
www.God.net: Office, Authority, and New Webs of Expertise

Renee S. House

I have given myself the task of talking about the future of office in the Reformed Church in America in light of a number of larger realities in church and society. I have struggled with this decision in recent weeks as I have tried to probe possible connections between a Reformed understanding of office and such things as the World Wide Web and secular leadership theory. Early in my exploration, I read an essay by leadership guru Warren Bennis titled, "The Future Has No Shelf Life"¹ (never mind the content of his essay). The title alone immediately filled me with a sense of humility, if not futility, in the face of my assignment. To say "the future has no shelf life" is to acknowledge that we live in a time of exponential change that emerges from within a web of complex global connections that we cannot even begin fully to see, much less try to predict their impact on us. Prognosticators of the future are forced constantly to revoke their predictions and to acknowledge that change is the only constant, and it does not unfold in a neatly causal, linear fashion.² So I will offer you no predictions about the future of office. Rather, I will sketch several realities, past and present, encompassing the church and the larger society, which shape the context in which we consider both our theology and our practice of ecclesial office in the Reformed tradition. Before naming these realities, I wish to locate our current concerns about office and ecclesial leadership within our own recent history as a denomination.

In 1968, the General Synod adopted a paper entitled "The Nature of Ministry," which describes a "pervasive uncertainty about the role of the minister" throughout American Protestant Christianity.³ Four core concerns drove this inquiry: (1) a "crippling institutionalism" that prevented pastors from devoting themselves to the core tasks of the ministry as pastor and teacher for the sake of building up and equipping the church for its ministry in the world; (2) pressures toward specialization in society that were being felt in the church in the "need and opportunity for 'other ministries'" for which "training was inadequate," and which were not defined in relation to the church's order⁴; (3) an increasing number of ministers who were engaged in vocations outside of the church, but who retained their ordination to the office of minister of Word and sacrament, thereby distorting the meaning of the office⁵; and, related to this, (4) confusion about the meaning of ordination as designating special "status and privilege," or even as conferring an "indelible mark" that the church could not revoke, even though persons were not engaged in the functions of the ministry of Word and sacrament.⁶

In response to these concerns, the paper attempted to define clearly what constitutes the ministry of Word and sacrament as a way of guiding classes in their deliberations.⁷ It recommended that the practice of ordination classes in office, which was confused and confusing, be replaced by repeatable commissioning to office,⁸ and it called for "a virile and well-articulated theology of the laity" whereby the church would recognize the role of the Spirit in calling and equipping all members for service to Jesus Christ.⁹ The guidelines concerning the office and functions of minister of Word and sacrament were incorporated into the *Book of Church Order*, but if my classis is any indication of how well other classes are following these guidelines, the original concerns persist. We have continued to ordain rather than commission to office, but there is evidence that we are still confused about what ordination is and does. And we have produced no "virile and well-articulated theology of the laity."

As I reviewed the recommendations and results of the 1968 paper in light of the 2002 "Report on the Summit to Study the Concept of Lay Pastoral Ministry in the R.C.A.,"¹⁰ it became clear that the chickens have, so to speak, come home to roost (the "chickens" being the concerns of 1968, not the persons who prepared the summit report). Now there are feelings of impatience and frustration and new motivation as the concerns of 1968 have only become more pointed and urgent. The summit report describes "an army of dedicated, knowledgeable, faithful individuals who [*sic*] God is calling out to serve in full- and part-time ministries, but the R.C.A. has no place in its polity where they fit and no clearly defined denominational requirements that validate their preparation and commitment."¹¹ The reality of increasing specialization in society and the church has intensified since 1968. Now we have youth pastors, church administrators, parish nurses, lay pastoral counselors, worship team leaders, and the list goes on. But we have no denominational standards on the preparation of such persons for their ministries in the church and no standard pattern for acknowledging and authorizing their ecclesial vocations publicly. Although we have standards on preparation for the office of minister of Word and sacrament, many will say that there is no absolute correlation between meeting these standards and fulfilling the vocation of minister faithfully and effectively. In fact, the Natural Church Development model recommended by the Reformed Church in America reports a negative correlation between classical theological education for ministers and church growth.¹²

In addition to focusing attention on a multiplicity of "unstandardized" and unrecognized ministries, the summit report also presents a theology of the "laity."¹³ Appealing to the notion of the priesthood of all believers, the report argues that the Reformers understood that priests were no longer "exclusive agents and conduits for communication with God."¹⁴ The report continues:

Part of the reforming church was the discovery of direct access to God: through prayer, through the Word, and through worship and the sacraments. The access was not at

the direction and discretion of the clergy, but was available to all believers.¹⁵

Further, the report reminds that ministry belongs to all church members and “is not to be controlled through the direction and discretion of ministers of Word and sacrament.”¹⁶

Although the report does not fully reflect a Reformed understanding of the priesthood of all believers¹⁷ or the office of minister, it is a potent reminder of the denomination’s need, identified in 1968, for a “virile and well-articulated theology of the laity” *vis à vis* the offices of the church. It is arguable that this need emerged as early as 1828, when the Reformed Church embraced the evangelical Sunday school movement and welcomed eagerly hundreds of laypersons to teach using non-denominational curricula materials as the basis for their instruction.¹⁸ Here, for the first time in our history, we struggled to clarify the relationship between the ministry of the laity and that of elders and ministers, specifically on the question of teaching authority in the church.

I would say this question—the question of teaching authority—continues to focus the heart of the matter before us. Our historic understanding of the office of minister, and the attendant practices of ordination and rigorous theological education, are all premised on a shared, authoritative, coherent, doctrinal or teaching tradition. Believing that this tradition derives from the Word of God and embodies the church’s faithful interpretation of the whole counsel of God, we prepare ministers to understand this tradition deeply, to be able to interpret it convincingly in relation to the church’s present context, and to present it faithfully and prayerfully to the whole people of God in order to enable their growth in the faith and their vocation and witness in the church and world. Through the offices of minister, elder, and deacon, the church’s teaching tradition is preserved and renewed, and it is the means through which the Reformed Church keeps faith with the catholicity and apostolicity of the one church of Jesus Christ.

I want to explore this core understanding of the teaching authority of the offices in relation to four challenges presented by our current context. The first focuses on secular management theory, institutional change, and leadership. The second explores the dynamics of democratization in secular corporations and the democratization of the sacred in the church. The third examines the plurality and relativization of truth claims characteristic of advanced modernity and three possible responses on the part of the church. Finally, the fourth probes the implications of the privatization of religion for our understanding of the church as a public institution and of ministers as persons ordained to a public office. The challenges presented in the first three points are linked fundamentally to this public/private split, and, I believe, our response to each depends on an understanding of the church as a public in its own right.

First, according to secular management theorists, change is the one thing we can predict, and institutions must devote themselves to change if they hope to survive into the future. Peter Drucker, in his book *Post-Capitalist Society*,

insists that the successful organization “has to build in an organized abandonment of everything it does. It has to learn to ask every few years of every process, every product, every procedure, every policy: ‘If we did not do this already, would we go into it now, knowing what we now know?’”¹⁹ Drucker is describing the need for institutions to be responsive to the demands of a wildly shifting marketplace. What worked yesterday may not work tomorrow. In this rapidly changing environment, the chief responsibility of corporate leaders is to assess and interpret new realities constantly. Leaders must learn to navigate by means of a compass because there are no longer any reliable maps.²⁰ One theorist describes the leader’s responsibility as constructing and presenting a narrative, a “convincing theory of the future” that can persuade all persons in the organization to cooperate.²¹ The institutions and leaders of corporate America must focus on the new and the next in order to insure success in the marketplace—a healthy bottom line.

It has become common in our context to think about the church in terms of the religious marketplace. Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark argue, in *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, that “religious economies are like commercial economies in that they consist of a market made up of a set of current and potential customers and a set of firms seeking to serve that market.”²² Translating certain aspects of commercial economies to religious economies, they write: “. . . the relative success of religious bodies (especially when confronted with an unregulated economy) will depend upon their polity [organizational structure], their clergy [sales representatives], their religious doctrines [product], and their evangelization techniques [marketing].”²³ I know this description feels crass, and I suspect most members of the Reformed Church would refuse such a description of the church’s existence.

But as long as we understand the church as a voluntary organization that must attract new members through a variety of strategies, the church inevitably, often unconsciously, shares in the dynamics of the American marketplace. Where this understanding of the church operates, we too will commit ourselves to “an organized abandonment” of everything we have done. We will evaluate the competence of our minister/leaders on the basis of their readiness to embrace the new and the next, and their ability to lead without maps. And we will measure our success primarily in terms of the bottom line. (Thus the Reformed Church’s only explicitly stated common goal is to be the fastest growing Protestant denomination in North America by the year 2011.) We have theological language for this way of being the church. We say we are reformed and always reforming. We say we are creating new wine skins. We say we are responding to the leading of the Spirit in our midst. We say God wants the church to grow. I can affirm the truth of these statements and that to which they call us. But I also sense in this denomination the spirit of the American marketplace, in which the numerical growth of the church depends on our

ingenuity, rather than God's electing grace, and everything we have been and done is potentially up for grabs.

I wonder then how we regard our Reformed theological tradition and the core of common church practices that derive from it. How do we understand the Spirit's participation in our past? Do we believe that the Spirit guided us in formulating our theological understanding of the Word of God and that the Spirit sustains us in this understanding and thereby provides a map, so to speak? Do we regard our theological tradition as an enduring gift and work of the Spirit, or is it an old wineskin, a human invention, an old institutional commitment that must be abandoned? We will return to these critical questions below.

A second theme in the literature of secular management is the increasing democratization and decentralization of postmodern organizations. To succeed in an environment of rapid change and shifting markets companies "need more information, insight, and intelligence to make good decisions—both daily and over the longer run," and they need it from every employee.²⁴ Successful post-modern businesses are "high-involvement organizations (like democracy)"²⁵; they are learning organizations in which everyone is encouraged to increase in knowledge and freely offer their ideas, gifts, and wisdom. In such an organization, the roles of leaders and followers are flexible—the "boss" may be on a team led by an underling.²⁶ The authority of leaders is not primarily dependent on their positions, or on established hierarchies, but rather on their ability to establish trust through strong interpersonal relationships, to make themselves vulnerable by taking risks, and their ability to express freely their doubts and uncertainties in the face of uncertain times.²⁷

There is a notable confluence between this literature and what is happening in the Reformed Church right now. On the one hand, we are eager to recover a sense of the priesthood of all believers, to seek the gifts of the Spirit for the whole people of God, and to empower the laity as agents of Christ's mission in the world. On the other, I sense that we are reworking our understanding of the authority of ministers. As I participated in the worship of our most recent General Synod, I was struck by the fact that most of the ministers were, in their dress, indistinguishable from members of the praise teams and drama troupes. The absence of robes and the absence of pulpits behind which to stand create a sense of the minister's accessibility, vulnerability, and availability for interpersonal relationships.²⁸ Through this kind of self-presentation as ordinary persons who rely humbly on nothing but the Spirit, ministers seek the confidence of their congregations and obtain their pastoral authority.

I return to the "Report on the Summit to Study the Concept of Lay Pastoral Ministry in the R.C.A.,"²⁹ where it is argued that the Reformers understood that priests were no longer "exclusive agents and conduits for communication with God,"³⁰ and that access to God was not at the direction and discretion of the clergy, but was available to all believers.³¹ These statements reflect what Donald Miller, a sociologist of religion, refers to as the "democratizing [of] access to the sacred."³² In his study of what he calls "new paradigm" Protestant churches,

Miller uncovers a core “theological conviction that access to God is through the Holy Spirit rather than through man-made institutions.”³³ This belief “directly challenges the legitimacy of a hierarchical structure, as it forcefully raises the question of why another human being should supersede the authority of the relationship between God and the individual.”³⁴ This democratization of the sacred is not new in the church’s history—the first and second Great Awakenings witness the same phenomenon.³⁵ The difference is that now, both outside and within the church, democratization is reshaping the authority of leaders and redefining the nature of participation by all members of institutions.

In our context, it is difficult to maintain a Reformed understanding of the church as a Christo-pneumatic rather than a democratic institution.³⁶ And within this Christo-pneumatocracy, it has become an offense to claim that the office of the minister is ordained by God to be a means of grace in the church, and that God calls some persons to serve in this office as conduits for God’s Word spoken in and over against the church. This ordering of the church is not hierarchical, nor do we believe the whole ministry of the church belongs to the office holders, nor intend to prevent Christians from reading Scripture or praying for themselves, yet, in practice, this impression has been created. As we continue to explore and clarify our theology and practice of office, we must also articulate clearly a theology of the priesthood of all believers, define it clearly in our church order, and enact it through ongoing church practices.

A third challenge is presented to the church by the plurality and relativization of truth claims in the situation of advanced modernity, or what some now call postmodernity. In his 1999 book on global economics, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman asserts that the world is ten years old. The Berlin wall fell November 9, 1989. Its symbol was an armed fortress. The symbol of our age, he suggests, is the Web, “a boundaryless world.”³⁷ It was also roughly ten years ago that the first episode of the *X-Files* aired with its tag line, “the truth is out there.” The *X-Files* and the World Wide Web provide two different responses to a single reality—the crisis of truth claims. If there is truth, it is out there, and you *must* and you *can* find it for yourself.

The World Wide Web provides a smorgasbord of unmediated information on every possible subject, which the searcher can find in seconds and must sift through and judge for him or herself. Obviously, not every Web search is a search for metaphysical truth or insights into life’s most perplexing questions, but a good deal of it is. When I typed the short title of this talk into Microsoft Word, “www.God.net,” the text turned blue so that when I hit return I was pulled, unsuspectingly, into a Web site about God that included hundreds of hyper links. I had never before searched for God in cyberspace. I discovered that the truth is out there—multiple truths, offered by multiple authors—truths, hyperlinked in ways that defy traditional categories of logical coherence. These multiple truths are easily published and immediately accessible to anyone with a link to the Web. They have no boundaries and no center, apart from the individual who becomes the center, the sole arbiter of multiple truths.

Contrast this WYSIWYG (“what you see is what you get”), instant, unmediated approach to multiple truths with the approach portrayed on the *X-Files*. Here it is assumed that there is such a thing as ultimate truth, but it is much harder to find. What you see is not what you get; it is always something else, something that science and mere human sight cannot find. The *X-Files* presents a gnostic approach to truth.³⁸ Fox Mulder possesses the secret wisdom that enables him to detect and know things that baffle and frighten others, and he serves as a guide to skeptical novices. In each episode of the *X-Files*, a tiny piece of a much larger, apparently coherent cosmic truth is discovered, but the larger truth is elusive, without center or boundaries.

Religious fundamentalism provides one possible response to the Web’s unmediated smorgasbord of multiple truths and the *X-Files*’ gnostic, endless search for truth. It professes a direct correspondence between objective reality (e.g. who God is) and cognitive propositions or coherently formulated truth claims derived from sources of revelation and/or reason. The fundamentalist’s claims about who God is or what God wills are understood to apprehend fully and to describe accurately the objective realities about which they speak. If at the heart of the fundamentalist practice is the apprehension and articulation of an objective reality to which others must submit, the heart of the gnostic practice is focused on individual subjectivity and direct experience and apprehension of the sacred.

Our own Reformed tradition offers a middle way between these religious poles—a middle way that can respond helpfully to the complexity of truth claims in our context—although I believe we are tempted constantly toward both fundamentalism and something akin to gnosticism. On the one side there is a biblical literalism evident in the Reformed Church (“God said it, I believe it, that settles it”), and, on the other, practices of spiritual discernment that seek to apprehend directly what the Spirit is saying and doing in our midst. The middle way is located in our submitting to a confessional tradition that we believe offers a coherent understanding of divine truth, while also always praying that the Spirit will continue to lead us into all truth. I have already raised the question of how we understand the teaching authority of our confessional tradition and what this means for our understanding of the offices of the church. In order to address these questions fully, we must turn to our fourth and final exploration: the implications of the privatization of religion for our understanding of the church as a public institution, and of ministers, elders, and deacons as persons ordained to public offices.

Under the conditions of modernity, human existence is divided into public and private spheres. In the American context, the public sphere is identified with the sociopolitical and socioeconomic realities of secular society in which all citizens necessarily participate. In keeping with this definition of the “public” sphere, religion, Christianity, and the church are understood to exist in the private sphere where individuals and traditions have the freedom and right to hold private, religious opinions. In this scenario, the private church experiences

a perpetual crisis of relevance in relation to the public realm of secular society. The church may devise a number of strategies to achieve public relevance, and indeed, American civil religion can be understood as a significant, albeit misguided attempt at such sociocultural relevance. Recent discussions of "public" theology, whereby the church becomes relevant by addressing issues of "public" concern (sociopolitical, socioeconomic), represent another such strategy. But these initiatives expose the church's deeper crisis, which is the failure to understand that the church is a genuine, distinct public in its own right, and that it always does public theology whether or not that theology is addressed to the concerns of this other "public" we call secular society. The church is the public of the Holy Spirit.³⁹

Sociologically speaking, a public is defined as a "human 'space' which is constituted by binding teachings, principles and norms; that makes possible 'a coming together' for action and interaction; and that creates a common identity and mutual accountability."⁴⁰ By analogy, we can use this definition as a basis for speaking of the church as a public which also possesses binding teachings, principles, and practices that are constitutive of a community and that enable the community to act together publicly. Our public constitution as a denomination within the apostolic and catholic church precedes and enables the public life of local congregations. While drawing on this sociological analogy to define the church as a public, we must immediately acknowledge that the church, as a public of the Holy Spirit, is not only, or even primarily, a "human space"—it is not constituted by the activity of human persons, but by the Spirit's drive to make public what God has done in Christ for the redemption of creation.

The Spirit creates the church as a public in which and through which the Spirit's publicizing of the kerygma can go forth. As theologian Reinhard Hutter writes, "The earliest creeds, the scriptural canon, and the office of ministry that provided the continuation of the kerygma and the kerygma's practices constituted the church as an identifiable public in distinction from the theologico-political public of the *Pax Romana*."⁴¹ The church's creeds and confessions, the canon, the practices of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the offices of the church are works of the Spirit, the means by which the Spirit creates a unique, identifiable public space in which God's own *oikonomia*, God's own salvific activity, becomes tangible and visible. The Reformed marks of the church—right preaching and hearing of the gospel, right administration of the sacraments and ordered oversight of this fellowship's life in word and deed—are the essential, visible, public marks of the church. The faithfulness of the public church is measured by its faithfulness to its foundations in the Word of God.

To claim that the canon, creeds, and order are works of the Spirit is not to claim that the Spirit's work is identical with or exhausted in them. The Spirit works beyond the limits of the church, creates new things, and stands as critic of the church both within and without. Neither do we claim that canon, creeds, and order are not also human works, subject to human fallibility. How else can we account for the divisions that have resulted from conflicting doctrinal traditions

in the church Catholic? But the solution is not to resort to a kind of "pneumatological agnosticism" in regard to the Spirit's activity in and through the church's binding doctrine and practices. We submit to our confessional tradition, believing that it teaches divine truth, while also always praying that the Spirit will continue to lead us into all truth, within our own denomination and in relation to the ecumenical church.

If the church is understood as a public through which the Holy Spirit publicizes the mystery of God once hidden and now revealed in Jesus Christ, then the offices of minister, elder, and deacon must be understood as public offices to which persons are called publicly and ordained publicly according to the church's quite public order. Through these public offices, "the age to come, the kingdom of God, makes its claim known in this age, to the powers that be,"⁴² and within the congregation. The Reformers understood that persons holding the office of minister are responsible to "make public proclamation of and public argument for the Word of God, to administer the sacraments as public acts, to call the public and its magistrates to judgment before divine law."⁴³ Elders are responsible to make public God's intention for human community, and deacons to make public God's compassion and desire for justice and peace. Faithfulness in these public offices assumes an understanding of and accountability to the church's public theology—the works of the Spirit as expressed in Scripture and the church's interpretive traditions expressed in creeds and confessions

Focusing specifically on the office of minister, we acknowledge that apart from this understanding and accountability preaching becomes a matter of "private opinions"⁴⁴ or the "public expression of private emotions and experiences."⁴⁵ Where this becomes the case, or where the minister's primary work is invested in private counseling or in a vocation that doesn't include public preaching and teaching, the church must inevitably ask (as it recently has), "Why can't any person do what the minister does? Why require theological education for ordination?" We all know that theological education in and of itself does not an effective minister make, but it is the means through which the church enables its ministers to understand the church's public theological tradition and to reinterpret that tradition for new contexts.

Through the foregoing exploration of the Reformed Church in its current context, I am urging that we resist thinking of the church as a private, voluntary gathering of persons seeking success in the American religious marketplace. Rather, it is my hope that we can recover a sense of the church as a distinct public of the Holy Spirit that is constituted by the Spirit's gifts of Scripture, creeds, confessions, and key church practices. We believe the Spirit has spoken and acted, and that the Spirit speaks and acts today. Our discernment must keep faith with what the Spirit has done and is doing. As a public of the Holy Spirit through which the Spirit publicizes the mystery of God, it cannot be doubted that the call to publicize this mystery belongs to everyone who is a part of this public. But this public of the Holy Spirit is enabled in its ecclesial and worldly vocation through the offices of the church. The offices are creations of the Spirit and

provide the concrete means through which the Spirit labors to form God's people by the Word for participation in the public church and the larger society. The church's coherent theological tradition centers the public teaching, preaching, and enactment of the gospel. Through these mediating works of the Spirit, God goes public in Jesus Christ. And through the perpetual presence and gifting of the Spirit, the whole people of God undergo and are drawn into God's cosmic, public, salvific activity—where past, present, and future exist as God's eternal redemptive now.

ENDNOTES

¹ In *The Future of Leadership: Today's Top Leadership Thinkers Speak to Tomorrow's Leaders*, ed. Warren Bennis, Gretchen Spreitzer, and Thomas G. Commings (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

² Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, The Web and hypertext, the new physics and relationality, butterfly effect.

³ Theological Commission of the R.C.A., "The Nature of Ministry," *Minutes of the General Synod* 1968, 190.

⁴ Points 1 and 2, "The Nature of Ministry," 190.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 196-97.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁰ "Report on the Summit to Study the Concept of Lay Pastoral Ministry in the R.C.A.," (www.R.C.A..org/synod/workbook/vocations/maps.html), 2-9.

¹¹ "Report on the Summit," 3.

¹² Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*, 4th ed. (St. Charles, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 23.

¹³ I use the term in quotations in order to link the summit's concerns to those articulated in 1968, but also to acknowledge Carol Myers's argument (see her conference paper) that the term "laity" has no place in Reformed theology.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷ See for instance, Richard Robert Osmer, *A Teachable Spirit: Recovering the Teaching of the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), in which he argues that in Calvin and Luther, "The priesthood of all believers . . . does not mean that individuals are their own priests, directly related to God. Rather, all are given the task of ministry for others. At no point are individuals abandoned to their own resources, including their consciences, to determine Christian truth. They are situated in a concrete fellowship of believers that is itself open to an ongoing interchange with past and present church councils, the inherited catholic tradition of the church, and office-bearers who are bound to the gospel," 104.

¹⁸ Some in the church were eager to bring the Sunday schools and teachers under the supervision of ministers and elders who, by ordination, were responsible for teaching the doctrinal traditions of the church as a faithful interpretation of the Word of God, as a source of unity within the church, and as the basis for equipping the whole people of God with a Reformed theological understanding of the Christian faith and life.

¹⁹ New York: HarperBusiness, 1993, 59.

²⁰ Karl E. Weick, "Leadership as Legitimation of Doubt," in *The Future of Leadership: Today's Top Leadership Thinkers Speak to Tomorrow's Leaders*, ed. by Warren Bennis, Gretchen Spreitzer, and Thomas G. Comings (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 93.

²¹ Larry Hirschhorn, *Reworking Authority: Leading and Following in the Post-Modern Organization* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 4-5.

²² New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1992, 17, quoted in Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, bracketed information added for clarification.

²⁴ Hirschhorn, *Reworking Authority*, 3.

²⁵ Bennis, "The Future Has No Shelf Life," in *The Future of Leadership*, 5.

²⁶ Hirschhorn, *Reworking Authority*, 10.

²⁷ Hirschhorn, themes expressed throughout his *Reworking Authority*.

²⁸ Robes and pulpits have been critical symbols denoting the fact that ministers do not speak for themselves, but rather proclaim the Word of God—ministers are set apart by the church to speak for God.

²⁹ www.R.C.A..org/synod/workbook/vocations/maps.html, 2-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

³² Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997), 178. He is drawing on the work of Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989), in which he explores the dynamics and impact of the Second Great Awakening on American Protestantism.

³³ Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 147.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ See further, Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*.

³⁶ See further on the church as a Christo-pneumatic institution, Paul R. Fries, "Faithful Consistories: Office, Ministry, and Mission in the Reformed Church in America" (www.R.C.A.org/lead/faithful.php).

³⁷ Warren Bennis, "The Future Has No Shelf Life," 3.

³⁸ My use of the term "gnostic" refers to an epistemology which professes that certain persons possess a special spiritual capacity to receive directly the divine gnosis or secret wisdom, and not to the more specific beliefs of Gnosticism.

³⁹ For my overall understanding of the church as a public of the Holy Spirit, I am indebted to Lutheran theologian Reinhard Hutter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice*, trans. Doug Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

⁴⁰ Reinhard Hutter, "The Church as Public: Dogma, Practice, and the Holy Spirit," *Pro Ecclesia* (vol. III, no. 3), 336, n. 8. Hutter is drawing on the work of political philosopher Hannah Arendt. For a fuller discussion, see his *Suffering Divine Things*.

⁴¹ Hutter, "The Church as Public," 348.

⁴² Gerald O. Forde, "The Ordained Ministry," in *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspective on the Office of Ministry*, ed. Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 123.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 130.