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# The Fraternal

May, 1974

No. 170

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## FOREWORD

by the Bishop of Ottawa

My brethren in Christ:

When Dr. Perkin asked me to write a Foreword to this issue of the **Fraternal**, I was pleased to comply and consider it a privilege to make some comments about today's ministry.

My particular assignment is not to analyze the articles in this magazine but to comment on the ministry after serving in it for thirty-four years—thirty-one years as a pastor and over three years as a bishop in the Anglican Church. Although someone has commented that people don't want good advice but good news, I am going to be bold in offering the former.

1. First of all I feel that today's parson should take advantage of opportunities to upgrade his ministry. At a conference I attended recently, someone commented that it is possible for one to have ten years' experience as a clergyman or to have one year's experience ten times! Therefore I ask myself the question, have I the experience of one year thirty-four times or the experience of thirty-four years? I realize that there is a danger in becoming the sort of parson who is always running off to courses and conferences, but there is also the danger of becoming stale or activist. To my mind one must choose a middle course. Most denominations today offer special courses for their ministers and clergy. Some provide funded (or partly funded) sabbaticals so that pastors can upgrade themselves. Many courses available are ecumenical.

2. My second piece of advice is, do not leave the parish ministry for secular work without much thought. Perhaps it is not true of Britain, but in America, both in Canada and the United States, it seems to me that the "God is Dead" period took its toll. We must respect those who have left for other work, but one wonders if the "God is Dead" era tended to reduce the Gospel to humanitarianism. One felt that some parsons seemed to be saying to themselves, "if we cannot be certain about our faith, at least we can lead our people in social welfare and social action". (Works without faith!) Unless one believes in fate instead of God, or unless one entered the ministry without conviction, he should think carefully before he takes his hands off the "parish plough" in spite of all the challenges and changes of the church of our day.

3. Early in my ministry I attended a Quiet Day which was conducted by a wise and effective clergyman who spoke especially of the parish ministry and of its demands. He said something to this effect, "do not spend all your time on work which you find easy but tackle the work which you find difficult. If you are a scholar, be sure to place emphasis on visiting. If you find preaching difficult, work at it and with the help of the Holy Spirit you will be surprised to find you have latent talents." As I write this I realize that today's church and today's world are placing an emphasis on

specialisation and such is necessary in certain areas and parishes. But for the average parish, the above advice is still valid.

4. Showing charity and lending support to leaders and members of other denominations are essential. Perhaps you have heard the story of the man whose hobby was cock-fighting. Although the sport was illegal, he continued until he had purchased two birds which were undoubtedly winners. The day came for the final match. He and his friends placed the birds in the back of the truck and headed for "the finals". Arriving at their destination the owner was devastated at what he saw! Unfortunately he had placed both cocks in the same cage and they had fought furiously all the way to the match! In angry exasperation he looked at them and said, "Didn't anyone tell you two birds that you are on the same side?" The time is long past when we should expound on the Ecumenical Movement—without practising it. We must show respect for our Christian brothers whoever they are. We may disagree with their views, but we can demonstrate concern and support. To put it Biblically, "while we have time let us do good unto all men and especially unto those who are of the household of faith".

5. We clergy must remind ourselves that all our members are in the ministry! (Perhaps Baptists think this way and work this way better than Anglicans). There is a word in our part of the world which is used in teaching and conference circles, namely, animator. This is our role. We make a great mistake if we think that the parson is the only minister. We must rediscover the ministry of the laity. The church assembles for worship or study and then its members disperse into the "market-place" to be the church in the world. The effectiveness of the future church depends not only on the ability, training and experience of its clergy, but the Christian effectiveness of its members.

I live in a city which has many ambassadors. That is the word I would like to emphasize, for as St. Paul said, "we are ambassadors for Christ". One Ambassador whom I admired greatly said to me one day—"Bishop, it may seem wonderful to be an ambassador, but I can tell you that it is not easy—I work long hours, I have a small staff and the pay isn't all that great." Those words, I suppose, could be spoken by many a clergyman. We are ambassadors of Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Christ is the first to agree that the way isn't easy. After all, He died on a cross! The Cross is the symbol of our ministry.

It is a distinct privilege to write these words from the Capital of Canada. May God bless you and continue to use you for the extension of His Kingdom. He isn't asking us to be sensational or special, but faithful. May you find abundant love and joy and peace in His Service!

Yours in Christ,

✠ WILLIAM J. ROBINSON

Bishop of Ottawa.

## INTRODUCTION

It is a commonplace observation that the church in the twentieth century has already been subjected to the influence of a number of powerful theological forces. The **Ecumenical Movement**, although passing through a time of critical evaluation both internally and from outside, is nevertheless a fact of history and a process with a notable record of achievement. We should not ignore the influence of the World Council of Churches on international politics any more than we should overlook the way in which local churches co-operate today as contrasted with fifty years ago.

**Biblical Criticism** is also here to stay, providing liberation for some and a handy scapegoat for others. It has been the means whereby the Bible is freed to speak to contemporary man, giving him a third choice somewhere between scepticism and fundamentalism.

**Liturgical Changes** have been apparent in most major denominations, so that a Baptist minister may even invite his congregation to share with him in a prayer of confession, while a Roman Catholic priest may deliver a challenging and scripturally-based sermon to his flock. The two most obvious features of the liturgical revival have been the greater flexibility in services and the increased participation of congregations.

The Church's **Self-Understanding**, reeling more under the impact of affluence than of two world wars, is finding new expressions. Less and less do we hear of the church as a chosen people, triumphantly claiming the Promised Land, and more and more we hear of the Pilgrim People, living by faith and seeking that ultimate city whose architect and builder is God.

These and many other examples of theological forces prompting change are at work. Yet the fascinating thing is that some churches manage to convince themselves either that these forces are not present or that, being present, they are not important.

However, another set of factors is present. There are **social forces** which can neither be denied nor dismissed. They affect the whole range of church life and influence every position on the theological scale. It may seem ironic that social forces should press upon the church changes which no strictly theological factors could induce, but church history is full of such reminders of God's involvement with the total life of the world.

We live in a **permissive society**, not in the sense of living in a state of moral anarchy or unfettered crime, but in the sense of having lost certain guidelines for conduct which were once commonly accepted, but are no longer.

Undoubtedly, western society is **better educated** now than in previous generations. Much of this education may be "pop-culture", provided by television and tabloid newspapers, but more people read, form opinions and discuss than ever before.

A **greater mobility** is apparent in our communities. It is no longer unusual to spend part of one's life working outside

one's native country; people move from one job to another and one town to another; many travel thirty, fifty or sixty miles to work each day; and holidays in distant places are no longer the unique privilege of the wealthy.

And yet (or should one say "And so . . . ?") we live in a more **anxious society**. There are mysterious and powerful forces at work upon us—the frightful war machine, the faceless bureaucratic system, the frustration of communications without communication, the guilt feelings arising from having too much while others have too little, and the uncertainties produced by a world of rapid change.

These factors affect ministry and ministers.

We no longer dare assume that the moral guidelines are clear and that ministers and congregations know where those guidelines are. The moral issues have become incredibly complex; it is hotly debated when life begins and when it ends, so, not surprisingly, some of the interim decisions present difficulties.

In such a world today's Christian disciple has to move, decide and witness. Merely to tell him to say his prayers and read the Bible is no longer adequate, if indeed it ever was. A policy of systematic Christian education, an optional extra in church life until comparatively recent times, has become an essential feature of total ministry.

How does the minister serve the restless, anxious communities which characterise our world? Presumably new pastoral and counselling skills are required to meet the need.

Perhaps an even more fundamental question is: what kind of man can meet the kind of situation outlined above? It is not possible to write a prescription or provide specifications for such an individual—and even if the ideal minister could be produced no church would ever call him!—but it ought to be possible to see some of the roles the contemporary pastor must fulfil.

The traditional categories may still prove helpful and in the articles which follow we have chosen to elaborate the roles of apostle, prophet, teacher, preacher, pastor and counsellor.

Certainly the minister will need a sense of apostleship, or mission, of vocation, of being divinely chosen, if he is to survive in ministry today.

He will need a prophetic understanding—an ability to interpret the world and its life in moral and spiritual terms.

In a world of increasingly educated people he will need to exercise the ministry of teaching and preaching, the inward and outward aspects of the Christian message.

In pastoral work generally and in the specialised area of counselling, the anxieties of the world and the healing ministry are brought face to face.

The contributors on these themes are conscious that the different roles they discuss begin as fruits of the same Spirit and should be somehow integrated in one person. There is room for specialisation but not to the total exclusion of any aspect.

## INTRODUCTION

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In this sense the man makes the ministry; his functions and roles help to mould his character, but the man is the unifying, integrating force.

We offer our observations in the hope that, in some small measure, the total ministry of the church may be enriched through them.

J. R. C. PERKIN

## THE MINISTER AS APOSTLE

"Sir, it is presumptuous to praise an apostle!" said Dr. Johnson once rebukingly to Boswell. How vastly more presumptuous it seems to claim to be an apostle! Paul can describe himself as "called to be an apostle", but can a minister today be fittingly so described? We may be willingly adjectival and speak with assurance of an "apostolic ministry": but to speak substantively of the Rev. Arthur Jones as an apostle is evidently neither theologically nor semantically respectable. Ordination services speak of ministers as "messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord"; as "bishops, priests, deacons, pastors, prophets"; but direct designation as "apostles" seems conspicuously lacking.

Is the word "apostle" really so rigorously restrictive? Is it to be used solely of the Twelve and only in first century contexts? Even in earliest Christian days the word had a wider application: James the Lord's brother, Barnabas, Silvanus and Timothy were all called apostles. Andronicus and Junias (or Junia, feminine? man and wife?) were apostles (Rom. 16:7) Chrysostom speaks of a woman whose devotion was so great that "she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of an apostle". The word apostle was used outside of early Christianity, in Judaism, in Hellenism, in Gnosticism. Indeed, Walter Schmithals (**The Office of an Apostle in the Early Church**) even finds the origin of the apostolate in Gnosticism, and pictures the Gnostic apostle as a charismatic person whose authority lay in his inward experience, not in outward validation. Only in post-apostolic times, claims Schmithals, did the apostolate in the Church come to be restricted to the twelve and to Paul. Such a provocative thesis is beyond the scope of this article to challenge; but it does make us aware of the wide-spread use of the term in the New Testament environment.

**Apostle** is undoubtedly one of the "fighting words" in Church history. Apostolic succession is a notorious ecumenical stumbling block: an Anglican has called it "the greatest historical and biblical misrepresentation holding back unity among Christians!" Nor is it helpful for those who dismiss it to speak smugly of "apostolic success versus apostolic succession." Why not boldly transpose the word **apostle** from then and there to here and now? Are we not apostles? Can we not restore the original New Testament inclusiveness of the word to the enrichment of our understanding of twentieth century ministry? Surely we can and should attempt just this, so that **apostle** can be a legitimate and meaningful title for a modern minister of Christ.

What are the characteristics of a true apostle in 1974?

(1) **An apostle acts with the authority of Jesus.** The first Christian apostles were not men of status; they were men of Jesus, having his authority as their sole credentials. Jesus, the Master, had followers, learners, disciples, some of whom were closer to him than others. Out of the larger group a smaller nucleus was formed, perhaps not by formal procedure (Mark 3:14 may be partly the schematization of the evangelist) but certainly as the direct outcome of his choice and purpose. But Jesus acted and spoke with particular authority which made his followers more than pupils or learners in a Rabbinic school; as T. W. Manson put it, they were, "apprentices, whose work was not study, but practice". As C. K. Barrett says (**The Signs of an Apostle**, p. 67), "their obedience to his authority, sadly imperfect as it was, was a more important characteristic of them than their understanding of his teaching."

Obedience is the innermost clue to the understanding of what apostleship meant in the New Testament. The earliest disciples were confronted by Jesus' revelation of God as the Holy One and as the Father. They did not take the initiative: they learned obedience, and their activity began only when Jesus decided to make them his fellow-workers. He called the Twelve to him and "sent them out", bestowing on them the power or authority which he himself possessed (Matt. 10:1; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1). They were **sheluhim**, sent by Jesus for a definite purpose, given authority to speak and act in the **name** of Jesus, as his representatives. This **sending** gave them no new rights or status; rather it bound them to serve the one who had authorized them. Indeed, their commission implied lowliness, not exaltation: it led to service in true humility. Following their commissioning and authorization (Mark 6:7) the apostles go out to exercise their mission. Then these apostles "return" to Jesus (Mark 6:30) and thereafter, as K. H. Rengstorff (**Apostleship** p. 37) points out, the word **disciple** is always used: "this excludes the possibility that these evangelists regarded the apostleship as an office with an indelible character."

Today's apostle, divided by "dim tracts of time" from those "golden days", seeks and finds his authority in the same source. He obeys Jesus. He is the slave of Jesus Christ. He speaks and acts, not of himself, but in and for Jesus Christ. He bears the burdensome task of leadership in the community of Christians, not as a badge of superiority in any human sense, but as Christ's humble servant. He accepts the insecurity of the Cross because it is the Cross of the one who said to his first apostles: "As the Father has sent me even so I send you"—and the Father sent the Son, not to privilege, but to the Cross.

The apostle-minister is a preacher with authority. Professor Archibald Duff once drew attention to a significant change in the line of Jewish preaching in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. For a long time the synagogue teachers had enjoyed the title of the **Amoraim**, the speakers; now they preferred to be called the **Seboraim**, the holders of opinions. No longer did they proclaim "God has said so"; now they

preferred to whisper, "We think that such and such is probably the mind of God."

Modesty and restraint in public religious utterance seem to be the order of our troubled times. The demise of preaching is often predicted and heralded, even with relief. "Educated people don't need to be preached at!" ejaculated a theological student who avowed his intention of preaching as little as possible. A survey recently conducted by Dr. Stephen Mayor of Westminster College Cambridge, asked **How Ministers See Their Work**. A questionnaire sent to over 1,000 ministers revealed that relative degrees of importance regarding ministerial functions were assigned by correspondents as follows: 80% gave the highest possible assessment to the role of pastor; 79% to the roles of example of Christian life and of man of devotion. The minister as preacher dropped at once to the fifties. One obvious rejoinder is the assertion that preaching must be **part** of a **TOTAL** ministry. But what part does it play in apostolic witness today?

There can never be total apostolic witness without apostolic preaching. The Reformers said: "Praedicatio verbi divini est verbum divinum."—the preaching of God's word is God's word. The incarnate word, the Son of God, is truly present and alive when he is manifested "from the written word to the spoken word", as Bernard L. Manning put it. So "Christ is risen in his word" and his word demands words as well as gestures, speech as well as study, proclamation as well as prescriptions. "We neither practise cunning nor distort the word of God; only by declaring the truth openly do we recommend ourselves", says the Apostle Paul. Apostolic preaching today will be spare and lean, pruned of facile dogmatism and flowery verbiage. Coming out of church one day Louis XVI remarked to one of his attendants: "If the good Abbé had talked a little about religion today I think he would have mentioned everything." The apostle of 1974, Christ's interpreter, must not fear the scandal of particularity. Indeed there is apostolic liberation in this very circumscribing of preaching. At Corinth Paul resolved to "think of nothing but Christ nailed to the Cross" because, like every other true apostle, he had nothing else to preach.

(2) An apostle is a **missionary**, a bearer of the Gospel to others. Here is a whole new dimension of the New Testament apostolate. The missionary activity which begins at Pentecost is the outcome of Pentecost. It is in the Spirit that Christians, and especially the apostles, receive assurance of the presence and power of Jesus. The Spirit gives to the apostle the pattern of his life and work. This is evident in the miracles in Acts. These are the signs of the apostles (II Cor. 12:12) and in every case Jesus himself stands behind the miracle, displaying his power and confirming the authority of his envoys. They are signs of God's sending activity, supremely expressed in the giving of his Son through whom Sonship with the Father is made available to all men.

It is the Spirit that sends apostles. Possession of the Spirit enables them to be apostles and to fulfill their apostolic

commission (John 20:21-23). The missionary thrust of the Holy Spirit's work has sometimes been less than realized; the Spirit has been interpreted as the justifier and sanctifier, but not as the sender of men. It is not enough for the Spirit to be conceived as building the Church and inspiring the faithful; the Spirit is the **sender** of the faithful in mission. Here is a word for all true apostles to heed most earnestly.

Today's apostle may have to learn to think in terms of "God-world-Church" rather than "God-Church-world". His mission may have to be conceived as **translation**. Just as God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ was a process of translation into terms that man could understand, so the missionary activity of men in response to God's mission may be understood as translation into the "language" of the people to whom it is made known. This kind of translation requires both an understanding of the Gospel and also a full appreciation of the thought-forms and culture of those who are to receive the good news. Mission must thus be related to culture.

At this point today's apostle must ask searching questions. Is this approach to mission really apostolic? Does it express adequately the role of the Church, and the Biblical pattern whereby God works through his chosen people to the rest of the world? Is today's apostle to be a subservient echo rather than a commanding voice, a reflection of environmental conditions rather than the salt of the earth? The earliest apostles confronted man with Christ. Peter at Pentecost called for a decision (Acts 2:38-40). Surely something is apostolically lacking in an apostle who does not frequently compel his hearers to face decisions for Christ. But such decisions must be intelligent if they are to be truly compelling. The gospel must be translated if it is to be meaningfully grasped. A modern manse may have to become the house of the interpreter if it is to house a genuine apostle in 1974.

An apostle's mission today may be interpreted as **presence** in the world. The Christian apostle fulfils the mission of God by revealing the God who is already present in the world. He does this by himself **being present** in different situations. He becomes involved in social, political and economic structures as a **Christian**: he brings to these the force and compulsion of Christian conviction. He is a witness to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. He is concerned that systems and organisations be Christianised, and his presence conveys his concern. Without moralising in judgemental confrontation he nevertheless, in love and truth, sets all human values under the judgement of the Cross. The true apostle questions conventional assumptions, and strips away the subterfuges of self seeking and tests the basic pre-suppositions of human life. As he speaks on public issues, represents the whole Church in his own locality, continues to be an un-self-conscious example of Christian action and reaction, he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. As he counsels, visits, listens, heals, travels, teaches, he is saying and doing far more than any mere busyness or activism could ever

enunciate. He stands for Christ; he lives for Christ; he exists to be Christ's own man, "ready for all his perfect will", prepared simply to render full obedience, with no thought of autonomy or aggrandizement, but with the sole purpose "that in all things he may have the preeminence".

All of this is surely apostolic, and persuasively evangelical. "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and never do what I tell you?" All talk and no action makes Jack Apostle a dull boy! So much of what passes for modern Christianity is talk, resolutions, programmes, committee reports. Mission is a vogue word, an "in-word", today; all too seldom does it become a practical deed, a real performance. It may be the wisdom of true apostleship to decline an invitation to attend a conference on mission or a panel on **What's Wrong With the Ministry** and to spend the afternoon "being present" in hospital or home or factory or street. An apostle may be in the true succession by "being present" at a city council open session, or a public hearing on housing, or even a political rally. But "being present" is more than just being there. The apostle embodies Christ's presence in active imaginative speech and service. As the mission of God is expressed in the servant Christ, so in the servant church the Christian gospel is apostolically convincing when it is expressed in the disinterested service of unqualified love.

(3) An apostle is **an** apostle of **the** Apostle. In Hebrews 3:1 Jesus himself is called "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession". Only here in all the New Testament is Jesus called **apostle**. What is the right exegesis of this unusual verse? Does it mean that Jesus surpasses Moses, the greatest Old Testament bearer of revelation, and Aaron, the greatest of all priests? Or does it mean, bringing together the basic themes of the whole book, that Jesus is both the Son in whom God speaks his final word and the High Priest who has atoned finally for the sins of his people? The latter appears to be the most satisfactorily inclusive interpretation, and thus the whole expression will mean the acknowledgement of the absolute authority which springs from the absolute authorisation for word (apostle) and work (High Priest). As he is the Apostle, so we are **his** apostles; as he is authorised, so we are given our authority to witness for him.

The apostle-minister of 1974 must learn to witness in new and vital ways to the lordship of Christ. The life that Jesus lived was a life of utter service to God and man, without a trace of the selfish ambition or desire for short cuts that spoils and mars all lesser lives. It is to this kind of living that today's apostle-minister is called. He will be dedicated to taking love as the clue. He will be prepared to attack "the eye for the main chance", the kind of impurity of motive that springs from sheer self-seeking, the irreverence for life that sneers at the vitality and wonder of love. As the first apostles learned to express Christ in a strange foreign world, hard and cruel and cynical, so today's apostle-ministers must learn to become contemporary translators in person of his eternal gospel.

It is Jesus the Apostle who has chosen those who are to

be **his** apostles. "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed (or ordained: Greek *tithemi*) you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide". (John 15:16). In the difficulties and frustrations that apostles must face their strength will come from the knowledge that their mission is not of their own choosing but of Christ's. In the whole Gospel narrative, Synoptic as well as Johannine, it is Jesus who chooses, calls and appoints his apostles. The initiative is his. Men are not his friends because they happen to have friendly feelings toward him, but because he has named them his friends. If they lay down their lives in love, it is because he first laid down his life for them.

Now, as always, this sense of vocation is the iron rations of an apostle's survival. Without this, resolutions languish, courage fails, hope withers, and ministers give up. But the true apostle is sustained amid the discouraged and walks bravely among the defeated, saying as he goes: "My work is not mine, it is his; my plans and projects are for his sake, not mine; it is his doing that originates and informs my doing; I am his man because he has laid his hand on me; and never can I, nor must I, forget."

JOHN B. CORSTON

## THE MINISTER AS PROPHET

The terms prophet, prophecy and to prophesy are used with surprising frequency in the New Testament. There are 144 occurrences of the word prophet alone, a frequency that is truly remarkable in view of the fact that *agapé* (love) occurs only 116 times. Even allowing for the fact that more than half these uses relate to the prophets of the Old Testament, there still remains a striking number of references to the New Testament prophets and the practice of prophecy in the early church. In spite of this there has been little attention given to the study of the role of the prophet and the practice of prophecy during the New Testament period.

Contemporary definitions of certain types of ministry as prophetic also make an investigation of New Testament prophecy important. Prophecy in popular thinking is often equated with prediction of the future, but the term "prophetic ministry" usually refers to a ministry which is directly related to the social evils and political problems of the time. Thomas Mullen, for example, speaks of the pastor's responsibility to be a critic of society, to deal with the social wrongs, and understands this as a prophetic as well as a reforming role.<sup>1</sup> One of the questions to be kept in mind in this investigation into early Christian prophecy is whether or not the modern concept has any relation to early practice or whether it is founded on an unexamined view of Old Testament prophecy.

### 1. Prophecy and the Gospels

In the gospels the vast majority of the uses of the word prophecy and related terms have to do with the Old Testament prophets, as the gospel is interpreted as the fulfilment of the promises and expectation of the prophets. They are, for the New Testament writers, men who proclaimed in advance that which was later fulfilled in Christ. The gospels also

present John the Baptist as a prophet (e.g. Mk. 11:32; Mt. 11:9, 21:26; Lk. 7:26, 20:6; Jn. 1:21, 25) and describe the call, appearance and preaching of the Baptist wholly after the manner of the Old Testament prophets (Lk. 3:1ff; Mk. 1:7f; Mt. 3:7ff). In a relatively few instances Jesus also is called a prophet (Mk. 6:4, 15, 8:28; Mt. 13:57, 16:14; Lk. 9:8, 19, 7:16, 39, 13:33; Jn. 4:19, 6:14, 7:40, 9:17). Significantly, however, it is the people around Jesus who use the term; Jesus does not use it of himself nor do the gospel writers use it as a title when speaking of him in their own words.<sup>2</sup> There are many interesting points to pursue along these lines but our concern here is with prophecy as one of the forms of ministry practised in the early church.

## 2. Prophecy as an Eschatological Gift

There is some uncertainty in the New Testament texts as to whether prophecy is a practice or at least a possibility for all Christians or whether the prophets are a specific group of people within the ministry of the church. Luke, in the book of Acts, relates an outburst of prophetism to the beginning of the church, using the words of Joel 2:28ff in explanation of the phenomenon of prophetic speech. In speaking of the last days God says, "I will endue even my slaves, both men and women, with a portion of my spirit, and they shall prophesy." (Acts 2:18). In this passage prophecy is represented as a general practice and is clearly interpreted as an eschatological power of the Holy Spirit confirming the expectation of a renewal of prophetic utterance at the end of the age. The association of the Spirit with prophecy is expressed later in Acts as well, for at Ephesus Paul found a number of converts who had been baptized only into the baptism of John, so they are baptized again into the name of the Lord Jesus, "and when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues of ecstasy and prophesied." (Acts 19:6).

The understanding of prophecy as one of the phenomena to be associated with the last days must be seen against the background of Jewish expectation during the inter-testamental period and at the time of Jesus. It is a generally acknowledged fact that long before Jesus' day the Jews believed prophecy had ceased in Israel and the prophetic spirit had been withdrawn. I Maccabees, for example, contains a number of explicit statements indicating that prophecy had ceased and there were no more prophets in Israel. The author says, "The Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a faithful prophet should arise . . ." In the report of the death of Judas he writes, "And there was great tribulation in Israel, such as was not since the time that a prophet had appeared unto them." The writer of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch also writes,

"In former times and in the generations of old our fathers had helpers,

Righteous men and holy prophets:

. . . But now the righteous have been gathered  
And the prophets have fallen asleep."<sup>3</sup>

The same attitude is affirmed also in Josephus<sup>4</sup> and in the rabbinic literature, for it was without doubt general tradition that the spirit of prophecy had been withdrawn and that there were no longer any prophets among the Jews.<sup>5</sup>

Coupled with this, however, was the expectation that the gift of prophecy would return to Israel at the end of the age and the prophetic spirit would be directly associated with the Messiah. The passages in Malachi (4:5, 6) and Joel (2:28, 29) which speak of the return of Elijah and the prophetic spirit are the basis for the Jewish belief that prophecy would return. It is against this background that the early Christian understanding of the return of prophecy must be seen, not only in the references to John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, and to Jesus, the Messiah himself, but also in the view of a general outpouring of the Spirit associated with the practice of prophecy.

Before leaving this topic of prophecy as a gift of the church, reference should be made to one other passage. Following Paul's well-known words to the Corinthian church exhorting the congregation to seek love as the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit, he urges them to put love first and then continues, "but there are other gifts of the Spirit at which you should aim also, and above all prophecy." (1 Cor. 14:1.) The fact that the words are addressed to the whole congregation in the same way as are the exhortations to show love indicates that prophecy was understood as at least a possibility for all members of the church and was not restricted to a select group.<sup>6</sup>

## 3. Prophecy as a Form of Ministry

There are many more references throughout the New Testament which indicate that the prophets are a specific group of persons and that prophecy is one of the forms of ministry practised in the early church. Paul says, "Within our community God has appointed, in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, thirdly teachers; then miracle workers . . ." etc. (1 Cor. 12:28). These forms of ministry are presented as gifts of the Spirit. In a similar way they are also listed in Ephesians 4:12, ". . . and these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." The manner in which prophets are included along with apostles and teachers and the references to "the prophets" (1 Cor. 14:29) indicates that prophecy is a special ministry within the church. It is a gift given only to some within the congregation and those who have the gift are to be given freedom to exercise it for the good of the community as a whole. The order of ministries within these lists is striking, for in both instances the apostles are mentioned first and the prophets second, undoubtedly indicating the high regard in which they were held. The prominence of the prophets is shown also in Acts, for it is a group of prophets and teachers who lay hands on Barnabas and Paul to commission them for missionary activity at the outset of their ministry (Acts 13:1). It seems clear from these texts that the prophets are to be regarded, along with apostles and teachers, as representatives of a special form of ministry

One of the questions raised by the Didache is whether the prophets were itinerant ministers or whether they exercised a settled ministry within a congregation. There is no doubt that for the author of the Didache they are itinerant, at least in some cases, for one of the tests of the true prophet has to do with the length of time he stays: "About apostles and prophets . . . he shall not stay more than one day, and if it is necessary, the next day also. But if he stays three days he is a false prophet."<sup>14</sup> It would seem from this kind of reference that the prophets were itinerant preachers and some have argued<sup>15</sup> that they wandered from congregation to congregation with their preaching. This is not the impression given by Paul, however, particularly in I Corinthians where the ministry of the prophets seems to be exercised within the local congregation, and there is here no suggestion of an itinerant ministry. Von Campenhausen says in reference to the prophets in Paul, "It looks as though it was their particular task to continue within the individual congregation the work which the apostle had first begun on within the church. It is, however, a group which does not have, at least at an early period, very clear boundaries and prophecy was regarded as a function rather than an office."

The authority of the prophet is recognised by Paul, for in the service of worship the prophets are to be allowed to speak as they wish and it is for the prophets to exercise judgement upon what is said and to control prophetic inspiration (I Cor. 14:29-33). In a slightly later period the prophet is recognised as an official of the church and as one who has considerable authority. In the small document known as the Didache, a Christian writing probably from the first part of the second century, the author gives exhortations regarding the kind of honour and respect that shall be shown to the prophets. Clear distinctions with regard to titles are lacking, but apostles, prophets and teachers are all to be accepted with genuine openness. There are tests to be applied to distinguish the true prophet from the false, a topic to be discussed later, but here it is sufficient to note that the prophet is a man of considerable authority in the church whose freedom to exercise his particular ministry must be clearly recognised.<sup>16</sup>

a wider scale."<sup>17</sup> It seems probable that in the earliest times the prophets were settled within congregations and that later they became itinerant and fell into the dangers inherent in that type of ministry. Because of the abuses of the practice churches found it necessary to establish criteria for distinguishing the true prophet from the false, and it is exactly that point which is the concern of the writer of the Didache.

Actually, the need for control of prophetic speech was recognised from the start, but in Paul's opinion the prophets themselves were to make the judgements: "Of the prophets, two or three may speak, while the rest exercise judgement upon what is said . . . It is for the prophets to control prophetic inspiration, for the God who inspires them is not a God of disorder but of peace." (I Cor. 14:29, 32). At a later time, as represented by the First Epistle of John and

the Didache, it is necessary not only to control the prophetic utterance within the context of worship but to distinguish true prophets from false. The true prophet for the writer of I John is the one who confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh, while it is precisely this affirmation which the false prophet denies. It is basic to the confession that the Christ, who is also revered as the bringer of salvation, has appeared in the historical Jesus.<sup>18</sup> The denial of this appears to be that of the Docetics whose teaching is condemned as due to the spirit of antichrist at work in the heretical doctrines.

The concern about false prophets has already been noted in the Didache, but mention should be made also of the warnings in II Peter regarding the coming of false teachers. In this instance as in I John the false prophets are condemned for false teaching, a fact which must surely indicate that teaching was an important part of the prophetic role. For the author of II Peter the presence of false teachers is to be expected, for just as in Israel there were true prophets who spoke the words of God through the direction of the Holy Spirit and also false prophets like Balaam, so in the church there will be false teachers who will be responsible for the errors and heresies which lead people astray. The statement, "Israel had false prophets as well as true; and you likewise will have false teachers among you." (II Peter 2:1), indicates a comparison between the false prophets of Israel and the false teachers in the church. A precise distinction between prophets and teachers at this time seems to be lacking.

The work of false prophets must have presented the church with a difficult problem. The authority of the prophet and the high regard in which he was held within the congregation undoubtedly caused much hesitation to question him or his message, but at the same time the abuses of prophecy and the dangers of false prophets made it necessary for churches to be on their guard and made it essential that criteria be established for distinguishing the true from the false prophet.

#### 4. Prophecy and Apocalyptic

The Jewish conviction that prophecy had ceased in Israel raises the question of the exact connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament practice. A further closely related question is that of the relationship between prophecy and apocalyptic in the early church. It is not clear whether we ought to look for the origins of apocalyptic in prophecy or not.

Toward the end of the period of the Old Testament some of the prophetic books, like Ezekiel, have clear characteristics of apocalyptic writing; others like Daniel, Joel and Zechariah include passages which are clearly apocalyptic. These books stand on the borderline, as it were, between prophecy and apocalyptic, and Daniel, in fact, is not included among the prophetic works in the Hebrew Old Testament, but is in the Septuagint. H. H. Rowley argues that the apocalyptic literature arose directly out of Old Testament prophecy and is the direct successor to the prophetic movement.<sup>19</sup> G. von Rad, on the other hand, thinks that this is

impossible: "In view of its keen interest in the last things and of the significance it attaches to visions and dreams, it might seem appropriate to understand apocalyptic literature as a child of prophecy. To my mind, however, this is completely out of the question."<sup>16</sup> The decisive factor for von Rad is the incompatibility between the apocalyptic literature's view of history and that of the prophets. Instead von Rad would find the real matrix from which apocalyptic originates in the wisdom movement.<sup>17</sup>

It is undoubtedly true that the apocalyptic writers regarded themselves as the authentic interpreters of prophecy, and as such the legitimate successors to the prophets. Wisdom, however, lacks the intense eschatological emphasis and expectation of an imminent end of the age which is so central to apocalyptic, and therefore does not provide an adequate setting for the origin of the movement. Perhaps we ought to look rather to those communities, like Qumran, where the eschatological expectation is so prominent but where connection with "Wisdom" circles is also to be found.<sup>18</sup>

The writer of the New Testament apocalypse, the book of Revelation, makes reference to his work as prophecy. He gives warning "to everyone who is listening to the words of prophecy in this book", and further warning "should anyone take away from the words in this book of prophecy" (Rev. 22:18, 19; cf. also 22:6, 7, 10). There is no doubt that the writer includes himself among the prophets whose primary emphasis is to bear witness to Jesus. In fact this is essentially what prophecy is, to bear testimony to Jesus.<sup>19</sup> The important point to be noted here is the direct connection between prophecy and apocalyptic. It may be that the book of Revelation ought to be understood more as prophecy than as apocalyptic, for the writer is primarily concerned to interpret the meaning of the history in which he is involved. He is confident of the power and victory of God in the present and in the future and can therefore address words of comfort and challenge to the church in a manner very much in line with the prophetic tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Another question mark must be noted in the whole area of the background of New Testament prophecy. It may well be, as Erich Fascher shows,<sup>21</sup> that prophecy in the early church has been considerably influenced by the Greek and Hellenistic practice, or at least shows much correspondence with it. Here the meaning of the term is essentially to speak in the name of a god, to reveal something dark or obscure. It is noteworthy that the predictive element is small in Greek prophecy; much more prominent is the understanding of the prophet as the one who is the mouthpiece of the divine, the one who speaks on behalf of the god.<sup>22</sup>

##### 5. The Role of the Christian Prophet

Unfortunately the New Testament provides little information on the activities of the Christian prophets or on the actual contents of the prophetic message. We are forced to glean what little we can from a number of references which give some slight indications of the nature of this important ministry.

*"There is a lad here" . . .*



*. . . who has a need*

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One of the most central and most consistent features of prophecy in the New Testament is its representation as the result of inspiration by the Holy Spirit. In Acts, as we have noted, prophecy is associated with the coming of the Spirit to the church and is part of the eschatological fulfilment. (Acts 2:17) Paul's inclusion of the ministry of prophecy among the gifts of the Spirit witnesses to the same understanding. (I Cor. 12:4-11). Under the influence of the Spirit the prophet is able to speak in intelligible terms for the good of the congregation. This is presented in contrast to the language of ecstasy or glossolalia which is of benefit only to the speaker. "When a man prophesies", Paul writes, "he is talking to men, and his words have power to build; they stimulate and they encourage." (I Cor. 14:3). This function of speaking words of comfort and exhortation is one of the traits of the prophet in Acts, for Luke tells of the coming of Judas and Silas to the church at Antioch and says, "Judas and Silas, who were prophets themselves, said much to encourage and strengthen the members." (Acts 15:32)."

The identification of the prophetic function in Revelation as essentially to bear witness to Jesus and the warnings against false prophets whose doctrine is not consistent with the central teachings of the church is further indication of the role of the prophet. An important part of their message was to proclaim Jesus as the Christ (I John) and any departure from this basic Christian confession was to be rejected. Teaching is further presented in Acts as part of the prophet's task, and perhaps even more specifically teaching which includes the interpretation of Scripture."

Because of revelation imparted to him through the Spirit, the prophet has a special knowledge of the future. Paul does not use the term in this sense but the author of Revelation proclaims "that which must soon take place", and in Acts there are prophets whose message includes the prediction of future events. (Acts 11:28, 20:23, 27:22). This predictive element is part of the prophetic insight into the situation of the church and insight into the divine mysteries, along with the application of the confession and teachings of the Christian faith to that situation.

Not only exhortation and words of comfort were expressed by the prophets; we must see a further part of their role in the utterance of warning and the pronouncements of eschatological judgement. There are a number of statements, such as I Cor. 3:17: "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him" (cf. Gal. 1:9, II Cor. 9:6, Rom. 2:12, et al.), where divine law is proclaimed in a form familiar in Old Testament prophecy in which the fulfilment of some condition on earth was to be followed in the eschatological future by promise or threat, blessing or curse. Ernst Käsemann has demonstrated that the proper setting for this eschatological divine law is the situation in which primitive Christian prophecy "judges" the messianic people of God, as once the old prophets "judged" Israel,<sup>25</sup> that is that the sentences of holy law have originated in the message of the Christian prophets.

In summary we can agree with Friedrich<sup>26</sup> that the prophet in the New Testament is essentially the proclaimer of a divinely inspired message, through him God speaks to his people in words of the Christian confession, of teaching, of exhortation and of warning. He is responsible above all else to proclaim the word of the Lord to the church.

### Conclusion

In spite of the prominence of the early Christian prophets and the importance of their ministry, their position is rather shortlived. During the second century the church witnessed a serious decline in prophecy until it was revived in the Montanist movement. The Montanists, however, brought early Christian prophecy at once to a head and to an end, for in the condemnation of the movement the work of the prophets was also made to cease. Only sporadic traces of it are to be found in later years, but such prophets no longer possessed any significance for the church, and were in fact quite summarily condemned by the clergy as false prophets.<sup>27</sup>

While the office of the prophet as such is no longer a part of the ministry of the church, the prophetic function may still be carried out. When ministers, under the influence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, proclaim the divine message declaring the Christian confession that Jesus is the Christ and bearing witness to him, bringing to the church not only words of exhortation and comfort but also of judgement relating the gospel to the contemporary setting of the congregation, they are acting in the role of the prophet. It is to be hoped that in spite of the absence of the office of the prophet the voice of prophecy will not be silent in the church.

MELVYN R. HILLMER

1. Thomas J. Mullen, **The Renewal of the Ministry**, New York: Abingdon Press, 1963, p. 31.
2. For further discussion of references to John the Baptist and to Jesus as prophets cf. G. Friedrich in G. Friedrich & G. W. Bromley, ed., **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. 6, pp. 236-48, s.v. "prophetes"; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967; cf. also H. A. Guy, **New Testament Prophecy**, London: Epworth Press, 1947, pp. 28-89, and F. W. Young, "Jesus the Prophet: a Re-examination", **JBL LXVIII** (1949), pp. 285-300.
3. I Macc. 14:41.
4. Ibid., 9:27; cf. also 4:46.
5. II Baruch, 85:1, 3.
6. Note particularly Josephus, **Against Apion I. 8**.
7. For a brief discussion of the Jewish understanding of prophecy in the intertestamental period and in Jesus' day, see F. W. Young, **op. cit.**
8. Eduard Schweizer, **Church Order in the New Testament**, London: SCM Press, 1961, pp. 134ff., argues that the same is true in the book of Revelation which reflects a church without hierarchy where all Christians are to be witnesses and all prophets.
9. D. H. Greeven, "Propheten, Lehrer, Vorsteher bei Paulus" **ZNW** 44 (1952-3), p. 7. E. Schweizer, **op. cit.**, rightly cautions against making a sharp distinction in the earliest period between official or "ordained" and unordained ministries; cf. also H. von Campenhausen, **Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power**, Stanford Cal.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1969.
10. Didache 11-12.
11. Ibid. 11:3-5.

12. E.g. A. von Harnack, **The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries**, Vol. 1, London: Williams & Norgate, 1904, p. 441.
13. H. von Campenhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
14. I John 4:2, cf. R. Bultmann, **The Johannine Epistles**, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973, p. 62.
15. H. H. Rowley, **The Relevance of Apocalyptic**, 2nd edn., Surrey: London & Redhill, 1947, p. 13.
16. G. von Rad, **Old Testament Theology**, Vol. II, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965, p. 303.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 306ff.
18. P. Vielhauer, Introduction to "Apocalyptic and Related Subjects" in E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher, edd., **New Testament Apocrypha**, Vol. 2, London: Lutterworth Press, 1965, pp. 596-8.
19. Rev. 19:10 may be translated literally, "witness to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
20. David Hill, "Prophecy and Prophets in the Revelation of St. John", **NTS** 18 (1972), p. 414, concludes from this that the author, who is one of the Christian prophets, stands in the tradition of Old Testament and Jewish prophecy rather than of Christian prophecy.
21. Erich Fascher, **Prophetes: Eine sprach-und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung**, Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1927.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 52ff.
23. E. Earle Ellis, "The Role of the Christian Prophet in Acts", W. W. Gasque & R. P. Martin, edd., **Apostolic History and the Gospel**, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970, pp. 56-58 discusses more fully the exhortation of the prophet in Acts.
24. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-62. Note again the overlapping between references to apostles and prophets and also between teachers and prophets.
25. Ernst Käsemann, "Sentences of Holy Law in the New Testament", in **New Testament Questions of Today**, London: SCM Press.
26. G. Friedrich, Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 849.
27. A. von Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

## THE MINISTER AS TEACHER

"The Muslim left his shoes outside the church—the Christian had to park his brains." In these words A. J. Colton describes how he once viewed the intellectual atmosphere of the church from outside.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later he was an Episcopal priest, viewing things from the inside and, not surprisingly, he changed some of his opinions. "First to go was the idea that all Christians were intellectual asses. Now I know that only some of them are . . ."<sup>2</sup>

It seems that the church is forever destined to project a double image. To some it appears as a group of intellectual but out-of-touch academics, the unrealistic bent on clarifying the irrelevant. To others it appears as a collection of pious but ill-informed apologists, the credulous anxiously trying to prove the incredible.

If the North American world looks at the church with some perplexity, that is only to be expected. The "God Is Dead" theology may seem itself to have died, and, as Bishop W. J. Robinson suggests, many ministerial careers were buried with it, but nevertheless there are main-line churches in Canada where songs from musicals have replaced hymns and where Scripture is used merely to provide quaint comments to supplement the readings from modern poets.

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## The Baptist Insurance Company Limited 4 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4AB

To the Readers of the "Fraternal"

Dear Friends,

". . . And blest are those whose blood and judgement are so well commingled  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. . ."

Hamlet

The theatre at Greenwich in the skirts of London has a well earned reputation for the ambitious (possibly audacious) presentation of well known plays which seeks to add a freshness to them.

Quite recently Jonathan Miller produced "Hamlet" at Greenwich and I was lucky enough to be invited to join a theatre party. It was an interesting performance and well repaid the visit.

In particular I was driven back once again to bed-time reading the play which I think I know pretty well (I saw my first production about fifty years ago) but I always find something fresh.

The night I read again the "pipe for Fortune's finger" lines I had arrived home somewhat depressed in spirit. The treasurer of one of our churches had phoned from the Midlands that day to ask for some comments on fire sums insured for his church.

The deacons were meeting that very night and it seemed poor preparation to leave so important a matter until the last moment. Perhaps it is flattering for us to be expected reliably, to read answers off the cuff but . . .

However, I looked at the figures, found the church building was insured for £20,000 when it ought to have been £140,000 and phoned back that day.

At least the deacons had finally got around to asking—but disaster had been stalking that membership for years and that depressed me.

I wish I could match a rush of blood to the head, a passionate "let's get something done" attitude with the sober judgement which would ensure time for proper consideration at annual revisions of sums insured.

When the piper is Fortune it is essential not to leave the tune to sound "from what stop she please."

You pay the piper—call the tune but let it be inspiring not dispiriting.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN  
General Manager

P.S. Delay too long can be disastrously too late.

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On the other hand North America and, one suspects, western Christendom in general, is witnessing a conservative backlash of such magnitude that some of its expressions amount to downright anti-intellectualism.

Ministers cannot fail to be aware of the tensions that exist and in individual ways they are responding to them. Some embrace one of the current theologies and serve it to their congregations each week; some with a frank smile warn us not to confuse theology with faith, and try to make everyone feel comfortable; others, one hopes the majority, try with their congregations to take up the challenge of setting Scripture and life in dialogue, with all the excitement and threat such a course may imply.

Such facts point to an urgent need for a re-appraisal of Christian education at all levels. It is open to serious question whether the present Sunday School programme, supplemented by some "preparation-for-membership" classes and by the limited opportunities for teaching afforded by the weekly sermon, is sufficiently comprehensive to meet the need. It may be argued that something far more systematic is required, and that teaching on such a scale calls for the appointment of a specialist, for it is clear that in many cases the pastor is not the best or the only person qualified to organise and carry out the teaching ministry. At this stage, however, we shall speak as though the church had no office of "teacher" as distinct from that of "pastor"; the case for a separate office or title will be looked at later.

Yet whoever undertakes the task, it must be stressed that teaching is part of the larger, total ministry. To separate teaching from preaching, counselling and visitation is, in the last analysis, to make artificial distinctions; indeed, in a profound way teaching may be seen as the basis and integrating force in ministry. The minister may teach by example, by counsel, by exhortation; in fact, by almost anything he undertakes.

One other introductory observation may be made. The minister is a professional; this designation implies mastery of a defined body of knowledge. Within this designation "professional" we may note a distinction between those whose professional performance involves simply **using** their knowledge, without necessarily sharing it—the surgeon and the lawyer belong to this type—and those whose efficacy as professionals is assessed by their ability to **share** the specialised knowledge they have. The musician and the teacher belong to this latter type. Plainly, the minister is in the second group and much will depend on the extent to which he can share his knowledge, insights and interpretations. The contemporary stress on the minister as an "animator" or "enabler" within the fellowship would seem to be an important emphasis.

It may seem that altogether too much weight is being attached to teaching as a vital and integrative element in ministry, so something must be said in defence of this position. We begin with a discussion of the appropriate New Testament concept and terminology.

## 1. Teaching in the New Testament

According to J. K. S. Reid, Jesus understood himself and his work in terms of servanthood (or deaconhood), a view based firmly on Mk. 10:45 and Lk. 22:27.<sup>1</sup> Morna Hooker concludes that Jesus used the term "Son of Man" of himself ". . . as an expression of the basis and meaning of his person and destiny . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Important though these conclusions are, it may be argued that there is a closer connection between Jesus as he saw himself and Jesus as others saw him than is usually recognised. Despite the fact that Professor Reid and Dr. Hooker see no need to discuss the title "teacher" in relation to their researches, the teacher-disciple relationship of Jesus and his followers is a fundamental feature of the story of his ministry.<sup>3</sup>

The incidence and distribution of words associated with teaching is of interest. **Didaskalos** (teacher) occurs 59 times in the New Testament; 41 of these are in the synoptics and 8 in John. **Didaskein** (to teach) occurs 95 times, 48 in the synoptics, 9 in John and 16 in Acts. **Didache** (instruction) is present 30 times, 12 in the gospels and 4 in Acts. **Didaskalia** (teachings) occurs 21 times, 15 of which are in the Pastorals.

While statistics need to be used with care, one may conclude that the concept of the teacher is important in the gospels and Acts, and that the New Testament shows a developing tendency to emphasise the content of teaching. When we add the observation that 30 of the uses of **didaskalos** in the gospels refer to Jesus it is clear that any concept of Christian ministry will have to take seriously the function of teaching. That this was the case in the early church may be demonstrated by reference to four key New Testament texts: Acts 13:1, I Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11 and II Tim. 1:11.

In all of these passages it is virtually certain that a specific function of teaching is implied and probable in the first three cases that an office of teacher had emerged or was in process of emerging.

In Acts 13:1 we read of "certain prophets and teachers" in the congregation at Antioch. Among them were Barnabas and Paul (called "Saul" at this point). Presumably this group exercised some kind of leadership in the church; clearly they felt they had authority to set aside two of their number for missionary activity and probably did so on behalf of the whole fellowship.

I Cor. 12:28 is more explicit and lists a definite order of importance for certain ministries ". . . in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, thirdly teachers . . ." The three categories are separated from another group in which miracle-workers, healers, helpers, administrators and ecstatic speakers are mentioned. We are probably justified in seeing here evidence for three "offices", but two cautions must be given.

First, this verse is singularly lacking in any indication of how the three key functions might be differentiated, so that

any theory as to the distinct roles of apostle, prophet and teacher is at best speculation. Indeed, this is largely true of any text one might cite on this topic.

Second, the context of verse 28 makes one hesitate to place too much emphasis on the idea of office, since verse 27 reads: "Now you are Christ's body, and each of you a limb or organ of it." With that imagery in mind the role of the Christian leader is more easily described in terms of activity than of status. The section leads naturally into the Hymn to Love, headed by the explicit statement that there are higher things in life than appointments within the fellowship—things like faith, hope and love.

In Eph. 4:11 the gifts of the glorified Christ to his church are specified: "And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the Body of Christ." Here we notice that the evangelist has made his appearance and that pastors and teachers are somehow linked in the writer's mind.

There is a tendency among commentators to regard apostles and prophets as specially concerned with the establishing churches and, holding that pastors and teachers comprise a single group, to present them as more concerned with the enrichment of church life. This view is well summed up by Bruce: "In the churches of the first generation the apostles and prophets discharged a unique role, which in some essential features has been taken over by the canonical writings of the New Testament. The second pair of gifts, evangelists and pastor-teachers (or teaching pastors), are required in each generation."<sup>6</sup>

As a final example we may refer to II Tim. 1:11—"of this Gospel I, by his appointment, am herald (**Keryx**), apostle and teacher." If we take the general view that the Pastorals are not (in their present form at the least) from the hand of Paul, but reflect a later stage in the development of church doctrine and order, then this verse may give us an insight into the important functions within the Christian community as viewed from a late first- or early-second century standpoint. The place of the apostle is still pre-eminent, and with him stand the herald, or preacher, and the teacher.

Although these comments by no means cover the topic of teaching in the New Testament they nevertheless indicate some tentative conclusions which a fuller examination of the texts does not challenge. Three observations may be made (i) That ministries in the New Testament period are all seen as gifts of God or Christ or the Spirit and are not clearly distinguished from one another. (ii) That the teacher had an important place among those whose work was vital to the spiritual welfare of the church (one might add that this place is not recognised in most studies of ministry, perhaps because such studies are so often seeking to justify a theory of ministry rather than review the whole concept). (iii) That the work of teachers appears to have been exercised within the fellowship, clarifying and explaining the implications of the faith rather than seeking to win converts.<sup>7</sup>

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## 2. Teaching in the Church

It requires little imagination to perceive that, the more successful the Gentile mission of the church, the more necessary would it be to have effective teaching. The Gentiles would, for the most part, see no necessary connection between religion and ethics, would have a tendency to acknowledge authority only where it was demonstrated to be present, and would find concepts of "covenant", "monotheism", and the like quite strange. In short, Gentile experience lacked most features of the essential basis from which Christianity was preached."

There is abundant evidence that the church actively sought to be a teacher of the Gentiles. Polycarp, ". . . the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teaches many not to sacrifice nor to worship" (*Martyrdom*, 12:2) is also described as ". . . an apostolic and prophetic teacher and bishop of the holy church in Smyrna." (16:2). In the Greek the words "apostolic" and "prophetic" are adjectives, throwing the emphasis on the words "teacher" and "bishop".

In the *Didache* it seems probable that four ministries were recognised—bishops, deacons, prophets and teachers. Perhaps the famous passage in 15:1-2 is a suggestion that the local fellowships provide themselves with the full range of ministries, instead of being dependent upon itinerant ministries. The section reads in part: "Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons . . . for they can also perform among you the ministry of prophets and teachers. So do not look down on them, for they are honorable men together with the prophets and teachers."

If further evidence of the importance of teaching were needed one might refer to the famous Catechetical School at Alexandria, with its noble succession of leaders in Pantaeus, Clement and Origen; or the independent attitudes to doctrine expressed in Antiochene theology; or in the detailed presentations of the faith found in the Catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem (delivered around the middle of the 4th century).

Responsibility for teaching was gradually transferred to the Bishop. The teachers were highly influential; while they were orthodox, well and good, but when they expressed unusual views they represented a danger the church could not ignore. As George Williams has observed, while free lance teachers functioned attractively but sometimes heterodoxically "bishops could not long safeguard the orthodoxy of the faith . . . the bishops seat became in the course of time to be at once a doctoral (magisterial) chair, a liturgical bench, and a judicial throne."

Of course, if the bishop were lax towards his overall responsibilities, teaching would be one of the first things to suffer and this happened all too often.

While the church was never without its pious ones and its scholars, true learning was in decline during the so-called Dark Ages. In particular, knowledge of the Semitic background of the Scriptures was largely ignored. What learning

there was tended to be concentrated in religious houses. The parish clergy were often not only ignorant but immoral as well and the formality of worship was frequently carried out in a perfunctory manner and in a tongue the priest understood imperfectly and the people not at all.

It is hardly surprising that the Reformation was spear-headed by men of immense scholarship, men "apt to teach" and that literacy and scripture translation figured so largely in their ambitions. It may also be significant to note that in a number of instances where English translations of Luther's works read "preach" the verb used by Luther was *lehren*, to teach.

In terms of providing a rationale and structure for a teaching ministry, it is to John Calvin that the Reformed church is chiefly indebted. He distinguished between functions which were relevant to the founding of the church and those which were permanent. The offices of apostle, prophet and evangelist were, in their original form, given for the establishment of the church, now they are assumed under the functions of pastors and teachers. (*Institutes*, Book IV, 3:4).

Calvin developed a four-fold pattern of ministry which comprised preachers, teachers, elders and deacons. The teachers had responsibilities in the church and also in the theological academy he founded in 1559 and which flourished under the vigorous leadership of Theodore Beza.

The blend of theology and the humanities taught at Geneva was reflected in thousands of church schools established in the west up to the end of the 19th century. That century, however, is more notable for its preaching than for its Christian education and the Landmark Controversy in the U.S.A. and the Down Grade Controversy in Britain (with the Shields-Marshall confrontation coming as a delayed Canadian counterpart) made it plain that the role of the teacher in an era of Biblical criticism was going to be far from easy. The Sunday School movement grew to enormous proportions at the beginning of the 20th century and in many instances it developed an organisational independence from the church. The emergence of the Sunday School Superintendent and, more recently, the minister for Christian Education in many large churches, has created a situation in which it is not easy to tell exactly where rests the ultimate responsibility for teaching. A disconcerting feature in recent years has been that teaching materials, intended to be aids to Christian education have become battle-grounds for singularly acerbic controversies.

The contemporary church finds itself trying to express ancient truths in a rapidly-changing world; to meet the educational needs of a wide range of individuals; to mediate new truths to some who long only for the old and familiar; and to work out attitudes on ethical issues which not so long ago were unheard of.

In the remainder of this article we shall attempt to indicate some guidelines which appear to be important if we are to give serious consideration to teaching as an essential part of total ministry.

### 3. The Place of Teaching

In the previous two sections we have seen that the church has always viewed teaching as an important part of total ministry to the whole person. The church is now in fact responsible for the second largest educational organisation in the world and for the most comprehensive system. Its scope is as large as life. It would seem to follow that to limit its scope to children, or to entrust its operation to the totally untrained, or to try to work on a budget made up of leftovers is ludicrous in the extreme.

It may be time to consider the official establishment of the office of teacher within the church. In large churches this could be a full-time post; in some towns churches could co-operate in employing a teacher; at least every association, or presbytery, or diocese should have a teacher.

The scope of the teacher's work would range from Sunday Schools to marriage preparation, from membership classes to training for deacons (elders) and from Bible study to conferences with specialist groups such as medical and legal personnel. He would not spend long hours preparing sermons but rather would have some time for reading and discussion of some of the great issues confronting Christian people today. He would need to know something about educational techniques and the art of communication. He would need to know what resources are readily available to those interested in Christian education.

Freed of the less obviously pastoral responsibilities, the pastor might have more time to spend in visitation and sermon preparation. Many a good sermon has been spoiled because of all the other addresses and talks in preparation at the same time.

### 4. The Impact of Teaching

From the days of the great 19th century controversies over the early chapters of Genesis to the correspondence columns prompted by **Honest to God** there is a continuous expression of Christian opinion that teaching should not disturb the faithful. At best this represents a keen pastoral concern that teaching should be positive and constructive and edifying to the individual and the church; at worst it excuses laziness and obscurantism to the point of deception.

Any discussion of teaching in the church should therefore take account of the fact that education stirs people up, challenges their assumptions and excites their imagination. Christian teaching can never sign agreements not to be controversial; to do this would be to deny the character of the gospel. Jesus stirred up a lot of religious people in his day and has done so ever since.

Of course there are elements of comfort in Christian teaching. It is the comfort and security which comes from facing issues rather than ignoring them or, worse, denying that they exist. In simplest terms one would expect the fellowship of the church to provide the comfort and security, the teaching to provide the challenge and the restlessness.

### 5. Conclusion

The office and function of teacher has a long and

honourable history in the church. We see something of its dignity and importance when we recall that Jesus himself was known by this title.

The present-day church urgently needs to reconsider its teaching ministry, especially the question of whether it is time to appoint an order of teachers. Teaching is so important to the spiritual health of the church that someone must be given specific responsibility for this task. It is fifteen years since I first read Montgomery's **Memoirs** but one incident has remained clearly in my mind. Soon after he took command of the Eighth Army in North Africa in August 1942, Montgomery began a systematic visitation of all units. "I had decided that in building up the Eighth Army for what lay ahead I would concentrate on three essentials: Leadership, equipment and training . . . I remember the shock I received on visiting a certain unit and asking the C.O. if he trained his officers, and how it was done. The C.O. replied without hesitation that he had handed that task over to his second-in-command. I came across the second-in-command later in the day and said: 'I understand you are responsible for training the officers in the unit. Tell me how you do it.' He replied that he did not do so, and that it was done by the C.O. I ordered that a new C.O. be found for that unit at once; it was clear that nobody trained the officers." (p. 102).

At first sight it may seem that Montgomery was being unreasonable in expecting a full training programme in each unit when the whole line was under fire and many of the troops had been fighting in Africa for over a year. But second thoughts indicate the realism of his view. Everyone needs training and retraining if the peak of performance is to be achieved and maintained.

The church is constantly in action and this makes the training of its personnel a crucial issue.

Christian education in the 20th century is not the pastime of the extra-pious or the academically-inclined; it is the mark of the serious believer who recognises that the challenges to the church are both real and potent.

J. R. C. PERKIN

1. In "Pilgrimage with Detours", a paper in **Essays in Ministry** (Princeton: The Fund for Theological Education, n.d.) p. 53.
2. **Ibid.** p. 55.
3. In **The Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry**, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Paper No. 4 (Oliver and Boyd) 1955.
4. In **The Son of Man in Mark**, (S.P.C.K.) 1967, p. 192.
5. One might refer to Mt. 10:24 in this context; on the question of Jesus' self understanding and self-designation Mk. 14:14 is relevant.
6. F. F. Bruce, **The Epistle to the Ephesians** (Revell) 1961, p. 85. There are also some good comments in Bonnard **L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Ephésiens**.
7. On this point see "The Ministry in the Primitive Church" by John Knox, being a chapter in **The Ministry in Historical Perspectives**, edited by Niebuhr and Williams (Harper and Row) 1956, especially p. 14.
8. This would not be true of the "God-fearers" who, in many cases, had embraced a great deal of Judaism.
9. In "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church", in Niebuhr and Williams, **op. cit.** p. 36.

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- 2) We give thanks to God for the devoted service of SISTER ETHEL KIME, Matron of our Rest-a-While Home, who died suddenly of a heart attack. God greatly blessed us by sending Ethel Kime from our Main Road Romford Church, and we thank God for every remembrance of her. God has also blessed us in her successor, SISTER JEAN BIRKITT, who comes to us from our Skegness Church, and we acknowledge with gratitude how much we owe to our Baptist Churches, not only for their monetary gifts but for the fine people they send to work with us.
- 3) We need some money. This will come as a surprise to you, no doubt! but the fact is, that we are planning to open the Greenwoods Extension in June. When we started on this enterprise the architect told me it could be done for £10,000. It looks as though the final cost (including some extra furnishings) will be in the region of £18,000. We have got £14,600 at the moment and I need the balance. All contributions will be thankfully received.  
May God's blessing be on your own family life, and on your own work in the Church.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL  
Superintendent of the West Ham Central Mission

## THE MINISTER AS PREACHER

Sinclair Ross writes about the Canadian prairies. With a beautifully lean style, he chronicles the isolated farms and towns of Saskatchewan . . . and especially the people who struggled through the dustbowl droughts of the 1930s. They were a generation who suffered at the hands both of capricious nature and the long and lonely isolation of the land.

In one of his short stories, entitled "Circus In Town",<sup>1</sup> seventeen-year-old Tom brings home to the farm a piece of poster he has found in the street. "A girl in purple tights, erect on a galloping horse, a red-coated brass band, a clown, an elephant ripped through the middle." Jenny, eleven years old, is ecstatic. She presses him with questions; but, in a surge of self-consciousness, Tom attempts to shrug it off. And then, recognising that she will not be able to get to town to see the circus and wanting to protect her from disappointment, he thinks he is being helpful by adding: "Everybody said it wouldn't amount to much. A few ponies and an elephant or two—but what's an elephant?"

"She wheeled from him, resenting his attempt to scoff away such wonders. The bit of poster had spun a new world before her, excited her, given wild, soaring impetus to her imagination; and now without in the least understanding herself, she wanted the excitement and the soaring, even though it might stab and rack her, rather than the barren satisfaction of believing that in life there was nothing better, nothing more vivid or dramatic than her own stableyard."

That's what a Christian preacher wants to accomplish. Even if his product is incomplete, a little torn at the edges, he hopes the poster of his weekly sermon will open up wonders and spin a new world before his people. For himself and for the persons with whom he lives, there must be something better than their own stableyard. Even though it might stab and rack them, there must be visions to give soaring impetus to their imaginations.

We are preaching to a world which is increasingly aware of its stableyard. Having lost much of the capacity for imagining spiritual meanings, our world concentrates on the geography and components of its earthy real estate. Some build barns, while others tear theirs down to build yet bigger barns. Some feel fenced within and chafe for freedom to wander . . . through other stableyards. Others nestle in the straw piled up in the sun: hesitant, reluctant, afraid to venture past the gate. So much we measure life by tools, fences and fertilizer. The preacher, now more than ever before, is one who must give soaring impetus to the imagination of those who hear his voice.

The risks are several. One is the anguish of dreaming impossible dreams . . . little more than fantasies which frustrate in their enticement. Another is the fear that we will not be able to follow our visions with ourselves. We are afraid that we will reach for heights and, trying to climb

them, fall flat upon our faces. Self-fulfilment is so important to us: will we pain ourselves by failing—whether in our dreaming or our living?

The saving factor, of course, is that the Christian preacher belongs to both Christ and his people. He dares to be fool enough to speak the thoughts of God—through the imperfect instrument of himself. He also dares to take upon himself the burdens and possibilities of a people. And, in the process, he catches glimpses of the wisdom of God's grace in the lives of men and world—and proceeds to make sermon-posters to proclaim it!

Jesus was a preacher. Near the beginning of the Gospel according to Mark is a succinct summary of his preaching:

“The time has come;  
the kingdom of God is upon you;  
repent, and believe the Gospel.” (1:15 NEB).

And, as we read on, he filled it out and fit it to the needs of men by parables and directives, symbolic actions and hopeful proclamations. And in all of Jesus' preaching (and, in fact, his ministry), there is the telling blend of earthy connection and kingdom possibilities.

We who preach are called to follow in his style. We speak for him who is “Greatest than self”, as Ross Snyder sometimes put it. At the same time, we speak for the sake of all people who hope passionately that there is something better than their own stableyard. We have to be, even uncomfortably, aware of time and place, sin and error. Yet we are commissioned to lift eyes to a kingdom which is not of this world. We purpose to open up wonders and spin a new world before our people.

Here are some ways in which this needs to be done.

**In our preaching, we are to draw our people into experiences and meanings with which they can identify.**

For some time now, we have been in a language crisis in our Christian communicating. Much of our Biblical vocabulary has become the meaningful possession of a decreasing number of persons who move in the knowing circles of the Church. A preacher can no longer assume that everyone in his audience will catch the nuances of a presumptuous use of words like grace, judgement, redemption and sanctification.

It is not enough simply to find other words or to make dictionary definitions of terms. Margaret Laurence, a Canadian novelist, was being interviewed recently on the radio network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She suggested that you cannot communicate joy, love, peace and the like because they are too abstract. You have to depict joy, love, peace actually happening: then your readers (or listeners) can grasp what you are talking about. If we are going to project grace or redemption in our preaching, we must find ways to depict them actually happening.

We must “enflesh”. This is as necessary for Biblical input as it is for the listener's felt situation. Biblical material is a record of event. It is first story: chronicle of God's permeation of the pilgrimage of man and world . . . crucially through

Jesus Christ. Peopling all the pages of the account are persons whose blend of sin and saintliness give us hopefulness—to the extent that we can identify with their experiences and meanings. Therefore, our Biblical preaching must present encounter enfleshed: people like us being penetrated by love and truth such that they become as we might be. Let Peter brag and bluster before he denies his Lord, before he kneels on the pebbled shore of the Sea of Galilee hearing the risen Christ say: “Feed my sheep.” And let Paul anguish over the Galatians and glow over the Philippians—tell his story and make him breathe—before you try to spin out any of his theology. We must see the connection between their words and the way it was for them before we can make the connection with the way it is for us.

By the same token, we must never assume that flat words will speak our listener's situation. He must be able to feel that the preacher understands and identifies with the way it is for him. And he will never be quite sure if we use words like a cold analyst. How much more effective to depict his situation actually happening—at least in approximate shape and movement. Which is why story, poetry, descriptive vignette, three-dimensional glimpse of human encounter are increasingly valuable in effective contemporary preaching. At the first level, they can meaningfully depict and describe the way it is.

At a second level is the “quest for immediacy”. I have a deep conviction that many of the most effective preachers of the world are mothers of small children who are able to speak to experiences of their young just as the events are happening. There is an immediacy to these expressive, interpretative incidents. They will be moments in which wonder, judgement, forgiveness, trust and rebirth may all be enacted and expressed. The more immediate the mother's words can be to the lived moment, the more the child can feel their significance. In preaching, we go in quest of that same quality of immediacy . . . except that, in preaching, we are required to recall, to resurrect the feelings and meanings of the experiences we seek to interpret. We may do this by recalling specific events; but keep in mind that we are trying to have our listeners relive **experiences** which they can identify as theirs . . . so it is often more useful to use literary segments which catch the aspect of felt meaning which we are trying to depict.

Recall is an important goal in our preaching. That is, can we help our listeners to bring back to the present their own freight-load of memory experiences which will be, at least approximately, the parts of their lives we would dare to address? For example, they will apprehend what we mean by forgiveness to the extent that they can remember experiences of forgiveness and can then be helped to make the connection with what they are needing now. Recall will always be not for its own sake but for the enrichment of the present and the potential of tomorrow. We will use our imaginations to help our people to bring to life again the shape and breath of interpreted experiences stored in their memory banks for

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just such a moment as this . . . when we hope to be able to lead them into new insights and possibilities.

Our authority as preachers depends very much on how well we help our people to connect what we are saying with the way it is for them. This is why we must be aware of our own humanity and preach to ourselves as well. We speak out of our own experiences and, at the same time, draw on the experiences of others. We may explain that the preacher's authority is from God, but unless the people will say "he is speaking to me and my situation", God's word will not get through.

At the same time, however, we must not be limited by our human definitions and memory banks. If we are going to spin a new world before our people, there must be visions to give soaring impetus to their imaginations. It is our task to stretch eyes beyond the stableyard. We are to help persons to reach beyond the experiences they have known and to lean into the future moment with faith and anticipation.

In our preaching, **we are to proclaim good news and point to possibilities.** We have an affirming function to perform. We need to play strongly on the theme of hope and expectation.

We do it, however, as counterpoint to the problem we have sketched or as answer to the question with which we are struggling in the sermon. Our visions must be connected to the earthy experiences we are helping our listeners to recall and relive. We must be prepared to meet them where they are and then lead them to see the possibilities of their lives and their world within the Kingdom of our God.

This means that we must help our people to see such possibilities within the givenness of life. We are not called to an exercise in fantasy which does not participate in hopefulness for the real world around us. We are commissioned to note God's involvement in his creation and the implications of his graceful action for all of our living. And, then, we are to express them in vivid, hopeful, apprehendable ways. We will speak of the coming of the Kingdom to us and we will speak of the Kingdom which is not of this world. In both, we will be called upon for dedicated imagination.

By imagination, we mean one of the most valuable tools of the preacher. We do not mean the adding of illustrations to give an otherwise dull exposition a little semblance of colour. Nor do we mean fictionalising to fill in blanks in the story. The purpose of imagination is to raise a mono-dimensional idea to life. It is to perceive the depths of meaning in the way it is between God and man, and then to call them out to walk upon the earth before us. Or as Richard Kroner said it years ago: imagination is "making visible what is invisible and . . . detecting the invisible element in the visible situation."<sup>2</sup> This is why story, verbal picture, poetic description, "enfleshed vignette" are so essential as preaching tools. They are not decorative additions but fundamental to our method—whether handling Biblical or contemporary material. They have an evocative function, as Joseph Sittler puts it, which is necessary to help

our people to meet living event with their full-dimensioned responses.

Ross Snyder once, in class, drew a large egg on the blackboard. He marked off the top one-tenth with a horizontal line. Then he offered this concise interpretation: one tenth of all we learn is expressible in concept, word or picture; nine-tenths is the response of feeling and meaning and willing. In preaching, we cannot be content to speak only to ideas; we are seeking responses of felt meaning and decision. And that requires disciplined imagination.

In practical terms, this means usually beginning preparations with an imaginative idea—which we then spin out with controlled craftsmanship. For example, I remember reading the account in Mark 5 of the raising of Jairus' daughter on the same day as I came upon one of the prayer-meditations of Robert Raines which begins: "Let me be like a child surprised . . ." That became the title of a sermon which was a call for all of us to wonder and amazement. For our Canadian Thanksgiving Sunday, a poem by James Kavanaugh posed this question:

"Little world, full of little people shouting for  
recognition, screaming for love,  
Rolling world, teaming with millions, carousel of  
the hungry,  
Is there food enough? . . ."

The sermon carried the title "Carousel Of The Hungry". And, some while ago, as I sat in a theatre waiting for a performance to begin, I was struck by the observation that the EXIT lights in places like this are always red. After much sifting and sorting and with the use of Paul's letter from prison to the Philippians, specifically 1:12-26, it became a sermon on coping with difficulties and death. Title: "Why Are Exit Lights Always Red?"

Let the sermon flow logically. The days of "three points and a poem" are over. If capturing the imagination and responses of our listeners is more important than linguistic textual analysis, then weaving one fabric is a more pertinent metaphor than building a structure with bricks. Let it flow from observation to conclusion, from picture to interpretative touch, weaving a logical tapestry as you do. It has to be logical because your case has to stand up under examination of both God and hearers. Begin where people are and carefully lead them to an imaginative perception of where they can be "in Christ".

If the weaving of a single fabric design is an adequate metaphor for preparing a sermon, then it is wise to weave our threads all the way through. Make sure the varied colours blend and surface in the pattern at the most appropriate places. The whole has design, and the parts must fit together well to produce the desired result. For example, a poetic quotation might be used in a repeated cadence as we work our way through the theme. Or part of the thread of a novel or play may be interwoven with a Biblical parable or Pauline letter segment. Or we may begin with the question raised by a descriptive vignette, move on to the main Biblical argument

of the sermon, and then return to the item with which we began—perhaps repeating it with an answering twist at the end, or perhaps finishing the quotation with a further segment which echoes the point we have been trying to make.

There comes a point when absolutely no-one can give anyone any further counselling about preaching for it is a highly personal craft. What finally comes out of a preacher depends on what he has assimilated as a human being committed to Christ and on his skills as a person of words and imagination. I believe in trying to write poetically and descriptively, but it is doubtful if any two of us would put the same tempo or tone to the same intended product. Nevertheless, let me suggest two further pointers which seem to me to be important for all of us.

We must find **varied** ways of expressing an idea or experience, both to avoid tiring repetition and to enrich what we are trying to say with varied shades of meaning. Therefore, let us always have several translations of the Bible on our desks—not so much to find an accurate translation (a little Greek would probably be better for that) as much as to find varied ways of saying it. And, let's always have a thesaurus at hand—and use it.

Then when we begin to put it all together, our writing must be **lean**. It is better to understate and let our people fill it in, than to make it too fat with verbiage. For example, avoid unnecessary preambles or explanations before any quoted material, Biblical or literary, and don't moralise or explain after reading it. Instead, learn the art of weaving it simply into the pattern you're creating. In other words, let the artistry be lean: just tell the story and let the shaped experience of the incident make its own impress on the sensibilities of your people.

Preaching really is very much like Jenny's poster . . . "the bit of poster (which) had spun a new world before her." That's what we want to accomplish. We hope that what we create and deliver will open up wonders and spin a new world before our people. For we speak as emissaries of the God of love and friends of persons who need to be reconciled to the One who made them. It is our task to draw one another into the Kingdom of our Lord, and preaching is still one effective way to do it. **BRUCE W. NEAL**

1. Sinclair Ross, **The Lamp At Noon, and Other Stories**, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968, p. 68.
2. Joseph Sittler, **The Ecology of Faith, The New Situation in Preaching**, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961, p. 47.

## THE MINISTER AS PASTOR

### 1. The terms "minister" and "pastor"

The essential meaning of the term "minister" is servant. Thus the minister is among his people as a servant of the Risen Lord. Since all believers are called to serve, the minister is a servant-among-servants. He is not alone in his work; he is a priest-among-priests, a prophet-among-prophets, and a shepherd-among-shepherds.

From this last description is derived the concept of pastoral

care as one of the functions of ministry. The Risen Christ is the Great Shepherd of the sheep and He asks His followers to take care of His flock as under-shepherds. In the New Testament this is part of the work of an elder and it is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

The metaphor of a shepherd and his flock belongs more appropriately to an earlier rural society than to the modern urbanized world. Thus, although the description "pastor" is still used, it is not surprising that it has taken on new meanings. Shepherd-like care is offered in contemporary terms to meet the needs of a complex, modern culture.

As long ago as 1934, John McNeill wrote, "We are evidently at the opening of a new era in the cure of souls. The ministry to personality will be at once scientific and religious." His prediction is slowly coming to pass. For example, the insights of psychology and personal therapy are being added to and merged with religious experience.

In the past the minister has been a general practitioner, a symbol and representative of the faith, and a trusted friend and adviser, who brought sanctified common sense and sincere religion to his people. Now, facing a bewildering world, much more aware of psychological dimensions, people are looking in addition for genuine Christian counselling rather than a religious social call.

## 2. The pastoral care of the congregation—a key to the pastoral ministry

As the people of God, the body of Christ, and the community of the Spirit, the whole fellowship shares the responsibility for pastoral care.

The church is people: the people of God who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. They have been brought into loving relationship with one another.

The church is an organism: the body of Christ, and He is its head. In obedience to Christ the whole body shares its common life, carries out its witness and renders its service. Each part of the body belongs to each other part, and the whole is bound together by mutual concern and trust.

The church is a community. It is not simply a voluntary society but is the community of the Spirit: called together, sustained and guided by God. The gifts of the Spirit contribute to its strength and to its witness. Without love, the harvest of the Spirit, all is useless.

When Paul urged all his readers, "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ",<sup>2</sup> he wanted each member of the churches to practise pastoral care for the others. And when he said, "Do good to all men",<sup>3</sup> he included loving deeds that would reach out into the world beyond.

If a minister is to be a pastor-among-pastors instead of merely the pastor, he must see to it that the church never loses sight of its own true nature. He must resist patterns of ministry which imply that he alone is the person responsible for pastoral care. Instead he should "equip the saints for the work of the ministry:"<sup>4</sup> preparing, encouraging and guiding others in the service they offer simply because they are believers.

"All that is said of the ministry in the New Testament", writes John Robinson, "is said not of individuals, nor of some apostolic college or essential ministry, but of the whole body, whatever the differentiation of function within it".<sup>5</sup>

Some may be specifically gifted as pastors but all should care enough to serve their brothers in Christ. This is what is meant by the pastoral nature of the congregation and it is an important key to the pastoral ministry.

## 3. Interpersonal relationships: a key to the pastoral ministry

Ministry, an interpersonal vocation, is best understood in terms of relationships.

In fact, Gibson Winter says of human experience generally, "Man is who he is in relationship to other persons; his being is a co-being. The discovery of one's own identity . . . is a process of reflection or self-consciousness within the network of communication and community".<sup>6</sup>

From within his place in the fellowship of the Church, Paul declared: "By God's grace I am what I am".<sup>7</sup> In the Christian community he found prayers to support him and fellow servants to work with him, friends who looked after his needs and some people who disagreed with him. In the New Testament and in our own experience we see the creative value of such interpersonal relationships.

Paul Johnson declares emphatically, ". . . the pastor who is unrelated to people may be an eloquent pulpit orator, a brilliant scholar, a stern ascetic, or a tireless administrator of church business; but his labours as a pastor of souls will be futile, and he will fall short of healing their conflicts or inspiring their spiritual growth. To fulfil the deepest hungers of his people, the pastor must reach out to others responsively in all of the many services he offers".<sup>8</sup>

The need to emphasise relationships is the second key to pastoral care.

## 4. Some pastoral relationships

### a. The pastor himself

Pastoral ministry, a many-sided activity, has further variety because of the emphasis that is brought to it by each particular minister. It cannot be adequately described in functional terms since pastors are personally involved in what they do. They bring their own unique strengths and weaknesses to their tasks.

The pastor himself is of express consequence to all of the pastoral relationships into which he enters.

Because of his own background and experience, he may be defensive in his approach to a particular member of his congregation. He may find himself responding disproportionately to certain irritations, but he may be at a loss to know why—or he may not even recognise what is happening at all. It is obvious that a better appreciation of the inner dynamics of his own personality would help him to function more effectively.

In these days of rapid change it is inevitable that pastors will ask disconcerting questions about their identity and their role. They will not find static answers that will serve for life. In fact Seward Hiltner puts his finger on a very real problem.

He says, "A minister who cannot tolerate ambiguity, cannot tolerate a local church". He adds these significant words, "... the capacity to tolerate ambiguity is a kind of final mark of mental health".<sup>9</sup> If for no other reason than his own need for sanity, in a situation full of emotional stress, a pastor needs to know who he is, he needs to have a sense of growth concerning himself, and he needs to know how to handle the feelings of guilt and inadequacy which can seriously debilitate him. It will help him immeasurably, for example, if he can himself receive the forgiveness he proclaims to others and if he can be open to the friendship, support and guidance of other people. Unless he is prepared to be vulnerable he will find his role very lonely indeed.

#### **b. The pastor and God**

It is surely not appropriate that the clergy should be committed to higher expectations than the laity. There is one gospel for all and one criterion for moral behaviour, namely the perfect law of love. Within that context, however, the pastor will want to set his sights high.

He will want to behave in a way that makes his preaching credible. He will wish to protect his pastoral ministry from conduct that would injure it. The claims of the gospel are absolute and the demands of the Christian ethic all-embracing for him as well as for others.

Hypocrisy or sham piety are obnoxious wherever one finds them. For some reason pastors seem to be particularly susceptible to a professional image which suggests a different style of speech, "the stained-glass voice", and a peculiar set of mannerisms.

The fact that there is rarely a television programme, film or play which presents anything but a caricature of the minister ought to cause us to examine ourselves.

One's faith in God should not be pretentious but honest and authentic and one should speak naturally about one's beliefs. It is part of what it means to live by faith to have doubts. If a pastor puts himself upon a pedestal, as though he has none, he separates himself from his people and becomes an unreal figure to whom they cannot easily relate.

#### **c. The pastor and individuals**

Adequate pastoral care for individuals depends to a large measure upon the extent to which a pastor can count upon the concern of the congregation as a whole.

His own contacts will be as comprehensive as possible on a social level, and he will keep his ear to the ground for indications of deeper needs out of which more significant pastoral experiences may arise. These will be followed up by appointment and conducted with professional skill as well as spiritual dedication.

Concerns that frequently appear include: job uncertainty or disappointment, concern for a marriage partner, disillusionment associated with middle age, adjustment to retirement, loneliness, personality differences, ill-health, feelings of inadequacy, bereavement, and other forms of personal hurt. On the positive side, there is a long list of matters for celebration and joy.

Strictly speaking, however, no one is just an individual. Each person is part of a complex set of relationships. The one to one approach has serious limitations because it does not sufficiently include other significant persons who belong in the picture. Hence there is growing emphasis upon pastoral ministry to couples and to families.

#### **d. The pastor and families**

Although some members of a church are present individually and need particular kinds of attention to see that they are not overlooked, most people come to church as families. Each family unit feels stress to some extent, especially these days. All would agree that life was simpler when roles were more clearly defined, goals were more generally agreed upon, and problems had relatively clean-cut answers.

There are amazing contrasts between life now and even twenty-five years ago. "Freer" attitudes to sex, the advent of the pill, easier divorce, the wide use of drugs, and the increased abuse of alcohol are some of the changes which put pressure upon young people and strain on the family. The whole context of family life has undergone radical change.

Great courage and adventurousness is shown by some people while others withdraw without facing the issues that confront them.

Relationships within families are more strained than formerly. Scripture passages cannot be referred to for guidance or used by the pastor as if they were written with the twentieth century in mind. Roger Mehl properly says, "That which the Old Testament tells us of patriarchal family organisation is surely not applicable to the conjugal family of the twentieth century. This does not mean that these texts are null and void. The Word of God can still ring out through them. But if we try to find imperative models of organisations for our world in the different sociological realities to which the Scripture makes allusion, we refuse to listen to the Word of the living God."<sup>10</sup>

That is all the more reason for serious study of the Old and New Testaments, in order to discover what is variable and what is constant. Family life conferences are needed with emphasis upon small groups and the sharing of anxieties. A family life committee can help to keep the issues alive. The human relations movement, stressing open, honest interpersonal experiences, counteracting contemporary dehumanising influences, is in some ways akin to the New Testament concept of fellowship. It may suggest ideas and techniques valid in a family life programme.

Pastors are not able to make as many evening visits as they would like, but even if they could, there is little chance of finding all of the family at home. Each has his own interests and activities. There is much coming and going. The telephone and television are only two of the sources of interruption.

One result is a tendency to think of each member of a family as an individual rather than one person who has many relationships of varying degrees of significance to him. He is

best understood in terms of these interpersonal ties and not in isolation from them.

Pastoral counselling, for example, is of only limited effectiveness when it is offered to husband and wife separately rather than jointly. If they face their difficulties together and discuss them with each other in the presence of a pastor the results are usually considerably better. The same can be said of family counselling in which all of the members of the family participate. For really serious family problems, casual pastoral calling offers only very limited possibilities of success. Definite appointments need to be made to ensure that the appropriate members of the family are present for suitable counselling at a proper level.

Apart from alertness to the stress brought about by changes in family life, pastors should be aware of phases in the family cycle, and of the characteristics of each phase: the family-founding period, the child-bearing period, the child-rearing period, the child-launching period, and what has been called the "empty nest period". To be tuned into such things in more than a haphazard way is to look out for typical features of family life at any given stage.

#### e. **The pastor and the congregation**

Members of a church, Norman Pittenger says, should be, "knit into a strong, self-conscious group aware of their function in the world, ready to give themselves to their task as Christians, and co-operating in every respect so that they may most adequately accomplish the work they are given to do."<sup>11</sup>

Relationships remain of predominant significance. A principal concern of the deacons should be for people, not just in general terms but specifically and personally. The pastor will look for ways of training and encouraging them in this task. Within almost every church fellowship there are men and women who possess ability in counselling and in the care of others. They too may be encouraged to function and should be provided with opportunities. Each small group in the church, from a church school class or young people's group to the boards and committees, should be expected to develop pastoral concern for individuals in the group and should work out simple procedures for following through.

Services of worship usually bring the largest number of people together and it seems appropriate to provide opportunities at such times to meet informally over tea or coffee. By this means friendly contacts are established, and deacons and deaconesses can be asked to look out for newcomers or for anyone who appears to be on the periphery. In addition, church membership lists can be broken down into small groups and each of these can be made the responsibility of a deacon. He may call on people on his list or invite them to his home, and he may well keep an eye open for them each Sunday.

Such a view of the congregation, as a mutually responsible fellowship, does not, of course, preclude an important pastoral role for the minister himself. Apart from educating the membership as to its responsibilities, he will relate in

pastoral terms to individuals, to families, and to the congregation as a whole. As he leads the church's worship, preaches, teaches and is involved in administration, he can see these functions as pastoral interpersonal activities. His emphasis will therefore be upon relationships, upon people and upon their relatedness.

#### f. **The pastor and the community**

Modern man thinks of himself as being involved in the world and interacting with it. He feels responsible for life around him and concerned about society's problems: locally and on a global scale. In the contemporary world, the church is also increasingly aware of a larger secular role. There is a new mood in the churches, and committed, sensitive clergy are at work with their people, in keeping with the words of John Robinson, "The charter of the Church is to be the servant of the world."<sup>12</sup>

Herbert O'Driscoll in a letter to the **Vancouver Sun** wrote, "The church as an institution in the contemporary world is torn by ambiguity . . . between being a creative contributing community in the turmoil of this age and being a refuge or a kind of time-machine for inexpensive travel into a mellower and simpler past."<sup>13</sup> Surely the choice must be to become a community for others, and it is part of the work of pastoral ministry, not only to respond to individual and family crises, but also amongst other things, to foster social concern and action.

On an institutional level, practical projects for the benefit of the community can be undertaken. On a personal level, everything from small individual acts of kindness to involvement in the power structures of society, is possible. The pastor will try to guide the life of the fellowship so that it becomes a home base and source of motivation for such service in the name of Christ.

In personal, pastoral ways the minister can make his services available for counselling to the community, working with other helping professions and organisations. He should take his share of work on useful committees that serve community needs.

#### 5. **Education for Pastoral Ministry**

"All Christian doctrine arises from Christian experience," writes Alan Richardson.<sup>14</sup> It evidently follows that theology ought not to deal only with abstractions; it should not be purely academic. Theological education accordingly should be suspicious of any separation of theory and practice. In the procedures developed for the preparation of ministers, academic courses should be closely integrated with actual ministry.

Very many ministers must feel that they are being asked to perform for much of the time as "engineers" having studied a great deal of "pure science", so to speak, but very little "applied science". To change the analogy, the would-be doctor's concern is not what might be called "pure medicine", or the study of medicine in antiquity, but rather of the healing art itself.

Education for ministry has its subject-matter, of course,

but such education should help to prepare a student to minister to persons out of the resources of the Gospel. Attention should also be focussed upon persons: upon the student as a person and upon those to whom he will minister. Besides academic performance of the highest possible level, there is need for maturation and growing personal competence if a man is to become adequate for his ministries.

Ministers need to be able to function within those relationships in which people encounter one another, within fractured relationships and personally disturbing experiences—as well as life's enjoyments and celebrations.

The phrase "education for pastoral ministry" is important. It keeps learning and doing in close relationship. Since ministry is the aim of such education, the student should be involved throughout his course in the practice of ministry itself. His efforts should be supervised and evaluated as an on-going process in which he participates fully. Pastoral calls, for example, may be discussed through the use of verbatim reports of visits. Such methods may be expected to lead to greater confidence and ability on the part of the would-be pastor. The need is for in-parish, supervised pastoral education, as well as classroom education.

Advocates of such an approach to education for ministers are often accused of anti-intellectualism. Samuel Miller said that such methods will produce "nothing but ecclesiastical mechanics".<sup>15</sup> Such comments are a mere caricature. The safest basis for ministry is a thorough spiritual and intellectual foundation and the integration of theological knowledge and pastoral ministry itself in both theory and practice.

STUART A. FRAYNE

1. John T. McNeill, "Historical Types and Methods in the Cure of Souls", (*The Crozer Quarterly*, July 1934), p. 227.
2. Galatians 6:2.
3. Galatians 6:10.
4. Ephesians 4:12.
5. John A. T. Robinson, *The Historic Episcopate*, (London: K. M. Carey (Ed.), Lutterworth, 1963), p. 14.
6. Gibson Winter, *The New Creation as Metropolis*, (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 106.
7. I Corinthians 15:10.
8. Paul E. Johnson, *Psychology of Pastoral Care*, (New York: Abingdon, 1953), pp. 34-35.
9. Seward Hiltner, *Ferment in the Ministry*, (New York: Abingdon, 1969), p. 22.
10. Roger Mehl, *Sex, Family and Society in Theological Focus*, (New York: J. C. Wynn (Ed.) Association Press, 1966), p. 30.
11. W. N. Pittenger, *The Historic Faith and a Changing World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 137.
12. John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1962), p. 229.
13. *Vancouver Sun*, 13 October, 1971.
14. Alan Richardson, *Creeds in the Making*, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1961), p. 14.
15. Samuel H. Miller, *Making the Ministry Relevant*, (New York: Scribners, 1960), p. 173.

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We regret that due to lack of space, it has not been possible to include a further article by one of our Canadian contributors. It is entitled "The Minister as Counsellor—A Psychologist's View", and will appear in a later issue.