

¹ORDINATION, ORDERS, AND ORDER¹

By Lawrence N. Crumb

Introduction

Ordination has always been a matter of great importance to the Episcopal Church, as to its parent body, the Church of England. The first Ordinal in English appeared in 1550, one year after the first Book of Common Prayer; each was largely the work of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury since 1532. Cranmer's Ordinal differed from the previous Latin rite in several details, but it continued three basic principles: that there should be different orders of ministry (bishop, priest, and deacon); that they should be conferred in a liturgical rite presided over by a bishop or bishops; and that the rite should include a sacramental act (the laying-on of hands). Moreover, the Preface to the Ordinal not only asserted that "from the Apostles' time, there hath been these orders of Ministers in Christ's church" but also stipulated that "no man ... shall execute any of them, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted, according to the form hereafter following." The Prayer Book of 1662, reflecting the anti-Puritan sentiment of the Restoration, the existence of Nonconformist sects, and a backlog of non-episcopally ordained clergy, added (after "no man") "shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the Church of England, or suffered to execute the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto according to the Form hereafter following or hath had

¹Parts of this article are derived from two previous articles in *Anglican and Episcopal History*: "What Happened in Philadelphia?" 76 (2007): 520-31); "The Extra-Canonical Ordination of Bishops and the Episcopal Church," 77 (2008): 402-13. They are used with the kind permission of the editor, Dr. Edward Bond.

formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination.” This Preface was adopted by the Episcopal Church in 1792 (substituting “this Church” for “the Church of England”) and has been included in every American Prayer Book since then, with minor revisions in the 1979 edition.²

Many of the controversies of the Twentieth Century have involved ordination. The Open Pulpit controversy of 1907, over a canon allowing non-episcopally ordained clergy to preach in Episcopal churches under certain conditions, resulted in a small secession to Rome under William McGarvey in the following year. Discussions with the Moravian Church in the 1920s broke down because of a gap in their succession of bishops. (The “apostolic succession,” as it was then called, referred to a tactual succession of bishops by laying-on of hands.) Intercommunion with the then young Church of South India was a controversy in 1958; the final form of the canon on intercommunion passed by General Convention in that year limited it to episcopally ordained clergy and episcopally confirmed laity, thus rendering it unacceptable to the Indian church.³

²Francis Procter and Walter Howard Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1905), pp. 656-73; *The First and Second Prayer-Books of King Edward the Sixth*, Everyman’s Library, [448], (London and New York, 1910), p. 292; <http://www.vulcanhammer.org/anglican/bcp-1662.pdf> (consulted 24 November 2013; most editions of the 1662 book do not include the Preface); *The Book of Common Prayer ... according to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (any ed., 1793-1976; pagination not uniform until 1928).

³Edward Hawks, *William McGarvey and the Open Pulpit* (Philadelphia, 1935); Enrico Molnar, “The Problem of Episcopal Succession in the Moravian Church,” *Anglican Theological Review* 45 (1963): 270-284; *Journal of the General Convention* (1958): 214-23. William McGarvey

The "Philadelphia 11"

"The exception tests the rule." This is the more literal translation of the Latin proverb, and, for the Episcopal Church, the rule was tested by the ordination service that took place on 29 July 1974 at the Church of the Advocate, Philadelphia, involving three bishops, all retired, and eleven deacons, all women; it is usually referred to as the first ordination of women to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church.⁴ But was it? Forty years after the fact, most people still do not understand what happened, or the principles for attaining such an understanding.

(1861-1924) was rector of St. Elizabeth's, Philadelphia and Master of the Companions of the Holy Saviour (C.S.S.S.), both very Anglo-Catholic, and the author of several scholarly books. He was ordained Roman Catholic in 1910, made Monsignor in 1921, and was one of the canopy-bearers at the coronation of Pope Pius XI in 1922.

⁴The retired bishops were Daniel Corrigan (suffragan, Colorado), Robert DeWitt (Pennsylvania) and Edward Welles (West Missouri). The ordinands were Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell [later Bozarth], Alison Cheek, Emily Clark Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Radley Hiatt, Marie Moorefield [later Fleischer], Jeanette Piccard, Betty Bone Schiess, Katrina Welles Swanson, and Nancy Hatch Wittig; see "Eleven Are Unlawfully Made 'Priests,'" *Living Church*, 18 August 1974, pp. 5-6, p. 107. The idea for the Philadelphia ordination began at a meeting of Bishop DeWitt, Deacon Hiatt, and Dean Edward Harris of the Philadelphia Divinity School on 15 June; Harris had preached an ordination sermon that morning lamenting that the women being ordained deacon would not be ordained priest with the men. (Heather Ann Huyck, "To Celebrate a Whole Priesthood: The History of Women's Ordination in the Episcopal Church" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1981), 105-06).

There was much discussion as to whether the ordinations were invalid or valid but irregular. (I prefer “authentic” to “valid” as less legalistic and will use that here.)⁵ An ordination is authentic when it is “in character”; that is, in keeping with the essential nature, including polity, of the church involved. Polity, although reflected in canon law, is distinct from it, inasmuch as many ordination canons are an arbitrary matter of administrative detail. However, there are canons that reflect the polity of the church and thus its very essence. Of all the canonical requirements for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood, there are three that reflect this polity and are thus essential for authenticity.⁶ These are: approval by the Standing Committee; the designation of the officiant to represent the diocese, if someone other than the bishop diocesan, who represents it *ex officio*; and the ordination service itself.⁷ The gender of the ordinand is not one of these basic requirements; in fact, contrary to widespread belief, there was nothing in the canons of the time that required candidates for the priesthood to be male.⁸ The real problem was the question of whether the bishops had the authority to ordain. They clearly did not have this authority as far as the polity of the Episcopal Church is concerned, but might the ordinations be authentic, albeit irregular?

⁵For the reasoning behind this preference, see Crumb, “What Happened,” 522-23.

⁶The complete process leading to ordination is complex. For purposes of this article, however, the term “ordination process” is used in reference to the three requirements here stated as essential. For ordination as a process, see Paul Bradshaw, “Ordination as God’s Action through the Church,” in *Anglican Orders and Ordination*, ed. David Holeton, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study, 39 (Cambridge, 1997), 9-11.

⁷For the essential nature of these requirements, see Crumb, “What Happened,” 525-27.

⁸For an analysis of the canons, see Crumb, “What Happened,” 527, f. 18.

Augustine and Cyprian

Many, if not most, Episcopalians assume that any bishop can go anywhere and do anything. That is the opposite of the apostolic order of which the episcopate is supposed to be the guardian. Bishops do not have special powers that they own as a personal possession, independent of the church; their authority is that which the church gives, to be used on behalf of the church and in accordance with its polity.⁹ For those who may disagree with this statement, it must be admitted that there is another school of thought, usually called “Augustinian,” as opposed to the so-called “Cyprianic” stated above. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) and Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) were both bishops in North Africa; they are traditionally regarded as saints and Fathers of the Church. Put very simply, the “Augustinian” theory holds that “once possessing the powers of a bishop, always possessing the powers of a bishop”; whereas the “Cyprianic” holds that holy orders are valid only within the context of the church, and thus validity cannot be separated from legitimacy.¹⁰ The problem with the Augustinian approach is that it is too much like the legalism that has distorted Western Christian thought through most of its history. Dom Gregory Dix pointed out that it leads inevitably to “the conclusion which not only Cyprian but the whole pre-

⁹Cf. A. G. Hebert, *Apostle and Bishop: A Study of the Gospel, the Ministry and the Church-Community* (New York, 1963), 70: “[The Augustinian] theory of Orders led the way to a conception of the Christian Ministry in which Episcopate and Priesthood could be seen as the possession of an individual, conferring on him personal gifts and privileges, rather than as being primarily the exercise of functions within the believing and worshipping community.”

¹⁰Henry R. T. Brandreth, “Validity and Regularity,” in his *Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church*, 2nd ed., rev. (London, 1961), 8-15, esp. 8-9; see also Colin Buchanan, “Anglican Orders and Unity” (f. 5), esp. 16-17.

Nicene Church might have found rather startling, that it is possible ... to have 'valid' orders outside the Church This is a later pressing of logic to an extremity which Augustine did not foresee, and might have repudiated had it ever been brought to his attention.”¹¹

The Cyprianic is more in keeping with the most enlightened thought of the present, reflecting the early church's sense of itself as a unified, organic community. Moreover, A. G. Hebert pointed out that “The Augustinian theory of Orders ... could produce the quite extraordinary phenomenon of *episcopi vagantes* – bishops validly consecrated so far as the 'pedigree' of their consecrators went, but having no flocks at all to tend. It is plain that the Apostolic Succession which the Anglican Ordinal intended to assert does not demand any such one-sided theory of Orders as this.”¹²

The late L. Mason Knox, in his dissertation for the doctorate in canon law, discussed the Cyprianic theory at great length, showing that it was not peculiar to the saintly bishop of Carthage but typical of the thought of his time. “For the Church of the first four centuries did not regard the validity of ordination as determined simply by the nature of the sacramental act itself, but as qualified also by the authority of the Church and a prudent evaluation of the situation. For the first three centuries of its history the Church saw the ministry not as a personal gift of grace

¹¹Gregory Dix, “The Ministry in the Early Church, c. A.D. 90-410,” in *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of Episcopacy*, ed. Kenneth E. Kirk (London, 1946), 286. Cf. Bishop John Krumm of Southern Ohio: “[The lack of approval by Standing Committees] suggests a discredited and almost magical view of ordination – namely, the conferring of priestly character and status simply and solely by the imposition of episcopal hands”; see “Eleven Are Unlawfully Made ‘Priests’”(f. 3).

¹²Hebert, *Apostle and Bishop*, 70.

given to the individual minister in the sacrament of Order, but as his incorporation into the corporate *klēros* of the local church. In the pre-Nicene period Holy Orders are viewed from an essentially ecclesial perspective ...”¹³ H. Boone Porter, while a professor at the General Theological Seminary, also emphasized the corporate nature of the presbyterate, saying, “It is to this council of priests ... that the newly-ordained [priest] is admitted.” The “corporate and collegial character of the order of presbyters” is also affirmed by the Greek Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware, sometime Spalding Lecturer of Eastern Orthodox Studies at the University of Oxford.¹⁴

Knox also writes at length on the Augustinian theory of ordination, showing that it was expressed in the context of the Donatist controversy and in works of polemical theology. In fact, it was not expressed systematically in regard to ordination, but rather as occasional extensions of the main subject, that of baptism by schismatic clergy. “[I]t is important to realize that he presents his argument in a very inconspicuous fashion. The crucial texts are buried in a few passages of his anti-Donatist writings, which seem to have had little currency outside North Africa.... The central point in this debate with the Donatists is the nature of a sacrament and the absolute parity between baptism and order. This he asserts vigorously, but he does not offer any

¹³Lincoln Mason Knox, “The Ecclesial Dimension of Valid Orders” (J.C.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1971), 59-60. Knox was an Episcopal priest who taught canon law at Sacred Heart School of Theology (RC), Hales Corners, Wis.

¹⁴Unpublished ordination sermon, 16 June 1962 (Yale Divinity School Library, RG 230, Box 12, Folder 105; cf. his “The Theology of Ordination and the New Rites,” *Anglican Theological Review* 54 (1972): 79. Kallistos [Ware], “Foreword,” in H. J. M. Turner, *Holy Orders and the Completeness of the Church* (Ely, Eng., 2005), 5.

fundamental theological foundation.... Augustine seems to view orders in very individualistic terms. Order is viewed as a gift or *sacramentum* possessed by an individual man, and for this reason it can exist outside the unity of the Church.... [His] terminology suggests a vision of the ministry which is substantially different from that which we encounter in the earlier sources.”¹⁵ Of course, the Donatist bishops represented a sizeable ecclesial body, however schismatic, and were not functioning on their own like the later *episcopi vagantes*.

Since I have discussed the Philadelphia ordinations at some length in a previous article, I will simply repeat here the interpretation suggested in it. At the time it took place – with emphasis on this qualifier – the service was not, in this author’s opinion, an authentic act of the Episcopal Church, did not complete the ordination process, and did not make the ordinands priests of the Episcopal Church; all that came later. Whether it made them priests in some other sense at the time is an interesting question. This author would like to suggest a theory that affirms the ordinations, while also consistent with the principle that ordination is something done by a church: When a group of Christians with no previous authorization to perform official acts of the church proceeds to do so, it becomes a *de facto* church – not a denomination with formal structure and defined membership, but what might be called a “para-church,” a movement with one or more ecclesial functions. (A rough parallel would be Eighteenth Century Methodism, not yet a denomination but already performing certain ecclesial functions.) The real accomplishment of the Philadelphia 11 can thus be seen as not so much managing to find a few bishops willing to lay hands on them, but forming a supportive community. It was this community, and only this

¹⁵Knox, “Ecclesial Dimension,” 17-25, esp. 18-20, 24. Knox also discusses the theory of “degrees of validity” in a divided church, citing the English theologian O. C. Quick (137ff.)

community, that authorized the ordinations, however implicitly; and it was only this community that recognized them until their completion.¹⁶

Extra-canonical consecrations

The basic principle set forth above is that ordination is something done by the church, not by private individuals acting on the basis of powers that they own as a personal possession. This principle of polity, if accepted, applies *a fortiori* to ordinations to the episcopate. In other words, if it takes a diocese to make a priest or deacon, it takes a province (in the sense that the Episcopal Church is one province) to make a bishop. However, there have been several occasions on which bishops of the Episcopal Church have taken part in ordinations not authorized by that church.

In 1873, George David Cummins, Assistant Bishop of Kentucky, left the Episcopal Church and founded a new denomination, the Reformed Episcopal Church. Although he did not accept the concept of apostolic succession, he ordained Charles Edward Cheney as the new church's second bishop later that year. This is apparently the only occasion on which a bishop, or former bishop, of the Episcopal Church presided alone at such an event. More important than the number of bishops, however, is the fact that Cummins was not acting on behalf of any historic church, and thus there was no organic continuity. There appears to have been no subsequent participation of bishops in the historic succession, although Methodist bishops, not in the historic succession, took part in the consecration of two bishops in 1876.¹⁷

¹⁶Crumb, "What Happened," 523-24.

¹⁷Matthew Simpson took part in the consecration of W. R. Nicholson, and Albert Carman, of Canada, in that of Edward Cridge and Samuel Fallows; see Allen C. Guelzo, *For the Union of Evangelical Christendom: The Irony of the Reformed Episcopalians* (University Park, Pa., 1994),

There has been only one occasion on which the Episcopal Church needed to pass judgment on the orders of the Reformed Episcopal Church. This was in 1922, when the Church of Jesus, a small body in Puerto Rico, asked to unite with the Episcopal Church there. Its bishop, Manuel Ferrando, was a former Roman Catholic priest who had been ordained bishop by the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1912. At the time of his reception into the Episcopal Church (1923), he “was given supplemental consecration” and became suffragan bishop of the Missionary District of Puerto Rico.¹⁸

On January 28, 1978, four priests of the Episcopal Church were ordained as bishops at Augustana Lutheran Church in Denver. The event was not sponsored by any organized church, but by the Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen, an organization created the previous year at a meeting held in St. Louis in reaction to the women’s ordination canon of 1976; other groups also joined in the sponsorship.

As with all ordinations, what is most significant is the identity of the officiating bishops, and the church, if any, that they represent. On this occasion, the officiants were Albert A. Chambers, retired bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield, and Francisco J. Pagtakhan, secretary for missions and ecumenical affairs of the Philippine Independent Church. (Charles F. Boynton, retired suffragan bishop of New York, and Mark Pae, bishop of Taejon, Korea, had also been scheduled to take part but were absent, the former because of severe heart trouble and the latter

212; email from the author dated 16 July 2004; Alice Katharine Fallows, *Everybody’s Bishop: Being the Life and Times of the Rt. Rev. Samuel Fallows, D.D.* (New York, 1927), 272.

¹⁸Guelzo, *For the Union*, 329-30; George E. DeMille, *The Episcopal Church since 1900: A Brief History* (New York, 1955), 18-19; Amy M. FitzGerald, Archives of the Episcopal Church, email dated 13 April 2005.

at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop Pagtakhan was a last-minute recruit, named in an insert to the service bulletin.) The absence of a third bishop was widely noted, and inspired an historical article in *The Living Church* by its editor, the distinguished scholar H. Boone Porter. What was more important, however, was the fact that each of the officiating bishops had been specifically requested by his church not to take part, and thus were not acting on behalf of any church. Since the officiating bishops were not acting on behalf of any church, they were no more able to effect an organic transmission of the historic episcopate than the notorious *episcopi vagantes*.¹⁹

There have been several more recent controversial episcopal ordinations. At the first, held at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, on 29 January 2000, two priests of the Episcopal Church were ordained bishop by two retired bishops of the Episcopal Church and other bishops from other countries. This event is more ambiguous, since not all of the bishops were retired and two were primates of their respective provinces (Rwanda and Southeast Asia) and thus the normative presiders at ordinations for those provinces. The question, however, is whether they were acting on behalf of their provinces, in accordance with the polities of those provinces, and for those provinces (or for another, at its request). The difficulty of deciding just who was doing what is compounded by the fact that only the two primates functioned as ordaining bishops; the "other bishops merely said prayers of blessings over the candidates," suggesting at best a blending of Anglican and Roman Catholic practices. A similar service took place on 24 June 2001 at the Colorado Community Church in Denver. Four more Americans were consecrated by an overlapping group of consecrators, including two primates and the two retired Episcopal bishops. This time, the ordinations were for the newly-formed Anglican Mission in America, an

¹⁹Crumb, "Extra-Canonical Ordination," 406-08.

organization of disaffected Episcopalians which does not claim to be a separate denomination. Although a case can be made for the authenticity of episcopal ordinations performed by the primate of a province, especially if they are in accordance with the constitution and canons of the province, there are still some questions that need to be answered before the ordinations can be recognized as authentic. If the ordinations were for the Province of Rwanda, why did they take place in Singapore and Denver? If they were for the Province of Southeast Asia, why did the assistant bishop of Singapore and the chancellor of the diocese refuse to attend? Why was the Singapore service held virtually in secret, with a congregation consisting of the participating clergy and acolytes and the family and friends of the candidates (about 30 in all)? Is the self-declared author of the Rwanda constitution and canons, being a participant in both services, an objective witness for the canonicity of the events? For what church were the candidates being ordained bishop? Does the Anglican Mission in America have official status as part of the Province of Rwanda? (It claims “oversight” from that province.) And, is it in accord with the larger polity of the Anglican Communion for one province to ordain bishops to function within the boundaries of another Anglican province if not requested to do so by that province? Until these questions can be answered satisfactorily, it would seem that the status of these bishops is in a kind of limbo, at best.²⁰

Having described several episcopal ordinations that are inauthentic or of dubious authenticity, it may be useful to describe, by way of contrast, some similar events that were unusual but nevertheless authentic. The most obvious is the consecration of the first four bishops of the Episcopal Church by bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church and by bishops of the Church of England. Each of the three services involved bishops acting on behalf of their respective

²⁰Crumb, “Extra-Canonical Ordination,” 408-10.

churches and not simply on their own authority. A parallel example is the consecration of three bishops of the Philippine Independent Church by three bishops of the Episcopal Church in 1948. The most recent examples, of course, are the participation of bishops of the Episcopal Church in the installations of bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, pursuant to the status of intercommunion established by the two churches at their national conventions held in 1999 and 2000.²¹

This article has used the word “organic,” a term that may not be familiar in this context. It is derived from the concept of the church as organic, based on Jesus’ metaphor, “I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5). The historic episcopate does not have an independent existence of its own; it subsists in the life of the historic church. It has often been said that the Episcopal Church’s principal contribution to Christian union would be the historic episcopate. Perhaps it would be better to say that one of its major contributions would be its organic continuity as an historic church, of which the historic episcopate is an outward and visible sign.

Roman Catholic women

In recent years, there have also been extra-canonical ordinations of Roman Catholic women. In the first example, generally referred to as “the ordinations on the Danube,” seven German and Austrian women were ordained in 2002 by Bishop Romulo A. Braschi of the Catholic Apostolic Charismatic Church of “Jesus the King” in Argentina. He had been consecrated in 1998 by Bishop Roberto Garrido Padin of the Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church and, in 1999, by Gerónimo José Podesta, Roman Catholic Bishop Emeritus of Avellaneda, who had been deposed

²¹Crumb, “Extra-Canonical Ordination,” 410-11.

in 1972.²² Since then, several women have been consecrated bishops, the first by “a Roman Catholic bishop in good standing whose identity will not be revealed until after his death.” They and the priests ordained by them have formed Roman Catholic Womenpriests, a fellowship rather than a denomination, since they consider themselves to be Roman Catholic priests awaiting recognition by their church.²³ In this respect, they are similar to the “Philadelphia 11,” who awaited the “completion” (the official term at the time) of their ordinations in order to be recognized as priests of the Episcopal Church. The Roman Catholic women, however, may have much longer to wait.

An older and more radical movement of Roman Catholic women is called Women-church. They held national conferences in 1983, 1987, and 1993 after the more general Women’s Ordination Conference held in Detroit in 1975. Following the lead of Mary Hunt and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, they reject apostolic succession, ordination by bishops, and traditional

²²Gisela Forster, “Ordained Ministries for Women,” <http://www.womenpriests.org/called/forster3.asp>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roberto_Garrido_Padin, both consulted 19 November 2013. One of the women later became a U.S. citizen and wife of a former governor of Ohio.

²³Ann Rodgers, “Twelve Women Ordained in Pittsburgh on Riverboat,” *National Catholic Reporter* 42 (August 22, 2006): 13; Pamela Schaeffer, “Though Church Bans Women Priests, More and More Women Are Saying, ‘Why Wait?’,” 44 (December 7, 2007): 18; Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Two Views of Valid Women’s Ordination Emerge,” 46 (September 3, 2010): 16, 18; Andrew Walsh, “Women’s Ordination Revisited,” *Religion in the News* 11 (2008): 15-18; Hellena Moon, “Womenpriests: Radical Change or More of the Same?” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24 (2008): 115-34; Pastor Toni Tortorilla, Sophia Christi Catholic Community, Portland, Ore., telephone conversation 6 November 2013.

vestments as part of the long history of “kyriarchy” – a term coined by Schüssler Fiorenza to indicate interconnected, interactive, and self-extending systems of domination and submission. Instead, they advocate a polity in which each congregation ordains its own priests, reminiscent of New England Congregationalists in colonial times. Rosemary Radford Ruether, in a very thorough article on the history and ideas of both movements, concludes that both are needed and complement each other: Women-church for small, informal groups, and Womenpriests for larger congregations needing a priest who is recognized as leading and representing the community. Jane Via and Mary Hunt, in responses to Ruether, both agree in the complementarity of the groups, although Hunt questions “imitating what one is trying to change” and feels that “there was something almost quaint about wanting to be ordained.” She sees broader social issues as shared by both groups and transcending their differences. Via complains that Women-church’s communities have tended to be exclusively for women, with husbands and sons not welcome, and where “even a two-year old male violated the integrity of the experience.” She also points out that most Womenpriests are over 55 and thus exempt from being required to have a degree in theology or even “education in Catholic feminist thought.” Her prescription: more academics (who would presumably come from that most hierarchical of all institutions, the American university). Since reform groups often become rigid enforcers of ideology once in power, one hopes that the old hierarchy of bishops, priests, and deacons telling people what to do would not be replaced by a new hierarchy of professors, instructors, and catechists telling people what to think. Anglicans will recall how Seventeenth Century Puritans reformed the Church of England in a way that led the poet Milton to exclaim, “*New Presbyter* is but *Old Priest* writ Large.”²⁴

²⁴Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Should Women Want Women Priests or Women-Church?”

Feminist Theology 20 (2011): 63-72; responses by Jane Via (73-84) and Mary E. Hunt (85-91).

Despite real and potential problems, both groups have made significant contributions – not only to the spiritual needs of their own adherents, but also, through their provocative questioning of tradition, to the historic Protestant churches in their need to be *ecclesia semper reformanda*.

Conclusion

Ordination is something done by the church, so that certain parts of its mission can be carried out by “divers orders of ministers,” and done in accordance with St. Paul's counsel that “all things be done decently and in order.” They are ordained so that their sacramental actions can be recognized as authentic acts of the church -- their ordination being “a pledge to assure us thereof.” Over the years, there have been many theories as to the nature of ordination and how it can be conferred. The Cyprianic understanding, eclipsed for many centuries by the Augustinian, is now making a comeback, albeit in modified form. In the High Middle Ages, Pope Innocent IV was among those who held that -- in theory, at least -- any cleric could confer the order he held. Later popes gave isolated privileges to certain presbyter-abbots to ordain to the subdiaconate and diaconate (both considered major orders) and possibly to the priesthood. Because these rare exceptions had explicit papal approval, they can be considered an authentic act of a church with a papal polity and a widespread understanding, following Aquinas, that the priesthood is the highest order, the episcopate and presbyterate being orders within the priesthood and essentially equal. The open-ended privilege granted to the chief Cistercian abbot was exercised as late as 1672 but revoked in 1902. In 1937, the Italian canonist Corrado Baisi observed, “If any priest could ordain, *tunc non esset ordo, sed horror*.”²⁵

John Milton, “On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament” (1646?).

²⁵Lawrence N. Crumb, “Presbyteral Ordination and the See of Rome,” *Church Quarterly Review* 164 (1963): 19-31.