

Liturgical Dress in the Uniting Church

A paper by Robert Gribben for private circulation through the Assembly Commission on Liturgy.

1. Human beings and their vesture

1.1 Humankind has always dressed up for festive occasions, and has celebrated special roles or special people with distinctive forms of dress or decoration. In Australia, we have the ancient example of our aboriginal people as well as the (now modified) ceremonies of the Crown and the courts.

1.2 In the Uniting Church, we have a broad heritage - from the formal dress of a Moderator of the established Church of Scotland with his lace cuffs, to the variety of clothes worn by clergy, to the best Sunday suit of a lay preacher in an outback church.

1.3 There is the old adage "what we wear reveals who we are". So does what we choose not to wear. A building also, with white-washed walls and painted biblical texts, is making just as much statement about what its community believes as an ornate Gothic chapel dripping with gold decorations. In many parts of our history. The church has rejected one form of dress (or architecture, or music, or words) only to adopt another, which has itself become fixed in time¹. This is part of our humanity, part of our self-communication, and part of the power of symbol². Since it is a "given", we should think clearly about what we wish to say in what we wear (and build, and sing. and say) in the Uniting Church in Australia. Otherwise our message will be confused and confusing.

2. An overview of history

A brief survey of the history of ecclesiastical dress may clear the way to make some decisions for today.

The biblical background

2.1 In Jesus' day, Jewish religious leaders wore distinctive dress - otherwise Jesus could not have made comments on those for whom dress (or position) alone was important³. It is equally likely that Jesus adopted the customs of his culture e.g. the wearing of the fringed prayer-shawl⁴. The High Priest clearly looked magnificent in his robes, the ephod, the breastplate and headgear⁵ and it said something about his role in the worship of the Temple.

2.2 None of the disciples whom Jesus called belonged to the priestly or Levitical caste⁶ who were entitled to wear distinctive dress. The link with Jewish liturgical dress was thus broken in the new Christian community. The tax-collectors, the fishermen, the soldiers, the merchants. masters and slaves rich and poor, men and women, were recognizable by their dress, which was distinctive of their work or their position.

2.3 The emergence of the Church as a group separate from its parent Judaism was accompanied by a good deal of tension, as biblical scholars are now discovering. The texts of the Christian scriptures reflect this (and provide the basis for later Christian anti-semitism). For instance, the church in proclaiming itself the New Israel thereby claimed the inheritance of the Temple. By the third century, preachers were using the image of "sacrifice" (the central part of Temple worship) to interpret what Jesus had done on the cross, and what the Holy Supper commemorated. So, curiously, the church both claimed to be different from Judaism, and at the same time took over the terminology and some of the practices of Judaism. Thus, the word "priest" was soon applied to those who held certain offices in the emerging "ordained" ministry. And in the longer term, some of the forms of dress belonging to the temple priesthood⁷ found their way "back" into Christian use. Probably no-one thought about

these things in a deliberate way - they simply developed in the way they always do in human communities.

The early church

2.4 It seems likely that a major development in dress took place when the emperor Constantine permitted (and later encouraged) the Christian Church to come out hiding into the sunshine of imperial favour. The meeting place for worship changed from the house to the basilica, with far reaching effects on how Christians worshipped. Bishops, for instance, now people of rank somewhat equivalent to a magistrate, began to wear forms of dress which showed their status. The basic form of dress in the empire was the tunic, usually white (Latin: tunica alba, hence alb). It appears to have been worn without a girdle, to emphasize the vertical lines of the garment.⁸ Senators and others wore a sash of distinctive colour over it, or signified their position by some other form of decoration - and the clergy followed the local customs.

2.5 These styles of dress were never uniform, nor especially laid down in law or custom. But it seems clear that Christians adopted a form of white robe to clothe the newly-baptised in as they emerged from the water; it was not "clerical dress", because everybody wore it, but for the new Christians it symbolized a fresh start, a new belonging.

2.6 The clergy did wear the white tunic, however (they too had been baptised!) and they wore a sash over it according to their particular ministry. It appears that priests wore the sash over their shoulders, hanging down equally on either side⁹; and deacons wore it over the left shoulder and tied at the right hip.

2.7 There were further elaborations which need not concern us in this paper. They included the "overcoat" (shaped like a "poncho" with a hole for the head) which was intended to keep people warm and dry, but which became more formal and is the ancestor of the "chasuble"¹⁰ and "cope", and various forms of headgear.

The mediaeval church and the Reformation

2.8 The origins of the Reformation are in Western Europe, so only the styles worn in the Roman Catholic Church, concern us. It is characteristic of Roman culture that such things are subject to rules and regulation. Rome likes uniformity. By the Reformation, not only was every item of clothing worn by clergy carefully detailed in canon law, it was also immensely complex in design and rich in decoration, especially in the wealthy bishoprics.

2.9 The Reformers reacted in different ways to this complexity. Luther declared such things to be adiaphora, things indifferent, and wore the vestments (or didn't wear them) as the mood took him. More deeply, however, he understood how such familiar customs affect the way people worship, and he did not wish to take such aids from the people whom they helped. He certainly did not ban the sacramental vestments.

The origins of the Geneva Gown

2.9 Calvin and other reformers who had no monastic or clerical background did reject the mediaeval vestments because of their association with certain understandings of the sacraments and the ministry, which they rejected. They conducted worship wearing ordinary street dress. But it so happened that most if not all the major leaders of the Reformation were university graduates and indeed Doctors of Divinity, and their street dress (in an age when you could tell what people did by what they wore) was a long black robe. Again, the design varied with the university, but it made a very suitable garment for the role of leadership of worship, plain and dignified. Street dress became liturgical dress.

2.10 The English (Anglican) Reformation retained a good deal of the ceremonial vestments of the past; the Scots, influenced through Knox by Calvin, rejected them. Thus the Presbyterians, and the Independents

(Congregationalists) who were associated with them in the Westminster Assembly (1645) established the tradition, which we largely received in 1977.

Academic variations

2.11 The Church of England had a strong connection with the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and academic custom also influenced later clerical dress (most clergy were graduates of those universities). By the 18th C, the mediaeval vestments were not usually worn; the clergy would wear cassock and surplice¹¹ for services. For choir offices (Morning and Evening Prayer) they added academic hood and scarf. Both these latter vestments had a functional origin, that is, the need to keep warm in unglazed church buildings. The hood slowly developed different designs and colours according to the university and the degree of the wearer; the scarf¹² similarly became a separate vestment, associated with academic dress. Later, scarves were sometimes decorated with heraldic or collegiate devices. Out of this tradition grew the "Force Chaplain's" scarf with a crown and military decorations, and the special scarves worn by recent Moderators of the General Assembly and Presidents of the Conference.

2.11.1 It must be noted that the scarf, while it happens also to be a sash worn around the shoulders, in fact has no connection with the stole, and has no necessary connection with worship or its leadership or with the sacramental ministry. It was worn (together with hood and gown, and with the white "bands" which were academic neckwear¹³) equally by clergy, academics and lawyers.

The 18th and 19th centuries

2.12 In the early days of Methodism, leaders who were Anglican priests (such as John and Charles Wesley) wore Anglican liturgical vestments according to the custom of the time, including cassock and surplice. They also wore the street dress of Anglican clergy, sometimes modified for riding! Lay leaders simply wore their best clothes, which by the 19th C included a black frock coat and white cravat.

2.13 The 19thC saw another attempt to adopt the dress of ordinary people for the leadership of worship. But ordinary people certainly understand that the leadership of worship is no casual task, and they tend to choose the best dress available to them as non-clerics, and that is frequently a formal or conservative form of dress, i.e. not worn in ordinary life. Women preachers tended to wear plain, dark dresses (cf. the young Wesleyan preacher Dinah in George Eliot's novel Adam Bede). In fact, every attempt to borrow "lay dress" soon fails because of the human propensity to formalize, and the process must begin again.

The re-claiming of clerical dress

2.14 In the late 19th and early 20th C, as part of the Protestant churches attempt to establish themselves as churches equal in ecclesiastical status to Anglican and Catholic bodies, Protestant clergy again began to adopt older forms of dress¹⁴. They reached back into the Reformation and restored the black gown, often in the form of an academically neutral "Geneva gown"¹⁵. It became accepted for hoods (and eventually, bands and scarves) to be worn, as a sign of the ministry based on [the study of] the Word. They followed (recent) Anglican custom and adopted the "Roman collar", which is street dress, not liturgical (Roman vestments normally cover up neckwear¹⁶).

2.15 In the 1960s, all such traditions were open to question - though few people were aware how often (and unsuccessfully) change had been tried before. The result has been chaos. There are those who have adopted forms of dress from other traditions with little regard to their historical background or symbolic meaning. Others have sought new forms of non-distinctive dress finishing up (for men) with the business suit, collar and tie, an

eloquent symbol of the social status of the middle-class church¹⁷. At the same time, lay worshippers ceased to wear their "Sunday best"; women and girls threw away hats and gloves, men and boys wore casual clothes - and in some cases, their minister followed (or led). But in every case, the "new" form adopted will have its own message - and it is not necessarily the message the church wishes to convey about its teaching or its ministers.

2.16 Some good thinking was done on this question on the eve of union in 1977 - by a committee which bore the name of "Working Group on Paraphernalia and Titles"¹⁸. But the Assembly shifted away from adopting regulations, partly because there was already such a variety, partly because there were three different traditions to be considered, and partly because they did not wish to legislate on "matters indifferent". The result was further chaos - each did what they wished.

2.17 However, "guidelines" were produced, and have been reissued with slight modifications since, and they deserve the attention of the church¹⁹.

Different forms of dress

2.18 We need perhaps to understand that there are different kinds of ecclesiastical vesture, not all of which apply to the Uniting Church's use. There is "liturgical dress", i.e. dress worn specifically during worship, which is the focus of this paper. The Uniting Church recognizes only one form of this dress, worn at "The Service of the Lord's Day", a service both of Word and sacrament. When on Sunday we do not celebrate the sacrament, we wear the same vesture. Other churches distinguish between "choir offices" (Morning and Evening Prayer, or non-sacramental services in general - para. 2.11 above refers), and the sacraments - and they wear different dress at each. (They may even change vestments during the service!) This becomes obvious on ecumenical occasions, when the UC clergy wear what other churches recognize as sacramental (especially the stole) and Catholics, Anglicans and Orthodox wear what is suitable to a non-sacramental occasion. A third form is street dress, i.e. for clergy, which hardly now exists in the Uniting Church since we do not seem to distinguish between formal and informal occasions. In this we reflect a particular contemporary Australian culture²⁰.

3. The UCA Guidelines

The 1992 guidelines suggested the following:

3.1 the "freedom of ministers of the Word, deacons and other leaders of worship to choose whether or not to wear liturgical dress" is recognized by the Commission.²¹

3.2 that the recommended basic garment is the white alb²², worn with or without girdle or cincture.

3.3 that stoles in liturgical colours or blue scarves may be worn; the former only by ministers of the Word and deacons. Stoles (but not scarves) are also worn in distinctive ways: hanging down the front by ministers of the Word, and over the left shoulder and joined at the right hip for deacons (see also para. 3.9).

3.3 significantly the last item - that the customs of the former churches were "honoured". Ministers could continue to wear the black gown (hood etc.)²³, but not a mixture of the previous tradition with the new forms (e.g. hood with alb- see also below, para. 3.8).

The Alb

3.3.1 This garment has the attraction of being simple, plain [and thus suited to a Reformed church], and ecumenical (used universally by other churches, east and west, and thus a good symbol for the uniting church). It

lacks any associations with the establishment, the law courts, academic attainment or civic distinctions. It can also be worn by men or women²⁴, by ordained or lay (the latter because of its baptismal association ²⁵). For this same reason, it should be white.

3.3.2 The alb is an all-enveloping generously cut garment, which reaches to the ankles, with reasonably open sleeves. (Cassock sleeves are close-fitting, like a suit-coat.) Whether it is closed at the front in the style of a double-breasted coat, or simply put on over the head is a matter of personal design preference²⁶. It is best made of pure white material, which points to its basic symbolism (see 3.7.1.)

3.4 The alb may be secured by a girdle (more formally known as a cincture) around the waist. This is a matter of individual taste. At least part of the original idea of an alb was that its lines were free-flowing, and did not reveal the shape of the person underneath. It is an unnecessary addition to wear girdles of different colours. Whatever symbolism the girdle may have (see below, 3.11) its significance is not seasonal!

3.5 A pectoral cross or other Christian symbol²⁷ may be worn as desired. This undoubtedly arose from recent "charismatic" custom. Again ecumenical (or at least non-denominational) and on the grounds that the cross is not a symbol confined to bishops!

The scarf and the stole

3.6 Over the alb²⁸, a minister of the Word or deacon may wear either a scarf or a stole.

3.6.1 The scarf is a strip of plain material, some 18-20 cm [7 1/2"] in width, gathered into pleats at the neck and hanging down to about knee length or slightly lower, and without fringes. The Uniting Church recommends blue as its colour. The Uniting Church logo, and/or a symbol of the office held or organization or council represented, or a form of the cross may appear on either or both sides at the bottom.

3.6.2 The scarf did not originate as a vestment with liturgical or sacramental significance²⁹. It has been adapted as a sign of office in the Uniting Church, worn equally by lay or ordained, by presidents, moderators and chairpersons, by lay preachers and deaconess and candidates for the ministry. There are already a wide variety of designs. (It follows from the above that a scarf should not be made in the same colours as the liturgical seasons³⁰)

3.6.3 The stole is a strip of material, either plain or patterned (e.g. brocade) in colours appropriate to the seasons of the church's year. It is usually cut to fit at the neck (i.e. without pleats), and is usually narrower than a scarf. Uniting Church stoles seem to be wider at the front ³¹ than those of other churches, probably because we have shown more concern to add other features to the message of the liturgical colour itself. Universal Christian symbols, appropriate to the season, may be added or worked into the stole, either at chest height or near the bottom. It is never appropriate to use the UCA logo on a stole (or pulpit or altar cloth) because it is a denominational sign, whereas the stole pertains to the universal gospel and common ministry.

Liturgical colours

3.7 The adoption of a pattern of liturgical colours means that the primary thing is the symbolism of the colour itself³². Strictly speaking, no decoration is necessary. But there are some nuances, which artists and designers may wish to consider:

3.7.1 The high feasts of the year are Easter and Christmas. Both are symbolized by white, but both may be richly decorated (e.g. with gold). The primary mood is rejoicing. In the language of symbol, white may stand for joy, glory, purity. White is also used to mark other feasts of Christ, namely his annunciation (25 March), his baptism,

and transfiguration (in the time after Epiphany), the Trinity (by derivation; a doctrine revealed in Christ), and his kingship (last Sunday after Pentecost). All Saints' Day (Nov- 1) uses white; it is Christ who is revealed in his saints.

3.7.2 The preparatory seasons for these two feasts are marked by the use of violet or purple. For Lent, the association is with the purple robe worn by Jesus at the mocking; it is a royal robe after the manner of the suffering servant. There is a tradition that it is a red-purple. There is another tradition that the stole be made of sack-cloth. Advent has a different mood, or rather two moods. There is the expectation of the birth of the Christ-child; but more profoundly there is the expectation of the coming of Christ at the Last Day, with the theme of judgement. Symbols for either may be used - e.g. the Bethlehem star, or Alpha and Omega, or a crown.

3.7.3 In the Uniting Church, the symbolism of the colour red has been confined to the fire of the Holy Spirit. (Is it necessary to add flames in the design?) It is thus used on the Day of Pentecost. It is also used on "other specific days in the life and witness of the church and of the congregation" which includes confirmation, ordination, induction and commissioning. In other traditions, the symbol of blood is also used e.g. in Passiontide (Passion/Palm Sunday and Holy Week, including Good Friday), and for commemorations of martyrs³³.

3.7.4 Green is used for all other days, for "ordinary time". This probably derives from green being the simplest and most available vegetable dye in ancient days. It is an accessible symbol for growth, under the Holy Spirit, and therefore appropriate for the long season of Sundays after Pentecost³⁴.

3.8 The 1992 guidelines do not envisage the wearing of academic dress with anything but the traditional black (or scarlet or other) robes. There may be times and places (e.g. processions at Church-related academic institutions) where it is entirely appropriate for suitably qualified Uniting Church ministers to wear such robes. But the guidelines envisage the alb and scarf/stole worn for the leadership of worship as freeing the ministry from former signs of rank and attainment. To wear a hood with an alb is to mix traditions; it is like wearing a top hat with working overalls.

3.9 By ecumenical tradition, ministers of the Word (as equivalents of priests or presbyters) have worn the stole over the shoulders hanging down straight on either side of the body, and deacons have worn it sash-wise, over the left shoulder and tied or looped at the right hip. Uniting Church deacons, however, should not merely tie the stole at the hip, as if expecting it to be undone and re-arranged on the analogy of other churches when deacons become priests; the join should be designed as integral and permanent.

Symbols

3.10 A comment should be made about symbolism in general.

3.10.1 First, few symbols are universal. Certainly the significance of colour varies from culture to culture (e.g. white, in India, is a sign of mourning).

3.10.2 Secondly, many symbolic things begin as purely functional. This is the nature of symbol: certain things in human experience are ordinary at one level, and profound at another- e.g. eating and drinking, lighting a lamp, the use of oil, certain gestures and postures. Symbols take us from the earthly to the heavenly, from the temporal to the eternal. They open the eye of faith.

3.10.3 Thirdly, symbols attract to themselves various secondary meanings, layer after layer of them in some cases, but these are neither universal nor necessary, and they are open to change and reform. The church first used candles, for instance, because they prayed at the end of the working day; the single candle was seen as a

sign of the light of Christ. Later, they lit the liturgical books on the altar in dark churches; two candles illuminate both open pages; but soon two candles began to call to mind the two natures of Christ. And so on. One needs to be careful with the simple attribution of meaning to a symbol. The truth is in the eye of the beholder, and it is not an absolute truth. It may need to change in order to live in a new situation.

Two final remarks

3.11 How far should all this be taken? We in the Uniting Church have a natural aversion (so this writer believes) to elaboration and legalistic detail. The primary test of what we wear (as in other aspects of ministry) is whether it helps the congregation to participate in the worship of God. We, of all churches, ought not to get involved in discussion, about what is "correct". On the other hand, by giving up the natural desire to choose for ourselves, and adopting a common practice, we may gain a great deal in affirming the particular calling of ministry, and in declaring the *esprit-de-corps*³⁵ of the Uniting Church. Overall, it should be noted that no-one who chooses to wear liturgical dress is required to wear all of it. The alb worn alone is an eloquent symbol. A pectoral cross may in fact say more than a stole.

3.12 The purpose of this paper is to provide the background against which Uniting Church people may decide whether to wear distinctive liturgical dress, and if so, what. It is intended as a general guide to those who want to know how to make such vestments. It is based on the conviction that few people decide such things by reason and logic: like all symbols, dress affects us at a level deeper than the intellect. It is also the writer's view that until people know what is involved in such decision, they are bound by what is familiar - and that may be very limiting and partial. Only when we know what we are doing are we free to do it - that is the real nature of discipline, the positive nature of church law.

Perhaps the contemporary English poet, John Heath-Stubbs, has got it right ³⁶:

I have no personal objection
if you wish to put on singing robes:
At a ritual you don't wear work-a-day clothes.
But the surplice and chasuble, or the Geneva gown
Are nothing more than the Sunday best

Of a Byzantine gentleman, or a Renaissance scholar;
And any clergyman, I suppose, would look pretty silly
If he walked down the street in them.
So under existing social conditions
You had better think over this matter of your costume
With a certain perspicacity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Few books contain more of a mixture of romantic myth and history than those on ecclesiastical vesture. They are usually written by enthusiasts, or by those who make them. One of the few solid historical accounts is the Gilbert Cope article cited in footnote 1. There are few studies, which touch on the traditions of the Reformation and their developments. Some Reformation theologians have written liturgical theologies which mention the issue - but they are dated: e.g. Jean-Jacques von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* Oxford, 1965, pp 271ff and Richard Paquier, *Dynamics of Worship*, Fortress, 1967, pp 135ff.

One book to be used with caution is: Janet Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress*, Batsford, 1984.

The various books by Beryl Dean reveal the skill of the doyenne of English ecclesiastical embroidery.

On symbols:

George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, Oxford, 1954 and subsequent editions;

W. Ellwood Post, *Saints, Signs and Symbols*, SPCK, 1964 etc.

Thomas Albert Stafford. *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches*, Abingdon, 1942.

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1 The Swiss Reformed theologian, J.-J. von Allmen suggests that historically there have been three "fresh starts" in celebrating worship in ordinary lay garments, and each time what was "ordinary" soon became "special" (or "lay" became "clerical"), namely the early church, the reformation, and the 19th century. See his *Worship its Theology and Practice*, p. 272ff. Gilbert Cope, in his important article "Vesture" in J.G. Davies, *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. SGM, 1972 (1st edn.) p.350, notes the "political" significance of vestments as the focus of protest and reform.

2 Para. 3.10 below gives a more extended consideration of symbol.

3. e.g. Mark 12 38-40 "Beware of the scribes. who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces..."

4. So Luke 8:44, where the woman with the hemorrhage touches the "fringe" of his clothes, which may suggest a prayer-shawl.

5. See Exodus 28 for the vestments of the priesthood.

6. Possible exceptions include Levi (Matthew), or members of the Sanhedrin such as Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea.

7. Strictly speaking, temple garments as such were probably not adopted (though some think the bishop's mitre developed from the Jewish high priests hat), but presumed biblical or Jewish liturgical meanings were transferred to the Christian clergy vesture.

8. For details, see Gilbert Cope, art. cit., p 366-7

9. Under a chasuble, it was customary for priests to wear the stole crossed over the breast; as an external vestment, it always hung down vertically on both side This later is the universal custom for bishop.

10. Other variations on this outdoor cloak are the tunicle, dalmatic, and rochet; worn by sub-deacons /crucifers, deacons and bishops respectively.

11 The surplice is a generously cut alb, made ample to fit over bulky and warm garments, e.g fur-lined cassocks, in the cold climates of northern Europe, Other variations include the short cotta, worn by some servers in Roman and Anglican Churches.

12 The scarf appears to have its origin in academic dress, derived from the mediaeval hood. It may have developed from the long tail (liripoop) of certain hoods. In any case, scarf and hood are probably separated parts

of the same garment, and they go together. At the Reformation the scarf became part of the choir dress of Anglican clergy worn over the surplice (as is the hood).

13 The bands are the end of neckcloth left hanging out after tying. Like most form of dress, they became formalized. Until the time when people stopped wearing neck-cloths as normal clothing, the bands were tied on or inserted into the top of the cassock. They are still required as graduation dress at Oxford and Cambridge: and barristers wear the same item.

14 In architecture, Protestant churches began to build in the Gothic style, as distinct from the Classical.

15 In Australia, a "preachers gown was available, which was a bell-sleeved academic gown, supposed not to be the gown of any particular university. The American academic gown, which closes down the front, was brought back by many post-graduates of American seminaries. In each case, the design happened to be simple and dignified, suited to the role.

16 The "Roman collar" may be an atrophied form of the neckcloth. It was intended to make a Roman priest recognizable in the street, especially in England when he was banned from wearing the soutane. The "ritualists" following the Oxford Movement were probably responsible for Anglicans borrowing it.

17 The influences were not only those of "secularisation", but of other contemporary movements such as the "charismatic renewal" and tele-evangelism. Television general no doubt made its impact.

18 Based in Queensland it was convened by the Rev Frank Whyte.

19 The "Paraphernalia" working group submitted a Report to the Joint Constitution Council (of the Uniting Church in formation) on 2nd September 1975. Basically it recommended the use of the alb and a blue scarf. I have no record of any action taken on it by the Council. A "position paper" written by me was prepared and circulated through the Assembly Commission on Liturgy about 1979 (my copies have no date). The paper described the proper use of traditional dress (black gown etc.), but recommended alb and blue scarf or stoles in liturgical colours. The Commission adopted the suggested guidelines and this seems to be the document which influenced those who adopted the new forms of dress. A modified form was produced by the Commission in 1983. It added the suggestion of a pectoral cross. The issue was discussed again in 1992 by the new Commission based in Queensland, but no major modifications were made. The present guidelines were dated 11th November 1992.

20. See Gilbert Cope, art. cit. P. 365

21. This is in line with the church's view of authority (e.g. on the use of particular liturgical books). It perhaps underestimates the impact on congregations of what is worn by ministers. It may be a secondary matter, but it is one of the most notable aspects of public leadership, visible on the most frequent occasions when ministers are professionally at work.

22. It is assumed that the garment will be plain. i.e. without decoration. Certainly, modern Roman albs (as with their ancestors') occasionally have some embroidery at the sleeve or hem. Women (and some men) may indeed prefer to break the starkness of the white, but in our tradition, plainness is surely preferable, stark or not. Is the Uniting Church ready for elaboration?

23 The cassock is mentioned as an example of the earlier tradition: some Presbyterians and Methodists had adopted it as a basic garment. It had the advantage of being plain and suitably clerical-looking [though its use was not confined to the clergy). Obviously in warm weather such a garment is unnecessary and uncomfortable;

but it may well continue to have a use; and practically an alb sits well over it. If there is any value to formal clerical street-dress (e.g. a moderator on ecumenical occasions), the cassock (perhaps in blue rather than black) is still a candidate.

24. This is no mere sociological point. The Scottish theologian T.F Torrence argues that "At the altar the minister or priest acts faithfully in the name of Christ, the incarnate Saviour, only as he lets himself be displaced by Christ, and so fulfils his proper ministerial representation of Christ at the Eucharist in the form of a relation 'not I but Christ', in which his own self, let alone his male nature, does not come into the reckoning at all." He draws the conclusion: "It is surely, partly at least, for that reason. that the celebrant wears vestments [which have no reference to his sex), for he does not act in his own significance, or in his own name, but only in the name of God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit It is rather in the office or "persona" with which he is clothed to act in Christ's name that the representation of Christ is to be recognized, not in the self of the celebrant and certainly not in his male nature". See his *The Ministry of Women*, The Hensel Press, Edinburgh, 1992, p 12. We may ask if Torrence would extend this point to lay persons presiding at worship. This question raises the whole issue of what ordained ministry in the Uniting Church means. At the time of writing this is not clear.

25 Anglicans are also used to seeing various lay ministers (organists, Choirs. Servers etc.) in a surplice - a development of the alb.

26 The inherited design was worn under other garments such as the Chasuble, hence the invention of the 'Ecumenical alb" in Europe, designed for wear as an outside garment. The traditional neck-covering. The amice, is often incorporated into the design of the alb to cover whatever form of collar is worn underneath.

27 The 1992 guidelines add the adjective simple"

28 Note "over the alb". There is no foundation for the practice of wearing a scarf or stole over streets dress. It understands the nature of special dress (why wear the secondary garment without the primary?) and it looks odd. See also para 3.8.

29 See paras 2.11 and 2.11.1 above.

30 The 1992 guidelines also provide for the particular decoration for a moderator and president, and notes that some presbyteries have designed alternative colours for use by their office-bearers.

31 In the Eastern Orthodox development, the sides of the stole actually meet across the chest and are sown together, leaving a hole for the head. The Orthodox do not usually add symbols (by applique etc.) however; crosses and iconic motifs may be woven into the material itself.

32 See *Uniting in Worship. Leaders Book.* pp 141-44

33 This is odd, and probably reflects the influence of charismatic thinking in the mid-70s - that is, the work of the Holy Spirit is over-emphasized. White is designed for Baptism – correctly in this writer's view, since Baptism incorporates a person into Christ (=white). It is also suggested for Marriage, presumably on the biblical grounds that marriage is a symbol of the love of Christ for the church (not, one hopes, on the sentimental parallel of the bride's dress!). But surely the symbolic argument also applies to other uses: confirmation has no meaning other than that of Baptism, so the use of red to symbolize the work of the Spirit is misleading, since the Spirit is not differently active in confirmation than in Baptism: and the setting apart for various ministries has at least as much to do with Christ's self-offering on the cross (red symbolizing blood) and with the Holy Spirit (fire). The symbolism of red (like other symbol) is not simple.

34 As we come of age in Australia there is a case for some variation of the universal colour scheme ("universal" historically really means western and European). We could start by seeking out greens, which, in contrast to English or Irish greens suggest our native eucalypts. The desert also produces a characteristic red and red-brown which might be used in stoles for Lent (the temptations of Jesus in the desert always appears in the Lenten gospels) or Advent (one Sunday at least of which focuses on John the Baptist, the desert prophet). But we need to think carefully about how to balance the local and the universal, the denominational and the ecumenical.

35 I have deliberately not said "unity", in case that implies that uniformity is its symbol. Outside the strict canons of the Roman Church - which are now in practical disarray - it is impossible to get a bunch of clergy to wear anything uniform. One can only hope that they wear garments which are recognizably of their tradition and that they wear them with dignity. The Uniting Church will probably slowly develop a "style" as we become a distinct church. It is too early to tell.

36 John Heath-Stubbs. *The B/ue-Fly in His Head*. Oxford 1962; this section is from a longer poem dealing with the use of English grammar, *Ars Poetica III*.