

MY THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

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MY EXPERIENCE OF MINISTRY

During my Internship, I was completely immersed in the parish life of St. John the Baptist Norway; functioning as a liturgical deacon during Sunday worship services, assisting at mid-week Eucharists, preaching as part of the clergy rotation, and understudying my supervisor in his pastoral ministry. I planned and led worship for the Scout / Guide Thinking Day service, and the evensong services in Holy Week. I participated in the baptism of three candidates, conducting the preparation and rehearsal for two of them. I assisted at several funerals, at worship services in nursing homes, and did hospital and home visiting. I also planned and conducted the Parish's Lenten Program, a seven-week applied Bible Study called "Time for a Checkup".

My supervisor's misfortune was my opportunity. Rev. Prideaux underwent a medical procedure that kept him at home, convalescing, for some three and a half weeks. During that period, The Honourary Assistant presided at Eucharists, but I was responsible for ministry in the parish. Rev. Prideaux was just a parking lot away, and could have managed the parish from there, but he allowed me to do so from his office in the church.

It is difficult to narrow my experiences into two that are paradigmatic. So much was formative. Regular participation as part of the ministry team was, in itself, paradigmatic. It was a joy, and a great privilege, to assist at the altar regularly, to preach and to administer the chalice. It was awesome, in the fullest sense of that word, to be permitted – on occasion – to distribute the Host as well. The Nursing Home services I conducted on my own were also special. Rev. Prideaux celebrated the Eucharist when he visited the Homes. I could only do Afternoon Prayer. However, I could and did do "Ash Wednesday". I don't know who was more moved by the experience – the residents, many of whom had not

received ashes for some time; or me, awestruck by the salvific intimacy of the act I was participating in with each of them.

Never-the-less, my task is to select only two instances symbolic of my time at Norway. After reflection I have determined that the twin paradigms of my internship have been soteriology and ecclesiology. I have selected two illustrative experiences that had particular meaning for me.

The first was a home visit. I took communion to the Parish's organist, who was fighting multiple cancers. One Sunday, he was not able to come to Church. Talking with his wife before the service, I realized that this sounded like a setback, and asked if he would like communion at home. During the peace, she passed me a message that he would.

I took them communion following the service. "Jane" met me outside their home. She warned me "Dick" was visibly jaundiced, and had difficulty walking. She feared the cancer had spread to his liver.

Dick, was seated in the living room. A table had been set up with white cloth, candle, crucifix, and icon of Mary, for use as a home altar. For the 'service', I used the Ministry to the Sick from the BAS. I read the Epistle from Romans 5, and gave a brief reflection based on my homily from the morning services. I offered prayer for both of them. Due to his condition, I incorporated the confession and deacon's absolution, and gave them communion.

The format of Ministry to the Sick allowed me to explore anointing. Dick said he would welcome it, and I undertook to pass that on to the Rector. Dick went into hospital later that day.

The experience of being the vehicle of God's love and hope in the face of serious, possibly terminal, illness was truly humbling. I offered assurance that God cared, and that Jesus would offer his strength to support them through this crisis. Both received tangible evidence of God's love demonstrated through the gift of his Son. (Salvation). My presence was tangible evidence of the love and concern of their Church

community (Ecclesiology). I believe that both were strengthened by this experience - Dick in knowing that his church community loved him and was praying for his recovery; Jane through her own experience of the communion, and the calming effect it had on Dick.

Dick died within the week. Rev. Prideaux visited him in hospital, but Dick was intubated and could not receive communion. I was the last person to communicate him, a sobering and humbling experience.

“Time for a Checkup”, was a seven session Lenten series I facilitated using Serendipity Small Group material. There were two courses, Wednesday and Sunday evenings. While the Sunday group was small it was particularly effective.

The group met for a potluck supper at 6:30 pm. Each member brought a “course” for the potluck. They collaborated in the kitchen in preparation, setup and serving of the meal. We enjoyed each others’ company during the meal, checking in about what was happening in our lives and discussing topics of mutual interest. Everyone helped with the cleanup, and then we began the session. Coffee and dessert was offered during the discussion.

The session began with a brief period of meditation to clear the mind for the new activity, and prayer to dedicate it to God. Each session was applied Bible Study on a theme – for example, “vocation” using the story of Paul’s conversion on the Road to Damascus - the vehicle for discussion.

Everyone participated freely. Members openly discussed what was happening in their personal journey, and how the bible reading had relevance for their lives right now. I participated in the group as a member as well as the facilitator. I did not adopt the role of didactic “teacher”; but rather was able to “teach” using the Socratic method where leadership by me was necessary.

The meeting closed with “caring time”. Members were invited to put personal prayer requests on the table, and to make their thanksgivings

known. The Lord's Prayer was said together to bring all of the prayers and praises into one, followed by the "Grace".

The "potluck" starter – sharing in the food preparation and cleanup as well as the meal – allowed the members of this group to bond with each other. Because of this, the group jumped right into sharing from the beginning of the session. The "ice-breaker" questions serve more as an introduction to the meeting material than as a method of "loosening up" for sharing.

Lack of biblical knowledge was not a bar to participation. Perhaps because of the above, some who would not have attended an "academic" study attended Time for a Checkup. The "applied" bible study approach, generated an open and free discussion. The group did not develop the level of in-depth academic knowledge of the passage and its context that the more traditional approach would provide. However, members applied the bible in looking at their own passage; which may lead to it having more meaning for them. It was a living, rather than an academic study.

Because I was a participant, and disclosed my own passage, I became a member of the community: but there was still a level of respect accorded me that put me somewhat apart. The participants ministered to each other in the course of discussing their journey and sharing their prayer requests and thanksgivings.

The theme of "ecclesiology" – the church as a community of believers – was being demonstrated here. The dominant form of "ministry" being exercised was "mystical communion" in Dulles's terms – the gathering and development of the members as a living form of genuine Christian community. There was a secondary characteristic of "servant" – with the leader as facilitator and participant rather than "teacher". The objective was the development of fellowship among the participants, inspiring them (hopefully) to reflect on and transform their lives, their relationship with God, and with each other.

Whether the program is successful will be demonstrated, in part, by whether any lasting change is effected in the lives of the participants.

THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Bible has many references that illumine the role of a priest - Isaiah 61:1-2, Ezekiel 34:11-16, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 4:18-19, Acts 1:8, 2:42-47, 1st Corinthians 12:27-31 and 13:12-13, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 2:5 and 9-10, and 2 Peter 1:5-10.

In struggling to synthesize the above I found an article that put it all together for me; explaining the role of the priest through the Old Testament Offices which Jesus brought to fullest expression and Paul emulated.¹ To Rowland Crowcher, the offices of prophet, priest, sage, and “king” together, illustrate the comprehensive nature of a pastor’s calling. Together they provide a balanced definition of ministry; realizing the “bold intention” of Christian ministry - to combine the Old Testament offices into a single public office.²

To Be a Prophet

A pastor is called:

- a. To be a contemporary spokesman for God, declaring God’s Word (1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:11; 1 Thess. 2:13), and expounding the scriptures as the living word of God.³
- b. To carry the Word like a burden, as did Paul – a man under divine constraint (1 Cor. 9:16); echoing those like Jeremiah, who felt compelled to preach.⁴
- c. To bear the price, confronting the evil of the day with courage. (Isa. 6:11; Jer. 16; Dan. 6; Hos. 1-3; Hab. 3:1-2)⁵. Pastors must be the conscience of the community. The minister who never cries

¹ The Rev. Dr. Rowland C. Crowcher, Pastoral Identity – And Old Testament Offices, (<http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/8267.htm>)

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid

"Who is sufficient for these things?" does not understand Christ's calling. ⁶

To Be a Priest

Pastors are called to a formally designated and consecrated ministry, performing certain acts at their deepest levels:

- a. To come alongside...to console and comfort. Pastors are called to a ministry of presence; seeking to enter the depths of human experience, and to be with people in their pain. ⁷ Like Paul, they are called to intercede for the flock (Rom. 1:8-10; 2 Cor. 13:7-9; Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 1:3-11; Col. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 1:11-12; 2 Tim. 1:3-7; Phile. 4-7); and to encourage reconciliation with God and others. (2 Cor. 5:19)⁸
- b. To guard the worship. Pastors ultimately bear responsibility for worship, and are called to help others prepare to meet God. ⁹
- c. To be holy. Because they lead in worship, pastors must be people of integrity. (Lev. 11-15) As Athanasius has said, "You cannot put straight in others what is warped in yourself."¹⁰
- d. To bless the people. Pastors are called to a ministry of blessing. (Num. 6:22-27, Lev. 9:22, Deut. 21:5)¹¹
- e. To bring an offering. Sacrifice and forgiveness were the preserve of Old Testament priests. Paul described those he had come to shepherd as his "offering" to God (Rom. 15:16); and himself as a "libation" poured out on the sacrificial offering of the people's faith (Phil. 2:17, 2 Tim. 4:6, Rom. 12:1). ¹²

To Be a Sage

Pastors are called:

⁶ Crowcher.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

- a. To search for wisdom. (Prov. 2:1-5, James 1:5-6; 3:13-18)¹³
- b. To observe life. But not from an Ivory Tower - they should not seek to escape the demands of ministry or the needs of the people.¹⁴
- c. To give wise counsel. The pastor is called to minister the practicalities of spiritual truth.¹⁵
- d. To live an ordered life. Few professions can be so chaotic. Pastors need to model the sage to stand their ground and pursue order. The need for the ordered life, described in Proverbs 5-7 is underscored in a concise way in James 3:17 - a pure life, with passions under control. The pastor is a mediator, peacemaker and a righteous person.¹⁶

To Be a King

Pastors are not called to reign over the church, but to exhibit the essential characteristics of Israel's rulers:

- a. To be a leader. Pastors must unite people toward a common goal, call people to decisions, and lovingly lead their people forward (Josh. 24:14-24), with an empathetic sense of what the congregation needs.¹⁷
- a. To impart a vision. Like the sons of Issachar, pastors must understand the times and know what their people must do (1 Chron. 12:32).¹⁸
- b. To steward the resources. A congregation consists of redeemed people, uniquely gifted, to do some work of service (Eph. 4:11-16). God has given the church pastors to equip the saints for ministry, steward its resources and call the people to action.¹⁹

¹³ Crowcher.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

- c. To lead in battle. As a king was called on to lead in battle, pastors are called to lead in spiritual conflicts; articulating the principles and procedures of spiritual warfare (Eph 6:10-17), and putting themselves on the line for their church.²⁰

Summary

Crowcher contends that by maintaining balance in these four areas of responsibility, a pastor functions properly as a shepherd, after the model of Jesus, "the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14).²¹

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Salvation

The doctrine of salvation (the atonement, or work of Christ) is at the center of all Christian knowledge, related to all other topics of Christian theology. "Thus", as Owen Thomas has remarked, "the doctrines of creation, salvation and eschatology are mutually implied in each other".²² Salvation can be focused narrowly on the significance of the death of Christ, more widely in the work of Christ, or most broadly in the idea of God's plan and will to bring the creation to its fulfillment. In the latter sense it incorporates the theological concepts of election, predestination, grace, regeneration, justification and sanctification.²³

Salvation is concerned with the things that make life bearable in difficult times; that allow us to resist oppression and unjust suffering; and that give us inspiration and courage. It names the healing and the renewal we experience.

From the Roman perspective, salvation is understood as the participation of humanity in divine life through the medium of the sacraments, the incarnation of Christ. Protestants focuses on the

²⁰ Crowcher.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Owen C. Thomas, Introduction to Theology (Revised Edition), (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow Co. Inc., 1983), 163

²³ Ibid.

atonement of Christ, through which our sins are forgiven and our broken relationship with God is restored.²⁴ Our Anglican principle of comprehensiveness permits us, as Avery Dulles remarked, to keep such irreducibly distinct theologies alive within the same ecclesiastical communion.²⁵

Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology, the Doctrine of the Church, is the fulcrum between biblical, historical, and systematic studies and the practical disciplines.²⁶ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen has defined it as a kind of *summa* of any given theological tradition;²⁷ providing an interpretation of the nature and purpose of the Church, and describing what the church and its members are called to be and do.

In the New Testament, the church is variously described as the congregation of the faithful – the blessed company of all faithful people – and the Body of Christ. The latter, particular to St. Paul, is his main image of the Church.²⁸

Ecclesiology is concerned with human community at its best – the church as a community of those who believe, love and hope. The life and well being of the community depends on the service and functioning of all of its members, and suffers if any are separated. Membership is gained and sustained by the sacraments.

Catholic ecclesiology is sacramental. Sharing in holy things – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist – is constitutive of the church. The Sacraments mediate the communion of life with God. Baptism gives the church its body, and together with Confirmation contributes to the

²⁴ Owen C. Thomas, Introduction to Theology (Revised Edition), (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow Co. Inc., 1983), 164.

²⁵ Avery Dulles, S.J., Models of the Church, (New York: Image Books, DOUBLEDAY, 1987), 12.

²⁶ Thomas, 229.

²⁷ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 18.

²⁸ Thomas, 230.

foundation of church order. It is only fulfilled by common participation in the Eucharist, through which the unity of the church becomes effective.²⁹

The oldest reference to the Eucharist (1 Cor 12:27) clearly expresses the causal subordination of the church's ecclesial body to its Eucharistic body – ie: Before making the eucharist the church was made by the eucharist.³⁰

In Lutheran Ecclesiology, the church is first a communion of saints, a gathering of believers. The formative elements are the Word and the sacraments.³¹

Since Christians are living in the world, together with people who are sinful and less than perfect, Luther's understanding of the church as 'hospital to the sick' is instructive.³² It is the *summa* of Christian life to bear the burden of one's neighbour. Church members are to act as Christs to each other. Although all Christians are called to minister in Word and sacrament, the community entrusts the public exercise of priesthood to ordained people who carry out this duty in the name of the church. The proper ministry for every bishop and pastor is to console consciences, nourish with the gospel, heal the sick, and take care of everyone according to their need.³³

Avery Dulles' seminal work, *Models of the Church*, is useful in drawing together a comprehensive ecclesiology. He developed five major models of the Church: Institution, Mystical Communion, Sacrament, Herald and Servant. He later added a sixth model - Community of Disciples - which brought all of them into combination. Dulles holds that no manifestation of church is solely one model, but that one theme predominates at a given time.

By its very constitution the Church is a community of grace (model 2), structured as a human society (model 1). While sanctifying its own

²⁹ Kärkkäinen, 31.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 39.

³² Ibid, 47.

³³ Ibid, 48.

members it offers praise and worship to God (model 3). It is permanently charged with spreading the Good News (model 4), and healing and consolidating the human community (model 5).³⁴ Dulles drew all of this together in the idea of the Church as a community of disciples, a variant of the communion model. It calls attention to the ongoing relationship of the Church to Christ; illuminating the institutional and sacramental aspects of the Church, and grounding evangelization and service central to the herald and servant models.

Discipleship is not limited to priests and vowed religious, but is shared by all of Christ's faithful. The common element of discipleship is the example given by Christ: is self-abnegation, humble service, generosity to the needy, and patience in adversity.³⁵ We are all called to be disciples, taking our part proclaiming the good news, imitating Jesus in our personal lives, and living Church as a community of mutual support and stimulation. However, some are called, through the sacrament of ordination, to a more mature level of discipleship; carrying the commission to go forth, speaking and acting in His name, by His authority.³⁶

The Anglican *via media*, synthesizes both the Roman and the Protestant approaches.

CHURCH HISTORY

The aspect of Church History that spoke to me was the Oxford Movement. The call to holiness was at the heart of the Tractarians' teaching. The ritual innovations they were accused of were rooted in the desperate pastoral needs encountered in their social and evangelistic work among the industrial working class in the English slums.

The eucharist was celebrated each morning to strengthen them for their work. Medicines were laid on the altar at morning communion, to

³⁴ Dulles, 205.

³⁵ Ibid, 214.

³⁶ Ibid, 217.

consecrate their use for the many parishioners dying of cholera. Beauty and holiness went into the midst of squalor and depression, as witness to faith in Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, present and active in his world. The sick and dying were to receive this sacramental presence as far as was possible. Deathbed confessions, the oil of unction, and communion from the reserved sacrament became their weapons against the despair they encountered.

The rediscovered emphases on apostolic succession, the Catholicity of the church, priesthood, sacrament and sacrifice, prayer, holiness, and beauty in worship have been the Tractarians' gifts to the whole church.³⁷

PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Pastoral theology is defined as the science of the care of souls.³⁸ It applies the results of the other theological sciences to the salvation of souls. The duties comprising the care of souls consolidate in two roles: the teacher of the sacred mysteries, and the shepherd.

As teacher, the priest has a twofold duty to preach and give catechetical instruction to those who have need. As minister of the sacred mysteries, the priest must not only know the nature of the sacraments; but possess such additional knowledge as needed for attending the sick, and other pastoral work.

As pastor a variety of duties have to be mastered, which grow and vary with the complicated conditions of modern life: the organization of parishes; the maintenance of a church, the formation of community; and a vast number of social works into which a priest in a modern city is almost necessarily drawn.³⁹

³⁷ Pusey House, What is the Oxford Movement?, (Oxford: Pusey House Chapel & Library, <http://parishes.oxford.anglican.org/puseyhouse/oxfdmove.htm>)

³⁸ The Catholic Encyclopedia, Pastoral Theology, (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14611a.htm>)

³⁹ Ibid.

ILLUMINATIONS

A number of eclectic “resources” illumined my experience of ministry.

BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

Since reading Esther de Waal’s *Seeking God*, I have been struck by the similarities between the Rule I followed as a member of the School of Philosophy and that of St. Benedict. This discovery was integrative for me, since the School had been a large part of my life.

When I was in Sri Lanka prior to my internship term I stayed at St. Margaret’s Convent, a Benedictine community, while taking a course at Lanka Bible College. That experience reintroduced me to the practice of my Rule. The course “Anglican Spirituality” provided further reading about St Benedict that confirmed my practice.

The key principle impacting my internship, was balance. Balance is so central it underpins everything else in the Rule. Indeed, de Waal describes it as “...the keystone of the whole Benedictine approach to the individual and the community”⁴⁰. In the belief body, mind and spirit together make up the whole person, St. Benedict designed his Rule to incorporate time for prayer, study and manual work.⁴¹ De Waal notes the purpose of the Rule is to create a favourable environment for the balanced life to flourish⁴². Work is kept in proportion by prayer and study; to ensure it doesn’t become end in itself, and tyrannize the rest of life.⁴³

As I began to experience the time demands and conflicts of parish life, I saw that such a discipline would be necessary if my personal prayer life was to be maintained. I also needed to establish boundaries so that I would not neglect my family. I found that The Rule of St. Benedict offered both a format and a theology for praxis in Christian life that is very “do-

⁴⁰ Esther de Waal, *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict*, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1984), 145

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 86.

⁴² *Ibid*.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 110.

able” in a parish setting. Because it is grounded in worship and reflects the flow of daily life, it became the theological framework and connecting force for all the otherwise disjointed activities of my parish experience.

JOHN MAIN AND THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY

Dom John Main’s *Christian Meditation* reinforced and informed my prayer life. Main’s testimony of his lapse in practice and recovery of meditation as the central focus of his prayer life inspired me to recover my own.

According to de Waal, prayer lies at the heart of the Benedictine life. It holds everything together, sustains every other activity, and is its root, fruit, foundation and fulfillment. Prayer is the work of God, and nothing whatever is to be preferred to it.⁴⁴ The disciple is to be silent and listen. Otherwise, as de Waal notes, one cannot have much hope of establishing that relationship with God of hearing and responding which will help root the whole life in prayer. To John Main, and to me, meditation is the vehicle for that silent, listening prayer.

I know that meditation is important for me. When I meditate I have more energy and generally do better in my daily life. Still, I allowed my practice of it to lapse – like Main – with the introduction to many new and varied spiritual disciplines in the course of my theological studies. For a time I struggled with where meditation fit amongst the new methods of prayer I was being asked to explore. Finding the Christian Meditation Community in Toronto, combined with a study of Main’s discourses, gave me the permission I needed to return to my practice of twice daily meditation. Speaking with Fr. Laurence Freeman, the Benedictine monk who heads the World Community for Christian Meditation (John Main’s successor) gave me some idea how to incorporate meditation into the practice of the Daily Office. The combination of the two anchored my prayer practice throughout my internship.

⁴⁴ De Waal, 145.

MODELS OF THE CHURCH

Avery Dulles' Mystical Communion model, including both the concepts of People of God and Body of Christ, holds a particular attraction for me. Interpersonal relationships – people in union with Christ and the Father through the Holy Spirit, drawn together in a family of faith - give form to my understanding of the Church as a dynamic and living reality, not just an edifice of bricks and mortar.

The test I took to determine where I fit in Dulles' models⁴⁵ indicated that by itself the Mystical Communion model can exalt the church beyond what is appropriate unless it is supplemented from the other models. In addition to scoring 100% in the Mystical Communion Model, I am pleased to note that I scored strongly in terms of the Sacramental model (89%), Servant Model (78%) and Herald Model (72%) as well; indicating, perhaps, a degree of balance and integration that will make the Mystical Communion Model work for me.

The paradigm of ecclesiology to which I referred in the first part of this paper was informed by this model

The model of Church as Sacrament reflects the Anglo-Catholic parish in which I regularly worship. The life of the Church centers around the Eucharist. The sacrament itself is the visible manifestation of the grace of God working in human community, and the promise of our ultimate salvation. As such it reflects the paradigm of soteriology referred to earlier. The act of taking and administering communion to the sick was tremendously meaningful for me, and – I believe – the recipients. In so doing I provided visible evidence of God's grace and salvation.

PROPHETICAL-PRIESTLY MINISTRY

During my internship I came across Darius Salter's *Prophetical-Priestly Ministry: The Biblical Mandate for the 21st Century Pastor*. Salter's ideas resonated with me.

⁴⁵ See http://quizfarm.com/test.php?q_id=49752

Salter believes that people today still need to hear the eternal truths borne by prophetic-priestly words that will confront, convict and connect them to the Redeemer.⁴⁶ He maintains that they need a pastor who can relate to their way of life, who can convey the truth to them, and who speaks in a language they understand – a prophet-priest.⁴⁷ He notes that ministry at times calls for maintenance and other times for disruption. Prophets interrupt and disrupt, sharpening us for the future. Priests stabilize, soothe and absolve to put the past in proper perspective.⁴⁸

He defines the Priestly Office as conducting public worship; and the Prophetic office as providing insight, instruction, exegesis, and proclamation of the word.⁴⁹ The former provides words of reverence, provision, and invitation. The latter provides words of vision, decision, and mission. Salter believes that every worship service should be a commissioning, applying the words of John 15:16 “I chose you ... and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit...”. In his view, worship is truncated if it does not issue marching orders.⁵⁰

I believe the sermons that I delivered in my Internship preached the Gospel in the spirit that Salter is advocating.

PARISH HISTORY

St. John the Baptist, Norway, is not just an ordinary Parish Church. Within 100 years it grew from humble beginnings into a corporate-size parish of some 1,500 families. More than 1,000 students were enrolled in its Sunday School. It established a cemetery that grew to encompass some 35 acres, and holds the remains of over 80,000 souls. Along the way, it established seven mission congregations, all of which became independent parishes. Three of these spawned mission congregations of

⁴⁶ Darius L. Salter, *Prophetic-Priestly Ministry: The Biblical Mandate for the 21st Century Pastor*, Nappanee: Evangel Publishing House, 2002), 17

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 141

their own. It is really quite a remarkable story. I could not help but be inspired it, and humbled to play my small part in its continuation. I will carry it with me as inspiration wherever I go.

THE MOST REVEREND GEORGE CAREY

The following quote from an address by then Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend George Carey, sums up my experience of ministry in my Internship.

Our theology of mission is incarnational. By that I mean we seek to live it. We are there with the people and seek to serve them. For us, then, mission and evangelism is indivisible... our commitment to education, health care, social reform is part of our missionary strategy.

Our theology of mission is sacramental. By that I mean we know that people are on a spiritual journey through life and they can't be rushed. Of course, there are some whose entry into the Christian life comes dramatically and suddenly... But normally the journey is more ordinary, more prosaic and gradual – and punctuated by the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and what the Prayer Book calls so eloquently 'means of grace' - prayer, bible reading and so on.

Our theology of mission is holistic. By that I mean that it includes the mind as well as the heart, the will as much as the emotions... we want the head and the heart to connect over our belief in God and in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world.

And the world Jesus saves is a fast changing world. I am proud to be an Anglican because it remains catholic and reformed - open to new ideas but thoroughly earthed in the life changing events of the gospel.⁵¹

⁵¹ The Most Reverend George Carey, Address to the Church Club of New York, Sept 14, 2000.

MY VOCATION TO MINISTRY

My internship has been the most meaningful and fulfilling experience of my life. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it, and being a part of the parish community of St. John the Baptist Norway. Whatever my path will be in the future, I will be forever grateful that God allowed me to have this experience of ministry.

From my perspective, ordained ministry was what I was put on earth to do. Everything felt very right during my internship. There were no anomalies or disconnects that I experienced. It was a joy to get up each morning, bliss to be in the church – particularly leading worship and working with parishioners in small groups - and a tremendous privilege to serve at the altar on a regular basis.

I was humbled by the way parishioners received me into their community, homes and lives. I was awed by the experience of taking communion to the sick and shut-in members of the parish, and visiting those in hospital. Of particular meaning for me, because of my own military experience, was visiting with and communicating parishioners in the military section of Sunnybrook Hospital, one of whom was a wartime member of my own regiment.

I was honoured to be accepted by my Supervisor and colleagues as a full part of the ministry team. I was particularly fortunate to be at the right place at the right time to run the whole show for a little while, during my Supervisor's convalescence from minor surgery.

I cannot think of anything I would rather do. Throughout my experience of internship I have had the feeling of coming home and being fulfilled.

I believe that the people of St. John Norway believe I have a call to ordained ministry. At least that is certainly the impression I have from my time there and my interaction with them. My time there, however, has been too short to ask them to sponsor me for ordination. I regret to say

that my assessment of my vocation does not appear to be shared by my own parish church. There are only a few people who have come forward and encouraged me in my theological studies – for the most part, the people I selected for my original discernment group. The rest are really not aware that I am a Divinity student. Beyond being an acolyte they have still not seen me involved in ministry, and therefore have no basis to support me. My parish priest still believes I am only suited to lay ministry.

Entering my third year of full time studies without the support of a parish and the endorsement of a bishop is a somewhat disconcerting experience. As yet my call has not been discerned by others, which raises questions as to whether or not it is real. My belief that I have a vocation to ordained ministry may be just my belief. Logic tells me that I may have waited too long to begin, and that opportunity has passed me by. That thought renders my experience of internship bittersweet. Yet, my heart tells me it is what I want to do with my life, and so I will keep on trying. I gave my life to God in 1992 after losing my family and my business and moving back to Toronto. I am not about to take it back now, just because the going is a little tough. I am praying to know what God's will truly is in this matter, and for courage to accept whatever He makes known.

My challenge in my third year of full time studies will be to find a congregation to support my application for postulancy, and a bishop who will accept me. The result will determine whether I have a vocation or an avocation.

May God grant that it will be the former. If it is the latter I will have to try to rebuild my old life.

Brian Bartley

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