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Missional Churches in Secular Societies: Theology Consults Sociology*

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Abstract
The church is missionary by nature. But what about public church mission in secular societies? Furious religion mobilizing against rebarbative secularity? Withdrawal to seek exemplary perfection? To the contrary, theologically principled consultation with the sociology of J. Casanova on deprivatized religion leads to public witness in modern societies. Public theology can interpret deprivatized religion as an expression of prophetic and kingly elements in church mission. However, sociology leaves the priestly element as if private. What might ecclesiology, missiology, and public theology say about a public aspect of the priestly element in the church's witness in modern societies?

I. The Church Is Missionary by Nature

In 2006 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches published Faith and Order Paper 198, *The Nature and*

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Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement. Paper 198 presents an ecumenical consensus that the church is missionary by nature, an ongoing sign and instrument of Trinitarian *missio Dei*.[1] The church 'participates in the mission of Christ to reconcile all things to God and to one another through Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 8.18-25)'.[2] Consensus on the missionary nature of the church does not terminate discussion, above all on how to express it. All witness takes place in concrete contexts. The state of the question on mission and context is such that the critique of missions associated with Western imperialism and colonialism, Christendom, and false universalism has achieved escape velocity and now orbits in the theological sky.

No similar satellite serves as a point of reference for appropriating, carrying out, or best exercising the church's missionary nature in Western, modern/postmodern, pluralist, secular societies. How do Christianity and faith serve the mission of Christ in the context of secularized Western societies and in regard to public life? The question gains salience from interrogations of secularity and public life that have been underway in philosophy, social science, religious studies, and theology.[3] They beckon theology to think further about Western societies as secular contexts for missional churches. Accordingly, and with attention to J. Casanova's sociology of religion, exploration of church mission as public in a Western, secular context will follow. However, theological controversy calls for methodological reflection in advance of reporting on Casanova's ideas.

II. Why Consult Sociology?

Is it legitimate for theological reflection on the church's missionary nature to take account of sociological theory?[4] A current of theological thought larger than some of its best-known figures – K. Barth, H. Urs von Balthasar, J. Milbank, S. Hauerwas – opposes theology learning from the social sciences. Why turn to a potentially reductive sociology when divine revelation mediated by Scripture and tradition already give struggling, sinful humanity incomparable guiding light for being church, living in faith, for faithful discipleship, effective witness, and theology?[5] Some suspect that if theology receives anything from sociology – methodological principles, specific

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findings, general theories – alien ideas and values like Greek soldiers hidden in the Trojan horse will infiltrate theological reflection, suborning revelation, faith, and theology to knowledge gained by human inquiry thereby overcoming the uniqueness of faith and theology with the effect of reducing theological to non-theological content.

Theological accountability demands then a declaration of intent on two matters. First, what does sociology offer theology? A very brief answer is that its wide array of kinds of social data and interpretations gives access beyond individuals' anecdotal knowledge to structures and practices embodying what C. Taylor calls the 'modern social imaginary' – 'the way that we collectively imagine, even pre-theoretically, our social life in the contemporary Western world'.[6] Individuals participate in and are formed by a social imaginary without necessarily having it in explicit self-understanding. Variations in national cultures and sub-cultures abound but some common ideas on life in society form the background of every theology. But is that background reliable? Sociology offers a way to test perceptions, impressions, and assumptions in individual or group versions of the 'modern social imaginary'. One version occurs in a widespread image of US society having squeezed religion out of the public square.[7] Casanova's sociology gives a basis for doubting that opinion.

Second, is not theology self-sufficient? To the contrary, in imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures and figuratively speaking, theology occurs at a mid-point on Jacob's ladder, on which angels of insight from above descend and angels of insight from below ascend. Divine revelation/redemption comes 'from above' yet involves reception/interpretation by culturally, linguistically, historically situated human beings already having some knowledge. Faith is 'from above' not in an angelic act apart from human subjectivity but in being and remaining a divine gift.[8]

The distinction between 'from above' and 'from below' emphasizes the difference between what traditional theology of grace and revelation affirm about divine initiative that introduces transformation, novelty, and redemptive sovereignty into human meaning on one hand and on the other what human beings have and

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may still discover about the world and themselves through speaking a language, cultural mores, social cooperation, religious rituals, ordinary practices in securing food, clothing, and shelter, along with various sciences, arts, and disciplines.

Movements 'from above' and 'from below' on Jacob's ladder meet in a middle that comes about only because of the prior difference. The surprising thing is that what comes 'from above' in Scriptural inspiration, Israel's history, the Incarnation, Trinity, divine grace, charity, the kingdom of God, sacraments, etc. generates understandings that are more concrete, more actual, more complete than ideas, theories, and truths coming 'from below', although the latter are usually accepted as defining the world of experience. That concrete comprehensiveness inclines some to think of divine revelation, the gift of faith, a church in communion with the Trinity, following Christ, and theology as self-sufficient sources of all else followers of Christ want or need to know.

The approach taken here affirms the primary interpretative role of special categories coming down Jacob's ladder from above, as it were. But at the same time theology does not contain actually or potentially all the insights and categories that accumulate into full knowledge and science of anything created and of all creation. That is, a distinctive primacy in categories and understandings that 'descend' from revelation and faith is not a totality. Consequently, I wish to deny that revelation and faith impart to theology a potential monopoly on knowledge of the church's many contexts and of nature, cosmos, history, society, and culture as investigated in other disciplines. If a queen because of grace, revelation, faith, and discipleship, theology is not an omniscient monarch.

Theology follows Christ. Christ in his context gained human knowledge of language(s?), customs, practices, and the Scriptures as part of a growth in wisdom (Luke 2:52). Why may not theology in our context learn something from sociology, as it has learned from philosophy, literature, the arts, and other disciplines? J. Coleman argues that insofar as theology speaks about secularization there is no avoiding some correlation with sociology, and that sociology oriented to correcting social malformation is already a 'moral science' with

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assumptions about morality and the good life.[9] Against Coleman M. Baxter defends J. Milbank's critique of turning to the social sciences and objects that Coleman does not argue theologically, that is, 'in terms and categories of pneumatology, ecclesiology, eschatology, or soteriology'.[10] Baxter is correct about systematic theology but Coleman does reflect in terms and categories of Christian moral theology ordinarily understood to involve affirmation of the mysteries of faith and a doctrine of grace.

At the same time Coleman observes that since both sociology and theology are internally plural and conflictual no model for a relationship will be a matter of consensus in either discipline.[11] Agreeing with Coleman, there still is room for a basic guiding principle. As P. C. Phan avers, 'On the one hand, the use of social sciences is possible and even necessary because the church is a human society; on the other hand, it is not sufficient because the church is also a theological reality'.[12] Moreover, descriptions of an interdisciplinary encounter such as 'dialogue' or 'mutual self-mediation' are attractive yet predict a response forthcoming from sociology. Consequently, I prefer 'consulting' to 'dialogue', 'mutual self-mediation', or 'correlating' as a general description of theology relating to sociology. Theology 'consults' by listening and learning but not apart from theological principles. Consultation instantiates the midpoint on Jacob's ladder, a meeting of faith seeking understanding (from above) with understanding seeking truth (from below) in the tradition of potential harmony not antithesis between faith and reason.

III. Sociology: Public Religion in Secular Societies

Theology has something important to learn from J. Casanova's sociology about Western Christianity's secular context. Casanova has spoken about a 'crisis of secularity' accompanying a 'crisis of Enlightenment rationalism' resulting from the collapse of the modern ideal of progress, and from a worldwide resurgence of religions.[13] He does not portray the crisis as an impending reversal of secularity that overcomes in wholesale fashion the results of historic processes of secularization from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries. What occasions the crisis is a new empirical fact, the emergence of new modes of Christian public religion that do not attempt to re-assert the

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religious prerogatives of Christendom. That emergence differs from sheer rejection of modernity by modern fundamentalism.

The old secularization hypothesis had obscured this emergence by lumping it together with fundamentalist antithesis to modernity. The old hypothesis accounted for fundamentalist resistance as a rear-guard reaction. That interpretation forced all public religion into the theoretical place of fundamentalism. A phenomenon thus occluded was an internationally scattered occurrence of a 'deprivatization of religion' that does not regret the end of Christendom and accepts the differentiated structure of modernity. Casanova distinguishes deprivatization from a supposed, cyclical 'return of the sacred' in Poland, the United States, Brazil, the Philippines, India, the Middle East, and Africa, tolling the death of secularization. Both the old secularization hypothesis and the 'return of the sacred' idea lack a discriminating analysis of secularization.

More in detail, what is the 'deprivatization of religion'? The thesis arises on the premise that social differentiation as part of secularity has achieved irreversible standing. The argument is that social differentiation allows public space for influential but not juridical, authoritative exercises of religion. Moreover, insofar as privatization of religion has come about in respect for freedom of conscience and for a personal privacy immune to coercive intervention by state or church, privatization too has been an unimpeachable gain integrated into the normative structure of modernity. The question then moves to whether religion can be public without trampling on privacy. If religion accepts privacy, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion what kind of public role does it (descriptive) and can it (normative) occupy in a secular society?

Casanova states that, '[w]hat I call the "deprivatization" of modern religion is the process whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public sphere of civil society to take part in the ongoing process of contestation, discursive legitimation, and redrawing of the boundaries'.[14] Placing himself in the tradition of E. Durkheim's functionalist sociology, M. Weber's interpretative sociology, and

especially T. Parson's theory of social differentiation Casanova re-conceives relations between religion and modern public life.

By 'public life' Casanova means what touches the state, political society, or civil society.[15] The term 'modern' has ceased being an innocuous temporal adjective close to 'contemporary'. In my view postmodernity continues to arise from within, to criticize, complicate, and prolong significant features of modern political conditions.[16] C. Taylor points out that a 'public sphere' emerged in the Enlightenment.[17] Casanova's work exercises discriminating judgment about the Enlightenment, eschewing alike comprehensive negation and unnoticed prolongation. I would put it this way, in assimilating a postmodern condition a society does not withdraw from durable, modern political structures, including democratic self-government, legal protections for human rights, and a public sphere.

Empirical study in *Public Religions in the Modern World* takes up the fivefold fate of religion in Spain, Poland, Brazil, and the US (Catholic and Evangelical). His findings and analysis counter the idea that secularization always brings an end to public religion. To the extent that differentiation of the major kinds of human activity into distinct institutional spheres – market economy, democratic state, science/technology, the arts, family, religion – takes place religion no longer integrates them or provides a moral compass for a society's public sphere. Each major institution instead becomes an autonomous zone of human purpose and activity. A de-centered religion recedes into its own distinct zone or sphere alongside the others. Each sphere becomes its own public. People fall back into subjective struggles to pull together disparate parts of social existence, and religion ends up in the private realm of subjective, intersubjective, and familial life.

The 1960's-1980's secularization theory had conceived privatized religion as an inevitable effect from social differentiation. Modernity advanced uniformly under the twin auspices of reason and progress that gradually deprived religion of a public role. The more extensive the scope of 'rational' modernity, the less visible any social presence of religion would become until it faded into unseen survival in

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personal and domestic lives, thence likely to evanesce altogether. A thoroughly secular public life in many Western European countries apparently substantiated the extinguishing of religion's public presence and verified the privatization of religion predicted by the standard secularization hypothesis. This was taken as the advance guard and new norm for what would take place in other nations in other parts of the world. However, Casanova and others have asked, is Europe the norm or the exception?[18] He has argued that secularization as decline in belief and practice in Europe is not a universal norm and only one element in secularization.

Still, Casanova has not jettisoned the whole old secular hypothesis. He accepts but revises a 1960's-1980's theory advanced by T. Parsons. Parsons explained secularization as social differentiation. Differentiating a compact society into constituent major institutions distanced them from any central religious authority and so ended Catholic and Protestant Christendom. Differentiation loosened or cut away authority and ties connecting a supervisory religion to the other major institutions (market economy, nation-state, science/technology, education, arts) of a society. Differentiation is a sociological term for centuries-long dramas and struggles for emancipation of science, the economy, the state, and education from integration into a religious way of life wherein religious authority representing divine authority undergirded, authorized, and guided the social order.

Casanova singles out diff erentiation as the valid core of secularization theory. He distinguishes 1) secularization as differentiation, from 2) secularization as loss of religious belief and practice, and from 3) secularization as privatization of religion. He accepts 1) and takes account of facts pro and con in different nations about 2). He disputes 3), showing in case studies that privatization depends on an option made by churches not on an iron law of secularization. Granted, churches can acquiesce in a default tendency toward privatization as seems to have been happening in Spain. Or they can resist in the name of restoring Catholic hegemony and a pre-modern arrangement as may happen in Poland, though this may go toward resistance by opting for a third, new kind of public presence in conditions of modernity as has happened in the US. A church opts for

deprivatization in deciding whether or not, and how, to enter the specific space of 'open, public, rational discourse in the public sphere of civil society'.[19]

Later, in 2008 he embarked on re-thinking this space in light of international globalization, world religions, diverse civilizational heritages, and attention to Islam.[20] He no longer makes disestablishment a strict condition for a church or religion to enter civil deliberations as a public religion. And instead of a fixed juridical framework separating church and state he prefers A. Stepan's theory of 'twin tolerations' between an autonomous religious sphere and autonomous civil authorities.[21] I am following his 1994 position since in 2008 he looks beyond Europe and the West, while I am looking mainly to the West. In 2008 he regards his 1994 thesis on deprivatization to be 'amply confirmed'.[22]

Three sorts of religious intervention into the public sphere of modern societies qualify as 'deprivatization'. One is an organized effort among believers to gather their opinions in defense of 'the traditional lifeworld against various forms of state or market penetration'.[23] In the US Catholic mobilization against abortion and *Roe v. Wade* and some Protestant mobilization against building the theory of evolution into school curricula without a creationist alternative are examples. A second form questions and challenges in the public sphere 'the claims of two major societal systems, states and markets, to function according to their own intrinsic functionalist norms without regard to extrinsic traditional moral norms'.[24] The pastoral letters of the US Catholic Bishops on nuclear deterrence and on economic justice did that, as have official social teachings by many churches in the US and elsewhere not remarked by Casanova.

A third kind of deprivatization consists in religions taking strong public stands on behalf of the common good against 'individualist modern theories which would reduce the common good to the aggregated sum of individual choices'.[25] This occurs in invitations by religions to citizens, officials, and academics to reflect on the normative foundations of modern societies. An outstanding example of this kind of reflection subsequent to publication of Casanova's book

took place in a 2004 public dialogue between philosopher J. Habermas and then Cardinal J. Ratzinger on the pre-political foundations of liberal democracy.[26]

All three kinds of public intervention accept the differentiated structure of modernity as normative. That structure precludes religious authority over public life, the state, the market, science, etc. Religious authority has a place within the sphere of religion, whence it may enter the public sphere of civil and political life without violating the normative structure of modernity. If a religion or church accepts secularization as differentiation, according to Casanova, then radical monotheism in Western Christianity, but by implication Jewish and Islamic monotheism no less, can find a credible, potentially effective but not authoritative public voice in civil society.

Accepting or approving social differentiation means for churches that they have relinquished a desire for Christendom or any other type of political theocracy and instead have come to acknowledge a legitimate, structurally differentiated secular status for the major institutions in a society. Accepting differentiation includes respect for freedom of individual conscience and freedom of religion without coercive power exercised by a civil authority on behalf of a belief, of worship, and of distinctive practices. In the US this means practical and theoretical affirmation of First Amendment protection of religious liberty.[27]

Moreover, a church or religion cannot be organized in political life as a political party or a lobby on behalf of its own vision, values, corporate and institutional self-interest.[28] Instead, a deprivatized religious voice in the deliberative discourse of civil society, as in the US Catholic bishops' pastoral letters on nuclear deterrence and economic justice, contributes distinctive value judgments on affairs of the commonwealth. Generally, when religions or churches have accepted the normative structure of political modernity they have been been and still can be effective voices in civil society. A real question though concerns whether or not church membership wants or heeds such teachings. If churchgoers keep their distance from public interventions by their churches deprivatization remains real and structural but thin in many consciences.

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Not refusing modernity does not equate to resignation to loss of belief and practice, something that also may have to do with more and less effective pastoral ministries. In a modern society a church or religion has scope to intervene in public discourse as an institutional protagonist for human dignity and even openness to divine transcendence over and against a momentum in each major institution – market economy, democratic state, scientific education, family, and the arts – to exalt itself over all other human institutions and so become a new societal absolute. A church or religion can call the question on any major institution (e.g. state, market) showing signs of making itself the central and overriding authority that demands compliance from all in a society.[29] Moreover, public religion can incite discussion of the horizon, boundaries, and practical implications of secularity itself as a potential monopoly on meaning and resources.

True, Casanova remarks on liberal fear of 'a deprivatized ethical religion, which could bring extraneous conceptions of justice, of the public interest, of the common good, and of solidarity into the "neutral" deliberations of the liberal public sphere'.[30] Casanova's view is dubious only in locating the fear among champions of a neutral public sphere. The more obvious place is among advocates of a free market system untrammeled by values other than economic.

Nevertheless Casanova shows that secular modernity has a built-in structural receptivity to such monotheistic interventions. His early focus fell on Christian instances in the West but in principle his argument holds for Judaism(s), as well as for Islam. His later writings bring the non-Western situation of Islam more and more to the fore.[31] He concludes that secularization is a particular historical dynamic emerging from Latin Christendom not a universal historical process with a uniform teleology in every civilization.

IV. Theological Response

First and at the level of method, Casanova's sociology of religion analyzes public religion without turning religion into a dependent variable explicable by non-religious social forces, understandings, actions, relationships, structures, and dynamics. The sociology of

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religion neither identifies the genus of religion by referring to the actual existence and action of God nor studies social manifestations specific to Christianity in light of faith. Sociological methods but not necessarily sociologists are agnostic in regard to God and divine influence. Not knowing, however, differs from denial. Casanova's sociological analysis does not encompass yet respects rather than denies a human capacity for transcendence and possible divine impact in the formation and operation of religion.

However, the sociological antonym to public religion is an ideal-type of private religion centered in individual salvation and a personal relationship with God bound to be problematic for theology.[32] One problem lies in building an ideal-type on an unreal, apparently asocial, atomistic idea of the human person, another in too sharp a difference from public religion, as if that carried no revealed salvational, missional meanings, and as if some religions were purely private religions of personal salvation, others essentially public.

Public Theology: Ecclesiastical and Academic

Second, public, deprivatized religion is proximate to but not identical with the concerns of academic public theology. The deprivatized religion Casanova has elucidated is ecclesiastical public religion. Ecclesiastical, deprivatized religion is a non-academic strand of public theology that includes the words and deeds of grass-roots groups, local pastoral initiatives, and official public interventions by church leaders and members.[33] However, deprivatized religion has not been formed consistently by academic public theology, as distinguished from ecclesiastical appropriations of Scripture and tradition. There is little theory/praxis circulation.

Academic public theology proceeds independently from church institutions and interventions, with more of a direction toward what M. Marty called a 'public church', not identical to any church or denomination or movement but rather an informal, ecumenical fact of Christians from many traditions having concerns for the good of society.[34] In academic public theology one study has addressed some of Casanova's ideas in connection with a public church. M. Mattox reviews Casanova's use of private/public distinctions borrowed from J.

Weintraub, concentrating on the public political arena of civil deliberation and the economic meaning as 'public goods accessible to all'.[35] Mattox endorses modern social differentiation as normative for Australia and explores content and mode of public theology in a secularized polity. The category of gift characterizes theological 'public goods' able to be contributed from religion to secular political life by religious (e.g. Desmond Tutu) and political leaders (e.g. Prime Minister of Australia Bob Hawke).

One gift is 'development of a language and practice of international and intergenerational apology and reconciliation'.[36] Examples are a 1992 apology by the Australian Prime Minister to aboriginal peoples, John Paul II's apology for Catholic sins against Muslims, women, and indigenous peoples in a March 2000 Day of Pardon Mass, and most famously the religiously-derived interest that generated the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Mattox is aware of and supports a translation into a secular vocabulary that occurs when meanings pass from religion and public theology into secular politics. Without naming it, Mattox locates instances of meanings, choices, and initiatives that deprivatize religion in modern conditions. They are instances of non-academic public theology.

Further, those meanings, choices, and initiatives along with many others that deprivatize religion actualize, I suggest, the missionary nature of the church in the public life of a modern society without, and this is crucial, calling for a response of Christian faith. Public theology, academic and ecclesiastical, offers a distinctive witness that does not aim at eliciting conversions. D. Forrester sees public theology 'offering convictions, challenges, and insights derived from the tradition of which it is a steward, rather than seeking to articulate a consensus or reiterate what everyone is saying anyway … Public theology is thus confessional and evangelical … has a gospel to share, good news to proclaim'.[37] However, being confessional and evangelical does not mean that public theology 'addresses the Gospel to the world in the hope of repentance and conversion'.[38]

Rather, Forrester speaks of doing 'theology which seeks the welfare of the city before it protects the interests of the Church ….'[39]

Mattox proposes that 'the phrase "public theology" should suggest that this theology is not done just, or at all, for the benefit of churches or Christian institutions'.[40] Even more, explains J. W. De Gruchy, 'Public theology as Christian witness does not seek to preference Christianity but to witness to values that we believe are important for the common good'.[41] J. Atherton's very appealing Manchester-centered approach to local and global marginalization projects 'a Christian social thought and practice with a fully public character able to proactively address the dimensions and character of such public matters as marginalization processes'.[42]

Ecclesiastical and academic public theology detached from an ideal of Christendom seeks to contribute to the public life of modern/postmodern societies for the sake of a temporal common good that protects human dignity and promotes human well-being and flourishing.[43] Public theology can be seen as a witness to love of God and neighbor that contributes meanings, possible choices, and cogent initiatives to public life for the sake of policies and structures enabling people to enjoy proportional access to participation in the major institutions of a society (i.e. social justice) and through that to human well-being or flourishing. Public theology as witness, consequently, shares in and expresses the missionary dimension and intention of the church in a distinctive way not usually associated with the term 'mission'.

Now, Casanova's findings on deprivatized religion engender a pointed question for public theology, academic and ecclesiastical, about a US pastoral, theological, and popular variation on a modern social imaginary. Many have decried public life in the US as a naked public square. In this view, Supreme Court rulings against prayer in public schools, against Christmas crèches on public property, executive-branch administration of funding for social programs that disqualifies faith-based organizations from seeking government funding, mandatory teaching of evolution, along with objections theoretical and practical to religious language in civil and political society have secularized American public life, rendering it resistant and hostile to religion.

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Casanova's work gives a basis for asking whether this image of American public life is accurate or not. If his analysis is correct, and I think it is, then secularization leaves open a space for public religion and it becomes difficult to escape a conclusion that absence of public religion in given cases indicates either failure of religious creativity or an outright, indiscriminate rejection of political modernity. What secular modernity closes out is a church's or religion's entry into public life for the sake of total rejection of the normative structure of social differentiation on behalf of an attempt to re-instate pre-modern Christendom, political theocracy, or any return to a pre-modern, sacral unity of society under religious jurisdiction. It follows that the public square is not so much naked of all religious garb as it is guided by a dress code.

Deprivatization: Prophetic, Kingly, and Priestly

Further, Casanova's deprivatized religion supplies academic public theology with what B. Lonergan designates a 'general category' shared with other disciplines, in distinction from a 'special category' unique to theology.[44] In the image of Jacob's ladder, general categories ascend from human experience seeking understanding, true judgments, and responsible decisions while special categories descend from divine contact with the human. Theology dwells at their meeting mid-way on Jacob's ladder.

Deprivatized religion is a general category signifying a possibility amid historical processes of secularization while church and mission are special categories from above, signifying biblical content and Trinitarian initiatives in history. Their meeting in theology does not abolish their differences, and yet a theological statement keyed to a special category can incorporate a general category so that a theological statement results. An example is: the missionary dimension and intention of the church (special categories, ecclesiology) come to partial expression in deprivatized religion (general category, sociology). A forthcoming example will relate deprivatized religion (general category, sociology) to prophetic, priestly, and kingly elements of church mission (special categories, ecclesiology, public theology).

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Monotheistic religion has access to public life in order to act as a public interlocutor that calls the question on any differentiated sphere that tends to absolutize and exalt itself over the others thereby undermining a structure of differentiation. A church or religion thereby acts as a public sentinel and societal Socratic gadfly raising public discussions on unforeseen but problematic consequences – e.g. a market economy detached from political, social, cultural, and ethical principles – from valid social differentiation. Further, a church or religion can contest in public the daily operation and overall human success of a secular model of society – e.g. does it rise to the level of a self-sufficient, potentially oppressive ideology? In raising questions in public discourse a church or religion can challenge the adequacy of the secular horizon behind the model as long as the church or religion does not, and is not perceived to, exert pressure toward restoring a pre-modern religious jurisdiction over all spheres of society.[45]

Deprivatized religion seems not far removed from prophetic Christianity. What is the prophetic element in Christianity? P. Avis helpfully notes P. Tillich's Protestant principle of 'prophetic critique of all human institutions, which have an inveterate tendency to claim the absolute and final authority that belongs to God alone', and J. H. Newman's prophetic, priestly, and regal offices of the church.[46] Deprivatizing interventions in public life approximate an exercise of Newman's prophetic teaching office if that were to apply Tillich's 'prophetic critique' to social, economic, political, and cultural institutions.

However, N. Ormerod's brief treatment of the prophetic element in a study of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon refines the picture. Ormerod explains the principal functions of ministry in the church in light of B. Lonergan's scale of values (religious, personal, cultural, social, vital).[47] In descending order there are priestly, prophetic, and kingly mediations of these values. The episcopate as sanctifying, teaching, and governing may be thought to exercise all three mediations.

The highest value is religious (divine healing grace) and priestly mediation provides 'the primary mediation of grace as religious value into the lives of believers' through sacraments and liturgy. In their

lives it becomes personal value in conversion, discipleship, and choices.[48] Prophetic ministry 'moves from the personal to the church's cultural context', carrying the insights of priestly mediation to preserve 'the identity of the message within the process of enculturation', and to serve 'as a critique of prevailing norms which run counter to the message of the Gospel'.[49] Finally, a kingly mediation works through 'the concrete situation of the communal life of the Church, its organisation and institutional forms'.[50]

Ormerod points to the church as 'the historical prolongation of Jesus' healing mission into all places and times, all cultures and societies'.[51] The church exists to fulfill Christ's mission. Laity have a specific mission in priestly, prophetic and kingly mediations from church to world. However, I am chary of amplifying a clergy/laity difference built on baptism directing the laity to the temporal affairs of the secular world, and ordination sending deacons, priests, and bishops into a spiritual world inside the church.[52] So rather than try to spell out how laity differ from hierarchy in mission I will consider Ormerod's prophetic mediation in reference to baptism and the missionary nature of the church that form discipleship of whichever sort.

Ormerod's prophetic mediation includes a 'critique of prevailing norms which run counter to the Gospel'.[53] This description has a more precisely Christian purpose than does Tillich's Protestant principle of prophetic critique of all human institutions in the spirit of the First Commandment. Ormerod's prophetic mediation also expresses the missional dimension of the church better than does Newman's concept of the teaching office.

Nonetheless, deprivatized religion has a wider scope than negative or contending judgments. Moreover, Casanova slightly under-describes public religion setting forth not timeless ideals or general norms but interim steps. Public religion in two examples he selects, the US Catholic bishops' pastoral letters on nuclear deterrence and on economic justice, does more than transmit public critical judgments or contest boundaries among the differentiated spheres. The former put forward a near-term path to prevent a catastrophic outcome to nuclear

standoff and the latter set forth a model of economic democracy. Is that prophetic? It comes closer to kingly mediation.

First though another step has to occur. Kingly mediating of personal value to 'the concrete situation of the communal life of the Church, its organization and institutional forms' can be re-conceived. Nothing prevents this mediation from being understood also as sharing in the church's missionary nature. Then positive content in public religion becomes missional mediation from the personal value of discipleship to the social value of the concrete communal situation of a society, its organization, and institutional forms. Then positive content as kingly mediation looks toward near-term goals, practical means, and effective participation by believers in social, economic, political, and cultural life. Kingly mediation, partaking in Christ's exercise of sovereignty by kenotic service, serves the civil and social community through interventions on behalf of the marginalized and the common good.

W. Storrar, without using the category of kingly, refers to public theology, apparently both ecclesiastical and academic, going beyond prophetic mediation after apartheid by '…engaging in the politics of democratic transformation and not simply in the politics of protest and prophetic resistance'.[54] I think the sociological category of deprivatized religion (general category) can be understood theologically in terms of some prophetic and kingly expressions of the church's missionary nature (special categories).

Deprivatization and Priestly Mediation?

So far, what has not figured into public religion and yet belongs to the missionary nature of the church is priestly mediation of divine healing grace through Word and Sacrament. This seems entirely a ministry serving church memberships. However, P. Avis argues that pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament, if attentive to 'common religion' by shaping 'a church that maximizes the points of access for those who are not yet active members of the Church yet who acknowledge the place of the sacred, the touch of God, in their lives', is the primary mode of mission.[55] Priestly mediation of divine healing

grace has a public aspect in relation to a 'common religion' outside the ranks of churchgoers.

Is there any other direction along which to think about a public dimension in priestly mediation? Granting that in a secular society liturgy occurs only within the differentiated sphere of religion, does celebration of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper, for example, in any way become public religion in a secular, pluralistic society? The Eucharist is public witness in four ways: 1) obviously, as a known, spatio-temporal event ordinarily in a publicly visible building, 2) by forming consciences in church members who are also citizens, 3) in lived commitment to religious liberty, and 4) by introducing a new, divine, public space whose spiritual, non-coercive, spatially small area nevertheless opens onto and redefines all other public spaces and spheres in relating them nonjuridically to the universal mission of Christ, the ubiquitous kingdom of God, and the Parousia.

1. Church-goers and churches are visible and public; no comment needed.
2. The formation of consciences by common worship has been explored and although its effects may well enter the public life of a secular society that would typically be in individuals' decisions.[56]
3. Priestly mediation of grace in Word and Sacrament depends for expression of its inner public nature on external conditions of religious liberty no less than on practical access to bread, water, wine, and a building or gathering place. Intuitive appreciation of this dependence and not only respect for human dignity has led to a high level of respect in churches for religious liberty. That is why respect for and dedication to religious freedom for all humanity inheres in the priestly, liturgical ministry of churches alongside respect for the physical cosmos as source of water, fire, soil, wheat, vines, bees. Participation in liturgy can and should incline and instruct communicants in their duty toward religious freedom of all churches and religions no less than they formally bless the Creator for wheat and grapes at the Offertory. One of the best practices in ecclesiastical public theology would be publishing a formal, public statement and explanation of a church's, denomination's, or religious movement's unreserved

affirmation of the human and civil right to liberty in matters of religion.

4. The Lord's Supper has an innate public nature not only as visible but also as communal commemoration in light of Easter of a public ministry and death in an official, public execution. The Pentecostal event after Jesus' resurrection set in motion a visible, public mission. The intentional structure of the Lord's Supper, Divine Liturgy, or Mass is public because expressing, reflecting, and enacting divine, redeeming love for all creation and humanity in their sociality not as a multitude of monads. All publics are relative to the divinely instituted public centered in Christ, the Spirit, and the Eucharist. Already real in the present the divine public is more obvious eschatologically. In a confession of sins at the beginning of every Eucharist the worshipping community and each person acknowledge sinfulness in the presence of the Lord, Mary, and all the blessed, opening worship not only to an interim heaven but to an eschatological public reality, the copresence of all humanity and creation *coram Deo*. The Book of Revelation envisions the New Jerusalem as a radiant public space.

V. Conclusion

Methodologically warranted theological consultation of Casanova's deprivatization thesis leads to several conclusions. First, the genre of public theology, ecclesiastical and academic (can they better connect?), has a missional aspect that disrupts association of 'missionary' with Christendom. Ecclesiastical and academic public theology can be conceived as witnessing in the public life of secular societies to the divine will for the human good in love for neighbor and hope for God's kingdom. Second, actualizing the missionary nature of the church in a secular society need not be reduced to laying religious siege to the secular structure of a modern society. To the contrary, interventions that respect social differentiation yet contest eff ects of state and market operations on behalf of the marginalized and the common good are prophetic and kingly public witness to the gospel.

Third, there is reason to doubt the popular picture of secular society as a naked public square since there has been structural room

for religious interventions that respect pluralism and seek the common good. Fourth, deprivatized religion, as a mode of Christian witness in a secular society does not fully express churches' missionary nature since it omits the priestly element. Whether or not and how worship, prayer, contemplation, self-offering, and ministry of Word and Sacrament have, can have, or should have an impact in a pluralist public square remains open for discussion. P. Avis has proposed a ministry of Word and Sacrament with a missional dimension. The preceding section suggests an additional perspective. Are there others?

Notes

*. This article developed, thanks to the journal's anonymous reviewers, out of a paper presented at the 2009 meeting of the American Academy of Religion in a session of the Ecclesiological Investigations Unit.

1. Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper 198, *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to A Common Statement* (2006), in G. Mannion (series ed.) *Ecclesiological Investigations* vol. 1, P. M. Collins and M. A. Fahey (eds) *Receiving 'The Nature and Mission of the Church': Ecclesial Reality and Ecumenical Horizons for the Twenty-first Century* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2008); Full Text of '*The Nature and Mission of the Church'* [*NMC*] in the Appendix, pp. 110-145. 'Missionary nature' first emerged in Protestant theology. See D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 368- 373, 389-393, as well as S. B. Bevans, SVD and R. P. Schroeder, SVD, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), pp. 286-304. 'Missionary by her very nature' entered the ecclesiology of Vatican II in the 'Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church', W. M. Abbott, S.J. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), pp. 584-630 at I, 2; p. 385.
2. *NMC*, n. 36, p. 120.
3. Among others see T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007), the writings of J. Casanova in FN 13 below, and, translated by B. McNeil, CRV, J. Habermas and J. Ratzinger, The *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), J. Atherton, *Transfiguring Capitalism: An Enquiry into Religion and Social Change* (London: SCM Press, 2008), and I. U. Dalferth, 'Post-secular

Society: Christianity and the Dialectics of the Secular', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* , 78 (2010), pp. 317-345.

4. See N. Ormerod, 'A Dialectical Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesiological Context', The*ological Studies* 66 (2005), pp. 815-840. Also, Clare Watkins, 'Organizing the People of God: Social-science Theories of Organization in Ecclesiology', The*ological Studies* 91 (1991), pp. 689-711 and the essays in M. H. Barnes (ed.) The*ology and the Social Sciences*, The Annual Publication of the College Theology Society, 46 (2000), (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).
5. J. Komonchak explains the intrinsic openness of ecclesiology to social theory in 'Ecclesiology and Social Theory: A Methodological Essay', in F. Lawrence (ed.), J. Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*, Supplementary Issue of the *Lonergan Workshop Journal*, vol. 11 (Boston: Boston College, 1995), pp. 57-76; originally in *The Thomist* , 45 (1981), pp. 262-283.
6. C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007), pp. 146, 171-196.
7. R. J. Neuhaus famously invoked an image of religiously-garbed or naked in The *Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. Eerdmans, 1984).
8. In an historically-conscious approach to the nature/grace relationship B. Lonergan explains two vertical directions within historical development in societies as, 1) an upward creating vector in cooperative learning, discovery, systemic order moving in the dynamism of self-transcendence, always prone to bias and break-down, and 2) a downward healing movement from love of friends, family, tribe, city, nation, humanity. God's grace enables stable love to overcome hatred and releases healing activities that renew the creating process and thereby change ruined situations. B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Healing and Creating in History' in F. E. Crowe, S.J. (ed.), *A Third Collection: Papers by B. J. F. Lonergan* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 100-109.
9. J. Coleman, 'Every Theology Implies a Sociology, and Vice Versa', in M. H. Barnes (ed.) *Theology and the Social Sciences*, pp. 12-33.
10. M. Baxter, 'Whose Theology? Which Sociology?', in M. H. Barnes (ed.) *Theology and the Social Sciences*, pp. 34-42 at 38.
11. Coleman, 'Every Theology Implies a Sociology and Vice Versa', pp. 14-20. See N. Ormerod, 'Quarrels with the Method of Correlation', *Theological Studies* 57 (1996), pp. 707-719 that applies and expands R. Doran's criticism of correlation in *Theology and the Dialectic of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 108-135.

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12. P. C. Phan, 'Social Science and Ecclesiology: Cybernetics in Patrick Granfield's Theology of the Church', M. H. Barnes (ed.) *Theology and the Social Sciences*, pp. 59-87 at 59.
13. J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 227. Also, 'What Is a Public Religion?' in H. Heclo and W. M. McClay (eds), *Religion Returns to the Public Square: Faith and Policy in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp. 111-140, and 'Public Religions Revisited', in H. de Vries (ed.), *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 101-119.
14. Also by Casanova: 'Globalizing Catholicism and the Return to a "Universal" Church', in S. H. Rudolph, and J. Piscatori (eds), *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 121-143, excerpted in F. J. Lechner and J. Boli (eds), The *Globalization Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 392-398, 'Between National and Civil Society: Ethnolinguistic and Religious Pluralism in Independent Ukraine', in R. W. Hefner (ed.), *Democratic Civility: The History and Cross-cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998), pp. 203-228, 'Ethno-linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Construction in Ukraine', in B. R. Rubin and J. Snyder (eds), *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 81-103, 'Religion, the New Millenium, and Globalization', in *Sociology of Religion* 62, 4 (2001), pp. 415-441. The foregoing four pieces set the stage for asking what 'public' and 'public' religion mean in conditions of globalization and in international spaces.
15. See also by Casanova, 'Catholic and Muslim Politics in Comparative Perspective', in The *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 1, 2 (2005), pp. 89-108, 'Secularism Revisited: A Reply to Talal Asad', in D. Scott and C. Hirschkind (eds), *Powers of the Secular Modern: Interlocutors of Talal Asad* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 12-30, 'Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A United States/European Union Comparison', in T. Banchoff (ed.), *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 59-84, 'Nativism and the Politics of Gender', in H. Herzog, A. Braude, and P. Steinberg (eds), *Gendering Religion and Politics: Untangling Modernities* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2009), pp. 21-50, 'A Secular Age: Dawn or Twilight?' in M. Warner, J. VanAntwerpen, and C. Calhoun (eds), *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 265-281.
16. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 65-6.

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17. Casanova, in *Public Religions in the Modern World,* distinguishes these three, pp. 40-66.
18. This understanding of postmodernity learns from though in a tense, unresolved relationship with the thought of G. Vattimo in, J. R. Snyder (trans., ed.), *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) and G. Vattimo, S. Zabala (ed.) and W. McCuaig (trans.) *Nihilism and Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, and Law* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2004).
19. C. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 185-196.
20. See Casanova, 'Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms: Towards a Global Perspective', in G. Davie, P. Heelas, and L. Woodhead (eds), *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular, and Alternative Futures* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), pp. 17-29; 'Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration', in T. J. Byrnes and P. J. Katzenstein (eds), *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 65-92; 'A Secular Age: Dawn or Twilight?'
21. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, p. 223. Also Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 185-196.
22. Casanova, 'Public Religions Revisited'. He observes that, 'Islam today has replaced Catholicism as the other of Western secular modernity', p. 108.
23. Casanova, 'Public Religions Revisited', Footnote 17, p. 855, cites A. Stepan, 'The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the "Twin Tolerations"', in *Arguing Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 218-225.
24. Casanova, 'Public Religions Revisited', p. 101.
25. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 57-8, 228.
26. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 57-8, 229.
27. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 57-8, 229.
28. Habermas and Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization*.
29. John Courtney Murray, S.J. (1923-1967) argued principled affirmation of the First Amendment no-establishment and religious liberty clauses by Catholic Americans. His best known book is *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005; originally Sheed & Ward, 1960). His interest lay with people of faith entering public conversation in civil society but he advocated a public philosophy that incorporated some natural theology, not a public theology.
30. Contrarily, see A. D. Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988) and *Representing God at the Statehouse:*

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Religion and Politics in the American States (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

31. Though not noted by Casanova, many churches have a history of social teachings that do just this.
32. Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*, p. 55.
33. See Casanova, 'Public Religions Revisited', and 'Secularism Revisited: A Reply to Talal Asad'.
34. On private religion see Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 44-46. 186.
35. M. L. K. Mich expounds the grass-roots genesis of Catholic social teaching from pastors, activists, lay movements and leaders in *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* (Mystic, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 1998, 2000).
36. M. Marty, The *Public Church* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1981).
37. 35 M. Mattox, 'Religion, Secularism, and the Promise of Public Theology', *International Journal of Public Theology* [*IJPT*], 1 (2007), pp. 82-100 at 93.
38. Mattox, 'Religion, Secularism, and the Promise of Public Theology', p. 94.
39. W. F. Storrar and A. Morton, 'Introduction', in W. F. Storrar and A. M. Morton (eds) *Public Theology for the 21 st Century: Essays in honour of Duncan B. Forrester* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 1-21 at p. 1, quoting D. Forrester, *Truthful Action* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), pp. 127-128. See also E. Graham and A. Rowlands (eds) *Pathways to the Public Square: Practical Theology in an Age of Pluralism* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005).
40. D. Forrester, 'Th e Scope of Public Theology', in E. Graham and E. Reed (eds), The *Future of Christian Social Ethic* s: *Essays on the Work of Ronald H. Preston 1913-2001,* A Special Issue of *Studies in Christian Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 5-19 at 6.
41. Forrester, 'The Scope of Public Theology', p. 6. Section V of this article demurs from the remainder of the sentence excluding from the scope of public theology '… its [the Church's] proper liberty to preach the Gospel or celebrate the sacraments', p. 6.
42. Mattox, 'Religion, Secularism, and the Promise of Public Theology', p. 94.
43. J. W. DeGruchy, 'Public Theology as Public Witness: Exploring the Genre', *IJPT* 1 (2007), pp. 26-41 at 30.
44. J. Atherton, 'Marginalisation, Manchester, and the Scope of Public Theology', in Graham and Reed (eds) *The Future of Christian Social Ethics* , pp. 20-36 at 27. See J. Atherton, *Marginalization* (London: SCM Press, 2003).
45. See also W. F. Storrar, '2007: A Kairos Moment for Public Theology', *IJPT* 1 (2007), pp. 5-25 at 16/17.

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46. B. J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), pp. 281-293. See the categories in R. M. Doran, The*ology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 115-119, 451-457 and, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 42-52.
47. M. Turunen, 'Orthodox Monarchism in Russia: Is Religion Important in the Present-Day Construction of National Identity?' in *Religion, State and Society* 35, 4 (2007), pp. 319-334, argues that in Russia conservative, communal, Orthodox monarchism deprivatizes religion. It questions secular spheres, and seeks to replace the secular realm with Orthodox monarchism to protect a traditional life-world. Orthodox monarchism, however, resembles Catholic interests Casanova describes in Poland (*Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 92-113) that want restoration of a pre-modern Catholic hegemony in public matters of family, education, and religion. Neither Orthodox monarchism nor Polish church hegemony exemplifies Casanova's deprivatization. Neither accepts social differentiation as normative for public religion. Instead, both advocate return to sacral, undiff erentiated premodernity.
48. P. Avis, *Beyond the Reformation? Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006), p. 6.
49. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, ch. 2 on the human good. N. Ormerod, 'On the Divine Institution of the Three-Fold Ministry', *Ecclesiology* 4 (2007), pp. 38-51.
50. Ormerod, 'On the Divine Institution of the Three-Fold Ministry', p. 47.
51. Ormerod, 'On the Divine Institution of the Three-Fold Ministry', p. 47.
52. Ormerod, 'On the Divine Institution of the Three-Fold Ministry', p. 47.
53. Ormerod, 'On the Divine Institution of the Three-Fold Ministry', p. 47.
54. Admittedly, Vatican II's *Lumen gentium*, and John Paul II's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifi deles Laici*, teach this division. It may not be irreformable.
55. Ormerod, 'On the Divine Institution of the Th ree-Fold Ministry', p. 47.
56. W. Storrar, '2007: A Kairos Moment for Public Theology', *IJPT* 1 (2007), pp. 5-25 at 16-17.
57. P. Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), p. 18.
58. See L. Mudge, The *Church as Moral Community: Ecclesiology and Ethics in Ecumenical Debate* (New York: Continuum; Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998).

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