

## Wider, Broader, Richer: Trinitarian Theology and Ministerial Order

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*Developing expressions of ministry are evident across the Anglican Communion. This paper seeks to address the “crisis in ministry,” as some call it, by offering a theology of relational ministry fitting with these culturally diverse developments. Drawing from the doctrine of the Trinity, the paper argues that ordered or relational ministry arises out of and is formed by the relational nature of the Triune God, known in Christ and the Spirit in the world as an outward movement of generosity. The understanding of order and ministry arises out of a *communio ecclesiology* that is viewed as a “method” or an “ecclesial disposition.” What this means for order and ministry requires ongoing vigilance and theological reflection. This paper is such an undertaking. It does so by drawing on historical precedent and present cultural inclination so as to develop an understanding of ordered ministry in its dynamic and diverse but relational sacramental identity.*

### *The Developing Practice of Ministry*

The theology of ministry has been a prominent theme in ecclesiology over recent decades. New models of ministry and the expansion of ministries that have arisen in response to the present context of church and contemporary society have been part of current theological reflection. The developing role of the laity together with renewed conceptions of order and ministry began to appear during the latter part of the twentieth century, as has the growing voice of the “church from below.”<sup>1</sup> This is reflected in new approaches to ministry,

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History, Vol. 1: Historical Ecclesiology* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 26–35. See also Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), 151–72.

including the ordained ministry within provinces such as those in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada, but also in the growing postcolonial and pluralist voice within the Anglican Communion more generally. Thus we have seen, for example, the renewal of the diaconate and the increased recognition of priestly ministry within business, industry, hospitals, schools, and so forth. Women are now ordained in many parts of the Anglican Communion, while lay presidency and the ordination of homosexual men and women remain issues of contention and division within the Communion. As David Cox observed, “No longer was the Anglican clergyman necessarily male, a priest, or in full-time parochial ministry,” and nor was the clergy’s authority and standing in the wider community what it had once been.<sup>2</sup>

These developments have contributed to what some call a crisis in the understanding and practice of order and ministry. The crisis is noted especially with regard to the nature and meaning of the ordained ministry when status and/or sacerdotal identity seem discounted or diminished in the face of developing lay ministries.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the crisis in ministry has also been evoked, some argue, by more recent therapeutic or managerial paradigms that have arisen in the latter half of the twentieth century. Ministerial ideals that arise out of therapeutic or managerial models may have contributed to a destabilization of the identity of ordained ministers, or encouraged unhealthy or mistaken ecclesial practice.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> R. David Cox, *Priesthood in the New Millennium: Toward an Understanding of Anglican Presbyterate in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Church Publishing, 2004), 85.

<sup>3</sup> John Webster, “Ministry and Priesthood,” in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (London: SPCK, 1998), 332; Leander S. Harding, “The Power and the Dignity of the Priesthood,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 43, no. 2 (2000). See also Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood: A New Theology of Mission and Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1994), 55–72.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Paul R. Kolbert, “Rethinking Ministerial Ideals in the Light of the Clergy Crisis,” *Ecclesiology* 5 (2009): 192–211. For a critique of the therapeutic model of ministry, see Urban T. Holmes, *The Future Shape of Ministry: A Theological Projection* (New York: Seabury, 1971). For a critique of a creeping managerialism within the church, see Scott Cowdell, *God’s Next Big Thing: Discovering the Future Church* (Melbourne: John Garratt Publishing, 2004), and G. R. Evans and Martin Percy, eds., *Managing the Church? Order and Organization in a Secular Age* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

However, the reasons for this sense of crisis in ministry are also cultural and theological. It is an interlocking crisis, as Duncan Forrester has suggested, because it is related more generally to “the place of the Christian faith and the function of the Christian church in our society, and to a whole series of pressing and complex issues about the integrity, cohesion and viability of secular pluralism.”<sup>5</sup> And more than ever in our post-September 11, 2001 context, we have to ask questions about the way we practice our faith and ministry in a religiously pluralistic time, while being reminded yet again of the ways the practice of religion may not only be unhelpful but downright dangerous.<sup>6</sup> Our understanding and practice of order and ministry are crucial in the face of these sobering realities because ministerial praxis is formative of our church life and of the more general practice of Christian faith today. Crisis it may be, but the developments represent new possibilities and renewed practice.

Within the Anglican Communion developments in ministerial practice, this “explosion” of ministry, as Thomas O’Meara calls this phenomenon within the Roman Catholic Church,<sup>7</sup> have been the result of our growing ecclesial and cultural diversity fed by the wider religious, cultural, and social developments of our globalized world. Along with the ordination of women to the threefold ordained ministry in many provinces within the Anglican Communion, there is an emergent postcolonial theology and ecclesial practice that will continue to challenge Eurocentric perspectives and cultural practices. The resulting need to expand our conceptual framing of a theology of ministry fitting with these developments is an important ecclesial task for our time, especially if we acknowledge that these movements in our understanding and practice of ministry are the result of the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The developing ministerial practices within the Anglican Communion have been variously named and conceptualized. In general these are practices that have tended to be more collaborative in nature,

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<sup>5</sup> Duncan Forrester, *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 65.

<sup>6</sup> Grace Davie, Paul Heelas, and Linda Woodhead, eds., *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Aldershot U.K.: Ashgate, 2003), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas O’Meara, *A Theology of Ministry*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1999).

fitting within Roger Haight's description of "ecclesiology from below."<sup>8</sup> As models of ministry they have been variously described within Anglicanism as mutual ministry, total ministry, non-stipendiary ministry, or local ministry.<sup>9</sup> The "mission-shaped church" movement has also been influential in Australia with its vision of "fresh ex-pressions."<sup>10</sup> These models and the theology behind them are not without their detractors and not without good reason. As John Hull, the Australian theologian and educator resident in the U.K. has suggested, while the "mission-shaped church" makes reference to trinitarian theology and the church's relationship with the reign of God in the world, it tends to lack any real depth in its ecclesial and missional reflection and often seems to promote in practice the notion of a "church-shaped mission."<sup>11</sup>

The degree to which Anglican dioceses in Australia have taken to the mission-shaped church models or the total ministry or ministering communities' model varies. However, the central trend in this ecclesiology and practice is toward more collaborative styles of church and ministry. In the Australian context, this is particularly so in the more rural and regional Anglican dioceses.<sup>12</sup> The irony is, however, that the success or otherwise of these models in practice also depends on the extent of acceptance, understanding, and practice by episcopal leadership. The case for collaborative ministry continually requires our theological reflection and reconstruction.

My concern in this paper, however, is not so much to argue the pros and cons of such models in their particular shape and emphasis. I do take it to be true that behind these developments we may see the intent of the Holy Spirit for "wider service, a more diverse ministry for a church life that will be broader in quantity and richer in quality."

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<sup>8</sup> Haight, *Christian Community in History, Vol. 1: Historical Ecclesiology*, 56–66.

<sup>9</sup> James C. Fenhagen, *Mutual Ministry* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977); Robin Greenwood, *Practising Community: The Task of the Local Church* (London: SPCK, 1996); Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Church: Liberating Structures for Ministry* (London: SPCK, 2002); Stewart C. Zabriskie, *Total Ministry: Reclaiming the Ministry of All God's People* (New York: Alban Institute, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> General Synod of the Church of England, *Mission-Shaped Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004); General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, *Building the Mission-Shaped Church in Australia* (Sydney: General Synod Office, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> John M. Hull, *Mission-Shaped Church: A Theological Response* (London: SCM, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Philip Hughes and Audra Kuncinuas, *Models of Leadership and Organisation in Anglican Churches in Rural Australia* (Nunawading, Vic.: Christian Research Association, 2009).

These developments reflect “a theology of grace which views God’s presence in the world as the source, milieu and goal of ministry.”<sup>13</sup> This paper offers a theological reflection on order and ministry in the light of the experienced widening concept of ministry and of its increasingly collaborative vision and practice.

The theological basis for my discussion here arises from recent trinitarian theology. The renaissance of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity over recent decades is well known.<sup>14</sup> Anglican documents on ecclesiology have also participated in this renaissance of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity and several have argued that it is the basis for new models of church and ministry.<sup>15</sup> This paper does not rehearse this discussion of trinitarian theology at length, though I begin with a brief outline of what I perceive to be key features of this doctrine in order to develop my own discussion of a theology of ministry. I do this with an eye to the present culture of postmodernity, its “search for community” within our experience of globalization and our similarly increasingly polycentric universal church, a church whose life, like that of the Trinity, knows its vocation “in an essential orientation toward relationship.”<sup>16</sup>

One document that represents a valuable example of the recent discussion of the doctrine of the triune God and ecclesiology is the 2006 report of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD), *The Church of the Triune God*. While there are several other documents and authors that could be

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<sup>13</sup> Zeni Fox, *New Ecclesial Ministry: Lay Professions Serving the Church* (Franklin, Wis: Sheed and Ward, 2002), 143. Fox is quoting from the earlier edition of O’Meara’s *Theology of Ministry*.

<sup>14</sup> More recent examples include: Anne Hunt, *Trinity* (New York: Orbis, 2005); Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2004); Paul M. Collins, *Trinitarian Theology, West and East: Karl Barth, the Cappadocian Fathers, and John Zizioulas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> General Synod of the Church of England, *Eucharistic Presidency* (London: Church House, 1997); Anglican Consultative Council, *The Virginia Report: The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission* (London: Partnership House, 1997); The Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report* (London: ACO, 2004); International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *The Church of the Triune God* (London: ACC, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> David McLoughlin, “*Communio* Models of Church—Rhetoric or Reality?” in *Authority and Roman Catholicism*, ed. Bernard Hoose (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2002). See in Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity*, 56.

chosen, the ICAOTD report offers an invaluable overview of the key theological understanding that has grown in ecumenical currency in recent decades.

### *Key Trinitarian Themes*

The renaissance of trinitarian theology in recent decades has brought a renewed awareness that God is fundamentally relational, that is, God is a communion of Persons, a being-in-relation whose sphere of generosity and life is the economy of creation and redemption. While there have been and remain differences in trinitarian theology in the Orthodox and the Western churches, it is commonly held that it is through the missions of the Son and the Spirit that God draws the church, all humankind, and all creation into this divine life and so into salvation, as this has been traditionally called. In parallel and in many ways as a consequence, communion models of ecclesiology also receive wide ecumenical support today, though issuing in widely divergent ecclesiologies.<sup>17</sup>

The central insight of early trinitarian theology is that “the life, love and movement that is the divine life has its ground . . . in an act of giving and generating that we can only speak of as personal and free.”<sup>18</sup> This view finds its basis in the person of the Father (and not the divine “substance”) who is the “cause” of this “movement, life and love.” While issues of gender and God are important within this discussion (see ICAOTD, IV.2),<sup>19</sup> the important and central insight is that God’s very nature is personal and relational with loving intent for the whole creation. Eastern theologians have reminded us that if we

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<sup>17</sup> Trinitarian theology has been used to undergird a variety of *communio* approaches to ecclesiology. Contrary to my own more communal approach, there are others who draw on this doctrine to justify ecclesiological hierarchies, that is, to underwrite a more universalist approach and at times a more authoritarian ordering. See John Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study,” in *The Forgotten Trinity*, ed. Alisdair I. C. Heron (London: BCC/CCBI, 1991). For a discussion of these issues from a Roman Catholic perspective, see Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity*, 181, n. 20. See also Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> ICAOTD, *Church of the Triune God*, I.17, 18. Subsequent references will be included in the text.

<sup>19</sup> For wider reference to matters of gender and God, see Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is* (New York: Crossroad, 1992). Quotations from the ICAOTD document will remain as originally written, although use of male-gendered pronouns such “he,” “him,” and “his” when referring to God are usual, if not theologically correct.

allow “impersonal categories” to enter our language about the Trinity we risk distorting theology. As the ICAOTD report states, we must not “obscure the personal act as the ground of divine life, and the risk of an individualistic interpretation of ‘from the Father alone’ that would obscure the eternal mutual involvement of Father, Son and Spirit” (I.17, 18, 20). The work of creation and redemption is “the action of the Triune God sharing his life of communion with us” (I.22, 26).

The divine trinitarian fellowship is not only the “basis, model and ultimate goal” of the church’s community life, for “the ultimate purpose of the Church, and of the divine economy as a whole, is nothing less than to bring human beings into communion with the life of the Holy Trinity itself.” God’s mission, of which the church is a part, is directed toward the healing of humanity and all creation (I.3, 21). The triune communion exists “toward and for another” because of God’s “ecstatic and fecund love.”<sup>20</sup> Alongside personhood and communion, this is the third key understanding of trinitarian doctrine expressed in the missions of the Son and the Spirit. In this mutuality of communion and care, all humanity, as part of the whole creation, is drawn toward trinitarian wholeness (II.6, 7).

Accordingly, we cannot speak of God except in relational terms or as a relational category,<sup>21</sup> a being-in-relation and not a being-in-itself. Trinitarian faith is ever a reminder about God’s largesse, and of God as the source and sustenance of all.<sup>22</sup> Here is a relational ontology whereby relationship, personhood, and communion are “the modalities of *all* existence.” This is God’s way of being, such that God and creature meet within the mystery of communion and interdependence.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 383.

<sup>21</sup> Zizioulas, “Doctrine of God the Trinity Today,” 22. See also Paul S. Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: DLT, 2000), 79; David S. Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 26; Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God* (London: DLT, 1998); Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God*; and Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).

<sup>22</sup> Daniel W. Hardy, *God’s Ways with the World: Thinking and Practicing Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 61.

<sup>23</sup> LaCugna, *God for Us*, 250.

There is much that could be drawn from this discussion about trinitarian theology, but I summarize the above central tenets as important for our purposes in this essay. As Daniel Hardy argues, “The relationality of God is one of energetic involvement and participation, moving toward fuller and fuller relationship.”<sup>24</sup> For the church this means that in its desire to follow Christ in the Spirit, it will always be drawn concretely beyond itself to “a being-from and being-toward God and a being-for the world.”<sup>25</sup> Here is the heart of trinitarian faith and the ground upon which order and ministry find their theological and social character.

However, criticism of the idealistic or naive tendencies apparent in much discussion about the doctrine of the Trinity and the church is well founded. Writers often fail to account for the creative tension, conflict, debate, and failure that lie at the heart of human life, not least of all in church life.<sup>26</sup> The ICAOTD report reminds us of the need to be constantly alert to the tendency of all language about God to become idolatrous (I.35). The disposition to which theology calls us implies, as Rowan Williams reminds us, that being Christian “is believing the doctrine of the Trinity to be true, and true in a way that converts and heals the human world,” but it is “not a claim about the *totality* of truth about God or about the human world.”<sup>27</sup> Trinitarian theology expresses what the ICAOTD report calls “a disposition of faith which presupposes the priority of revelation and the commitment of those engaged in theology to a life of love and communion.” This is not an invitation to impose any ecclesial sense of *communio* uniformity from above. To do so would encompass a process ill-suited to the ecclesiology of our time.<sup>28</sup> Trinitarian theology is of practical import, as Karl Rahner and others clarify, and the ordering of ministry is a relational category shaped by the “existentially and radically transformed mentality” (I.31) of a trinitarian faith.

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<sup>24</sup> Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 28; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (London: SCM, 1992), 225, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth T. Groppe, “Catherine Mowry Lacugn’s Contribution to Trinitarian Theology,” *Theological Studies* 63, no. 4 (2002): 762.

<sup>26</sup> Mark D. Chapman, “The Social Doctrine of the Trinity: Some Problems,” *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 1 (2001): 239–255.

<sup>27</sup> Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 180.

<sup>28</sup> Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity*, 181–182.

*Some Implications for the Ordered Ministry of the Church**1. The Dynamic of Order and Ministry*

The conceptualization and practice of order and ministry in the church is my particular interest in this paper. How does this relational trinitarian perspective offer insight here? How might the recent developments in models of ministry or cultural variations in ministry be understood theologically?

In common with a broad range of ecumenical thinking today, the biblical notion of *koinonia* is rooted in convictions about the nature of the triune God. The *communio* model has become a key model for the church and ministry. Anglicans view ministry as arising integrally from our understanding of the church: “ministry is first and foremost a feature of the life of the Church as a whole,”<sup>29</sup> and baptism is the primary sacrament.<sup>30</sup> As Lambeth 1998 asserted, “Baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ is the foundation of all Christian ministry.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, ministry is constitutive rather than derivative of the church’s being.<sup>32</sup> As Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas asserts, “There is no such thing as a ‘non-ordained’ person in the Church.” When a person is initiated into the ecclesial community that individual becomes a member of a particular “ordo,” being initiated into a specific ecclesial relationship with others who profess the Christian faith.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Hannaford, “Representation and the Theology of Ministry,” *Ecclesiology* 1, no. 2 (2005): 90; Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach* (New York: Herder and Herder/Crossroad, 2003); Robert Hannaford, “Foundations for an Ecclesiology of Ministry,” in *Order and Ministry*, ed. Robert Hannaford and Christine Hall (Leominster, U.K.: Gracewing, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> See Fredrica Harris Thompsett, “The Primacy of Baptism: A Reaffirmation of Authority in the Church,” in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, ed. Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-lan (New York: Church Publishing, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998: Transformation and Renewal* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse, 1999), 192–194; Kenan B. Osborne, *Order and Ministry* (New York: Orbis Books, 2006); Hannaford, “Representation and the Theology of Ministry.” See also the ICAOTD report, VII.1.

<sup>32</sup> General Synod of the Church of England, “Eucharistic Presidency,” 3.6; Hannaford, “Foundations for an Ecclesiology of Ministry,” 23, 47.

<sup>33</sup> John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: DLT, 1985), 215–16. Also referenced in Richard R. Gaillardetz, “Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry in an Ordered Communion,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and*

However, while there has been this developing *communio* understanding or paradigm of the church, there are various ways that this *communio* ecclesiology has been conceived. Some notions of *communio* continue a more institutional and hierarchical structuring in conception and practice. My own preference, as implied above from the developments in trinitarian theology, aligns with a more communal or relational interpretation that also acknowledges the value and necessity of ecclesial engagement with history and culture as the place of trinitarian creation and recreation. Thus, as the Roman Catholic writer Gerard Mannion argues, the *communio* perspective is better viewed as a “method” or an “ecclesial disposition.” This also seems to mirror the intent of the ICAOTD report, though it is not always as thoroughly argued, as I will suggest. This more relational perspective bears an ecclesial vision that encompasses the diversity of contextual and historical developments. It is a more dynamic understanding of the interrelationship of theology and church that enables us to assert the sacramentality of the church while ensuring the full embrace of grassroots diversity and current experience in our conception of order and ministry.<sup>34</sup> It is important, therefore, that any description of a relational ecclesiology and ministerial order does not move too quickly toward abstracted or idealized theories or “blueprint” ecclesiologies unattainable in reality, as Nicholas Healy has argued.<sup>35</sup>

The ecclesial ordering of ministry bears a dynamic relationship with disciples who journey together in faith and action within their context or world. Discipleship is the ongoing response to the life of God among us and with others in the world. Ministry arises as part of our discipleship as we live into Christ in the Spirit for the world. Discipleship and ministry together form the ecclesial community as they exist in a complementary relationship as source and energizer of the church and its mission for each other and for the world. Ministry is therefore not an afterthought of discipleship, but of the essence of

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*Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 35.

<sup>34</sup> Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity*, 52–55. See also Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent* (New York: Orbis, 2008); Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Haight, *Christian Community in History, Vol. 1: Historical Ecclesiology*.

<sup>35</sup> Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*.

who we are as God's people in Christ.<sup>36</sup> As Daniel Hardy argued, ministry is a "cooperative responsibility, exercised by all, to embody the abundance of God's healing compassion for the world. . . . Even in the time of Jesus, and certainly afterward, the Church was not first an idea or a doctrine but a *practice* of commonality in faith and mission."<sup>37</sup> Central to this common practice of faith and mission is the dynamic ordering of ministry shaped by the character and purposes of the Triune God, in accordance with the needs of time and place. It is this ecclesial disposition of faith as a response to the trinitarian revelation that draws commitment to "a life of love and communion." Church order is then another way of speaking about the trinitarian ecclesial disposition that provokes developments in the church's common life and mission.

This dynamic view of order and ministry has support from the recent work of Kenan Osborne. Osborne has shown that, etymologically, it is service and not order that was the lens through which the true meanings of order, ministry, and leadership, clerical and lay, were to be interpreted. This has tended to contrast with the use of the notion of "order" as this developed after the second century and the tendency to preference ordained ministry, especially priesthood and the episcopate. However, there was in the early centuries of the church's mission more diversity in the naming of leadership and ministry roles. For example, terms such as *episkopos* and *presbyteros*, while common, were not dominant within early Christian communities until the fourth century CE. The role and ministry of these *episcopoi* and *presbyteroi* also differed from the roles and ministries of bishops and priests today. In other words, there is no single definition or essence of the ordained ministry that stretches from the time of Jesus to today; the naming of Christian leadership from 30 to 500 CE "was at first very diverse and not all uniform."<sup>38</sup>

Mirroring these comments of Osborne, Anglicans, while acknowledging the role of the Spirit in the historic development of ministerial order, have resisted the claim that there was an original structural blueprint to be read from Scripture and applied to the

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<sup>36</sup> In stating it this way I seek to give a more integral relationship between discipleship and ministry than Robert Hannaford appears to suggest. Compare Hannaford, "Representation and the Theology of Ministry."

<sup>37</sup> Daniel W. Hardy, *Finding the Church: The Dynamic Truth of Anglicanism* (London: SCM, 2001), 29.

<sup>38</sup> Osborne, *Order and Ministry*, 6, 44, 71.

present situation (V.6, 13). The Lambeth Quadrilateral also affirmed a legitimate diversity within its ministerial order: “the Historic Episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church” (V.13).

The implications of Osborne’s findings are important for our acceptance and understanding of developments in the ordering of ministry. A relational ecclesiology seeks to order its ministry so as to witness to God’s love within its own time and context. For example, our consciousness of globalization has made us aware of the need to heed the voice of local culture and needs. Christopher Duraisingh argues that while a Eurocentric, Western perspective has generally sought to universalize and valorize unity, harmony, and totality, the postcolonial imagination values the historicity of every particular: “Everything has meaning only as it is located both in its particularity . . . and within ‘a densely woven web of relationality.’”<sup>39</sup>

A relational ecclesiology acknowledges and encourages diversified local expression as part of the church’s relational trinitarian character. This kind of relational but diverse ordering of ministry is apparent in the early Christian centuries. As Osborne insists, during these first centuries it was the *local* pastoral concerns that shaped any adaptation in forms of ministry. Any standard forms that developed were, he argues, “the result of historical evolution and human judgement guided by the Holy Spirit.” Thus the church in this dynamic and relational perspective can adapt to new circumstances over time, while remaining faithful to its theological ordering. Translated to today’s “equicultural” world, Osborne concludes that no one culture expresses the theological benchmark for the church’s order and ministry.<sup>40</sup>

However, while order and ministry are functions that have and can change as the church interfaces with the various cultures and peoples across time and geography, they remain part of the dynamic of the ecclesial community that is relationally bound to the triune God.

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<sup>39</sup> Christopher Duraisingh, “Toward a Postcolonial Re-Visioning of the Church’s Faith, Witness and Communion,” in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, ed. Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-lan (New York: Church Publishing, 2001), 345.

<sup>40</sup> Osborne, *Order and Ministry*, 5, 73, 139. See also Susan K. Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003), and Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1985).

It is not the case that “anything goes,” as the content or expression of order and ministry are theological in character. The ordering of ministry is not immune to culturally imbued processes characteristic of particular contexts and political understanding. Indeed, a faith of the Incarnation would suggest that the presence of culturally imbued processes is not only possible but to be expected.

The doctrine of the triune God as a dynamic relationship of unity-in-diversity implies a legitimate and necessary diversity for the church and human sociality more generally, just as there is a legitimate and necessary diversity within the creation in order that it might be fruitful and creative.<sup>41</sup> For the ICAOTD report, this doctrine “implies that to be ‘in the image and likeness of God’ is to be in communion, to be simultaneously ‘one’ and ‘many.’” This means, they argue, that the church catholic “cannot logically precede the multiplicity of local churches” (I.24).

However, ICAOTD could develop this understanding of ecclesial diversity further than they have allowed. The increasingly diverse Anglican Communion not only mirrors the increasingly diverse and pluralistic church catholic, it also mirrors the global context in which it lives and ministers and receives God’s love and life. Our postmodern era calls for a recognition and celebration of pluralism, as indeed does trinitarian theology. But as Roman Catholic author Gerard Mannion has commented, this is not to commend a “woolly” pluralism. It is rather an aspiration to have the God-given courage “to live with tensions, even with conflict and disagreements: this must be possible, in order for a communion to flourish.” In other words, inclusivity and acceptance of the other is not necessarily limitless. However, the ecclesial disposition of the church today in the face of its diverse cultural and geographic expression is to “strive to bear witness to, to be the sign and mediation of the very self-communication of God to the world, to be a sacrament of grace, of salvation, ‘for God so loved the world.’”<sup>42</sup> Our ordering of ministry is of this nature, for they are orders of care.

Keeping the *theological* character of the ordering of ministry in the forefront of our thinking and practice is important. Theological reflection will therefore be an important process as an ecclesial tool.

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<sup>41</sup> See David S. Cunningham, “The Trinity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192; Cunningham, *These Three Are One*.

<sup>42</sup> Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity*, 225, 184.

If theological reflection is like a “craft,” as has been suggested, then it is like a “way of life” whereby it enters as a process into our ecclesial dwelling in the world. Undertaken with an eye to the ordering of ministry, it may also be seen as a process by which we focus and develop our communal Christian practices in order to “continually ‘answer and respond’ to the call and vocation of apprenticeship and discipleship in God’s ways.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, as with Christian practices more generally, the ordering of ministry is concerned “not only to articulate norms but also to transform lives and institutions, to get down to specifics—to get practical.”<sup>44</sup>

By way of example, we might draw from the recent and well-known work of John Collins on the diaconate. As Collins points out, *diakonia* as used in the New Testament is not identified primarily as an ethical term suggesting menial service. Rather, *diakonia* is more appropriately viewed as action on behalf of another, in the name of an authority, namely God, and of God’s reign in the world.<sup>45</sup> As an important category for a theology of ministry, service or *diakonia* requires this theological corrective when related to the construal of ecclesial order and ministry. One becomes a minister by entering into and being established in relationships of service designated theologically as representatives of God through Christ in the Spirit.<sup>46</sup>

Ministerial ordering, as with this example of the diaconate, is concerned relationally with a certain kind of transformative practice, or as Rowan Williams has suggested, “the reconstruction of community.” This requires that we leave room both for imaginative surprise and acknowledgment of the eschatological proviso of future transformation. The Christian logic of embodiment, of personhood,

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<sup>43</sup> Terry A. Veling, *Practical Theology: “On Earth as in Heaven”* (New York: Orbis, 2005), 16. Veling is here describing “practical theology.” Theological reflection, as I understand it, is a process of “reflection on the practices of the church as they intersect with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God’s redemptive practices in, to and for the world” [(John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 6].

<sup>44</sup> Don Browning, *Christian Ethics and the Moral Psychologies* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 57. See also John Reader, *Reconstructing Practical Theology: The Impact of Globalization* (Aldershot U.K.: Ashgate, 2008), 5.

<sup>45</sup> John N. Collins, *Deacons and the Church: Making Connections Old and New* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse, 2003). See also Don Saines, “Revisiting the Diaconate,” *Uniting Church Studies* 9, no. 1 (March 2003): 35–48.

<sup>46</sup> Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 93. See also Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2005).

and of community speaks of participation in the new life of the Spirit that entails a community life that takes us beyond our connectedness with our own kind.<sup>47</sup> So when people bring other people into relationship with Jesus and each other, the church in a very real sense “happens.” But because the church’s order reflects something of the reality of a transforming and transformed human community, it is “always helpful to think of the church as an event before it is an institution.” That is, the church is a relational event in which, as people of God, we are no longer bound by the social mores of religion or world but instead have the power of forgiving love to move to places of greater well-being. This is always a bigger picture than most of us comprehend (see Ephesians 3:13–19), but it is the vision of the Christian church.<sup>48</sup>

A theology of order and ministry will therefore seek to avoid a binary division that has bedeviled a lot of our thinking about order and ministry, whether in terms of race and gender, local versus universal, or lay versus clerical ministry. In the next section I will discuss this further, but for the present we need to again hear from Christopher Duraisingh. He suggests that we must seek to live into the declaration of Pentecost by holding both “all” and “each” together, since “local identities are affirmed within a larger community.”<sup>49</sup> This is also affirmed by the ICAOTD report:

Reflected in the life of the Church, this means that the one universal Church cannot logically precede the multiplicity of local churches. The local churches can be neither parts of, nor derived from, the universal Church; rather, they constitute the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” . . . The universal Church exists only as a communion of local churches (I.24, 25)

However, it is not sufficient to speak only in these generalities about ordered ministry, as if to underscore sameness in the way such ministries are expressed across the church. I have already noted developments and differences in the ordering of ministry today in comparison with that of the early church. My work in training Sudanese Anglican

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<sup>47</sup> Williams, *On Christian Theology*, 233.

<sup>48</sup> Rowan Williams, “Theological Resources for Re-Examining Church,” in *The Future of the Parish System*, ed. Stephen Croft (London: Church House Publishing, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Duraisingh, “Toward a Postcolonial Re-Visioning,” 349–350.

clergy within a theological college highlighted for me the different ecclesiologies and theologies of ministry that exist within the Anglican Communion. Very real shifts in thought and practice, ours and theirs, had to occur to enable the full participation of ordered ministry (especially that of priests and deacons ordained in refugee camps) of Sudanese Anglicans within Anglican dioceses in Australia. Compromise by all concerned was important, but the risk is always deep and profound loss to the church as a whole because of a failure to see ordered ministry as primarily a matter of care and service, especially when cultural diversity and traumatic communal dislocation is evident.

Unity-in-diversity is a key feature of relational ministry and its concrete practice.<sup>50</sup> It highlights the need to translate this legitimate diversity into pastoral practice such as the concrete engagement with others in their difference. Ministerial character in the light of its trinitarian formation will accordingly find relationship with diverse and different others at its core. Here William Countryman's perspective on priesthood or ministry offers an invaluable reflection because, as he argues, God's people are called in the Spirit into a community where difference and disagreement will be part and parcel of a common life, the "arcane" as he suggests. There will be Christians with whom we disagree, and so also with those outside the church. The "cultural borderlands" is the place to which persons in ministry are drawn because of the memory of Jesus and the pull of the Spirit. Christian tradition as a dynamic relational process will engage with other forms of inquiry and community.<sup>51</sup> We note that within the Anglican Communion we are being reminded that appreciation of difference is a healthy mantra as an antidote to the previous hegemony of Eurocentric and Western perspectives. In our multicultural Communion we can no longer speak so clearly of church culture as

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<sup>50</sup> See Cunningham, "The Trinity," 192, and Cunningham, *These Three Are One*.

<sup>51</sup> Countryman's notion of priesthood is broad yet not unhelpful in his desire to connect the ordained priesthood or the ordained ministry to the community of ministry and to the baptismal call upon all Christians to live toward and in the borderlands where the transcendent God is often to be found. This perspective of Countryman reflects well the shape of the creative and re-creative trinitarian relationality discussed above from which, I am arguing, ministry gains its true character and order. L. William Countryman, *Living on the Border of the Holy: Renewing the Priesthood of All* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse, 1999), 175–195.

“ours,”<sup>52</sup> and there is a growing reality that it is “multivoiced, dialogical and polycentric.”<sup>53</sup>

However, diversity in ordered ministry does not only exist in the face of racial and cultural difference. As suggested above, diversity within the Australian context will surely be paralleled within the Anglican Communion more generally. This is particularly so in racially and culturally diverse cities, but no less in the rural and regional Anglican dioceses of Australia, where cultural and local variation is common.<sup>54</sup> The awareness of the distinctiveness of particular cultural settings is vitally important “to the discernment of what may be an authentic Christian response, or range of responses, to those situations” (III.4). “We may affirm the unity of the Church . . . not as a begrudged necessity but on the basis of positive theological conviction” (III.31).

So far in this section I have described the theological and ecclesial basis of order and ministry from a relational perspective that, in general terms, adheres to a trinitarian relational theology in its outward movement of generosity and of a dynamic but relational unity-in-diversity. The ordering of ministry, I have argued, is therefore responsive to local or particular pastoral and cultural needs, while remaining true to the transformative ordering of Christ through the Spirit. I now turn to discuss the nature of the relationship between ministries from this relational perspective. For this discussion I draw first from recent Roman Catholic and then Anglican writers.

## 2. *The Relational Nature of Ordered Ministry*

Kenan Osborne, in his book *Order and Ministry*, suggests that in the postconciliar ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church, ministry and leadership in the church is based on the matrix of “the call and commission of all Christians to share in the threefold ministry of Jesus [as] part and parcel of the sacrament of initiation,” that is, the threefold dimensions of Prophet, Priest, and King (which Osborne equates with leadership).<sup>55</sup> Herein also resides the gifting of the Holy Spirit in this ordering of ministry, as I will suggest further below.

<sup>52</sup> Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life*, 170. See also ICAOTD, III.14, and *The Virginia Report*, I.4.

<sup>53</sup> Duraisingh, “Toward a Postcolonial Re-Visioning,” 344–348.

<sup>54</sup> See Hughes and Kunciuinas, *Models of Leadership and Organisation in Anglican Churches in Rural Australia*.

<sup>55</sup> Osborne, *Order and Ministry*, 6, 84–85.

Relational ministry draws on the theological and ecclesial insights of *koinonia* or communion to affirm the complementary relationships of all ministries, lay and ordained. The nature of ministerial relationship is therefore less hierarchical in conception than has often been considered in practice over the history of the church; it is, as we saw above, an ecclesial disposition that approaches the ordering of ministry from below. As with all disciples, those who are baptized are called to play complementary roles in the life of the church and its mission so that ministerial relationships will remain dispositions of complementarity and collaboration.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the orders of ministry vary in terms of their ecclesial relationship, rather than as positions of power or as sacramental power received at ordination—though it is important that not all in the church are called ministers; nor should we refer to everything the church does as ministry.<sup>57</sup>

To speak of complementary ministry or of cooperative responsibility exercised by all does not negate notions of authority and power within ecclesial and ministerial relationships. Again, this ordering is always the subject of ongoing theological reflection and practical performance. A relational view of church and ministry does not imply a greater informality or a confusion of ministerial relationships or ministerial identity. Distinctions in ministry remain true to the particular giftedness or charism within their ecclesial positioning and focus.

In fact, as Stephen Sykes argues in his study *Power and Christian Theology*, there is danger in concealing or failing to understand the nature of power relationships within the ordering of ministry, as the plethora of recent cases of abuse in the church give evidence. As Bishop Sykes states, “The health of the church is more threatened by the disguise of power than by its open acknowledgement.” Sykes is helpful for our account of a relational view of ministry and the need to take into account the reality of power in the church and society and the likelihood of its corruption.<sup>58</sup>

Diagrammatically, the nature of these ministerial relationships is better represented as concentric circles of ministry rather than as a pyramidal hierarchy, better reflecting the interrelationships between

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<sup>56</sup> Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 162–164.

<sup>57</sup> Hannaford, “Representation and the Theology of Ministry.”

<sup>58</sup> Stephen Sykes, *Power and Christian Theology* (New York: Continuum, 2006), xii, 150.

various aspects of the *laos*.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps, as Edward Hahnenberg suggests, recognition of the ministries of leadership is an integrating factor here in helping to clarify this interrelationship of ministry and ministerial identity.<sup>60</sup>

What is important in this discussion about ministerial identity within a collaborative model is the theological and ecclesial view that ministry is ontologically relational. That is, ordering of ministry arises out of and is formed by the relational Triune God, known in Christ and the Spirit. Ministerial identity is therefore at once collaborative and missional at heart. Binary divisions so typical of ecclesiology and its practice are avoided in favor of more integrative—relational—ecclesial wholeness.

Typically, it has often been suggested that the power of the ministry of the laity is chiefly beyond the church in the world, as William Temple once said. Paul Lakeland also makes the valid point that lay people experience the church differently—“primarily of the element of life, not of structure.”<sup>61</sup> But to argue that lay ministry functions chiefly in the secular realm is once again to enter into binary visions of the ecclesial community. It also mitigates against a *communio* dispositional model of ecclesiology and of a trinitarian theology which views the dichotomy between the sacred and secular as false on the basis of the doctrine of creation and redemption.

The alternate problem in the discussion of lay ministry in the church is evident in the ICAOTD report. The report refrains from situating lay ministry within a relational ontology established earlier in the report, and its preference is for a “typological” description of the usual situation of lay ministry found in the respective Communion.

It is here that the concept of “ordered ministries” is most helpful when reflecting on the nature of relational ministry. Susan Wood and Richard Gaillardetz both propose this as an appropriate way ahead which also connects with the earlier tradition. According to Wood, “The concept of ‘ordered ministries’ preserves the unity of the community served by a variety of ministries . . . and minimizes the dichotomy between lay and ordained.” As has been widely argued, both

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<sup>59</sup> Cox, *Priesthood in the New Millennium*, 257–261. See also O’Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, 183, and Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 126–127, 148–149, 204–205.

<sup>60</sup> Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 124–127.

<sup>61</sup> Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 224. David Cox also refers to this as a view espoused by William Temple (Cox, *Priesthood in the New Millennium*, 338).

forms of ministries “share a common mission and common identity as the *Christifideles* before they are further specified by state in life and particular ministry.”<sup>62</sup>

“Ordered ministry refers to any and all ministries that, once formally undertaken, draw one into a new ecclesial relationship within the life of the Church; in undertaking an ordered ministry, one is *ecclesially re-positioned*.”<sup>63</sup> This concept of ordered ministries still allows for differentiation within ministerial ordering while remaining a *theological* category. As we saw above in relation to the concept of service, ordered ministries more generally “are placed in a larger vocational and liturgical framework.” This compares to the more occasional roles or tasks which still come under the banner of ministry. This is because “ordered ministries” retain an “emphasis on vocation, discernment, formation, ecclesial authorization, and liturgical ritualization.”<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, this notion of ordered ministries does not deny the validity of ministry undertaken at the various contexts of life without formal recognition or appointment apart from baptism. Importantly, however, this approach makes it clear that ordered ministry is both lay *and* ordained. Drawing on their Anglican heritage, Robert Hannaford and David Cox argue that this is best spoken about as ministerial *representation*. They apply this similarly to lay and clerical ministry.

Representation, according to Hannaford, characterizes ministry in terms of its particular form and substance in line with a trinitarian ecclesiology, namely, “the eschatological life of the spirit-filled community of the Church.” Conceptually, representation underscores not only the nature of the relational link with the triune God, but also between particular ministries and the ministry of the whole church. Representation implies that ministry “is not simply an action on behalf of the Church; it is *also a manifestation of the life that animates the whole Christian community*. Ministry is not only on behalf of the

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<sup>62</sup> Susan K. Wood, “Conclusion: Convergence Points toward a Theology of Ordered Ministries,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, 260.

<sup>63</sup> Gaillardetz, “Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry in an Ordered Communion,” 36, emphasis added. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 95, 89, 128–131, 180.

<sup>64</sup> Wood, “Conclusion: Convergence Points toward a Theology of Ordered Ministries,” 261. See also John Macquarrie, *Theology, Church, and Ministry* (London: SCM, 1986), 155–78.

Church; it is also of and about the Church,” so underscoring the sacramental character of the church and its ministry.<sup>65</sup>

However, to conceive of the representational character of ministry in trinitarian terms, as we are here seeking to do, can also move us beyond the more hierarchical christological perspective still implied by Hannaford’s christological focus. This is evident when he writes that “the union-in-distinction between Christ and his Church” suggests that the “ordained ministry represents the whole body of believers but it also represents the ministry of Christ as head.”<sup>66</sup>

The problem with this view is that, in spite of an otherwise invaluable description of the church and ministry as relational, Hannaford maintains an incipient hierarchical perspective of the clerical/lay dichotomy, though in fairness to Hannaford and Cox, it should be said that this tendency is one they seek to avoid. Trinitarian relationality reminds us that “the priest’s acting *in persona Ecclesia* makes acting *in persona Christi* possible. Representing the church allows the priest to represent Christ.”<sup>67</sup> However, this ordering must also take into account the people-forming power of the Spirit, to which I now turn.

### 3. *Ordered by Christ and the Spirit*

The relational character of ministry is highlighted when we attend to the experiential presence of God in the Christian community and to the emergence of the church’s life and ministry through the work of the Spirit. Of course this life is said to be one with that which was known in the life of Jesus but now experienced through the Spirit of the Risen Christ. The community-forming movement of the Spirit was then and is now a movement from below in the sense that people were drawn together around the risen Christ from all kinds of backgrounds and situations. In so doing the early church experienced various challenges as it moved into the larger world and this also elicited a variety of experiences of the Holy Spirit and a growing plurality of church order and mission as reflected in the New Testament. The shared giftedness of the Spirit is the logic of an

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<sup>65</sup> Hannaford, “Representation and the Theology of Ministry,” 90. Emphasis added.

<sup>66</sup> Hannaford, “Representation and the Theology of Ministry,” 91.

<sup>67</sup> Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 57.

ecclesiology from below that a relational but less hierarchical ordering of ministry seeks to emulate.<sup>68</sup>

As the Spirit accompanies and animates the growing community of disciples, the body of Christ is realized concretely, here and now, in the face of the life context of this community. The developing complex of ministries contains a unity in Christ in that all are relationally interdependent. The Spirit, in other words, orders ministry through the various charisms of ministry evident within the person and character of ministers but also through the developing institution. However, at the forefront of this ecclesial movement is that which characterizes its life, its sense of a people shaped by the trinitarian character. Ministerial order and distinction, whether between priest and lay person, deacon and bishop, reader and school chaplain, is due to the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit, as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:4–6, and as a result the recognition of gifted *people* within the life of the church. There is, as Lewis Mudge points out, a social realism that acknowledges that the church wrestles in the Spirit with the actual, complex ambiguities found in the church as a diverse people living in diverse situations. The ordering of ministry is part of this wrestling undertaken with a view to the church's "social sacramentality" as it relates to the world by drawing on its tradition but also in its wisdom from the social sciences and so forth.<sup>69</sup> For this reason, and in line with a trinitarian theology as outlined above, we may speak of it as a relational ordering in terms of a trinitarian sacramentality (VI.25). It is the work of the Spirit who *re-positions* or orders ministry accordingly within the Christian community but always with the mission to and with the world in mind.

John Zizioulas points to the sacramental nature of ministry by placing ministry within the framework which he calls "ministerial mysticism." By this he means that ministers introduce the faithful into the Christian community because ministry offers a vision and foretaste of the Kingdom. Again we must assert in ways that perhaps Zizioulas does not, that this visioning must be given concrete relational expression by the minister—sacramental ministry is surely incarnational. Ministry can be, then, an *icon* and transformative of

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<sup>68</sup> Haight, *Christian Community in History, Vol. 1: Historical Ecclesiology*, 62–63. See also Lewis S. Mudge, *The Sense of a People: Toward a Church for the Human Future* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1992), 45–53.

<sup>69</sup> Lewis Mudge, *The Church as Moral Community: Ecclesiology and Ethics in Ecumenical Debate* (Geneva and New York: WCC/Continuum, 1998), 89–90.

community life. But ministry is also transformative of the minister. Ministry is an event which allows a participation in the future realities of the reign of God, and this implies that ministry is therefore no empty sign but is of the Spirit. In this way ministry is relationally ontological. This is not to suggest that the minister is an individual possessing indelible character. Helpful for our conception of relational ministry, this iconic metaphor suggests that ministry as icon requires “the event of communion” and this also highlights the charismatic and eschatological character of all relational ministry<sup>70</sup> and our need for an ecclesiology to give place to the people-forming intention of the Spirit. Ordered ministry also has this people-forming purpose within the church; it is a *personal* ministry that is iconic of the reign of God in the world. However, it is important that we acknowledge that ordered ministry is not yet what it might become. The ordering of ministry is relational, not only because ministry attends to the Spirit of Christ in the community but also because it is open to a changing and developing world and so to God’s future reign.

God’s way of being in the world is, nevertheless, the “concrete” way of the Holy Spirit, the experienced transformative presence of God that is neither a generalized abstract universalization of God nor primarily spirituality turned inward. We are reminded once again of Christopher Duraisingh’s insight that as church we are invited to live into the declaration of Pentecost by holding both “all” and “each” together and that in so doing we must not allow “impersonal categories” to enter our language about the Trinity, nor in consequence the ordering of the ministry.

For the ordering of ministry in the church these relational but concrete parameters of the Spirit are important. The ordering of ministry is an important aspect of the people-forming power of the Spirit who accompanies and animates the growing and spreading body of disciples.<sup>71</sup> Our acknowledgment of the third article of the creed and so of the personhood of the Spirit is important in our theological reflection here. It is the presence, power, and person of the Spirit who gifts and orders ministry so as to invite people into deeper and wider

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<sup>70</sup> John D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. Paul McPartlan (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 300–301.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis Mudge, *The Church as Moral Community: Ecclesiology and Ethics in Ecumenical Debate* (Geneva and New York: WCC/Continuum, 1998), 45–50; Haight, *Christian Community in History, Vol. 1: Historical Ecclesiology*, 62–63.

relationships with others, with the world, and with God in Christ.<sup>72</sup> The Spirit of God is therefore at the heart of the relational character of ministry known and shared personally as God's "ecstatic" but incarnational life. This personal and relational life of the Spirit moves us beyond ourselves toward our ecclesial formation and mission in and for the world; it is a presence and power that opens human persons to see and know a broader moral and existential horizon. The Spirit becomes an ongoing source of relationship; the Spirit is the giver of life who allows the ministry person to become alive as a *person in relationship*, as we are "in-personed in the Holy Spirit."<sup>73</sup>

The relational core of ordered ministry is, then, of Christ and the Spirit; ministers are "en-spirited" persons, not as individuals but as persons-in-relation, as co-workers with Christ and the Spirit. This ministry, we might say, is always the ministry of a people, a movement from below but within the memory and ministry of Jesus in the experience of the Spirit. The life of the trinitarian God is mediated through communities of persons, some of whom have been "re-positioned" as representative or ordered ministers, as deacons, priests, bishops, but also readers, chaplains, pastoral caregivers, and so forth. For some this is a vocational and lifelong charism, as with the threefold ordering of deacons, priests, and bishops, while remaining personal, collegial, and communal.<sup>74</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This paper was written in response to the varied experiences of order and ministry arising within the Anglican Communion over recent decades. It was also written with a mind to the current postmodern and polycentric church and to the tension that is threatening to split the Anglican Communion as a result of the plurality of ministerial approaches and practices. The expansion of ministries has particular Anglican shape and requires ongoing theological reflection. I have drawn on recent discussion about the doctrine of the Trinity, especially noting key themes that revolve around the personal and interpersonal mutuality of ordered ministry formed in relation to the Triune God and "the work of redemption as the action of the Triune

<sup>72</sup> Ralph Del Colle, "The Holy Spirit: Presence, Power, Person," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001).

<sup>73</sup> Del Colle, "Holy Spirit," 335.

<sup>74</sup> General Synod of the Church of England, *Eucharistic Presidency*, 3.16.

God sharing his life of communion with us" (I.22, 26). Thus the heart of the Triune communion, as being-toward and being-for another in ecstatic and fecund love and as a unity-in-diversity, is integral for the ecclesial identity and practice of ministry. This is highlighted by the multicultural church of today's diverse and multilayered, globalized world.

I have argued that a relational ordering of ministry finds its identity from within the character of the Triune God. As Zizioulas again reminds us, the relational and charismatic character of ministry as *icon* roots ministry in the Christian community. Ministry is therefore "determined by *communion*" and this qualifies and defines both "ontology" and "function" as these have traditionally been conceived.<sup>75</sup> I have also sought to depict the theological nature of ministry in line with the soteriological theological perspective of trinitarian theology. Most importantly, therefore, ordered ministry is by its nature dynamic, relational, and diverse. The ordering of ministry requires our continual theological reflection in the face of a multicultural and polycentric world in order to rediscover the nature and task of ordered ministry.

Diversity in the ordering of ministry is to be celebrated as theologically appropriate. It is this relational identity and diversity that ever moves the church toward deeper, wider, and richer relationships with other human beings and our world more generally. Herein resides the sacramental nature of the church and its ministry. Daniel Hardy's comment about the church must equally apply to its ordered ministry: its calling "is to proclaim and realize the creative and redemptive work of God in the world in Jesus by the Holy Spirit. This task gives it its nature: as it proclaims and acts God's creative and redemptive work in the world, it is identified ('natured') by that."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> John D. Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion: A Presentation on the World Conference Theme," in *On the Way to a Fuller Koinonia*, ed. Thomas F. Best and Gunther Grassman (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 226.

<sup>76</sup> Daniel W. Hardy, "The Repossession of the Church in Birmingham," *The Bishopric* 8, no. 2 (1986): 12.

