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introducing a double
Editorial

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THE MODEL MINISTER

Christian Ministry means quite different things to insiders and outsiders. On behalf of the latter, we include in this issue some random samplers "As Others See Us". Novelists down the centuries have thrown an objective light on the person and role of Priest and Presbyter, sometimes kindly but often cutting. To the outsider the clergy-man appears a strange beastie indeed, making a living as "shepherd" or "preacher" — both archaic roles; or trading on current trends by practising "counseling". To the insider, however, the office is sacred, the "highest calling" as our ecclesiastical rhetoric puts it. The many faces of ministry down the years serve only to reinforce its importance and to support recruitment. Happy indeed is he who is called to this supreme office!

The two sketches seem wildly different. Yet today the outsider's view receives considerable support, for, even within the church, both clergy and

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laity worry over leadership roles and authority figures. We are still not out of the depressing period when our theologues considered the parish ministry as the lowest form of Christian service, and opted for "special ministries" or even for "secular" jobs. The ideal of "service" still obtains, but no longer can we take it for granted that Christian pastors do it best. Today we recognize how different Jesus' own ministry was from a parish pastor, and how strange the Apostles would have seemed to a modern vacancy committee (can you imagine interviewing Paul on a Sunday afternoon following a service in which he had preached theology for an hour and then insisted on sending out for bread and wine for an *Agapé*?). So what is our "model" minister?

Not long ago an Assembly Committee (unhappily named "Committee on the Training of Professional Church Workers") tried to poll the church on the topic of models for ministry, especially "team ministry". It discovered that nobody understood how "models" function in human thinking, and that most thought of "team" as meaning more than one minister. The last point need not be all that bad, except to reinforce the old priestly idea of clericalism. That is, the Reformation was in large part a reaction against the proliferation of priests who had taken over all the functions of divine service. The new Presbyter was not to be "old Priest writ large" but rather one who interacted with his congregation, allowing them to discover their rightful "service" or ministry. In modern terms he "enabled them to participate fully in liturgy and polity, and in the ethics of Gospel living. He and they together constituted the *team*."

Today we seem to have glimpsed that ideal for a brief bright moment and then quickly buried it under a return to clericalism. When we talk of "models of ministry" we seem to mean various ways of helping the clergyman do his unique task. We do not see the need for genuine renewal in liturgical, political and ethical terms, a search for genuine expressions of the clergy-laity teamwork, which the Reformers tried to initiate. It is to be hoped that the section of the June Congress devoted to "models of ministry" will help to overcome this error.

There are several "team ministries" going throughout the land; almost all of them take that name because they employ more than one ordained clergyman. They do not necessarily see the function of the cleric as enabling his session, his congregation, its groups, to function as a team in and to its community. So it seems that that "ministry of the laity", which we talked of so resoundingly only a decade ago (remember the birth of Presbyterian Men and what it was supposed to do for the ministry of the laity?), has been lost in our frantic search to legitimate the ministry of the clergy.

Perhaps in this issue we may see how both fit together; and how there may yet arise a "model" to show the way.

BY "AUTHORITY" OF ASSEMBLY

Not every article in Arc is authorized by the General Assembly but the following one, "Ordained to Serve" and the reactions to it, has been. Not that the 100th Assembly knew exactly what it was promoting—the article was only written in December. That Assembly agreed to encourage the church to reflect on the meaning of ministry today through such an article and responses to it. So this double issue (we hope Subscribers will be satisfied!) is being sent to presbyteries in limited quantity. Presbyteries can then act in a variety of ways: "note and file"; send them to a committee; debate them in the full court; ask one person to make a resounding critique that can be sent back to the Committee of Church Doctrine simpliciter; auction them off to the lowest bidder; or set aside some time for informal reflection on the various viewpoints expressed here. This last option might include input of the participant's views or questions about ministry, study of various Scripture passages and some prayerful struggle toward the most effective shape of ministry as we commence our second century. When that begins to happen, Assembly's gamble will have paid off.

ORDAINED TO SERVE

John Knox once said that if tradition did not adequately reflect scripture, tradition would have to change. But sometimes what we have thought of as being biblical is open to other interpretations. If one takes the historical rootedness of the New Testament documents seriously, the variety of church structures, offices and leadership patterns reflected in its pages should not be surprising. The first century was a fluid period in the development of ecclesiology and what is *described* is not necessarily *prescribed*. Further, in the case of the laying on of hands, when is this ordination or induction or an act of ministration in some other sense? Even by asking such an analytical question, we are tending to impose our perspective on the New Testament instead of opening ourselves to the New Testament's own perspective.

Ultimately our ministry must go back to our Lord himself. He is the source and paradigm for ministry. He calls us to follow him and grants us his Spirit to enable us to do so. His ministry was marked by servanthood and the early church deliberately abandoned priestly and authoritarian words for office in favour of "servant" terminology in the main.

The nature of the Church as the Body of Christ has also affected the development of ministry. All have the gift of the Spirit and each can "minister" in some way to each other (I Corinthians 12). This raises afresh the problem of the relationship of some, whom we call "ministers", to the rest whom we refer to as "laity". Once again the temptation is to read back into Scripture what we want to find there.

CURRENT ISSUES IN OUR CHURCH

All of this is a backdrop for looking at current issues in the area of ministry that have been raised at General Assemblies in recent years (1969, 1970, and 1973). These issues may be grouped under several headings.

LEVELS OF ORDINATION

Both elders and ministers are said to be "ordained". In fact so are members of a "deacons court" (*Book of Forms* #135-138). According to this section the "higher office" includes the "lower one". A deacon must be ordained again to be an elder and an elder must be ordained again to be a minister. This is not just a functional distinction because the minister's office includes the other two. Does this raise a serious question about the "parity of the eldership"? Ruling elders and teaching elders may be numerically balanced in the courts of the church and given an equal vote there, but, in many respects, they are not equal. There are vast differences in educational preparation as well as in responsibility and authority. It may be that elders are "ordained" as over against the rest of the congregation, but aren't they really part of the "laity" as over against the "clergy"? Should we "come clean" with this distinction and stop talking about "parity"? What clarity can we gain on this from the Scriptures? To what extent should our polity be altered to be more appropriate for the Body of Christ in the twentieth century?

DEACONNESSES AND ORDINATION

A comparison of ruling elders and formally trained, fully employed, deaconesses raises a number of questions. Why are elders "ordained" and deaconesses not? If the courts have to do with ruling, and if theologically developed acumen is an ingredient in ruling, why are elders members of church courts and deaconesses not? In addition, two persons could function in the same way as directors of Christian Education, but the one who is a minister is given a very different place in the courts of the church than the one who is a deaconess. What is the relationship between "place" and "function"? Does ordination have to do primarily with place and secondarily with function? How did the church in the first century relate ordination to function?

MINISTRY AND THE SACRAMENTS

It has been said that the exclusive administration of the sacraments by ministers is purely a matter of "good order" in the church. The minister is entrusted with interpreting the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments remains the only function reserved for ministers. Ruling elders and other members of the congregation may preach and teach the Word and are encouraged to do so. *The Book of Forms* allows for the exceptional ordination of a student or catechist "solely for the purpose of increasing his efficiency" (#211/a), by which is meant his right to administer the

sacraments. How does this functional distinction relate to the New Testament documents and Reformed Tradition? Does this distinction move in a "priestly" or sacerdotal direction?

VARIETIES OF MINISTRY

One mark of our present world is increasing specialization and diversification. More and more ministers are no longer pastors of congregations. Some are theological professors, national office administrators, field superintendents, chaplains, mission work co-ordinators, evangelists etc. They are in areas of Christian service which are generally viewed as ministry. Most, though not all, of them are, or have been, "ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament". Because we have viewed ordination normally as life-long, ministers who change their form of service continue to be viewed as ministers even when they are employed in "secular" work. Can this approach to ministry be supported by the biblical writings? Should all ministers be ordained "to Word and Sacrament"? If so, why? If not, why not? What are the pros and cons of having a plurality of ordinations related to service (but not to status)?

EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

One of the fundamental reasons for differences between the "clergy" and the "laity" is in formal theological education. There are also other important differences such as the private call and the call of the church with reference to ministers being "stewards" of the gospel or special representatives (not mediators) of Christ. But when elders are called and ordained to rule and given (comparatively) no theological training, the gap between them and the ministers is widened and the dependence of the former on the latter is almost assured. Furthermore, up until recently, theological education has been seriously limited in two ways. It has been oriented chiefly to the pastorate and not fostered specialized preparation for other forms of ministry. Second, it has viewed such education primarily in terms of a three year course of theoretical and practical subjects. Today there are new opportunities for specialization and theological education includes the general acquisition of knowledge, the development of particular skills appropriate to each person and his task, and the personal growth of the individual. Such learning must continue in a wide variety of ways while one is engaged in ministry. Can it also involve the laity, especially the session? Should we put more emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit for ministers and laity? How can we develop more theological training for elders? Should we also make different (and not just additional) requirements for non-pastor ministers who are serving as teachers, administrators, chaplains, etc.

WOULD A PLURALITY OF ORDINATIONS HELP US MOVE TOWARD SOME ANSWERS?

I would like to suggest that our church consider whether some of the questions raised above could be resolved by ordaining persons to particular forms of service. This is not pure functionalism or pragmatism. Ordina-

tion must continue to be grounded in Christ and the Apostolic witness to his living presence as the source of the Church's life. Our apostolic succession has to do with our faithfulness to that witness and to the Spirit who still breathes power and vitality into the Church. No ordination can be valid that does not arise out of the ministry of Christ.

In brief, our approach may be summed up in the words of Henri d'Espine:

"The Church recognizes by ordination the call that God has addressed to one of its members. It grants him authority for the exercise of the ministry within the church to which God has called him. It prays earnestly on his behalf for the graces necessary to the work of this ministry. It ordains him to the service of God, by the laying on of hands, and expresses its certainty that God grants its prayer."

ORDINATION AND THE DIVERSIFIED MINISTRIES, in *The Church and its Changing Ministry*, R.C. Johnson, ed., p.122)

Professor d'Espine then goes on to say that if God calls people to different kinds of ministry in the Church, there should be a "corresponding ordination proper to it". Then, "the difference between the pastoral ministry and the other ministries of the Church will be seen with precision, and no longer falsely". Further, this will mean that pastoral ministry "will no longer be regarded as the only ministry in the full sense, compared to which the others are only auxiliary ministries."

Then ordination could focus more specifically on service. As there were a variety of gifts and functions in the early church and a recognition of three offices by Calvin, we could ordain each person to his form of service. This is not just to a particular position but to a general category of ministry such as teaching, pastoring, ruling, administrating, etc. Theological professors, national office staff, hospital chaplains and so on could be ordained to their respective service. When a person, who was ordained to one form of service, enters another he could be ordained to that new form of service. If he returns to the former, he would not be ordained again.

Such a plurality of ordination would have to depart from the principle of "higher" and "lower" because one ordination is not required for another ordination, nor does one include another. All ordained persons are equal in status, level or authority as far as the government of the church is concerned. Being ordained more than once only indicates various kinds of service and not more power or higher position.

This would seem to be in keeping with the variety of ordinations in the New Testament: of the Seven (Acts 6:6), of the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:17), of elders (Acts 14:23), of missionaries (Acts 13:3), and of the pastor (Tim. 4:14). It is valid to ask whether these are all examples of ordinations, but then can one show they are not ordinations? Cf. further II Timothy 1:6 where spiritual gifts and ordination are specifically connected. That a

variety of gifts should not lead to levels of importance is the central thrust of Paul's whole argument in I Corinthians 12:14-26. The reference to "first", "second", etc., in succeeding verses must relate to chronology or other factors.

The alternative, of ordaining all to "Word and Sacrament", suggests that the pastor is the norm and other forms of ministry are logical extensions of pastoral (in the sense of parish) work. The roles of chaplains, professors and national executives have different thrusts and would only be related incidentally to the sacraments. This may raise new and deeper questions about the meaning of ministry and ordination. That would be all to the good, especially if it throws us back to our historic rootage in Christ and the Apostolic Word instead of rationalizing our current practice.

Art Van Seters

TO CHANGE

or not to change
that is the question;
whether 'tis nobler
to stick with tradition
or endure the slings and arrows
aimed at those who would change it.

To ordain to one office
or to ordain to various offices
that is my question,
Is it nobler to defend "reformed" tradition
or can we be liberated by scripture
to the stance of *semper reformanda*?

EXCERPTS FROM RESPONDENTS

Everet Bean

Does parity ... refer rather to relationship in Church Courts etc? Is it not possible that the present system does not "do violence to parity"? (I read an) article (stating) that the ordination of an Elder, teaching or ruling, is the same ordination and an Elder becoming a Minister having already been ordained would simply now be recognized as a Minister. I have not found much support for this position but it could have bearing on (this) particular question

It would not seem to be true that theologically developed acumen is a required ingredient in the matter of teaching and ruling Elders being a member of Presbytery.

...an excellent case could be made for removing from the Roll of Presbytery...any individual who is not engaged as a Minister in a Congregation except in some very stringently defined "cognate work".

...the reason for ordaining a man to the ministry of Word and Sacrament is not that he has had more training but, having received a Call to the ministry, (he) prepares himself more fully to carry out the responsibilities of that Call. ... a man called to be a ruling Elder should (also be required to prepare himself more fully. ...congregations should elect Elders perhaps a year ... before they are to be ordained and ... (require them) to undergo a recognized course of training.

...perhaps we should have some form of recognition for any Christian person giving his life to some form

of Christian work but this ... should not be equivalent to ... ordination.

...(plurality of ordination) does not seem to have a strong Biblical basis ... and would certainly not give membership on a Church Court—which seems to be the purpose why some wish to have the matter of ordination made to include a much wider segment than it now does.

Bill Duffy

...this paper makes the reader think about ordination, making him reach into past accepted traditions and pressing him to positive, practical changes that could be implemented within the church without... diminishing the importance of ordination. (This) really opens the door to a fuller understanding of the Body, and the gifts given to the different members under Christ's Lordship and the recognition of these gifts and service.

...although ... the spirit enables all to minister to each other, ... this ministering is very specific through the gifts given by the Spirit to different members.

...(re) the parity of elders, ... the answer is ... to train ministers and ... elders to realize that we believe in and should practise the parity of elders as a characteristic of the ordination of elders — all elders.

The Plurality of Ordination. ... is excellent .. (it) will help break the straight jacket that now exists ... (and) should open up the recognition of ordination to other forms of ministry. ... one safeguard, however, is to limit the groups of ministry and service.

Roy Gellatly

...higher and lower levels of ordination has validity only in the sense of the higher level including ordination to additional responsibilities over and above the governmental function. ...Within the courts ... additional ecclesiastical responsibilities should no more upset the balance than the additional responsibilities of a non-ecclesiastical nature that the elders exercise as the sphere of their Christian witness and service. ...imbalance ... speaks of ... ecclesiastical housekeeping rather than ... service ...

...ordain suitable persons who can read well to dispense the Sacraments ... Strictly speaking, laymen should ... read sermons prepared by trained persons. Since we have broken this ideal ... why hang on to the other (limiting the dispensing of Sacraments to clergy)? ... our Church must decide whether we are inclined to a priestly or a prophetic ministerial role.

Ordination means to place in an order of ministry. Once in that order, there follows a commissioning to a specific function or sphere of responsibility. We have lost the sense of being brothers ... in Christ, members of one team of ministry in one mission to the world. ...we ... need to acknowledge ... team ministry, specialization ... balanced by ... specialists and non-specialists within the team setting. Such a reorientation in our thinking makes plural ordinations irrelevant.

EXCERPTS FROM RESPONDENTS

Hans Kouwenberg

I recall ... with amused seriousness, your previous proposal in the A&P to "commission" persons to offices in the church without all the froofraw about ordination. ... "the priesthood of all believers" has been more often quoted than enacted ... we might well reconsider our "traditional" position. Assembly's recent approval of the "ordination" of several men and women to a variety of ministries ... rather than the monolithic ministry of "word and sacrament" is a step in the right direction.

Apart from a different giftedness and preparation of persons for the task ... of ministry, ...there should be no distinction of place among them. "Ordination" has to do with the recognition or approval by the people of the suitability of the gifts and skills which the person possesses and ... is called by God and ... people to exercise. A person's authority rests in the ability to fulfil the task well ... Christ's church is in need of a greater exercise of a greater variety of her people's gifts. ... false and defensive distinctions should be abandoned.

I would have little difficulty in having a recognized, qualified leader in the congregation administer the Sacraments. Perhaps someone ... in the congregation has been gifted by the Holy Spirit for this task. ... that person could share and complement the teaching elder in his role. ...as..."main-line churches" now function, little participation is expected or elicited from each part of the body of

Christ as found in the congregation. ...a more ... extensive programme of lay education would then need to be implemented. ... "ordination" to any of the variety of ministries would still have to be within the context of "Christ and the Apostolic witness to his living presence" but that places all the more emphasis on lay education.

Walter McLean

While working in Nigeria under the Board of World Missions I was acceptable to all persons and paraded ... as a "true" minister. When working for the ... Government ... doing "missionary education", (I) ... was viewed as one who had left the ministry. Ironically ... (I) was dealing with exactly the same issues ... whether I was working with a governmental agency or from a church base. ...to me ... there was need for some ... serious discussion about what ordination and ministry meant. ...the church does

not have machinery ... to relate and encourage responsible action from those who are not in a traditional parish situation. Since there is no sense of control financially, we have not attempted to make our Presbytery machinery work, ... raising comments about "the validity of ministry", which we claim is "not sacramental".

...men who are ordained ought to be called by the Presbytery ... asked if they wish to have their ministry recognized. If a man does not see what he is doing as ministry, the matter ends there. If he sees his work as a ministry ... then ... can the church recognize it as a legitimate area of ordained service? At the moment we take no initiatives with regard to ministry ... when the O. and P. report recommended that the Presbyteries have an executive officer our ... members panicked ... for fear they would lose some of their autonomy. Without some "executive capacity", it is impossible ... to broaden an understanding of ministry and ... maintain a sense of responsibility. ... in order to have a healthy ministry, there must be some guide lines and some sense of mutual responsibility. ... Presbyteries have the capacity to create this, but ... do not have the executive machinery, even if they had the "will".

What is the Church? ... the clergy?
... the courts?

Here the numbers game ... comes to the fore ... Whoever is *ordained* is of the Church, and for the Church in service ... Rather than a plurality of ordinations, why not one ordination broadened to recognize and include specialized ministries.

Wayne Smith

It is necessary that we give recognition to vocations and gifts beyond the functions of ruling and teaching. ... recognition of other gifts is beginning to take hold here and there in our congregations. When Jesus first "ordained" it was to "their fruit" which is not necessarily the same thing as preaching or ruling.

Whether people should be ordained as a response to the church's recognition of their various gifts, I doubt. Ordination has sometimes been restrictive instead of helpful ... because even (ministers) have varieties of gifts among them. But, because they are ordained, they, and the church at large, assume that preaching and ruling are their long suits and that one minister or elder is interchangeable with another. In the recognition of the other gifts of the Spirit there should be recognition, ... (on) some occasions even a rite, but not an ordination with its implication that this one gift will continue to be exercised as the major vocation in the Christian's life. ... some individuals have within themselves a variety of gifts which the Holy Spirit may see fit to utilize from time to time in different ways.

Fred Miller

"Ordained to Serve" is a most constructive piece of thinking on ordination. I ... agree ... and encourage you to move even further. ...we ... need a more radical — more nearly a New Testament type of ministry. The future ... is going to require a creative, flexible, much broader understanding of ordination.

Your insights excite me ... at last there might be the possibility of breaking the power dead-lock the institution has placed upon the Church. We are so accustomed to ... the institution that we scarcely see the reality of the world's needs. So tied to the structure that we are prevented from doing the very thing to which Christ calls us.

... some years ago ... (immediately) after (his) ordination (a minister) ... declared that now he had the privilege of the Sacraments and he enjoined the people to accept his authority. I wanted to scream the only authority we have is that of servant. ... It's really questionable in N.T. terms of gifts whether any amount of theological training gives us the prerogative of authority which we have assumed. ... In the synoptics there is a thread of ministry — a calling to service which is gathered up ... in the words of Christ in Luke 4:18-19. ... any understanding of ministry or ordination which does not encompass this statement is short of the mark.

... specific forms of service would be a good base for ordination. ... why not make ordination completely task oriented? In the act of ...

setting people apart for specific tasks the Church could give its support to the ministry of gifts and not "Word & Sacrament" ... the life of God's people would be enriched if they had the right to celebrate Christ in the midst of the Sacrament without having to bring in a clergyman. I realize the possibilities for abuse — but surely we've gone the other way?

... ordination as I know it has lost most of its meaning. I see it as a power thing and hence very questionable in its present form... it is one of the limiting factors in the work and service of the Church.

COMMENT ON COMMENT

The responses shared above seem to me to indicate a common concern for more genuineness in the ministry of the visible Church. The matter of ordination more specifically depends on one's basic definition. In trying to define ordination there is the further question of the sources of our definition including the biblical materials. We may defend a certain idea as biblical (and, presumably, beyond debate?) but have we really done our exegesis? Yet even after defining ordination and whether there should be one ordination (which is either exclusive or more inclusive) or a plurality of ordinations (with the continuing question of how do you draw some limits), there is still an important question of the relationship of the ordained to the courts of the church. That gets us into the whole matter of what is a court and who should vote in it. Perhaps all this will lead us back again to our basic conception of the church and this, in turn, to her inception and the ministry of Christ.

A.V.S.

"AS OTHERS SEE US"

"Mackenzie had told him that although he might be an intellectual agnostic, he was an emotional child in thrall to his barbarous Presbyterian past. As he thought this, he felt guilty again. But why? Was there no end to the circle of Original Sin? Could a man never grow up and be free?"

(Hugh MacLennan, *Each Man's Son*)

"St. Osoph's is only presbyterian in a special sense. It is, in fact, too presbyterian to be any longer connected with any other body whatsoever. It seceded some forty years ago from the original body to which it belonged, and later on, with three other churches, it seceded from the group of seceding congregations. Still later it fell into a difference with the three other churches on the question of eternal punishment, the word "eternal" not appearing to the elders of St. Osoph's to designate a sufficiently long period. The dispute ended in a secession which left the church of St. Osoph's practically isolated in a world of sin whose approaching fate it neither denied nor deplored."

(Stephen Leacock, *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*)

If Grace
 builds on nature
 how infinite
 must
 the patience of Grace
 be.

Yet nature
 itself
 seems so infinite
 in its design
 and potential -

How else
 could Grace
 then deal
 with nature
 but with infinite patience?

It is
 a comforting precept
 that Grace
 will be waiting
 for those
 who struggle
 but lack
 the wisdom
 of patience.

jutta benfey

THE MINISTER AS CONSULTANT: Four Possible Roles

- Advocate (you have a program and try to sell it)
- Expert (you go with information to deal with their data)
- Process (you help them accomplish their goals)
- Observer/Evaluator (you listen to others and reflect back to them)

The particular role should be appropriate for the situation as well as for the person who is asked to be the consultant, The group and the consultant should agree on which role is appropriate before commencing involvement.

*(from blackboard scratchings by John Westerhoff
 at a Continuing Education Program, P.C.)*

MINISTRY — THE SETTLED PASTOR

A "prima-donna", whose monument was a huge Church, which emptied upon his translation; a "door-mat", whose concern was to offend nobody, and was put to the use which his name implies; and an "autocrat", so unsure of himself his suggestions were heard as commands of the Lord, and therefore intimidated everyone in sight. These were some of the ways in which ministers have been seen in the past, it was suggested at the fall Retreat of Presbyterian College.

Those retreating were assorted professors, students at varying degrees of preparedness for ministry, and two working ministers, one a clerk of Presbytery with weighty comments, the other, a fledgling of little experience and small substance. Such was the forum, the format was simple. Those present were asked to arrange twelve categories or roles in order of priority, to determine their view of the ideal minister.

The consensus was as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Leading Worship and Preaching | 7. A Leader among Leaders |
| 2. Personal and Spiritual Growth | 8. Teaching |
| 3. Counselling | 9. The Leader |
| 4. Enabler | 10. Denominational, Ecumenical Responsibilities |
| 5. Visiting | 11. Community Leader |
| 6. Evangelism | 12. Administration |

The two speakers then spoke at inordinate length, and as a concluding exercise, "vacancy committees" were formed who were given typical charges to fill. They were then asked to rearrange the priorities of their categories, to conform to the needs of the vacancies, and the following "mean average" list emerged.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Leading Worship and Preaching | 7. A Leader among Leaders |
| 2. Counselling | 8. Administration |
| 3. Visiting | 9. Community Leader |
| 4. Teaching | 10. Evangelism |
| 5. Enabler | 11. Denominational, Ecumenical Responsibilities |
| 6. Personal and Spiritual Growth | 12. The Leader |

One further thing might be added. A downtown Church of 1,000 people, and a three-point rural charge, coincided almost exactly in the arrangement of priorities that were made for future ministers. The tentative conclusions that one might wish to draw are that ministry was seen as individualistic, when applied to oneself, and when offered a chance to role play, very

little change takes place. From the perspective offered by the foregoing some comments seem to be in order.

It is said of teachers that the basic style they adopt is one they found acceptable in a teacher by whom they, themselves, were taught. This has the effect of making them less receptive to the changes in methods and goal-setting that have taken place since their mentor was trained. Might one say similar things of ministers? Most candidates for ministry, it appears, made the decision to embark upon ministry under the influence of an already established minister. It is of more than passing interest to note that the polls already mentioned gave the most public face to the minister the most priority. Certainly in talking to church members, as well as teachers and student, a good "pulpit man" seems almost mandatory if our pressing needs are to be solved. For a Presbyterian it is almost heresy to question this premise. Yet is it so, and, more importantly, should it be so? We're stuck with great barns of Churches, many nearly empty, and the only possible way it seems we have of filling them is by engaging a "star act". It also seems that most ministers think of themselves as having this potentiality. Understandably so. We have all experienced little old ladies telling us just what wonderful preachers we are and most of the verbal feedback we get tends to be positive. Providing we don't enquire too closely as to its motivation, people have a natural tendency to tell one "smooth" rather than "hairy" things. Yet there is another kind of feedback, that of emptying pews, of loss of commitment, even in the churches staffed by Mr. Super-preacher. Is it not time to stop and ask, are we training and preparing men in any way that takes account of the changes that we see as both possible and desirable. Some radical rethinking of the role of the minister seems to be in order. It might be worth trying to formulate some first principles.

The Church is called into being to exercise two functions: to worship, and to evangelise. To that end Christians are given gifts, to teach, to prophesy, to administer, to do any of the myriad tasks that facilitate these ends, both of which are Theocentric. To worship is to praise God, to evangelise is to call people to God. To be effective in either or both, the Church is always in the position of pointing beyond itself, to the greater reality, rooted and founded "in Christ". One of the ways this happens is that the community "in Christ", placards the dynamics and relationships that are implicit in the phrase. The function of ministry is one exercised by the community both amongst itself, and to larger communities, i.e. its locale, and its presbytery. It follows then that any one individual who takes these functions to himself, or stands in between the individual and the community, is counter-productive to the very ends which he seeks to serve. At best he is behaving "vicar-iously", at worst he's placarding traits of individualism, competitiveness and egocentricity that deny efficacy of the gospel, for he is trapped in a vicious circle of events. If one competes with one's colleagues, one either wins or loses. Either is bad. The winner is confirmed in his competitiveness, the loser withdraws from the battle. How many ministers are there to whom the words "cynical",

"bitter", "defensive", or "hostile", could be applied! That's the result of learning to live with competitive defeat. It seems that a first step toward a model ministry would have as a result an openness and an honesty which appears impossible between people who see themselves as rival drawing cards.

A minister is ordained by the larger community, the Presbytery, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, neither of which can be done in a vacuum. To preach in this context cannot be limited to twenty minutes of quasi-revelation each Sunday morning. This might still be an appropriate strategy in some Churches, but viewing acres of serried pitch pine, broken only by an occasional grey head, should have convinced us that its universality is open to question. Preaching, then, must be seen as the strategy of placarding the gospel whenever and wherever we do it. To administer the Sacraments not only implies a community, it is impossible outside of a community. And here seems to lie the nub of the matter. For community involves a network of relationships between the constituent members, and it is by the depth and quality of these relationships that we become "in Christ", and that we effectively placard the gospel. A Church in which members are encouraged to engage in loving one another, and helped towards a satisfactory expression of love, is a Church which will have the greatest difficulty in accommodating the people clamouring to be part of it. The minister's role, then, is one of enabling such relationships and facilitating their expression.

Let me conclude with an example. The sudden death of an only son had left a widow distraught. Her minister was disqualified by age, sex and experience from ministering effectively to her needs. Fortunately he realized it. He telephoned people of similar age and like experience and background and suggested that they, on behalf of the Church, should minister on this occasion. They agreed. They discovered that they were effective "ministers". The widow found in the non-professional solace a comfort unavailable from any other source. The "ministers" were strengthened, the widow was helped, a network of relationships was forged and deepened. The community ministered to a member. All involved grew together "in Christ". The minister enabled this and facilitated the outcome. That seems to be a style which, in a lonely, alienated world, will prove itself time and time again.

Derek Balmer

BARC (readers' feedback)

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