Healing the Wound: Collaborative Ministry for Mission

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1. Ministry's Unhealed Wound

A recent book by the Roman Catholic theologian, Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church*¹ provides the backdrop for the subject of this article. Lakeland offers a robust critique of the doctrine of ministry and the place of the laity in the Roman Catholic Church in the twentieth century. He exposes the continuing fault line that separates those in Holy Orders from the rest of the baptised. The excitement of Vatican II, in particular the rediscovery of the notion of the people of God and the diversity of the Spirit's ministries, has struggled against a more traditional line of thought that operates on a hierarchical model of authority and ministry. In the former account the Church as a ‘community of life’ is foreground. In the latter, the Church as ‘ministerial structure’ dominates. The unreconciled tension between the Church as life and structure is reflected in the deep and unhealed wound at the very heart of the Church. This wound is caused by the continuing tension between ‘the ministry’ and the laity in Roman Catholicism. It was a wound that the Roman theologian, Yves Congar, tried to address in the mid twentieth century.² But the infection was so deep and widespread that the wound has not healed but continued to fester.

Lakeland’s critique of his own communion is relevant across the ecclesial spectrum. The Church of Jesus Christ in its many forms, from Orthodoxy at one end to Pentecostalism at the other and everything in between—including the many garden varieties of Anglicanism and Protestantism—exhibits the effects of an unhealed wound. It is a wound that severely hampers the energy, purpose and mission of the Church.

The relationship between those ordained and the rest of the baptised is a highly contentious and confused one. It is important to recall that this relationship is a matter that has to do with the internal ordering of the Church. It concerns how the Church organises and lives its life in order to fulfil its brief to bear witness to the gospel. It is interesting that in the groundbreaking ecumenical statement *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), which was the fruit of fifty years of ecumenical endeavour, the major unresolved issue remained that of ministry.³ In this report the relationship between ordained ministry and the whole people of God remains underdeveloped. Although the document begins with a consideration of the ministry of all it quickly moves to a focus on ordained ministry. This is unfortunate but almost inevitable given the ecumenical nature of the document and its emphasis upon the ordained ministries of the various churches. In this context the wound of ministry was evident in the difficulty churches had in recognising the ordained ministry of other churches. How is this a problem for the relationship between laity and ordained ministries? Here we uncover one of the sleepers in the sys-

The complementary nature of emergent order and top-down causality observed in the sciences of emergence have a corresponding form in the dynamic of ministry within the body of Christ. Being members ‘one of another’ is a particular instance of the more general dynamic at work in creation and redemption as God brings all things to their fulfilment. This also suggests that our understandings of ministry have a double focus in a doctrine of creation as well as a doctrine of redemption.

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Strategies to bind the wound

Strategies to deal with the confusions are various. Two obvious ones are circulating in the Church. The Protestant version underplays the ordained ministry and exalts the wider ministries. This has popular support for it connects with an apparent democratic and egalitarian ethos and culture of the West. In this version ministry is the work of the whole people of God. Certainly there are different jobs needing to be done, and differentiation and lines of accountability have to be developed. But it is basically a functional matter. Shared power and collaborative practice from below rather than devolution from above, seem like a gospel imperative. And you can make a reasonably good case for this from the New Testament. Protestantism is not alone on this. Pentecostals know about the movement of the egalitarian Spirit, baptising at will, endowing the Church with gifts and power for ministry. This Spirit is no respecter of position or privilege. This too has been an important theme in contemporary Roman Catholic theology, with Edward Schillebeeckx being a contemporary example.\(^4\) The rise of the laity seems to go hand in hand with a diminishment or marginalising of the ordained. It doesn't have to be the case and there are examples of genuine collaboration, but generally the cry of John the Baptist in relation to ministry and the laity is true: the laity must increase and the ordained ministry must decrease.\(^5\) This development can be observed in the anxiety about the role and identity of the ordained. It is also expressed in the frustrations of the laity when 'they' are 'held back', silenced or ignored.

The other strategy is to invest greater energy in bolstering the position and authority of the ordained. In a time of clergy crisis and where traditional clergy roles are undermined or marginalised the question of the identity and role of the ordained representative in the community of faith becomes a topic of conversation. Lakeland identifies the more conservative reaction post Vatican II as an example of this strategy.\(^6\) The hierarchical and clerical structure of the church reasserts itself; not intentionally to exclude or undermine the ministries of the baptised, but in an effort to recover the identity and authority that belongs to ordained ministry. But this strategy is not the preserve of Roman Catholicism. Pentecostals have a strong view of the authority and status of the leader. The contemporary crisis in leadership has spawned a new theology of the apostle in Pentecostalism which looks very much like its Roman Catholic counterpart.\(^7\)

Anglican and Protestant churches don't escape this problem. The clerical spirit inhabits most churches. It has been given unique liturgical sanction in the Anglican Church of Australia in its liturgy for ordination. It is now unambiguously clear that at the laying on of hands the deacon, priest or bishop is 'set apart'.\(^8\) Rather than being set in a new place in a new set of relationships to the baptised, the ordained are separated.\(^9\) This apparently involves a 'pastoral distancing' of the ordained from the people of God.\(^10\) Identity is won over against others rather than in interdependence with others. The soft version of this development is articulated by the former Anglican Primate, Peter Carnley, who notes that while the emphasis on the collaborative ministry of the whole people of God is undoubtedly a good thing, its downside is that we have tended, perhaps unintentionally, to devalue the importance of the ordained ministry, and even to blur the boundaries between the respective roles of ordained and lay people.\(^11\)

Valuing the distinctiveness of ordained ministries and clarifying boundaries is language suggestive of anxiety concerning the identity and purpose of those in Holy Orders. To what extent such identity issues are the result of the flowering of the ministries of the baptised is an interesting yet extremely difficult matter to determine. However Carnley's instincts may be quite right; today the question of Holy Orders is very much a puzzle for many in the Church, not least those ordained to ministries that have such a valued and ancient pedigree in the Church. The strategy of recovering the ministerial identity of the ordained is both deeply attractive and urgent.

These two strategies bear testimony to the continued conflict between the ordained and the wider baptised. There are a number of things to note about these strategies.

First, they arise because of a long-standing tension between lay and ordained. While the term 'lay' is foreign to the scriptures, \emph{kleros} is used to describe the whole people.\(^12\) The religious deployment of the idea of laity (\emph{laikos}) appears initially in Clement of Rome writing to the Corinthian church at the end of first century. In the context of division and discord, Clement's overriding concern seems to have been to re-establish proper order within the Corinthian church.\(^13\) To this end he appeals to an ideal ordering
under God in which each has a particular 'rank'. Whilst the analogy with the idea of rank in the military is not difficult to discern, Clement also draws upon analogies with the Levitical cult of the Old Testament. He locates the ministries of the Christian community in terms of the orders of high priest, priest and le vite. Those designated as 'layman' (anthropos laikos) are assigned their own place and are bound by 'lay precepts'. However in trying to carve out a place for the baptised Clement managed to cement a division.

Clement's use of the term laikos did not reappear until a century later in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. Tertullian, writing in the early years of the third century, was the first Western theologian to distinguish the ordo of the clergy from the Latin plebs—what we call laity or laos. Tertullian was alive to the increasing divide between clergy and the baptised and even in his pre-Montanist days he held a strong doctrine of the laity. Certainly by the time of Cyprian in the fourth century the lines had been established between clerical and lay life. From this early period tensions between the two would become a feature of the Church. The appeal to laity today reflects both the early tradition which distinguished laity from clergy and a more recent tendency to include all the baptised under the term laity or more usually laos. The conflation of these two usages can create confusion.

The second feature of the lay/clerical divide is the continual conflict between the two. This conflict is rooted in the institution's deep investment in maintaining a stable and fixed structure and order. The stronger the forces making for stability the stronger the countering force for destabilisation. This is a major reason for the stoning of the prophets and the uneasy relationship between the institution and mystical traditions in Christianity. The conflicts are essentially a response to human failure and improper use of power. The laity have felt this deeply and it generates frustration, cynicism and loss of respect. Clergy have often felt their authority and calling has been ignored or dismissed.

The third thing to note is that the two strategies noted above offer different options for clerical and lay survival within the framework of conflict and division. Neither strategy is a resolution of the fundamental division but rather ensures its continuance. Accordingly, when the institution reasserts the position of its clerical orders and invokes an ordering of its ministry from above by divine fiat the result is a closure of the system, an over-order, and strong hierarchy. The reaction to this is expressed in a movement from below, a troubling of the waters, a disruption to established patterns of ministry, and the emergence of a diversity of lay ministry and weakening of ordination. The circle of conflict continues unabated.

The fourth thing to note is the theological underpinnings to these strategies. When the ordained ministry is exalted it is usual to secure this by appeal to a strong Christology. The priesthood of Christ is the foundation of the ordained ministry. But what of the rest of the baptised? They too are sharers in the priesthood of Christ. So there emerges a special priesthood, usually 'from above', and a common priesthood, 'from below'. The two priesthoods remain disconnected. The Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue (ARCIC) documents on ministry exemplify this problem. This unsynthesised doctrine of ministry is the ministerial face of the Nestorian heresy.

A different problem arises when the ministry of the whole people of God is stressed and the special priesthood of the ordained is weakened. This is usually associated with an emphasis on the Spirit. The Charismatic Spirit bubbles up from below; the gates of heaven are opened to all, hierarchical structures are dismantled. Closure of the system gives way to a pneumatological openness. The problem with this strategy is that order gives way to its opposite: disorder. This free-floating exercise of ministry generates idealised and overly romantic notions of equality and mutuality but essentially it opens up a vacant space which is filled by whatever power elites emerge to colonise ministerial authority.

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The above points to the fact that the rift between clergy and lay goes deep and the wound has been a long time festering. The resultant ministry wars seem to be an accepted part of the ecclesial landscape. The unhealed ministerial wound of the internal life of the churches is the mirror image of the unhealed state of the ministries between the Churches. If we think we can ignore the ecumenical scene on the assumption that we need to get on with the job of ministry and that ecumenism is a massive diversion from the gospel, then beware. The problems and challenges between the churches simply re-emerge within our respective churches. Ministry wars are endemic not only between but within churches.

The quest for ministerial integration

Given this state of affairs it seems fairly obvious that the rhetoric of the churches will be laced with the language of collaboration. Clearly what we need is greater collaboration. But the closer ordained and lay work together, the more sharply the unhealed wound is evident. A more integrated approach to ministry between ordained and lay is an imperative, but because the fissure between the two is so deep integration is problematic and we easily fall back into traditional modes of operation and dysfunctional ministry. A question arises: Is there a way of understanding the inner relations between the ministries of the church that justifies genuine collaboration and confers enriched ministerial capacities upon all ministries?

From an Anglican point of view we want to know what justifications can be offered for Cranmer's Good Friday collect, which stresses the vocation and ministry of all the faithful:

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men [sic] in thy holy Church, that
The unhealed ministerial wound of the internal life of the churches is the mirror image of the unhealed state of the ministries between the Churches.

This collect from the 1549 Book of Common Prayer represents Cranmer's re-working of the earlier Roman rite. It presumes that all members of the Church have a vocation and ministry. The reference to 'vocation and ministry' was added in the 1549 Prayer Book and points to Lutheran influence. This collect points to a profound mutuality in ministry wherein each ministry bestows life and energy on other ministries. How such ministries might be coordinated and collaborate in the service of the gospel remains an important and urgent issue in a period which has witnessed such an explosion of ministries among the people of God.

In pursuance of a fuller integrative approach to the ministries, it has been common to begin with an appeal to trinitarian doctrine as a springboard for reflections on the church as a communion in which relational categories become the norm for ministry. However, this has not proved particularly fruitful for resolving the question of the relations between the ministries. The transposition of trinitarian doctrine into understandings of ministry remains underdeveloped. We might say that the trinitarian field has been tilled extensively in recent years. We have tried to milk it for all the relational and collaborative language we can. But much of it sounds overly idealistic and bears little relationship to the conflicts and tensions that we encounter in the everyday world of discipleship, ministry and witness. We readily invoke the language of relationality but we don't know what to do with it when it comes to ministry, not really. There is usually a jump—a kind of theological pole vault from an idealised trinitarianism to proposals of a practical kind for the re-organising of ministry and mission strategies in congregation, parish and diocese. Leonardo Boff's Trinity and Society is a good example of the problem. Boff ends up using a very Thomistic account of the Trinity to justify all sorts of blueprints for a new liberated society. But it looks like he already has in mind what kind of society he desires before his theology. John Zizioulas' highly influential Being as Communion is powerful and foundational for subsequent scholarship. Yet his argument provides a trinitarian justification for the prevailing hierarchical and male structure of the Orthodox Church. What this suggests is that an integrative account of ministry cannot be simply read off from the Bible or creative trinitarianism. The collaborative venture of ministry and the joy this brings will require more careful thought, and attention to detail.

2. Ordered Ministries: Insights from Science for a Theology of Ministry

Emergence, order and the new sciences

Having identified some of the issues involved in the clergy/lay division and the unsatisfactory strategies to overcome it, it is a fair question to ask: where to from here? My proposal is that we need a better theory of ministry if the churches are to have a future together in mission. A general understanding of ministry derived from first principles can provide conceptual apparatus that opens up new possibilities for understanding and practice. To do this I want to examine the concept of emergence and order in the sciences using the work of the scientist and theologian Arthur Peacock. I want to show how insights on emergence can be utilised in theology to help us understand the way the ministries of the Church are related.

The modern period of the sciences has been the principal means for uncovering the remarkable order of the world and human life. A particularly good example of this is in the area of evolutionary biology. Here the concept of order is linked to the emergence of successively higher levels of complexity in living organisms. More complex orders emerge which rely upon continuities with less complex forms. Yet these higher levels also evidence properties that can't be explained by what has preceded them. New order evidencing novelty and discontinuity emerges through continuities. Higher levels of complex self-organisation have what is described as 'emergent' properties. Scientist and theologian, Arthur Peacock, describes the process thus:

For the processes of the world exhibit an intelligible continuity in which the potentialities of its constituents are unfolded in forms of ever-increasing complexity and organization. These forms are properly described as 'emergent' in that they manifest new features which are irreducible to the sciences which describe that out of which they have developed. That qualitatively new kinds of existence come into being is one of the striking aspects of natural becoming. We witness the seeming paradox of discontinuity generated by continuity. For nature adopts new forms of being that appear to be discontinuous, at least in some respects, with those from which they originate. [my italics]

Peacock develops the theological trajectory of this insight from evolutionary biology:

Hence belief in God as creator involves the recognition that this is the character of the processes whereby god actually creates new forms, new entities, structures and processes that emerge with new capabilities, requiring distinctive language on our part to distinguish them. God is present in and to this whole process whose discontinuities are grounded in its very continuities.

As a complement to the process of emergence is the notion of 'top-down causality' or 'whole-part influence'. This has been posited to explain the way in which the parts of an evolving system are constrained to develop in certain patterns or order due to the
influence of the whole upon the parts. Peacock describes it thus:

The notion of causality, when applied to systems, has usually been assumed to describe "bottom-up" causation—that is, the effect on the properties and behaviour of the system of the properties and behaviour of its constituent parts. However, an influence of the state of the system as a whole on the behaviour of its component units—a constraint exercised by the whole on its parts—has to be recognised.36

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Such influence has been variously described—'downward' or 'top-down' causation—though Peacock refers to it as 'whole-part constraint'. He cites the example of the Benard phenomenon where individual molecules in a hexagonal convection cell, 'beyond a critical point', 'move with a common component of velocity in a coordinated way, having previously manifested only entirely random motions with respect to each other. In such instances, the changes at the micro-level, that of the constituent units, are what they are because of their incorporation into the system as a whole, which is exercising specific constraints on its units, making them behave otherwise than they would in isolation'.27

The relationships between the constituent parts considered as a whole complex are new; the nature of their interactions is influenced by virtue of their incorporation into a complex whole which itself remains relatively open to more comprehensive determination from e.g., the wider environment. Peacock argues for a complementarity between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' causation. The exploration of the dynamics of such complementarity remains a work in progress. However we might briefly summarise the situation in the following terms: the whole is more than the sum of the parts; the parts are generative of higher level orders that involve novelty; the operation of the parts are constrained by their constitution as parts of a whole; the whole is only what it is because the parts are constituted as they are. This points minimally to a notion of living organisms as a dynamically ordered set of relations in which parts and whole contribute to the constituting of the entity and its functioning.

The unresolved nature of the direction and dynamics of order, and the significance of the complementarity of the bottom up and top down causality is particularly evident in the contemporary inquiry into brain/mind/consciousness. The psychologist Malcolm Jeeves argues for an 'irreducible intrinsic interdependence'—"irreducible (in the sense that it is to get rid of either mental and physical) is to tell less than the whole story); intrinsic (in the sense that it is part of the way the world is); interdependence (the mental and physical are correlated and complementary)'28

Interestingly, the one uncontested result of the above developments is the fundamentally integrative nature of all orders of life. What is equally remarkable is the capacity for novelty that erupts from within deeply integrative sequences of complex biological development.

Developments in contemporary physics reveal a quantum world that is both resistant to ordering and expressive of an implicate order amidst chaos. Chaos and order appear to be reciprocally related; order has its 'seeds in the realm of chaos' and 'just as a smoothly operating machine can become chaotic when pushed too hard (chaos out of order), it also turns out that chaotic systems can give birth to regular, ordered behaviour (order out of chaos)'.29 Instability appears to be the pre-condition for the emergence of new order. Thus, not only is novelty integrally related to continuity, dynamic order is predicated upon the operation of chaotic systems and indeterminacy. It is relevant from natural biological systems to complex social systems and their organisational life.30

The dynamic ontologies of order revealed by the modern sciences raise questions for theological reflection about the nature of the world and divine agency. The dynamic and integrative world of the sciences is not inimical to deep ordering and patterns. On the contrary the latter seem to feed off such dynamism. The insights of the sciences have also impacted upon the social sciences and the understanding of social evolution of human communities and organisations.31 Resilience as the capacity to adapt and transform whilst maintaining a measure of homeostasis within rapidly changing environments is a central feature of dynamically ordered systems.32 Identity and continuity of institutional life is achieved through the complex interplay of the parts and whole of a system and fluctuations (perturbations) generative of new relations of order.33 This can be challenging for 'newtonian organizations in a quantum age' where sharp boundaries, poor information flow and inability to adapt seriously impede the ability of an institution to fulfil its purpose. Dynamically ordered systems with richly interrelated rather than disjointive and/or implosive structures are constituted, in part, by concomitant forms of leadership.34

Minimally the above reflections on the concept of emergence and order in the contemporary sciences suggest that the question of the ordering of ecclesial life and its ministries may have much to gain from a creative interaction with the best insights of the other disciplines.

3. The Dynamics of Collaborative Ministry

Ecclesial ministries: a set of dynamically ordered relations

Ecclesial ministries that are dynamic ordered relations exhibit similar features to the ordering of complex entities observed above. The variety of ministries give birth to more complex levels of ministerial forms that are in continuity with the diverse charismata. The latter provide the building blocks for the emer-
gence of the higher order ministries. In the social evolution of complex entities such as an ecclesial system the emergence of ministerial offices (e.g., episcopacy) does represent genuine novelty in the system. But its precondition is the operation of ministries that contributed to the expansion and increasing complexity of the system. The offices cannot be reduced to their constituent parts, i.e., to those ministries that funded their creation. But nor can they be what they are without the presence and existence of the ministries.

Ministries at all levels are co-related, integrally and dynamically linked and thus truly establish each other. They exhibit a genuine complementarity between an emergent ministerial order and a 'top-down' influence whereby that which gives 'order to the orders' (e.g., episcopacy) acts in such a way that the energy of the various ministries is released and directed for the purposes of the whole ecclesial system. The higher order ministries are thus confirmed in their purpose and significance as the 'lower ordered' ministries fulfil themselves in accord with the purpose of the whole. In this way the orders of ministry establish each other and foster each others' work and purpose. This is implicit in the Anglican Ordinal at the examination where the ordinand is asked: ... Contained in this promise is the notion of a mutuality in ministry and a responsibility upon the priest to facilitate the development of the ministries of the baptised. Thus can it be truly said that the

higher order ministries and the those that brought them forth are 'interanimative' and 'bring each other to be', The ordering of ministries is neither driven by fear of reductionism (i.e., the Catholic fear of loss of essential order) nor by fear of 'top-down' control (Pentecostal fear of sublimation by a dominant order). Rather, the ministries are irreducible, intrinsic, and interdependent. The vitalities of the ministries are embedded within the system.

The inner relation between the ministries sketched above is what one ought to expect for an evolving social system that follows the general pattern exhibited in the world seen through evolutionary biology, physics and the social sciences. The central feature in these different but related domains is the operation of a dynamic ontology of order in which new orderings and novelty are woven into deep continuities. A further consequence is that the orderings of ministry are open to new developments as in any form yet engender new capacity for the system to expand. Ministries as a set of dynamically ordered relations is not a code for capacity to maintain a steady-state but rather points to a basic resilience in the system to respond creatively to new disturbances and information. The premise of this approach to the relations between the ministries is a fundamental congruence between natural reality (and an associated doctrine of creation) and the dynamics at work in the ecclesia and its ministry as an agent in redemption.

A mission shaped church will require a mission shaped ministry that is fundamentally collaborative. Team ministry is not a luxury or optional extra; rather, it is fundamental to the fulfilment of the ministry of the Church. Collaborative ministry is the way in which the ministries of the baptised are coordinated and reflect the ways of God in the world. This means that such ministries are intrinsically related in a 'mode of togetherness' such that they raise each other to the fullness of the ministry of each. As the ministries are so interrelated they become participants in God's own energetic ordering of the church for the world. To this extent the ministry and the ministries can be genuine mediations of God's own holy order.

Ministries 'one of another': the integrative ideal

How helpful is the forgoing approach for understanding the ministries of the Christian Church? How is it related to the biblical understanding of ministry? For example, what insight does it offer for the Pauline conception of the body of Christ as 'members, one of another' (Rom. 12:5b). In the opening verses of Romans 12, Paul outlines the way in which the different members of the one body serve the body through the gifts God has given. 'Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith ...' (Rom. 12:6a). The intention is not so much ranking or weighing the gifts (in proportion to a quantum of faith) but acknowledging that the charismata are diverse and distributed through faith.

However, the key text for our purposes states: 'so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another' (kath hei allelon melē) (Rom. 12:5). What James Dunn calls 'a slightly odd variation of the body metaphor', Wannenwetsch suggests is a 'transgression of its natural logic' for while 'we can imagine what it is to be members of the same body, to be a member of someone else, as Paul phrases, can hardly be understood within the logic of the body metaphor'. Thus we miss the point if we simply hear 'individual members of one another'. The emphases here are important. The apostle Paul moves beyond merely acknowledging another's charism to one of delight in 'accepting the ministry of the other towards myself'. The emphasis is not on the 'membership of the other in the body'—e.g., whether we like them or not or have regard for their gifts—but something more radical. Ministries 'one of another' points to the fact that the
ministries of the body both share a common bond in Christ and also establish each other rather than being self-constituting. The ministries are skewed or bent towards each other and derive their vitalities from their relationship to each other. It is as if each ministry did not belong to itself but to the other ministries. Yet within this dynamic there is clearly a place, and a necessary place, for truly representative ministries to arise. Yet representation does not mean 'exclusive ownership'; rather 'the individual minister is but a personal reference to the presence of the charisma of the whole body'43. The lie to any individualistic understanding of the ministries is exposed, for if the individual were 'the only one to have a particular charisma she could not re-present it' since there 'would be no 're' no presence to refer to apart from her own personal gift.44. This means that the one exercising a 'charisma to others' is 'exactly witnessing to the commonality of the charisma'45. Hence the 'specific unfolding of the ministry into several offices is not a function of the specific charismata of the individuals'.46 Accordingly the charismata are not the property of the ministers as officeholders but the possession of the church, a possession which makes it into a society'.47 Finally, we note that representative ministry is directed beyond the maintenance of the church to the Lordship of Christ.

Collaborative ministry for mission
The above account of the inner relations of the ministries 'one of another' is a particular example of the argument developed above for ministries as a set of dynamically ordered relations. The ministries of the body are not vicarious but properly re-presentative. They are co-present to each other. Each ministry is received by others as a ministry which is a part of the other. The ministries subsist within the body. They are re-presented to and for the body that it might become what it is. They are thus expressive of the being of the whole body but yet are brought to be by that body. The basis for genuinely collaborative and interdependent ministry is grounded in the charis of God expressed in interrelated but differentiated forms. On this account divine grace does not operate outside or external to the system but rather from within. Yet it is precisely from within that the transcendent ground of all ministry—the charis of God—is operative, emergent and influential for the form and direction of ministry. This approach renders null and void the appeal to certain external coordinates (e.g., as arises in certain doctrines of apostolic succession) as guarantees of ministerial authenticity.

The dynamic that makes ministries 'one of another' operates at both micro (highly localised) and macro levels of the Church. The social evolution of the Church is generative of increasingly complex networks and levels of ministry. A differentiated representational ministry is thus an expression of a novel form of order at higher levels of complexity. For example, with episcopacy its reach and ambit extends beyond the other ministries. As such it sees over a wider range of ministries and this introduces new emergent properties of order. The 'order that orders' emerging at more complex levels of ecclesial organisation evidences both continuity with the diverse ministries, and also embodies new possibilities for the Church to realise its mission.

Importantly, however, the emergent 'order that orders' does not imply diminishment of the relational dynamic identified in the ministries 'one of another'. Rather, this dynamic adapts itself in such a way that all the ministries can endure, expand and enrich the being and witness of the Church to the gospel. In other words, higher levels of complexity ought to generate even richer forms of relation and interdependent ministries. Thus, for example, an episcopal polity ought to be able to generate increasingly rich practices of ministry among the whole people of God. Ministries remain 'one of another' throughout the fluctuations and disturbances of the ecclesial world. Indeed, it is only as the ministries are dynamically ordered as outlined above that the resilience and freedom of the Church to bear its marks (one, holy, catholic and apostolic) can occur.

The ordering of ministries is neither driven by fear of reductionism (i.e., the Catholic fear of loss of essential order) nor by fear of 'top-down' control (Pentecostal fear of sublimation by a dominant order).

The implications of the foregoing for the inner coherence and vitalities of the ministries of particular churches, local communities of faith and the exercise of common ministries across the ecclesial divides ought not be underestimated. Ministries as dynamically ordered relations; representative ministries as emergent from the wider charismata yet influencing the ordering of less complexly ordered ministries; all ministries interdependent and irreducible; acting upon one another as if each were not their own; not self constituting but constituted both from and toward another; such features of properly ordered ministries reflect the ways of God in the world as revealed in the sciences of emergence. The complementary nature of emergent order and top-down causality observed in the sciences of emergence have a corresponding form in the dynamic of ministry within the body of Christ. Being members 'one of another' is a particular instance of the more general dynamic at work in creation and redemption as God brings all things to their fulfilment. This also suggests that our understandings of ministry have a double focus in a doctrine of creation as well as a doctrine of redemption.

The dynamic of order uncovered in the biological and social worlds offers genuine insight into the way of order in the ecclesial world precisely because such interlocking realities are modes and means through which the economy of God's order is manifest. This, at least, is the fundamental theological axiom undergirding a trinitarian doctrine of creation. The coordinates for this way of God in the world are rich and transformative, energetic and ordered, personal and universal. The Christian community has glimpses of this 'bright mystery'48 of God in the face of Jesus
Christ and the life giving presence of the Spirit. As the ordered ministries of the ecclesia of God are shaped and directed by these coordinates they too bear witness to a highly complex and specific form of participation in God's active work bringing all things to their fulfilment in the kingdom of the trine God. (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Indeed, from this perspective ecclesial ministries have a remarkable reach and sphere of influence. Yet the Church has barely begun to scratch the surface of the possibilities embedded in its very life. Ministries that serve the gospel of God represent a witness not merely to the ends of the earth (extensive) but richly into every domain of the created order (intensive).

How then, from a practical point of view, do such ministries belong to one another in such a way that they can be said to ‘bring each other to be’? The dynamic identified in this article suggests quite simply that, for example, the wider ministries of the whole people of God bring the ministries of the more ‘complex’ orders (traditional offices) to be in so far as they fulfil their own calling and purposes within the ecclesia in relation to the ‘order that orders’. It is not a question of encouraging the bishop, priest or deacon in their job, supporting, praying etc. These may be all worthy and important activities. But the ministries of the people don’t do things for ordained ministries in order to strengthen and raise these orders to their full stature in Christ. Rather, as parts of the whole ecclesia, they bring the orders to be as they fulfil their own ministries. In this way the ministries of the corporate priesthood confirm the ministries of oversight, teaching and gathering. This confirming is a rich bestowal of grace and strength for those ministries that facilitate and coordinate the work of the people of God. This aspect needs to be stressed because the usual emphasis is on how the ordained ministry enhances and facilitates the wider ministries of the Church. But the ministerial dynamic is fully relational and it is intrinsic to this kind of ‘mode of togetherness’ that neither ordained nor other ecclesial ministries can be what they are or shall be without the other. Ministry as a collaborative and coordinating activity of the church is a condition of it being a ministry ordered according to the gospel.

At the ecumenical level this suggests that the churches across the ecclesial spectrum will make little progress as long they remain locked in paradigms for the recognition of ministries that reflect static ontologies, sharp boundaries and a fundamental inability to grasp the secret of their own inner life in the gospel that calls forth a richly differentiated and interdependent ministry. The general theory of ministry outlined above may provide some conceptual tools for the reconciliation of the ministries at all levels of the Church’s life. For example, it may radically change the kind of criteria invoked in ecumenical dialogues concerning the recognition of ministries. It may become less a question of ministerial validity and purity of pedigree and more a question of faithfulness to the deeper dynamics of the ministries both intra and inter church. This suggests some different questions for the churches: How might the various churches give an account of the ministries as dynamically ordered relations within their own communion? What corrections and modifications might they first need to attend to before making judgements in respect to their dialogue partners? The foregoing ought to provide a common basis for a deeper reconciliation of the ministries, in which the ecclesial spectrum, from Pentecostal to Catholic, may discover a richer framework for their common ministries which remain fundamentally incomplete with the other.

Sharing ministries ‘one of another’ takes us into the deepest reaches of the economy of God whose remarkable ordering and transforming activity in Christ and the Spirit beckons the Church to new places for the sake of the gospel. How such a general theory of collaborative ministry might unravel in the context of traditional orders of ministry and the wider mission of the Church is a subject for another occasion. But its recovery is a precondition for genuine mission in the gospel.

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5. ibid., p.39.
6. See e.g., Colin Bulley, The Priesthood of Some Believers, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, UK, 2000, p.319. Associated with this view is a failure to understand the full significance of a ‘non sacerdotal’ and ‘representative’ understanding of priesthood, pp.323 & 325. For Bulley the issue is thus quite simple; if general priesthood is to increase, special priesthood must decrease.
9. The standard ordination prayer at the laying on of hands for the three orders states: ‘Send down your Holy Spirit upon your servant N, whom we set apart by the laying on of our hands, for the office and work of a ... ’ See A Prayer Book for Australia, Broughton Books, Sydney, 1995, pp.788, 796, 805.
13. ibid., p.18.
14. Alan Hayes, 'Christian Ministry in Three Cities of the Western Empire', in Richard Longenecker (ed.), Community Formation in the Early Church and in the Church Today, Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, 2002, p.140. Only a few years earlier in 177 at Lyons, in a letter transcribed by Eusebius, there is no such distinction between clergy and laity. Rather, 'the kleros—allotted portion' here taking the meaning 'class or order'—refers to the martyrs. See Hayes, p.153.
15. The Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue (ARCIC) 1973 states that 'The ordained ministry can only be rightly understood within this broader context of various ministries, all of which are the work of one and the same Spirit' (para.2). It goes on to speak of the ordained ministry sharing in the 'priesthood of the people of God'. 'Nevertheless their ministry is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the gifts of the Spirit' (para.13). The subsequent 'sacralization in 1979 referred to two priesthoods as 'two distinct realities' (para.2). ARCIC's approach to ministry leads to what Alan Brent has called an 'unsynthesised antinomy' expressed in the following terms: the priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of the community are 'two distinct realities'; priestly ministry is 'not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to another realm of the Spirit'. The tacit assumption here is that a strong doctrine of catholic orders requires such a sharp differentiation. The price is a lack of integration of ecclesial ministries. See Allen Brent, A Cultural Episcopacy and Ecumenism: Representative Ministry in Church History from the Age of Ignatius of Antioch to the Reformation with Special Reference to Contemporary Ecumenism, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1992, p.61.
16. Nestorian Christology struggled to give an adequate account of the relationship between the humanity and divinity of Christ. This Christological failure has a ministerial form in an unreconciled relationship between a 'special priesthood' and the 'common priesthood' both of which derive from Christ. I am developing this critique further in a manuscript on ministry.
18. The basic form of this collect first appeared in 1549 and has remained in the Anglican Church ever since. Cranmer added 'vocation and ministry'.
25. ibid., p.301.
27. ibid., p.273.
30. ibid., p.143ff.
33. ibid., p.65 drawing on the work of Ilya Prigogine.
34. Wheatley, Leadership and the New Science, op. cit., ch.2.
36. Though here we are clearly talking about a system that is open rather than closed, capable of regeneration and expansion through interaction with its environment and life-giving agency as the transcendental ground of system and environment.
39. loc. cit.
40. loc. cit.
41. loc. cit.
42. loc. cit.
43. ibid., p.212
44. ibid., p.213
45. loc. cit.
46. loc. cit. Wannenwetsch gives an example: "The office of a teacher is not established because one member or a few members of the congregation happen to be just so pedagogically gifted. Rather, God has established 'teaching', the particular praxis of making the rationality of the Christian faith intelligible to one another because grace is, among other things, instructive grace; thus, the ministry of teaching is a charis, a gift of God to the whole body and which awakens different charismata in different members, often but not always by ordaining natural talents to serve the oikodome of the whole body".
47. loc. cit.