

## **Transforming Priesthood: Robin Greenwood**

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### **1. Those historical influences** which led our priests till 1970 largely:

to confine themselves to 'spiritual' matters & separateness.

Receiving authority 'from above'. Based on Christological appointment of Apostles.

### **2. New present demands and factors.**

Baptism confers authority on laity.

Spontaneity and informality of culture.

Finance no longer from public historical purse but in hands of private laity, so CofE now more a precarious voluntary body.

Emergence of LNSM and NSM and less didactic training.

Need to help laity in their secular places of witness.

Strains between local and centralisation.

### **3. Dawning of a New Era**

Ecclesiology first: ACCM 22: asks the question what ministry does the Church require.

Might suggest:

a. Awareness of Context. b. Closeness to the Nature of God. c. Church as Community.

d. Integrated with laity. e. Desire for Unity.

f. Eschatological awareness: thus:

Church shares with HT concern for the final ordering of the world in Shalom.

Internal ordering of Church must conform to this concern.

Church lives out its life in the interim period before eschaton.

### **Relational Trinitarianism:**

1. Church works with world without polarising. Ordained/lay, Church/world.

2. In Eucharist, Church is drawn into that relational living with God and others as witness to world.

3. Church must be a 'first draft' of what relational world of community love can be like.

4. Concrete arrangements for the ordering of the Church follow from HT.

### **4. Relational Mission and Ministry**

Leonardo Boff -RC. Colin Gunton - URC.

Juergen Moltmann - Reformed. Metropolitan John Zizioulas - Orthodox.

Cappadocian Fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus [c350]

Communion lies at heart of God's being.

*Perichoresis* [6<sup>th</sup> cent?] = living within each other.

Interrelationship and mutual deference.

Three persons invite us in.

Inter-relatedness and mutual penetration yet all within spirit of Freedom.

Despite brokenness of sin and evil, all creation is invited to echo trinitarian relationship.

Trinitarian Ecclesiology therefore necessary since Church prepares way for godly relationships in society and creation into the Future.

### **Cf. Modern Science.**

Einstein: relativities not absolutes.

Heisenberg: no more precise measurement.

Prigogine and Stengers: and Brussels School of physicists - world is bubbling with randomness and process, not stability and equilibrium. Reality is best described in terms of a journey leading from a static state of 'being' to a continually developing condition of 'becoming'.

By analogy, a correlation between a universe in which no part exists in isolation from another and the God who, as differentiated loving communion of Persons, gives it being and purpose.

Cf. Modern conceptions of society & personhood

Descartes led to individualism and dualism. Construct society from our own individuality? But the 'idea' does not precede the artist's work but follows it.

A selfish market economy. But we are what we are by virtue of our membership of one another. Human being is a relational structure = Persons of HT live beyond themselves.

Like God's image, we are a process, not a substance.

But Church IS bound up in society.

## **5. The Church. Sign of Hope to the World**

### **CHURCH IS ONE**

*Koinonia* is 'communion', 'community' and 'communication'

Communion = relationship with God. Praying is a *perichoresis*

Community = mutuality within life of the Church [& Church unity]

Communication = relationship between Christians and wider community or society.

I Cor 10: the bread we break is a *koinonia* in the Body of Christ.

Phil.2: if there is any *koinonia* ...same love for one another .. emptied himself.

I John: *koinonia* technical term for all three meanings.

Some local Churches major on one or at the most two but usually to detriment of third.

Eucharist is the *koinonia* par excellence. [ASB emphasises this]

CofE and the State: Some 'christians' only adhere to *koinonia* as communication in world since they sense that Church has reneged on this secular element of the faith.

Don't take high moral ground but shared responsibility for well-being, sociality of City.

### **CHURCH IS HOLY**

Quality of inter-relatedness

Church can offer more than a 'social gospel'. God's call to a new creation.

Holy management within the CofE. Holy egalitarian relationships.

### **CHURCH IS CATHOLIC**

Not allow for individualism nor for communities that define themselves.

So - Baptism and Eucharist.

How can Church find order without relying on secular device of law and bureaucracy?

### **CHURCH IS APOSTOLIC**

Open to hearing God's word [hence scripture] from the past and the future in order to engage faithfully with the present. Sharing Christ's mission to the poor.

## **6. Priesthood: the Presiding Ministry**

All equal members of the Body. Made of people, not for people.

Clergy oversee, or 'preside' [Vat II] amongst other ministries in eucharistic community.

All have vocation to be 'in Christ' through baptism.

All summoned to a ministry at each phase of life.

All summoned to a unique task.

Christ shares ministry with whole Body.

Trinitarian model means no permanent subordinations.

Without being separate or superior in holiness etc = *primus inter pares*

Will require:

Gift of discernment of gifts within local church:

requires *contextual* awareness - the culture -ecumenicity

requires *theological* vision - know God active, steeped in contemporary work,  
collaborative theological style.

Requires *spiritual* development - more than a taker of services, can take criticism.

Gift of Blessing of celebration and good things. Sustaining the laos.

Co-operation with saving presence of HT.

Gift of Witnessing - as representing wider Church to local. As representing church to the local community