Acts 18:7).
5. The translation given in cases like this are based on the Greek unless otherwise indicated.

*shatar*, those in charge of the people). In Numbers 11:16 the seventy elders (*presbuteroi*) of the people are actually called the *grammateis*, the overseers, of the people, this use being almost like the later use of *episkopos* as overseer. In addition, the term *grammateus* could be used for an individual's secretary (II Samuel 8:17) or for a professional learned person, as Ezra (an official of Artaxerxes and scribe of the law of God, Ezra 7:12, 21).

The term *presbuteros*, elder, in an official sense is used by the LXX mainly for the Hebrew *zaqen* and occurs as early as Genesis 50:7 for Pharaoh's elders and continues in use in the Exodus narratives and into the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, conveying the concept of the performance of such official functions as exercising supervision over the theocratic nation and people (Numbers 11:16), responsibly receiving the law of Moses delivered to them (Deuteronomy 31:9), and being the responsible agents for building the temple in Ezra's time (Ezra 6:7, 8, 14).

There are only a few LXX references to *episkopos* (mainly for Hebrew *paqad*, attend to), used not as a regular religious functionary, although employed for one having oversight of the tabernacle (Numbers 4:16), or for an officer in the army (Numbers 31:14), or for an overseer of the temple (II Kings 11:18), or of the Levites (at Jerusalem, Nehemiah 11:22).

Septuagintal words for servant include several occurrences of *leitourgos*, used rather generally as servant of the king (I Kings 10:5) or of one of the prophets (II Kings 6:15), or some sort of ministers of the temple (Ezra 7:24); a very few occurrences of *huperetes* (of a king's servant in Proverbs 14:35); and a few instances of *diakonos*, mostly in Esther of king's servants (1:10; 2:2; 6:1, 3, 5).

There are no LXX uses of *archisynagogos* (chief of the synagogue), but there are a few of *archiereus* for Hebrew *kohen* in such as Leviticus 4:3; Joshua 22:13 and I Kings 1:25 (Abiathar the priest).

The intertestamental period bears witness to most of these religious terms, such as *archontes* (I Macc 1:26, used there with *presbuteroi*); *grammateus* (I Macc 5:42);<sup>6</sup> the *leitourgos* (III Macc 5:5); the *presbuteroi* (I Esd 6:5, the elders of the Jews; Judith 6:16; I Macc 1:26; I Macc 14:28, etc.); and *diakonos* once (IV Macc 9:17). *Huperetes* does not occur and neither does *archisynagogos*, but *archiereus* is used in such as I Macc 10:20, 32; II Macc 3:1, etc.

In the Qumran community the officers included: 1) a leader or prince of the entire congregation, with which compare I Macc 14:27, Greek *en saramel'* like *sar* which the LXX in some other places trans-

6. Which Charles equates with the *shoterim*, "officers," as used in Deuteronomy 20:5, etc. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol. I (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 85, footnote 42.

7. Charles translates this, "prince of the people of God." *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, 119, footnote 28.

lates *archon*; cf. I Chronicles 29:6); 2) the presbyters (modeled after the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel;) and 3) the overseer or inspector about which Gaster says: "It is not quite clear whether the overseer (*mebaqqer*) or the inspector (*paqid*) more closely answers to the *episcopos*... of the early church...."<sup>8</sup>

In connection with the archaeological inscriptional evidence on religious functionaries from this time it is well to observe Filson's remarks:

...we have not given the attention deserved to inscriptions of the period just prior to and contemporary with the emergence of rabbinical Judaism and the Christian church.<sup>9</sup>

Lifshitz has set forth information regarding synagogues and their officers from inscriptions dating from the third century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. and representing the general Mediterranean area.<sup>10</sup> These inscriptions yield information regarding the *synagoge* (No. 2, etc.) and the equivalent term *proseuche* (place of prayer) (Nos. 11, 86, 92, etc.), and officers, as the *archon* (No. 100, first century A.D.); *presbuteros* (No. 79, first century A.D.); and *archisynagogos* (Nos. 33, 79, first century A.D.). Lifshitz states that *archon* was a title known in the Jewish communities and that the *presbuteroi* were frequently mentioned in Jewish inscriptions.<sup>11</sup>

#### NEW TESTAMENT FUNCTIONARIES

Among the religious functionaries of New Testament times are those which came not from the Old Testament period but arose out of the milieu of the hellenistic times, and were used by both Judaism and Christianity, such as the name "Rabbi" used as a term to show respect, to indicate a teacher-discipleship relationship and applied particularly to Jesus and John the Baptist (cf. John 1:38; 3:26, etc.);<sup>12</sup> inscriptions also show use of the term by Judaism back to the first century A.D.<sup>13</sup> *Didaskalos*, the companion term to rabbi in the New Testament is used in the Gospels and is also found in Jewish inscription as early as the first century A.D.<sup>14</sup>

There is one term for a religious functionary, *presbuteros*, elder, which came down through the LXX from the Old Testament and Inter-

8. T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, rev. and enlarged ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor, 1964), pp. 398-401.
9. F. V. Filson, "Ancient Greek Synagogue Inscriptions," *BA*, 32, no. 2, (May, 1969): 41.
10. B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et Fondateurs dans les Synagogues Juives*, No. 7 in *Cashiers de la Revue Biblique* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1967).
11. Lifshitz, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
12. See W. Harold Mare, "Teacher and Rabbi in the New Testament Period," unpublished paper read at the Midwestern Section of the Evangelical Theological Society meeting at the Fort Wayne Bible College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, April 18, 1969.
13. R. P. J. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, Vol. II (Rome: Pontificio Instituto di archeologia Cristiana, 1952), Nos. 891-903, a number of which are from the second and third centuries A.D.; No. 1218.
14. Frey, *op., cit.*, No. 1266.

testamental materials, and which was used by both Judaism and the New Testament Church. In the New Testament record frequent is the reference to the elders functioning in Judaism as members of a group in the Sanhedrin along with the chief priests and the scribes (cf. Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22) and as members of local councils and synagogues in individual cities, exemplified in the New Testament in Luke 7:1-5 and outside as well.<sup>15</sup>

Then a number of times in the Acts and Epistles *presbuteros* is used in Christian contexts for leading officials in local (Acts 11:30; 14:23) and regional (Acts 15:2, 4, 6) *ecclesiae* (churches) to lead in church doctrinal decisions (Acts 15:22f; 16:4), to be responsible for missionary endeavors (Acts 21:18, 19), to supervise distribution to the physical needs of congregations (Acts 11:30), and to guard churches from error (Acts 20:17-31).

Jewish inscriptions likewise show usage of *presbuteroi* in official religious life in the first century A.D. in the Theodotus Jerusalem synagogue inscription<sup>16</sup> dated before A.D. 70 which gives a fitting picture of elders, the *archisynagogos* and priest being responsible for the building of a synagogue as well as for the reading of the law and teaching of the commandments. With the added evidence of the secular honorific use of *presbuteros*, as, for example, Egypt in the second century before Christ (P. Tebt I, 484, 113 B.C.) and in the two or three centuries following (P. Lips I 106, 14, A.D. 98; P. Flor I 99, 3, second-third centuries A.D.),<sup>17</sup> the term *presbuteros* was a fitting word for Judaism to retain and for the New Testament church to adopt to indicate general leadership over their respective areas of worship.

Some religious functionary terms used in the New Testament more distinctively belonged to Judaism, such as the *grammateus*, scribe, employed quite frequently in New Testament Jewish contexts, as in Matthew 2:4; Mark 8:31, but not used in the New Testament church unless Matthew 13:52 and Matthew 23:34 are considered such.<sup>18</sup> This word employed also in non-Jewish situations, as of a town clerk at Ephesus (Acts 19:35) and a second century A.D. village council clerk (P. Giss I 45<sup>4</sup>),<sup>19</sup> is continued to be used in Jewish contexts beyond New Testament times, as exemplified in Frey, Nos. 142, 148, 53, 800, etc.,<sup>20</sup> but is not employed in the Church Fathers period.<sup>21</sup>

15. Cf. the Jerusalem Synagogue Inscription of Theodotus. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, new and rev. ed. (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), pp. 439-441.

16. Deissmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 439-441.

17. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *presbuteros*.

18. See Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek English Lexicon* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), *grammateus*.

19. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *grammateus*.

20. Frey, *op. cit.*

21. See G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961), *grammateus*.

Likewise, *archiereus* is used fairly frequently in the New Testament for Jewish high priests (Matthew 26:57, etc.), and for important members of high priestly families (Matthew 16:21; Luke 20:19). Since for the Christian church in such passages as Hebrews 2:17, etc., the term is used exclusively for Christ, there is no office of this nature in the New Testament church nor in the Apostolic Fathers.

The *strategos*, a term employed to indicate a Roman chief magistrate at Philippi (Acts 16:20) and at Pergamum (Jos. Ant 14, 247), is used in the New Testament of the commander of the Jewish levitical temple guard (Acts 4:1) and of a position of captain next in honor to the high priest (Luke 22:4, 52),<sup>22</sup> but it is not used at all in New Testament church officialdom.

Of the officials of the synagogue besides the *presbuteroi* the New Testament speaks of the *archon* (Luke 8:41), who was also a functionary found connected with the *proseuche* (i.e., synagogue) of Theban Jews (P. Lond 1177, 57, A.D. 113).<sup>23</sup> The term is likewise used for a member of the Sanhedrin (Luke 18:18) and for a ruling official over Pharisees (Luke 14:1). The *archisynagogos*, a term also found in pagan religion,<sup>24</sup> is a title for a leader in the synagogue who took care of the physical arrangements for the worship service<sup>25</sup> (Heb., *rosh hakkeneset*), as in Acts 13:15; compare also Theodotus who is called both a priest and *archisynagogos* in a Jerusalem synagogue in the middle first century A.D. (Frey 1404). This term is not used in New Testament church officialdom.

*Diakonos* is not used in a religious sense in New Testament Judaism, but the term, *huperetes*, servant is used of a synagogue attendant in Luke 4:20, verified by Thieme (33) as a religious term along with *diakonos*.<sup>26</sup> The Jewish *hazzan* official seems to be somewhat equivalent to the *huperetes*,<sup>27</sup> although at a later time (fourth century A.D.) it is associated with the *diakonos* (Lifshitz 40). However, Frey feels that there is a considerable distinction to be made between the *huperetes* or *hazzan* who was just a humble servant of the synagogue and the Christian *diakonos* who became an important official of the church.<sup>28</sup>

Of religious functionary terms and concepts of New Testament times some are more distinctively Christian in nature. Such a term is *episkopos*, overseer, used rather sparingly by the LXX (as has been seen)

22. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *strategos*.

23. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *archon*.

24. As Preisigke 623 (80-69 B.C.), through Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *archisynagogos*.

25. E. Schurer, *A History of the Jewish People in The Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), p. 63.

26. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *huperetes*, re: G. Thieme, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maander und das Neue Testament* (Göttingen, 1906).

27. Compare M. C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), p. 93.

28. Frey, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. CIV. Beyer in his discussion of *diakonos* comments that *hazzan keneset* is always translated *huperetes*. H. W. Beyer, "Diakonos," TDNT, Vol. II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 91.

and not to indicate a continuing office, as was the case of the *presbuteros*. The suggestion that the Essene type *mebaqqer* of Qumran may have connection with the Christian *episkopos* does not prove that such relatively small, isolated and reactionary religious communities may have affected the functionary structure of the New Testament church.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, although the mainstream of Judaism of this period shows no *episkopos* in its religious leadership,<sup>30</sup> the term becomes a part of New Testament church language for a functionary coming into use after the adoption of the Jewish *presbuteros* and employed in the New Testament as an equivalent of *presbuteros* (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; I Timothy 3:1-7—Titus 1:5-7), with emphasis on the overseeing activity (Acts 20:28) implied in the office of *presbuteros* (Acts 20:17).

The distinctively Christian term *diakonos* is used in the New Testament church to indicate a companion office to *presbuteros* (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-12), which involved the exercise of spiritual discernment (I Timothy 3:8-12) and also the caring for physical and material needs of the church (Acts 6:1, 2). That *diakonos* could have a pagan religious connotation is shown by its inclusion in a pre-Christian list of temple officials which ends with the words *mageiros*<sup>31</sup> . . . *diakonos* (cook . . . deacon) (Magn 109, about 100 B.C.),<sup>32</sup> as well as its being found in other lists of religious officials where the association is also with *mageiros*, cook (see inscriptions of Troiza, IG, IV, 774, third century B.C.; and of Acarnania, I G IX 1, 486, second/first century B.C.).<sup>33</sup> Beyer says:

... there is a similar list on the pillar of a temple of Apollo dating from at least the time of Christ's birth (I G IX 1, 487 and C I G II, add., 1793b, p. 982. . . . The work of the deacon obviously remains the same; i.e., the serving of food, since they are always mentioned after the cooks.<sup>34</sup>

This type of usage may suggest a reason why in taking over the concept for the Christian church function the word came to be associated with food and other needs of the widows in Acts 6:1, 2. Compare the use of *diakonia* and *diakoneo* to include meal preparing and serving in Luke 10:40, as well as to indicate the providing for the physical needs of Jesus when He was tempted (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13).

*Apostolos*<sup>35</sup> in a religious functionary sense is a uniquely New Testa-

29. See J. Jeremias, "Poimen," *TDNT*, Vol. VI, 1968, p. 489; also Gaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-401.

30. The Jewish inscriptions given by Frey, *op. cit.*, show no such usage.

31. Liddell-Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, suggests that *mageiros* means butcher, then cook, public cook.

32. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *diakonos*.

33. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *diakonos*.

34. Beyer, "diakonos," *TDNT*, Vol. II, p. 92.

35. It is used in LXX I Kings 14:6 in a general sense of messenger. Judaism had an office of apostle, whose chief function, Schurer says, was to be a communication messenger between Jewish communities. Schurer, *op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. 2, p. 269.

ment Christian term, applying basically to Christ (Hebrews 3:1) and to the Apostles of Christ (Matthew 10:2), commissioned to be witnesses of Him and of His resurrection (Acts 1:26). Later authors applied the term back to the twelve apostles as witnessed by the Apostolic Fathers (Barn. 5:9, etc.) and the papyri (P. Oxy. 1151, 44-45, fifth century and CPR I 30, 4, sixth century, both of the Apostle John).<sup>36</sup>

The term, *evangelistes*, although used sparingly in the New Testament, is hardly attested in non-Christian material, except in a Rhodian inscription, IG XII, 1675, 6 where it means "one who proclaims oracular sayings."<sup>37</sup> Its three uses in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11 and II Timothy 4:5) convey the idea of one especially commissioned to proclaim the Gospel good news. Thus, all of the apostles as well as others (cf. Ephesians 4:11) could fit into this function.

The *poimen*, in the functionary sense of leader, shepherd, over the spiritual flock (Ephesians 4:11), although used some in the Old Testament (as Genesis 48:15, Jeremiah 3:15, etc.) and in Qumran type literature (Damasc 13:9f (16:2f), the *mebaqqer* as shepherd of the flock) is more distinctively a New Testament functionary concept. Christ is the shepherd (John 10, etc.) and church leaders are to function as shepherds (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28, etc.). (Compare in later times the *shepherd of Hermas* and Clem. *Paed.* 1:6.)<sup>38</sup>

Regarding the *antilempseis* (helps) and *kuberneseis* (administrations, governments) of I Corinthians 12:28, Beyer's suggestion seems sound that the *episkopoi* [*presbuteroi*] and *diakonoi* were to have and use these as gifts,<sup>39</sup> they not being official positions in the church in the strict sense of the word. Neither of these terms is found in Frey's Jewish inscriptions.

In seeing similarities, as well as differences, between New Testament Christianity and Judaism in the use of terms and concepts for religious functionaries, it is well also to observe the similarity of the worship service<sup>40</sup> of the synagogue with its *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4, 5, praise (Berakot), reading of the Scripture, sermon (Luke 4:16ff), singing and prayer<sup>41</sup> with that of the *ecclesia* with its doctrinal teaching, prayers (Acts 2:42), citing of Old Testament Scripture (Peter's sermon, Acts 2), preaching, singing (Ephesians 5:19) and benediction (II Corinthians 13:13).

36. *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part VIII, No. 1151.

37. G. Friedrich, "Evangelistes," *TDNT*, Vol. II, p. 736.

38. Lampe, *op. cit.*, *poimen*.

39. H. W. Beyer, "Kubernesis," *TDNT*, Vol. III, p. 1036.

40. Beyer states, "As there are similarities between synagogue and early Christian worship, so there are in fact many material parallels between Jewish and Christian cultic offices." H. W. Beyer, "Episkopos," *TDNT*, II, 618.

41. Compare F. V. Filson, *A New Testament History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 45.



Following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the patterns of religious functionaries connected with the *ecclesia* and the synagogue became more firmly established and distinct.

There is strong archaeological evidence in the centuries after Christ for the continuance of the Jewish synagogue in various areas such as Asia Minor (Frey 755, second or third century), Egypt (P. Oxy. 1205, A.D. 291), Greece (Lifshitz 9, fourth century A.D.), Italy (Frey 503, 504),<sup>42</sup> etc. With this organization went the offices of the *archon*<sup>43</sup> (Lifshitz 9a, Greece; 85, Cyprus, both third century A.D.); the *archi-synagogos* (Lifshitz 16, Pamphilia, Asia Minor, fifth century A.D.; 39, Syria, fourth century A.D.; Frey 991, Galilee, third and fourth century A.D.); *Rabbi*,<sup>44</sup> *gerousiarchos*<sup>45</sup> (Frey 803, Syria, late fourth century A.D.), *hazzan* and *diakon* (Lifshitz 40, Syria, fourth century A.D.), and finally *presbuteros* which finds considerable use in Jewish religious service in this later time (as exemplified in Lifshitz 14, Smyrna, fourth century A.D.; 32, Caria, third century A.D.; 37, Pamphilia, fifth century A.D.; 38, Syria, A.D. 391; 84, Cyprus fifth century A.D.; Frey 595, Italy). Among these are references to a plurality of *presbuteroi* in a synagogue community (Frey 803, Syria, "the most illustrious presbyters"; Lifshitz 101, north of Carthage, "the *presbuteroi* and the *archons*").

Equally strong is the evidence for the continued use in the church period of the term and concept *ecclesia*, which had come out of the same LXX linguistic situation as the term *synagoge*, both in the Fathers and in papyri (as P. Oxy. 1138, fifth or sixth centuries A.D.; P. Oxy. 1900, sixth century A.D.). Along with this organization went church officerships, such as the *episkopos* (P. Oxy. 2344, c. A.D. 336; P. Oxy. 1848, sixth or seventh centuries A.D.; C I G 9265 Phrygia, fourth century A.D.,<sup>46</sup> Ramsay 362, A.D. c. 200-215.)<sup>47</sup> It is true that *episkopos* which in the New Testament was equivalent in concept to *presbuteros* develops into what seems at first to be a moderator of, or leading member of, a group of *presbuteroi*, as in Ign. Phila. 4 ("one overseer with the presbytery"), *Poly.* 6, and *Trall* 2 (where subjection is to be given to both the *episkopos* and the *presbuterion*, or body of elders). But also the *episkopos* comes to be thought of as more distinct from and over the *presbuteroi* and *diakonoi*: in Ignatius,<sup>48</sup> as the one solely responsible for the Eucharist, *agape* (love feast), baptism (*Smyrn* 8) and marriage (*Poly.* 5);

42. See Frey's discussion on the synagogue-community life in Italy. Frey, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. LXX ff.

43. "Among the officials the archons... played the principal part in all Jewish communities of the Roman empire." V. A. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, ed., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, Vol. I (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 8.

44. See W. H. Mare, "Teacher and Rabbi...."

45. *Gerousia* being a term used as an equivalent for Sanhedrin in Acts 5:21.

46. W. M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Vol. I, Part II (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1897), p. 558.

47. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 521.

48. See G. Bornkamm, "Presbus," *TDNT*, VI, 674, 5.

in the papyri, as the one who is *episkopos* of the whole church of a city (P. Oxy. 2344, c. A.D. 336) and issues orders (P. Oxy. 1848, c. sixth or seventh centuries A.D.).

The *deacon* position of the New Testament continued in the church, being in the Apostolic Fathers third in importance to the *episkopos* and *presbuteroi* (Ign. *Poly.* 6, *Smyrn* 12) but serving in an important capacity with the *episkopos* (I Clem 42; Did 15:1) and in the service of Jesus Christ (Ign., *Mag.* 6). Christian use of the word shows up in P. Oxy. 1162, 3 (fourth century A.D.) along with *presbuteroi*.

Of particular interest is the church's continued use of *presbuteros*, a term which Beyer says for Jewish Christians was obvious.<sup>49</sup> In the Apostolic Fathers there is depicted a body of elders either spoken of as *presbuteroi* (as in I Clem 54; Ign. *Mag.*; Hermas, *vis* 2, 4, 2) or *presbyterion* (as in Ign. *Smyrn* 12; *Trall* 2). Papyri also demonstrate this plurality of elders in P. Oxy. 1162, 3 (fourth century A.D.) which speaks of *presbuteroi* and *diakonoi* of a local church; and in P L III (fourth century A.D.)<sup>50</sup> which mentions the elders of a particular church.

The *presbuteroi* with the *episkopos* served in an overseeing leadership of the church, involving decision-making and discipline (Ign. *Trall* 2, where there is enjoined subjection to the *episkopos* and presbytery), being called "The council of God" (Ign. *Trall* 3; *Mag* 2, 6) and doing work superior to that of deacons (Clem *Str.* 7.1). In the papyri the *presbuteroi* are seen as acting in the role of mediators (P. Oxy. 1026, fifth century A.D.) and of handling problems of conduct in the church (P. Grenf. I 53, 1.23, fourth century A.D.).<sup>51</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

We have examined terms for religious functionaries which developed from the usage of the Old Testament LXX as well as those which arose out of the New Testament milieu, and we have observed that eventually Judaism with its synagogue and appropriate offices continued in one direction while the Christian church and its functionaries went in another.

It is to be observed, however, that the one office, that of *presbuteros*, coming out of a Jewish background and used by New Testament Judaism and the New Testament Jewish Christian church alike, continued to be employed in centuries to follow by both religious bodies as a religiously revered term and concept. The following deductions can be drawn from this phenomenon:

1. The term and concept of *presbuteros* was sufficiently unencumbered with strong sacramental associations (such as the word *hiereus*,

49. Beyer, "Episkopos," *TDNT*, II, 619.

50. B. P. Grenfell, *Greek Papyri Chiefly Ptolemaic* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1896).

51. Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, *presbuteros*.

*priest*, would have had) so as to make it palatable to both religious groups.

2. The term and concept, *presbuteros*, represented the biblical concept of council or group leadership in directing God's work or seeking God's will (Numbers 11:16, 17; Deuteronomy 1:13-17; Acts 15:6, 22-28) which was theologically compatible to both Judaism and Jewish Christians.

3. While Judaism could use this term and concept as a part of the continuation of the teachings of the Old Testament (*cf.* the "traditions of the elders," Matthew 15:2), the New Testament Christian church could find in this term and concept of representation in the area of religious or church structure (*cf.* Acts 7:38) an aspect of that same continuity from Old Testament to New Testament of God's dealings with His people as they saw in the continuity of saving faith from Abraham to the New Testament believer (Romans 4:9-16; Galatians 3:6-9), and of the picture of substitution in the Passover and the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 5:7). Thus the church freely employed this term.