

VALIDATION QUESTION 2

In the light of that understanding what are the main characteristics of ordained and other public ministries for which the training institution seeks to prepare its candidates?

1 Introduction

In our response to the first validation question the Hall has set out some of the basic tenets of biblical, Christian and Anglican belief concerning ordained ministry. In response to this second question we will extend the discussion by reflecting on and setting out our understanding of the characteristics and role of the ordained minister and how we prepare our candidates for such a role. Although Wycliffe does occasionally train candidates for other forms of public ministry apart from ordained ministry and occasionally on behalf of other churches (usually other Anglican provinces or churches) almost all candidates for public ministry are being prepared for ministry within the Church of England.

The context of ministry into which candidates will be placed has changed enormously in the last decades. In many ways the context could now be seen as much closer to that of the early church as set out in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles. To put it another way, no-one can now exercise effective ministry in the Church of England without a crucial appreciation and understanding of the mission context. On a generous estimate around 5% of the population attend church on a Sunday, perhaps 3% in Anglican churches. The ordained minister must be trained and formed to look outwards to the 95% who are not in a worshipping relationship with Jesus, a concern for individuals, a concern for their salvation and a concern for the communities and world in which they live. An excessive separation of 'secular' and 'sacred' can be just as disastrous as too close an identification.

2 The characteristics of ordained ministry

In describing the characteristics of ordained ministry, as the bulk of this paper will be concerned with, there is an inherent danger. An overemphasis on the *characteristics* of ministry can lead to a failure to give proper weight to the *character* of those called. Indeed we would want to argue that issues of character precede matters of function or role. The latter may be able to be taught, the former comes only from the forming and shaping of the life-long relationship with Christ.

This is perhaps best illustrated by reference to 1 Timothy 3 where we see set out the character of those called to ordained ministry. We are told here that the office of overseer is 'a noble task' (v1), that the overseer must be 'above reproach....temperate, self-controlled, respectable' (v2), a series of positive statements, then a series of negative, 'avoiding drunkenness, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money' (v3). They must manage their own family well (v4) and have a good reputation with outsiders (v7). Yes, indeed, v2 also sets out a requirement to be able to teach, but the essence of 1 Timothy 3 is the ethical, personal and spiritual character of the person called to ordained ministry. The formation of that character lies at the heart of the work of Wycliffe Hall. Hence our investment in personal tutors (above and beyond a strict application of the Ministry Division's recommended ratio), in a dedicated Tutor in Prayer, Spirituality and Mission with half of their time dedicated to one-to-one work. In addition, each year begins with a series of bible readings for new students in the Pastoral Epistles, engaging with the scriptural heart of the calling.

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2.1 *Preacher and teacher*

The role of the ordained minister as preacher and teacher lies at the heart of the calling. This is clearly set out for us in the Pastoral Epistles and elsewhere in Scripture. Hence the elder, overseer, presbyter, is 'to be able to teach' (1 Tim 3:2), must be one 'who correctly handles the word of truth' (2 Tim 2:15), and someone called to 'preach the word in season and out of season' (2 Tim 4:2). We have been entrusted with 'the apostles teaching,' (Ac 2:42) 'the faith' (1 Tim 1:19), 'the truth' (Tit 1:1), 'sound doctrine,' (1 Tim 1:10), 'the trustworthy message' (Tit 1:9) and 'that which has been entrusted to you' (1 Tim 6:20), 'the good deposit' (2 Tim 1:14), the 'solid foundation,' (2 Tim 2:19), 'the faith once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3).

It is noteworthy that these same characteristics are given such prominence in the Ordinal, both that of the Book of Common Prayer (which is the doctrinal norm) and Common Worship. So for example, in the BCP exhortation, the priest is to 'teach and premonish,' and in the declarations, 'Are you determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge...'

Wycliffe has a stated strategic purpose to give emphasis to preaching. It derives from our convictions about God, the Bible and the Ministry. We are committed to helping, training and forming future ministers of the gospel to be effective preachers. We are undertaking this task in the service of God, but also in both service *for* and co-operation *with* the Church. The main means by which this is being undertaken is through the establishment of a School of Preaching, under the directorship of Revd Dr Simon Vibert, the Hall's Vice-Principal. The School has both an *internal* and *external* focus. Internally, a review has been undertaken of the content and form of the training on preaching. The number of lectures on homiletics has been increased from 8 in the first year only to 16 spread across two years. More importantly the homiletics teaching has now been formally linked to the BTh/CTh paper on Worship allowing formal assessment of work for the first time. Practical preparation remains with weekly sermon and exegesis classes, practical placements and feedback, chapel sermons and feedback and voice production training. There is now much greater integration between the work on preaching and that of the Trainer in Voice Production. Externally the School has held a day bringing together networks involved in preaching and is planning a weekend event in 2009 in co-operation with the Oxford churches and the Diocese of Oxford.

2.2 *Leader*

Leadership is an essential quality in, and characteristic of, ordained ministry. There are, of course, numerous examples of leadership in Scripture to act as models, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Paul, Timothy. All have their strengths and weaknesses. The supreme model of leadership for the Christian is Jesus Christ. There are a number of key elements that can be learnt about leadership from Jesus, four of which are noted below:

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- *Leadership is servant leadership*

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45). There is perhaps some resistance to the idea of leadership in discussing the characteristics of priestly ministry. However, rather than adopting secular or managerial models - though there may be much to learn from these, including aspects of servant leadership - once it is recognised that Christian leadership is essentially one of service, to God, his Word and also to his Church, it can be seen that actually leadership lies at the heart of priestly ministry.

- *Leadership is apostolic*

What does it mean to say that leadership is apostolic? Two words come to mind; *faithful* and *missional*. The word 'apostle' appears in various lists of the gifts of the Spirit. So, for example, in Ephesians 3:11, apostleship heads up a list including prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. In 1 Corinthians 12:27, apostle again heads the list followed by prophets, teachers etc. In Romans 12, apostleship is not mentioned explicitly, but leadership is included. Paul, of course, makes reference to himself as an apostle on a range of occasions. Hence apostleship seems to have something to do with leadership. It can be seen in the sort of leadership exercised by Paul, Timothy and Titus. In Titus 1:1, Paul's own apostleship is clearly linked to 'the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of truth,' Titus was left in Crete with responsibilities of leadership and mission - to 'straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town.'

- *Leadership is collaborative*

To talk about collaborative ministry carries the twin dangers of, on the one hand, being axiomatic, and on the other of being presumed to be a 'modern whim.' Christian leadership, however, is collaborative. Examples include the apostles themselves, the appointment of the seven in Acts 6, the references in Acts 20:28 and Titus 1:5 to 'overseers' in the plural and other examples. What is important to note is that collaborative leadership does not mean weak leadership or indecisive leadership or even leadership by consensus. More important is the harnessing of the gifts of the whole people of God in the exercise of leadership.

- *Leadership is spiritual*

The Scriptures and the Ordinal both link leadership and ordination to spiritual maturity (1 Tim 3:6) and to prayerfulness - BCP, 'Will you be diligent in prayers...' This, of course, is reflective of Jesus' own ministry, from the wilderness, the mountainside and the lake to the garden of Gethsemane.

How does all of this affect the curriculum and the teaching at Wycliffe Hall? In recent years Wycliffe has set out the emphasis on leadership generally, and leadership in the local church specifically as one of its strategic priorities. This led in 2007 to the appointment of a Director of Christian Leadership to oversee the expression of leadership in *ministry, mission and spiritual* formation, thus bringing together the key and essential elements of Christian leadership as outlined above. In a formal sense there is a 16 lecture course on Leadership which is assessed under the Ministry and Mission paper of the BTh/CTh, in addition to the teaching on mission, spirituality and discipleship. There is additional material for leavers on Practical Issues in Leadership. The material covers vision, team leading, oversight of a local church, together with matters such as media, pastoral care, working outside one's normal tradition. In addition to this the spiritual preparation of discipleship,

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quiet days, spiritual formation together with the exploration of the Ordinal and its meaning and purpose and the teaching on Anglicanism forms the heart of the Hall's response to preparing for the priestly leadership to which candidates for ordination are called.

2.3 Enabler of mission

In the Common Worship Ordinal for presbyters, in the questioning of candidates by the Bishop, the ordinands are asked, 'Will you lead Christ's people in proclaiming his glorious gospel, so that the good news of salvation may be heard in every place?' This combined with the apostolic emphasis on church planting as set out in Titus 1, and the whole tenor of Scripture leads to the conclusion of the centrality of mission and evangelism in the characteristics of ordained ministry. It is, however, also clearly the case that the call to mission and evangelism (as set out in the Common Worship Ordinal above) is one of enabling mission amongst the whole of God's people. Similarly, mission cannot be conducted or undertaken in isolation from the cultural setting of the church.

Ordinands need to engage with mission both in terms of evangelism and in terms of holistic understandings and approaches to mission in accordance with the Five Marks. This is expressed and explored within the curriculum at Wycliffe Hall in a number of ways. The cultural and missiological settings of mission are considered in two courses of lectures brought together under Christian Witness in the Contemporary World and Ministry and Mission. In addition students undertake missions and placements that emphasise the whole range of the Five Marks of Mission, from traditional evangelistic missions to the social action of, for example, the Betel mission.

2.4 Public representative

One of the characteristics of ministry noted earlier from 1 Timothy 3 was that the overseer must have a good reputation with outsiders. That in itself is a pointer to a civil and civic role for the minister of the Church of England. In addition to that the role of the Church as established by law, the nature and role of the occasional offices and the church's role in providing chaplains to hospitals, prisons, armed forces and elsewhere, all give considerable weight to the characteristic of ordained ministry as carrying a public representative role. Personal spiritual character and formation are essential in this regard, as is an understanding of the church's historic role as well as expectations and appropriate responses in the post-modern and post-Christendom setting.

This means that ordinands need to be willing, able and open to engagement in debates in the public square, the local, national and global issues which affect the contextual setting in which the Church of England works. In other words there needs to be engagement with the 'political process.' This is quite different from engaging in 'politics' but it is a recognition of the public representative nature of the ministry that there needs also to be a public concern for community, national and global issues. An useful example of this was the march of the bishops and others through London during the Lambeth Conference in support of the Millennium Goals to end global poverty.

These matters are dealt with at Wycliffe in a number of ways. They include the general leadership training already mentioned, the teaching on the nature of Anglicanism, work on occasional offices through study weeks on death and bereavement (including preaching at funerals) and on the Ministry of the Sacraments, where the issues related to baptism are considered, together with the courses on Ethics and Apologetics. In addition to all of this is the engagement in the leavers course with the professional and other related codes of practice, canon law and other legal frameworks

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which govern the work of Anglican clergy. This is supported by the wide ranging placement programme in a variety of contexts such that ordinands can observe and reflect first hand on the public nature of the ministry to which they have been called. In addition to that there are regular public lectures and/or Focus Days on issues related to 'Christianity and the public square.'

2.5 Leader of public worship and presidency of the sacraments

A further specific characteristic of the ordained ministry is the role of leader of public worship and presidency of the sacraments. As previously noted it is this combination of the preaching of the word of God and the administration of the sacraments that defines a church in terms of the Articles. The key for ministerial formation and understanding is that the worship which they are required to lead is *public*. The worship of the Christian community is not private, it is not simply the gathering of believers (though of course it is also the gathered community of the Lord's people), but it is also the representative worship of the community in which the parish church is set. This is not intended to be arrogant, presumptive, nor to imply that members of that community will not choose to worship elsewhere than the parish church, or not at all. It is simply to reinforce that in terms of Anglican ecclesiology, and the nature of the church as by law established, there is a wider representative role of the ordained person as the leader of *public worship*.

What does this mean in practice for ordinands? It means that they do need to be formed in an awareness of the nature of the parish church, the recognition that a wide-range of a cross-section of the community will come into contact with the parish church and they need to be aware of this in the planning and the leading of worship, such that as Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 14:23, the outsider does not dismiss the church's worship as irrelevant or unintelligible. Again it is the combination of understanding Anglicanism, worship, training in public worship, together with placement experience that gives the ordinands insight into these issues.

The presidency of the sacraments is also a characteristic mark of the ordained ministry. Hence an understanding of the sacraments, the biblical basis, the doctrinal issues involved and of course the practical implications and debates around current issues all form part of the ministerial preparation and training at Wycliffe. There is engagement with the doctrinal material in the Reformation course as well as the Doctrine course (Christian Life and Thought), some extensive reflection on Anglican understanding of the sacraments in the course on Anglicanism and then a significant and new integrated study week entitled the Ministry of the Sacraments, bringing many of these issues together. It is in this setting that debate and reflection would take place on issues of baptism policy and presidency, but in a context in which the doctrinal and ecclesiological issues which inform practice are also being considered.

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3 Conclusions

The overall reflection from this material is that Wycliffe understands the main characteristics of the ordained ministry to which its ordinands are called in the light of the biblical, doctrinal, ecclesiological and formation material which forms the basis of work in this area. The Hall gives significant attention to the Anglican setting, the Book of Common Prayer as well as Common Worship and teaches extensively on the nature and understanding of ordained ministry in the Anglican context. This approach informs the Hall's teaching from the very beginning with bible readings on the nature of ministry in the first week for new students and a further teaching session on the nature of ordained ministry. This is then built on and reinforced with the range of the teaching set out above.

To conclude, however, it is important to return to our original purposes and question. *In the light of the Hall's overall framework and understanding of God's mission, what are the main characteristics of ordained and other public ministries for which the institution seeks to train its candidates?*

The essential characteristic is that of priestly formation and character. However, the key characteristics as set out above, preacher, teacher, missionary, leader, public representative, worship leader and sacramental president reflect a coherent, biblical and historic Christian understanding of ordained ministry reflecting the Church of England's doctrinal and historic heritage understanding in and through the challenges of ministry in the contemporary world.

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