

A Feminist Companion to

Luke

edited by

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GETTING MARTHA OUT OF THE KITCHEN: LUKE 10.38-42 AGAIN*

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Contemporary Lukan scholarship is divided in its assessment of the presentation of women in Luke-Acts.¹ Is Luke an oppressor or liberator? Must the audience read with or against the text? One way ahead in the current impasse is a re-evaluation of the sections of the Lukan narrative from which these larger conclusions arise. In this paper I shall re-examine the story of Martha and Mary. My argument is that the pericope is not primarily concerned with the need for busy Christian people to be hospitable,² or with the superiority of liturgical over diaconal ministry,³ or with Jesus' blessing on the education of women,⁴ or with rendering women in leadership and ministry roles invisible.⁵ Rather, by building

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1. See R.J. Karris, 'Women and Discipleship in Luke', *CBQ* 56 (1994), pp. 1-20 (reprinted in this volume, pp. 23-43); J. Schaberg, 'Luke', in C. Newsom and S. Ringe (eds.), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (London: SPCK; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 275-304 (pp. 278-82, 288-89); Mary Rose D'Angelo, 'Women Partners in the New Testament', *JFSR* 6 (1990), pp. 65-86; *eadem*, 'Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View', *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 441-61; Jane Kopas, 'Jesus and Women: Luke's Gospel', *TTod* 43 (1986), pp. 192-202; Rosalie Ryan, 'The Women from Galilee and Discipleship in Luke', *BTB* 15 (1985), pp. 56-59; Ben Witherington III, 'On the Road with Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and Other Disciples - Luke 8.1-3', *ZNW* 70 (1979), pp. 243-48 (reprinted in this volume, pp. 133-39).

2. L. Jones, 'The Virtues of Hospitality', *Christian Century* 109 (1992), p. 609.

3. B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (trans. E.J. Sharpe; ASNU, 22; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1961), pp. 239-45; B. Reicke 'Instruction and Discussion in the Travel Narrative', *SE* 1 (TU 73), pp. 206-16 (esp. pp. 212-13).

4. Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and Their Roles as Reflected in His Early Life* (SNTSMS, 51; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 101; R.J. Weems, *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible* (San Diego, CA: LuraMedia, 1988), pp. 39-50 (esp. pp. 44-48); Schaberg, 'Luke', pp. 288-89.

5. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'A Feminist Critical Interpretation for Liberation: Martha and Mary (Lk. 10.38-42)', *Religion and Intellectual Life* 3 (1986), pp. 21-36 (esp. p. 32); *eadem*, 'Theological Criteria and Historical Reconstruction: Martha and Mary:

on Mary Rose D'Angelo's argument that Mary and Martha form one of several missionary 'women partners' in the New Testament,⁶ and by attending to the context of the pericope in its larger narrative and to the words selected for telling the story, I claim that the pericope not only evidences the women's leadership but also instructs the gospel's readers and hearers about important aspects of the task of leadership and ministry. That two women supply the focus is not insignificant for the larger agenda of evaluating Luke's presentation of women.

I

Though the story is conventionally described as the story of Martha and Mary, Martha receives more attention than Mary does.⁷ The opening verse names her and presents her as the subject of the action of 'receiving' Jesus, 'into her house' (in some manuscripts); Lk. 10.39 defines Mary in relation to her as 'sister'; Lk. 10.40 divulges her internal frame of mind ('distracted'); her question to Jesus determines the rest of the scene; Lk. 10.41-42 underline her situation through Jesus' address and the comparison with Mary. This focus, though, as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has convincingly demonstrated, does not legitimate a polarization of the two women.⁸ Mary plays an integral part through her designation 'sister', her role in Lk. 10.39, and the perplexing comparison in Lk. 10.42. Any interpretation of the scene must account for both women characters.

The nature and significance of Martha's action in Lk. 10.38 have received little investigation. Conventional analyses see Martha as the harried hostess performing her kitchen duties without help from Mary. Several indicators in the context and in the presentation of the scene

Luke 10.38-42', in H. Waetjen (ed.), *Protocol of the Colloquy of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture*, 53 (Berkeley, CA: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1987), pp. 1-12. The seven responses (pp. 13-38) and the discussion (pp. 41-63) which follow address both Fiorenza's larger agenda and aspects of her interpretation of the story of Martha and Mary; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 52-76. Earlier, E.M. Tetlow (*Women and Ministry in the New Testament* [New York: Paulist Press, 1980], p. 104) proposed a similar analysis. See also Schaberg, 'Luke', pp. 278-82, 288-89.

6. D'Angelo, 'Women Partners', pp. 77-81.

7. Loveday Alexander, 'Sisters in Adversity: Retelling Martha's Story', in G.J. Brooke (ed.), *Women in the Biblical Tradition* (Studies in Women and Religion, 31; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 167-86 (esp. pp. 177-78) (reprinted in this volume, pp. 197-213).

8. See Fiorenza, 'Feminist Critical Interpretation', pp. 21-36.

indicate this to be an unlikely reading which misconstrues the whole pericope.

The scene occurs in the context of Luke's travel narrative.⁹ While interpreters have seen the pericope contributing to the travel narrative's general instruction about discipleship (hearing the word,¹⁰ loving God¹¹), they have paid little attention to the specific interaction between this context and the story.¹² This neglect is surprising, since Lk. 10.38

9. The literature on the travel narrative is extensive. For discussion and bibliography, see the commentaries; also W. Grundmann, 'Fragen der Komposition des lukanischen "Reiseberichts"', ZNW 50 (1959), pp. 252-70; J.L. Reseque, 'Interpretation of Luke's Central Section (Luke 9.51-19.44) since 1856', *Studia biblica et theologica* 6 (1975), pp. 3-36; C.L. Blomberg, 'Midrash, Chiasmus and the Outline of Luke's Central Section', in R.T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Studies in Midrash and Historiography* (Gospel Perspectives, 3; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 217-61; D.R. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

10. So M.J. Lagrange, *Evangelie selon saint Luc* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda, 8th edn. 1948), p. 316; G.B. Caird, *The Gospel of Saint Luke* (Westminster Pelican Commentaries; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 149; E.E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974 [1966]), pp. 161-62; I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC, 3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 439, 451; E. Stagg and F. Stagg, *Woman in the World of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), p. 225; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (AB, 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), p. 826; E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Luke* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), p. 167; R.C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* (2 vols.; FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986-90), I, pp. 136-37; J. Brutscheck, *Die Maria-Marta-Erzählung: Eine redaktionkritische Untersuchung zu Lk 10.38-42* (BBB, 64; Frankfurt: Peter Hanstein, 1986), pp. 30-132 (esp. pp. 50-64); F. Craddock, *Luke* (IBC; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), pp. 151-52.

11. Some see a connection with the first commandment after discussion of the second in 10.25-37; so E. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT, 5; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1929), p. 122; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (THKNT; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1966), p. 225; F.W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age* (St Louis: Clayton, 1972), p. 133; C.H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 120.

12. J.A. Fitzmyer (*The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* [AB, 28A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985], p. 891) declares the story unrelated to the preceding passages. He does concede, though, that with A. Plummer (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* [ICC, 28; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906], p. 290) it is possible to see it as another way of inheriting eternal life (v. 25). Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 132-39) discusses the story as part of a thematic consideration of Jesus' ministry to the oppressed and excluded, but he does not consider it in his discussion of 9.51-12.53 (*Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 228-53). Exceptions, who have paid attention to the interaction between the story and the travel narrative as a whole, are Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, p. 144; Brutscheck, *Die Maria-Marta-Erzählung*, pp. 50-64; D. Gill, 'Observations on the Lukan Travel Narrative and Some Related Passages',

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signals the connection through its use of vocabulary prominent in the opening scene of the travel narrative: πορεύομαι, 'go',¹³ εἰσερχομαι, 'enter' (Lk. 9.52; 10.38), and κώμη, 'village' (Lk. 9.52, 56; 10.38b).

The references in Lk. 10.38 to Jesus entering the village (εἰσηλθεν) and being received by Martha (ὑπεδέχτο αὐτόν) particularly recall aspects of the mission of the Seventy from earlier in ch. 10 (Lk. 10.1-20; cf. the Twelve in Lk. 9.1-5). Jesus instructs them about entering a house or town (Lk. 10.5, 7, 8, 10; cf. 9.4-5) and locating someone to 'receive' them (10.8, 10; 9.5). Being received involves much more than being supplied with food and drink;¹⁴ it primarily denotes the embracing of the disciples' mission and its eschatological reality. As D. Moessner argues, Lk. 10.5-10 concerns the meal fellowship of the reign of God in which the presence of the Lord of the banquet is revealed through these ambassadors.¹⁵

The positioning of the story of Mary and Martha at the end of ch. 10 and the use of this significant vocabulary in Lk. 10.38 point to a close connection between this scene and the rest of ch. 10. Martha appears in Lk. 10.38 as an embodiment of the positive responses named through ch. 10. In *receiving* Jesus, Martha is a child of peace (Lk. 10.6) who has encountered God's reign (Lk. 10.9).¹⁶ She is not subject to the curses and eschatological warnings of Lk. 10.12-15. She has 'heard' Jesus, not rejecting but accepting the one who sent him (Lk. 10.16); she has 'seen'

HTR 63 (1970), pp. 199-221 (esp. pp. 205-206). R. Wall ('Martha and Mary [Luke 10.38-42] in the Context of a Christian Deuteronomy', *JSNT* 35 [1989], pp. 19-35) sees Deuteronomy, especially chs. 5-8, supplying the connection with the previous pericopes.

13. See 9.51, 52, 53, 56, 57; 10.37. The verb appears in 13.22, 33 in association with Jesus' teaching and as a summary of Jesus' mission of life and death. Gill's claim ('Observations', p. 201) that πορεύομαι is a *terminus technicus* for 'Jesus' progress toward Jerusalem' seems overstated. It would be more accurate to say that this is one possible meaning among others.

14. So Ellis, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 162; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 451; Fitzmyer, *Gospel according to Luke X-XXIV*, p. 893. E. Laland ('Die Martha-Maria Perikope Lukas 10.38-42', *ST* 13 [1959], pp. 70-85) emphasizes the pericope's instruction about extending hospitality to itinerant missionaries.

15. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, pp. 132-43. For consideration of the significance of food in Luke, see R.J. Karris, *Luke, Artist and Theologian: Luke's Passion Account as Literature* (Theological Inquiries; New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 47-78; J. Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (OBT, 17; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 15-51, 85-123.

16. W. Klassen ('"A Child of Peace" [Luke 10.6] in First Century Context', *NTS* 27 [1980], pp. 488-506 [esp. pp. 500-503]) emphasizes the key relationship in Luke between this term and 'the irruption of the Kingdom of God' (p. 502).

God's revelation (Lk. 10.21-25). She is among the blessed disciples who 'see and hear' (Lk. 10.23-24); she inherits eternal life (Lk. 10.25).

That Martha's *receiving* Jesus signifies embracing his eschatological mission is also evident from the six uses of δέχομαι, 'receive', prior to ch. 10 (Lk. 2.28; 8.13; 9.48 [4 ×]).¹⁷ The verb expresses openness to the word and work of God.¹⁸ Martha's *receiving* Jesus signifies her commitment to Jesus mission and to the God who sent him (cf. Lk. 9.48). She appears as a model disciple in contrast to those in the previous verses who do not receive Jesus' messenger (Lk. 9.52-53; 10.10).

Moreover, what is appropriate to Martha at this point is shown in Lk. 10.39 to be applicable also to Mary. She is presented as 'listening' to Jesus' teaching. The verb used to denote her listening (ἤκουεν, 10.39) appears in Lk. 10.16 as an antonym for 'rejecting' the disciples, Jesus, and God, and hence, as a synonym for 'receiving' them. It also appears in Lk. 10.23-24 in Jesus' blessing of disciples who 'see' and 'hear'. Earlier, it describes the desired response to Jesus and his teaching (Lk. 8.8, 15, 21; 9.35). Mary, like Martha, is among those who receive Jesus. This response suggests that the term 'sister' points beyond a relation of kinship with Martha to denote their joint participation in the community of the disciples of Jesus.¹⁹

II

In Lk. 10.40 the attention reverts to Martha, who is described as 'distracted with much serving'. The verb indicates being pulled away or diverted from a task.²⁰ Most interpreters assume Martha to be preoccupied with her kitchen tasks,²¹ as befits her patriarchal context.²² Several

17. In addition to 9.5, and 10.8, 10 which have been considered; and 9.48, which is discussed below.

18. The same emphasis continues in the subsequent uses of δέχομαι (16.4, 6, 7, 9; 18.17; 22.17) and ὑποδέχομαι (19.6). Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 235-36, does not recognize this diversity.

19. See the discussion by H. von Soden, *TDNT*, I, pp. 144-46, the lexica entries, and D'Angelo, 'Women Partners', pp. 77-81. Apart from Lk. 10.39, 40, the noun ἀδελφή appears twice in Luke-Acts with its literal meaning (Lk. 14.26; Acts 23.16). Through the narrative, the audience encounters the noun referring variously to relatives (Lk. 20.28-29; Acts 12.2), people of one's own race (Acts 7.2), males (Acts 7.26; 9.17), and the Christian community in contexts which probably include women (Acts 1.15; 11.29; 15.3; 16.2, 40; 21.7).

20. BAGD, *s.v.* περισπάω. The verb is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament.

21. Most commentators assume this meaning. As a partial exception, Witherington (*Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, p. 67 n. 125, p. 101 n. 136) raises a question in relation to Jewish norms but affirms Martha's domestic role. For the division public world/

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factors, however, point to a more likely interpretation. We have noted the important connections between the pericope and the larger context of the gospel. Luke 10.38-39 highlights Martha's embracing Jesus' eschatological mission and participating in the community of the disciples of Jesus. Given this context, it is more likely that her distraction 'with much serving' pertains to this mission and community and to her particular role in them.

As one step toward clarifying this role, we can observe the use of the *διακον* words, especially *διακονία*, 'serving' (Lk. 10.40), in the cultural context of the gospel's audience. As J.N. Collins has demonstrated, the words were not common,²³ and, contrary to the oft-repeated tradition in contemporary scholarship, they do not primarily designate the menial task of waiting at tables.²⁴ Rather, they denote 'activity of an in-between

private world, see B. Malina and R.L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 348-49.

22. G. Lerner (*The Creation of Patriarchy* [Women and History, 1; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986], p. 237) defines patriarchy as 'the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general'. The literature on the role of women in the Greco-Roman world is extensive. For the prevalent, though by no means exclusive, domestic roles of women, see J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 76-100; J. Leipoldt, *Die Frau in der antiken Welt und im Urchristentum* (Leipzig: Kohler & Amelang, 1954); J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Roman Women: Their History and Habits* (New York: John Day, 1963); S.B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), pp. 120-204; D.L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code of 1 Peter* (SBLMS, 26; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 21-62; J.E. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); E. Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughter: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 90-98, 113-59; S.B. Pomeroy, 'Greek Marriage', in M. Grant and R. Kitzinger (eds.), *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome* (3 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), III, pp. 1333-42; S. Treggiari, 'Roman Marriage', in Grant and Kitzinger (eds.), *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean*, III, pp. 1343-54; M.R. Lefkowitz and M.B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2nd edn, 1992).

23. J.N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 73-191 (esp. pp. 191, 336).

24. Collins, *Diakonia*, pp. 3-95. H.W. Beyer ('*διακονέω, διακονία, διάκονος*', TDNT, II, pp. 81-93) asserts the traditional view that waiting at tables forms the basic image of *διακονία*, yet his own discussion of secular and New Testament examples indicates that the term has a much wider range of referents. It can denote the activity of merchants, tradespeople, moneylenders, priests, and political leaders. In New Testament literature, it expresses a range of ministries (Rom. 16.1-2; 2 Cor. 8.1-6; Mt. 25.42-44), including acts of love, proclamation, and leadership; see Schaberg, 'Luke', p. 287.

kind', activity relating to a message (as a go-between or spokesperson), an agency (activity of a person commissioned as an agent to execute a task), or attendance on a person (by acting on behalf of a person).²⁵ Collins offers examples of activities that 'implement the intention or desires of another': delivering messages, performing errands, executing contract killings, as well as priestly and prophetic callings, heavenly revelations, household tasks, and activities of agents authorized to execute various matters on behalf of another.²⁶

The nature of the 'go-between' activity or agency that distracts Martha can be clarified by investigating the use of the noun διακονία in Luke-Acts. By the end of Acts, Luke's audience has encountered the noun διακονία eight times in contexts that concern not kitchen activity but participation with others in leadership and ministry on behalf of the Christian community.

This dimension appears in Acts 1.17 and 1.25 as the community appoints another apostle (Acts 1.25) to the group of male leaders after Judas's betrayal. The context indicates that preaching and mission on behalf of God and the church are the primary tasks of this διακονία.²⁷ In Acts 6.1 the Hellenist widows experience neglect in the daily ministry (διακονία). The Twelve want to devote themselves to 'prayer and the ministry (διακονία) of the word' (Acts 6.4).²⁸ So the Seven are set aside as representatives of the community commissioned to provide care and

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (*In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* [New York: Crossroad, 1983], pp. 171-72) discusses Phoebe as a διάκονος (Rom. 16.1-2). A. Weiser ('διακονέω, διακονία, διάκονος', *EDNT*, I, pp. 302-304 [esp. p. 302]) identifies a similar variety of uses embracing 'specifically Christian functions in the Church: charitable activity, proclamation of the word, and the task of leadership'. J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* [2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 2nd edn, 1989], I, pp. 460-61, §35.20) warn that translations of the cognate διάκονος must avoid terms that specifically emphasize meals or domestic service.

25. Collins, *Diakonia*, pp. 335-37. 'Waiting at table' is 'merely one expression of the notion of 'go-between' — that is, the table attendant goes between diner and kitchen' (p. 335).

26. Collins, *Diakonia*, pp. 148, 173-91.

27. Collins (*Diakonia*, pp. 213, 338) views the two references as examples of being heaven's spokespersons 'mandated for the word'. H. Conzelmann (*Acts of the Apostles* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], p. 11) renders διακονία 'ministry'. Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, II, p. 21) sees the story warning those who have 'positions of leadership in the church'.

28. Collins (*Diakonia*, p. 213) comments that 'the Twelve are under commission to "the Word" and are the channel by which it communicates itself'.

material necessities (Acts 6.3, 5-6).²⁹ Διακονία refers to the social or eucharistic ministry to the widows (Acts 6.1) as well as to the preaching of the word on behalf of the church (Acts 6.4). The subsequent narrative shows the futility of attempting to differentiate rigidly between these two types of ministry, for Stephen, one of the Seven, performs signs and wonders (Acts 6.8) and preaches (Acts 6.10, 13-14; ch. 7).³⁰ 'These "relief officers" in Acts [appear] as Christian preachers and missionaries' functioning as representatives of the church'.³¹

The same emphasis on partnership in ministry and leadership on behalf of the church continues in Acts 11-12. In Lk. 11.29, after Agabus foretells a worldwide famine, the disciples in Antioch join together for ministry (εἰς διακονίαν) to Judea. In Acts 11.30, Barnabas and Saul, after fulfilling their ministry in Antioch, function as go-betweens in taking the relief to Jerusalem. Their joint ministry (διακονία, Acts 12.25) in Antioch is portrayed in Acts 11.26 as church planting, leadership, and teaching.³²

The final two uses of διακονία in Acts denote Paul's lifework 'as a sacred commission to preach' received from the Lord.³³ Luke's Paul employs the term as he addresses the Ephesian elders (Acts 20.24) and as he addresses James and the elders of Jerusalem (Acts 21.19). In both scenes there is recognition of the leadership and preaching to which God has appointed Paul, as well as of his partnership with others in these tasks of ministry.³⁴

29. Louw and Nida (*Greek-English Lexicon*, I, p. 462 §35.38; I, p. 571 §57.119) suggest two possible interpretations of διακονία in 6.1, a procedure for taking care of the needs of people, or money given to help someone in need. With both options the term is understood as something broader than the provision of food. E. Haenchen (*The Acts of the Apostles* [trans. B. Noble and G. Shinn, under the supervision of H. Anderson; trans. rev. R. McL. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 14th edn, 1971], p. 263 n. 4) also sees the task as consisting of the general care of the poor and ailing. Fiorenza (*In Memory of Her*, pp. 164-67) argues that the reference is to eucharistic ministry which includes providing, preparing, serving, and distributing food. Collins (*Diakonia*, pp. 230-31, 339) emphasizes that the people are commissioned for particular roles on behalf of the church. He is undecided whether they attend people eating or provide financial assistance.

30. Also to be noted are the exalted terms with which Stephen is described: he is full of the Spirit and wisdom (6.3), of faith (6.5), of grace and power (6.8). I am suggesting that it is with such company and activity that the audience associates Martha.

31. Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 266. See pp. 264-69 for his more extensive discussion of the difficulties of this passage.

32. Collins (*Diakonia*, pp. 230, 338) classifies both texts as giving examples of emissaries of the church.

33. Collins, *Diakonia*, pp. 212-15.

34. In Acts 21.18-26 partnership is evident (1) in the Jewish believers' glorifying

Thus, in six of its eight occurrences in Acts διακονία indicates leadership and proclamation on behalf of God or of the church and the gospel. In two of the six the administration and provision of material relief for those in need are indicated without separation of these tasks from the tasks of leadership and proclamation. Partnership with others in the acts of ministry pervades all eight texts, as does the sense of ministering as the representative of God or of the church. Males are the focus of the ministry and leadership. Διακονία, thus, does not designate domestic or culinary activity. It refers, rather, to ministry and leadership in the Christian community and on its behalf.

This conclusion about the meaning of διακονία in Luke-Acts coheres with Collins's conclusion that the word means primarily the activity of a 'go-between'. Rather than designating a person of inferior status involved in table waiting or domestic service, διακονία in Luke's usage typically designates a commissioned spokesperson or agent, a 'go-between' who ministers on behalf of God or the Christian community.

In this context the source of Martha's distraction becomes clear. She is not distracted by her kitchen duties. Consistently with the actions of the male leaders of Acts denoted elsewhere by διακονία, her 'much ministry' consists rather of leadership or ministry in the Christian community and on its behalf. By analogy with these uses of διακονία, her responsibilities include care for believers, teaching, and preaching, perhaps as a leader of a house church.³⁵ Furthermore, given the naming of Mary as 'sister', the presentation of her positive response to Jesus, and the importance of partnership in the other references to διακονία in Acts, it is reasonable to conclude, significantly, that Martha and Mary are partners in this leadership and its tasks. As with the initial post-Easter group of leaders (Acts 1 and 6), with the Antiochene disciples (Acts 11.29), with Saul and Barnabas (Acts 12.25), and with Paul (Acts 20.24; 21.19), the leadership and ministry of Martha and Mary make available the blessings of God.³⁶

God after hearing of God's action 'among the Gentiles through [Paul's] ministry'; (2) in Paul's willingness to purify himself and his four colleagues in order to maintain fellowship and unity. In 20.17-38 it is evident (1) in the recognition that the Holy Spirit is at work in the ministry of Paul (20.22, 23) and of the Ephesian elders (20.28); (2) in the recognition of mutual difficulties (of Paul, 20.19, 23; of the Ephesian leaders, 20.29-31); (3) in the common bond of faithful care for the believers (by Paul, 20.19-21, 27; by the Ephesian leaders, 20.28, 31).

35. By the end of Acts the audience has heard of Mary (Acts 12.12), Lydia (16.15), and Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18.2-4, 18, 26), who provide 'space, support and leadership' for house churches. See Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 175-84, esp. pp. 177-79.

36. B. Malina, 'Patron and Client: The Analogy behind Synoptic Theology', *FF4* (1988), pp. 3-33 (esp. pp. 9-11).

se two women are members of the community of brokers that, as ones has argued, offers access to the *beneficio* of God the patron.³⁷ nificantly, Martha's (and Mary's) inclusion with these leaders or kers indicates that women as well as men exercise leadership and nistry in the community created by Luke's text. Two further factors reinforce the understanding that Martha is tracted by her responsibilities of leadership and ministry on behalf of e church. The first concerns the nine other uses of the cognate verb *οκονεῖν*, 'to serve', in Luke-Acts (its use in Lk. 10.40b will be discussed ter). The verb can have a range of referents, but basic to its meaning is he idea of being a 'go-between', of performing commissioned actions on ehalf of another. In four examples it refers to the performing of ousehold duties by slaves and women (in three parables at Lk. 12.37; 17.8; 22.27a; also in 4.39).³⁸ Examination of the narrative context of the three parables also indicates a metaphoric meaning. Two of the parables identify Jesus as the 'go-between' performing among human beings his God-given (commissioned) tasks (Lk. 12.37; 22.27).³⁹ The third parable

37. H. Moxnes ('Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts', in J.H. Neyrey [ed.], *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991], pp. 241-68) sees Luke employing, but transforming, the patron-client institution to depict the fellowship of the new community. He argues that God is the benefactor and patron with people as clients. Jesus is the broker who gives men and women (Acts 9.2) access to God's *beneficia* in his teaching and actions. Apostles and disciples are also brokers. Their brokerage, like Jesus' brokerage, is marked by service and by acting on behalf of God (12.41-48; 22.25-26) as they extend God's *beneficia* to men and women (17.4, 12). The Twelve and the Seventy make available the power of God in healing and in proclaiming the reign of God (9.2; 10.9). For other discussions of patron-client relationships, see A.R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; London: Thames & Hudson, 1968); S.C. Mot, 'The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence', in G.E. Hawthorn (ed.), *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of M.C. Tenney* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 60-72; S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, 'Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), pp. 42-77; Eisenstadt and Roniger (eds.), *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* (Themes in the Social Sciences; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); F.W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis: Clayton, 1982); R.P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); J.H. Elliott, 'Patronage and Clientism in Early Christian Society', *FFF*, 3 (1987), pp. 39-48; Malina, 'Patron and Client', pp. 3-33; Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 175-84.

38. On the basis of Collins's work, it is possible to understand this reference as one indicating not domestic service but ministry on behalf of Jesus and other disciples.

39. In Lk. 12.37 the Master who serves denotes Jesus the Son of Man, the 'go-

(Lk. 17.8) exemplifies apostles (Lk. 17.5), hence church leaders, faithfully attending to their commissioned tasks on behalf of God and accountable to God, without expecting thanks or reward.⁴⁰ Leadership is in view in Lk. 22.26b, as the actions of commissioned representatives of the church are in view in Acts 6.2 (care for the poor)⁴¹ and in Acts 19.22 (the mission of Timothy and Erastus as partners with Paul).⁴² Luke 8.3 may designate women who financially support the mission of Jesus or who use their resources on his behalf, extending his commission through their own missionary activity.⁴³ It is clear that the verb *διακονεῖν* is used in these contexts to designate Jesus (Lk. 12.37; 22.27b), apostles (Lk. 17.8; Acts 6.2), other missionary leaders (Acts 19.22), and women (Lk. 8.3; 4.39) as commissioned representatives, agents, 'go-betweens', spokespersons of God's saving action.

Martha's ministry is undertaken in partnership with that of the new community, with women and men, in continuation and imitation of Jesus' life-work and death. In light of this information from Luke-Acts and its cultural context, Tannehill's claim that 'in Luke *διακονέω* (serve) always refer to the work of preparing and serving food, work normally performed by those regarded as social inferiors, such as women and servants'⁴⁴ (emphasis mine) cannot be sustained.

A second piece of information concerns the presentation of women in Luke-Acts. Though this is the subject of much debate, women do appear throughout the narrative in roles of leadership and proclamation; we may note the preachers Mary (Lk. 1.46-55) and Anna (Lk. 2.36-38), the

between' commissioned by God (1.30-33; 2.34-35; 3.17; 4.18) to do God's redeeming and judging work among human beings. In 22.27a the servant is the intermediary between the one sitting at table and the kitchen, while in 22.27b Jesus is the one who serves not only in 'a lowly humble way' (so most commentaries) but as the one who, in offering bread and wine (22.19-22), faithfully carries out the divine commission and offers himself and his lifework.

40. So P.S. Minear, 'A Note on Luke 17.7-10', *JBL* 93 (1974), pp. 82-87; I.H. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 645; Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 288; L.T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina, 3; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 261; Craddock, *Luke*, pp. 199-201.

41. So Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 261-62; L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sacra Pagina, 5; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 106.

42. Timothy appears in Acts 16.1; 17.14; 18.5; 20.4 as Paul's partner and agent in his mission of preaching and establishing churches. Acts 19.22 is the only reference to Erastus in Acts.

43. For the second possibility, see Karris, 'Women and Discipleship'.

44. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, II, p. 22 (but compare Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 257, where he recognizes *διακονία* as a received commission to be performed). Moxnes ('Patron-Client Relations', pp. 259, 261, 266) has a similar understanding.

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four women prophetesses (Acts 21.9), women patrons (Mary in Acts 12.12 and Lydia in Acts 16.15) who have groups of believers meeting in their houses, Priscilla the missionary (Acts 18.18) and teacher (Acts 18.26).⁴⁵ Martha is in good company. She appears (with Mary) as one of several women in roles of ministry and leadership, in partnership with the church's wider ministry.

Martha's words to Jesus in Lk. 10.40b disclose further information about the cause and nature of her distraction 'with much ministry'. Doing what any burdened person or community should do in Luke's world (cf. Lk. 18.13; 22.39-46; Acts 4.24-30), and anticipating the instruction to the disciples about prayer in the following scene (Lk. 11.1-13), Martha seeks the Lord's intervention. More often than not through the narrative, the verb ἐφίστημι, 'come', which expresses Martha's approach to Jesus in Lk. 10.40, involves encounter with divine power or presence.⁴⁶ Martha's use of the title 'Lord' (κύριε) in addressing Jesus is appropriate for a disciple who encounters in Jesus God's authority and reign.⁴⁷ That 'sister' (ἀδελφή)

45. Fiorenza's claim (*In Memory of Her*, p. 161) that Luke nowhere pictures women as missionaries and preachers is questionable.

46. The verb appears 18 times in Luke-Acts with a variety of meanings. The dimension of encounter with divine power and presence is prominent in Lk. 2.9, 38; 4.39; 21.34; 24.4; Acts 12.7; 23.11. Three other events in whose description the verb is used reflect divine intervention: Acts 10.17; 11.11; 22.13. Fitzmyer (*Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, p. 409) indicates that in classical Greek the verb often denotes encounters with gods and heavenly beings who appear in dreams and visions. See also the references listed in BAGD, s.v. ἐφίστημι.

47. While the title 'Lord' does not indicate divinity in Luke-Acts, it does express Jesus' transcendent character which puts him on a level with God (so Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, pp. 200-204 [esp. p. 203]). See also his comments (and those of Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, pp. 204, 274, 285) on the use of the vocative κύριε in Lk. 5.8, 12; 6.46. E. Franklin (*Christ the Lord: A Study in the Theology and Purpose of Luke-Acts* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975], pp. 49-55) argues that the use of the title κύριος for both Jesus and God indicates that Jesus is viewed as deriving his authority from God: the vocative 'expresses the response of a community which already knows the power of the Exalted One' and which recognizes that he shares God's 'authority and supremacy' (p. 53); so also J.D. Kingsbury (*Jesus Christ in Matthew, Mark and Luke* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981], pp. 98-100). The christological and ecclesial dimensions of the title in the story of Martha and Mary are recognized by I. de la Potterie ('Le Titre KYPIOS appliqué à Jésus dans L'Evangile de Luc', in A. Descamps and A. de Halleux (eds.), *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R.P. Bédarida Rigaux* [Gembloux: Duculot, 1970], pp. 117-46 [esp. pp. 129-32]), and by Grundmann (*Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 226). Others are not convinced. E. Hahn (*The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity* [Lutterworth Library; London: Lutterworth Press, 1969], pp. 81-85) sees the use of the vocative as an expression of the subordination of the user; while C.E.D. Moule ('The Christology of Acts', in L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn

denotes physical as well as ecclesial relationship is suggested by the content of Lk. 10.38-39 indicated above, by Jesus' prior use of familial terms to denote and redefine the community of disciples (Lk. 8.19-21), and by subsequent uses of ἀδελφός for the Christian community.⁴⁸ The verb διακονέω, 'serve', can designate functions of ministry and leadership on behalf of God or of believing communities, as we have noted. The verb 'help' resonates with its use in the LXX to designate God's saving and sustaining help in times of crisis. It also recalls Mary's affirmation of God's merciful and faithful intervention in human affairs (Lk. 1.54).⁴⁹ In asking the Lord to tell Mary to help her, Martha seeks the Lord's intervention to bring about Mary's active help.

Martha's 'distraction with much ministry' arises, then, from difficulties in her partnership with Mary as a leader. It is the 'muchness' of her task that distracts Martha (a fact underlined in Jesus' response in Lk. 10.41), περὶ πολλὰ. Specifically, her complaint is that Mary has left her to minister alone (Lk. 10.40b). From Martha's perspective, Mary is not pulling her weight. Martha's prayer to the Lord is the request of a disciple for the Lord's intervention to secure her sister's active participation in their partnership of ministry.

The importance of partnership to this request cannot be understated. We have already noted in our discussion of the eight uses of διακονία that partnership in ministry was a constant feature of the term's use.⁵⁰ Further, this emphasis on partnership in the passages in Acts confirms what was already established in the sending out of the Twelve and the Seventy in Lk. 9-10. The plural language in Lk. 9.1-6 indicates that Jesus sends the Twelve as a group to be brokers of the kingdom's presence and of God's healing power. In ch. 10, the Seventy are sent two by two (Lk. 10.1) to perform the same tasks (Lk. 10.9). In Lk. 10.25-37, the audience has seen the Samaritan exercise his patronage in partnership with the innkeeper (Lk. 10.33-35).

Given Luke-Acts's pervasive concern with partnership in ministry,

(eds.), *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966], pp. 159-85) thinks it indicates respectful address.

48. See n. 19 above.

49. The verb συναντιλαμβάνομαι has this meaning in the LXX of Exod. 18.22 and Num. 11.17. In Ps. 88.22, it indicates God's help for the king (cf. Rom. 8.26). The simpler form ἀντιλαμβάνομαι used in the Magnificat at Lk. 1.54, appears particularly in the LXX of the Pss. (68.29 [NRSV Ps. 69.29]; 19.2 [NRSV 20.2]; 17.35 [NRSV 18.35]) and Isa. 41.9 with this sense of divine intervention.

50. For example, the post-Easter Eleven (Acts 1.17, 25), the Twelve and the Seven (6.1-4), the Antiochene disciples who act together (11.29), Saul and Barnabas (12.25), and Paul with the elders of Ephesus (20.17-39), and Jerusalem (21.18-19).

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Martha's question (her prayer) is an important one. It concerns a central aspect of the new community's style of ministry. It is the prayerful concern of a person committed to working out the Lukan model of leadership. It provides the occasion for instruction about this model. One of the functions of this pericope, then, is to reinforce the gospel audience's understanding of ministry and leadership as an act of partnership. As much as ministry or brokerage is commissioned for the service of another, it is carried out *with* others, as an act of partnership.

III

In Lk. 10.41-42, the Lord responds to Martha's prayer (cf. Lk. 18.1-8) by providing instruction about how to maintain partnership in leadership. The instruction is explicit for Martha and implicit for Mary. Jesus begins in Lk. 10.41 by naming Martha's anxiety 'about many things'.⁵¹ The use of the verb *μεριμνάω* in ch. 12 and the noun *μέριμνα* in Lk. 8.14 indicates the harmful role of anxiety in discipleship.⁵² Anxiety reveals false commitments and distractions which prevent single-hearted responses to the word made in an attitude full of faith (so the parable of Lk. 8.14). Jesus reminds disciples that the Holy Spirit supplies words of witness and proclamation in anxiety-inducing situations (Lk. 12.11-12). He encourages anxious and distracted disciples to center themselves on God by recognizing and trusting God's gracious valuing of them and providing for them (Lk. 12.24, 28, 30). In like manner, Jesus suggests that Martha needs 'one thing', Mary's 'good portion' (Lk. 10.42).⁵³ The good portion that Martha needs is not to prepare just one dish in the kitchen but to join Mary in listening to Jesus' teaching as a means of overcoming her distraction and regaining her single-heartedness (cf. Lk. 10.39).⁵⁴ His

51. On the textual difficulties of these verses, see especially Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, pp. 452-53; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, pp. 125-26; Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, p. 894; Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, p. 102; TCGNT, pp. 153-54.

52. Lk. 12.11, 22, 25, 26. R. Bultmann, '*μεριμνάω*', *TDNT*, IV, pp. 589-93. The other verb, *θρορυβάζω*, a *hapax legomenon*, is textually uncertain.

53. I follow the *UBSGNT* text. For the textual and interpretive possibilities, see the commentaries and A. Baker, 'One Thing Necessary', *CBQ* 27 (1965), pp. 127-37; G.D. Fee, '"One Thing is Needful"? Luke 10.42', in E.J. Epp and G.D. Fee (eds.), *New Testament Textual Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 61-75; TCGNT, pp. 153-54.

54. So Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, p. 892; Schweizer, *Good News*, p. 189. In the LXX, *μερίς* indicates being in the company of people (Ps. 49.18) as well as trust and openness toward God and God's word (Pss. 72.26; 118.57).

word to her is not a rebuke but the answer to her prayer concerning her distraction 'with much ministry'.

The question that has plagued interpreters is the relationship in which Mary and Martha stand to one another at this point in the story. E. Schüssler Fiorenza has rightly criticized interpretations that view the two women as polarities, that force readers to choose between the active and the contemplative life, between everyday or spiritual life, between domestic responsibilities or service of Jesus, between the active Martha and the submissive, quiet Mary.⁵⁵ Since the context and content of Martha's complaint and request concern partnership in ministry and leadership, Martha cannot be viewed as exclusively domestic and secular, nor Mary as contemplative and submissive. Since Martha and Mary are partners in ministry, these 'either-or' approaches are not viable options. A 'both-and' relationship is required.⁵⁶

The context of the story provides the clue to the nature of this relationship. Jesus' instruction to Martha to follow Mary's example reiterates a point already made in the preceding verses. While commentators have noticed patterns of alternation and contrast in the responses to Jesus (by crowds, disciples, Pharisees) throughout the travel narrative,⁵⁷ another alternating pattern appears in ch. 10 with regard to disciples. The sequence of pericopes alternates between scenes of active ministry and scenes of encounter with God, the patron and source of the mission.⁵⁸ For instance, the opening 16 verses of ch. 10 focus attention on the Seventy as active and commissioned agents or brokers in mission. They receive instruction from Jesus (Lk. 10.2-16), and they engage in ministry (Lk. 10.1, 17). When they return from their ministry rejoicing in their power (Lk. 10.17), Jesus confirms their role as active brokers of the reign of God (Lk. 10.19) but immediately recalls them to their relationship with their patron, God.⁵⁹ They are directed to rejoice not in their power over

55. See Fiorenza, 'Feminist Critical Interpretation', pp. 16-36.

56. Loveday Alexander ('Sisters in Adversity', pp. 181-82) draws attention to Jesus' refusal elsewhere in Luke to take sides in sibling rivalries (6.37-42, esp. vv. 41-42; 12.13-15; 15.25-32).

57. D.R. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, pp. 212-16. Reicke ('Instruction and Discussion', pp. 209-15) sees an alternation between instruction to disciples and discussion with opponents.

58. For discussion of the theocentric nature of Luke-Acts, see R.L. Brawley, *Centering on God: Method and Message in Luke-Acts* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990). Kopas ('Jesus and Women', p. 198) emphasizes the story's presentation of depth of relationship with God as the basis for 'wholeness, integration and reconciliation'.

59. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, p. 860.

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spirits, not in their activity, but in the fact that their names are written in heaven (Lk. 10.20). The metaphor of having one's name written in the register of God's people denotes the identity and allegiance that provide the source of the Seventy's ministry.⁶⁰ As brokers, they must be sure of the patron on whose behalf and for whose interests they are 'go-betweens'.

Verses 21-22 reinforce this reminder by presenting Jesus in prayer. After his ministry to the Seventy (Lk. 10.1-16), Jesus appears in Lk. 10.21-22 as one whose ministry or brokerage, like that of the Seventy, is also centered in God's revelatory power and derived from it. Luke 10.23-24 maintains this focus as Jesus blesses the disciples (the brokers) as recipients of God's revelation. The two themes of doing ministry (brokerage, Lk. 10.1-16) and of encounter with God the patron, the source of the ministry (Lk. 10.17-24), are intertwined.

Luke 10.25-37 continues the interaction of the two themes in the lawyer's questions. He asks Jesus the broker how he might receive one of God's benefactions, eternal life (Lk. 10.25), and how he might be a broker of love for his neighbor (Lk. 10.29).

The instruction closing Jesus' story about the Samaritan, 'Go and do likewise' (Lk. 10.37), emphasizes active ministry. Martha is one who rightly and commendably goes and does likewise, but her ministry and leadership activity have left her 'distracted with much ministry', 'anxious and troubled'. In the context of the alternating patterns, and of Jesus' comment in 10.42, it seems that she has neglected the source of that ministry. Mary appears as a person who has the 'one thing' that Martha needs at this time to regain her single-heartedness, to listen to Jesus' teaching (cf. Lk. 10.23-24). In the context of the interweaving of the two themes throughout ch. 10, the gospel's audience is not invited to choose one woman rather than the other but, like Martha and Mary, to find partnership between them.

The interweaving of these two emphases has implications for understanding Mary's role in 10.42. The interweaving relativizes the commendation of Mary which is offered there. Previously, in Lk. 8.21, Jesus has declared that his family comprises those who 'hear the word of God and do it' (cf. Lk. 8.15). The Seventy exhibit the doing of the teaching (Lk. 10.1-16, 17), and the hearers of the parable of the good Samaritan are left with the same challenge (Lk. 10.37). Jesus returns to the same theme in

60. See G. Schrenk, 'βιβλος, βιβλίον', *TDNT*, I, pp. 618-20; *idem*, 'γράφω, ἐγγράφω' *TDNT*, I, pp. 769-70; also I.H. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 430; S. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 128; Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, pp. 863-64; Schweizer, *Good News*, p. 181.

Lk. 11.27-28 as he blesses 'those who hear (οἱ ἀκούοντες) the word of God and keep it'. Beyond 'hearing' is 'doing' or 'keeping' the word. Mary's listening is appropriate to this specific moment,⁶¹ and it is good as far as it goes, but there is no commendation of her as a perpetual listener. Listening requires that she also do, or keep, the word.⁶² Only then can her partnership with Martha in ministry and leadership be effective.

The gospel's audience is thus, through chs. 10-11, given warning and instruction about several dangers of ministry and leadership. One danger is that disciples may exult so much in *doing* that they, like the Seventy, are in danger of forgetting loyalty to their patron, the source of their brokerage (Lk. 10.20). Another danger is that leaders may be so energetically engaged in ministry that they, like Martha, are distracted from ministry's source. Martha's concern about being 'distracted with much ministry' is answered when the Lord recalls her to the basis of her life work, to that which sustains her ministry (Lk. 10.41-42). Mary manifests yet another possible danger, that disciples may be so intent on the Lord's teaching (Lk. 10.39-40) that they do not do or pass on the teaching (cf. Lk. 8.21; 11.28). Both Martha and Mary threaten the partnership in ministry, though they do so in different ways.

IV

I have argued that Lk. 10.38-42 celebrates and affirms Martha's and Mary's ministry rather than rendering them silent and invisible. Their ministry is done in partnership with that of a number of men (the Eleven/Twelve, Stephen and the Seven, Paul and Barnabas, Jesus) and of other women.

Not only does the pericope remember and proclaim this partnership of two women in ministry, it also offers instruction about the way in which

61. Craddock, *Luke*, p. 152, an interpretation proposed by John Chrysostom. See B.R. Heffner, 'Meister Eckhart and Mary and Martha', in M.S. Burrows and P. Rorem (eds.), *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective: Studies in Honor of Karlfried Froehlich on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 117-30 (esp. p. 120).

62. The extravagant praise that commentators heap on Mary and the strong insistence (for instance, by Talbert, *Reading Luke*, p. 125; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, pp. 450-51) that hearing the word is the crucial point must be qualified by attention to this sequence in which 8.21 precedes the story of Martha and Mary, and 11.28 follows it. Mary's response to Jesus is commended in the pericope, but the prior declaration (8.14) and the subsequent benediction on hearing and keeping (11.28) emphasize for the audience a further dimension of her discipleship (and the audience's own discipleship).

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this brokerage is to be actualized. The ministerial partnership consists of the interaction between active brokerage in ministry and encounter with God the patron, as it is depicted in chs. 10 and 11. The sequence of pericopes in these chapters warns that a number of factors can destroy this interaction and actualization. Along with the affirmation of her role, Martha, with Mary, presents the audience with a warning of dangers that attend all women and men who are engaged in partnership of ministry and leadership.⁶³

Martha and Mary, thus, are not invisible or silenced; nor are they domesticated or token figures. Their story (which Luke alone tells) presents an instructive example of crucial aspects of the tasks of ministry and discipleship in the new community. The larger question of this story's place in the presentation of women in Luke-Acts as a whole remains for further investigation. That task will be difficult, given the ambiguities of the text and the presuppositions of all interpreters.⁶⁴ What cannot be overlooked in the debate, however, is that this story utilizes two women, Martha and Mary, to provide positive instruction about partnership in ministry and leadership.⁶⁵

63. This conclusion supports and develops Moxnes's claim ('Patron-Client Relations', p. 267) that Luke presents a 'radical transformation of the patronage system as a model for social relations within the Christian community'.

64. D'Angelo ('Women in Luke-Acts', p. 442) notes that 'the author of Luke does increase the number of stories about women', but that 'the roles in which women appear are more restricted'.

65. My thanks to Dr Harold Washington and Dr David May, and to the editorial readers of the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* for insightful responses to earlier forms of this article.