

The Christological Notion of *Diakonos* in Clement of Alexandria

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Abstract:

The article explores the notion of *diakonos* in the legacy of Clement of Alexandria. *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* shows that Clement uses the word at least 69 times in all of his works, which indicates that the Alexandrian theologian frequently turns to the meaning of the word. The majority of passages show that the prime meaning of the notion of *diakonos* and *diakonia* is tight in with the notion of Christ, who, for Clement, is on the one hand, the divine pre-existent *logos* of the Father, and on the other hand, the incarnate *paedagogos*, *didaskalos*, and *archiereus*. At the level of menial work, Clement follows a regular usage of the word, where *diakonia* denotes the meaning of serving at table or doing menial work, and he adds to it the sense of doing good with the moral and ethical connotations of self-control, restraint, and exhibition of virtues and extinction of vices. At the theological level, Clement describes the ministry in community, which points to the preaching of God's Word, which is the first responsibility of God's servants. Just as in the Old Testament the angels ministered to the prophets, so in the New Testament they did to the apostles. Correspondingly, in the New Testament the ministry takes an ecclesiastical sense on the social and spiritual levels. Clement reflects the contemporary three-ranking Church hierarchy of deacon, presbyter and bishop, and he argues for the successive ascent from one rank to the other as stages of spiritual growth and becoming "God's men." All together, the mission of the deacon is to assist the presbyter and bishop to proclaim God's Word and to participate with them in the ministry of Christ's mysteries. Studies on Clement often show that in his incarnational theology Clement envisages a project of Christian *paideia*, but often *diakonia tou Christou* is overlooked. This presentation, therefore, is an attempt to fill in the gap and present an important early Christian witness to the formation of both early dogmatic and ecclesiological notion of *diakonia*.

Text:

In this study, I will look at the notion of *diakonos tou theou* (the servant of God) from the point of the perfect Christian and gnostic, as it was described by Clement of Alexandria.¹ This notion is exemplified in the Christian ministry and service contextualized in the menial, communal, ecclesiastical, and specifically christological senses of *diakonia*. When Clement uses the word *diakone/w* together with its derivatives, such as *dia/konoj*, *diakoni/a*, one immediately recognizes its broad semantic field. We can find the use of the word with the following meanings, such as *to serve, fetch, provide, accomplish, fulfill responsibilities, behave in appropriate way, labor, do good deeds, serve at the Eucharistic table, and realize God's intent of salvation*. Depending on the context, the meaning of the word takes a cluster of senses and shades.² I shall venture a few examples.

Menial Work

In Clement's *Paedagogos*, we find vivid descriptions of Alexandrian extravagant banquets and immoderate entertainment, which he offers sharp criticism yet and, it seems, renders with hidden

¹ The most authoritative still remain the following works: Walther Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus*. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 57. Berlin, 1952; Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*. London, 1971; Judith L.Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9.1 (2001): 3-25 and Eric F. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*. Cambridge, 2005.

² On the New Testament and Early Christian sources of the notion of ministry see John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources*. New York, 1990; *ibid. Are All Christians Ministers?* Collegeville, Minn., 1992; *ibid. Deacons and the Church: Making Connections between Old and New*. Leominster, 2002; Jean Colson, *La fonction diaconale aux origines de l'Église*. Paris, 1960; Jean Daniélou, "Le ministère des femmes dans l'Église ancienne," *La Maison Dieu*. 61 (1960): 70-96; Velott H. la Rue, *The Order of Deacon: Its Origin and History in the Early Church*. Bernalillo, N.M., 1996; John Chryssavgis, *Remembering and Reclaiming Diakonia: the Diaconate Yesterday and Today*. Brookline, Mass., 2009. It used to be generally accepted that in NT the basic meaning of *diakone/w* and its derivatives was mere menial work, as is presented in H.W. Beyer, 'Diakonew, Diakonia, Diakonos', *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Ed. by Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1964, p. 81. However, recent studies have shown that such a view is too narrow. Dieter Georgi (*The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians: A Study of Religious Propaganda in Late Antiquity*. Philadelphia, 1986, p. 29) began to emphasize defining the function of deacon exclusively as "messenger", who has nothing to do with menial work but rather to do the business of preaching the Gospel. Finally, John N. Collins, whose works have become a standard today, contends that in the NT the notion has a different meaning in different contexts, including the traditional sense of menial work, as well as the Pauline "messenger" and "mediator." In some other contexts it can even mean the eschatological and ecclesiastical dimension of ministry and service, which later was transformed into practical social ministry and liturgical ministry. Collins's approach is reflected in the newer edition of the Greek-English lexicon. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt. Chicago, 2000, p. 229-31, which gives five senses of the word *diakonia*: (1) service rendered in an intermediary capacity, mediation, assignment: mediation of this public obligation (2) performance of a service (3) functioning in the interest of a larger public, service, office of the prophets and apostles (4)

delight. He notes that the trait of a silly person is to relish in vulgar banquets, and much sillier it is “to make one’s eyes the slaves of the delicacies, so that one’s greed is, so to speak, carried round by the servants (pro\j tw=n diako/nwn).”³ When he describes the objects of opulence, Clement gives a long list of “silver couches, and pans and vinegar-saucers, and smaller dishes and bowls; and besides these, vessels of silver and gold, some for serving (eij) diakoni/an) food, and others for other uses which I am ashamed to name.”⁴ He also criticizes overabundant sumptuousness and household valuables by ironically raising a question: “Will the table that is fashioned with ivory feet be indignant at bearing a three-halfpenny loaf? Will the lamp not dispense (diakonh/sei) light because it is the work of the potter, not of the goldsmith?”⁵ Clement ridicules those who spend time in vain and are afraid of manual work: “For, avoiding working with their own hands and serving themselves (au)todiakoni/an), men have recourse to servants, purchasing a great crowd of fine cooks, and of people to lay out the table, and of others to divide the meat skillfully into pieces.”⁶ Clement’s criticism did not circumvent deceitful eunuchs, who “serve (diakonou/menoi) without suspicion those that wish to be free to enjoy their pleasures, because of the belief that they are unable to indulge in lust.”⁷ In an agrarian and household context, when Clement spoke of sowing seeds, he called a father to be a servant of see sowing (dia/kono/j e)sti sperma/twn katabolh=j).⁸ And in his *Quis Dives Salvetur?* Clement mentions Martha, “who was occupied with many things, and distracted and troubled with serving (diakonikw=j) [Jesus].”⁹

When in the second book of his *Paedagogus*, Clement builds his argument against gnostics apropos the ontological unity of the people of faith and people of knowledge and he turned to the

rendering of specific assistance, aid, support; send someone something for support (5) an administrative function, service as attendant, aide, or assistant (English ‘deacon’).

³ *Paed.* 2.1.11.2. In most cases, I use the translation of Ante-Nicean Fathers, but also, where available, modern English translations, such as *Clement of Alexandria. Christ the Educator*. Translated by Simon P. Wood, C.P. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 23. Washington, D.C., 1954 and *Clement of Alexandria. Stromateis. Book One to Three*. Translated by John Ferguson. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 85. Washington, D.C., 1991. In the rest of the cases translations are mine.

⁴ *Paed.* 2.3.35.3. The meaning of serving food at table echoes Acts 6:2, to which Clement alludes in *Paed.* 2.7.56.1.

⁵ *Paed.* 2.3.37.3.

⁶ *Paed.* 3.4.26.1.

⁷ *Paed.* 3.4.26.3. Clement adds: “But a true eunuch is not one who is unable, but one who is unwilling, to indulge in pleasure.”

⁸ *Strom.* 3.12.87.4 and 6.16.147.4.

⁹ *Quis dives salvetur* 10.6. Clement refers here to Lk 10:39.

interpretation of the liquid and solid food in 1 Cor 3:2-3. Valentinians erroneously interpreted Paul and distinguished two opposite categories of people, those of faith and those of knowledge. But Clement saw a natural unity between faith and knowledge. He illustrates the mistake of the gnostic argument by the example of cheese that is made of liquid milk that becomes solid and, thus, Clement would add: “one substance supplies (diakonei=tai) both types of food.”¹⁰ As we can see, the meaning of the word goes beyond menial work and engrosses abstract senses of work in general.

Ministry of Heart and Mind

Besides the generally accepted meaning of the word *to serve*, Clement, in the manner typical for him, draws special attention to the ethical domain, and thus he connects the word with the notion of self-control, i.e., restraint in the consumption of alcohol, food, and sexual pleasures. Since Clement is a teacher of *apatheia*, one of the most important features of the true Stoic, which he adapted and interpreted through the prism of Christian understanding,¹¹ the meaning of the word *service* implies also moral connotations. When Clement ventured an exegesis of Christ’s words “do not worry about your life” (Mt 6:25), he explains them by saying that the one who fully devotes his or her life to Christ “ought to be sufficient to himself, and servant to himself (au)todia/konon), and moreover leads a life which provides for each day by itself.”¹² But when one is not with Christ, one becomes a servant of various vices: “Let us keep away from us discord, the originator of insult, from which strifes and contentions and enmities burst forth. Insult, we have said, is the servant of drunkenness (u/brin dia/konon).”¹³ If mocking is the beginning of immorality, then Sodom’s sin is perhaps its worst consequence. Therefore, Clement condemns it, too. In order to strengthen his argument, he turns to the analogy of promiscuous people with hyenas. According to Clement, only hyenas have exceedingly

¹⁰ *Paed.* 1.6.45.3.

¹¹ See Tomaš Špidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East* (Michigan, 1986), p. 66ff; Harry O. Maier, “Clement of Alexandria and the Care of the Self.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62.3 (1994): 719-744; Andrew Louth, “Apathetic Love in Clement of Alexandria.” *Studia Patristica* 18 (Louvain, 1989): 413-418.

¹² *Paed.* 1.12.98.4.

¹³ *Paed.* 2.7.53.1. Clement expresses a similar thought in *Strom.* 1.10.46.2.

large sexual organs and therefore they were given an additional organ, large enough to accommodate (ei)j diakoni/an) their excessive sexual activity.¹⁴ People do not have such accommodations, thus their sexual act is intended only to the conception of a child. Clement called people of sin servants of meretricious licentiousness, who wander about here and there.¹⁵ Special criticism is cast on men, women, and androgynes that make money in prostitution, since they are ministers of adultery (moixei/aj dia/konoi).¹⁶

To counter sinful weakness, Clement exhorts Christians to a virtuous life, which is brought up in us by the divine *Logos*. Christ the Pedagogue carefully looks after each human person so that he can willfully discard lavishness and adultery, grow wiser, recognize the value of self-restraint, from which springs temperance, and the human person becomes the minister of self-help (th\ n de\ au)tourgi/an dia/konon).¹⁷ To be able to answer to Christ's exhortation, one needs to express the readiness of the will, because "volition takes the precedence of all; for the intellectual powers are ministers (dia/konoi) of the will,"¹⁸ and "lust is nurtured and vitalized if we minister (diakonoume/nh) to its enjoyment; on the other hand, it fades away when it is kept in check."¹⁹ At the same time, Clement envisages a link between virtuous life and gnosis not in the sphere of human endeavors and abilities, not even in character's schooling (ou) d) ek paidei/aj th=j e)gkukli/ou) but in spiritual obedience and in imitation of God and God's Son, who gives his grace, gnosis, and victory over temptations in pursuit of righteousness.²⁰ The art of education and care for body finds its best realization, when "it only prepares the soul and serves it."²¹ The rest is in the hands of the Savior, who ennobles humanity with his grace.

Theology of Ministry

¹⁴ *Paed.* 2.10.87.2.

¹⁵ *Paed.* 3.4.28.5.

¹⁶ *Paed.* 3.4.29.2.

¹⁷ *Paed.* 3.6.35.3.

¹⁸ *Strom.* 2.17.77.5.

¹⁹ *Strom.* 3.5.41.6.

²⁰ Cf. *Strom.* 7.3.20.3.

²¹ *Strom.* 7.3.19.4. On Clement's theological use of the agrarian language, see Denise K. Buell, *Making Christians. Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy*. Princeton, N.J., 1999.

Besides the abovementioned menial and moral connotations, a semantic field of the word *to serve* in Clement has also a broader sense of *doing good*, as it is reflected in the biblical tradition, which he made use of in a regular manner.²² The biblical meaning of the word is transferred to a specifically theological and Christological domain. I will illustrate this sense, which springs from the common meanings and takes on at least four theological dimensions. I will tentatively call them *communal*, *ecclesiological*, *prophetic-angelic*, and *Christological* service.

Theology of Ministry: Community

Clement discusses the first dimension of the theological sense of *diakonia* in the context of service inside a Christian community. He derives this sense from the reading of the letters of Saint Paul, whom Clement calls “the one, who serves” (*diakonou=ntoj*).²³ Clement frequently uses Paul in a direct way,²⁴ yet at times he interprets Paul in a broadened sense of service. For instance, when Clement cites 1 Cor 3:8-9, he calls those who sows seeds and those who waters them as servants (*dia/konoi*) of the one, who gives growth, according to the general service.²⁵ Paul does not use the word *dia/konoi* here and explains what he means by saying “For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s cultivation, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9), yet Clement interprets this “fellow-working” with the meaning of Christian service.

Clement understands Christian service as the fulfillment of God’s will and participation in God’s life, as well as the participation in divine mission, which God bestows on his Son and the Church. He conjures up the incisive gradual plan of God’s providence and the role of God’s servants in its fulfillment: “For by these instances it is shown that both good things and gifts are supplied by God; and that we, becoming ministers of divine grace, ought to sow the benefits of God, and make those who

²² On the use of the Scriptures by Clement, see James A. Brooks, “Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon.” *Second Century* 9.1 (1992): 41-55; Annewies van den Hoek, “How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and his Alexandrian Background.” *Heythrop Journal* 31.1 (1990): 179-94 and her “Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria: A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 50 (1996): 223-43.

²³ *Strom.* 4.15.97.3.

approach us noble and good.”²⁶ Just as in Paul, so in Clement we find a distinction between general service, which pertains to the entire community, and the deacon’s service of God’s Word. We will return later with more detail to the second distinction, but it is important here to point out that Clement accepts Paul’s teaching of different vocations in the Church, in which our Alexandrian theologian emphasizes the liberation from sin. Such a liberated condition, in which a Christian dwells, gives him or her the possibility to fulfill his or her mission: “Let each man therefore fulfill his ministry by the work in which he was called, that he may be free in Christ and receive the proper reward of his ministry.”²⁷ This state of being liberated is the result of a certain ascetical preparation for the gnostic way of life, whose core meaning is participation in the work of ministry (ei)j e)rgon diakoni/aj). Thus the perfect Christian is eager “to strive to reach manhood as befits the gnostic, and to be as perfect as we can while still abiding in the flesh, making it our study with perfect concord here to concur with the will of God, to the restoration of what is the truly perfect nobleness and relationship, to the fullness of Christ, that which perfectly depends on our perfection.”²⁸

A communal dimension of ministry in Clement, as in Paul but with a different emphasis, finds its realization in the preaching of the Gospel. We find this communal relationship in Clement’s discussion of Barnabas’ mission, as it lies within the same semantic field as *kerygma*: “Barnabas, too, who in person preached the word along with the apostle in the ministry of the Gentiles, says...”²⁹

The subjects of preaching and instruction are closely related with the level of training and education of the one, who preaches. Thus, Clement justifies the genre for his own written tapestry of thoughts and ideas (*Stromata*), since he clearly realizes that some things he will tend to forget and in some subjects his memory will fail him altogether. Therefore he humbly acknowledges that “such a

²⁴ See citations of 2 Cor 6:4 in *Strom.* 1.1.4.4; Eph 4:11-12 in *Strom.* 1.1.13.5 and 4.21.132.1.

²⁵ *Strom.* 1.1.7.4.

²⁶ *Strom.* 2.18.96.4.

²⁷ *Strom.* 3.12.79.7 with allusion to 1 Cor 7: 22-24 and 1 Tm 3:4-5.

²⁸ *Strom.* 4.21.132.1 with a long quotation of Eph 4:11-13.

²⁹ *Strom.* 5.10.63.1: a)lla\ kai\ Barna/baj o(kai\ au)to\j sugkhru/caj t%= a)posto/l% kata\ th\n diakoni/an tw=n e)qmw=n...

ministry is not easy to those not experienced.”³⁰ He points out that God’s ministers have to know how to read and search through the Scriptures and to compose treatises, through which the minister/deacon continues his investigations and interpretations of the Holy Scriptures and Church dogmas.

A special stress on preaching is visible in Clement’s description of the activity of the apostles who commit their entire life to the ministry “by dedicating their attention to undistracted preaching.”³¹ Incidentally, Clement mentions in this context the fact that the apostles took their wives with them, and they helped the apostles to preach (*sundiako/nouj*) and to bring the Word of God to those places where access to men was closed. Here Clement stresses the actuality that for the apostles their wives were more like sisters than wives. As we know, Clement just like Paul accepted the married and celibate condition of Church leaders. He argued for the Christian understanding of family and insisted that “celibacy (*eu)nouxi/a*) and family life have their discrepancies in their mission and form of ministry (*leitourgi/aj kai\ diakoni/aj*),” and “the value of family life is embedded in giving a possibility to a man to learn in practice how to administer common property.”³²

Theology of Ministry: *Ecclesia*

The end of the second century is the period of the final stages for the institutional establishment of the Church. Clement perceives himself as the member of one Catholic Church.³³ At the end of the seventh book of his *Stromata*, he deals with the question of the unity of the Church. This unity derives from the unity of God, unity of one Savior, who is the Archpriest,³⁴ and thus the Church must be one and single:

Therefore in substance and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, we say that
the ancient and Catholic Church is alone, collecting as it does into the

³⁰ *Strom.* 1.1.14.3: *e)pei\ mh\ r(#/dioj h(toia/de diakoni/a toi=j mh\ dedokimasmē/noij.*

³¹ *Strom.* 3.6.53.3.

³² *Strom.* 3.12.79.5. In *Strom.* 3.12.90.1 Clement drew special attention to the fact that the presbyter, deacon or lay person can be married once, “if he conducts his marriage unblameably.” For such persons, Clement explains, “shall be saved by child-bearing” (1 Tm 2:15). It is interesting that the latter Scriptural quotation refers to women, who are saved “by child-bearing,” but Clement uses it to approve of the married presbyterate. I thank for this observation to Fr. George Berthold.

³³ See *Strom.* 7.17.106.1-108.1. In *Strom.* 7.17.107.3 Clement contends that “the true Church, that which is really ancient, is one, and that in it those who according to God’s purpose are just, are enrolled.”

³⁴ *Protr.* 12.120.2, *Strom.* 2.5.21.4-5.

unity of the one faith³⁵ – which results from the peculiar Testaments, or rather the one Testament in different times by the will of the one God, through one Lord – those already ordained, whom God predestinated, knowing before the foundation of the world that they would be righteous.³⁶

About these predestinated or “chosen out of the chosen” (e)klektw=n e)klekto/teroi) in the Church, Clement says that the Scriptures endows them with different functions³⁷ and they can be called deacons, presbyters, and bishops. A threefold structure of the Church hierarchy is frequently found in Clement, each of which having its own particularity and mission. Besides this, these three Church ranks are intimately intertwined with each other not only for the reason that they serve the same cause of ministry in the “unity of faith,” but also for the reason that they are in hierarchical interdependence:

Since, according to my opinion, the grades here in the Church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory, and of that economy (oi)konomi/aj) which, the Scriptures say,³⁸ awaits those who, following the footsteps of the apostles, have lived in perfection of righteousness according to the Gospel. For these taken up in the clouds,³⁹ the apostle writes, will first minister [as deacons], then be classed in the presbyterate, by promotion in glory (for glory differs from glory) till they grow into “a perfect man.”⁴⁰

I will return to the question of the heavenly hierarchy again later, but it is important here to note successiveness of the ranks from deacon to presbyter, and thus to bishop. The allusion to Paul’s letter to Thessalonians gives the Church hierarchy a certain eschatological tension, which is directed to growth and perfection. Incidentally, the Greek word used here for denoting the “rank” literally means *gradual moving forward* (prokopai/) or to be more precise it is a gradual progress meant here in a spiritual sense. This progress results in a growing authority that oversees the wellbeing of the Christian community. On the other hand, the realization of this progress finds its fulfillment in the ultimate transformation of the individual Christian into a “perfect man.” “The perfect man” is the allusion to the Ephesians, which Clement, as we could see earlier, used, when he described the uniting of the human

³⁵ Cf. Heb 4:13.

³⁶ *Strom.* 7.17.107.5.

³⁷ See *Paed.* 3.12.97.2.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 2:9.

³⁹ Cf. 1 Col 4:17.

will with God's will. The uniting with God happens simultaneously with the liberation from sin, which results in the ability to truly serve God in Church.⁴¹ The presbyter's duty is to teach, help, and correct, and the duty of the deacon is to assist presbyter in his mission. Both are the true gnostics.⁴² The deacon and the presbyter and the bishop do angelic ministry, fulfill God's will, and humbly teach not human wisdom but God's knowledge, and participate in the ministry of Christ's mysteries.⁴³ In the latter we see the meaning of the advancement from deacon's rank to the rank of the presbyter and to further spiritual growth. From this they draw their righteousness and merited place not on earth but at the Last Judgment, at which they will sit at the twenty four thrones to judge nations.⁴⁴

Here one can raise a question, whether Clement himself was a presbyter or a deacon? Some scholars have attempted to answer this question before, as they thought that from this answer one could deduct Clement's personal relation to the local Church community and the bishop in Alexandria. In the older historiography, Hugo Koch asserted that Clement undoubtedly was a presbyter.⁴⁵ However, not long ago, Ulrich Neymeyr followed arguments of Friedrich Quatember and expressed an opinion that when Clement taught his apprentices the art of "caring for the soul," he did not have to fulfill the duties of a presbyter.⁴⁶ Neymeyr's position was based on two premises. First of all, he reinterpreted the title

⁴⁰ *Strom.* 6.13.107.2-3. "Perfect men" is the allusion to Eph 4:13.

⁴¹ See above note 27.

⁴² *Strom.* 7.1.3.2-4.

⁴³ On Clement's "sacramentology" see Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis*, C. 17-76; Ulrich Neymeyr, "Presbyteroi bei Clemens von Alexandrien." *Studia patristica* 31 (Louvain, 1997): 493-496; Andrew L. Pratt, "Clement of Alexandria: Eucharist as Gnosis." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32 (Sum 1987): 163-178; André Méhat, "Clement of Alexandria" in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians*. Willy Rordorf...[et al.]. New York 1978, p. 99-131; A. H. C. van Eijk, "Gospel of Philip and Clement of Alexandria: Gnostic and Ecclesiastical Theology on the Resurrection and the Eucharist." *Vigiliae Christianae* 25 no 2 (1971), p. 94-120.

⁴⁴ *Strom.* 6.13.106.2 with the allusion to Rv 4:4.

⁴⁵ Koch Hugo, "War Klemens von Alexandrien Priester?" *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 20 (1921): 43-48.

⁴⁶ Ulrich Neymeyr. *Die christliche Lehrer im zweiten Jahrhundert: ihre Lehrtätigkeit, ihr Selbstverständnis und ihre Geschichte*. Leiden, 1989. C. 46-50; Friedrich Quatember, *Die christliche Lebenshaltung des Klemens von Alexandrien nach seinem Pädagogus*. Wien, 1946, C. 15, note. 13. See also Annewies van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage." *Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997): 71-79; Adolf Knauber, "Die patrologische Schätzung des Clemens von Alexandrien," C. 289-293. Adolf Knauber, "Die patrologische Schätzung des Clemens von Alexandrien bis zu seinem neuerlichen Bekanntwerden durch die ersten Druckedition des 16. Jahrhunderts." *Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannes Quasten I*. Ed. by P. Granfield, J.A. Jungman. Münster, Westf., 1970, p. 289-293. As Neymer, so Quatenberg and van den Hoek tend to think that Clement was not a presbyter, and this title was given to him by Eusebius to emphasize his authority. This point of view is supported by Ks. Czesław Krakowiak, "Posługiwanie biskupów, prezbiterów i diakonów w pichmach Ojców Kościoła do V wieku." *Vox Patrum* 28 t.53 (2008): 513-530, on Clement see pp. 522-523. See also P.Szczur, "Urząd prezbitera w świetle pism Klemensa Alexandrii." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 51 (2004):

maka/rioj presbu/teroj, by which Alexander, the bishop of Jerusalem, honored Clement in his letter to the church in Antioch, written ca. 215-255, and cited by Eusebius in his *Historia ecclesiastica* and elsewhere.⁴⁷ Incidentally, this letter was written after Clement's death as the short citation which is found in Eusebius. It implies that Clement left this world. This letter also is the locus of determination of Clement's date of death. With this title Clement entered Church tradition, and the later Church Fathers, such as the Cappadocians, Maximus the Confessor, John Damascene, and Photius had no doubts about the fact that Clement was a local Alexandrian presbyter. Neymeyr, however, suggested treating the title maka/rioj presbu/teroj, by which Alexander revered Clement, only in a titular and honorary sense, and not as the indication of a certain sacerdotal rank. Secondly, Neymeyr pointed out to the fact that Clement is more interested in allegory, the mystical sense of Christian sacraments, spiritual guidance of soul and mystical union with God, and not the literal description of liturgical processions of baptism and Eucharist. Such non-physical interest of Clement in the life of the Christian community led Neymeyr to believe that Clement was a lay person rather than a presbyter. One thing is certain from this story that is Clement was a member of a specific congregation/church and not of an abstract group of people. And even if Clement does not provide any historical descriptions of Christian rituals⁴⁸ and is interested in their allegorical, ethical, and spiritual explanations, which is a certain fact, this does not exclude the possibility that he was also a presbyter. Moreover, as we saw earlier, Clement's understanding of the deacon's role in church is connected to his picture of the true gnostic, who as he begins his duty of teaching and correction of other members of the community, he automatically begins to hold the deacon's ministry and enters the steps of the hierarchical progress to the higher ranks of Church structure. The true gnostic must yearn to become a "perfect man," which means that he is invited to climb all the steps of the ladder, from the diaconate to presbyterate and

C. 68-79. The point of view that Clement was a priest is expressed recently by Eugenii Afonasin in the introduction to his Russian translation of Clement's *Stromata*, see Eugenii Afonasin, ed. *Kliment Aleksandriiskii. Stromaty. Knih 1-3*. St.-Petersburg, 2003, pp. 16-20ff.

⁴⁷ *Hist. Eccl.* 6.13.3 and 6.14.9.

⁴⁸ See Herbert G. Marsh, "The Use of *Musth/rion* in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria with Special Reference to his Sacramental Doctrine." *Journal of Theological Studies* 27 (1936) 64-80.

episcopacy.

Theology of Ministry: Pneumatological Unity with Angels, Prophets, and Apostles

The third type of the theological meaning of the ministry is what can figuratively be called prophetic, pneumatological and cosmo-liturgical form of ministry, which springs from Clement's exegesis of such biblical texts as Gen 28:12, Ps 18:2 and Mt 4:11 (Mk 1:12), where *ministry* is described as enacted by angels, prophets, and apostles. As we established above, Clement inscribes the notion of ministry within the triad of the deacon-presbyter-bishop, although this triad, as we saw earlier is part of the broader sacerdotal order which connects humanity with the invisible world. Alexander Golitzin has recently demonstrated that Clement preceded pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the description of "heavenly" and "ecclesiastical" hierarchy, in which each rank has a clearly defined role in the transmission of the divine blessing and knowledge from the first source to each created being, in general, and each human person, in particular.⁴⁹ Basing himself on Golitzin's findings, Bogdan Bucur has ventured a thesis that the pneumatological link between angels, prophets, and apostles is a theme adopted from an older Jewish tradition. In that tradition, parallel to the image of the Word of God as mediator there is also God's Spirit and angelic spirits, perhaps even the seven archangels, whom Clement calls the first-begotten angels.

When he comments on Ps 18:2 (LXX) "the heavens declare the glory of God," Clement suggests understanding "the heavens" both as the heavens, in the literal meaning of the verse, and as works of the first-begotten angels, who brought God's testimonies to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Clement explains that the first-begotten angels transmitted God's testimonies to angels, and these, being closer to human persons, brought the "glory of God" to the prophets. Clement summarizes this account and says that the word "heavens" ultimately can be understood as denoting even God and

⁴⁹ In *Strom.* 6.13.107.2 and *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 1.27.1-6 Clement corrected gnostic myth in light of traditions of Jewish and Neo-platonic legacy and spoke of the "heavenly hierarchy" (cosmic order), laying foundation for Ps.-Dionysius. See Alexander Golitzin, *Et introibo ad altare Dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita, with Special Reference to Its Predecessors in the Eastern Tradition*, AV 59. Thessalonica, 1994, p. 265.

the first-begotten angels and “together with them holy persons, who lived before the Law, as well as the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets, and finally the apostles.”⁵⁰

In the New Testament context, which he uses in his *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, the ministry of angels to Christ is emphasized in the scene of Christ’s victory over temptations in the desert, after which “angels appeared and waited on him” (Mt 4:11).⁵¹ These spirits and the Holy Spirit, in essence, were considered in the older tradition as one and the same entity, through which God communicated with the created world by speaking to the prophets (in the New Testament with the apostles).⁵² Early Christian theologians, in particular Clement or Bardesane and Aphrahat in Syria, wrote in approximately the same period and concurrently reflected in their writings an echo of the angelological pneumatology.⁵³ However, as Christological and Trinitarian discussions advanced, this tradition gave way to new formulations and thus became obsolete, although it did not disappear altogether.⁵⁴ Several other examples will better illustrate this pneumatological venue.

Clement enters into polemics with Basilidians regarding the true interpretation of the saying in the book of Proverbs 1:7, “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” A question occurs, what kind of fear and whose wisdom are these? For gnostics, the answer was clear: this is the fear of the false god, since the wisdom of the true God never arouses fear. In this context, they speak of the Spirit-

⁵⁰ *Eclogae Proph.* 51-52.

⁵¹ *Exc. ex Theodoto* 4.85.2. Clement notes here that “angels served him, who, by being in body, served them. Thus we should dress up in the Lord’s armor, having body and soul invulnerable, ‘the armor that casts off devil’s arrows,’ as the Apostle said.”

⁵² See Bogdan G. Bucur, “The Divine Face and the Angels of the Face: Jewish Apocalyptic Themes in Early Christology and Pneumatology.” *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity*. Edited by Robert J. Daly, SJ. Grand Rapids, 2009, p. 144-148. Bucur points out that Clement’s hierarchical universe, as well as angelological pneumatology or pneumatological angelology are formed not so much by the Neo-Platonic philosophical system, as by the older Jewish apocalyptic tradition. See also Paul Collomp, “Une source de Clément d’Alexandrie et des Homélie Pseudo-Clémentines.” *Revue de philologie de littérature et d’histoire anciennes* 37 (1913): 19-46; Wilhelm Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom: Literarische Untersuchungen zu Philo und Clemens von Alexandria, Justin und Irenäus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915; Jean Daniélou, “Les traditions secrètes des Apôtres.” *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 31 (1962): 199-215; Johannes Munk, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria*. Stuttgart, 1933, p. 127-204; Georg Kretschmar, *Studien zur frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie*. Tübingen, 1956, p. 68 note 3.

⁵³ Bogdan G. Bucur, “The Divine Face and the Angels of the Face,” C. 148-153. See also Robert Murrey, “Some Themes and Problems of Early Syriac Angelology.” *Orientalia christiana analecta* (1990): 143-150.

⁵⁴ Bogdan G. Bucur, “The Divine Face and the Angels of the Face,” C. 153: “Face Christology never became a major player in classic definitions of faith. Like “Name” Christology, “Wisdom” Christology, or “Glory” Christology, once crucial categories in the age of Jewish Christianity, this concept went out of fashion, giving way to a more precise vocabulary shaped by the christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries. Angelomorphic pneumatology,

minister. Clement is indignant of the gnostic's opinion that Archon, namely the false god, the Demiurge, having heard the words of the Spirit-minister (*diakonoume/nou pneu/matoj*) was afraid of such great and good news.⁵⁵ It follows that out of this fear is born wisdom. In Clement's *Excerpta ex Theodoto* we find that here the author of the book of Proverbs speaks about the Holy Spirit, whom Valentinians called the Spirit of the Father's Intent and the followers of Basilides called him the Minister.⁵⁶ Valentinians also contended that the Spirit, who dwelled in the prophets for the completion of the service, now is poured out onto the entire Church.⁵⁷ Clement answers that in the book of Proverbs the prophet speaks about the one and only beginning of wisdom, which comes from one God. This beginning is called "fear," because God conceived the law, which the *Logos* later gave to the people through his prophet Moses. Hence, the unjust are afraid of the Law, but the righteous have no fear. In the same context, Clement calls Jesus Christ a servant or a minister and contends that if the beginning of wisdom were "fear and shock" "then the Minister (*dia/konoj*), his preaching and baptism entirely lose their meaning."⁵⁸ I believe that the term *the Minister* here could be taken in a pneumatological sense, since the narration earlier was about the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus during his baptism. But besides the pneumatological connotation, one can also clearly see a christological allusion precisely because the term *Minister* is used in the context of both the preaching and baptism, in which the Holy Spirit is present and Christ is both the object of baptism and the subject of preaching. I will return to Clement's christological interpretation of the term later.

Besides the allusion to the Holy Spirit, we can see here also an important role of Moses, who brings God's Law to the people. In his short interpretation of the dialogue between Moses and God at the desert vision of the burning bush, Clement puts into Moses' mouth extracanonical words, which are intertwined with citations from the book of Exodus. Moses speaks with a certain timidity due to his

however, and the associated exegesis of Matthew 18:10 illustrated by Clement and Aphrahat, became problematic with the advent of the Arian and Pneumatomachian confrontations, and were eventually discarded."

⁵⁵ *Strom.* 2.8.36.1.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Exc. ex Theotodo.* 1.16.1. Such a meaning in this concrete passage is given by G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon.* Oxford, 1961, p. 353.

⁵⁷ *Exc. ex Theotodo.* 1.24.1.

stammering: “Who am I that you are sending me. ‘For I am slow and hesitant of speech’ to transmit (diakonh=sai) God’s word through human language.”⁵⁹ To minister, as we saw earlier in the examples of the apostolic and ecclesiastical ministry, is intimately connected with the transmission and pronouncement of God’s word. Clement additionally emphasizes that “both laws ministered (dihko/noun) the Word for educating (ei)j paidagwgia/n) humanity, one was given through Moses, the other one through apostles.”⁶⁰

At the end of the first chapter of his *Pedagogue*, Clement explains God’s pedagogy, according to which God educates and brings up chosen people through the expression of God’s love and through different kinds of punishments. Pronouncement of God’s will is done through prophet-ministers, whom Clement calls God’s servants: “for he that knows God, how does he persecute God’s servants?”⁶¹ God’s ministers are inspired by the divine *Logos*.⁶² And on the contrary, false prophets are messengers/ministers of apostates (a)posta/tou dia/konoi),⁶³ and the kingdom of the fallen angels “by not fulfilling any ministry has become the place of death.”⁶⁴

Clement calls the greatest ministry (kalli/sthn diakoni/an) in the Old Testament the receiving and feeding of guests. Thus he establishes an allusion to the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah, who received three unusual guests.⁶⁵ The ministry at table, the ministry to the angels or to God is also closely related to the mystical ministry, which later was interpreted in the context of an encounter with God in the Jerusalem Temple and, also, at the Last Supper of Christ with his twelve apostles.

A correlation of the spiritual and angelic ministry is seen even better in the following example. In his fifth book of *Stromateis*, Clement describes the Jerusalem Temple, the sacrifice that is being offered there, the entire temple arrangement, as well as the vestments and the figure of the Archpriest. To each of these elements, Clement provides allegorical explanations, which he Christianizes based on

⁵⁸ *Strom.* 2.8.38.1.

⁵⁹ *Strom.* 4.17.106.4, this is not an exact quotation of Ex 4:10.

⁶⁰ *Paed.* 3.12.94.1.

⁶¹ *Paed.* 1.9.79.3.

⁶² *Strom.* 1.17.81.3.

⁶³ *Strom.* 1.17.85.4.

the interpretation of Ex 26-28 and Lev 16:4 of Philo of Alexandria seen through the prism of the New Testament text of Heb 9:6-12.⁶⁶ A divine Liturgy is described here celebrated by Christ the Archpriest. In his *Excerpta ex Theodoto* we also find a similar description of a mystical performance, which Clement transfers into the depths of the human soul, in the center of which a union of the human person with God takes place through the intercession of the perfect Mediator, Jesus Christ. Clement calls this mystical experience “sacred ministry” (i(eratikh\ diakoni/a) that takes place beyond the curtain, which separates participants of this act from those outside.⁶⁷ Certainly, one should not imagine here a contemporary church of Byzantine rite with an iconostasis and priests standing around the table. But rather we should read here an allegorical explanation of the happening that takes place at the Jerusalem Temple, in the Holy of Holies into which only the Archpriest entered only once a year. Clement could not have been a witness to such ritual in Jerusalem, since the Temple was already destroyed in his times, a fact which obviously opened doors to Jewish and Christian theologians to allegorize the old-Jewish temple cult. However, he could have been a witness to the Eleusinian or other Greek mystery processions, which he described in detail and, on the one hand, criticized them, and on the other hand, borrowed from them a religious terminology for indoctrination into a new religion.⁶⁸

The golden lamp in the Jerusalem Temple, according to Clement’s interpretation, is the sign of Christ, who sheds light “at many moments in the past and by many means” (Heb 1:1) upon those, who

⁶⁴ *Exc. ex Theodoto* 3.58.1.

⁶⁵ *Paed.* 3.10.49.5.

⁶⁶ See Anniewies van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His use of Philo in the Stromateis. An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*. *Vigiliae Christianae Supplement* 3. Leiden, 1988, pp. 116-147; Judith L. Kovacs, “Concealment and Gnostic Exegesis: Clement of Alexandria’s Interpretation of Tabernacle.” *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997): 414-37; Oleh Kindiy, “Do narysu christologii Klymenta Aleksandriiskoho: Xristovj)Arxiereuj” *Bohoslovia* 69 (2005): 134-145.

⁶⁷ *Strom.* 5.6.34.3.

⁶⁸ Clement described Greek, Roman and Syrian myths and mysteries in his *Protrepticus*. Here he demythologized and deconstructed old myths and showed the power of the new, truly real, Christian religion. See Bruce M. Metzger, “Methodology in the Study of the Mystery Religions and Early Christianity.” In *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian*. *New Testament Tools and Studies*, vol. 8. Leiden, 1968, pp. 1-24; Hugo Rahner, “The Christian Mystery and the Pagan Mysteries.” In *The Mysteries*. *Papers from the Eranos Yearbook*, vol. 2. Ed. Joseph Campbell. Princeton, 1978, pp. 337-401; Thomas Halton, “Clement’s Lyre: A Broken String, a New Song.” *The Second Century. A Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1983): 177-199.

hope for and look at him through the ministry of the firstborn angels.⁶⁹ One thing here is worth of special attention, namely the terminology employed by Clement: the sacred ministry, which summarizes all previous dimensions of physical aid and service, moral purity, proclamation of God's Word and angelic, prophetic and apostolic ministry, which are connected with each other and transferred in the realm of Christ's priestly ministry. It is also important to emphasize that angelic ministry is aimed at not only serving God but also serving people.⁷⁰ In other words, the ministry is not only hierarchical subordination of the lower to the higher but also it is best understood as a close relationship and mutual espousal of all levels of God's creation.

Theology of Ministry: *Christos Diakonos*

For Clement, the model of genuine ministry is Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve (Mt 20:28). Just as the angels serve not only God but also people, who are called to serve God and the people in their preaching of God's Word. This is precisely the reason why the ultimate and profoundest sense of ministry is tied to the ministry of Jesus Christ. This sense is part of who he is.⁷¹ The typical approach Clement takes to answer the question of who is Christ comes from his understanding of the encounter of the divine *Logos* with the human.⁷² The *Logos* is coeternal with the Father, exists before the creation of the world, and carries the universal character of the oneness and the entire multiplicity hidden in this oneness.⁷³ However, at the same time, Clement perceives God's Word as the agent, who is able to become the New Song, Teacher, and the Archpriest and thereby to penetrate the social, ethnic, cultural, and religious sphere of humankind. Education, i.e., Christian *paideia* is the crucial component of Clement's theological program.⁷⁴ Clement's perception of Christian *paideia* is not simply a figurative and interpretative category, by which Clement attempted to

⁶⁹ *Strom.* 5.6.35.1. See also *Strom.* 6.17.157.4, where Clement explicitly says that divine powers cooperate in the ministry of virtuous people, whose thoughts come from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

⁷⁰ *Quis dives salvetur* 29.4.

⁷¹ On Clement's christology see Oleh Kindiy, *Christos Didascalos: Christology of Clement of Alexandria*. Saarbrücken, 2008.

⁷² *Paed.* 1.7.59.1; *Protr.* 11.116.1; *Paed.* 1.3.8.2.

describe the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. His understanding of *paideia* necessitates a constant, yet always evolutionary, creative and self-perfecting infrastructure of school/synagogue/church, which is inseparable from the physical culture of everyday gatherings and religious rituals.⁷⁵

The divine *Logos* becomes human and redeems humanity from incredulity, sin, and unhappiness by giving a happy alternative, namely the life with God in a deified status.⁷⁶ Clement's soteriology and christology are closely related. The unity of soteriology and christology is seen in the description of what the *Logos* does for people, when he dwells among them. Jesus Christ, the true God and the true man takes upon himself a well designed sequence of roles, through which humanity receives salvation.⁷⁷ At first, Christ acts as *protrepticos*, namely the one, who converts people by his New Song. This Song is understood as the New Testament of love, which complements, fulfils, and supersedes the Moisaic Law. As the new song of literature and philosophy he gives a definitive kind of *Überphilosophie*, which complements, transforms, and supersedes Greek philosophy and leads to the ultimate truth⁷⁸ in the Christian community and Christian way of life. Having made one interested in what the *Logos* offers and having invited one to the mutual dialogue, Christ plays the role of the *pedagogos*, who brings a person up and purifies him from old habits of sinful life. As a good pedagogue he leads the human person to a realization that there is something more than the human person can ever think of. The fundamentals of faith and first steps into the knowledge of the divine are given to the human person at this stage. When the human person undergoes conversion and the process

⁷³ *Strom.* 7.2.5.3-6.

⁷⁴ *Paed.* 3.12.97.3-98.2 and *Strom.* 4.25.162.5.

⁷⁵ *Eclogae proph.* 23.

⁷⁶ On deification, see Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background*. New York, 2002; Patterson, L.G., "The Divine Became Human: Irenaean Themes in Clement of Alexandria." *Studia Patristica* 31 (Louvain, 1997): 497-516; Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. Oxford, 1988, C. 121-139; George W. Butterworth, "The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria." *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1916): 157-169; Cuthbert Lattey, "The Deification of Man in Clement of Alexandria: Some Further Notes." *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1916): 257-262.

⁷⁷ *Protr.* 1.7.1.

⁷⁸ See *Strom.* 1.13.57.1-6. In *Strom.* 1.13.57.6 Clement even contends that "if anyone brings together the scattered limbs into a unity, you can be quite sure without risk of error that he will gaze on the Word in his fullness, the Truth." See also 1.5.32.4: "philosophy is characterized by investigation into truth and the nature of things, this is the truth of which the Lord Himself said, "I am the truth" (Jo 14:6); that, again, the preparatory training for rest in Christ exercises the mind, rouses the intelligence, and begets an inquiring shrewdness, by means of the true philosophy, which the initiated possess, having found it, or rather received it, from the truth itself."

of education, Christ invites that person to the highest level of communication with God. Christ the Teacher, *didascalos*, opens before the human person the unlimited mysteries of God's life.⁷⁹ The knowledge of the mysteries of communication with God is the ultimate sense of human existence. Through the knowledge of God, the human person enters the Holy of Holies of the everlasting Liturgy celebrated by angelic ranks. Its chief celebrant is Christ, the divine *Logos*, who, having taken upon himself material body, is also the Temple/Church, in which the Liturgy takes place. He is the sacrifice that is being offered at the altar of God's glory. Christ is the Archpriest, who brings in the perfect offering, as if taking himself into his own hands and handing himself over to the Father in complete obedience, in the eternal act of his being born as the Son.⁸⁰

Hence, the most excellent expression of the ministry is the ministry of Christ himself in the soteriological, mystical, and trinitarian senses of the notion. It is one of the decisive parts of the identity of God's Son:

Now, O you, my children, our Instructor (*paidagwog*) is like His Father God, whose son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion (*apawh*); God in the form of man,⁸¹ stainless, the *minister* (*dia/konog*) of His Father's will,⁸² the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father's right hand,⁸³ and with the form of God is God. He is to us a spotless image; to Him we are to try with all our might to assimilate our souls. He is wholly free from human passions; wherefore also He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless.⁸⁴

Henri- Irénée Marrou in his running cross-reference to the Sources Chrétiennes edition of Clement's *Pedagogue*, apropos the use of the term *dia/konog* in Clement in this particular passage, points out the fact that the Alexandrian theologian applies the term *minister* (*dia/konog*) to Christ even though there are no scriptural examples of such use, even though the word is often found in the Scripture in other contexts with other meanings. Marrou also notes that the christological usage of the term can be

⁷⁹ *Pead.* 1.1.3.3: "Therefore, the all-loving Word, anxious to perfect us in a way that leads progressively to salvation, makes effective use of an order well adapted to our development; at first, he persuades, then he educates, and after all this he teaches."

⁸⁰ Oleh Kindiy, *Christos Didascalos: The Christology of Clement of Alexandria*, C. 240-248.

⁸¹ Cf. Phil 2:7.

⁸² Cf. Jo 4:34.

⁸³ Cf. Act 7:55 (Ps 109:1).

found in Polycarp's letter *To Philipians* 5.2, where Christ is called "the minister of all" (dia/konoj pa/ntwn).⁸⁵ Clement may have been familiar with this letter or at least with the earlier Christian tradition, which applied the term to the characterization of Christ. On the other hand, we can disagree with Marrou, since in the above quotation of texts from Clement's *Pedagogue*, he could have had in mind Christ's own words: "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27).⁸⁶ Besides making an allusion to Luke, Clement also refers in a different passage of the same tractate to the text of Mt 20:28 and explains that the term *to minister*, which Christ uses in his address to the disciples means *hard work*, which Christ does for the many, since he came not to be served but to serve.⁸⁷

Parallel to the exegetical appropriation of the term *to serve*, Clement unwraps the meaning of Christ's ministry in his incarnational vision of Christ's mission. Clement firmly establishes Christ as God's Son and God and emphasizes the evangelical principle of the perfect obedience of the Son to the Father. The Son shares with the Father divine life, which makes him equal with the Father and makes him able to fulfill God's will.⁸⁸ This thesis Clement ventured in the first book of his *Pedagogue*, as we could see above. With this thesis he concludes his tractate in the third book. However, here, in addition to the presentation of Christ as the Mediator "God in man and man in God," Clement calls him here God's Minister and our Teacher. The notion of servant here is identified not only with the obedience to the Father's will, but also with the *kenosis* and incarnation, according to which the Son is not ashamed of anything human or material. Clement clearly distinguishes a slave from a servant. He develops the Pauline theme of Phil 2:7 and views the physical or the bodily as the aspect of slavery (*dou/lon*), i.e., something that belongs to the sphere of sin and death, to the outer side of the human

⁸⁴ *Paed.* 1.2.4.1-2, the emphasis is mine.

⁸⁵ Clément d'Alexandrie, *Le Pédagogue*. Livre 1. Introduction et notes de Henri-Irénée Marrou; traduction de Marguerite Harl. Sources Chrétiennes 70. Paris, 1960, C. 114-115, note 3.

⁸⁶ Lk 22:27: e)gw\ de\ e)n me/s% u(mw=n ei)mi w(j o(dia/knw=n.

⁸⁷ *Paed.* 1.9.85.1: toiou=toj h(mw=n o(paidagwo/j, a)gaqo\j e)ndi/kwj. "ou)k h)=lqon", fhsi/, "diakonhqh=nai, a)lla\ diakonh=sai." dia\ tou=to ei)sa/getai e)n t%= eu)aggeli/% kekmhkw/j, o(ka/mnwn u(pe\r h(mw=n kai\ "dou=nai th\n yuxh\n th\n e(autou= a)nti\ pollw=n". Such is our Instructor, righteously good. "I came not," He says, "to be ministered unto, but to minister (Matt 20:28)." Wherefore He is introduced in the Gospel "wearied," because toiling for us, and promising "to give His life a ransom for many."

person, which Christ takes upon himself. However, according to Clement, Christ takes upon himself the form of a slave so that through his ministry “the compassionate God Himself set the flesh free, and releasing it from destruction, and from bitter and deadly bondage, endowed it with incorruptibility, arraying the flesh in this, the holy embellishment of eternity, immortality.”⁸⁹

Such a soteriological aspect of Christ’s ministry is supported by the interpretation of the immanent nature of the *Logos*, who dwells in the bosom of the Father and is called to express the Father through such means as Name, Image, and Light. Clement explains that the divine omnipotence can make itself heard without the means of a created mediator and therefore God’s voice, namely the divine *Logos* does not have a material created form. But “the Lord’s voice, the Word, without shape, the power of the Word, the luminous word of the Lord, the truth from heaven, from above, comes to the assembly of the Church, wrought by the luminous immediate ministry (dia\ fwteinh=j th=j prosexou=j diakoni/aj).”⁹⁰

Clement leads us again into the context of a Liturgy presided by the Archpriest. Setting up the scenery of the Last Supper and the prayer for the apostles (Jo 17) as the backdrop, Clement portrays Christ the Archpriest, who prays for the completion of his ministry by asking God the Father that as many people as possible reach the true gnosis, the knowledge of God.⁹¹

Brief Conclusions

In this research I have looked at almost all the cases of Clement’s usage of the word *to serve/minister* and the words that derive from it, such as minister or ministry. I divided the cluster of semantic meanings of the word into two categories: menial and theological. At the level of menial work, Clement follows a regular usage of the word, where it denotes the meaning of serving at table or doing menial work, and he adds to it the sense of doing good with the moral and ethical connotations of self-

⁸⁸ Whether Clement espoused a theological view of subordination or equality of the Son to the Father is a matter of scholarly discussion, but the most recent scholarship finds in Clement arguments for both standpoints, although he seem to be closer to the later Nicean theology than Origen. See Kindiy, *Christos Didascalos*, 52-117.

⁸⁹ *Paed.* 3.1.2.1-3. Cf. *Strom.* 7.2.7.5: Nor does He ever abandon care for men, by being drawn aside from pleasure, who, having assumed flesh, which by nature is susceptible of suffering, trained it to the condition of impossibility.

⁹⁰ *Strom.* 6.3.34.1.

control, restraint, and exhibition of virtues and extinction of vices. At the theological level, Clement is even more interesting. First of all, he describes the ministry in community, which reflects not only menial sense, but rather points to the preaching of God's Word, which is the first responsibility of God's servants. Not only are people engaged in this ministry but also angels, who fulfilled ministry in the Old Testament by bringing God's Law to the people through the prophets. Thus Clement calls prophets God's ministers, too. Just as in the Old Testament the angels ministered to the prophets, so in the New Testament they did to the apostles. Correspondingly, in the New Testament the ministry takes an ecclesiastical sense on the social and spiritual levels. Clement reflects the contemporary three-ranking Church hierarchy of deacon, presbyter and bishop, and he argues for the successive ascent from one rank to the other as stages of spiritual growth and becoming "God's men." All together, the mission of the deacon is to assist the presbyter and bishop to proclaim God's Word and to participate with them in the ministry of Christ's mysteries.

The Christological dimension of the ministry is unveiled in doing the *hard work* of bringing people to God and in the perfect sacrifice, which took place at the Cross and continues to take place in the Holy of Holies of the soul of the believer. Clement calls ministry "most excellent," "sacred," "luminous," and "blessed."⁹² Even though the ministry requires the hierarchical structure of obedience, it also denies a strict vertical subordination: the Son of God is completely obedient to the Father but becomes human not to be served but to serve (Mt 20:28). Accordingly, the angels minister to God and each other and to people. This also applies to the people: one should serve God, angels and all humanity in proclaiming God's Word and in bringing people from the condition of death into participation in the luminous Liturgy of eternal life.

⁹¹ *Strom.* 7.7.41.7.

⁹² *Quis dives salvetur* 35.2.