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TOWARD 2000: SOME FUTURES FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP*

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The paper focuses on changes affecting religious leadership as we move toward and beyond the year 2000. Using Robert Wuthnow's "restructuring," I argue that significant change have been occurring in the symbolic markers and boundaries that define the religious leader's status and role, especially in relation to the legitimation, distribution and exercise of authority. Following a discussion of restructuring and authority, I examine three areas in which significant restructuring has been occurring: a redefinition of the "sacredly masculine" image of the ordained leader as significant numbers of women enter the ordained status; a breaking down of the markers that have separated clergy from laity through emphasis on the ministry of "the whole people of God;" and a redefinition of the clergy's authority as interpreters of religious truth under the impact of "high" or "late" modernity. In the conclusion, I speculate on the likely directions that these trends will take in the coming years.

In commenting on a monograph that I wrote several years ago, a reviewer called me a "veteran clergy watcher." That is to some extent accurate. I have devoted a considerable portion of my scholarly career to "clergy watching," including the institutions engaged in clergy education. While such a focus does not always offer the kind of excitement as, for example, studying some of the more exotic new religious movements, it is by no means boring. The well-publicized sexual foibles of some religious leaders in recent years are a case in point. That can quickly turn one from a "watcher" to a "voyeur!" It is, however, from the vantage point of "clergy watcher" (not "voyeur") that this lecture derives.

My focus generally is on changes affecting religious leadership in this time near the beginning of the third millennium. Using Robert Wuthnow's (1988) "restructuring" perspective, I will argue that recent social and cultural changes, including religious changes, are bringing about significant restructuring of religious leadership. I will restrict myself primarily to leadership within the Christian tradition, and I will focus especially on the clergy status and role. As Richard Schoenherr (1987) has emphasized in his studies of Catholic priests, changes affecting the clergy role and the symbols and meanings that define it are a crucial point at which many broader changes in the religious system and its environment come into focus. In particular, I will consider changes that affect the legitimation, distribution and exercise of authority. Much of the restructuring that is occurring centers on these issues.[1]

Such restructuring sometimes creates considerable difficulties, both for religious leaders themselves and for their congregations. Although I will not try to show causal relationships, I suspect that restructuring and its resistance are important contributors to such issues as stress and "burnout"; low morale; dropping out; the growing incidence of clergy firings, especially in high conflict denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention; the apparently rising incidence of clergy moral problems, especially in the area of sexuality; and possibly also difficulties in recruiting quality candidates for the ordained ministry.

This is obviously not the first time that a restructuring of religious leadership has occurred in the long history of the church. Earlier in this century, H. Paul Douglass and his colleagues at the Institute for Social and Religious Research engaged in several studies of rural and urban clergy (e.g., Douglass, n.d.; Douglass and Brunner, 1935; May, 1934). These studies played an important role in redefining ordained ministry as a "modern" profession and theological seminaries as professional schools.[2] This represented an important restructuring of religious leadership in ways that have been the widely discussed and often criticized.[3] They also form part of the immediate backdrop for much of the change that is occurring today.

RESTRUCTURING AS A PERSPECTIVE

As is well-known, Wuthnow (1988) has argued that a restructuring of American religion is taking the shape of a cross-denominational, liberal-conservative cleavage, especially with respect to public life. My purpose is not to argue that the restructuring of religious leadership reflects the same developments that Wuthnow describes, although these developments clearly have a beating on religious leadership. Instead, I find his use of structure and restructuring helpful conceptually in analyzing the changes that are occurring.

Wuthnow (1988: 9) defines structure as "an identifiable pattern in the symbolic-expressive dimension of social life." Acknowledging his indebtedness to the work of Mary Douglas, he comments that: "Usually we are able to identify such patterns by looking at the symbolic boundaries that divide up the social world and by looking at the categories created by these boundaries." The roles of clergy and laity, and the symbols and signs that mark off the distinctive boundaries that separate them, are structures in Wuthnow's use of the term. Some traditions set off the clergy role by ritual acts such as ordination, rifles, dress, particular styles of discourse, responsibilities that clergy alone are permitted to perform, and expectations and obligations for clergy that differ from those of laity. The clergy role is also usually predicated on training and formative experiences that laity do not typically experience. These markers and boundaries help to set clergy off from laity, define their relationships, and symbolize the authority that clergy have in the religious, if not also the secular, sphere.

While religious traditions differ in the ways that they structure and symbolize clergy authority, some basic commonalities exist. Both Catholics and Protestants, like most religious traditions, understand the leader's authority to be grounded ultimately in an encounter with the sacred or ultimate reality (Wach, 1944). That encounter is often interpreted as a call to ministry. Both Catholics and Protestants also understand the leader's exercise of authority to

involve a kind of interpretation of God's power, making it present through word or deed. Different traditions nevertheless give different meanings to the encounter and to the task of interpreting God's power and purposes.

The priestly-sacramental tradition places greater emphasis on the symbolic, representative character of the clergy's role. Clergy have authority as sacramental persons. In their persons they represent the sacred in the midst of life. Thus, marking clergy off from laity with special dress, mandating celibacy, restricting the clergy status to males, or restricting certain sacramental roles exclusively to the clergy represent efforts to structure and symbolize the sacramental interpretation of clergy authority. Other traditions, especially Protestant but also Jewish and Muslim, understand the interpretive role of religious leaders differently. The leaders' authority rests primarily in their expertise in interpreting God's power and purposes for humankind. They are principally preachers and teachers, rabbis, 'ulema--experts in the interpretation of sacred matters. Thus the pulpit, rather than the altar, is the central place where they exercise their authority. The Geneva gown, a scholar's robe, is often a symbol of their expert authority. Or they may preach and teach with a Bible in their hand to symbolize their interpretive role. The charismatic tradition combines some elements of the other two, validating clergy authority primarily based on the pastor's demonstration of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in both the pastor's person and his or her interpretive roles.

These bases of authority are not mutually exclusive--at least not within most Christian traditions. It is a matter of emphasis. While Catholics have given priority to the clergy's representative task, they have not neglected the interpretive competence required for the role. Also, while some Protestant traditions, including charismatic ones, have avoided sacramental interpretations of the clergy status, they usually expect their clergy to exhibit exemplary piety or spirituality as God's representatives. They also may expect the pastor, in her or his preaching and teaching, to make God present. I recently attended an African-American congregation in which the pulpit was carved in the shape of an open Bible. Superimposed on the Bible's pages was the inscription, "Thy Word." That was a potent symbol of both the representative and interpretative dimensions of the preacher's authority!

As I noted, the patterns that define the authority and roles of clergy are not static or unchanging. They have been restructured often in the long history of the church, developing different trajectories in different religious traditions. In response to new challenges, church leaders have drawn various symbols and signs from their cultural "repertoires," including scripture and tradition, to define the emerging patterns. Over time the new structures have taken on a nonnative, even sacred, character. Considering these changes is a reminder that structures and the symbols that define them are neither static nor themselves outside the context of action. They are also, as Anthony Giddens (1984) has emphasized, the media for purposive action that restructures relationships in an ongoing, reflexive process--"structuration" as Giddens calls it. Such structuration or restructuring occurs as individual and corporate actors act purposively, often in response to changes in the broader environment in which the structures are embedded.

In what follows, I want to use this restructuring perspective to examine three somewhat

related areas in which restructuring is occurring, especially in the understanding and exercise of clergy authority. The areas on which I will focus are generally well-known, and it is impossible to treat them in depth. They are, however, areas in which important changes have been occurring that both affect the future of religious leadership and give clues to broader changes affecting religious organizations.

TOWARD THE END OF A SACREDLY MALE IMAGE OF MINISTRY

The first type of restructuring involves the definition of the religious leader as a "holy man"; that is, we are moving toward the end of a sacredly male image of ministry.

Almost ten years ago, as Barbara Hargrove, Adair Lummis and I were completing our study of women clergy, published with the title, W*omen of the Cloth* (Carroll, Hargrove, and Lummis, 1983), I had a conversation with our editor about the title. At a meeting of the publishing staff, he said, they had come up with a title for the book. They proposed to call it "The New Shape of the Ministry." I asked if he were serious, and he was! I then asked if they had also thought what the book jacket might look like? At that point, we decided that *Women of the Cloth* seemed a more fitting option for the title! At the level of symbols, however, the publisher's title may not have been too far wrong. The entry of significant numbers of women into the ordained clergy in many Protestant denominations and into the rabbinate in several branches of Judaism constitutes a substantial "reshaping" or restructuring of the symbols and markers that define the clergy status in sacredly masculine terms.

In 1986, the last year for which we have national statistics, there were just under 21,000 ordained women clergy. This was almost double the number in 1977, and three times as many as in 1970 (Carroll, Hargrove and Lummis, 1983; Jacquet, 1988). Most of the increase between 1977 and 1986 was in "mainline" or "old-line" Protestant denominations. A recent national study of clergy (Flaugher, in process) reveals that over half the Reform rabbis in the sample who were ordained in 1985 or since were women. This was true for over one in five clergy in the other denominations studied, excluding Catholics. Although the Catholic Church continues to deny access to the priesthood to women, many women are functioning as lay ministers--sometimes in co-pastorates with a priest, sometimes, as Ruth Wallace described in last year's Douglass Lecture (Wallace, 1991), as the sole administrators of parishes that have no priest. The proportion of ordained clergywomen still lags considerably behind the proportion of women in law or medicine, for example. This would not likely be true if Catholics and several other large religious bodies opened their doors to women clergy.

While resistance to women clergy persists, including those denominations that now ordain women, the presence of women in parish leadership roles is fostering greater openness to ordained women, especially among laity, for both Catholics (Hoge, Carroll and Seheets, 1988; Wallace 1991), and Protestants (Carroll, Har-grove and Lummis, 1983; Lehman, 1985). As Edward Lehman (1985: 289) concludes:

> *Where clergywomen have taken the role of pastor, members of the congregation tend to stereotype them less, tend to have fewer preferences for men in pastoral*

roles, and tend to be less willing to discriminate against women applying for positions in the church.

But are these attitudinal changes by laity accompanied by a restructuring of the symbols that mark off and define the clergy status and role at deeper levels of consciousness? Are clergy women reshaping the practice of ministry by introducing a "different voice," a feminine style of leadership that is more egalitarian, relational and collaborative, as many have suggested?[4] Are androgynous--if not feminine--symbols and styles of ordained ministry replacing exclusively masculine symbols and styles? These questions have a great bearing on issues of clergy authority and *practice,* and they beg for more conclusive answers than we now have. This is especially true regarding the symbolic character of the clergy status that is central to clergy authority and leadership. Clergy are not only functionaries, performing certain roles necessary for the operation of religious organizations. As I noted earlier, they are also symbols, sacramental persons, *theotokoi,* bearers of the sacred in the midst of life. This is true even in traditions that do not have a sacramental theology of priesthood. The clergy status has a "sacred aura." Thus, calling a minister "Reverend" is not simply an occupational title. It is a statement about the symbolic character of the clergy status and it is a key resource in the clergy's exercise of authority. It points to the one the clergy are believed to represent. The implications of this symbolic dimension are clear in those traditions that refer to the priest as "Father." This is not just a statement about the priest's masculinity. It is also a symbolic statement about the masculine characteristics of God, who Jesus Christ incarnates and who, in turn, the priest "images."

When women enter the clergy status they obviously create a new dynamic, a status contradiction (Hughes, 1945), a clash of symbols, an entry of the feminine into what had been sacredly masculine. Such contradictions and conflicts can be resolved, on the one hand, by excluding women from the status, as Roman Catholics and some conservative Protestant traditions continue to do;[5] or, on the other, by restructuring the symbols, markers and expectations that define it--in other words, by restructuring the status and its symbolic markers. Here, it means incorporating feminine symbols into one's conception of God as well as into one's conceptions of the clergy.[6] And if clergy women do function with a "different voice," with a more egalitarian, personal, collaborative style than is typical for males, then their styles of leadership and practice are further restructuring the symbols, markers and expectations of the clergy status and role.

As I noted, such speculations must be stated more as hypotheses than as firmly established conclusions. Feminist scholars themselves disagree on some of these issues. In a study of ordained women in the late 1970's, Joy Charlton (1978) found that women were attempting to overcome status contradictions by adding feminine characteristics to the role definition of clergy; however, she found only limited evidence that women were bringing a distinctively different leadership style to the clergy role. Martha Ice (1987) argues that clergywomen have distinctively feminine leadership styles that, as they permeate church structures, will change the church away from patriarchal, hierarchical styles of leadership. Her research, however, is based on self-reports of a small sample of clergywomen about their values and styles of practice. In a forthcoming study, based on telephone interviews with a

much larger sample of clergywomen and men, Lehman (in process) found only limited differences between clergy women and men in their values and leadership styles. Lehman's study, though based on a much larger sample than Ice's and providing comparisons between women and men, is nevertheless also limited by reliance on respondents' self-reports. In contrast to Lehman's findings, Wallace's (1991) study of women administrators in "priestless" parishes is based on both interviews and observation of women in parish leadership roles. She found that the women administrators demonstrate a more collaborative, personal style of leadership than parishioners had experienced in many male priest-pastors. Similarly, a recent study of top women professionals and managers, with a smaller matched sample of males (Rosener, et al., 1990), found several significant differences in leadership style between their male and female samples.

Other feminist scholars, such as Cynthia Fuchs Epstein (1988), are sharply critical of those who emphasize women's distinctiveness, especially when they do so to the neglect of efforts to alter the power dynamics that have excluded women from formerly male roles. Emphasizing women's differences, they suggest, may play into the hands of traditionalists and stiffen resistance to changing these power dynamics. Even apart from these disagreements, we simply do not have adequate data for definitive answers, partly because the research strategies required are difficult and partly, too, because we are in the midst of an unfinished restructuring process.[7] What we especially need are careful field studies, using semiotic analysis that combines interviews with observation, of male and female clergy in their practice of ministry. Such studies will help us understand more fully whether and how clergywomen are restructuring the "sacredly masculine" clergy status and role and how this is affecting the ways that clergy exercise authority in leadership.

TOWARD THE END OF CLERICALISM

A second instance of restructuring involves a blurring, if not breaking down, of the markers setting clergy off from laity. Clergy, who were once wielders of power over laity, are now called to share ministry with them. The old dictum that Catholic laity are to "pay, pray, and obey" no longer holds. The Protestant version--"shut up, sit up, and pay up"--never quite as widespread, is equally invalid. Partly these changes reflect the strong anti-hierarchical, egalitarian emphasis in the culture at large. While equality has always been a dominant value within American culture--often honored more in the breech than in practice--it has been especially strong since the counter-cultural revolution of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Hierarchies, clerical or otherwise, are suspect. The bumper sticker says it well: "Question Authority!"

Cultural egalitarianism has its ecclesiastical counterpart in a renewed emphasis by both Catholics and Protestants on "ministry of whole people of God." This is not, to be sure, just a recent emphasis. It has come and gone during various periods of the church's history. Richard Schcenherr (1987) argues that all religions have two centralizing tendencies: an externalizing one that establishes a central locus of authority, for example in a consecrated priesthood; and an internalizing, egalitarian tendency that draws members into a living relationship with the Holy and may lead them to challenge the mediation of an external authority. Both emphases have been present within Christianity from the earliest times and find expression in the

different views of church order in various New Testament documents (Schweizer, 1961). The dialectic between them is evident in the history of the church. It seems clear, however, that the externalizing tendency has been the dominant one, particularly for Catholics but also for Protestants, in spite of Luther's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. More recently the emphasis on the ordained ministry as a profession has expressed the externalizing tendency. This emphasis, which took hold in the last half of the nineteenth century, was itself partly a reaction to the growing power of a laity aroused through the Great Awakening. As I have argued elsewhere, the emphasis on ministry as a profession has been salutary for several reasons (Carroll, 1985). Some, however, have used it as a way of maintaining invidious status distinctions between clergy and laity, illustrating George Bernard Shaw's aphorism that "Every profession is a conspiracy against the laity" (cited in Sanchez, 1972: 199).

Nonetheless, since the middle of this century, both Protestants and Catholics have again "rediscovered" the laity and the ministry that laity and clergy share. For Protestants, this has been a major theme at least since the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1954, where lay ministry was a central focus. For Catholics, the Church as the "People of God" and an emphasis on collegiality have been prominent themes since Vatican II. These emphases have increasingly taken hold in parish life. Major exceptions among Protestants have been in some evangelical Protestant churches and especially in many African-American churches, where a tradition of strong, charismatic pastoral authority, often hierarchically expressed, continues to prevail (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990). This also may be changing as increasingly well-educated and affluent Black laity press for greater participation in church decision-making and as some pastors venture to change the dynamics by giving laity permission to lead (Jarrett, 1991).

Because of the shared ministry emphasis, one visible change for Protestants and Catholics is in forms of liturgical renewal. Increased lay involvement has made corporate worship more of a partnership of clergy and laity than a performance by the clergy. Also, in sharp contrast to the pre-Vatican H practices, Catholic parishes now have parish councils as another way of acknowledging shared leadership, a practice that most Catholic laity have applauded (D'Antonio, et al., 1989:111). As David Leege (1986: 1) expressed it in his study of Catholic parishes, "... 'leadership' is [now] a plural noun." Additionally, the image of the ordained leader as "enabler" or "facilitator" of the whole church's ministry has become widespread. Pastors are often counseled to "lead from the middle," in a shared ministry with laity. As previously noted, feminists (e.g., Russell, 1987) have also called for partnership and mutuality in ministry and resisted structures of authority based on hierarchy and domination.

Besides restructuring of clergy-lay roles on theological grounds, institutional necessity has also played a part. For Catholics, the continuing and worsening shortage of priests has led to understaffed parishes and also a growing number of parishes that are without a priest altogether. For Protestants, the issue is not a short supply of ordained clergy, but many small churches that can no longer afford full-time, trained, ordained leadership.[8] Both traditions are increasingly experimenting with various options to ordained ministry, including a growing use of laity to fill roles traditionally considered the preserve of ordained clergy.

I believe that the turn to shared ministry is salutary, and I have noted some positive contributions it has brought. I acknowledge, as well, the institutional necessity that both the priest shortage and the exigencies of small Protestant congregations create. Yet, the restructuring that both changes involve is still in process, and it is creating some difficulties, at least for the short run. When the symbols and signs that have set clergy and laity off from one another are blurred and no longer seem to apply, conflict and confusion may result--for laity and clergy. Let me cite several examples.

Both Catholic and Protestant laity express strong preference for ordained rather than lay ministers in traditional pastoral roles. Substantial numbers of Catholic laity, for example, prefer dropping mandatory celibacy and ordaining women. This is not only as a matter of justice, but as a way of preserving ordained leadership (Hoge, 1987; Hoge, Carroll and Scheets; 1988; Wallace, 1991). I take this to signify that laity resist the blurring of distinctions that institutional necessity creates. Again, increasing instances of lay-clergy conflict and clergy terminations are the result--perhaps a necessary one--of the laity's awareness of their right to challenge the clergy's authority and style of leadership? Also, many laity (and clergy) interpret shared ministry primarily as a call for laity to assume leadership roles inside the gathered church. They give less attention to laity's vocation to ministry in roles as parents, workers, or citizens, for example.

For some clergy, the blurring of distinctions has also been difficult. This is especially true for older clergy who were socialized into a ministry where the pastor was expected to be directive and authoritarian, where the "pay, pray and obey" dictum was expected. They miss the older clerical culture in which they found their identity.

A more widespread response has been that of clergy who wonder whether there is any longer any distinctive contribution that they bring to the ministry. Is a set-apart clergy really necessary if all are ministers? What does it mean to be ordained?

Other clergy, who work hard at sharing ministry with laity, report frustration when laity continue to defer to them as experts and see themselves primarily as spectators rather than ones mutually called to ministry (Schuller, et al., 1975: 73). In her study of a mainline Protestant seminary, Sheryl Kleinman (1984) found that students who had adopted a strongly egalitarian approach to ministry--with the faculty's encouragement--expressed surprise and disappointment in their field work experiences when they encountered laity who deferred to them as authorities. The seminarians interpreted their distinctive calling primarily to be "authentic persons," not experts or authorities who know more about some things than laity or who have a distinctive symbolic role in the church. Kleinman interprets the attitudes of the seminarians and their teachers as attempts to deprofessionalize the clergy role, an effort that the laity thwarted.

In short, the movement from hierarchy to a shared ministry has considerable warrant in the teachings of the churches and is consonant with egalitarian themes in the culture. Yet, the restructuring that it is bringing has blurred many markers that have long distinguished clergy and lay roles and has led to confusion and conflict. This, too, is an area in need of research. How do laity and clergy understand their respective roles? Do clergy see shared ministry as

undercutting their authority? What kinds of structural constraints, in and outside the church, hinder realization of shared ministry? Does the church's organizational structure work for or against shared ministry? What are some ways clergy that are exercising effective leadership in empowering lay ministry? Much has been written about these issues from a prescriptive perspective, but in preparing this lecture I was struck by the relative paucity of empirical research informing the prescriptions.

TOWARD NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF INTERPRETING TRUTH

A third instance of restructuring involves the clergy's authority as interpreters of religious truth. As noted, an important basis of clergy authority has been their role as definers of meaning, helping people to make sense of and shape their lives in conformity with the truths embodied in scripture and tradition. In his study of preaching and religious culture in colonial New England, Harry Stout (1986: 19) writes of the "awesome powers" which preachers exercised in their interpretive role: "Their sermons were the only voice of authority that congregations were pledged to obey unconditionally." With varying degrees of success and effectiveness, the interpretive role continued strong through the early part of the twentieth century. In many places, "preacher" became an accepted popular title for addressing clergy. It was often said that a particular pastor "filled the pulpit" of such-and-such church. Even as late as the 1950s, clergy had substantial influence in the shaping of public opinion. Names such as Henry Sloane Coffin, Ernest Fremont Tittle, George Buttrick, Stephen Wise, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Fulton J. Sheen, Ralph Sockman, and Billy Graham were widely known throughout the nation. Since the 1950s, however, preaching--along with the interpretive role generally--has been in something of a funk.[10] The reasons for this are complex, but a part of the explanation can be found in some of the *characteristics* of high or late modernity. Here I am using Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991) categories, which he argues more accurately describe the present period than the term "post-modern."

As Giddens (1991: 20) expresses it, the characteristics of high modernity, especially its reflexivity, "propel social life away from the hold of pre-established precepts or practices." Certainty is undermined; doubt is institutionalized; everything, including science itself, seems open to revision. We are called to live in a world that is bereft of the all-encompassing traditions and certainties that sustained earlier generations. Consequently, we are increasingly thrown back on ourselves, on our own subjective choices, as we "ride the juggernaut of modernity" into the future, to use Giddens's graphic metaphor (1991: 28).

Clergy have not been immune from the subjectivizing, certainty-eroding characteristics of high modernity. Many persons choose to become clergy because they are searching for a meaning system on which they can ground their lives. Ironically many find their beliefs and certainties in flux. Fred Craddock (1971: 14), a popular teacher of preaching, describes the dilemma that many clergy experience:

> *Does the fact that [the preacher's] own faith is in process, always becoming but never fully and finally arrived, disqualify him from the pulpit? Not really feeling he is a member of the congregation he serves, he is hesitant to let it be known when his own*

faith is crippled for fear of causing the whole congregation to limp. It is this painful conflict between the traditional expectation of him and honesty with himself, a conflict so dramatically heightened in our time, that gives the minister pause and often frightens him from the pulpit.

Laity, too, are not immune from the subjectivization of belief and practice characteristic of high modernity. They increasingly exercise choice with respect to religion and religious truth. Even those whose choice is to submit to the authority of a fundamentalist religious tradition are aware that they have made a choice among a host of possibilities. Others exhibit a growing sense of their own authority vis-a-vis the clergy and the church's official teachings. They refuse to swallow religious truth "whole and undigested." The Barna Research Group, an organization that does survey research for evangelicals, recently reported *(Atlanta Journal,* September 7, 1991) that 62 percent of adults surveyed agreed that Christians, Jews, Muslims and Buddhists all "pray to the same God," although called by different names. The same percentage expressed the belief that "there is no such thing as absolute truth." Barna noted a transformation in the way that people think about religion: they are "transferring many elements formerly deemed 'necessary' into the realm of the 'optional.' "Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney (1987) have called this the "new voluntarism," choosing among beliefs and moral norms even as consumers choose among different products. *A New Yorker* cartoon (February 11, 1991) showed two couples talking at a dinner party. One said to the other, "We tried on religion, and it fits." All of this creates a diversity within many congregations and denominations that strains inclusiveness and tolerance to its very limits and/or heightens the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict. Clearly religion seems in no danger of disappearing under the impact of modernity, but it has significantly changed is character and made the clergy's interpretive role quite difficult.

Because of these changes, many clergy are attempting to restructure their role as interpreters of religious truth--either defining their role differently, or trying to find new ways of engaging in the interpretative task under the conditions of high modernity.

Of course, not all do. Many conservative religious leaders reject the claim that there is no certainty. They are willing to claim divine authority and exercise pastoral discipline in an un-restructured manner. For example, James Ault, Jr.'s stunning documentary of a fundamentalist Christian congregation, *Born Again,* shows a pastor willing to intrude into the personal lives of his parishioners to teach and discipline, claiming biblical authority to do so. It is not surprising that the pastor's style both fascinates and appalls viewers of the film, especially liberals. Pastors like him, however, are probably a minority, even among religious conservatives. Most are trying to restructure their interpretive role in ways that respond to the challenges of high modernity.

One option is to downplay the role of authoritative interpreter and to find one's identity in other roles more consonant with modernity. Social activism--substituting deeds for words--was a popular choice for the "new breed" of clergy in the 1960s and early 1970s (Hadden, 1969). That was short-lived, especially for those who chose to remain as ordained ministers in congregations. More recently, the images of "enabler" or "facilitator" have become popular.

Their popularity is due not only to the emphasis on shared ministry. Some clergy seem to think that being an enabler or facilitator relieves them of having to speak with certainty and authority about their faith. They and their laity are in the "soup" of doubt together. Many of these same clergy, however, have adopted a largely uncritical, almost fundamentalist acceptance of the insights of organizational consultants and church growth specialists. These specialists often cast their insights, theories and techniques in law-like rules in contrast to the relativity of the clergy's knowledge of the truths of faith. If clergy cannot preach and teach their faith with authority born of certainty, then perhaps they can at least be experts as enablers and managers.

Similarly, clergy's uneasiness with authoritative interpretive roles has made non-directive, therapeutically oriented pastoral counseling a popular alternative to more traditional, directive approaches to pastoral care and congregational discipline. The subtitle of Brooks Holifield's (1983) *book, A History of Pastoral Care in America,* says it well: "From Salvation to Self-Realization."

I do not wish to minimize the importance of congregational management and pastoral counseling as pastoral tasks. My point is that they have become popular substitutes for the more traditional but increasingly difficult task of the religious leader as interpreter of religious truth.[11]

Some clergy are not willing to give up the interpretative task. They are restructuring it in ways more appropriate to the changing, open ended character of high modernity. Elsewhere (Carroll, 1991) I have tried to describe one such alternative based on observation and conversations with a number of clergy. I call this style of ministry "reflective leadership," a concept adapted from the studies of professional practice by Donald Schön (1983, 1987). While I cannot consider here in any detail what this implies, let me at least suggest some of its major characteristics.

Clergy who practice reflective leadership, like the conservatives I mentioned, also ground their practice in the culture of their particular religious tradition. They understand their tradition's culture--its language, stories, liturgies, beliefs and norms--as making particular claims about the character of God and God's purposes for the world and about the purpose of human life in the world. Unlike the conservatives, however, they refuse to treat this tradition literally or proposition-ally. Instead, they treat it as open and growing, responsive to the contours and challenges of high modernity. As one pastor told me, "I'm not certain of too much any more, but there are some claims that scripture makes about God and about human life that I hold to be true. These claims are at the core of my life and ministry. I sit loosely to most of the rest. I also try to remain open around the edges."

From such a stance, these clergy attempt to construct responses to the experiences and issues that their constituents and congregations face, responses that are faithful to their core convictions and appropriate to the complex issues of the modem world. They do this reflectively, or "reflexively" if one uses Giddens' term. In preparing sermons, teaching, counseling, or managing their congregations, they reflect-in-action, drawing on their biblical

and theological heritage, on their own and other's experiences, and on ideas and insights from a variety of sources. They also take seriously the perspectives of laity, treating them as reflective practitioners in their own right. And, they regularly reflect on their practice, finding in their experiences new models and resources for addressing future challenges.

Reflective leadership is not all cognitive. There is also the symbolic, non-rational side of the interpretive task. In much of his recent writing, Andrew Greeley (e.g., Greeley and Darkin, 1984) has been emphasizing the sacramental, metaphorical dimensions of religion and religious leadership. He sometimes refers to this as the "Catholic imagination." He is probably correct in contrasting it with a more dialectical and cognitive approach that he associates with Protestantism. I find, however, a growing awareness among religious leaders of all persuasions of the significance of the sacramental, symbolic dimensions of their status and role. They recognize that liturgical and sacramental acts, as well as their own sacramental presence, are non-rational, non-cognitive means of interpreting the presence of the sacred. In a suggestive, exploratory study of clergy practice, John Fletcher (1975) asked a sample of laity to describe the factors affecting their relationships with clergy. The attribute that his respondents most often mentioned is what he came to call "religious authenticity." To describe religious authenticity, laity used such phrases as "having head and heart together," or as reflected in the person who “lives the gospel,” or as evident in one who is both "a man of God and a man of the world." They valued clergy's expertise, but the clergy's personal religious authenticity communicated a sacramental presence without which their expertise was inadequate.

Does all of this constitute a restructuring of the role of the religious leader as the interpreter of religious truth? I suggest that it does, although, as with the other two instances of restructuring, it is still in process. As I noted, some clergy appear to downplay, if not abdicate, the interpretive role. This is one form of restructuring, representing a departure from what has long been a central task of religious leadership. Others, including those I called reflective leaders, are also attempting to restructure their interpretive role to bring religious faith to bear meaningfully on the complex issues of living in this time of high modernity. These various efforts to restructure the interpretive role also call for further research, based not only on self-reports, but on careful observation of practice.

CONCLUSION

In my title, I promised a look at some futures of religious leadership as we move toward the year 2000. One may object that I have not really dealt with the future but have only considered existing issues, some of which have been with us for a long time. That is true. Yet, I have suggested that, for each of the issues, its future remains unfinished. Restructuring is still in process. From current trends, however, certain things do seem likely--or unlikely as the case may be.

It is highly unlikely that the present Pope will alter the sacredly masculine image of the Catholic priesthood by ordaining women--even in the face of tremendous practical pressures for change. Even if the current Pope or his successor should restructure the boundaries, one

can predict a backlash from traditionalists. Meanwhile pressures mount from within the Church for the flail participation of women, including their ordination. Thus for at least the near future, the likelihood is for intensifying conflict.

For Protestants the picture is not quite so clear. Although tensions remain within liberal Protestant denominations over ordaining women, I see no evidence of any counter movement that will succeed in turning back the clock. The struggle instead will be to insure justice and equality in the deployment and support of women clergy. There will also be opportunity to explore the ways in which women clergy in these traditions are restructuring the practice of ministry and the symbols that define it.

The more conflicted Protestant cases will be in those evangelical and African-American traditions that have resisted full participation of women in pastoral ministry, typically based on a literal reading of Scripture. There is clearly not unanimity in these traditions. The role of women in the church is a hotly debated issue in many evangelical seminaries, foreshadowing continued and perhaps growing conflict in the coming years.

Similar, though less divisive, conflict will likely exist around the issue of shared ministry. This will partly reflect the blurring and confusion that exists over what it means to share ministry. I noted several of these issues earlier. But as I also indicated, many evangelical and African-American Protestants still maintain a hierarchical approach to leadership, with the pastor as the dominant figure. Some Catholic pastors also continue to operate in a pre-Vatican II mode and resist giving laity a significant voice in decision making.

My hunch is that resistance to sharing ministry in these traditions is not so strong as it is to ordaining women. I suspect that we will see a convergence between the various groups--liberal and conservatives. Both, I suspect and hope, will come to recognize that leadership is not a zero-sum game; that strong clergy leadership and a shared ministry with laity are not mutually exclusive; that complex organizations require differentiated but not necessarily hierarchical leadership to carry out their purposes.

Finally, the strains and uncertainty that high modernity creates for religious leaders' traditional roles as interpreters of religious truth are not likely to end. Here, as in the case of ordaining women, Wuthnow's liberal-conservative cleavage will continue to be evident, within and between denominational traditions. Theological conservatives within all denominations will attempt to resist the corrosive character of modernity by seeking certainty based on scripture and/or tradition, and they will not lack for followers. There will also be those in all denominations who will downplay the interpretive role and opt for other roles more consonant with modernity--for example, managerial or therapeutic roles. And there will be those, like the reflective leaders I described, who will not close themselves off from the challenges of modernity but will struggle to find within their traditions resources that enable them and their constituents to address the moral meaning of existence. Thus this particular instance of restructuring will continue in an ongoing reflexive process.

From my perspective as a clergy watcher how restructuring plays itself out around these

three issues is not only fascinating. It is terribly important for the future of religion as we move toward and beyond the year 2000.

NOTES

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1. I have considered this topic more extensively in my book, As One *With Authority, Reflective Leadership in Ministry* (Carroll, 1991). The book is primarily aimed at clergy and seeks not only to interpret the restructuring that is occurring but also to propose some constructive ways of exercising their authority as leaders.

2. While ministry is one of the ancient occupations defined as a profession, a peculiarly modern understanding of professions--in contrast to older concept of "status" professions--emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Bledstein, 1976). Russell (1980) has traced this development within the Church of England and Scott (1978) within the context of New England Congregationalism.

3. See Carroll (1985) for a summary of the various critiques of the professional model of ministry.

4. See, for example, Ice (1987), Russell (1987), or Rhoades (1987).

5. I recognize that reasons other than the symbolization of God in masculine terms also form the basis for resistance to ordaining women--e.g., fundamentalist Christians who take certain New Testament proscriptions of women in church leadership roles as the basis for refusing to ordain women. This rationale, however, seems to be ultimately rooted in "sacredly" masculine images of God.

6. Several studies (e.g. Roof and Roof, 1984 and Nelsen, Check and Au, 1985) have examined conceptions of God in American society. Although they used the same data, the two studies came to different conclusions. The Roofs noted the dominance of paternal conceptions of God, while acknowledging the presence of feminine images. Nelsen and his associates, however, used a different methodology to conclude that a more supportive ("healer") image of God, which they interpret as more feminine, is the dominant image held by Americans. They speculate that this may reflect a change from earlier, more masculine images that began at least as early as the nineteenth century with what has been called "the feminization of American religion."

7. The complexity is evident in a recent review of a whole range of research on gender and leadership styles (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). Their review indicates the difficulty of sorting out whether differences in leadership values and behaviors are based in underlying gender *characteristics* or represent more subtle differences in the status of men and women occupying similar roles. They also point to the importance of studying leadership styles in the context of actual occupational roles.

8. In 1974, 9,741 United Methodist congregations had an average Sunday attendance of 35 or fewer persons. Ten years later, in spite of closing or merging approximately 1500 congregations, the number of congregations of this size grew to over 10,000, or 27 percent of all United Methodist Churches. Seventy percent of the denomination's congregations have an average Sunday attendance of less than 100. Methodists are not atypical among Protestants

in the large number of small, financially struggling, congregations.

9. A Southern Baptist study (Tharp, 1985), found that disagreements over leadership style, including rejection of authoritarian styles, accounted for one-fourth of the increasing number of forced terminations of Baptist pastors. Forced terminations were up by 31 percent in 1988 as compared with 1984, averaging approximately 116 per month (New York Times, January 17, 1990).

10. See the recent treatment of twentieth century Presbyterian .preaching by John McChire (1990). Also, Joseph Faulkner (1989) analyzed sermon manuscripts from a random sample of contemporary clergy and came to a rather bleak assessment of their quality. There is evidence, however, that preaching is making a comeback, being taken with much more seriousness by seminaries and practicing clergy (In Trust, 1990). Laity have continued to place preaching at or near the top of their expectations for the minister.

11. The popularity among mainline and evangelical clergy of managerial and therapeutic images of ministry is not surprising. These images reflect the dominant social types - "characters" to use Alasdair Maclntyre's term (1981:23 ff.)--of an culture dominated by technical rationality: the manager in the public, bureaucratic sphere; the therapist in the private sphere. "The manager," writes Maclntyre (1981: 29), "treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern is with products The therapist also treats ends as given; his concern also is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming ... maladjusted individuals into well-adjusted ones." Hough and Cobb (1985:5 if.) draw on both Macintyre's work and that of Ronald Osborn (1982) to make a similar point about ministry in their discussion of theological education.

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