

*Reflections upon the Nature of Ministry and Priesthood in the Light of the Lima Report*¹

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Two fundamental reasons prompted the writing of this article. The first is that evangelical Christians often react to the concept of priesthood with suspicion, treating it as a heretical notion which has no proper place in sound theology. I have long felt that this defensive attitude hardly equips the evangelical to make a positive contribution in ecumenical discussion.² Secondly, as a new member of General Synod, I noticed that a private members' motion in February 1984 appealed to the Church of England to get its own house in order on the matter of ministry and priesthood before entering negotiations with other churches. This was well put. One of our most central concerns must be for the establishing of common ground between catholics and evangelicals in our own denomination on the nature of ministry. I urge this for two reasons. Not only does the unity of our own church require it, but, if we are able to signal substantial agreement on this issue, it may well lead to an ecumenical breakthrough at the denominational level.

In this brief article I do not intend to present an analytical commentary on the text of the Lima document on ministry because a number are already

1 World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, Geneva 1982.

2 At the first Anglican Evangelical Assembly 1983 I was struck by the fact that John Stott's excellent paper 'Mosaics of Ministry: A New Quest for the Church: A Fresh Look at Ministry in the New Testament', *1983 Proceedings of the Anglican Evangelical Assembly*, CEEC, 1983, pp 19-33, made no reference whatever to priesthood. During the time of questions which followed I asked why this aspect was ignored, especially in the light of an assurance given at the beginning of the Assembly that we wanted to speak to issues in the Church and world. 'Why is it,' I asked, 'that you left out this aspect when for two thirds of the Christian world priesthood is regarded as an essential feature of ministry?' John's reply was that Christian ministry was not considered in these terms in the New Testament – and the issue was swiftly passed over. Although I could see John's reasons for omitting this aspect of ministry, and I value very highly what he said, I was greatly troubled, believing then, as I still do, that unless we grapple with the issue of priesthood positively, evangelicals will not be able to make a constructive contribution towards the ecumenical goal.

in print.¹ Instead what I intend to do is to consider key concepts in the document which are relevant to evangelical participation in ecumenical discussion and which may be pertinent to our theology of ministry. Two aims may be noticeable. First, to explore theologically the deficiencies as well as the virtues of the evangelical doctrine of ministry. Secondly, to try to suggest ways of understanding the notion of priesthood which are acceptable to the evangelical doctrine of ministry.

The Church is Ministry

The first six sections of Lima give a sturdy outline of the calling of the whole people of God to engage in ministry through the Spirit. I am glad to see that ministry is set in the context of the mission to 'proclaim and prefigure the Kingdom of God' (4). An urgent and important note is thus struck at the start of the document. It is recognized that the Church is engaged in God's work of reconciliation. From an evangelical perspective, however, what is significantly lacking in this introductory section is an understanding that the mission includes reaching out to fallen mankind, separated from God through sin and selfishness and that the Church's task is to proclaim the good news of forgiveness of sin. What we have instead are high sounding words like 'oppression', and 'liberation'. The Church's mission, we are told, 'needs to be carried out in varying political, social and cultural contexts'. No mention is made of mission in its 'spiritual' context. But this, I submit, is a surprising and serious omission. The nature of the Church's task will, surely, affect the shape of ministry at its heart. Ecumenical dialogue has not given sufficient attention to the fact that different salvific models often form the basis for our ecclesial diversity. It is not surprising that, because we are not agreed as to the enterprise of the Christian message, fundamental differences appear at the level of ministry. Now, it could be that my analysis is unjust and that the spiritual objectives of the Gospel are clearly in view. If so, I only wish that this note were sounded as loudly as the more fashionable social and political elements. But unjust or not, I believe I am right in saying that the way we understand the nature of the Good News will radically affect the nature and shape of Christian ministry itself. Evangelical participators, in dialogue with other Christians, will want this element brought out into the open and examined carefully.

Lima is however correct in commencing its doctrine of the ministry from the notion of the Church involved in mission. Lima follows Vatican II in making the 'people of God' image the key ecclesiological concept (1)

1 For example: T. Price, *Evangelical Anglicans and the Lima Text*, Grove, Nottingham 1985; D. Wright: *BEM: An Evangelical Assessment*, Rutherford House Forum, paper 3; R. Beckwith, *Themelios* 10, 1984, pp 28-30; General Synod, Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Board for Mission and Unity *Towards a Church of England Response to BEM and ARCIC*, GS 661, CIO, London 1985.

and this is surely right. Unless 'ministry' is seen as central to the being of the Church, we shall soon end up making it external to its life and the prerogative of certain 'gifted' people only. Lima asserts the opposite. Because the whole people are chosen and called, all have a part to play in the reconciling and healing work of the Church. From this basic theological position Lima goes on to affirm the gifts of the Spirit upon all in the fellowship. None is 'gift-less', (5) but each is gifted for the common good and for ministry to the Body and to the world. This radical theology, so self-evidently scriptural, is so manifestly missing from Church life today, whether evangelical or not. We all affirm the importance of 'every member ministry' but it is scarcely the norm. We have inherited a theology of ministry which starts at the top and seeps down. Lima reminds us that unless our theology of ministry begins at the call to be a disciple and works up it will be deficient.

2. Ordained Ministry as a Gift of God

Sections 8-16 go on to consider the role and place of the ordained minister or priest within the people of God. Certain phrases may raise a few evangelical eyebrows, such as that:

- The ministry of the ordained is 'constitutive for the life and witness of the church' (8).

- Christ continues through the Holy Spirit to choose and call persons to the ordained ministry. As heralds and ambassadors they are representatives of Jesus Christ (11).

- 'It is especially in the eucharistic celebration that the ordained ministry is the visible focus of the deep and all-embracing communion between Christ and the members of his body' (14).

What Lima sets forth (and ARCIC more strongly still) is a theology of the ordained ministry which, while it is deeply anchored in the entire calling of the people of God (sections 12, 15), is a special calling to do certain functions on behalf of the body. The report evidences the pattern of Jesus' calling of the Twelve and the setting apart of ministry in the New Testament generally. I do not think there can be much doubt about the truth of this approach. Although B. H. Streeter's dictum that 'all have won and all shall have prizes', spelled the death knell for any theory of ministry which claims to be the definitive New Testament model, most reputable scholars in ecclesiology will speak with one voice of the importance of ministry in the New Testament era in which there are different models: for example, that of the Petrine (John 21 and 1 Pet. 5); the Pauline (2 Cor. 3; 4: Phil. 4) and that found in the Pastorals.¹

Lima reminds us, then, that it will not do to make light of any calling to serve Christ in his Church. This is something for evangelicals to heed. I

1 The literature on this topic is vast but see E. Schweizer *Church Order in the New Testament*, SCM, London 1961 for a generally accepted view of the variety of ministerial forms in the New Testament.

often meet evangelical clergymen who have no more than a 'functional' view of ministry. Ordination is the gateway to exercise certain ministries in the Church. It merely gives us authority to perform an office on behalf of the people. The reason for this dismissive attitude probably flows from two understandable fears; that of an over-clericalizing of ministry (that the ordained is *more* in ministry than the lay-person) and that ordination, mechanically somehow, conveys an 'indelible character'.

But our own Church in its Ordinal has supplied us, I believe, with a scriptural and thorough theology of the ordained ministry which balances very nicely the functional and ontological and it does so by making ministry a gift which, in turn, requires a gift for its performance. That is to say, ministry is first given to us. We are set aside for ministry and no protestations to the contrary can deny that we are now different by reason of Ordination. Tom Wright points out on the ordained person: 'He holds *an office* within the church, not in virtue of who he is personally but in virtue of the ministry entrusted to him'.¹ That is to say, the preciousness of our calling comes, not from ourselves but from the ministry entrusted to us – which is in itself a gift.

Second, this 'marking out' of ministry is not merely signalled by what the Church does but also by what God does. The gift of the Spirit is given to enable us to perform our ministries – not in our strength but in his. The gift of ministry and the gift of the Spirit are brought out clearly in the laying on of hands in the ordination service with the accompanying words: 'Receive the Holy Spirit for the *office and work of a Priest* in the church of God'. Although our Church refused at the Reformation to give to ordination the name of a sacrament, it appears undeniable that sacramental grace is given for the performance of our ministry: 'Remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee by the imposition of my hands'.² I am unhappy about styling this concept of ministry as 'ontological', as opposed to functional because the term 'ontological' may suggest that the newly ordained is somehow hermetically sealed off from the rest of the Church. What I wish to emphasize, rather, is the distinctive calling from God to act on behalf of the congregation in God's name for which dynamic activity his Spirit is given and his grace experienced. The 'office', such as it is, is humble service to others and ministry by way of Word and Sacraments by which the people of God are fed and built up in the faith (Lima 13).

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- 1 N. T. Wright, *Evangelical Anglican Identity: The Connection Between Bible Gospel and Church*, Latimer House, Oxford 1980, p 32.
 - 2 Richard Hooker believed that, although ordination was not a sacrament, it made the other sacraments 'sacraments'. See J. S. Marshall: *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition*, A. & C. Black, London 1963, pp 117ff.

Another problem with the 'functional' approach to ministry is that it tends towards an individualistic, 'episodic' concept of the Church.¹ The Anglican Church has always resisted this tendency. Our reformers anchored church life, not only in scriptural truths, but in continuity with the main streams of church life as they flowed from the patristic period on. Authentic traditions, that is those traditions which could be verified from Scripture and which were consonant with it, were readily accepted as our Ordinal, services and Articles testify. Thus we have inherited an ecclesiology which is enriched by an incarnational-historical-objective concept of God's dealing with us. Whilst rejecting the worst features of medieval catholicism, which 'reified' Calvary within the historical reality of the Church, Anglicanism kept the balance between Christ's total victory in his life, death and resurrection and that of the historical manifestation of his life within his Body.

With other main-stream denominations, therefore, Anglicanism sees the sacraments as central to this incarnational-historical-objective reality which we call the Church. As we celebrate Christ's victory, we stand in that historical continuum with the Church down the ages and appropriate, yet again, that victory which was and is his, and is now yours and mine. An 'episodic' church, however, may be characterized by a tendency to ignore the historical reality of the Church. Although there are evangelicals who have such a theology, it is more likely to be encountered by those groups (such as some house-church fellowships) whose concept of Christianity appears to lack any historical or sacramental awareness. It is the immediate that counts. Christianity seems to be largely a matter of divine disclosures in time, dependent upon our faith or a collection of key doctrines associated with the Spirit. An 'episodic' church is not bothered about denominations or church unity, neither is it greatly troubled by tradition or liturgy. It is God's activity NOW that matters. But for the historical-objective-incarnational Church unity does matter – it is the hideous tear which mocks the name of Christ. And continuity does count – because of the importance of handing on, not only the faith once delivered to the saints, but also the valued traditions which come from the lived out experience of the Church in time.²

3. The Priesthood of Church and Ministry

The Lima Report, perhaps conscious that not all Christian groups consider priesthood to be a significant feature in ministry but aware that for Roman Catholics, Orthodox and for many Anglicans it determines the character of ministry, states:

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- 1 I am very grateful to Canon John Hind, Principal of Chichester Theological College for help in developing this concept of 'episodic' church life. John and I are currently working together on this topic of priesthood.
 - 2 So, an episodic church would find it very difficult to say wholeheartedly with Wright: 'He (the minister) forms the historical and visible link between the congregation and the worldwide historical church' (op. cit., 33).

Jesus Christ is the unique priest of the new covenant . . . derivatively, the church as a whole can be described as a priesthood . . . ordained ministers may appropriately be called priests because they fulfill a particular priestly service by strengthening and building up the royal and prophetic priesthood of the faithful through word and sacraments . . . ' (17)

Now we come to the 'crunch' issue for the evangelical because he is reluctant to attribute any notion to ministry which appears to negate Christ's functions or which seems to lead away from him. And it is important to stress this point because both Continental and English Reformers were insistent in their teaching that Christ dealt with the tragedy of human sin once and for all, becoming sin for us and dealing with it finally, fully and satisfactorily. He is our Atonement, the Reformers declared; the '*sacerdotium*' has been made by the One who is our High Priest and victim.¹ Our Book of Common Prayer emphatically marked out the non-negotiable factor in Protestant theology: 'Who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world'. Little wonder, then, that the terminology of worship came under rigorous scrutiny and every effort was made to render liturgical language as 'water-tight' as possible.

Why, then, did our own Church, while following the thrust of the Reformation by emphasizing the fullness of Christ's salvation, persist in using the terminology of priesthood? Why was it that, rejecting a 'sacerdotal' concept of ministry, it still allowed this 'dangerous' term to continue on in the life of the Body? Why rejecting the word 'altar' and replacing it with the word 'table' were our Reformers happy still to refer to priests? Still more remarkably, how was it that Cranmer and others, following the Strasbourg theologian Bucer in many respects, did not follow his advice that the three main ranks of ministry should be: Superintendents, Presbyters of the second order and Presbyters of the third order? Bearing in mind the very considerable pressure there must have been upon them to fall in line with the movement to remove all traces of Romanism 'hook, line and sinker' it is astonishing that they did not succumb. I think there were three reasons why they did not do so and to these we now turn.

(a) *Antiquity*

Our Ordinal begins: 'It is evident to all men reading the scriptures . . . that there have been these three orders of ministers in the Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons'. Actually, it is not at all that self-evident because no trace of a three-fold order is there in the New Testament writings, let alone is the word 'priest' used of the Ministry! Nevertheless the Ordinal is correct in pointing out that the application of 'priesthood' developed very

1 Perhaps one of the most spirited although polemical expressions of this viewpoint is to be found in N. Dimock's *The Christian doctrine of Sacerdotium*, Longmans, London 1910.

early in the life of the early church. We must face the fact that terms like 'altar' and 'sacrifice' for the eucharistic celebration; 'offering the gifts' for the elements and Old Testament priestly terms for the ministry are there in such early writings as the Didache and I Clement (first century) and Ignatius (early second century). By the end of the second century the word priest was commonly used of the second order of ministry. There were probably two main reasons for this use of Old Testament terminology. Firstly, it seemed very natural for the early church, which had received the Old Testament Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God, to apply Old Testament terms to their liturgical functionaries. I cannot find any evidence in the first three hundred years that the terms used threatened or diminished in any way the perfect sacrifice of Christ or the finality of his Priesthood. Secondly, our earliest writers seemed to have realized that, in a world which valued sacrifice and priesthood very highly, it was appropriate and natural to work with Old Testament categories. But they did so to show the contrast to other ways of finding God. Thus, Justin Martyr shows the superiority of Christianity over other faiths in that Christ has already dealt with the problem of sin:

We who through the name of Jesus have believed . . . are the true high priestly race of God, as God himself also bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles are men offering sacrifices well pleasing unto him and pure. Yet God does not receive sacrifices except through his priests. Therefore God anticipating all sacrifices through this name which Jesus Christ ordained to be offered, I mean those offered by the Christians in every region of the earth with the Thanksgiving (*epi tee eucharistia*) of the bread and of the cup, bears witness that they are acceptable to him, but the sacrifices offered by you through those your priests, he rejects¹

That is to say, Justin is emphatic that the entire body of Christ is 'priestly', and that the nature of the Eucharist is that of a commemorative celebration of a sacrifice that is complete. Justin cheerfully accepts, and uses religious terminology to express the meaning of the Christian service, but in the process shows that the atonement of Christ transcends and transforms the language used. Equally firmly, indeed, Justin takes for granted the fact that, although all are priests, not all are granted the privilege to 'preside'. Only the President (most probably the Bishop is meant) gives thanks over the bread and wine and deacons assist in the distribution.

We may see the same process at work with another key word, 'sacrifice', which Justin uses. It is quite clear that he means celebration of the Eucharist. But, over against the literal sacrifices of the Jews and the heathen, the 'offering of the gifts' were expressions of the spiritual sacrifice of heart, mind and will. The early writers seem to go to some lengths to show that, unlike pagan sacrifice where attention is centred upon the

1 *Dialogue with Trypho*, 116, 117.

victim and the gift of material offerings such as blood and flesh, the nature of the Christian offering is the expression of a meal in which thanksgiving is made with the symbolical offerings of bread and wine – the only material link with the sacrifice of Christ. Indeed, by the end of the second century the Greek term *Eucharistia* (Thanksgiving) had become the principal term to describe the meal which Christians shared together. Its prominence must have arisen from the meaning attached to it. The meal was a celebration of God's redemptive act in Christ. They were the new people of God. Through Christ they were born again and, in their common act of eating bread and drinking wine together, they commemorated Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin. Origen explains to the pagans of his day: 'We are not ungrateful people. It is true we do not sacrifice to the gods but to a God who has bestowed upon us an abundance of benefits. The sign of this gratitude towards God is the bread which is called Eucharist'.¹

This juxtaposition of thanksgiving and sacrifice is a common feature in the early writings and has created some of our later theological problems. It is certainly true, as we have seen, that sacrificial language is used of the Holy Communion service and, indeed, the Eucharist itself is called a 'sacrifice'. The Roman Catholic liturgiologist Jungmann in his otherwise splendid book *The Early Liturgy*, while acknowledging the importance of thanksgiving, concludes: 'The Mass, therefore, in spite of the original emphasis on thanksgiving, has been considered from the very beginning as a sacrifice which we offer to God'.² But this conclusion is far too sharp and crude. We have to ask: why was it called a 'sacrifice' when there is no victim and the character of the rite was that of inexpressible joy, not the cries of penitents crying out for forgiveness? If Jungmann had stayed with an earlier assessment of the Eucharist he might have drawn a different conclusion. He noted that to the first believers the Christian Eucharist was a real sacrifice but it was a spiritual sacrifice, a *sacrificium laudis* which he describes as the 'expression of a mind wholly given to God . . . the adoration in spirit and truth which expands into a holy life and evokes a sense of gratitude'.³ This is surely right and an affirmation which is in line with the thought of the writers but there is no substance in asserting that as 'sacrifice' the Eucharist is the means whereby the Church pleads the death of Christ, as though we are unforgiven people. Because Christ has died and is risen, we can join together in our thanksgiving and unite in our sacrifice of praise and dedication of holy lives.

What we do see running through Anglican theology is that our Anglican fathers had a strong sense of continuity with the past and they were not anxious to separate themselves from their roots in the ancient Church.⁴

1 *Contra Celsum*, 8, 57.

2 Josef. A. Jungmann *The Early Liturgy*, DLT, London 1959, p 69.

3 *Op. cit.*, 48.

4 Anglican theology is very much in line with Lima 19-25, which anchors the threefold order of ministry in antiquity and the Bishop's role in the Eucharist.

(b) *Etymology*

Against their Protestant colleagues who chided Anglicans for using the term 'priest' for the second order of ministry, our forefathers pointed out that the term had no original sacerdotal meaning. It, together with the French *pretre*, the German *priester* and Italian *prete* are all derived from the Christian term *Presbyter*. The term itself, they argued, is not a problem; the problem is the association of sacerdotalism it had acquired over the centuries but this should be no cause to excise a proper term. The Puritan Thomas Cartwright, on the other hand, considered that the associations had contaminated the term so greatly that a speedy death to the word was the most satisfactory solution: 'Although it might be proved that the word "priest" were the same with the Greek *presbyteros* yet the use of this word "priest" for a minister of the Gospel is very dangerous'.¹ Even the judicious Hooker, who had a far higher doctrine of ministry than Cartwright, was later to agree with this verdict:

Touching the ministry of the Gospel . . . I had rather term the one sort of presbyters than priests because in a matter of small moment I would not willingly offend their ears to whom, the name of priesthood is odious . . . the word presbyter doth seem more fit, and in propriety of speech more agreeable than priest with the drift of the whole gospel of Jesus Christ².

But the substantial body of opinion in the Anglican Church was that, once the term had been purged of its doctrinal links with the sacrifice of the Mass, the name may be safely used to signify a minister of the Gospel.³

(c) *Ministerial Priesthood*

But antiquity and etymology cannot be the only reasons why Anglican theology has retained the term. There must be more to it than that. I, for one, cannot believe that our Reformers resisted the considerable pressure just because the term was ancient and was essentially innocuous. Cartwright was not alone in pointing out that the term 'presbyter' was even older and considerably less open to question. What, we must ask, was going on at the deeper levels of meaning considering the theology of ministry?⁴

I think Moberly got to the heart of it with his analysis of a 'ministerial priesthood' as being central to the concept of ministry in the Anglican Church.⁵ Moberly is quick to deny that by ministerial priesthood we are

1 *Whitgift's Works*, PS Vol II, 310.

2 *Eccles Polity* V.lxxvii.2. See also Marshall, *op. cit.*

3 *Whitgift's Works* PS Vol II, 311.

4 This is also noted by Jean Tillard *What Priesthood has the Ministry?* Grove, Nottingham 1973, p 7.

5 R. C. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood*, 2nd ed., John Murray, London 1899.

referring to a sacerdotal order of ministry independent of the life of the Church. He emphasizes the once for all character of Christ's unique sacrifice and asserts the priesthood of Christ exercised in and through the priesthood of the Church. According to this view of ministry the priesthood of the ordained ministry has no life of its own, separate from the body. The priesthood of the Church does not differ in kind from the priesthood of ministry. Indeed, Moberly argues the movement does not flow that way. It is because the Church is priestly that its ordained ministers are a priesthood. Their priesthood springs from the body and is exercised on behalf of the rest. Thus Moberly rejects any notion of priesthood as a 'substituted or atoning priesthood' between God and man.¹ Rather he views priesthood as the organ of the body in which functions which belong to the whole are done on its behalf by those it has set apart. Moberly then very sensitively traces the nature of an ordained priesthood, not from any origin in Old Testament and pagan priesthood but in the incarnation and service of Christ who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. He asserts that our concept of priesthood is too often understood by the sacerdotal character of the Old Testament and not by an understanding of priesthood as set forth in humble sacrifice, holy living and a dedicated life.² This, I believe, is at the heart of our Ordinal, when contrasted with the Sarum rite from which it is drawn. Cranmer omitted explicit references to sacrifices, or to the power of the priesthood, putting in their place a much greater emphasis upon holiness of life, service to the people of God and godly learning.³ Thus the Bishop exhorts:

Consider the end of your ministry, towards the children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ, and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lies in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness, and perfectness of age in Christ, that they shall be no place left in them either for error in religion or for viciousness of life.

Furthermore, the over-emphasis of the Sarum rite on the link between the priest and the Eucharist was replaced by a much broader stress upon the priest's role to be 'messengers, watchmen, pastors and stewards of the Lord'. Instead of the priest being given a paten and chalice as a mark of his office, the Anglican priest is given a Bible with the words: 'Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the holy Sacraments in the congregation'. However, although Cranmer was determined to rid the Ordinal of all vestiges of medieval accretions which blurred the fullness of Christ's sacrifice, his intention throughout was not to destroy the

1 Op. cit., 242.

2 Noted by E. Echlin *The Story of Anglican Ministry*, St. Paul Publications, Slough 1974, p 90ff. Also Moberly, op. cit., ch. 7.

3 Op. cit., 258ff.

priesthood and render it a different beast completely but to reform it in the light of Scripture and the patristic tradition. Thus Anglican priests are primarily ministers of the Word and Sacraments and have authority in the Church to care for the flock of Christ. But this is NOT to say that the sacraments were now shifted to the circumference of the church's life. Although there have been times in our history when this may have seemed the case, it was never the Reformers' intention and has never been the general rule.¹ We need to repeat again, however, that our Reformers had no intention of separating the priesthood of ministry from that of the royal priesthood of the Church itself. Nevertheless for Cranmer and others the priesthood of ministry was a sacred and awesome trust from God which needed careful preparation and considered prayer and thought before entering upon it.

4. Theological Implications

Both the Lima and ARCIC documents challenge evangelicals to look afresh at the subject of ministry and to make positive, not sterile, contributions to the debate. I suggest the following two areas are ones where more thought is needed.

(a) *Questions which the Evangelical Scholar Must Continue to Put*

It is heartening to see that the doctrine of ministry in Vatican II and ARCIC is basically in line with ministerial priesthood. But there is still a chasm between the ordained ministry and the rest of the Church. Of what consists the priesthood of the laity? How may we coax the flickering embers of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit in the congregation to burst into flame? The character of Christ's ministry may suggest that the way to do this is not by talking about office, status and authority but by humble service, clear teaching and holy living. Then, secondly, the evangelical will point to the fact that where 'priestly' language is used in the New Testament of the Church and ministry it seems to be set in the context of witness to the world (1 Pet. 2: Rom. 15:16). That is to say, the direction of our ministry is towards those who are outside of the Kingdom. The Church is a priestly body precisely because its role is to serve the King in the world and to glorify his name with sacrificial service and clear witness. Thirdly, the genius of evangelicalism has always been its total commitment to the centrality of Jesus Christ in worship and church life. We shall want to be assured that his authority as Lord and his fullness as Saviour are not denied in liturgical and ecumenical formulations which attempt to bring Christians together.

1 See, John Moorman: *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, D.L.T., London 1983, p 186ff. On the other hand, George Herbert exhorts the country parson to 'celebrate it, if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times a year; as, at Easter, Christmasse, Whitsuntide, afore and after Harvest, and the beginning of Lent'. Yet his own understanding of the priest as representing the people before God and God to his people was very high. He had with this a very high and solemn understanding of the sacrament of Holy Communion. (*The Country Parson*, ch. xxii).

(b) *Questions for the Evangelical to Face*

There are a whole cluster of hermeneutical ones for a start. The evangelical is inclined, when the theological issues become demanding, to jump within his *sola scriptura* shell. But our Anglican divines, while accepting wholeheartedly the primacy of Scripture, also took into account the theological importance of the Fathers as part of our inheritance of faith. Do we not in our own day also take this dimension into account? Then again I note that many of us would prefer to argue, with the puritan Cartwright, that 'if a word or theological concept is not in scripture it should not be part of our vocabulary either'. Our forefathers rejected this because they felt that the notion of priesthood was embryonically present theologically, in the incarnation of the Lord, in the nature of ministry and sacrifice, as well as being present in the Church from the very earliest days.¹ We must be careful that our theological exegesis takes all this into account when we engage in dialogue with other Christians.²

Then, secondly, I have already pointed out a tendency within evangelicals which tends to denigrate the sacredness of the ordained ministry. Perhaps it is suspicion of a priestly 'caste' which generates this reluctance to speak wholeheartedly in the terms that the Ordinal uses. I regard this as a tragic error. It does not necessarily follow that to affirm one's priesthood one denies the priesthood of the people of God. It is because my priesthood is for the priesthood of the whole Church that I will serve them humbly and sincerely. I have been called by Almighty God and authorized by the whole Church to act as a minister of Word and Sacrament for them. They will expect me to have the highest regard for this trust and they will (or should) be dismayed if I am diffident about my calling.

But our priesthood has a twofold shape as we have noticed; we are ministers of Word and Sacrament. Historically evangelicals have stressed the nature of the first but have not been noticeable for a strong doctrine of the Eucharist. In my four years as Principal I have taken note of a number of excellent candidates who have not been selected for training because 'they have no understanding of priesthood'. I think the Selectors mean by this that these people had no awareness of the importance of the sacraments to a true understanding of Christian ministry. With a heavy heart I have to admit that this is too often true, and yet ought not to be the case if we had a more Anglican view of the Sacraments. Most particularly the sacrament of Holy Communion is one which is central to the ordained ministry itself and which the English Reformation did not obscure. This meal of

1 Wright, *op. cit.*, offers a fair and balanced critique of evangelical theological method.

2 So Marjorie Warkentin's recent book, *Ordination*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1982 is marred by a negative view of Christian history. The implications of her study is that following the N.T. there was a sharp decline from the 'purity' of N.T. teaching.

Thanksgiving, this sacrifice of praise, this commemoration of our Saviour's victory, this celebration of his death and passion, should be at the heart of the church's life and, naturally, at the centre of ministry as well. It is possible then to agree with Lima that 'It is especially in the eucharistic celebration that the ordained ministry is the visible focus of the deep and all-embracing communion between Christ and the members of his body. In the celebration of the eucharist Christ gathers, teaches and nourishes the Church' (14).

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Anvil Bursaries

At the end of 1984 we suggested that *Anvil* subscribers might like to contribute to bursaries to send *Anvil* to third world theological colleges and educational institutions (*Anvil*, 1984, p 217). We indicated that we were prepared to send *Anvil* vol. 1 for the special price of £6. As a result a number of copies of vol. 1 have been sent. We are happy to retain this price for volumes 2 and 3 and we are most grateful to those who have given bursaries again recently. If you would like to subscribe to this means of expanding contact with third world theological institutions, please send your bursary of £6 or multiples thereof to the editor, the Revd. Peter Williams, *Anvil*, Trinity College, 14-26, Stoke Hill, Bristol BS9 1JP. We would also be interested in the names of any institutions which would benefit in this way, though we do already have more on our lists than bursaries to cover.

Peter Williams