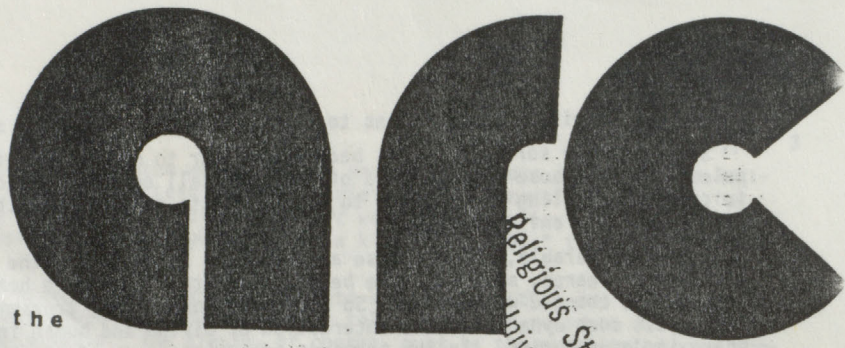


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WHAT'S AN ARC?

On every side we are attacked by slogans, names, acronyms--UNESCO; STOP! Right Reverend or Very Reverend? Right On! The Grateful Dead--so what's an ARC? (According to Bill Cosby's oral tradition, even Noah had to ask, "Hey Lord! What's an ark?" But that's a different story).

"By choosing the title ARC we mean several things. We mean to recall to modern minds the biblical idea of *covenant*, a partnership involving two parties in mutual interaction. That two-way encounter created a space in between, cleared for action and pregnant with new possibilities. (A pregnant Arc is something to behold.)

"We mean also to recall another biblical figure, the *parabola*. When Jesus taught in parables he was using a familiar device, throwing one thing alongside another (*para-ballo*) so that a comparison and contrast could generate a new idea, an insight or revelation. Arcs are for tea-

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Peter Richardson
Art van Seters

sing minds, inviting imaginations to explore a frontier region, strange and surprising.

Still another sort of Arc has become familiar to modern man, the electrical spark that jumps from pole to pole because of the field of force we call energy. The dynamic flow happens when a polarity is created, enabling the current to discharge its power across the gap. (If you're not sure how it works, ask your children.)

Covenant, parable, spark—these and more are suggested by the root idea of dynamic interaction. A space is cleared, some distance between two; the difference between them shows itself creative, energizing, charged with power. So communication occurs, transmission of energy. The Bible's focus is on just such dynamics. The interaction of divine and human in both Testaments receives classic shape in Jesus Christ. In the terms we are using we could say that he is not one of the poles, nor somehow a little of both; rather, he is the Arc itself which engages the two in energetic connection. After him, one has to imagine both "man" and "God" as partners in this sort of being.

Sampler

This first issue is a sampler. We have tried to present the variety that seems needed today. Three articles pursue different paths—biblical (Richardson), pastoral (van Seters) and theological (McLelland). Hopefully, they are all "relevant" and "practical", to use the holy words of modernity. We do not wish to do theology that speculates in some highfalutin' manner. We do not need to search for examples of "arc-ing" in classic theological tomes, or ivory-tower theologians. We hope that we may engage our readers in the arc of dialogue, debate which exposes and expresses the real polarities of today, and of our church.

Examples of such polarities are legion. French and English; past and present; denominational identity over against ecumenical catholicity; political theology and evangelism; christian education and teaching religion in the public schools; the apparent "wide divergence" of views within our own church. Moreover, certain themes seem to call for exploration from an "arc" perspective. All this talk of "team ministry" for example, of the need to develop the kind of people who work in partnership with others, who are open to others, and ready for change—perhaps that is the crucial issue of our time.

Trouble With Ministry

The sense of need which led to our decision to launch a new publication arose from numerous contacts. Over the years and in diverse ways, we have concluded that "the average working minister" needs the stimulus of some forum that will prove itself by providing material complementary to other journals. We do not see ourselves as rivals to, say, *The Presbyterian Record*; and certainly we plan to be different from the professors' learned quarterlies such as *Studies in Religion*.

Nor do we pose as experts. What will test our efforts is a common concern for the live issues, an awareness of the places where the hurt is, and the healing. Thus the number of studies which underline trouble with ministry, with both dropouts and dropins, with theological education and experiments and new roles—surely here is the primary focus of concern. We will not promise to provide final solutions but we will attempt to clarify and to comment.

Besides that primary and foundational need to examine the very nature of ministry, are there not other issues less fateful but equally pressing? To keep up with the knowledge explosion, with books and ideas, with ongoing debates and new issues, what "working minister" has the time or energy? So great is the impact of the various media that one can but find trustworthy guides. Thus may one at least sample token offerings from the rich feast spread before us—or the rotting pile, as it may appear to some. Who prepares the feast? Artists of every kind, whoever uses the gift of imagination to present images of man and his world. Therefore he who wishes to "minister" to man and his world needs to hear these lie-detectors and makers of poetry and fantasy and the rest of what we tell one another to give sense to our life together.

The scene is so vast today that the little journal needs to offer itself as a modest contribution with deliberately narrow focus. Our sampler suggests certain ways we wish to assist in the art of ministry. Besides articles, certain "features" can be run as stimuli or provocative pieces, sometimes serious, sometimes not. The WORKSHOP for this issue suggests one way a preacher may tackle his diet at this season; we hope it suggests not just ideas for others to use but a column open to various ways of going on with the job of sermon preparation. There should certainly be some cove-

rage of media, including books; for this issue we have dealt enough with books in two of the articles that we are not featuring reviews. Instead we have a brief look at cinema. A contribution from a strange early reader may provide a sort of outside arc we hope will prove pleasant. And if our readers come through with letters and dialogue, why not a kind of "soapbox" to make this a proper forum?

And something for you, dear reader, to do. We will need to know soon whether our sense of need is on target or not. We include a coupon for you to return, telling us your response to our general aim, and specific features of this issue. The finale, of course, must be the question of your commitment to our expense account--that's the financial arc that proves decisive for all the others!

The Editors

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY: agenda and desiderata

"What the church needs is a new hymn book" (did Kierkegaard really say that?) Or perhaps new structures around head office. Ah; there we have it. Centralization! Another Assembly looking at another restructured Board, with another tiresome debate on the old "structure versus person" theme.

The trouble with that debate is that it starts so badly. Surely "person" is a "structure", a living system with a world-view, a highly structured way of seeing things. He is not "free" in any absolute sense (nor "determined" either). He appears with a history of past interactions (memory) and a set of expectations (hope). More basically, he "is" through his *body*, and it is the Bible's stress on man's bodily nature, his creatureliness, that forbids our talking abstractly about "persons" as if human being is unstructured.

"Structures" themselves, of course, may promote or discourage *humanity*. It is not true that structures (or "institutions") *always* dehumanize. The truth is that some encourage humanization and others do not. Just as some persons, by accepting the other, sharing decisions with him and entering into partnership, encourage his humanity; while other persons of authoritarian and paternalistic mold, discourage or prevent his human presence.

The perennial tension in our own church between "evangelism" and "social action" is a case in point. We lose the unity of the two, failing to see that Gospel is a matter of *incarnation*, *em-body-ment*: structures toward humaneness. If *love* is the logic of "God", is not *justice* the logic of "Love"?

Perhaps the restructuring of Boards and Committees, then, is a minor issue. Perhaps "head office" reform is not a sinister part of the American managerial revolution after all! Maybe

it's just a businesslike approach to a specific problem, namely a little church stretched across a ridiculous expanse of country, heavily loaded in the centre provinces, small at the extremes (is it 9% in the Atlantic Provinces and 13% in the West?), in fact a marginal case in terms of managerial ideals.

The major problem, therefore, is not posed by head office but by the far more serious question: how long can we continue as a "hierarchy of courts"? We have failed to develop a sort of "courtly love" because the legal model of the court is no longer viable. Even if Assemblies need to continue some kind of legislative-judicial format, the *Presbyteries* are something else.

To re-structure Presbytery: there's the hope (*desideratum*). Two things seem in order. One is for some *better* way of doing our legislative or official tasks—processing remits, calls and grievances, etc. The other is for some *new* way of doing our pastoral oversight, including mutual support, counselling—and criticising.

Presbytery is the *corporate bishop*. Can't we begin from that Reformed insight? When one considers the amazing openness and flexibility of the 16th century Reformers about church structures, one wonders where their spirit has gone. Forms and spirit; what are today's "spirit and forms of love"? Is *marriage*, for instance, not a better and more biblical model than a court? If so, we need to explore the dynamics of personal encounter, shared decision-making, the family group, its budgeting problems and solutions, its understanding of authority. Perhaps this hope and the Assembly agenda could get together to explore such basic issues. If so, it would by-pass nit-picking debate and focus on the larger question: how is the church to be the church in today's world?

UNDERSTANDING UNDERSTANDING

Three major shifts have taken place in biblical interpretation in recent years. Nineteenth century biblical exegesis asked "What does the Text say?", characterized most vividly by the *International Critical Commentary* and its imitators; but Rudolph Bultmann and Karl Barth (under the influence of Schleiermacher and Dilthey) re-phrased the question to read "What can I understand?"—with the emphasis on the subject. In place of simply understanding the text the focus shifted to a life-relationship between the reader and the text, the understanding of which began with an understanding of human existence, rooted in the notion of "decision making".

In more recent years a second major shift has taken place. Those who have followed Bultmann (and to a lesser extent Barth) have been deeply influenced by Heidegger's later developments. "Language making" replaced "decision making" as the key concept, and theologians now speak of a word-event as the agent of understanding (so Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling). Thus, the word of God interprets the hearer, it is not the hearer who interprets the word. Bultmann's stress upon human existence is accepted but reversed, so that the interpreter listens to the word-event implicit in the text. This word-event judges his existence, rather than vice versa.

A third move, and it is still too early to say where this one is heading, attempts a rapprochement between biblical studies and process philosophy. Alfred North Whitehead argued that what is real is what happens; these events, when prehended, become a part of the process of determination of significantly new possibilities. Those who are attracted by this view of understanding (like Beardslee) put the emphasis not upon the text, or upon the interpreter in either of the senses above, but rather upon the process of "concreting" reality, which then is used as a principle for understanding the biblical material.

It is extremely significant that much of the impetus for these new understandings has come from the side of biblical theologians and particularly from New Testament theologians. Understanding how one understands the Bible is still a fundamental theological starting point. Too often it is simply assumed that the task is straightforward; the text is there and all that is needed is to apply the best critical tools available. The recent developments shatter those notions by concentrating upon the pre-conditions for understanding the scriptures,

whether by focussing upon the existence of the interpreter, the word-event in which the interpreter listens, or the process by which the future is becoming present. In each case understanding requires some shaping, for existence is varied, language is elastic, and the future is not yet determined. The preacher should be delighted at some of the fresh possibilities this opens up for him, not because he no longer needs to wrestle with the actual text as previous exegetes did—he still does—but because it underlines the interpretive importance of that preaching task. It may be that none of these new approaches to understanding is completely satisfying, but in each the role of the preacher (or of anyone who takes seriously the word of God in the written text) has been greatly extended and freshly understood. It is in the so-called school of the new hermeneutic that this has been worked out most consistently.

The threat to the preaching ministry of the church is that it *thinks* it has not forgotten that hearing and speaking are correlative, that it *thinks* it has not forgotten what word of God says when heard. Those who mount the pulpit Sunday in and Sunday out before a sea of people are inclined to sail their ships into the harbour of Pharisaic intransigence. ("The Pharisees are those who insist on interpreting the word of grace rather than letting themselves be interpreted by it.") They do so, of course, in the interest of a firm anchorage. It is there, however, that one can forget and then forget that he has forgotten. He cannot remember because he cannot remember forgetting. The horizon of the sea has become the mouth of the harbour ... Those concerned for the renewal of the word cannot remind each other until someone is himself reminded, until someone is again addressed by the text of faith in such a way that hearing is restored. (Funk, pages 12, 13, 15)

This is not simply a new kind of pietism — though it is not unrelated to earlier insights into allowing the text to speak to the interpreter first. What sets it apart is that the text is allowed to speak freshly and, as in process theology, to shape future reality. There can be in preaching both a binding to the text as it addresses the interpreter and a freedom for the text to expand beyond its original horizons of the preacher's present situation. It is one of the characteristics of the word of God that it can do this.

The preacher's role, then, involves an incisive understanding of his freedom—a freedom neither to avoid the text, nor to misapply or

misinterpret it, but to catch a fresh vision of how that language can be re-interpreted to bring new life to his hearers. Language and understanding go hand in hand. The preacher can reshape the reality of the hearers by his understanding and his language. But he can do this only if he knows the extent of his hermeneutical freedom.

The New Testament, and particularly Paul's letters, are full of the conviction that, in their own day, those interpreters knew what hermeneutical freedom was all about. This freedom was in part borrowed from the Pharisees' approach to understanding. But this should not minimize the extent to which the early church's understanding was shaped by their certainty that God had done a new thing in Jesus the Messiah, that in Jesus he had fulfilled the hopes and provisional understandings of the Hebrew Scriptures. The early church, however, in spite of the depth of its conviction on this, never allowed its view of reality to remain static. It constantly revised, rephrased and reapplied what it "knew", but it did so in the light of what in had experienced. God—and the word of God in Jesus Christ—interpreted the hearers through the church's experience of the Holy Spirit. Thus, for Paul, hermeneutical freedom is contingent upon the Holy Spirit's impact upon reality and his mediating of the benefits of Christ. In this way, says Paul, understanding and unveiling occur (see 2 Cor. 3).

With respect to the Holy Spirit the new hermeneutic is seriously deficient and so, I suspect, is process theology. In both, concern for Spirit is largely absent. Without a trinitarian understanding of hermeneutics one is forced into either subjectivism, or neo-positivism, or an anti-metaphysical tendency (see Kuitert). Obviously, the Holy Spirit is not the only factor in hermeneutics, nor is he the guarantor of any given interpretation; rather the Spirit is the fact of experience on the basis of which the interpreter can be addressed by the text, and he represents the power of God to reshape reality. The contrast between Spirit and letter is necessary to the hermeneutical task, and leads to a fresh understanding of understanding in freedom.

Finally, let me suggest some resources for further reading.

Paul J. Achtemeier (*An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) has produced an easily understandable introduction to the background (Heidegger, Bultmann; Language, Perception and Reality) together with a section on how this might pertain to the New Testament.

Robert W. Funk (*Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God*, New York: Harper and Row, 1966) is the leading American exponent of the New Hermeneutic. His book is stimulating, creative and extremely helpful. After a section on the background—Bultmann, Heidegger, Fuchs and Ebeling, Van Buren, Ogden and Ott—he deals with New Testament parables and then with the New Testament letter. It is a must.

Harry M. Kuitert (*The Reality of Faith*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), a young Dutch theologian, has attempted to find "a way between protestant orthodoxy and existentialist theology". It is clear and, for those with a strongly reformed background, an exciting attempt to respond to modern existentialism but to go beyond it. It is not concerned frontally with hermeneutics, but it is no less apropos for that.

William Beardslee (*A House for Hope*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) tries to build a bridge between process philosophy and the New Testament. He introduces Whitehead's thought and explores its implications in several areas of biblical concern.

James D. Smart (*The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) is the most recent work by the minister of Rosedale Presbyterian Church in Toronto. He has long been concerned for the interpretation of Scripture and here is concerned in a practical way for its use by modern Christians.

Peter Richardson

WORKSHOP

Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity. Let's see; what tools will I need? Bible, commentaries, map, calendar, prayers, hymns.

Blueprint: a line on the map and the calendar and through the Two Covenants. And so on. Symbols, festivals: three stories. "God made man because he loves stories" as the Hasid said.

Ascension They've forgotten Easter by now, so we'll have to refresh (sermons as refreshments—must remember that one) their memories—too much Lent these days, not enough follow-up. The setting of the Easter story. Locale. Staging. On the map it's from Egypt to Sinai; on the calendar it's a fifty-day stretch from Passover to Pentecost. On the way all hell breaks loose (skirmishes; Marah; Golden Calf) but something else too (that Other again). What about sacraments? Baptism (the Sea of Reeds) and Eucharist (Thanksgiving at Sinai). Hmm. The Rabbis now—there's some beautiful commentary. They held that Sinai was the special event, the paradigm: hearing the Word. Those Ten Words given to Israel were "heard" by all seventy nations across the world in their own languages that very day. But that's getting ahead of the story.

Which way is up? The Russian cosmonauts didn't see a thing; the Americans saw Creation. Is it a case of elevation? In Québec *les ascenseurs* don't run that day. Didn't Frank Scott write

The advantages of living with two cultures
Strike one at every turn,
Especially when one finds a notice in an
office building:
'This elevator will not run on Ascension
Day'...

Maybe it's a symbol of a different dimension from up-and-down? After all, don't forget the *cloud* (a Bible sign of God's presence). Presence; parousia; hiding—faith, not sight. Till when? Pentecost, Holy Spirit; presence in a new mode (everywhereness) "Spirit of Christ". Oh oh. (Pass Go, do not collect until you reach Pentecost).

Pentecost "fiftieth day". Feast of the Words and the Tent. (Formerly known as Tabernacle). Harvest festival: early reaping; first fruits. OK—harvest symbol is one line, but the

other comes first: liberation from bondage; redemption. God is the Lover (Hosea, Jeremiah), sweeping his Intended off her feet, courting in the wilderness (ah those Bedouin sheiks), betrothed at Sinai (Moses as Best Man; Ten Words as marriage vows; plan of Tabernacle as the new home—He's already bought the lot in Canaan). Love Story. Marriage. Sex! Does the N.T. have all this? And more! Acts 2. Ephesians. John. Sowing and reaping. Jesus was *planted*? Holy Spirit as the *Happy Reaper*? Why not?

Back to that hearing of the Word. Gifts of the Spirit: common language, common health, common wealth (let's take it right to the end of chapter 2 this year). Do we have to mention glossolalia? Sure, but keep it Jewish (not pagan ...): the "tongues" of all mankind. Not Esperanto; more like translation (plug for Bible Society). Word of God meant to *mean*. Mean what? What else but *Love*.

Trinity Can't preach on that ... one, two, three *God*? No, not a new maths. Something more subtle: one *and* three; unity and trinity: *triunity*. That's better. Polarity again - arc of divine being, Life swinging between simple and complex, Being-and-Loving, background essence and dynamic energies reaching out to us. But (Augustine, Calvin) the Love catches us in its motion ... Logos takes up man ... humanity of God!

Two impossibilities: God without man, man without God. New reality: God and man as lovers. Players. Drama. Tragedy or comedy? To die a little; to recover; thanks; let's celebrate. "To Life!" (Rubric: ask congregation to toast God-and-man; dance in the aisles; choreograph choir; and session? Move the pews. What? not only comfortable but immovable? ah well. Let's just talk about dancing for this year).

Now let's tackle those texts ...

MEDIA RARE

The question is asked in desperation, by a young man afraid to face the ordeal that confronts him: "What do I do now?" The answer—from his friend, more experienced and authoritative, but now badly hurt—comes through pain and gritted teeth: "Now...you...play the game!"

That's *Deliverance*, the James Dickey novel now a movie, a stark and powerful portrayal of the human dilemma, and of one man's *agony* into maturity. It's not nice; relentless, unyielding. Perhaps unsatisfying too, since it tears a segment of raw life from its wider context. But it

serves to underline heavily a theme that is more to the fore in our day than for some time. The theme is *playing the game*. In the excellent vehicle *Sleuth* (drama now movie), Olivier and Caine delight themselves and us by their *tour de force*—game within game, labyrinth of cunning and juxtaposition, so that the final image (ultimate concern?) is *the Game*: to live or to die?

In both cases, the plot turns on whether man will learn the groundrules, will learn that in this Game the stakes are high, and for keeps. It's more than performing a part, assuming a role, or doing all those psychosocial things beloved of "social scientists". To be a con man, for instance (*Marjoe* perhaps) is sometimes to be in earnest about a con game, and sometimes to be conning an earnest game. (The importance of not being earnest *all* the time!) "Life is a Cabaret,

my friends!" except that jackboots sounded a sinister message that silenced the laughter, and blood proved redder than champagne. Clowns abound too; but if Fellini is to be believed, they are a species of his inevitable grotesques.

What's it all about? The media, like the university experts, seem better at diagnosis than prescription. But they do serve another purpose: "lie-detection" it has been called (and other things less polite). The unmasking of our hypocrisies, the exhibiting of man as he really is, warts and all, remains a primary function of all forms of art. The media are seldom so good as that sounds; but even at worst they serve to recall sober Christians to the gamesmanship of Life, and to refresh us with images of players and parts more attractive—because more authentic—than the petty roles we so often assign ourselves in the name of Religion.

MINISTRY SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Are human categories adequate?

Managers organize and direct. Labourers follow instructions and do a job. Into which class do Ministers fit? They do a lot of organizing and directing. They are the teachers and preachers who do the telling. They are to be honoured, respected and obeyed (according to 1 Thess. 5:12f. and Heb. 13:17). Yet they are "Ministers", that is "servants". The term "minister" translates various Greek words for different kinds of slaves or servants like *doulos*, *huperetes*, *diakonos*, *oikonomos*.

It is true that officers in the early church are described as ruling or leading (*proistemi* is used in Rom. 12:8 and 1 Tim. 5:17 and *hegeomai* in Heb. 13:7,17,24). But a quick check of the lexicon demonstrates that such officers are never called leaders (*hegemonoi*) or rulers (*archontes*) though the latter is used extensively of Jewish and civil rulers. Why were officers in the Christian church not called rulers? When more functional designations such as "teacher", "pastor" and "overseer" were not used, the preponderance of the general designations were servant terms. What has this to say about our understanding of ministry and ministers in the church today?

In a world of pyramid climbers, personality cults, authority destroyers, and fee-for-service servants, the church's view of ministry is apt to be distorted. In fact, if we think at all like the world, we will have great difficulty understanding the relationship between being a leader and, at the same time, a servant, between exercising authority and rendering service. We may confuse status and office and utterly blur our relationship with Christ. As ministers, we may also rob the laity of their ministry.

We can find clarity and hope by considering how the New Testament relates people in the church to each other and to Christ.

The servant is the greatest

The *locus classicus* for ministry is Mark 10:35-45. James and John ask for status in the Kingdom. Jesus challenges them with the cost of even sharing in the Kingdom and then points out that positions are appointed by the Father, not by himself. The negative reaction of the other ten disciples leads Jesus to make some clear cut distinctions between the world's reasoning and the church's ordering. In the world there are leaders (*hoi dokountes archein*) who lord it over people (*katakuriuousin*). They are the great ones who exert authority (*katexousiazousin*).

This is the status-subservience syndrome. But in the church greatness is measured in terms of service (*diakonos*), the first has to be slave (*doulos*) of all. Jesus, the Lord of the church, is himself the clearest expression of this pattern. He did not come to be ministered to (passive, *diakonethenai*), but to minister (active, *diakonesai*). He went further: he gave his life sacrificially for many.

In terms of logical human reasoning, this does not make sense. Yet it was eminently real for Jesus, and real to the church, which acknowledged this suffering servant as both Lord and Christ. How can we model our ministry on this pattern? How can we ministers serve Christ and the church, and, by our our service, give leadership? How do we avoid becoming status oriented and liberate the laity to serve also?

The husband/wife analogy

This whole matter of authority and service is related to the family in Ephesians 5 and 6. A consideration of the husband/wife relationship here may help us considerably toward a more Biblical view of ministry.

On the surface the husband appears to outrank the wife, as though there is a difference in status. But when Paul speaks of wives submitting themselves to their husbands he is thinking of a relationship entirely different from children being obedient to their parents. In the case of wives, the verb *hypotassethai* is used. The verb form is in the middle (reflexive) voice and means the willing subjection of oneself to another. The implication is that this is the voluntary decision of an equal in order to manifest the quality of humility. In the case of children, the verb *hupakouein* in the active voice is used and expresses a relationship of subservience. It is to be noted that the willing subjection of the wife is but a repetition of the willing subjection of all persons in the family to each other (Eph. 5:21). In view of what Paul says in Gal. 3:28, 1 Cor. 7:3f. (note the *homoiou*, indicating equality) and 11:11f., there can be no doubt about the equality of husband and wife before God. Paul is here departing from contemporary Jewish tradition which treated women like children. According to Bera-koth (a tractate of the Mishnah) slaves, children and wives could not repeat the *shema*: "The Lord our God is One", because this meant that the speaker had only one lord and the slave had another master; the child also had a parent, and the wife also had a husband. Paul does not see the husband as one to be obeyed, but the wife as one who should humbly submit herself as an equal to her husband.

Yet the husband is described as the head (*kephale*) of the wife. This does not mean status but responsibility. He is the leader who serves with love, indeed self-sacrificing love (Eph. 5:25). The only force he uses is the force of love which finds its supreme manifestation in the crucifixion of Christ.

Now the apostle is speaking here primarily of the relationship of the Church to Christ (Eph. 5:32). The people of God are to submit themselves willingly to each other and to Christ who willingly subjected himself (as an equal) to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28 cf. 11:3). Within the Church, then, there is ruling without higher status and submitting without lower status and, because there is no status (after the pyramid style), the servant can lead and the leader can serve. The latter part of this statement is corroborated by the apostle's comments re slaves and masters in Eph. 6.

The master/slave analogy

Although the master/slave relationship is similar to that of the parent/child (cf. *hupakouete*, Eph. 6:5), there is still an equality expressed in verse 9. Masters are to do the same to their slaves as their slaves do to them, namely, give willing service (*met'eunoias douleuontes*). The reason for this unexpectedly (from the human viewpoint) reciprocal relationship is theological. Masters (*kurioi*) themselves have a Master (*Kurios*) in heaven. Christ is the *Kurios* of both the *douloi* and the *kurioi*.

The implication here is exactly the same as in Gal. 3:28, that before God there is no higher or lower so far as male and female, master and slave is concerned. God is not partial to these physical differences and man should not be either (compare the use of the same term in Eph. 6:4 and Jas. 2:9).

The fact that today we do not believe in slavery and are convinced that Christianity liberates from slavery in all its forms, should not prevent us from listening to what is said here. Paul is not working out a political philosophy for changing the structures of human relationships. He is, rather, showing how Christians should view these relationships out of their acceptance of the Lordship of Christ. When a man or woman, Jew or Gentile, master or slave, parent or child stands before the Crucified One he stands as a person needing the forgiving grace of God. When this person, regardless of such human distinctions, accepts this grace he or she becomes a brother or sister to every other Christian and to Christ. At the same time, those who have this family relationship are also fellow servants (*sundouloi*, Rev. 6:11).

A LETTER FROM A PATRON AND SPONSOR

Implications for Ministry

What must be emphasized now in regard to ministry in the church is the supreme headship of Christ and the equality of all members as fellow servants. As there is no partiality before Christ of male and female nor master and slave, so there is no partiality of so-called clergy and laity. We who are ordained to office in the church, stand ultimately before God without our office as far as our acceptance by God is concerned. Like the Apostle Peter at the foot-washing described in John 13, we need the forgiving grace of God. Here we stand completely with the rest of the people of God.

Ministers, as those under Christ, and hence *douloi*, have as their primary task the leading of others to be under Christ (and hence *douloi*). Only out of our willing submission to the authority of Christ can we, who bear office, be free to lead as servants both of Christ and of the congregation. The congregation, in turn, voluntarily accept the authority both of Christ and the servant of Christ, and each person ministers to the others (cf. *diakonountes* and *oikonomoi* as applied to all Christians in 1 Peter 4:10).

The action of setting apart some through the laying on of hands has to do with the development of order in the church. Such order carries with it both responsibility and authority. It does not have any accompanying status. Those chosen under the direction of the Spirit and ordained by the church are first and foremost servants of Christ. Through teaching, preaching, pastoring and other actions they represent their Lord and, by the activity of the Spirit, encourage the church to be faithful to him. The historical rootedness of the ministry has to do with fidelity to Christ and those who were his first chosen witnesses rather than with a succession of who lays hands on whom.

When, therefore, the people of God, in their humanity and sinfulness, move away from the Gospel of Christ, their *doulos* best serves them by being faithful as a servant of Christ. As *doulos* he, then, stands-over-against what they wrongly want, and represents the will of Christ. Of course, his Christian brother in the congregation may, on other occasions, stand on the side of Christ when the minister has moved away from Gospel.

He who would minister must be servant of all—servant of Christ the Head, servant of the body of Christ.

Art Van Seters

It was no easy task for the editors to find persons who would support this publishing venture. Only one sponsor has been found so far. He is a prominent Quebec businessman, Jean Philippe McLennan, III. One of the main conditions for his support was that he should be allowed to explain his action in our pages. The editors are only too happy to meet this condition by printing the following letter from our sponsor.

My dear editors, friends and readers of Arc:

Without doubt you are asking yourselves a question. Why should I, Jean Philippe McLennan, III, a francophone and a catholic (small "c"), undertake to support this modest publishing venture which is being edited by four members of some tiny and obscure religious group about which I know little, understand less, and (to be very frank) care nothing? That, my good friends, is a question which often returns to haunt me late at night when sleep is denied me due to a recurring gastric disorder too delicate to be described in detail to readers of these pages. (Too much good food, my friends,—one pays a price).

But to return to the question. How came my support? Well, these four gentlemen, your editors (journalists *manqué* so to speak) arrived on my doorstep late one evening to seek help. I was their last hope. They had approached every Presbyterian businessman of some importance (and a few of no importance) in Greater Montreal in search of a pitifully small amount of capital needed to launch their venture. They had been turned down flat by every last person they approached and in many cases actually driven out with words found only in modern novels and student newspapers. They had come to me because of my rather tenuous connection with this peculiar religious group to which they adhere. My great-great-grandfather was a Scottish Presbyterian, alas long dead but still on the role of a small Presbyterian Church in the Townships as a member in good standing. (I still receive regularly copies of some journal called the *Presbyterian Record* addressed to him which incidently I find extremely useful for stuffing cracks in the wall of my summer home.)

Well, what was I to do? Could I say no to these four haggard creatures standing on my doorstep? I am a kind man, generous to a fault, like my fathers before me. Anyway, this is not the first time our family has been afflicted by grasping Presbyterians eager to exploit even the slightest connection to further their cause. My dear Father allowed himself to be talked into a generous donation to something called *Presbyter-*

ian *Comment* which I still receive but decline to describe the use to which I put it. And so I offered my four editors a gift of some shares in my munitions and small arms factory. They began to look ill and politely refused the gift. I perceived that I may have offended some deeply entrenched scruple. Perhaps they were worried about the use to which my guns and explosives were put? I hastened to explain that I sold to all parties, right or left, Maoist guerilla or fascist colonel. No discrimination was practised. But our four gentlemen still declined the gift.

There was one other possibility. I own another company, the English Ladies Genuine Whalebone Corset Company, Ltd. and I offered them a gift of a few shares in this company if they can produce one hundred subscriptions. However, to be frank, this is not as generous as it may sound. The demand for genuine whalebone corsets has not been great in recent years. Nevertheless, the odd order from portly clergymen is just enough to keep the business from bankruptcy. I hasten to explain that these clergymen purchase our corsets to wear under their cassocks. It keeps the tummy in and brings to an end rude remarks from little boys about imminent blessed events and so on. All in all there should be enough return from the shares in my corset factory to float the Arc (if I may be permitted to put it this way—my irrepressible sense of humour).

But I must confess another reason for my generosity in supporting Arc. My dear mother, Jeanne, is directly descended from that brave young heroine burnt at the stake by the English, Jeanne d'Arc. Indeed, my dear mother still hides the matches when English friends come to our home. And so, when I saw the title of this little venture, "Arc", it was like a sign. Could it be that in some mysterious way these four anglophone gentlemen, perhaps even unconsciously, are seeking to do penance and make amends for the past? Could it be that they are resuming in some way the mission of that French girl long ago, picking up the torch so to speak? We can hope so. Perhaps they too hear voices. Let us hope that they find some measure of success for then my dear mother will no longer feel compelled to hide the matches when English visit.

Most respectfully,

Jean Philippe McLennan, III

DOING THEOLOGY TODAY

Canada is notoriously insecure about its own identity. A famous skit in the McGill student review *My Fur Lady* explained that we are busy half the time telling the British we aren't American, and the other half telling the Americans we aren't British; so who has time to be Canadian? In theology it's the same thing—we trade on British or American theology (behind both stand forbidding Germans—or Dutchmen). Or perhaps we make some small contribution toward paying off the heavy mortgage we owe on our past, that debt to our fathers which hangs heavy around our necks. Mortgage or albatross, the metaphors suggest what's wrong with theology in Canada today: it lacks breathing space to be creative, room to flex its muscles.

In this series of articles projected for Arc I will try to indicate some leading theological lines or groups or "trajectories" along which creative theology is being done today. But I will try to keep before us this other trajectory, the modest and even insecure position of theology in Canada, including the Presbyterian Church. For instance, the recent book "What it Means To Confess the Christian Faith Today" (edited by William Klempa and published by the Committee on Doctrine) was planned in order to show Presbyterians that one must learn how to "do theology" from age to age. One cannot repeat the conclusions of one's fathers without engaging in the wrestling with *questions* as they did.

A different figure may be used to suggest what a series like this in a journal like this should attempt. It should try a kind of theological cartography—mapping out the terrain to help us get our bearings, to let us see the woods before we examine the trees. We will find old landmarks, trails blazed—and some dead ends. Hopefully, we will also discover unexpected vistas of splendour and paths that invite futher exploration.

The Dead and Living God

Most important, surely, is the fact that the "debate about God" has been renewed in our time. It was the 19th century that began the modern form of that perennial debate, with sharp critique (Feuerbach, Marx) through bold rejection (Nietzsche) and now various alternatives: existentialists, humanists, behaviorists. Both the "Honest to God" and the "God is Dead" forms of the debate reminded us that traditional ways of phrasing Christian theology had hardened into a false obstacle to proclamation. Tied to outworn ideas and images, the Gospel could not get a hearing. The old "classical theism" in which God and man are separate beings, with God exist-

ting outside his creation and present only in some miraculous manner—that was seen to be an accidental way of putting things, not the essential way.

Alan Richardson has provided a good summary of this scene: *Religion in Contemporary Debate* (SCM paperback, 1966; about \$1.50). Here is Religion and Religionless Christianity; Atheism and Secularism; the New Hermeneutics; the Death of God. Those were the catchwords, already outdated as the debate moves forward. Even the famous question of the "secularization process" which Harvey Cox celebrated (*The Secular City*, Macmillan, 1965) has received various answers—Jacques Ellul (e.g. *The Meaning of the City*, Eerdmans, 1971) is pessimistic about the whole technological enterprise, although Colin Williams (*Faith in a Secular Age*, Fontana, 1966) can provide a cautious optimism as he sees new possibilities for mission and evangelism.

It helps to know who shaped the debate about God in our time—the big guns now largely silent: Barth, Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, Tillich. For a fine summary and assessment, see William Nicholls' *Systematic and Philosophical Theology* (\$2.15). What they all were after, more or less, was—as Karl Heim once phrased it—to "show how transcendence is possible" in the modern world. For if scientific man cannot form a proper question about "transcendence", then all proclamation will by-pass him completely. So in different ways, they laboured to make a hearing possible for gospel. Barth remained adamant that one has to challenge man—at all times, including this one—with an alien language, a piece of news that Bonhoeffer described as "revelation-positivism". If you don't believe it, it's because you don't want to. No doubt a caricature of the real Barth, it nevertheless fed the debate, especially as Bonhoeffer's disciples waxed eloquent about religionless christianity, and thought that Christ wanders around incognito in Everyman. Another caricature, masking another truth. Was Bultmann more helpful? At least he reminded us that exegesis and preaching are what we're talking about, so that if Gospel doesn't happen in between interpreters and proclaimers, there's not much hope. Tillich, of course, was tuned in to somewhat different drummers—artists and poets, for instance: what do they say about the question Who is Man?

From Man to God

The God-question has to take this form, if transcendence is to seem possible—that is the conclusion of much of the debate. For instance, in *New Theology* No. 7 ('The Recovery of Transcendence': Macmillan, 1970) we find significant shifts: theologians are again willing to talk

about "experience", about "myth" and the various "models" that (often subconsciously) guide our imagery; about "presence" and "process", and "the futurist option". That's not a bad agenda for where this series should go—what about our exploring those paths together?

Another indicator of how theology is getting done today comes from *Theological Crossings* (Geyer & Peerman: Eerdmans, 1971), the "How My Mind Has Changed" series from *The Christian Century*. Notice how the contributors now include figures from the Third World (Camara), behind the Iron Curtain (Lochman), Judaism (Fackenheim), and a woman (Cynthia Wedel)! Notice, more significantly, that throughout their reflections is a sense of urgency, of the importance of sorting things out theologically in such a time of doubt and confusion.

But are we to let pass the idea mooted above, that it is the "question about man" that takes precedence? Insofar as we mean that this is the form in which the ultimate question strikes an age like ours, it demands the closest attention. That is, we may well be in a pre-Easter situation, as it were, the "time" of disciples rather than apostles. In that case, we are being addressed by the manhood of Jesus and faced with the question: who is he, really? Thus the divine trajectory, the polarizing power of the divine behind the human, may find a way towards us. Lest this be thought bad theology, let us remember Calvin's words at the opening of the *Institutes*: "True and substantial wisdom consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves. But, while these two branches of knowledge are so intimately connected, which of them precedes and produces the other, is not easy to discover."

It was this sort of divine-and-human connection, this covenantal unity, that led Karl Barth to suggest the term "theanthropology" for what christians are up to. "Theology", in the literal sense, means the science and doctrine of God. A very precise definition of the christian endeavour in this respect would really require the more complex term 'the-anthropology'. For an abstract doctrine of God has no place in the christian realm, only a 'doctrine of God and man', a doctrine of the commerce and communion between God and man" (*Evangelical Theology in the 19th Century*).

Here is the radical shift which the Bible warrants—away from abstract speculation about some God "on his own" (his attributes, attitudes, inner life or being)—and about some man "on his own" (his nature, destiny or existence). That's the stuff of which "religions" are made—and philosophies. The Bible, on the other hand, un-

veils a different scene, a drama of interplay, a give-and take action. Dynamic; in process; God-and-man "becoming" together. What do we know of God "on his own"? (Answer: not nearly so much as our fathers thought *they* knew!) Luther and Calvin, of course, were not so arrogant. Luther used to warn against climbing up to heaven for a vision of some "naked deity", as if Jesus Christ were not enough; as if he could be by-passed.

Today's insistence on the human dimension, therefore, is not necessarily bad theology. It is not to begin with man on his own, to decide that anthropology of some kind (e.g. existential anxiety) is a good starting-point. Rather, it is to begin with covenant, with Incarnation, with Jesus Christ. It is this christian starting-point that provides a focus on man. But it is no longer the absolute man, the "classical" view in which man has his own nature or substance. This may be the case for too much of our traditional theology, but its long history does not prove its truth. Rather, we must turn to a more "relational" view of man and God, a view which honours the biblical perspective, the focus on their interaction as the basis for our double knowledge.

J. C. McLelland

Religious Studies Library, McGill University
3520 University St., Montreal, Que. H3A 2A7

before the event

chimes strike
piercing the stillness
of the night

the racing mind
cannot sleep

tomorrow
(it's already today)
the burden of worship
returns
not as a load
suddenly picked up
but as a hot day's
journey

peddling easy
in the morning
wind in the face
free
refreshing

a shady tree
in the heat
of noon
an oasis
temporary

the afternoon's marathon
straining
every fibre

this saturday pause
over
the final struggle
has begun

if integrity is to win
if the signpost is to be clear
if god's people are to be led
only to the nazarene
the yielding
dying
of one
must come and
with it
within it
out of it
the blowing of a wind
the burning of a fire

Art Van Seters