

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Lutheran and Protestant Vestment Practices
in the United States and Canada: A Survey

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Homiletics

Theological Observer

Book Review

Vol. XXXVII

November 1966

No. 10

Lutheran and Protestant Vestment Practices in the United States and Canada: A Survey¹

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A. THE LUTHERAN TRADITION²

The alb, sleeved and often sleeveless, both with cincture and in the modified uncinctured form that gradually assimilated

¹ This study summarizes the detailed documentation assembled in connection with the production of an article on "Vestments, Ecclesiastical: Lutheran and Protestant" for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It covers the major traditions and church bodies of the Western tradition (except the Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal Churches) in the United States and Canada. For the most part, it reflects the statements made by persons whom the head of the church body in question had designated to provide the desired information. The originals of the communications herein referred to have been deposited in the Concordia Historical Institute, 801 De Mun Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63105.

² On the Lutheran Church in general see Herman A. Preus, article "Vestments," in Julius Bodensieck, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), III, 2436—2439; Luther Dotterer Reed, *Worship: A Study of Corporate Devotion* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), Ch. 18; and Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Survival of the Historic Vestments in the Lutheran Church after 1555*, 2d ed. (St. Louis: School for Graduate Studies of Concordia Seminary, 1958). The latter work has been revised and expanded in the German translation by Jobst Schöne and Ernst Seybold, *Die liturgischen Gewänder in der lutherischen Kirche seit 1555* (Marburg-an-der-Lahn: Ökumenischer Verlag R. F. Edel, 1965). The most recent discussion is that of Christian Vasterling, "Kirchlicher Ornat oder bürgerliches Gewand? Erwägungen zur Amtstracht der lutherischen Geistlichen," *Lutherische Monatshefte*, 5 (1966), 346—350. Vasterling is a pastor in Hannover-Mittelfeld, Germany.

itself to what we know as the surplice, never passed wholly out of use in the Lutheran Church. Neither did the chasuble. The cope has survived primarily, but not exclusively, as an episcopal vestment in Scandinavia. The amice persisted in a sense as the collar of the Swedish alb. The black gown, either with bands or with the "millstone" type of collar (which still survives in parts of European Lutheranism), became general as liturgical vesture only in the 19th century. In parts of Scandinavia the black scarf worn with the gown became a stylized appendage ("black stole"). The mitre (except at Loccum Abbey) and the pallium seem to have gone out of use in the 16th century; the maniple not later than the 17th, and the dalmatic (and tunicle) in the late 18th or the early 19th century. The stole passed out of general use by the 17th century, although here and there it may have survived into the 18th. Where mitre, maniple, dalmatic, tunicle, and stole are currently in use among Lutherans, they are restorations, not survivals. Successive waves of Lutheran immigrants to North America brought with them the vestment practices with which they were familiar in their homelands at the time of their departure. They retained these practices with varying degrees of loyalty in their New World environment.

The carefully cultivated and propagated conviction of Pietism, of the Enlightenment, and of contemporary Protestantizing

Lutherans that vestments are chiefly the inheritance of the Interims of 1548 and that genuine Lutherans have always rejected them, is without foundation in historic fact. If anything, the reverse is often true; the traditional service vestments tended to survive precisely in areas of the Lutheran Church where the Interims had never been in force and they numbered among their doughtiest defenders some of the most impeccably orthodox doctors of the church of the Augsburg Confession.

Specifically, there is no positive contemporary evidence that in the Lutheran community the stole was ever used prior to the recent past apart from Eucharistic vestments with either an alb or a surplice or with a black gown for regular parochial services in church.³

1. *The Lutheran Church in America*⁴

Not more than a sixth of the clergy wear a black preaching gown for services. In some cases they wear a stole with it; in some churches of German or Slovak origin the pastors wear bands with the gown. In a few instances a white preaching gown replaces the black gown in hot weather only. Clergymen rarely wear a doctor's gown, a master's gown not at all. Occasionally academic hoods are worn either with a doctor's gown or with a surplice and stole. Seventy to eighty percent of the clergy wear cassock, surplice, and stole for all offices. A very small percentage of clergymen rightly omit the stole

at the minor services. A few wear tippets or scarves, and some wear a surplice over a black preaching gown. Not more than one clergyman out of 50 wears either full Eucharistic vestments (sometimes without a maniple) or a combination of alb and chasuble, but the number is growing.⁵ Street clothes are seldom worn for services; formal morning wear is no longer in use. Clergymen formerly associated with the United Lutheran Church in America are most likely to wear the surplice-and-stole combination. Clergymen of that body and of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church are most likely to wear Eucharistic vestments; in isolated instances congregations of Danish background were accustomed to the chasuble. In some congregations of German background a sleeveless rochet ("Saxon alb") is worn over the black gown at celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. In some congregations of Slovak background a lace surplice tied at the neck with a bow is worn. Most clergy have little personal interest in vestments and merely conform to the accepted practice. The trend toward surplice-and-stole of the past half century and the present trend toward Eucharistic vestments has resulted from the work of a relatively small number of liturgically knowledgeable persons.

³ Piepkorn, *The Survival of the Historic Vestments*, pp. 119—120.

⁴ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Edgar S. Brown, Jr., Director, Commission on Worship, Lutheran Church in America, New York, which he describes as "my estimate of the situation."

⁵ The "Report on the Manifested Life of the Congregation for the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 1958" of the United Lutheran Church in America contained the following statistics: Between 1941 and 1958 the number of parish pastors habitually officiating without any vestments declined from 491 to 123 (1.9%); the number wearing a black gown declined from 1,073 to 559 (14.5%) in the same period; the number using black gown and stole rose from 355 to 691 (18.0%); the number using cassock, surplice, and stole rose from 216 to 2,710 (70.3%); 69 used Eucharistic vestments; 105 did not provide information.

A Statement on Vestments published by The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church in America in 1963 stresses the principle of freedom combined with a voluntary concern for good order. It notes that cassock, surplice, and stole are "usual" but that there are congregations accustomed to alb and chasuble, to alb and stole, and to black gowns. Unordained assistants are to conform to the vestments of those whom they assist, or they are to minister in ordinary street clothing; they do not wear stoles. Choirs and organists need wear no vestments if they sit in a rear gallery; otherwise they may wear black cassocks with white cottas (short surplices), but not colored cassocks, stoles, or adaptations of stoles. Women should wear skull caps or Canterbury caps, but not mortarboards. A sexton may wear a cassock and cincture or a black gown.⁶

2. *The American Lutheran Church*⁷

The church has no authoritative statement on vestments. The accepted use is cassock, surplice, and stole, and the district presidents generally recommend these. The black gown has fallen almost completely into disuse. Where it survives, neither bands nor stoles are worn with it. Very rarely a white preaching gown is used in hot weather. Academic gowns and hoods are not worn. Alb and chasuble are worn in a few cases. Street clothes are not habitually worn at divine service; cutaways

and Prince Alberts have completely disappeared. Black gowns are most likely to be worn in churches formerly associated with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church. The trend of the past toward cassock, surplice, and stole is turning into a trend toward the use of alb and chasuble.

3. *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*

At the turn of the century, the normal vestment use was black gown with bands, and Friedrich Lochner despaired of the possibility of restoring the alb or Eucharistic vestments.⁸ A few of the clergymen who used the English language had begun, as a part of their acculturation to the American scene, to conduct services in street clothes or formal morning wear. Today possibly a fifth of the parish clergy still wear black gowns, but almost invariably without bands. Most common is the combination derived largely by indirect imitation from the Anglican custom of the Victorian era—cassock, surplice, and stole. No historic Lutheran justification exists for this combination as normal service vestments and a limited number of clergymen wear the alb or surplice without stole. Full Eucharistic vestments, as well as the combination of alb and chasuble, have become sufficiently common and widespread that they no longer evoke strong reactions, and the number of parishes that use them is—especially in the eastern and middle western parts of the country—steadily though

⁶ Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church in America, *A Statement on Vestments* (New York: Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church in America, 1963), pp. 7–8.

⁷ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Prof. Herman A. Preus, Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, who describes his statement as a summary of personal impressions.

⁸ Friedrich Lochner, *Der Hauptgottesdienst der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895), pp. 20 to 21. American Lutherans, he argued, might properly content themselves with the black gown, "since even this vestment had become a rarity in the land of Reformed sectarianism at the time our Synod was founded."

not spectacularly increasing. The girdled alb without or with stole is occasionally used for non-Eucharistic services. Here and there an ordained officiant wears a black scarf at the minor services. When more than one clergyman officiates at the Holy Eucharist, the deacon and subdeacon occasionally wear dalmatic and tunicle, but a surplice or alb, with or without stole, is more frequent. Copes are sometimes worn for processions and solemn non-Eucharistic services. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod officially neither prescribes nor recommends any particular vestment or vestment combination.⁹

B. THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED TRADITION

Although Ulrich Zwingli discarded all clerical garb, the Reformed churches of Switzerland adopted the black gown as normal service vesture. On the European continent the linen collar worn by Reformed ministers around the neck grew first into a narrow ruff, then into the "millstone" collar. With the general use of perukes, the bands replaced the ruffs, although the use of bands before the era of the peruke is amply documented.¹⁰

At Strasbourg the last reference to any

vestment (*Chorrock*, "rochet" or "surplice") was in 1526. By 1537 the black gown and cassock alone remained. In Geneva the ministers wore cassock, bands, black gown, scarf or tippet, and cap. In 1567 Théodore de Bèze was unwilling to make an issue out of the gowns and vestments which the Puritans had to wear in England in spite of their strenuous objections. The black gown was worn in Scottish pulpits by 1574, and in 1610 King James directed that ministers wear black gowns in the pulpit.¹¹

Twenty years ago Scott Brenner, the American Presbyterian liturgiologist, saw the beginning of a trend toward the use of vestments in place of business suit, frock coat, or even academic gowns, and noted that cassock, surplice, and stole and the traditional Eucharistic vestments were being introduced in Reformed churches. He observed that the Puritans and Covenanters had been as hostile to the black gown as to the traditional vestments. He set up

¹¹ William D. Maxwell, *The Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book Used by John Knox While a Minister of the English Congregation of Marian Exiles at Geneva* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1931), pp. 210 to 213; Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship: Its Development and Forms*, 3d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 100. Maxwell, a Scotsman, is one of the most distinguished contemporary liturgiologists of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. He recommends to his clerical coreligionists that they wear a long cassock, with either the Geneva gown or an academic gown, the former with an ecclesiastical cap, the latter with the proper cap of their degree. An ordained minister may wear a scarf or tippet. With a scarf or tippet he may wear a hood, but not a stole. A stole may be worn at Communion, marriages, and ordinations in place of the scarf or tippet. Only an ordained minister may wear bands. (Maxwell, *Concerning Worship* [London: Oxford University Press, 1948], Appendix B.)

⁹ For recent discussions of vestment practice by clergymen of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod see Paul H. D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 47—56, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "What About Vestments for Pastors?" *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXX (1959), 482—493; 582—594.

¹⁰ Georg Rietschel, *Lehrbuch der Liturgik*, 2d edition by Paul Graff, I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951), 125; Graff, *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands*, 2 ed., I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 109.

three standards on which the whole church should be able to agree: First, that there be no compulsion in the matter of vestments and that those used be divested of all fictitious sacramental and quasisacramental significance. Second, the prevailing or dominant color should be white. Third, there may be a diversity of vestment answering to the several heritages and traditions in the church. He foresaw a time when in the church ecumenical it should suffice for the minister to be clothed in a simple white gown like a primitive dalmatic, or in cassock, surplice, and stole, or in Eucharistic vestments.¹²

Henry Sloane Coffin, another Presbyterian, pointed out that sacerdotal vestments have had no place in churches of the Reformed tradition, but that the 400-year-old custom of wearing a Geneva gown and bands—the uniform of the teacher, not the priest—is a venerable one that ought to be honored.¹³

Ilion T. Jones, a liturgical conservative in American Presbyterianism, rejects the academic hood as peculiarly unfitted for ministerial attire. He concedes that a simple black gown may serve a useful purpose but insists that any vestment in the technical sense is out of place in Reformed worship.¹⁴ Howard G. Hageman sees good

Reformed precedent for cassock, gown, and bands both on the street and in the pulpit.¹⁵

1. *The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*¹⁶

The majority of the clergy wear a black gown when they conduct corporate worship, with a majority of those holding doctorates wearing the gown of their degree. A considerable number wear white preaching gowns in hot weather. A substantial and increasing number wear a clerical collar and bands. The influence of Eugene Carson Blake, until recently Stated Clerk of the church, has been strong here. A small number, possibly 10 percent, substitute a black tippet or a stole, usually of red or white, for the hood. A few wear a stole of the proper seasonal color. Fewer than 5 percent wear cassock, surplice, and stole. The number of ministers that wear a chasuble is negligible, but the fact that there are any at all and that they are all young men is worthy of notice. About half the clergy wear business suits. This is especially common in the Middle West. Only a very few of the older clergy wear formal dress such as cutaways. Vestment patterns do not reflect former affiliation prior to the union of the Presbyterian

¹² Scott Francis Brenner, *The Way of Worship: A Study in Ecumenical Recovery* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), pp. 110 to 115. See also his *The Art of Worship* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), pp. 67–72.

¹³ Henry Sloane Coffin, *The Public Worship of God: A Source Book* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 62–63.

¹⁴ Ilion T. Jones, *A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), pp. 239–240. More recently, Bernard Schalm, head of the New Testament department of the Christian Training Institute

at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, writing in his *The Church at Worship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1962) for a conservative Protestant readership, urges that when the minister conducts services he dress conservatively in a ministerial robe or in a dark (rather than a light) suit. (P. 37)

¹⁵ Howard G. Hageman, *Pulpit and Table: Some Chapters in the History of Worship in the Reformed Churches* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 131.

¹⁶ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Scott Brenner, Board of Christian Education of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Philadelphia, Pa.

Church in the U.S.A. with the United Presbyterian Church. Rural congregations still tend to shun vestments; city and suburban congregations are making increasing use of them.

2. *The Presbyterian Church in the United States*¹⁷

Vestments at divine service are left entirely to the discretion of the individual minister. In the last three decades the number wearing a black Geneva gown in the pulpit has increased to a point where this is the service garb of possibly a majority of ministers.

3. *The Reformed Church in America*¹⁸

There is no church legislation regarding vestments. The classic black gown with cassock (or cassock front) has persisted as the use of many congregations. Bands are most often worn with it. Many holders of doctorates wear academic gowns. The use of academic hoods with both pulpit and academic gowns is quite common, especially on such occasions as ordinations. Occasionally the tippet or scarf is still used. Many younger clergymen wear colored stoles with the black gown. A few ministers wear surplices, especially for the Eucharist; Eucharistic vestments are not in use. Where vestments are not worn, a simple dark business suit serves. The use of formal dress, such as cutaways or Prince Alberts, is fast disappearing. The use of gown and bands is more common in the

Northeast, where the bulk of the churches trace their history to colonial foundations sponsored by the established church of the Netherlands. In the Midwest, where many of the congregations were founded by a group that left the Netherlands in protest against the established church, the gown is viewed with suspicion, although practice is divided and the prejudice against the gown is slowly breaking down, especially in urban areas.

The smaller Reformed bodies quite consistently dispense with the gown, although in the Christian Reformed Church a few exceptions have reportedly begun to appear.

In general, the situation with reference to vestment practice is very fluid.

C. UNITED AND UNITING CHURCHES

1. *The United Church of Christ*¹⁹

The church has no official position and makes no recommendations. The fear of sacerdotalism is strong. The Reformed background of this body has made the Geneva gown the rule, and alternatives are the exception. Older pastors continue to wear bands with their gowns. In hot weather a white preaching gown is sometimes used, or, more frequently, services are conducted without a gown. Doctoral gowns (or Geneva gowns modified by the addition of stripes and facings) are usually worn by most holders of doctorates. Academic hoods are frequently worn, especially by those with doctor's degrees. Apparently clergymen out of the Congregationalist tradition are more likely to wear hoods. A very few pastors, chiefly of German

¹⁷ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. James A. Millard, Jr., Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, The Presbyterian Church in the United States, Atlanta, Ga.

¹⁸ Source of information: Letter of Dr. Howard G. Hageman, 510 Broad Street, Newark, N. J.

¹⁹ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Prof. Walter H. Krebs, Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo.

Reformed background, wear surplices; most of them minister in Pennsylvania, the home of the ecumenical-liturgical "Mercersburg tradition" of Philip Schaff and John W. Nevin. Among younger pastors the wearing of stoles in the color of the season is a growing practice; this is the most notable development in this area of worship to occur in the last generation. Those who wear surplices generally wear stoles as well. Eucharistic vestments are not worn.

2. *The United Church of Canada*²⁰

The ministers conform almost entirely to the practices of the Presbyterian or Reformed churches in Scotland and the United States and wear a black Geneva gown, usually over a short or long black cassock, with bands. A number wear a preaching scarf, embroidered with a Latin or Celtic cross. A very small number wear stoles in the color of the season. Ministers customarily prefer to omit academic hoods when presiding over or taking part in an act of worship. A very small number wear surplices, none wear Eucharistic vestments. In view of the discussions of union with the Anglican Church of Canada, some ministers may feel that they should anticipate the union by modifying their vestment practices, but this has not as yet happened.

D. THE METHODIST TRADITION

One of the leading exponents of liturgical worship in American Methodism is George Hedley. He deplores vesting the choir "while leaving the first minister in secular garb," and criticizes the attitude that regards academic robes as permissible,

²⁰ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Ernest E. Long, D. D., LL. D., secretary of the United Church of Canada, Toronto, Ont.

"while still the specifically Christian vestments were abjured."²¹ He regards it as "one of the most unfortunate vagaries of the Protestant reaction . . . that black became standard for the clergy and black only." Even where the Prince Albert or business suit has yielded to a robe, it is "only to one of lugubrious, funereal appearance." While the "bright bits of colored velvet and silk" of academic robes and hoods improve the situation somewhat, "the church is not a university and the minister in its services should wear not professional but churchly garments."²²

1. *The Methodist Church*²³

In large sections of the church, ministers wear no vestments, a dark business suit or dress suit with a dark tie is generally accepted. In some parts of the South the morning coat with striped trousers is worn on Sunday morning. A majority of ministers currently wear a Geneva gown, mostly without stoles, although the practice of wearing a stole in the color of the season is increasingly common. Some ministers wear academic gowns with academic hoods.

Although the early American Methodists followed John Wesley in wearing cassock, surplice, and stole, pioneer conditions and post-Revolution prejudice against things Anglican resulted in the early disuse of

²¹ George Hedley, *Christian Worship: Some Meanings and Means* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), pp. 26—27.

²² Pp. 67—68.

²³ Source of information in the first paragraph is a letter of Bishop Lance Webb, Illinois Area of the Methodist Church, Springfield, Ill. Information in the remainder of this section is contained in communications from the Rev. Romey P. Marshall, President of The Methodist Order of St. Luke, Summerdale, Pa.

these vestments. Bands are now rarely worn. White preaching gowns are becoming popular in the South, especially in Florida; stoles are sometimes worn with them. Academic gowns seem to be losing in popularity, and the use of academic hoods is also on the decrease. Street clothes are more likely to be worn in small rural churches and in resort-area churches. The use of formal dress is declining rapidly. Except among members of the Order of St. Luke, surplices are almost unknown. Stoles are becoming more commonplace in the North and East and in some southern conferences; while seasonal colors are used, a single color—red, white, or green—is frequently used throughout the year. A few ministers wear a stole for weddings only. Eucharistic vestments are almost never worn. Bishops tend to wear white stoles over black gowns, the latter sometimes embroidered on the left breast with an emblem denoting the episcopate, but many wear a purple insert under their clerical collars to identify their status. Seminary training, the heterogeneous denominational background of recently organized suburban churches, higher socioeconomic status, and the existence of vested choirs are all factors inclining toward the use of gowns and vestments. If present trends continue, cassocks and surplices may well be normal at Methodist Eucharists in another decade.

2. *The African Methodist Episcopal Church*²⁴

The church does not prohibit or prescribe any vestments. It discourages ex-

trêmes but does not forbid the freedom of personal choice. Ministers with academic degrees most often wear their academic gowns, generally with their hoods, while others usually wear black pulpit gowns. One out of 10 ministers wears a surplice. Stoles and Eucharistic vestments are not used. Street clothes are seldom worn in the conduct of services.

3. *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*²⁵

Ministers normally wear pulpit gowns; a few older ministers wear cutaways and Prince Alberts. Ministers with academic degrees wear their hoods at some services, especially at the Sunday morning services of the annual conference, the General Conference, and national gatherings. At the consecration service for bishops, the candidates wear robes, stoles, and hoods. For baptisms and funerals, the minister wears the same vestments that he uses at Sunday morning services; at weddings he may wear a white surplice. The trend of the last two decades has been toward greater formality.

4. *The Evangelical United Brethren Church*²⁶

The church neither recommends nor forbids the use of vestments. The last decade has seen a considerable increase of the use of the black pulpit gown, and it is now worn in nearly half the churches. White preaching gowns are rare; usually

²⁴ Source of information: Letter of Senior Bishop Sherman L. Greene, 1105 Fountain Drive, S. W., Atlanta, Ga.

²⁵ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Arthur Marshall, Jr., minister, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, St. Louis, Mo.

²⁶ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. John H. Ness, Jr., secretary-curator, The Historical Society of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 1033 Yorkshire Place, Dayton, Ohio.

no gown is worn when the weather becomes too warm. Ministers who wear gowns and who hold academic degrees will usually wear academic gowns or the markings of the wearer's degree on their pulpit gowns. Academic hoods are worn by very few ministers and then only on special occasions. Since 1960 a small minority of younger ministers recently graduated from the seminary wear stoles in the color of the season. Surplices are not worn, nor are cutaways or Prince Alberts. East of the Mississippi river, where theology, practice, and outlook are more liberal, where the church is 100 to 175 years old, and where individual congregations are larger, gowns are worn in more than half the churches. West of the Mississippi, where the church is younger and the congregations are smaller and more conservative, a modest minority wears them. Urban congregations tend to accept vestments more readily than do rural congregations. Seminary training in the case of the minister and a higher socioeconomic status in the case of the congregation predispose toward the use of gowns and stoles.

E. THE BAPTIST TRADITION

1. *The Southern Baptist Convention*²⁷

The convention does not prescribe, prohibit, or recommend vestments. The black pulpit gown is worn rarely and never with bands. It is largely confined to North Carolina and Virginia churches, frequently suburban ones, with members of higher socioeconomic status and more highly educated ministers. White preaching gowns are almost never used. A few ministers

who hold doctorates use their academic gowns, but not their hoods, when conducting services. Cutaways and Prince Alberts, fairly common 50 years ago, are hardly used anymore. As many as three-fourths of the ministers use a black gown for baptisms. Robes — sometimes quite elaborate — are worn by choirs and organists in 9 out of 10 churches. A continuing trend toward wearing more formal attire dates back about a generation and reflects the culturally upward mobility of Southern Baptists and the impact of the ecumenical movement.

2. *The American Baptist Convention*²⁸

The last 10 or 20 years have seen a shift in the direction of wider use of the pulpit gown, along with a thrust in the direction of a more formal order of worship and greater emphasis on prayer and meditation. While one out of four ministers wore cutaways in conducting worship services in the early 1950s, today few cutaways are worn, but the same ratio of one out of four ministers — most often in city churches — wears black pulpit gowns. The majority of ministers continue to use business suits for regular worship services. Only one out of 20 wears an academic hood with it.²⁹ Approximately half the ministers use a gown for baptisms.

²⁸ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Leon R. Robinson, Jr., minister, Second Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo.

²⁹ In his statement on the Baptists in the section on "Elements of Liturgy" in Pehr Edwall and others (eds.), *Ways of Worship* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), R. Claibourne Johnson describes a metropolitan Baptist church in a residential area in which "the ministers wear Geneva gowns or academic robes which indicate a preaching rather than a priestly function" (p. 145).

²⁷ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Prof. Penrose St. Amant, Dean of the School of Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lexington, Ky.

3. *The American Baptist Association*³⁰

The ministers of this body wear business suits when they conduct services. Some of the churches use choir and baptismal robes.

4. *The National Baptist Conventions*³¹

Most ministers wear business suits when they conduct services. A very few older ministers wear cutaways or Prince Alberts. Some wear pulpit gowns and academic hoods. Baptismal gowns are widely worn for baptisms.

F. THE "CHRISTIAN" (RESTORATION) TRADITION

1. *The Disciples of Christ*³²

Business suits are the normal service attire. Prince Alberts, cutaways, and similar formal attire are seldom, if ever, used. Academic and preaching gowns are being used increasingly for Sunday services and for weddings. Academic hoods are quite common accompaniments of gowns, and a few ministers are using stoles. The past decade and a half has been marked by a continuing trend in the direction of more formal pulpit attire, largely through the impact of the liturgical movement. A 3-year study currently going on is focusing attention on contemporary developments in liturgy and it would not be surprising if this resulted in more carefully designed worship services and the wider use of vestments.

³⁰ Source of information: Letter of Dr. Paul Goodwin, Past President, American Baptist Association, 4 Valley Drive, Little Rock, Ark.

³¹ Source of information: The Rev. W. D. Thompson, Jr., 4015 Fair Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63115.

³² Source of information: Letter of Dr. Merrill L. Cadwell, director of church life and worship, The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, Ind.

2. *The Churches of Christ*³³

No vestments of any kind are used.

G. OTHER DENOMINATIONS

1. *The Moravian Church (Unitas Fratrum)*³⁴

The practice of this church is not uniform; some ministers wear gowns, some do not. Hoods are not usually worn with gowns, although occasionally (at Advent services, for instance) hoods may be worn. Business suits and formal attire are used as individual ministers prefer. Surplices are worn for baptisms and the Lord's Supper (as the *Book of Order* directs) and occasionally for weddings. Bishops of the Unitas Fratrum do not wear distinctive vestments. The increasing use of pulpit gowns has been the most notable trend of the past few decades.

2. *National Holiness Association*

Ministers of the church bodies that belong to the *National Holiness Association*³⁵ (including the *Church of the Nazarene*³⁶), of the *Assemblies of God*,³⁷ and

³³ Source of information: Letter of Mr. B. C. Goodpasture, ed., *The Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, Tenn.

³⁴ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Vernon W. Couillard, Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pa.

³⁵ Source of information: Letter of Dr. Richard S. Taylor, associate professor of theology and missions, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

³⁶ Source of information: letter of Dr. Edgar B. Johnson, general secretary, Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Mo., who speaks of an "unwritten law" having the effect of prohibiting gowns and other vestments.

³⁷ Source of information: Letter of the Rev. Thomas F. Zimmerman, general superintendent, General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Mo.

of *Pentecostal* churches,³⁸ as well as the first and second readers in the branches of the *Church of Christ, Scientist*,³⁹ and ministers of the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*⁴⁰ do not use vestments or robes in the conduct of services, but wear only business suits.

³⁸ Source of information: The Rev. Lester E. Shockley, 4 Santa Cruz, Florissant, Mo.

³⁹ Source of information: Mr. Elgin Wasson, St. Louis, Missouri, State of Missouri Committee on Publication, The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

⁴⁰ Source of information: Letter of Mr. Theodore L. Cannon, Church Information Service, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

3. *Unitarian-Universalist Association*

A majority of *Unitarian-Universalist Association*⁴¹ ministers wear academic gowns when they conduct services. On major holidays, hoods are generally added. A very few, largely because they are located in parishes with a long history (such as King's Chapel, Boston) or because of the backgrounds from which they themselves have come, wear vestments complete with surplices and stoles.

St. Louis, Mo.

⁴¹ Source of information: The Rev. Thaddeus B. Clark, minister, First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, Mo.