The Rev. Canon Lydia Kelsey Bucklin
Senior Advisor & Project Evangelist,
Mutual Ministry Initiative

Hello and Welcome to the Conversation!

This packet of curated resources is offered by the **Mutual Ministry Initiative** (**MMi**) with the hope that what you encounter will draw you into a conversation about how we relate to ourselves, those around us, and the wider world in authentic and affirming ways while focusing on the abundance of what we have for this moment.

This collaborative and expansive way of seeing the world can be found inside and outside the church. Through these resources, we (MMi) hope to explore what this way of being in the world can look like with others. We do not claim to have all the answers. We see this sharing as an opportunity for conversation, where we can learn together as we travel this road.

There is no right or wrong way to approach these resources. There is also no set order. Some of the resources are more academically situated, while others use a more straightforward approach. Through narrative, theological discourse, image, essay and comparison, these resources are meant to provide a place to begin.

Because MMi is a part of Virginia Theological Seminary and a part of the Episcopal Church, most of the resources currently shared are from within the Christian context. This lens is in no way claiming that Mutual Ministry is only found or belongs in this context. Also, because up until now, most writing on Mutual Ministry has been done within the church, several resources come from a white Christian male perspective. We are actively doing the work to expand the voices and experiences found within our resources and welcome any materials that you are willing to share with us to assist this project and the overall movement. This is a beginning, a conversation, and we value your voice.

If you have any questions or feedback for us, we invite you to email our Project Manager, Kim Arakawa at karakawa@vts.edu.

Again, welcome to the conversation, we are so glad you're here.

Gratefully,

WHAT IS MUTUAL MINISTRY?

MUTUAL MINISTRY initiative | VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A WAY OF BEING CHURCH TOGETHER

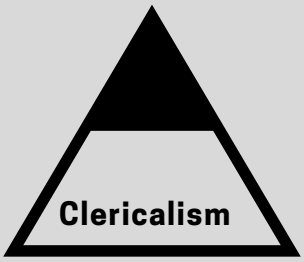
An ecclesiology in which:

we see ourselves and the church as Christ's agents in the world;

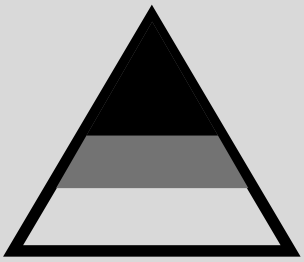
we affirm that each of us is a minister empowered with gifts the Holy Spirit has given;

and we, together, are a community of ministers, not a community gathered around a minister (Wes Frensdorf).

LET'S EXPLORE THREE MODELS...



The priest is "THE Minister." All others are passive consumers of ministry congregating around the priest.



The priest is still the primary Minister, but receives assistance from a select group of (hand-picked) laity who serve in lay leadership positions. All others are passive consumers of ministry.

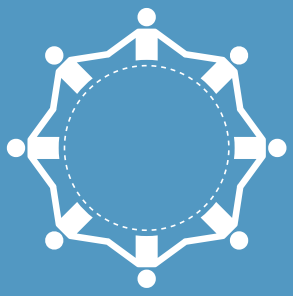
All ministry is Christ's; every baptized person is an active participant, each according to their gifts. The main arena for ministry is daily life.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over the past 30 years, this practice of ministry has also been known as: Total Ministry, Shared Ministry, Baptismal Ministry, Collaborative Ministry, & Ministry Development.

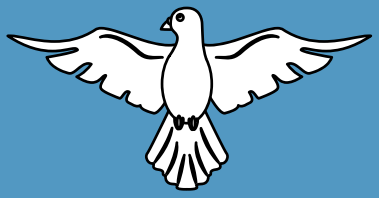
The Mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. (BCP, p. 855)

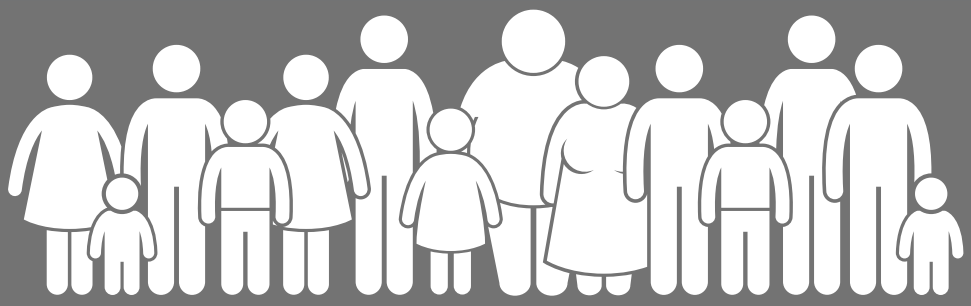
MUTUAL MINISTRY IS...



A **ministry paradigm** where leadership is shared according to the gifts God has provided. It is...

- Systematically and intentionally **collaborative**;
- Focused on building **ministering communities**, not communities headed by a minister;
- Invitational **to/with all**;
- **Rooted** in local community – proximity and relationship cultivate invitation;
- Constantly **Discerning**;
- A **Celebration** of the small with **attention** to the margins;
- **Empowering/ Equipping** the natural curiosities and callings that arise;
- **Flexible** – ongoing discernment to be the church with the gifts and callings already there; and
- Serious attention to the **"ministry of all people of God"**





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Additional Voices

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Excerpts: Verna Dozier

"There are no second-class citizens in the household of God. Religious authority comes with baptism, and it is nurtured by prayer, worship, bible study, life together." (p. 115)

Dozier, V. J. (1990, May). Saying "yes" in a "no" world. The Witness , 73, 8-9.

"In a world that exalts whiteness, maleness, youth, I live by a faith that whiteness, maleness, youth is not the best part of reality - nor the worst either - but only part of reality and indeed, without blackness, femaleness, age, a very incomplete part." (p .8)

Dozier, V. J. (1991). The dream of God: A call to return. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications.

"Back when I first started talking about ministry, it was seen as something the ordained did. Lay people had no ministry at all except as they participated in the work of the institution. If you taught in the Christian education program, you had a ministry. If you taught in the public schools, you 'did time' five days a week until you could get to your ministry. When I began my second career, people would say, 'You taught school for thirty-two years; then you began your ministry.' … In my unredeemed way, I would steel myself and reply through clenched teeth, 'No, I continued my ministry." (p. 140)

Dozier, V. J. (1992, November 19). Sermon at the consecration of Jane Holmes Dixon as suffragan bishop of Washington. Virginia Seminary Journal (1993, April).

"When we baptize a little baby it says that God has already accepted this beautiful breath of life and that what we are doing here is just a sign of that and from this day forward you are a child of God- the community is trying to say that the action of God for you is so important that nothing can really destroy that."

Additional Voices

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Excerpts: Christopher Duraisingh

"In a missional response shaped by an attentive following of the Spirit who goes ahead of us, there is always room for surprises. Mission takes place in unheard of places and through the agencies of unexpected people.As the Spirit moves afresh in changing contexts, there is little room for fixed order and set strategies: things are turned upside down…Without a radical insistence upon the priority of attuned discerning of God's already up-and-running presence and work in the world, there can be no transformation from a church-shaped mission to a mission-shaped church." (p. 11)

"The broad description of a 'priest' – not just the ordained clergy, but all priestly people – by L. William Countryman is pertinent to consider the quality of such a leader.He says, "By 'priest' I mean any person who lives in the dangerous, exhilarating, life-giving borderlands of human existence, where everyday experience of life opens up to reveal glimpses of the HOLY- and not only lives there but comes to the aid of others who are living there."

"In many ways these words sum up much of what it means to be a leader in a mission-shaped church. The leader is one who has learned to discern the God-movement by being really present and sharing in the 'dangerous and exhilarating borderlands' of our context today. In other words, the leader is one who has learned to sit where people sit, just as the prophet Ezekiel sat where the exiles sat and wept with them for seven days and seven nights. The formation of Jeremiah or even Jesus of Nazareth was no different: in the midst of the ordinary, they were able to see the glimpses of the Holy, the accompanying presence of the Divine." (p. 26)

All Excerpts from Christopher Duraisingh's From Church-Shaped Mission to Mission-Shaped Church as printed in the Anglican Theological Review.

Additional Voices

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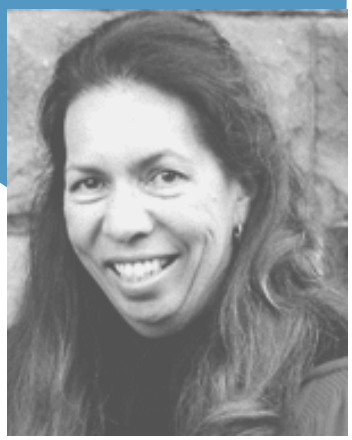
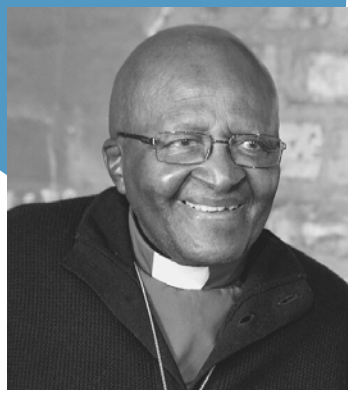
Excerpt: Jenny Plane Te Paa



"Leadership, as a younger single woman within my own cultural context, is still a somewhat fraught experience, but I believe that with infinite patience, abundant humor and timely gestures of boldness, even the most intransigent indigenous sexist can be moved along! I prefer to see the responsibility of shared leadership as being a requirement to model generosity, not power; to engage, rather than to avoid tension (but to do so with humility and not arrogance); and to envision a just and open future, grounded in the best of our past and yet firmly attuned to the current realities." (p. 288)

Excerpt from Jenny Plane Te Paa's Leadership Formation For a New World as published in 'Beyond Colonial Anglicanism'

Excerpt: Desmond Tutu



"There is a movement not easily discernable, at the heart of things to reverse the awful centrifugal forces of alienation, brokenness, diversion, hostility, and disharmony.God has set in motion a centripetal process, a moving toward the center, toward unity, harmony, goodness, peace and justice that removes barriers. Jesus says "And when I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw everyone to myself: as he hangs from his cross with outflung arms, thrown out to embrace all, everyone, everything, belongs. None is an outsider, all are insiders, all belong. There are no aliens; all belong in one family, God's family, and the human family."

Excerpt from Desmond Tutu's No Future without Forgiveness.

Further Reading

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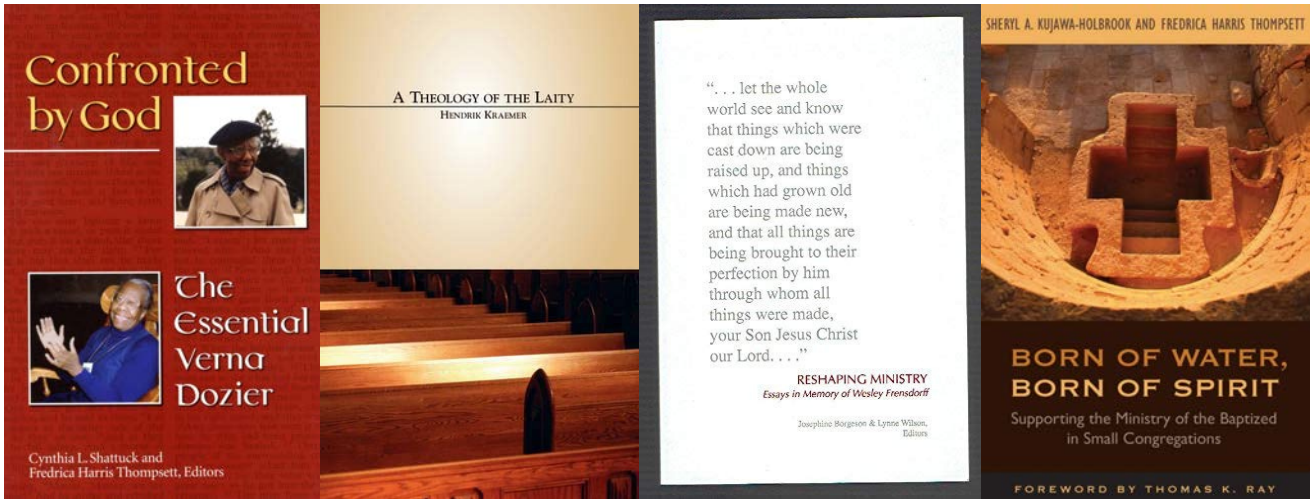

- Cynthia L. Shattuck and Fredrica Harris Thompsett, Confronted by God: The Essential Verna Dozier, Seabury Books, 2006
- Hendrick Kraemer, Theology of the Laity, Regent College Publishing, 1958
- Josephine Borgeson and Lynne Wilson, Reshaping Ministry: Essays in Memory of Wesley Frensdorff, Jethro Publications, 1990
- Sheryl A Kujawa-Holbrook and Fredrica Harris Thompsett, Born of Water, Born of Spirit, The Alban Institute, 2010

FAQ's about MM

(Frequently Asked Questions about Mutual Ministry – adapted from an Introduction to Total Ministry for a Commission on Ministry, 2005,The Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota)

MUTUAL MINISTRY initiative | VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

1. What is Mutual Ministry?

Mutual Ministry is a way of enabling the Ministry of All the Baptized. It is based in our theology of baptism, where we affirm that each baptized Christian is called to use their God given gifts for ministry. In some dioceses, a team of leaders is called within a congregation or a cluster to work together – such a team is often called a "ministry support team," indicating that these leaders seek to involve as many members of the congregation as possible in various forms of ministry. Mutual Ministry is also called Shared Ministry, Collaborative Ministry, Team Ministry, or Total Ministry.

2. Is Mutual Ministry only for small congregations who can't afford to pay a seminary trained priest?

No. Some congregations or clusters who engage in Mutual Ministry may have seminary trained priests only as mentors and supervisors. Others may continue to have a full or part-time seminary trained priest who works with the team. The team works with the seminary trained priest to further the mission and ministry of the congregation or cluster. Many people who are engaged in Mutual Ministry have come to believe that God may have gotten the church's attention via financial difficulties, but God then redirected us to pay attention to our baptismal vows.

3. Where did the concept originate?

It has its roots in both the Old and New Testaments. Here are a few passages you can read.

a. Numbers 11: 10-30 – God tells Moses to appoint 70 elders
b. Mark 3: 13-19 – Jesus appoints the Twelve
c. Luke 10: 1-9 – Jesus appoints 70 for Mission
d. I Corinthians 12: 4-13 – One body with many gifts
e. Ephesians 4: 1-13 – Gifts given to equip the saints for ministry

Mutual Ministry is a way of living out the Baptismal covenant, found in The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305. The renewed vision of the Ministry of all the Baptized is emphasized in the Catechism, found in The Book of Common Prayer, page 855, in the section on "The Ministry." The first question asks, "Who are the ministers of the Church?" The answer is, "The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons." "Lay persons" are intentionally listed first. The second question is, "What is the ministry of the laity?" "The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church."

FAQ's about MM

(Frequently Asked Questions about Mutual Ministry – adapted from an Introduction to Total Ministry for a Commission on Ministry, 2005,The Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota)

MUTUAL MINISTRY initiative

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4. What Episcopal Dioceses utilize Mutual Ministry?

In the Episcopal Church in the United States, Mutual Ministry (which may be known by other names as mentioned earlier) has been used in the Dioceses of Alaska, Nevada, Northern Michigan, North Dakota, Montana, Colorado, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Western Kansas, Western New York, West Virginia, and several others. In the Anglican Church of Canada, it is used in Rupertsland, Calgary, Qu'Apelle, Kootenay, and many others. It is also utilized in other parts of the Anglican Communion, including in England, Scotland, New Zealand, and Australia, in Dioceses too numerous to mention here. In some Dioceses in England, it is used in urban areas as well as in towns and villages.

5. Who authorizes the use of Mutual Ministry within the church?

The Canons of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. provide for the licensing of a variety of Lay Ministries and for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood persons who are identified by their congregations and who study locally. The Bishop, Standing Committee, and Commission on Ministry in each Diocese set the guidelines for their Diocese in accordance with the national Canons.

6. What are the Licensed and Commissioned Ministries?

The Canons provide for licensing Preachers, Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Visitors, Worship Leaders (formerly called Lay Readers), and Catechists. Other equally important ministries that do not require licensing as such (but for which training and commissioning are offered) may include an Evangelist, a Team Coordinator, an Administrator, a Christian Education Coordinator, a Youth Leader/Advisor, Pastoral Care Ministers, an Intercessor, a Liturgist, a Stewardship Coordinator, and Musicians.

7. Where does ministry take place?

Ministry takes place in each Christian's life situation, at home, at work, at school; in service to the world; and within the church. It is an adventure with God.

Article

Every Person's unique gift is honored – Carol Bell, Episcopal Life, Back Page, September 1997

Episcopal Life BACK PAGE
SEPTEMBER 1997

Every person's unique gift is honored

By Carol Bell

GLADSTONE, MICH.

"I haven't heard the words 'clergy' and 'laity' in over five years," says Ellen Jensen, an elementary school teacher and member of Trinity Episcopal Church. She is smiling, animated, enthusiastic. "The whole community shares equally in leadership. So a call to ordination here is no more important than any other call."

Trinity Church is a community of Christians who live and worship and minister in a city of about 5,000 in the heart of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. A decade ago this church might easily have been described as survival-oriented, fear-driven, isolated, deprived or burned out. But today, Trinity is a vital and energetic community of women and men and children.

"Each of us knows he has a unique place in the community; each of us knows she is a unique part of the body of Christ," says Carol Clark, a retired nurse, whose whole demeanor communicates hope and courage.

Maria Maniaci, a longtime member who works at Mead Paper Co., says, "Leadership here is very broad-based. We never look to any one person to make decisions. Everyone in the congregation is part of the leadership." She adds, "It's amazing. It's very life-giving. This is what I imagine the early church must have been like."

The egalitarian leadership described by these members of Trinity Church is not unusual in the Diocese of Northern Michigan. Over the course of the last 15 years, the diocese has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in the development of such models for the revitalization and empowerment of small churches.

"Only a decade ago," elementary-school teacher Sue Jamison says, "Trinity Church was organized quite differently. For a few years we would have a priest. But then he — it was always he, of course — would leave. When he left, the congregation would pitch in, minister, worship, keep the community alive. Then a new priest would arrive. And we'd sit back and wait for the ordained person to tell us what to do. It was sad. But that's the way it was."

"In 1987 all that changed," Carol Clark says. "Along with many other congregations in this diocese, we embarked on a discovery process, in which the gifts of every member were identified and affirmed. After that, the vestry called 12 of us to form a covenant group. And the covenant group met biweekly for about three years."

She describes the covenant group process, in which both theological education and community-building received major emphasis. A seminary-educated regional missioner served, and continues to serve, as consultant and resource to Trinity. But missioners in the Diocese of Northern Michigan are just that — consultants; they are never "in charge."

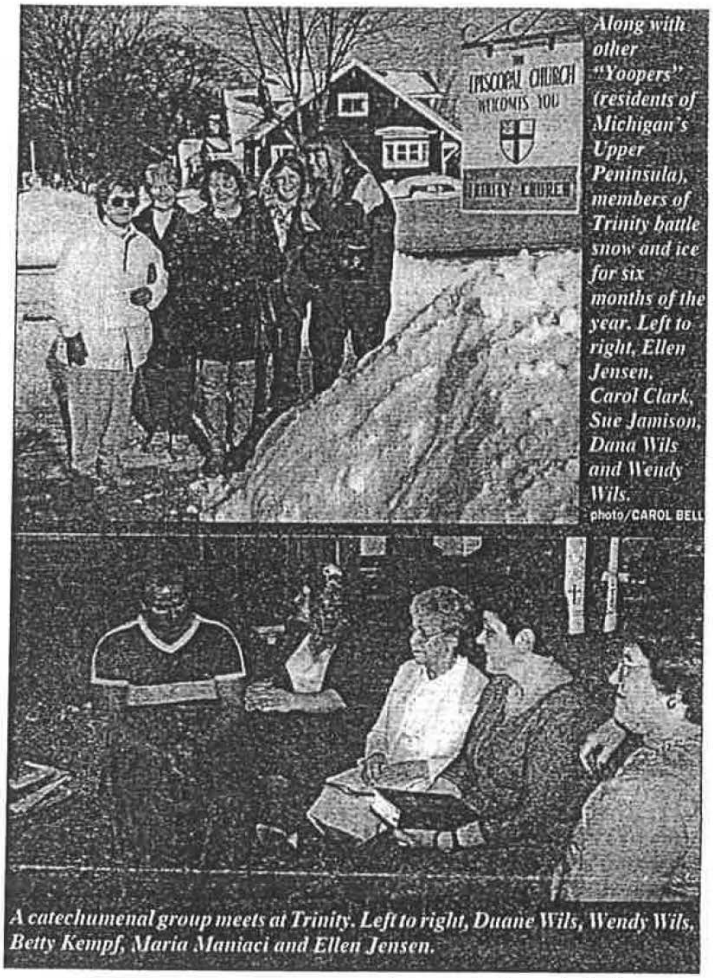
After three years, the covenant group was commissioned as a ministry support team, with two of them ordained priest, two ordained to the diaconate, and five called to be preachers. Others were commissioned as coordinators of the various ministries of the church. The purpose of the ministry support team is not to "deliver ministry" to the congregation, but rather to develop and support the ministry of everyone at Trinity. "And in the discovery process, we always looked at *people*, not at tasks that needed to be done," Sue Jamison says.

Since that first commissioning, the parish has undergone a second discovery process. Now a new covenant group has nearly completed three years of preparation. According to Wendy Wils, who works during the week as a secretary, the leadership model at Trinity engenders real freedom. "We don't burn out — because we can always say no if we need to," she says.

Empowerment, equality, shared responsibility, dynamic interaction, pure joy: again and again these qualities are spoken of by the people of Trinity Church. "We thought we knew each other before we embraced the new model," Carol Clark says, "but now we have achieved such strong bonding, such closeness. It's wonderful." Naturally, over the course of the last 10 years, conflicts have arisen. However, a commitment to openness, honest discourse and prayer always seems to have prevailed. "Certainly we disagree, often very strongly disagree, but we've always managed to work through the issues," Jamison says.

Ellen Jensen adds, "This is important: At Trinity we have not 'raised up' a select few to be our leaders. We have affirmed the leadership of all. We're all in this together, young and old!" ■

Carol Bell is a freelance writer who lives in St. Ignace, Mich.



Along with other "Yoopers" (residents of Michigan's Upper Peninsula), members of Trinity battle snow and ice for six months of the year. Left to right, Ellen Jensen, Carol Clark, Sue Jamison, Dana Wils and Wendy Wils. photo/CAROL BELL

A catechumenal group meets at Trinity. Left to right, Duane Wils, Wendy Wils, Betty Kempf, Maria Maniaci and Ellen Jensen.

Celebrating the Small Church

Profiles about the challenges they face:
MONEY • ISOLATION • YOUTH/CHILDREN
SELF-ESTEEM • BURNOUT • MUSIC
SPIRITUAL FORMATION • IDENTITY
THIS MONTH LEADERSHIP at
Trinity Church
Gladstone, Michigan
Membership: 80
Avg. Sunday attendance: 45

Marks of Baptismal Communities

From our Christian context, Mutual Ministry is a way of being community together that is rooted in our baptism. Mutual Ministry is a way of relating where we see ourselves as individuals and the community as Christ's agents in the world; where we affirm that each of us is empowered with inherent gifts given by the Holy Spirit; and where we, together, are a community of called and capable individuals working in collaboration, not a community gathered around a single called and capable individual.

There is vast diversity in the communities that relate to each other and the world this way. They can be found all over the world, inside and outside of the church. Some of them may not use this language and yet may resonate with this way of being and relating.

Despite language and context, there do seem to be common marks of communities who relate to each other and to the world this way.The following list was put together by the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa in 2017 using language from the Christian tradition. These Marks of Baptismal Ministry point out aspects of this way of being to help describe what we call Mutual Ministry and what it looks like in more practical ways.

Marks of Baptismal Communities

People understand their authority and gifts for ministry come from the Holy Spirit and are expected to be used daily –

- There is ongoing discernment and reflection on the ministry of individuals and the congregation;
- People support each other in growing and using their gifts; and
- People are encouraged to share their gifts with each other and the wider community.

Responsibility for life in community is shared by all in the community –

- People participate in the life of the community;
- Leadership is shared in all aspects of community life;
- People know their gifts are valued;
- People take responsibility for effective communication;
- People are encouraged and supported in order to follow through on their work in community; and
- The health of the community is the responsibility of all.

Decision making is flexible and adaptable –

- Transparency exists; people know what issues are being raised and what decisions need to be made;
- Decision making practices include all community members when appropriate; and
- A variety of decision making practices are used and people understand why different practices are helpful.

Marks of Baptismal Communities

Marks of Baptismal Communities, continued

A commitment to growing as a learning community is practiced –

- A wide variety of formation and educational opportunities are offered;
- A variety of prayers, music, and worship experiences are practiced;
- People know they can bring their questions about their spiritual journey to others in the community and have the opportunity for some reflection and conversation; and
- People work to increase their emotional intelligence.

Hope is apparent throughout the community –

- People feel a sense of belonging and energy;
- Ideas are expressed and explored; and
- The community focuses more on possibilities than on what is missing or lost.

Creative tension exists between inward and outward vision –

- There is a balance of ministries where members are gathered together and where members are scattered in the community in ministry;
- The focus inward supports the individual and community growth in order to go out into the world;
- The focus outward offers reflection on the inward strengths, gifts and skills required to meet the needs in the world;
- How money is spent matches the inward and outward vision; and
- The community seeks to develop authentic relationships with its neighborhood and partnerships with other faith communities.

Chaordic energy is apparent –

- Conflicts are managed well and people interact with each other in respectful and appropriate ways;
- Feelings and ideas are expressed directly and openly and are listened to in the community;
- Groups are willing to take risks; and
- The community actively seeks and values diversity.

01/12/17 (Edited by MMi 07.23.22)

Frensdorff, Wesley. Ministry and Orders: A Tangled Skein. New York: Episcopal Church Center, 1985.

MINISTRY AND ORDERS: A TANGLED SKEIN

BY WESLEY FRENSDORFF

Ministry and Orders: A Tangled Skein

Ministry, as the sharing of God's gifts in service, is the personal privilege and imperative of every member of the Church by virtue of Baptism. There's little debate about that.

> Whatever gift each of you may have received, use it in service to one another like good stewards dispensing the grace of God in its varied forms. 1 Pet. 4:10.

The Church is a ministering community, a community of ministers, interrelated, interdependent, proclaiming, and sharing the love of God, in Christ Jesus. There is little debate about that either.

> For Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs which, many as they are, together make up one body. For indeed we were all brought into one body by baptism, in the one Spirit whether we are Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free men, and that one Holy Spirit was poured out for all of us to drink. 1 Cor. 12:12,13.

Yet somehow, the Church has not always been able to make this a reality in its life and mission. Happily, in this past decade or two, there has been considerable concern with these matters in many traditions and denominations and certainly in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. Ultimately, it is a matter of ecclesiology. Examining ministry and the ordained offices in the total ministry of the Church forces us also to a reexamination of some aspects of the theology of the Church.

These ministry explorations have necessarily also resulted in a reexamination of the place and role of the ordained offices because of their importance in both the tradition and practice of the Church's life and mission. The episcopate has received a certain amount of attention. The diaconate, as a distinct order, is being studied extensively, resulting in a significant renewal. The presbyterate is experiencing significant changes.

Out of the reexamination and remodeling of the ordained offices a number of questions and issues have emerged that beg for further exploration. Some of these are theological, some institutional, and some more personal. All are intertwined and interrelated. Most of these relate particularly to the place of the presbyterate in our tradition. I would like to suggest some approaches to these questions and perhaps raise some additional issues.

In introducing the articles from the 1981 Trinity Institute Symposium on Priesthood, Dean Durston McDonald writes:

> There are other signs that we must rethink our theology of priesthood. The large increases in the numbers of "nonstipendiary" clergy, the ordinations of a variety of "sacramentalists," of rectors also working in secular jobs, as well as changing relationships between clergy and laity and the increased stress upon clergy and upon parishes economically, are phenomena which have implications not only for policy but also for our understanding of the nature of priesthood.[1]

Let me suggest the image of the tangled skein. Those who knit, do needlepoint, or other hand work, as well as those who recall their mothers doing such things, remember a skein of work that has been hopelessly entangled. The tendency in the process of disentangling is to pull on one or another strand. But that tends to tighten the knot and usually is not effective. The wool in such a skein can be restored to usefulness by fluffing it so that gradually the knots are loosened. Pulling on one strand, or one issue, tends to harden the knot. Therefore, we want to examine the variety of questions and issues with the hope that out of the tangle the strands of ministry and orders can be loosened and freely examined.

However, before examining the strands themselves, let us set forth some definitions. I find it most helpful to think of the church in terms of its life and its mission. Rather than focusing on the now all too common phrase "the mission and ministry of the Church," for me it is clearer to focus on the life of the church and the mission for which that life exists. Ministry is the instrument of both. I am aware that the life and the mission of the church are essentially one, but in functional terms it is, for me, clearer to distinguish between them.

The life of the church begins and is centered on its worship--the offering of praise and thanksgiving focused in the Eucharist. This life takes place in the context of a caring, loving community and includes the growth and nurture of the members. Ministry in the life of the church involves all of those activities in which the members offer their gifts for worship, community life, caring and nurture, as well as the organizing and administration that are necessary.

But the life of the church, as the body of Christ, exists primarily for the sake of its mission. The church is sent to make known the good news of God's total love as revealed in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and to the servant of God's children in his Name, binding up their wounds, and participating in establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. Ministry, in the mission of the church, is the activities of its members in carrying out evangelization and servanthood.

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[1] Anglican Theological Review, 66 (Suppl. Series 9): 1, 1984 (subsequent notations, ATR).

> All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the church and for the service of the world to which the church is sent.[2]

Some Systemic Problems

In my mind, there are two basic systemic problems, which are interrelated. One of these deals with our ministry delivery system, and the other with our system of leadership and governance. These are in practice too intermixed and intertwined to distinguish easily. Disentangling them may be helpful for the purpose of this exploration.

Our ministry delivery system, the delivery of service in the name of Christ, is basically the English village model, but in overload. That model is centered and heavily dependent on the "cleric," who at one time was the most educated person in the village and thus also the primary teacher. The church buildings, as a result, are set up as classrooms. This model tends to create vicarious religion, centered on the priest as the holy person, in whom is focused the religious power and knowledge. It also tends to create dependence, rather than interdependence. If the priest is "father," church members are children, who never reach sufficient adulthood in Christ to exercise much of their ministries. If the priest is pastor, members are always sheep intended to follow, not lead. Furthermore, this ministry delivery system is highly professionalized; at the center stands a professional with professional training. The model is highly hierarchical, and economically dependent in that it cannot function in its presently accepted traditional form without money. Furthermore, as a result of setting priesthood in a professionalized and economically dependent ministerial system, we have created a "sacramental captivity." Sacraments are primarily available where a professional, stipendiary priest is available. As a result there is a high degree of sacramental deprivation where the conditions of the model can't be met. (Parenthetically, we might note such deprivation is even more extreme in the Roman Catholic system because celibacy and other factors have further limited the number of priests in relationship to membership.) As Roland Allen pointed out more than fifty years ago, we have a situation in which we claim that the Eucharist must be central to the life of the Church wherever it gathers, but we have locked up its presidency in a professional, highly educated order. This clerically centered model of congregational life and mission increasingly limits both ministry delivery and the sacramental life of the Church.

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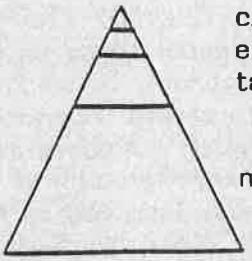
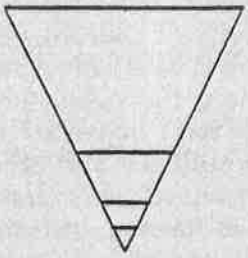
[2] Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1982, p. 20, Ministry, 1, 5(subsequently BEM).

But this system is also tied up with our governance system. It has separated, or at least created a distance between, the Church's primary leadership and the community of faith. As far as the local congregation is concerned, the primary leadership, by design, is imported. That, however, is not as true with Bishops because they are called by the diocesan community through an extensive process, and often from that community itself. With regard to the local congregation, the exercise of leadership takes second place to that of the imported leadership of the Priest. Furthermore, because primary leadership has been focused in the ordained offices, the governance system has been largely clerically dominated. While the laity have exercised strong leadership at all levels of the Episcopal Church, in the mind of many and in practice such leadership is heavily clerical. The governance system has not been clearly defined and the hybrid ecclesiastical democracy that is ours does not function with clarity. For example, a vote by orders is used as much to impede change as to develop concensus.

Our congregational leadership system can be diagramed as follows:

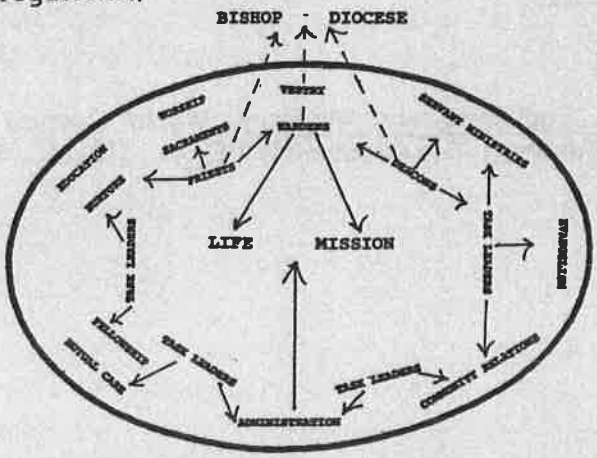


However, because we want to be a servant community, we often think of our congregational leadership this way:



In this form the system is very unstable and top-heavy; no wonder it tends to keep falling over.

In New Testament terms a congregational leadership model might look as in the figure below. (The diocesan model would look similar and include the interrelationship of congregations.)



An ellipse, rather than a circle, is a better way to diagram the church's life and mission because it has two interrelated focal points. Around the edge is the leadership team. Mutuality is at the heart of Christian community and therefore mutuality in leadership is more authentic than in a hierarchical model, even an upside-down one. We are reminded of this by Jesus' conversation with Peter at the washing of the feet at the Last Supper.

> When it was Simon Peter's turn, Peter said to Him, "You, Lord, washing my feet?" Jesus replied, "you do not understand now what I am doing, but one day you will." Peter said, "I will never let you wash my feet." "If I do not wash you," Jesus replied, "You are not in fellowship with me." "Then, Lord," said Simon Peter, "not my feet only; wash my hands and head as well!" Jn. 13:6-9.

Both systemic problems -- leadership and ministry delivery -- create much discomfort because they are basically inconsistent with our faith convictions. There is a gap between the message and the medium. That creates pressures, both on the Church and on the persons in the ordained offices. As Christians we are committed to a basic view of life that has interdependence at its heart. The world, in our understanding, is not hierarchical, but interrelated, and all parts are considered of equal value. However, our systems further either a high degree of dependence or a high degree of independence, but fall short in creating interdependence. Our present ways of doing things impede a personal and institutional life that reflects effectively the kind of body images that St. Paul uses so effectively.

We are uncomfortable with hierarchy because we are servant oriented by our faith commitment. We are committed to the servant principle but we have difficulty in living it out. Jesus obviously had the same problem with the disciples. We accept mutual servanthood in principle, but our life does not reflect that too well. We have a yearning for communal sharing -- to have all things in common -- but we find it difficult to realize that ideal. We claim and affirm gifts for each disciple, yet both the negative spirituality, which is part of our inheritance, and the customary ministry delivery and leadership systems prevent our actualizing the offering of those gifts. Our members are largely convinced that they are giftless, especially for ministry. In our spirituality, we are committed to a noncompetitiveness, yet our culture manages to press us in the opposite direction. Furthermore, we have tended to support a two-class spirituality -- one for clergy, one for laity. We explore this topic later.

A Bit of History

In order to understand these systemic problems a little more clearly, or perhaps as a way of clarifying the issues further, it might be helpful to look at a bit of history. Dr. Bernard Cooke is the author of one of the thorough studies of the development of leadership and ministry in the first four centuries of the Church's life; his book is called Ministry in the Word and Sacrament. In a lecture given at the Roland Allen conference in Hawaii in the summer

of 1983 he pointed to three major shifts or movements that occurred in the first two centuries of the present era. These shifts so far have not been reversed, but in some cases even heightened as the centuries progressed.

First, he pointed to the shift from itinerant ministry and leadership to resident ministry and leadership. Jesus was itinerant, and he demanded the same from his followers. In the early church, leadership ministries were also itinerant but many soon settled down. While there has always been some itinerant ministry, for example through missionaries, most primary leadership in the church has been "settled" since those early centuries.

The second shift to which Bernard Cooke points is one from charismatic to official leadership. The early leadership patterns were based on gifts given to individuals, because of which they were then called to carry out certain functions. Paul has a number of these lists. But soon the institutional leadership needs tended to shape these functions into offices. This shift, Cooke points out, was heightened by the second-century gnostic crisis. "In the face of these two challenges, both the ministry of prophesy and the ministry of teaching have their autonomy diminished, almost eliminated.[3] Other similar challenges tended to solidify this movement toward more "official" leadership.

The third shift, ". . . that from secular to sacred, is perhaps the most important because it deals not with who does ministry but with the very nature of what it is that is done. At the same time it is inseparable from what we have just seen because it is the key element in the process towards attributing sacrality to official church leadership; the shift towards contributing to such leaders sacred power by virtue of which their ministerial activity is salvifically effective."[4] Here are sown the seeds of what later developed into a view of actual superiority of the clergy by virtue of ordination.

In contrast, Cooke points out, primitive Christianity

> really saw its own existence with that of Jesus as "secular." They believed that a radically new form of sacrality had entered the picture with the advent of Jesus, and above all with his death and resurrection. This new sacrality had nothing to do with some special realm of sacred religious activity. It dealt with the sanctifying presence of God's spirit in Jesus and thereafter in the church. It was this Holy Spirit that made Jesus the new and definite "holy of holies" and the Christian community the temple

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[3]Bernard Cooke, "Early Christian Ministry," unpublished, a paper presented at the Roland Allen Conference, June 1984, p. 16 (subsequently Cooke).

[4]Ibid., p. 20.

> in which God dwelt; it was this creative spirit that came in fullness with Jesus' resurrection to transform the face of the earth; it was this spirit that was the life force animating the church as body of Christ, filling both vine and branches with new and unending life; and it was this spirit of sanctification that rooted all of the early manifestations of Christian ministry. The entire community was believed to be empowered by Christ's spirit, and empowered to share in the ongoing mission of the risen one.[5]

By the end of the first century, all of this was beginning to change. There was a shift to the sanctuary with images of priesthood praising God on behalf of the people. In the second century "the sacred character of the Episcopos and the sacred nature of his role are explicitly and consistently mentioned."[6] This appears to reverse earliest Christianity's reluctance to apply sacred terms to any individual in the church. "From the third century onward we can speak of holy orders in the life of the church."[7]

Edward Schillebeeckx in his book Ministry--A Study of Ministry in the Life of the Church supports Cooke's thesis and especially the third shift.[8] He points out that the trends that Cooke identifies reached new heights in the Middle Ages and that we are still stuck with them. Schillebeeckx then goes on to point out that at that time the shift from leadership rooted in community to leadership with "private" power came to new fulfillment.

This shift could be diagramed this way:

	Jesus	the people of God	clergy and leaders
to	Jesus	clergy and leaders	the people of God

Our theology and tradition still claim the first picture while our practice and ecclesial culture point in many ways to the second. It is also interesting to note that while the Reformation sought to make basic changes in some of these areas, it was largely unsuccessful. Even though the various traditions differ with us in their historical and theological views regarding ordained leadership, their basic situation is the same. Even though their polity may differ with ours, the basic issues we are discussing in this article are shared in every tradition. Aidan Kavanagh puts the matter as follows:

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[5]Ibid., p. 22.

[6]Ibid., p. 23.

[7]Ibid., p. 25.

[8]Edward Schillebeeckx, Ministry, Crossroad, NY, 1981.

> The upshot of all this is that the Western churches in the first half of this present and perhaps most egalitarian of centuries found themselves with a highly undiversified ministerial structure focused on a "learned" and thus ineluctably hieratic and elite group of people who were now regarded by many as "first-class Christians," a church of the chosen within a far larger church of the unchosen who constituted a baptized proletariat of Christians of the second, third, or even fourth kind. The effects of this are presently all around us. The other Christian ministries, where they survived, have been presbyteralized, and the rest of the church has been deministerialized. Charisms have not been restricted by this situation, for the Spirit persists in blowing, disconcertingly, where it will. But there can be no doubt that this constricted ministerial situation has made it all the more difficult to discern diaconic (i.e., service) charisms when they occur, and made it all but impossible to recognize them publicly and employ them effectively to the churches' good.[9]

The most significant thing to recognize is that in this process the ordained offices have been uprooted from community. They are privatized and clericalized. Equally important, sacramental power leads to leadership, rather than leadership leading to sacramental ministry. In the earliest church tradition, a leader was identified, called, and then given sacramental responsibility. Now, because of these shifts, in our practice, someone offers him or herself to the church and, if affirmed, is trained. Then, through ordination, sacramental authority is given; only after this comes the call to specific leadership. The primary criteria are leadership potential and intellectual ability, rather than already established leadership in the community of faith. Simply put, in the early church, leaders became Eucharistic presidents, while in our system we make Eucharistic presidents and then call them to leadership.

The sacraments are the lifeblood of the church. The present system gives their control to potential leaders rather than to established leaders. Then, add the economic factor. While there are increasing variations, it is still largely true that the availability of money controls the availability of Eucharistic and sacramental leadership for most local congregations.

If we are going to free the life and the mission of the church from these clerical and sacramental captivities, we must understand our history, disentangle the issues, and "reform" the systems, in order that every community of laity, in Schillebeeckx's words, "may have a full ecclesial life." Only then is the Church truly empowered for mission. Now let us take a look at some other strands in the tangled skein.

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[9] ATR, pp.38-39.

Some Strands to Be Examined

Several of the strands are related to what I consider confusions. We can identify three of them. One is a role and expectation confusion. The second is an identity confusion. The third is a call and career confusion.

The role and expectation confusion can be illustrated from our ordination liturgy. An analysis of the liturgy for ordaining a priest reveals a multiplicity of references to roles, function, life-styles, and expectations.[10] The pastoral and preaching aspects of the office appear more important than the priestly and sacramental functions. Teaching and eldership are also referred to. The examination declares that it is the task of the priest to "proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to fashion his or her life in accordance with its precepts." It next mentions the call to love and serve the people and to caring for all sorts and conditions. Then it goes on to say "you are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration in the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you." Presidency in the community's celebration of "word and sacrament" is certainly not primary; it almost appears like an afterthought. The rest of the service puts more emphasis on the pastoral and teaching aspects of the office than on the sacramental aspects. It also focuses the spotlight on extensive life-style expectations. Even in the actual ordination prayer, we do not find a clear picture of the office itself. While it begins with the recognition that the priest is to "offer spiritual sacrifices," and "rightly administer the sacraments," there is really no direct reference to Eucharistic presidency. The prayer does contain a plea to make the ordained a "faithful pastor, patient teacher and wise counselor," none of which are, while most desirable, theologically or even historically essential elements of the presbyteral office. These are or can be broadly shared by others in the church. In the attached appendix, I have attempted a sample rewrite of part of the liturgy for the Ordination of Priests for a clearer focus and order. The liturgies for Ordination and Consecration of a Bishop and of a Deacon are a bit clearer, but they could also benefit from describing each office more clearly and distinguishing between function and other expectations.

The role and expectation confusion is also illustrated by a recent study done for the Board for Theological Education. We Need People Who (as the report is entitled) is described as "an exploration of criteria for ordained ministries in the Episcopal Church.[11] In this study Margaret Fletcher Clark, the director, sets forth ten different models for ordained ministry. They are listed as follows:

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[10]Book of Common Prayer, pp. 525ff (BCP).

[11]Margaret Fletcher Clark, We Need People Who, Board for Theological Education, September 1982.

1. Counselor/Healer/Caretaker
2. Minister of the Word
3. Administrator/Manager
4. Prophet/Social Activist
5. Social Examplar
6. Ring-leader
7. Community personage
8. Celebrant
9. Spiritual guide
10. Witness

Referring to the study in an Alban Institute article, Clark points out that it is "important to know that we use 'model' here to describe neither an ideal nor theological tradition. It is more like a person's dream house; more an abstraction of reality than a description."[12] These models came from Church members, Commissions on Ministry, and clergy. Clark notes that the study committee was surprised by the variety of role expectations and by their seeming discrepancies, even apparent contradictions. For me it is of interest that the categories leave out a clear indication regarding "authority," even though the local priest in most situations is considered the primary leader and by canon has many prerogatives. But even more important is the fact that eucharistic presidency is merely listed as one among ten functions, whereas in our theology and spirituality this is considered central to the priestly office. The multiplicity of roles tends to blur the primacy of eucharistic presidency in the office of priest.

More than a decade ago, David G. Jones developed a table of how clerical expectations were enlarged in this century. He lists as many as twenty-four different roles. As congregational life developed and as the mission of the church was expanded, the model that had professional leadership at its apex tended to assign primary responsibility for implementation to the clergy; since much of this accumulated without clarity, it is not surprising that overload stress among the clergy became common.

Now let's add to all of that the even more undefined and subtle expectations or images, such as prophet, guru, or shaman, and we see another dimension of this confusion.

"Prophet" does not even appear in the ordination liturgy, yet it is a part of the collective consciousness of the church for the ordained. The supposed prophetic role of the clergy needs examination, because it is often misused as a way to excuse the rattling of the cages. It is generally agreed that prophets are called by God in peculiar ways and that the most disturbing, and thus the most effective, are not necessarily among the ordained. It may in fact be impossible to be priest and prophet at the same time. There is enough in the history of Israel and the life of the church to support that statement. The church is indeed called to be prophetic, but who within the church becomes its instrument is another matter.

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[12]Alban Institute Information, Nov.-Dec. 1983, p. 2.

The "guru" expectations of the clergy add another dimension. The guru is the answer person, the one who has the "knowledge" and on whom the people can depend for the "correct answer." Partly because of this, the Episcopal Church has the interesting phenomenon of having one of the most highly educated memberships, but also one of the most biblically and theologically illiterate. This, by the way, is not an indictment of our membership, but rather an indictment of the system that tends to promote vicarious religious knowledge, as well as vicarious spirituality. Happily, recent years have tended to bring this to our attention, and we are making some progress in providing more incentive and opportunities for education for our people, but it is my conviction that until we make more radical reforms, such progress will not be significant.

Priesthood also takes on the role of "shaman," or healer. As in other religions, it is understandable that some such role expectation is attributed to those who exercise sacramental and other spiritual leadership. However, it becomes a great personal burden when the officeholder moves from being a sacramental channel to being sacralized as a person.

The titles we use for clergy also point to the role and expectation confusion. Take the term "father." In a normal family, the children are expected to grow into adulthood, capable of parenthood. However, in the Church, a male priest is the father and the members of the congregations are the children and remain so forever. Once in a while somebody may be called to become another "father," but then probably not in that household. The use of the term "pastor" conjures up similar dependency images. The Priest is the shepherd, the people are the sheep, always. In the early church and in the Scriptures there is very little reference to Church leaders as shepherds. Clergy and people are sheep of the Good Shepherd even as they share in his shepherding. It is my conviction that the Bishop carries a shepherd's staff not so much as the symbol of the chief shepherd, but rather to call the church to it's shepherding vocation.

In earlier parts of this essay, reference was made to the leadership aspects of the ordained offices. We need to rethink the nature and way of servant leadership. Servant leadership cannot be hierarchical; it is without rank or title. As the conversation between Jesus and Peter at the Last Supper makes clear, servanthood must be mutual. It is <u>not</u> a reverse kind of ranking. We must also learn how mutual, shared leadership is effectively exercised. Our present models are as hierarchical as the society in which we live; they have their roots in the Roman and feudal systems of the Middle Ages. The essentially communal character of the early church was set aside soon after Constantine. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, we need to consider further the way leadership is called and affirmed. Is the present practice and process effective? We will examine this later.

With regard to leadership, as a function of the ordained offices, there are additional anomalies or at least differences between theory and practice. The presbyterate has a strong tradition of collegiality and collegial leadership. The

very origins of the office lie in shared eldership. But here also we have problems in practice. For historical reasons the governance system of the Episcopal Church has strong democratic elements. Yet, as indicated earlier, it does not function with clarity and is clerically dominated. Furthermore, nowhere as far as I know, is there a presbyteral college, simply functioning with the bishop as an accepted authority. Indeed, presbyters take their "share in the councils of the church"[13] but in practice they do so by virtue of election rather than ordination.

Recently we have rightly made it possible for Deacons to serve as clerical deputies in the General Convention. Many dioceses seeking to reestablish a renewed and effective diaconate, and increasingly aware of the disenfranchisement of their deacons, are making similar appropriate changes in diocesan leadership structures. But what about the tradition that deacons are directly under the authority of the bishop? The ordination liturgy includes such reference. The implication is that they do not share in the same kind of collegiality as do presbyters. Though there is some historical basis for such tradition, do we need to maintain it in our time? The diaconate was nominal for centuries. Does its revival preclude its inclusion in a system of collegial and communal leadership that is more biblical than the tradition on which the single bishop and deacon authority line is based?

If we can disentangle the leadership strand from the other strands of the role and expectation confusion, we might be able to achieve not only an increased clarity and effectiveness, but also greater consistency with biblical principles.

Now to another strand in the tangled skein. I call it the identity confusion. As a result of the "sacralizing" of the ordained offices, as explained by Cooke and Schillebeeckx, those who are ordained tend to place their primary Christian identity in their ordination rather than in their Baptism. Two theological terms, "character" and "indelibility," play a part in the disentangling of this confusion.

In reference to the shift from a secular to a sacred understanding of the ordained offices, Bernard Cooke wrote: ". . . when we come to official church leadership we are dealing with more than a common social phenomenon. We are faced with an explicit claim to distinctively sacred status and role."[14] Schillebeeckx points out that this shift reached its zenith in scholastic doctrine, which led to an "even magical sacerdotolizing of the priesthood."[15] The notion

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[13] BCP, p. 531.

[14] Cooke, p. 20.

[15] Edward Schillebeeckx, "A Creative Retrospect as Inspiration for the Ministry in the Future," in Minister? Pastor? Prophet?--essays on grass-roots leadership in the churches, Crossroads, NY, 1981, p. 67 (MPP).

of "character," he writes, "seems to be a particular medieval category which expressed the ancient church's view of the permanent relationship between the minister and the gift"[16] . . . given through ordination. But what started out to be a theological explanation of sacramental grace--gifts received for special ministry--became related to "personal power" and status.

In a 1972 article Herve-Marie Legrand, a Belgian Roman Catholic, relates character to indelibility and to the tradition that the Sacrament of Ordination is not repeatable. He writes:

> At the seventh session of (the council of) Trent, a definition was issued which received no dogmatic codicil since then: "If anyone says that in the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation and orders there is not imprinted in the soul a character, that is a certain spiritual and indelible sign from which it follows that they cannot be repeated, let him be anathema.[17]

In the subsequent discussion Legrand expresses the opinion that the preoccupation with "sacramental character" was a way of dealing with the prevailing theology of the presbyteral office, which emphasized status rather than function.

Our new Prayer Book moves in the right direction as it attempts to be clear about the relationship of baptism and confirmation. The latter is at most a reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant, not the establishment of a new membership status as is often implied in previous practice. Furthermore, when Confirmation is talked about as the ordination of the laity, there is an implied denial of the primary ministerial identity accepted in Baptism. Such a view of Confirmation also plays into the hands of that which makes a categorical difference between laity and clergy.

Even at Trent, Legrand claims, the intention was not to establish a connection between the understanding of "character" and the nonrepeatability of the sacrament of orders. "Just as someone who has been confirmed can no longer be considered as never having been confirmed, so one who has been ordained."[18] Someone ordained may cease to function, or even be prohibited to do so, but when restored or recalled to function in the ordained office such a person is not reordained. However, that is not because some indelible character has been bestowed in the ordination, but rather that a previously authorized office is being reauthorized. Legrand says:

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[16]Ibid,. pp. 76-77.

[17]Herve-Marie Legrand, "The 'Indelible' Character and the Theology of Ministry," Concilium, 74:54, 1972.

[18]Ibid., p. 59.

> When thought on this subject starts with the concept of character it is no longer based on the notion of ministry, that is of service to the people of God, but on a theology of cult: the priest becomes the one who is personally empowered to offer the eucharist.[19]

Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic (ARC) and the Lutheran and Roman Catholic statements on the ministry of the church make reference to the permanence of ordination. Regrettably, both use "ministry" to refer to the clergy. The ARC statement says:

> Just as Christ has united the church inseparably with Himself . . . so the gifts and calling of God to the ministers are irrevocable. For this reason ordination is unrepeatable in both of our churches.[20]

We may note that the word "indelible" has been avoided. The Lutheran and Roman Catholic statement is more explicit.

> By means of ordination Christ calls the ordained person once for all into the ministry of the church. Both in the Catholic and Lutheran understanding, therefore, ordination can be received only once and cannot be repeated.

There follows a discussion of the question of indelible character that rejects the notion of personal sanctification and seeks to understand it more "in terms of the promise and mission which permanently marks the ordained and claims them for the service of Christ."[22]

Aidan Kavanagh, in a Trinity Institute article, deals with identity as follows:

> Christians thus do not ordain to priesthood, they baptize to it. While the episcopacy and the presbyterate do come upon one for the first time at ordination, priesthood per se does not; it comes upon one in baptism, and thus laos is a priestly term for a priestly person. The vocabulary of priestliness, with which Christian tradition is ingrained, denotes a christic, i.e., a messianic-sacerdotal-royal quality which all the baptized share in the Anointed One himself and is expressed in a vast symphony of charisms, all of which originate from his own spirit given for the life of the world. To lay this on the Procrustean bed of a single

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[19]Ibid., p. 61.

[20]ARCIC Final Report, the Canterbury Statement, p. 15.

[21]International Lutheran/Roman Catholic Agreed Report, p. 36.

[22]Ibid.

> order of ministry, or even on that of two orders of ministry, and then analytically chop away with modern scientific tools, is to engage in a reductionism of so severe a kind that it closely approaches an invalidation of the results of the process. Christians must not be led astray by it, especially Christian presbyters and bishops.[23]

Urban T. Holmes, in his book Spirituality for Ministry, attempted to get away from the view that clergy are in a special class, but he did not quite succeed. He wrote:

> the priest or pastor objectifies in his or her person, and by what he or she does as the one preaching and presiding at the liturgy, a constellation of images that serves as a symbol of God's presence . . . . I am not implying that ordination effects some kind of characterological change in a person. It is not clear what such a change might mean. It does appear true, however, that within the consciousness of a community that recognized a person as ordained and within the awareness of its individual members he or she becomes a symbol. He or she represents and shapes a sense of the divine that wells up from deep within the corporate and individual memories of the people of God.[24]

> The power within the ordained person is what in fact the community gives to him or her as a sacrament of Christ, who is in turn the primal sacrament of God . . . . The pastor or priest is rooted in a world of symbols and takes on the character of his or her environment. There is an expectation that gathers about the person which, while not of his or her making, is real . . . . The ordained person is expected to be a person of prayer that the person in the street cannot be.[25] (emphasis mine)

Many persons in the street are in fact more fully persons of prayer than some of the clergy.

We do indeed need to explore in greater depth the matter of sign and symbol. The ordained offices do serve as "living reminders" of the central elements of the church's life and mission . . . the bishops are signs of unity, catholicity, and apostolicity of the church; presbyters are signs of the whole body's priesthood; and the deacons are signs of its servanthood. But they do not thereby become a separate class. Furthermore, symbol and function are related. A priest who does not exercise the office is not a sign or symbol to anyone. A sign that cannot be seen is not a sign. In that sense the indelibility question is moot.

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[23] ATR, p. 40.

[24] Urban T. Holmes, Spirituality for Ministry, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1982, p. 32.

[25] Ibid., p. 34.

The important World Council of Churches document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry touches on a number of these questions:

> The authority of the ordained minister is rooted in Jesus Christ, who has received it from the Father (Matt. 28:18), and who confers it by the Holy Spirit through the act of ordination. This act takes place within a community which accords public recognition to a particular person. Because Jesus came as one who serves (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27), to be set apart means to be consecrated to service. Since ordination is essentially a setting apart with prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the authority of the ordained ministry is not to be understood as the possession of the ordained person but as a gift for the continuing edification of the body in and for which the minister has been ordained. Authority has the character of responsibility before God and is exercised with the cooperation of the whole community.[26]

Obviously all of the questions and discussions related to the ordination of women to the three orders will also continue to force the Episcopal Church into a new awareness of all of the significant symbolic and psychological questions. The male images and the patriarchal elements of both our theology and our practice are now being examined with a new scrutiny and with refreshing new insights. Similarly, when we accept the fact that clerical power is at stake in the reform of our practice of the ordained offices, we will be able to deal more creatively with such alternative models that welcome the leaders of minorities and of the poor to the ordained offices through "paths" that are appropriate to their context.

> The absence in many modern churches of significant and deeply rooted orthodoxy in baptismal theology and practice turns seminaries into catechumenates, ordination into baptism, and clergy into "first-class" ecclesiastical citizens freed of obligations to the tradition and to proletarian communities of the merely baptized.[27]

There is one church, one laos. Indeed, "Christians do not ordain to priesthood, they baptize in to it." We may well wonder if it is not our holding on to the medieval vestiges of "character" and "indelibility" that continues to press in the direction of maintaining a distinctive status for the ordained. Maybe ordination ought not to be considered quite so permanent! It would be a way to reestablish, periodically, the relationship of the ordained to the community of faith. At least this matter deserves some continuing reexamination.

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[26] BEM, p. 22, Ministry 1, 15.

[27] ATR, p. 44.

For me, two of the most significant aspects of the forgoing discussion are these. First is the distinction between laity and clergy. Even our new catechism almost makes that implication when it asks the question, "Who are the ministers of the church?" and responds with the statement: ". . . ministers are lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons"[28] as if there were four orders. I have often heard statements to that effect. Even in common vocabulary, lay means uneducated, unknowledgeable, unprofessional.

Perhaps the language battle is lost. Yet, the laity are all the people of God, including the clergy!

The second and more serious concern relates to the distancing of ordination from community. To me this is symbolized by the tradition that the call to presbyterate and diaconate generally originates with the person and is then given to the church for affirmation. The primary call is understood as coming from God, by the Spirit, to the individual. However, with the call to the episcopate both the theory and the practice are different. There the primary call comes from the community and is followed by assent and affirmation from the individual called. It seems to me that that is the way it might also be for the other offices. Both Canon III. 8 and III. 10.10 move in this direction, but community call is not generally practiced even in their use.

In the Diocese of Nevada, in calling persons to the ordained offices we have focused on such a community call process. There is strong evidence that the Spirit acting through the community in calling persons to presbyterate and diaconate is often more, or at least equally, effective than through the "traditional" approach.

The third confusion I call the career and call confusion. It relates to vocation, profession, and employment. On the one hand we believe that God and the Church call someone to these offices, but once employed, such a person is also concerned with job, career, and professional service. The tension is immediately posed when it is realized that while a priest may well be a shepherd, even among other shepherds, he or she is also a hireling. It is quite difficult to keep that tension from becoming a stressful conflict. Some of this is reflected in the "life-style" expectations and requirements expressed even in the liturgy; some of it is expressed in the ill-defined professional criteria, some of it is reflected in concerns about compensation standards and tenure.

It is interesting to explore in what way the question is related to vocation and community call, and in what way it is related to professional protection. If we believe that a community calls a person to career responsibility in one of the ordained offices, why is it not equally possible for the community to withdraw that call? We certainly believe that the individual who has responded to such a call can feel called to another community for the exercise of that office. Why not the other way around?

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[28] BCP, p. 855.

These questions merely illustrate the need to disentangle the vocation and career confusion that is part of the entangled skein.

Some Conclusions

Where, then, are we led by these discussions? First of all, we are called to develop a renewed theology of the church. Then, as we continue to explore and work at the renewal of the church in ministry, we need to continue to rediscover the biblical understanding of ministry as shared by every member of the Body of Christ. Furthermore, we need a more focused understanding and modeling of the ordained offices based on the renewed and clearer New Testament understanding of the church.

Second, we need to continue the process of "fluffing the tangled skein" by describing the offices more clearly, distinguishing them from employment, understanding them in a variety of settings, and achieving some clarity regarding role and function. In the process we might discover that clergy can be volunteers and laity can be employees in the life of the church. We will discover that shared ministry avoids distinction in status. As we continue the process of desacralization and declericalization, the ordained offices will become more open to varieties of persons in varieties of situations. Preparation will be less academic and more situational. Spiritual formation will be less monastic and less concerned with creating a separate ministerial status.

Third, it is equally important for us to continue to explore the meaning of shared leadership in order to make our governance system more consistent with our Gospel commitment. The medium must be brought closer to the message.

And last, the ordained offices must be more firmly rerooted in the community by which they are called and for the sake of which they exist.

> All members of the believing community, ordained and lay, are interrelated. On the one hand, the community needs ordained ministers. Their presence reminds the community of the divine initiative, and of the dependence of the Church on Jesus Christ, who is the source of its mission and the foundation of its unity. They serve to build up the community in Christ and to strengthen its witness. In them the Church seeks an example of holiness and loving concern. On the other hand, the ordained ministry has no existence apart from the community. Ordained ministers can fulfill their calling only in and for the community. They cannot dispense with the recognition, the support and the encouragement of the community.[29]

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[29] BEM, pp. 21-22, Ministry II, 12.

Furthermore, every community of faith, no matter what its size, no matter where it is situated or how little money it has available, must be enabled to have a complete life, and thus be empowered for a comprehensive mission.

> As for the community and the Eucharist, the ancient church and--the modern church cannot envision any Christian community without the celebration of the Eucharist. There is an essential link between the local ecclesia and eucharist. Throughout the pre-Nicene church, it was held evidently on the basis of Jewish models, that a community of which at least 12 fathers of families were assembled had the right to a priest or community leader and thus to the eucharist, at which he presided. In the small communities, these originally Episcopal leaders soon became presbyteral leaders, parish priests. In any case, according to the views of the ancient church a shortage of priests was an ecclesiastical impossibility. The modern so-called shortage of priests stands to be criticized in the light of the ancient church's view of church and ministry, because the modern shortage, in fact, has causes which stem from outside the ministry.[30]

David Paton points to the main thesis in Roland Allen's writings:

> The heart of Allen's understanding is that the Church lives by faith in Christ, whose gifts are sufficient for its life. At every level the Church is empowered by Christ to be itself, from the almost illiterate little congregation in a village to the Vatican Council itself; and the deepest considerations apply as much to the one as to the other, and to all other levels between.
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> This conviction, that no part of the church is too small or too lowly to be the church and be responsible as the church for being Christ to the world around it, rests upon two convictions which Allen held with a depth of passion of which he may himself have been unconscious. They seemed to him obvious, and they continued to seem so even when he had become reluctantly aware that many sincere Christians did not hold them as he held them. These convictions are (1) that the gifts of God in the "signs of the Kingdom"--in the Gospel and the Gospel sacraments and the life of the Spirit-filled Body itself--are sufficient; (2) that ordinary human beings--yea, . . . Chinese peasants or . . . African tribesmen--are able to receive and use these gifts.[31]

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[30] MPP, p. 77.

[31] Paton, David (Ed.), Reform of the Ministry, Lutterworth Press, London, 1968, p. 26.

In conclusion, we must recall that the primary reason for the reform and remodeling of the ministries and ordained offices of the church is to continue the renewal of her life and the strenghtening of her mission. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry provides us with a helpful summation:

> The ordained ministry should be exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way. It should be personal because the presence of Christ among his people can most effectively be pointed to by the person ordained to proclaim the Gospel and to call community to serve the Lord in unity of life and witness. It should also be collegial, for there is need for a college of ordained ministers sharing in the common task of representing the concerns of the community. Finally, the intimate relationship between the ordained ministry and the community should find expression in a communal dimension where the exercise of the ordained ministry is rooted in the life of the community and requires the community's effective participation in the discovery of God's will and the guidance of the Spirit.[32]

It is indeed one of the major challenges and opportunities of our time to develop both the systems and the theological understandings that will enable this to become a reality. When it does, the church's life will be more vital and her mission more effective.

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[32] BEM, pp. 25-26, Ministry III, 26.

Article

Single-Leader-Centered vs. Group-Centered Leadership; Mathew Wesley Williams; July 20, 2010; A blog article published by the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE)

MUTUAL MINISTRY initiative | VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Consider these two statements on leadership:

"Strong people don't need strong leaders." ——— "Leadership never ascends from the pew to the pulpit. It always descends from the pulpit to the pew."

The first quote is a famous line from Ms. Ella Jo Baker, whose masterful work in organizing and leadership development helped to launch and stabilize the early work of many of the most significant civil rights organizations of the 20th century: NAACP, SCLC, SNCC and MFDP. The second quote is a lesser-known line from a better known figure: the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. These two contrasting statements open a chapter entitled: "The Preacher and The Organizer," in Barbara Ransby's landmark book: Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision (Gender and American Culture). With these statements, Ransby positions Baker and King as symbolic representatives of two very different models of leadership.

Baker was a strong critic of a leadership style she saw embodied in King: a single-leader-centered model. This style of leadership tends to centralize power, decision making and responsibility for meaningful action in a single leader. She was convinced that this mode of leadership made superhuman figures out of ordinary individuals while robbing the masses of their own extraordinary power to value their own resources and change their collective condition. Group efforts at social change that are organized around a single leader tend to become focused on the needs and personality of that leader. More importantly, such efforts either die or are severely diminished when that leader meets his or her inevitable demise.

Ransby attributes Baker's perspective, in part, to her early experiences at the feet of her mother and other female missionaries in the black church. As a girl, Baker observed that in the male-dominated Black Baptist church, ordinary, untitled, and uncelebrated women were the ones who did the work of the church—feeding the hungry, organizing church activities, and making sure all of the "little things" in the church and community were in order. There, she developed a belief in the power of ordinary people organized to achieve collective aims. Baker was a strong proponent of the leadership style she saw in those women: group-centered leadership. This radically democratic mode of leadership shares power and responsibility, placing priority on the needs of the community. Baker's deep-seated belief in this type of leadership was not based on a "Polly Anna" view of human beings. She held a sober

paradoxical appreciation for the human capacity for both tragic frailty and innovative agency in community. She knew that group efforts that trust group members to own, lead, interpret and organize around their shared vision tend to generate patterns of change that last far beyond the limitations or life span of any single charismatic leader. It is a much more sustainable model of leadership.

What does this mean for pastoral leadership? Recently I posed these two models—single leader-centered leadership and group-centered leadership—to a gathering of young pastors who are active in social service and justice ministries. One young pastor's response has both haunted and saddened me, "Well the Baker model is ideal and all, but it doesn't really work in real life…the reality is that the people want the King model." This seems to suggest that despite his deepest ideals, values, and convictions about leadership, discipleship and ministry, pastors are, in many ways, subject to the limits of the leadership model resident in the imagination of the congregation they serve. One's livelihood often seems to depend on whether he or she will conform (or deform) to meet the people's demand for a "King" (see the story of King Saul). (By the way, my colleague Elizabeth Mitchell Clement posted a good reflection on this a while back)

If Baker's experience and beliefs hold true—and I believe they do more often than not—congregations that hold to the model of single-leader-centered leadership are doomed to hitch their hopes for vitality to the certain decline or death of an individual. It is an unsustainable model. More importantly this is a model that stands in stark contrast to the model of Jesus found in the gospels. Jesus' leadership style called ordinary people, gave them the keys to the kingdom, the power to tread on serpents, and access to the promise of Pentecost. Interestingly enough, even when some stranger outside of the inner circle was found exercising power on behalf of the people, Jesus suggested that it was not a threat to his status, but rather a cause for celebration. Jesus' model of leadership was group-centered. In contrast, when Herod and the subjects of Caesar heard about Jesus and the movement that he generated, they decided that he had to be executed. Herod's model of Empire was of a single-leader-centered group. This contrast begs the question, "If Jesus' model of leadership was group-centered, from whence do we as church leaders derive a single-leader-centered leadership model?" More importantly, what would be required of a pastoral leader to help a congregation make a shift from dependence on a single leader to a group centered way of being?