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Abstract: Graham Hughes article Limping Priests: Ministry and Ordination appeared in Uniting Church Studies ten years ago, and its inclusion amongst a select range of sample articles on the journal webpages (<http://ucs.uca.org.au>) may justifiably identify it as one of the highlights of the journals neartwenty year history. No doubt amongst others, Stephen Pickard regards the article highly, describing it as careful, perceptive and prophetic. The essay itself was a revised version of an address given in 2001 to the Georges River Presbytery of the (then) New South Wales Synod of the Uniting Church. Hughes was at that time a long-lime member of the Unired I11eological College faculty, having (in 1977, after completing a doctorate on the Letter to rhe Hebrews) firsr been hired to reach the New Testament. Over time, he shifted focus to liturgical studies - a discipline to which his own contributions were honoured by the Festschrift Prayer and Thanksgiving of 2003 and in which his reputation was firmly cemented in 2005 with the publication of his significant book *Worship as Meanint* in the Cambridge University Press series of Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine, This placed Hughes among a limited range of Uniting Church theologians whose work has garnered international attention. Be that as it may, Hughes influence in Australia has also been weighed heavily, as in William Emilsen and John Squires estimation that Hughes has, perhaps, more than anyone else in the Ausrralian Church, deepened and disciplined our understanding of prayer and worship.

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‘Limping Priests’ Ten Years Later: Formation for Ordained Ministry

STEPHEN BURNS

‘The Uniting Church is proud of its journeying’.¹

‘The only effective priest is a priest who limps’.²

Graham Hughes’ article ‘Limping Priests: Ministry and Ordination’ appeared in *Uniting Church Studies* ten years ago, and its inclusion amongst a select range of ‘sample articles’ on the journal web-pages (<http://ucs.uca.org.au/>) may justifiably identify it as one of the highlights of the journal’s near-twenty year history. No doubt amongst others, Stephen Pickard regards the article highly, describing it as ‘careful, perceptive and prophetic’.³ The essay itself was a revised version of an address given in 2001 to the Georges River Presbytery of the (then) NSW synod. Hughes was at that time a long-time member of the United Theological College faculty, having (in 1977, after completing a doctorate on the Letter to the Hebrews) first been hired to teach the New Testament. Over time, he shifted focus to liturgical studies—a discipline to which his own contributions were honoured by the Festschrift *Prayer and Thanksgiving* of 2003 and in which his reputation was firmly cemented in 2005 with the publication of his significant book *Worship as Meaning*⁴ in the Cambridge University Press series of ‘Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine’. This placed Hughes among a limited range of Uniting Church theologians whose work has

¹ *The Pilgrim People: Seeking Simplicity and Flexibility in Structure*, Sydney, Uniting Church in Australia, 1987, p. 4.

² Graham Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’: Ministry and Ordination’, *Uniting Church Studies*, 8.1 (2002): 1-13 (and available on-line at <http://ucs.uca.org.au/>, accessed August 10 2011), p. 13. Hughes’ view of what formation requires is largely in terms of focus, a word he himself uses in this context. His imagery of the ‘limping priest’ of course draws on the Hebrew bible’s depiction of Jacob limping after encounter with God (Genesis 32) as well as the imagery of the Letter to the Hebrews. The imagery also inspires the poet-cleric R. S. Thomas’ poem ‘The Priest’, which may also have been in Hughes’ mind, in which a pastor is depicted as ‘limping through life on his prayers’ (‘The Priest’, in *Not That He Brought Flowers*).

³ Stephen Pickard, ‘Orders of Praise: Ordination, Ministry and the *Missio Dei*’, William W. Emilsen and John Squires, eds, *Prayer and Thanksgiving: Essays in Honour of the Rev’d Dr Graham Hughes*, North Parramatta, UTC Publications, 2003, pp. 87-100.

⁴ Graham Hughes, *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

garnered international attention.⁵ Be that as it may, Hughes' influence in Australia has also been weighed heavily, as in William Emilsen and John Squires' estimation that Hughes 'has, perhaps, more than anyone else in the Australian Church, deepened and disciplined our understanding of prayer and worship'.⁶

Some of the key themes of 'Limping Priests' are carried over into *Worship as Meaning*⁷ whilst the article itself recapitulates and extends arguments and appeals made in Hughes' earlier and more modest publications such as *The Place of Prayer*,⁸ in which he addresses various aspects of the practice of liturgical presidency—a practice which is firmly at the centre of his reflections on ministry and ordination in his *Uniting Church Studies* article.⁹

Because the text of 'Limping Priests' is readily available on the internet, I do not reiterate its arguments in great detail in the context of my own present reflection. What I do instead is set 'Limping Priests' within trajectories of thinking about ministry and ordination in the Uniting Church both before and after its publication (the sections below on 'looking back' and 'looking forwards'), distil some key points from 'Limping Priests' and then, in light of my explorations, ask Hughes' questions about 'formation for ordained ministry' ten years later.

'Limping Priests': looking backwards

Hughes' *Uniting Church Studies* article takes as its starting point what he identifies as the 'deep restlessness and uncertainty in the church about the practice of ordination'.¹⁰ He draws special attention to the work of the vibrant lay theologian of the Uniting Church, Val Webb, in her article in the 1997 volume of this journal which voices the question 'Is it Permissible to Ask Why We Ordain at All?'—a question that led to proposals from Webb that evoked a robust response from Christiaan Mostert, included in the same 1997 volume.¹¹ Mostert was—and has remained¹²—at the heart of the Uniting Church's

⁵ Graham Stanton suggests that *Worship as Meaning* enables 'Graham's special gifts and theological concerns to enrich the church world wide' (Graham Stanton, 'Foreword', Emilsen and Squires, eds, *Prayer and Thanksgiving*, i-ii, p. i). Hughes' work has been a particular focus of attention at the like of the UK/European Society for the Study of Theology and the North American Academy of Liturgy as well as in academic discussion in worship and theology elsewhere.

⁶ Emilsen and Squires, 'Preface', Emilsen and Squires, eds, *Prayer and Thanksgiving*, v-vi, p. v.

⁷ This seems to me to be especially with respect to his reflections on 'liturgical direction' in *Worship as Meaning*, pp. 160-4.

⁸ Graham Hughes, *The Place of Prayer: Leading the Prayers of Worship*, North Parramatta, UTC Publications, 1988.

⁹ Hughes has in fact made numerous contributions to *Uniting Church Studies*, some on no less contested topics than 'Limping Priests': see especially his article (and exchange with Ann Wansborough) in the 1997 edition, and on Reformed loss of sacramental sensibility in 2011.

¹⁰ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 1, with the descriptors echoed throughout the article.

¹¹ Val Webb, 'Is It Permissible To Ask Why We Ordain At All?', *Uniting Church Studies* 3 (1997): 13–38; Christiaan Mostert, 'Ordained for Ministry: A Brief Reply to Val Webb', *Uniting Church Studies* 3 (1997): 39-47 and Val Webb, 'The Ordination Debate Revised: A Reply to Christiaan Mostert', *Uniting Church Studies* 3 (1987): 52-57.

¹² For example, co-chairing the bilateral dialogue between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church, referred to below.

ecumenical dialogues with respect to ordination and he was a key player in the production of the 1994 Assembly report on ‘Ordination and Ministry in the Uniting Church’, which is singled out for critical attention in Webb’s essay. The 1994 report was in its turn a corrective to the report ‘Ministry in the Uniting Church’ adopted by the 1991 Assembly, but deemed by the next Assembly to be ‘faulty’.¹³

Whilst the 1991 report accents ‘the Australian context’¹⁴ and develops its thinking about ministry in terms of the category of ‘mission’ in that context, the 1994 report—significantly describing itself as ‘a report on ordination’¹⁵—accents the ‘ecumenical tradition’ of the ‘wider church’.¹⁶ The theology of ordination that the 1994 report develops takes its own cues from the international ‘renaissance’ in Trinitarian theology with which it is contemporaneous and the widespread ecumenical recovery of a ‘baptismal ecclesiology’ in which baptism is understood to commission Christians to ministry, thereby allowing what may be distinctive about ordination to emerge as a somewhat more specific issue. In short, 1991 offered a wide, even diffuse, range of reference with respect to ‘ministry’, saying:

people participate in the mission and ministry of Christ in a myriad of ways for example when they participate in family life, share in the lives of sick and disabled people through care and friendship, in friendship of all kinds, in daily employment or unemployment, in leisure, in sport, in all kinds of creative activities, in work in the community, participation in Church activities. . .the list is endless,¹⁷

and, given the baptismal calling to ministry extended to all Christian people—soundly reaffirmed in 1994—this large canvas is undoubtedly correct; but the 1994 thinkers impressed that this does not take away from the need to say what focus ordained ministry might take among the many diverse ministries of the Christian people. So the 1994 report concentrates on that issue, asking about ‘the particular kind of leadership that an ordained ministry brings to the activities of proclamation, sacraments and care’.¹⁸ This key episode in the volatile history of the Uniting Church’s theology of ministry can now easily be traced in the valuable recent collection *Theology for Pilgrims*, where both documents are set within a longer tangle of reports on ministry, and which all together occupy well over half of the anthology’s pages—itsself an indication of unsettled and contested thinking in this area within the Uniting Church.¹⁹

Looking further back, no doubt the spat between the very different emphases of the early 1990s was itself made possible—perhaps inevitable—by the ambiguities scripted into

¹³ Rob Bos and Geoff Thompson, eds., *Theology for Pilgrims: Selected Theological Documents from the Uniting Church in Australia*, Sydney, Uniting Church Press, 2008, p. 331.

¹⁴ Ministry in the UCA, 2.2, Bos and Thompson, *Pilgrims*, p. 254.

¹⁵ Ordination and Ministry in the UCA, Chairperson’s Preface, Bos and Thompson, *Pilgrims*, p. 330.

¹⁶ Ordination and Ministry in the UCA, e.g. heading above para. 23 for ‘wider church’ and para 25 for ‘ecumenical tradition’. Bos and Thompson, *Pilgrims*, p. 340.

¹⁷ Ministry in the UCA, 3.3, Bos and Thompson, *Pilgrims*, p. 264.

¹⁸ Ordination and Ministry in the UCA, part 3.2, Bos and Thompson, *Pilgrims*, p. 359.

¹⁹ Hughes himself points out that the 1994 report on ordination was the seventh since 1963, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 1.

the Basis of Union, the fourteenth paragraph of which is headed ‘Ministries and ministry’. That paragraph claims that the church

comes into being in a period of reconsideration of traditional forms of the ministry, and of the renewed participation of all the people of God in the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the building up of the fellowship in mutual love, in commitment to Christ’s mission, and in the service of the world for which he died.

In his commentary on the Basis of Union, published in 1980—just after the close of his tenure as first President of the Uniting Church—Davis McCaughey acknowledged that ‘few words in the Basis have caused as much trouble since union as those with which Paragraph 14 ends’.²⁰ What others so quickly seemed to have found so ambiguous, Davis McCaughey for his own part was clearer about: his commentary argues firmly that the words at the end of paragraph fourteen ‘cannot be interpreted as a denial of what is asserted so clearly elsewhere [in the Basis] that preaching and the administration of the sacraments are the special responsibility of Ministers of the Word’.²¹ And his commentary on the Basis reiterates the shared sense of the uniting churches in their pre-union negotiations²² that there are:

Three [] marks of the regulated ministry [which] have well-nigh universal acknowledgement: (a) Responsibility for preaching and teaching—‘the Word truly preached’; (b) responsibility for sacramental and liturgical life—‘the sacraments duly administered’; (c) responsibility for pastoral care and order—‘Godly discipline’.²³

Three years after union, McCaughey therefore unequivocally claimed that the Basis of Union ‘reasserts’²⁴ this ‘thoroughly catholic and ecumenical’²⁵ perspective. But the contests of the early 1990s show that some years later Uniting Church perspectives had widely fragmented, and in fact the official position of the church involved some oscillation away from and then perhaps back towards at least some of what McCaughey did not question. Certainly, it is not obvious that by 2002, the year in which ‘Limping Priests’ was published, that the church was united around the 1994 report’s correctives to its earlier counterpart. Hughes’ own opening statement about restlessness and uncertainty is indicative enough of that, as is the weight given to questioning of ‘traditional’ perspectives on ordination in Val Webb’s work, to which Hughes refers. Webb herself may be regarded as expressive if not always of the Uniting Church Assembly’s doctrinal affirmations at least of the ‘egalitarian’

²⁰ J. Davis McCaughey, *Commentary on the Basis of Union*, Melbourne, Uniting Church Press, 1980, p. 82.

²¹ McCaughey, *Commentary*, p. 82.

²² In 1963, the first of the trail of reports to which Hughes refers (‘Limping Priests’, p. 1).

²³ McCaughey, *Commentary*, pp. 71-2. The extract of the second report can be found in Bos and Thompson, eds, *Theology for Pilgrims*, p. 103.

²⁴ McCaughey, *Commentary*, p. 72.

²⁵ McCaughey, *Commentary*, p. 72.

‘culture’²⁶ which sometimes marks much of the church—an approach she herself allies to repeated appeals to feminist imagination of a ‘discipleship of equals’ in the early Jesus-movement. Such egalitarianism seems to be the basis of her pointed challenge to the church’s official theology of ordination:

the desire of some in power in the UCA to remain in an ecumenical dialogue which demands visible, shared ministry and sacraments rather than ecumenical co-operation and mutuality in mission which can accommodate our ecclesial diversity, has forced the ordination debate to espouse theologies of ordination acceptable to dialogue partners with episcopal orders, by authenticating such theologies to laity with claims of them being our ‘tradition’. Other understandings of leadership which arise as functions of the Ministry of the people of God have been selected out or debunked, even though they may serve the UCA better in understanding itself in an Australian context.²⁷

Here an appeal to an ecumenical tradition meets an appeal about an egalitarian tradition with little critical discussion of how both ‘traditions’ are constructs; but at the very least, the quarrel illumines aspects of an enduring tension between the Assembly and members of the church who may raise their voices in other councils and forums of the church (not least this journal), even if and when the Assembly apparently settles its own sense of perspective and priorities.²⁸

All of this is crucial context for Hughes’ paper on ‘Limping Priests’ because Hughes crafts his own contribution to discussion of ministry and ordination clearly in the stream of the 1994 report, with particular emphasis on re-focusing upon the three marks of ‘well-nigh universal’ provenance which McCaughey had previously affirmed and defended. Yet whilst not invoking the contested notion of the church’s ‘egalitarianism’, Hughes also deftly suggests that focusing on these three-fold marks of ordained ministry is critical if the ‘primary dignity, worth and validity’ of the ‘the ministry of Christ’s baptized people’ is not only to be ‘preserved’ but ‘restored’—and ordination ‘regain an acceptance’²⁹ in the church—having being lost in the young church’s melee of thinking through matters of order.³⁰

‘Limping Priests’ itself

²⁶ Webb invokes Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza’s re-construction of early Christianity as a ‘discipleship of equals’: Webb, ‘Why?’, pp. 28, 35. Rodney Smith challenges the notion of the church’s egalitarianism in ‘The Assembly’, William W. Emilsen and Susan Emilsen, eds, *The Uniting Church in Australia: The First 25 Years*, Melbourne, Circa, 2003, 7-33, see note 13 on p. 257.

²⁷ Webb, ‘Why?’, p. 38.

²⁸ Dutney, *A Genuinely Educated Ministry’: Three Studies on Theological Education in the Uniting Church in Australia*, Melbourne, MediaCom, 2007 (with a new Preface, 2011), p. 111, notes that ‘Uniting Church members . . . tend to relate to the assembly in a way that is similar to the way Australians relate to “Canberra”: with ambivalence’.

²⁹ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 12.

³⁰ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 6.

In order to assert the ‘primary dignity’ of *baptismal* ministry, Hughes argues that *ordained* ministry needs to be held to some strict limits: ‘Severe limits should . . . be set. . . on the range and nature of “specifications” by which the primary ministry [i.e. of baptism] is amplified or expanded’. After making this pivotal point, Hughes then avers that ‘those very particular ministerial tasks for which some ministers need to show particular aptitudes and which require an especial authorization (ordination) need to be both articulated and adhered to with scrupulous exactitude’. Furthermore, ‘large, nonspecific terms for this order of ministry (such as “leadership”) or the generic use of “ministry” (when “ordained ministry” is intended) should be abandoned’. A fourth step in his argument underlines the importance of care and clarity about formation for ordained ministry: ‘a necessary part of the delimitation or focus inherent in a renewed understanding of ordination for our times will have to do with the preparation (formation) of people for such ministry’.³¹ Hughes makes clear here that he sees the particular ministries to which some are ordained as in no way undermining unequivocal affirmation of the ministry to which all Christian people are called by virtue of baptism.

Hughes makes his appeal for ‘limits’ on specified ministry with reference to aspects of the ‘ecumenical tradition’ of the ‘wider church’: notably the World Council of Churches’ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and Catholic theology which complements Protestant assertions that ‘the primary form, locus and inspiration for ministry is not in ordination but in the baptism into which all of Christ’s followers have been inducted’.³² But he also roots his argument firmly in relation to the Uniting Church’s own Basis of Union (ambiguous as this is with respect to ministry, as noted above). Like the Basis, Hughes does not invoke the popular notion of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ (which so easily takes on plasticity little related to either to the Reformers’ views or to scriptural understandings).³³ Nevertheless, it is crystal clear that his arguments for certain kinds of ‘priestly’ ministry by some are contextualized in a wider understanding of the ministry of a *priestly people*.³⁴ As to the kind of priestliness which he thinks befits ordained ministry, Hughes suggests elsewhere that although ‘highly problematical in our tradition’,³⁵ ‘without some such idea of ministry, it is not clear to me just how we will re-appropriate a style of encountering God in our public worship’.³⁶ Unsurprisingly, then, liturgical actions are at the heart of what Hughes understands as the priestly vocation, and in ‘Limping Priests’ he highlights the role of being story-teller, mystagogue and carer—his own improvisation on the Basis’ three-fold cluster of key ideas in ‘worship, witness and service’ (paragraph 1), and what McCaughey affirmed as the three-fold task of ordained ministry. With respect to witness/proclamation/story-telling, Hughes suggests:

³¹ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 6.

³² Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 5.

³³ Note, for example, David Cornick, *Letting God be God: The Reformed Tradition*, London, DLT, 2008, pp. 111-112: ‘Luther’s rediscovery of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers did not (as widely misunderstood) mean that anyone could do anything in church. The Reformers were in fact very conservative in their understanding of ministry’.

³⁴ Hughes expresses appreciation that the eucharist ‘draws people out of their individuality’ (Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 7).

³⁵ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 13.

³⁶ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 13.

Story-tellers. . . must be able to read foreign languages, they must be as diligent students of human nature as they are of ancient texts, and they must have a pastor's heart.³⁷

In relation to worship/presidency/mystagogy, Hughes suggests that: 'Sacramental leader[ship]. . . means a great deal more than being able to say the words and perform the actions at the table or the font'.³⁸ Rather, he says, it is 'only derivatively (though importantly) to do with presiding at the table of communion',³⁹ and 'vastly transcends "administering the sacraments"'.⁴⁰ His more expansive understanding involves

[t]he mystagogue. . . [a]s. . . someone able to lead her or his people relatively safely through the "tremendous mystery" which is the condition of our life and through the local mystery which is each Lord's Day worship. No one can successfully or responsibly undertake the latter who is not deeply acquainted with, yet not overwhelmed by, the former.⁴¹

Hughes, then, closely relates both preaching and presidency with pastoral care, correlated to the Basis of Union's wider category of service:

No one can break open the Word into people's lives (or conversely, open lives to the light of God's Word), nor can one safely lead the same people through the terror and ecstasy which await us at life's boundaries, if one does not know these people—deeply, intimately, "carefully".⁴²

Having placed the three-fold task of ordained ministry centrally, 'Limping Priests' then moves to reflect on what formation for such ministry might entail. Hughes suggests that it must 'prepare[] the candidate to live out, or live within, the limitations which this particular [i.e. ordained] ministry demands',⁴³ which he understands to require concentration on '[t]he enabling, or inculcation, of a requisite humility precisely in knowing one's necessary power'.⁴⁴ He argues that ministers need

³⁷ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 10.

³⁸ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 10.

³⁹ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 11.

⁴⁰ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 11.

⁴¹ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 11.

⁴² Hughes, 'Limping Priests', pp. 11-12. As part of his argument, he appeals to the 'Protestant instinct of anchoring ordained ministry in concrete, pastoral engagement' as an expression of the idea that 'pastoral acquaintance is the *sine qua non* for the interpretative and sacramental forms of leadership which, in combination, constitute the responsibilities for which we feel we need to ordain some of Christ's ministers' (Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 12).

⁴³ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 6.

⁴⁴ Hughes, 'Limping Priests', p. 13.

to know deeply within themselves. . . how to occupy positions of power, but loosely; not be[] afraid actually to preside in worship and then be[] able to let it go; [and] to be free for dangerous, incisive—threatening even—interpretations of the community’s disposition and yet in a way that is empowering, grace-full; to know that some human agent must speak the word of absolution or blessing in God’s stead or on Christ’s behalf; and yet, in all this, knowing one’s own all-too-immediate frailty.⁴⁵

‘The only effective priest is a priest who limps’.⁴⁶ But Hughes then asks: ‘can limping priests be formed within the limitations of the structures at the disposal of most present day theological colleges’ and their ‘brief and haphazard processes’?⁴⁷

‘Limping Priests’: looking forward

Before asking Hughes’ question ten years later, it is important to take note that much has changed in and for the Uniting Church since 2001/2; and indeed, that one of the most steady constants may be continuing volatility about ordination. But even this has been intensified: in the last ten years, Andrew Dutney’s studies have unearthed what Dutney calls the ‘confusion’ about ministry carried over into the Uniting Church by the uniting churches, with their different approaches to call and settlement, and which were not in his view satisfactorily sorted out. It is a confusion which he thinks remains unresolved.

Such confusion is also entangled with newer currents that include the ongoing embedding of a shift underway from the late 1990s to ‘focus on congregations’,⁴⁸ and questions of the gender and sexual preference of persons in ordained ministry⁴⁹—with these issues of major import with respect to the possibility or not of fully humanly inclusive notions of representation and a wide public reach for ministry. Incursions of ‘mission-shaped’ thinking from British Anglican and Methodist contexts have also made their impact on the Uniting Church in the latter part of the 00s, and given *Mission-Shaped Church*’s own concern for ‘cultural exegesis’, these also helpfully sharpen questions about the public reception of ministry.⁵⁰ Yet ten years later, ‘Limping Priests’ may seem to

⁴⁵ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 14.

⁴⁸ *The Pilgrim People: Seeking Simplicity*. . . , and synodical reflections (e.g. in NSW, ‘21/21’), arising from the 1997 Assembly. The focus on congregations of course in part came about because imported notions of ‘parish’ were found to have been tested to the limit in the vast scale of the Australian country.

⁴⁹ See Rodney Smith, ‘The Assembly’.

⁵⁰ The Anglican Church of Australia’s *Building the Mission-shaped Church in Australia*, Alexandria, Broughton Books, 2007 engages in cultural exegesis of Australia, but like its British predecessor (*Mission-shaped Church*, London, Church House Publishing, 2004), it may be criticized for being weak in this area of its reflection. More developed perspectives on Australia from the like of Gary Bouma (*Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-first Century*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2007), Tom Frame (*Losing My Religion: Unbelief in Australia*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2009), Clive Pearson (‘Australian Contextual Theologies’, John England et al, eds, *Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources*, Volume 1, Delhi, ISPCK, 2002, pp. 599-657) and Stuart Piggin (*Spirit of a Nation: The Story of Australia’s Christian Heritage*, Melbourne, Strand Books, 2004) offer nuance, but are not always closely aligned nor easily reconciled. Notably, Philip Hughes,

somewhat under-use the category of ‘mission’ to be fully compelling—indeed, it does so only in quoting church documents. With hindsight, this feature of Hughes’ reflections might even appear complacent, not least amidst new shared awareness that the Uniting Church has suffered the sharpest recent declines of any mainstream/old-line Christian tradition in Australia.⁵¹ Presumably not unrelated to this is the fact that fewer placements for ordained ministers are available, in part because there are no longer always the numbers of congregants to stump up cash to pay for ordained ministry. Although some ordained ministries—amongst others—are sometimes recipients of limited pools of synod-administered mission funds (in NSW/ACT, SMRF), it remains that most ordained ministry is made possible by being paid for locally.⁵² And one notable impact of the above features conspiring together appears to be increasing numbers of only part-time placements, as congregations cut their cloth accordingly. Another is the widespread development of exactly the kind of specified ministry that Graham Hughes argued against so adamantly in ‘Limping Priests’: the Ministry of Pastor is not an ordained ministry, but has a certain local authorization which may well include responsibility for homiletic and sacramental ministry.⁵³ Arguably, the introduction of such ministry creates a kind of ‘ministerial hermaphrodite’⁵⁴ (to adopt Leslie Griffiths’ phrase), a lay-ordained hybrid, the status of which in the wider public realm of which the church is part is far from clear, quite apart from its theological underpinnings.

Whilst the emergence of the Ministry of Pastor has generated some internal tension within the Uniting Church,⁵⁵ the 00s have also witnessed ecumenical dialogues in which the Uniting Church has been involved being strained around differences with respect to ministry.⁵⁶ Perhaps, then, in such ecumenical circumstances there has been a certain

Shaping Australia’s Spirituality: A Review of Christian Ministry in Australia, Melbourne, Mosaic, 2010 includes almost no comment on ordained ministry.

⁵¹ See Bouma, *Australian Soul*, pp. 66-67 and Frame, *Losing My Religion*, p. 93.

⁵² Synodical restructurings in response to falling incomes, and proposals for ‘mission-shaped church’ do not as yet seem to have invited re-visitation of inherited links between congregational placement and ordination, resulting in a shift of emphasis *from placement to public authorization*, potentially allowing for non-stipendiary ordained ministry. Nor do circumstances seem yet to have raised wide questions of alternatives to congregational modes of funding—for example, congregations contributing to a common synod pot which attempts to strategically determine where stipended ministry in the synod will be focused.

⁵³ A Brief Statement on Ordination of 2008, distinguishes the Ministry of Pastor from ordained ministry at paragraph 3.

⁵⁴ Leslie Griffiths, ‘What is a Presbyterian?’, Philip Luscombe and Esther Shreeve, *What is a Minister?*, Peterborough, Epworth Press, 2002, 1-13, p. 9.

⁵⁵ It has been known for presbyteries to have to begin to deal with the refusal of laypersons to receive sacraments from Pastors, and so on.

⁵⁶ See Raymond Williamson, ed., *Stages on the Way II: Documents from the Bilateral Conversations between Church in Australia, 1994-2007*, Strathfield, St Pauls, 2007, pp. 76-119 on Anglican-Uniting Church dialogue and pp. 120-126 on Lutheran-Uniting Church dialogue. According to Williamson’s editorial comments, two as ‘critical issues’ block convergence: the Anglican-Uniting Church dialogue has underlined ‘the significance of the barrier of non-episcopal ordination’ (p. 76), and the Lutheran-Uniting Church dialogue has surfaced the ‘Uniting Church’s practice of allowing lay people to act in leadership roles in the Eucharist and Ordination’ (p. 121).

inevitability that at least parts of the Uniting Church might stress a ‘new kind of ecumenism’ in ‘bringing together Christians of many cultures and ethnic origins’ as a ‘multi-cultural church’.⁵⁷ Minority-ethnic congregations within the Uniting Church have certainly been highly significant in resisting the trend of declining numbers. And when ‘traditional’ (McCaughey-like) language of (ordained) ministry has attracted less-than-widespread assent, it has perhaps been inevitable also that the so-called secular language of ‘leadership’ has sometimes risen to prevalence, as it has in the theological college of which Andrew Dutney is principal: notably, Adelaide’s Parkin-Wesley College is lately the Uniting College of Leadership and Theology, with ‘leadership’ leading the nomenclature and ‘ministry’ not highlighted—though neither of course is it in the popular categorization of the ‘theological college’, as several other synods call their seminaries (Victoria/Tasmania’s Centre for Theology and Ministry is an exception).⁵⁸

Several of these marks of the life of the Uniting Church in the twenty-first century indicate the church’s struggle to engage and appropriate tradition—perhaps a necessary struggle in a recently united church, in some respects still uniting, sometimes surfacing its rumbling undercurrents, and all the time negotiating aspects of its antecedent traditions and world communion partners.⁵⁹ Concern with tradition is of course a matter with which, beyond ‘Limping Priests’, Graham Hughes has been deeply concerned, expressed not least in his robust sense that ‘shaping our styles, our theologies, increasingly in terms of the media of the world around us’ is ‘a recipe for disaster’.⁶⁰ He has characteristically advocated the need to ‘recover the church’s historical memory’, especially of the liturgy—‘an observable historical tradition which extends beyond our immediate context’—as well as at the same time ‘a ministry which is not shaped by the canons of modernity, not couched in the “leadership” styles of the CEO models around us, but in terms of some kind of priestly person in the midst of the assembled congregation’.⁶¹ Hughes does not name the 1991 report when making this assertion, but it may be in his sights. By way of considerable contrast, it might be noted that Andrew Dutney’s recent reflections on ‘*A Genuinely Educated Ministry*’ make no mention of the 1994 report which Hughes’ views enlarge.⁶²

⁵⁷ William W. Emilsen, ‘Uniting Church’, James Jupp, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 582-591, p. 588.

⁵⁸ See Dutney’s new Preface to the 2011 edition of ‘*A Genuinely Educated Ministry*’. My own view is that there are very good things emerging in the ‘Adelaide experiment’, and its very robustness is all the more reason to address some strong questions to it.

⁵⁹ We might note here Robert Gribben’s assertion that the Uniting Church has ‘formed itself into a national church with tenuous connections with its world communion partners’; Robert W. Gribben, ‘Sharing Mary MacKillop’, Alan Cadwallader, ed., *In the Land of Larks and Larrakins: Australian Reflections on St Mary MacKillop*, Adelaide, ATF Press, 2010, 69-82, p. 77.

⁶⁰ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 12.

⁶¹ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 13; cf Robert Gribben, ‘Contemporary Worship: The New Cultural Cringe’, Emilsen and Squires, eds, *Prayer and Thanksgiving*, 58-70, pp. 59-60 on the ‘anti-historical mood which followed union’, daring not to speak of the past in case seemingly recidivist and ‘much consumed with being a “new” church (a serious fallacy)’.

⁶² The ‘minutes and reports’ of the 1994 Assembly are cited in the bibliography, but in notable contrast to the 1991 report on ministry, its 1994 counterpart is not highlighted (see Dutney, ‘*A Genuinely Educated Ministry*’, pp. 216-217). Stephen Pickard’s *Foundations of Collaborative Ministry*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008—ostensibly a book about Anglican orders—is perhaps the most direct recent re-iteration

Yet it may be that one of the ironies of the recent growth of the language of ‘leadership’ in the Uniting Church is that *in practice* it functions to create space between some and the rest of the priestly people: leadership is a distinctive role (or cluster of roles), not open to everyone (at least at the same time), and so the language of leadership raises its own questions of particularity just as language of ordained ministry once more widely did than now appears to be the case in the UCA. Of course, the relation of ‘leadership’ to a supposedly desirable ‘egalitarianism’ is not entirely obvious or unambiguous, and it remains to be seen how the current prevalence of leadership-language will pan out over time.

Formation for Ordained Ministry

These changes and challenges are all relevant to questions of what to make of ‘Limping Priests’ ten years later. In my view, none of them empty ‘Limping Priests’ of its strength as an advocate of the ongoing merit of the view of McCaughey and other early shapers of the Uniting Church that ordained ministry is centred on a three-fold task of proclamation, sacramental leadership and pastoral care.⁶³ It is, with caveats, viable that formation for ordained ministry might continue to concentrate on these tasks.⁶⁴

Ordination studies

Yet given the contested history of debate in the Uniting Church about ordination, and the apparent tendency for writers on ministry issues to lean into one strand of the church’s thinking whilst eliding others (for example, perhaps like Dutney, sidestepping 1994),⁶⁵ a foundationally important area for reflection on formation is: at which points, in what forums, and with what biases of interpretation are the church’s documents on ministry and ordination to be encountered by candidates? In practice, at least at Hughes’ former college in Sydney, ordination studies—an obvious place to expect that such documents would be studied—has sometimes functioned as a kind of after-thought in the curriculum, in some cases completed after candidates have exited the ‘core phase’ of formation.⁶⁶ Presumably, a

of the views of the UCA’s 1994 report. Pickard (in 1994, a colleague of Graham Hughes on the faculty of United Theological College) was one of its authors, later becoming Principal of St Mark’s Theological College, Canberra and Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Adelaide.

⁶³ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 8.

⁶⁴ In ‘*A Genuinely Educated Ministry*’, Andrew Dutney cites Gary Bouma (in *Australian Soul*, pp. 105/128) with approval, that ‘Many institutions that train clergy still produce graduates to a society and culture that has now passed for more than a quarter-century’ (p. 195). This is a very serious charge that merits much attention, and which I pick up in more detail in Stephen Burns, ‘Ministry’, William Emilsen, *The Uniting Church in the Twenty-first Century*, Melbourne, Mosaic, 2013. Bouma’s/Dutney’s charge invites careful scrutiny of how candidates’ understandings of *ordained* ministry are being formed, what *intentional strategies* of formation colleges enact, and what measure of *critical* ‘cultural exegesis’ is taking place as integral to such strategies.

⁶⁵ Admittedly, my own view is not without bias, as my praise of Graham Hughes’ promotion of perspectives from 1994 makes quite transparent.

⁶⁶ As is the case with my own tutee, who at the time of writing has recently left, but not yet undertaken ordination studies.

much better arrangement would be to place ordination studies ‘upfront’ at the beginning of time in seminary, allowing candidates to carry awareness of the church’s theology of ministry into the rest of what it is possible to learn in theological college, using the church’s theology to as it were refract their further learning?

Following on from that point: surely the church’s (albeit contested) theology of ministry needs to be *continually* engaged in formation for ministry? Yet, to use Hughes’ former college once more as an example, whilst its ‘Practice of Ministry Handbook’ incorporates good and helpful material on theological reflection (with respect to the so-called ‘pastoral cycle’ and such like), it in fact represents nothing at all of the church’s official theology of ordination, thereby effectively resisting that theology as a key feature of what there is to be ‘integrated’ in the process of formation.⁶⁷

Ordination services

Constant attention to the liturgy—‘public service’—of ordination might well also be expected to be a major focus of formation, not least with respect to the ways in which such services clearly embed emphasis on the ‘every-member ministry’ commissioned in common baptism. Ordination services firmly contextualize ordained ministry in the wider ministry of all Christian people—one of the emphases which Hughes is at pains to underline in ‘Limping Priests’. At the same time, the services assert that those ordained deacons or ministers of the Word by the Uniting Church in Australia have a wider identity and role ‘within the one holy catholic and apostolic Church’.⁶⁸ So one might ask: at which points, in what forums, and with what biases of interpretation is the study of liturgy to be encountered in training for ministry; and indeed, how are the convictions expressed in the church’s liturgy conveyed to candidates and shaped up within their own thinking?

These questions matter also because current editions of the church’s ordination services prescribe forms of a charge and vows that sketch out a subtle sense of the relationship between the ministry of deacon and that of ministry of the Word.⁶⁹ In the charge, the images of ‘servant’ and ‘shepherd’ feature in orders for deacons and ministers of the Word respectively (but not in the other) whilst the rest of the charge is almost word-for-word the same: after the one exception just noted, only the order of the sentences and paragraphs of

⁶⁷ See the Practice of Ministry Handbook 2011. Compare, say, a Brief Statement on Ordination and pp. 8-9 of the handbook (on the practice of ministry programme) or pp. 18-19 of the handbook (on ministry practices) from which the Brief Statement’s emphasis on representation is missing (see also below).

⁶⁸ The 2009 ordination services are accessible at <https://assembly.uca.org.au/worship/resources/order-service-in-church.html> (accessed August 10 2011). Paragraph 3 of the ordination services asserts that the ordination of a deacon/minister of the Word is as such ‘in the Church of Jesus Christ’, whilst paragraph 14 (the questions) opens with ‘In this ordination, the Uniting Church in Australia acts and speaks within the only holy catholic and apostolic Church’, and asks candidates if they themselves ‘embrace the faith and unity of the holy, catholic and apostolic church’. This latter affirmation links back to paragraph 13 (the charge), in which the candidate is commissioned to ‘receive’ the historic ecumenical creeds and ‘use them in worship’ (itself an echo of the Basis of Union, paragraph 9). Like the creeds, ordained ministry seems thus to be regarded as an instrument of the church’s catholicity.

⁶⁹ A prescribed charge was introduced in 2009 in order to contest propagation of merely local, or highly idiosyncratic, understandings of ordained roles.

the charges differ—and so they suggest emphases and orientations for each form of ministry, whilst at the same time emphasizing their similarity and inter-relatedness. Given that the ordination service makes perhaps the most public statement about ordained persons that is ever made of them—not to say a public statement about the baptismal ministry of all Christian people—close scrutiny of ordination services might be expected, that their emphasis might be appropriated and subtleties appreciated.

Representative ministry

Amongst those subtleties is the point that the close similarities of the current ordination charges minimize the significance of earlier distinctions about ministry of the Word being focused on ‘gathering and reconciling’ and deacons being focused on ‘dispersing and reforming’. Where in formation are such understandings explored—and, like everything else, subject to critique? For all that the 2009 ordination services work ministry of the word and that of deacons into very close coherence, distinctions between gathering and dispersing are re-iterated in the 2008 Brief Statement on Ordination.⁷⁰ At the same time, however, the Brief Statement strongly affirms that ordained ministry is ‘representative’—a perspective which Graham Hughes worked through in considerable detail in his *Worship as Meaning* with its splendid reflections on ‘liturgical direction’. Sometimes, Hughes suggests, presiding celebrants in liturgy represent the assembly, voicing prayer on behalf of others, standing with them (and, importantly, facing the same way), whilst at other times, they face the assembly as representatives of the God of Jesus Christ, gesturing with their body and mediating with the sound of their voice the good news of divine blessing, assurance, invitation, challenge, and such like.⁷¹ Hughes’ own work on ‘liturgical direction’ can be read as a practical outworking of the 1994 report’s focused identification of ordained ministers’ representative role:

The new status into which a minister has been placed by ordination means that the Presbyter or Deacon may stand on behalf of the community before others, or before the Congregation itself, as a representative of the wider Church. The minister presiding at the Eucharist represents not only the local Congregation (both those present and those absent) who together celebrate the sacrament, but the universal Church at all times and places which joins us ‘with choirs of angels and the whole creation in the eternal hymn’. In another liturgical sense, the minister may represent Christ, although all Christians share that responsibility. At other times, the presence of a Presbyter or Deacon anywhere may symbolise the presence of the Church catholic in what God is doing in the world.⁷²

⁷⁰ Brief Statement on Ordination, paragraph 2.

⁷¹ In his ‘practical commentary’ on the church’s eucharistic prayers, Robert Gribben pinpoints two moments when the presider might make a ‘direct look at the people’—in ‘enacting the Narrative of the Supper: this is drama’ and at the *anamnesis*. (Robert Gribben, *Uniting in Thanksgiving: The Great Prayers of Thanksgiving of the Uniting Church in Australia*, Melbourne, Uniting Church Press, 2008, p. 204).

⁷² ‘Ordination and Ministry in the Uniting Church’, paragraph 10; Bos and Thompson, eds, *Theology for Pilgrims*, p. 363.

Where in formation are candidates to learn this, and how? What kind of practice do they need? Even with respect to the liturgy itself, whilst some of what presiders might need to flourish is rightly considered to belong to the realm of ‘gift’, other things can—and I think Graham Hughes would think, must—intentionally be learned, strategically formed, even by conscious shaping of the ‘muscle memory’⁷³ that bodies develop by stepping up to the demands of practice, thorough preparation and rehearsal.

U/uniting in worship

Hughes’ concern that presiders understand their particular liturgical representative responsibilities also raises related questions about how processes of formation engage candidates in learning to become presiders who represent the church’s theology of worship, its ‘standards’ and ‘norms’,⁷⁴ shapes and patterns—not least ‘ordered liberty’,⁷⁵ and what the Basis of Union (at paragraph 5) affirms as a ‘controlling’ role of scripture in preaching. Where in formation are candidates inducted into such liturgical responsibilities, and how are they encouraged and evaluated in their engagement with the challenges of ‘uniting in worship’ in the sense both of upholding ecumenical consensus and expressing what may be supposed to be denominational distinctiveness?

Furthermore, if word and sacrament are key to what ordained persons represent—and both care *for* and care *with*—some sort of deepening focus on the centrality of proclamation and of sacramentality, both (as in ‘Limping Priests’) broadly conceived, might be expected to be an important strand of candidates’ formation, and a focus in candidates’ ‘progress’ reports—as might willingness to undertake spiritual direction, so yielding to scrutiny of one’s sense of the sacramental and of the sacramentality of the word. ‘Limping Priests’ makes quite clear the demands of growing into the challenges of becoming a reverer of sacred scripture as of the ‘living human documents’ of persons’ lives, a mystagogue at life’s limits, and one shaping and being shaped with a ‘pastor’s heart’—things in which even the best pastors with the most dazzling innate gifts can be expected to need steady ongoing help, and at the very least focused opportunities for accountability. At the very centre of such ‘scaffolding’ to support a life-long quest for spiritual vitality is a point Hughes makes elsewhere: ‘one should not be a liturgical leader—lead public prayer—if one is not practicing prayer in one’s personal life’.⁷⁶

Public ministry

Hughes is surely correct here to affirm that liturgical prayer is ‘public’ work, and yet this is an affirmation which leads to consideration of how whilst the 1994 report and Brief Statement on Ordination of 2008 both affirm the representative dimensions of ordained ministry, they may each be suspected of a certain kind of under-development with respect

⁷³ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Uniting in Worship 2*, Sydney, Uniting Church Press, 2005, p. 8.

⁷⁵ *Uniting in Worship 2*, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁶ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 5.

to the ‘public’ context of ordained ministry—its orbit beyond a ‘focus on congregations’.⁷⁷ On this point, Graham Hughes too might perhaps be pushed. ‘Limping Priests’ is rightly troubled about the very real prospect (given multiplication of spurious, sometimes notably unspecific, ‘specified ministries’) of various ‘incremental malefic tendencies’⁷⁸ overtaking Hughes’ desired focus on the three-fold task of proclamation/story-telling, sacramental presidency/mystagogy and care. Yet perhaps Hughes also provides resources to shunt the church towards a more robust appreciation of the inter-relationships between activities central to the church’s gatherings and their wider significance? Hughes’ own distinctions between administrator of sacraments and mystagogue—quite apart from his stress on ministry at ambiguous ‘limits’—is deeply suggestive in this respect. More mundane, and yet important, are the church’s Regulations, which (at 2.4.2) provide quite plain guidance that the ‘duties of a minister’ include various activities in ‘the community’—where the clear sense is of ‘the *wider* community’ as opposed to the congregation. Outlining twelve areas of responsibility, the Regulations place first ‘preaching of the Word’, and second ‘presiding at the celebration of the sacraments’—hence, ‘classical’ (McCaughey-esque) ministries are prioritized at least in so far as they are placed in front of others.⁷⁹ Yet the fourth duty of ministers is ‘witness[] in the community’, the eighth ‘serv[ice] in the community’ and the fifth involves ‘equipping [members of the church] for their ministry in the community’. Also of note with respect to Hughes’ (McCaughey’s, and ‘well-nigh universal’ focus), the seventh duty of ministers involves ‘pastoral oversight and counsel’, whilst the third links liturgical ministries with pastoral care in a particular way: ministers are to ‘provid[e] for other persons to preside at worship and/or preach within the pastoral charge in which the Minister is in placement’. In various ways, then, the work of ‘the [ordained] minister’ is related to the ministries of other church members, whilst the priority of word and sacrament is at least suggested by their pride of place at the head of the list.

The notes of ‘extra-congregational’, public, ministry in the Regulations may be particularly important counter-voices, irritants, to a ‘focus on congregations’ and how such a focus might connive with aspects of theologies of ministry that can tend lopsidedly to stress ‘gathering’. Further, the public, ‘community’, dimensions of ministry are likely especially crucial in an age of mission. Yet they are perhaps the most difficult aspects on which to focus in formation. On the one hand, fieldwork with congregations needs not to be confined to the church’s gatherings, but to allow for candidates strategically to explore dynamics of ‘dispersal’, and by no means least those that relate to the particular ministry of the ordained in a local place, whether the ordained are deacons *or* ministers of the word. On the other hand, fieldwork needs also to involve intentional engagement in sector ministries, for which models as diverse as ‘industrial mission’, ‘prison fellowship’ and ‘city centre

⁷⁷ A member of the Ministerial Education Commission’s comment to me in conversation recently that they ‘wouldn’t expect the minister to be working beyond the congregation’ provoked this article by way of response—I hope that my response is constructive, and by leaning so appreciatively on Hughes is also evidently ‘traditioned’ by the UCA’s own internal theological resources that can be put to use in an alternative view.

⁷⁸ Hughes, ‘Limping Priests’, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Albeit that there is no specific indication that they are deemed *more* important than other duties that ministers are expected to exercise.

chaplaincy’, as well as ‘ministry in secular employment’/traditions of the ‘worker priest’ and newly budding forms of ‘pioneer leadership’ may all be nothing less than vital as foci for intense attention. Even so, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and its direct influence on models of hospital chaplaincy may well remain as of special significance for formation for ministry, as a durable means by which ordinands and ordained ministers have learned that they may rise to the challenge (and sometimes, as the history of CPE demonstrates, the explicit invitation) to find a distinctive role in ambiguous ‘extra-congregational’ space.⁸⁰ All of these traditions of ministry—venerable or emerging as they may be—resist notions of formation for ministry which as it were take sanctuary in the sanctuary, and can consequently tend to be under-confident in their capacity to engage in varied and heterogeneous public realms. Whilst the Uniting Church encourages deacons to undertake CPE, it might well extend this encouragement—perhaps better again, galvanized to requirement—also to ministers of the Word. In any case, one way or another, more *intentional* and *strategic* learning in formation for ministry in contested, common, spaces may be crucial for formation if the Uniting Church is to hold on to its precious aspiration to be a church for the nation, not to say to renew its ministers’ capacity to cope with experience of ‘dislocation’, to employ another key-word in ‘Limping Priests’.⁸¹

Stretching formation in such directions would not, I aver, be necessarily to fall foul of Graham Hughes’ resistance to ‘incremental malefic’ distractions from the three-fold heart of ordained ministry. The Festschrift for him, *Prayer and Thanksgiving*, takes its title, the book’s editors suggest, from the second-century apologist Justin Martyr, whose writing ‘brings together what have become two of Graham’s long-standing scholarly passions: presidency and prayer’. The editors cite part of Justin’s *First Apology* chapter 67,⁸² but had they let the extract run for longer Justin himself would have provided some longstanding insight into some of the ‘public’—and missional—implications of liturgical presidency. Justin speaks of various sendings from the gathering: portions of the meal to those who are absent, and a collection for the poor. And he describes the presider as ‘guardian to all in need’. The presider is one who ‘aids orphans and widows, those who are in want through disease or through another cause, those who are in prison, and foreigners who are sojourning here’.⁸³ Just as in the assembly the presider’s role has been to ‘sit in front of’ others, in the service which follows worship the presider is to lead the church’s public work in its dispersed modes of being. Such activities beyond the gathering are perhaps best regarded as neither incremental nor malefic to prayer and presidency, however true it is that

⁸⁰ Of course, there is no place for naivety about the potential challenge of this proposal. It may lead to the conviction that, as Anthony Dyson—in a different but related context—puts it, ‘pastoral theology has now to be placed centrally in the pattern of the theological disciplines, thus ousting dogmatic theology and biblical theology’: Anthony Dyson, ‘The Body of Christ has AIDS’, Stephen Barton and Graham Stanton, eds, *Resurrection: Essays in Honour of Leslie Houlden*, London, SPCK, 1994, 165-176, p. 173.

⁸¹ These challenge may be even more pointed with respect to continuing ministerial education—synodical resources for which have recently been cut in NSW/ACT. Hughes makes comments on his ‘disappointments’ with respect to failure to establish ‘workshops’, ‘teaching sessions’ and ‘love of the liturgy’ in presbyteries in Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 9.

⁸² The editors mistakenly identifying their quotation as from chapter 65.

⁸³ Quoted in Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993, pp. 31-32.

they might spring from sense of dislocating encounter with the real presence of the divine which liturgy mediates. As Charles Foster, Lisa Dahill et al, in their work on ‘Educating Clergy’, note: ‘[t]he clergy may be among the most public of professions’⁸⁴—and in any case, liturgy itself, as Aidan Kavanagh (whom Hughes is fond of quoting) suggests, is robustly ‘public business in which petitions are heard, contracts entered into, relationships witnessed, orations declaimed, initiations consummated, vows taken, authority exercised, laws promulgated, images venerated, valued affirmed, banquets attended, votes cast, the dead waked, the Word deliberated, and parades cheered’.⁸⁵ However understandable it is that in the context of much restlessness and uncertainty about ordained ministry, Graham Hughes might wish to place clarifying ‘limits’ on ordained ministry’s scope, is it not also the case that the central things of Christian worship imply wide reach,⁸⁶ invite and foster wide horizons? Are not the dynamics of gathering and sending, assembly around central things and dispersal in mission, mutually enfolding? And is not the representative role that is the privilege of liturgical presidency—and which Graham Hughes has explored with such verve—meant to be, and yet capable of being, emboldening of Christians in their shared representative, priestly, public service in God’s world? More so: if it is, what *integrating maneuvers* would formation for ordained ministry need to enact to support candidates (and others) to limp into this vision?

Conclusion

William Emilsen’s ‘introductory interview’ with Graham Hughes in the Festschrift *Prayer and Thanksgiving* reveals that after *Worship as Meaning*, Hughes hoped to work on a book on ordination.⁸⁷ To date, that book has not emerged, but I hope that in some modest way, my reflections suggest that even ten years after ‘Limping Priests’ the continuing vitality of Graham Hughes’ ideas about ordination and ministry are manifest. In my view, the church does well to listen to him to focus its thought and learn its theology of representation—tasks that are part of its mission (representing the church, representing Christ) and equip it for mission (learning and re-learning in the liturgy the responsibility for witness it pours into all things). Hughes’ vision still sounds the call for less ‘haphazard’ approaches to formation, such that to invite attention to his focus may by no means be to ‘advocate for the *status quo*’.⁸⁸

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⁸⁴ Charles Foster, Lisa Dahill et al, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2006, p. 156.

⁸⁵ Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite*, Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1984, p. 21.

⁸⁶ Pickard uses the phrase ‘the question of reach’ in *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry*, pp. 85-108.

⁸⁷ Emilsen, ‘Introductory Interview’, p. 12. I will be glad if these reflections help to spur on Hughes’ own book on these themes.

⁸⁸ Dutney, ‘*A Genuinely Educated Ministry*’, p. 12.

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