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contemporary living.*

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The Rev. Dr. Chris Wigglesworth, a convert from Marxism, is pastor of the Scots Church (CNI) in Bombay. He was recently awarded the MBE for his work in rural development in western India.

The Meaning of Man in the debate between Christianity and Marxism, by ANDREW KIRK. *Themelios*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2 and 3.

This learned article is an opener for all those who desire to understand the real issues of debate between Marxism and Christianity. The author aptly points out that we cannot have a real grasp of Marxism unless we understand Marx's critique of religion, particularly of Christianity. It is only then that we can follow Marxist reasoning and analysis. The author shows how two conceptions of man, that is, Marxist and Christian conceptions, are incompatible on the grounds that the former views man in reductionist terms, whereas the latter sees man as the crown of creation. It is by Christian love and witness that we can transcend Marxism. Marxism has no answer to the problem of evil, and therefore is unable to give a sustained analysis of human alienation, whereas Christians know that the root cause of alienation, whatever its form may be, is sin. Christ came to save mankind from the perdition of sin. Christians need not follow Marxist socio-political programmes, for they have their own programme which is given to them in the revealed Word of God. Those who desire to grasp the real nuances of Marxism are strongly recommended to read this article. p. 109

Present-Day Pastoral Work in Latin America

by PABLO PÉREZ

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INTRODUCTION

HARDLY ANYONE doubts that the hour for pastoral work in Latin America has arrived. The information we have concerning the growth of evangelical churches in that continent points to it now more than ever. Large-scale evangelistic campaigns, in churches and cities, the seed that has been planted for more than a decade through nationwide efforts led by Evangelism-in-Depth, the spectacular development of the Pentecostal movement in several countries, and the growing number of believers in the second and third generation, all speak forcefully concerning the urgent need of more effective pastoral work. Moreover, the increasing use of mass media has made the saving message available

to a large number of people who soon after need more adequate attention than can be provided for them through a correspondence course. The large urban centres with their imposing condominiums and poverty belts present complex and formidable challenges both to those who live in them and to those who are trying to minister to their spiritual needs. Students at universities and technical schools are demanding more and improved attention both in their intellectual difficulties and in their many personal problems. Current trends in society which include those of drugs, the political revolutionary challenges, and sexual liberty are constantly haunting believers who in turn demand firm guidelines which are closely related to reality at any moment.

And the list could be increased with a whole set of situations and complex conditions in which our churches are being born, [p. 110](#) raised, and reproduced. These also become a major challenge that the Church cannot ignore at the present time, much less its leaders. And even if we may not believe everything that was said in the previous paragraph, we cannot deny that one of the essential elements for the forward movement of our churches is that of pastoral care. However, if conditions in our countries and their cities are nothing short of dramatic, it is no less important for us to focus our attention upon the real situation in which pastoral work finds itself in the same countries and cities.

For many people the pastoral dimension is one of the distinctive characteristics of the evangelical churches in Latin America, and their pastors, at the same time, are legitimate source of pride for them. For some others that same dimension—even if they do not want to put it that way—is worthy of that simple and humble servant of the Lord who has not had the opportunity to get a higher education. Nowadays famous evangelical leaders are evangelists, seminary professors, magazine editors or denominational officers, but not great pastors. This may account for the general impression in religious circles that the study of pastoral work should not be included as a part of the strict and rigorous discipline of systematic theology, but that it should be considered as something merely ‘practical’. It may be of great value, but it is actually of secondary importance. Nevertheless we should all be confronted both by reality and the Biblical witness concerning pastoral work.

This is because, even if it is true that pastoral work has ostensibly had a major place among us, its hour has come now more than ever, in view of the divine imperative, to make eternal truth known to a continent engaged in epoch-making explosions and in urgent need of positive directives because of the bright promise in a not too distant future. But that initial proclamation also implies a strong consolidation among groups and individuals who in turn can witness effectively to the regenerating work and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit both in their lives and relationships one with another, and in their sphere of action. This means that it must be emphasized that to be the object of grace means to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, just as much as to give of grace and to be fruitful in grace was our Master’s ideal. It is here that the pastoral ministry should occupy the place of prime importance to which it was called. This is also [p. 111](#) where the Holy Spirit will build the Latin American Church of the future. But before that let us look at:

I. Pastoral Work at the Present Time

There is a certain amount of confusion in our evangelical circles as to the meaning of pastoral work. Perhaps one of the main reasons can be found in the names or titles which are used to identify the one who has the task of being the visible leader in our churches. He may be known as pastor, minister, preacher—especially in those places where there is a strong influence from the Southern States of North America—reverend, counsellor, and servant of the Lord. In some other cases he is called ‘the sacred speaker’, ‘the spiritual father’, and even ‘the little shepherd’ if he is young or manifestly unlettered. But to these

titles there are added certain functions which are supposed to be discharged by the same individual. These may be Sunday School teacher, singer, pianist, missionary, evangelist, electrical repair man, carpenter, accountant, and even janitor. He is also expected to have such virtues as simplicity, humility, piety, exemplary holiness and unlimited patience—and of course personal discipline to be able to distribute his meagre earnings, cleanliness and tidiness, intelligence and good manners. And if this is not enough he is also expected to inspire confidence, to 'have lots of personality', to know the laws of his country, to exercise authority without being bossed by his wife, to be a model father and a dedicated husband.

And even if some may consider this to be a laughable and even exaggerated caricature, a visit to a few churches will be enough to realize that we are not far from reality. However, in order to make the task of understanding what a pastor is a little easier, we could very well follow the four categories of the pastoral ministry described by Edward Murphy.¹ According to him they could be called clerical, priestly, paternalistic and professional.

In the first one, the clerical, we find a strong man who leads a church with energy and wisdom under conditions very similar to those of a *caudillo** in the political realm. Murphy tells us that this situation can be both advantageous or adverse but it can, in spite of p. 112 this, be used positively. On the one hand, and because in these cases it is the pastor who has this image of himself, there is the risk that his work may be finished after his death. On the other, there has been the case in which that same individual thinks about the future and thus prepares outstanding men from among his followers who are thus enabled to take his place and to continue leading the church wisely even after his death. He will most likely use the same system, but now there may be more *caudillos*. Moreover, there is no need in this case to adapt foreign forms, since the *caudillo* is genuinely Latin American in origin. We should only be extra careful to give the whole set-up a really Christian meaning.

In the second place Murphy tells us about a priestly category. This is when the pastor functions as a salaried priest and consequently not only acts as a mediator between God and the people, but is also under the obligation to perform the work of others. Here is where we find the 'all-round man' described on the previous page, from whom his church demands a great deal of versatility and a multiplicity of tasks simply because 'he is the pastor and that's why we're paying him'. Undoubtedly the effectiveness of a pastor under these circumstances is almost nothing and manifestly contrary to the Biblical principles of the universal priesthood of the believer. This subject will be dealt with more fully later on.

In the third place we see a paternalistic category where the pastor is like a father who takes care of his children in their needs and to whom these same children owe respect and faithfulness. These mutual links are further corroborated by pastoral calls at the homes of the members of the church. Those visited acquire the obligation of regular attendance and contribution to the church. As a result we have a church that lives for itself and that is not too much concerned that the pastor carry on his evangelistic task—much less that the congregation itself do it.

In the fourth place we find a professional category. Here we find the church which is fully convinced that it cannot function properly without a 'full-time' professional pastor who has been trained in a seminary of high repute. There are many churches which simply

¹ E. F. Murphy, *The Gifts of the Spirit and the Mission of the Church* (Pasadena, Fuller Theological Seminary unpublished thesis, 1971), pp. 112–20.

* A political chieftain with a type of military following made up of servile people.

cannot tolerate to be without that kind of an individual. Just the same, there are both seminary students and ordained ministers who are not happy in any other type of field of labour than this, and they also expect all the economic rewards that go with it.

And we could go on listing circumstances and categories that would describe pastoral work in Latin America with more details. [p. 113](#) For the time being let us concentrate on those already mentioned since they give us a clearer idea of the present state of this type of ministry—except for some small variations of minor importance. At the same time we should recognize that there are elements of a Roman Catholic origin in this picture which we ourselves have incorporated, though unwittingly. There are also habits introduced during the time of the Protestant Reformation and the patterns brought into our continent by the missionaries who presented the Gospel to us and established the first churches. However, it cannot be denied that in all of these influences one can perceive Biblical principles being reflected, which can have a good application at the present. But we should not ignore that all of them represent a certain degree of a cultural heritage, be they of fairly recent origin or from time immemorial. What is important for us is that, once we become aware of their existence and origin, we should be able to establish the difference between that which we have traditionally accepted and institutionalized—and even almost ‘canonized’—and that which is Biblically valid and functional in our context. There is also a demand for us to examine the situation fearlessly as well as the factors which are still contributing to produce it. We should then try to lead it along strictly Biblical lines which our Lord himself sets up at the present time. In all honesty we should test everything and hold fast that which is good. At the same time we should not hesitate to incorporate that which is an integral part of our Latin culture that can be honouring to the Lord.

II. Present-Day Conditions in Theology and Society

Even though in general terms pastoral studies have had a somewhat secondary place as has already been noted, and perhaps preaching has been over-emphasized with respect to the healing and leading of souls, we can see that some works concerning pastoral work have been produced in Spanish. The following list speaks eloquently:

Laborando con Exito en el Ministerio (Working Successfully in the Ministry) by A.T. Robertson.

El Pastor (The Pastor) by H. Harvey.

¿Llamado a predicar? (Called to Preach?) by W. W. Melton.

El Obrero Cristiano Normal (The Normal Christian Worker) by Watchman Nee. [p. 114](#)

Pastores del Rebaño (Shepherds of the Flock) by G. B. Williamson.

Una Clinica Espiritual (A Spiritual Clinic) by J. O. Sanders.

De Corazón a Corazón (Heart to Heart Talks) by Samuel Vila.

La Práctica de la Pastoría (The Work of the Pastorate) by Donaldo D. Turner.

To mention just a few. They all represent a commendable effort on the part of the translators and publishing houses and we should all be sincerely grateful for them. Moreover, the very existence of such a list, even if it is short, shows a genuine concern in some evangelical circles on behalf of such an important task in our midst.

Unfortunately, as can be observed simply by looking at the list, none of the authors are Latin Americans, except for Samuel Vila. It is thus obvious that the original purpose has been to apply them to an Anglo-Saxon situation, with Anglo-Saxon illustrations. This in itself is not a capital sin, but it does mean that they are rather far from our particular context. As for the correspondence course entitled *La Práctica de la Pastoría* which was written in a Latin American context, its patterns of thought and observations are, in the

best of cases, the product of naturalization after they have been imported to South America—to say nothing of the term *pastoría*.*. But what is more important for our present purpose is that these books are lacking a truly Biblico-theological basis. Generally speaking, they limit themselves to sharing a few experiences which simply turn out to be a series of practical suggestions about what should or should not be done in specific situations. In some of them can be found detailed instructions about the administrative aspect of pastoral work whereas in others we find inspiration through devotional meditations.

Moreover, the evangelical literature market is beginning to provide for us works of a psychological nature, written and edited by evangelicals. Among these are *Biblia y Medicina Psicológica* (The Bible and Psychological Medicine), and *Psicoanálisis, Reflexiología y Conversión Cristiana* (Psycho-analysis, Reflexiology and Christian Conversion), which delve into scientific depths of great importance. These give us hope that the evangelical pastor will, in the very near p. 115 future, be adequately prepared to speak intelligently in a time that uses psychological terminology quite widely. Unfortunately we must notice once more that the majority of the authors are Anglo-Saxons. Also, that the language used is well above the understanding of our fellow ministers. Moreover, if many servants of the Lord lack a firm theological basis for their pastoral ministry, the introduction of this type of literature will only contribute to their own confusion.

All of this leads us to deplore the lack of production of adequate works from the pen of Latin American thinkers and theologians. We know from many sources that in such and such an institution of theological training such and such a professor is giving excellent lectures in pastoral theology; that he gives his students excellent syllabi and that, if he makes use of any existing work as a textbook, he often corrects it as he goes along and applies it wisely to concrete situations in his immediate area. It is to be deplored that the circulation of those documents is extremely limited, which consequently means that the benefit derived from them is for only a few people. Moreover, all these isolated efforts represent a duplication of the same type of work that is being done by others in other countries. It is very possible that the lack of adequate incentives may contribute also to these professors' apparent reluctance to publish and circulate their teachings and experiences. Again, there may be some who consider that their work is not worthy of being made known to the rest of the continent. But neither these nor any other reasons should keep our pastors, theologians and professors from entering the field of producing this kind of material from our own point of view and our own context. If some seminaries have relegated the serious study of pastoral theology to a secondary place,² present-day demands make it imperative to take emergency measures so that this situation experiences a radical change. If some people p. 116 feel inhibited or hesitant in entering

* This term is really a dictionary word which describes quite accurately the work of the pastor, but which is hardly used in Latin America. It seems to me that a more common word could have been used just as effectively, thus eliminating the impression of a mere translation

² This assertion is confirmed by the suggestion concerning theological education which is found in the book *The Christian Ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which says:

Finally, the seminaries and Bible schools should develop in the student a pastoral spirit and train him for pastoral ministry and pastoral counselling. Often the student will have had no experience of this kind of thing, no personal background for understanding its significance. The Roman Church does not offer such a ministry to many of its people and the present generation of Protestant pastors is only moderately effective at this point. Neurotic and psychotic problems are not uncommon in the churches and are to be found within the schools themselves (p. 206).

the arena of literary production, let them be encouraged through collective efforts such as those initiated by our Fraternity to give impetus to these ideas so that we may confront the crude realities of our continent.

And a quick look at the situation will confirm our assertion. Our continent has traditionally been considered as being populated by peasants with meagre earnings, few demands, and small ambitions, and that only a few military men and vociferous politicians stage small *coup d'états* and political comedies frequently. What has been known in recent years by the term 'developing countries', represents among us slow steps toward industrialization under basically conservative systems.

But we all know the truth to be completely different. Even if ours were a truly agrarian society, the peasant has experienced a transformation which is nothing short of dramatic concerning his points of view and even in his habits, simply because he can now purchase a transistor radio. Besides that, he has migrated in large numbers to such centres of population as Lima, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo and Montevideo.³ These in turn have had to assimilate him alongside their native populations with all the subsequent proliferation of problems. In several areas with modern buildings and improvised shacks men and women concentrate with a multiplicity of tensions, frustrations and needs that condition, and in many cases, determine their conduct and attitude. Every novelty and apparent improvement in those great urban centres imposes a heavy burden both on the heads of family and housewives that affects their lives and those of their children.

As a result it is the home that suffers most of the effects of its environment. One of our strong traditions includes firm family ties and relative stability where the father is in unquestionable command, the mother is submissive and understanding, and the children are obedient. Truly, the father's escapades have always been tolerated, but the mother has always risen to develop a benevolent and unifying matriarchy that helps keep the home together. But it is precisely within this framework of deeply rooted customs and precarious equilibrium where the seeds of destruction of the home have started to sprout and yield fatal fruit. To these may be added the current trends imposed by what is learned through movies p. 117 and television programmes, as well as newspaper reports and other information media. These, together with a spiritual vacuum created by an archaic and decaying religious system with its relative morality, have caused the very foundations of the family structure to be in grave danger. And we cannot deny that these conditions, besides the promiscuous situation engendered by reduced living space and the moral cynicism found in exclusive residential areas, have been a basis for the spirit of licentiousness which indiscriminately incorporates exotic influences and foreign fads to the mainstream of life. It is here where the effective ministry of the pastor is needed. This must be a man who can manifest his absolute dependence on the Great Shepherd of the sheep for the solution of his own domestic problems.

What, then, could be added regarding many other problems of our modern society which in turn are an integral part of the life of many of the members of our churches? Due to prejudices or shyness many pastors intentionally by-pass the very hot issues of birth control both in public and in private. Many more think that such problems as drugs and alkaloids 'are of the devil' and that 'their' young people are immune to them because 'they are Christians' and 'have a good example in their parents and teachers'. There are those also who condemn short skirts among women and long hair among men with a holy anger without understanding that these are but symptoms of a generation which is sick of hypocrisy and saturated with false repressions. Of course we can also find those who

³ Glen H. Beyer (ed), *The Urban Explosion in Latin America* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 92.

watch in utter bewilderment revolutionary movements on behalf of social and political equality and can but declare piously that their own mission is simply spiritual. In some instances it is thought that the only adequate solution to these problems is for the Church to intensify its evangelistic activities and hold more services and special activities which may keep its members busy and help them to take their minds off their burdens.

But at the same time there is the possibility of finding plausible solutions both for these problems and for the many emotional disturbances which are so much in vogue nowadays. Psychology and some other ideological trends have produced valid analyses that, generally speaking, have been the product of careful experimentation—except, of course, those solutions offered by the increasingly popular astrology and its speculative fantasies. We have observed, nevertheless, that some of the pastors in urban and suburban p. 118 areas feel a special attraction for clinical psychology and they fall into the temptation of becoming amateur psychiatrists. With amazing boldness they venture to analyse their parishioners who go to them asking for some help. They even dare to recommend some kind of treatment which seems feasible simply because they have become familiar with one or two types of therapy or clinical procedures related to this scientific discipline. And even though their motives may be good and noble, their medical ability is non-existent since they have not undergone the strict regimentation and training of the profession. Moreover, they may fall into the trap of limiting themselves to the use of these psychological tools in a rudimentary way, or of believing that these are sufficient in themselves for the solution of the problems brought before them. They may think that by adding the reading of a Bible portion and a short prayer a spiritual sanction will be given to their actions and will bring a special blessing to the counsellee. As a result they may have offered another panacea which may deceive the person who receives it, but they will have failed to fulfil their mission as servants of the Lord and shepherds of the flock.

In conclusion, present-day pastoral work in Latin America shows us a rather strange combination of traditional and institutionalized patterns together with a lot that is new and even imported. This has not seriously considered many of the problems that haunt church members and people in general. If we put everything on the scales we have to confess that it is found wanting and even in danger of losing its seasoning power and its positive influence even among the evangelical churches themselves. In the best of cases it will become just one more option before the believer with but few probabilities of receiving adequate attention. A conscientious and in-depth study is called for, one that may answer fully to present-day needs and to the Biblical imperative without letting itself be led by intellectual novelties or by political influences of a pseudo-Christian nature.

III. The Biblical Imperative.

What really is a pastor? The Word of God describes for us his characteristics, functions and duties by means of different key terms. p. 119

To begin with, the noun 'pastor' and its corresponding verb 'to shepherd', occupy a place of special importance since from its real and symbolic use are derived a whole series of meanings which are essential to the integration of a complete picture of the divine ideal. We cannot forget that the pastor is that individual who is in charge of a flock and assists it in its different needs. But the Biblical term goes further than a merely bucolic situation. It describes for us the person who leads, feeds, keeps, defends and guides the flock in its daily activities. Thus when we speak symbolically of a leader and his relation to his people, all the preceding characteristics are borne in mind and at the same time the concept of a captain who marches at the head of his army is added. Moses asked for his people 'a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall

lead them out and bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd.’⁴

A similar note is struck when we are told about the relation of God himself with his people. Jacob talks about him saying that he is the God who leads him⁵ and also ‘the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel’.⁶ These ideas are used and enlarged by David later on in such passages as the one which says: ‘O save thy people, and bless thy heritage; be thou their shepherd, and carry them for ever.’⁷ This intimate relationship and special responsibility is also conferred, in a representative way, on judges, kings, priests and prophets so that they might be the leaders of the people and might guide them according to God’s will. This is the reason for the Lord’s severe dealings with them when they failed to fulfil their duties. He showed them their errors and weaknesses and promised his people a Shepherd who would truly be after God’s own heart.⁸

When the Lord Jesus Christ came to the world this Shepherd also said that those who had come before him were ‘thieves and robbers’⁹ but that he was the Good Shepherd.¹⁰ The apostles tell us that he is also the Great Shepherd of the sheep,¹¹ the Shepherd p. 120 and Guardian of our souls¹² and the Chief Shepherd.¹³ It thus fulfils the ideal set by [Psalm 23](#) in all its implications, but at the same time it opens new dimensions that will be turned into benefits for the sheep. In connection with this, in his lesson found in [John 10](#) which speaks to us about what he does on behalf of his sheep, he not only defends them but provides eternal life, an atoning sacrifice and absolute security before the Father, as well as many other details which only an extensive and detailed study of the passage may reveal. And if this is not enough he reveals his wish, a completely new one for his Jewish audience, to go after other sheep. Even though these may not belong to the same flock, they are his also. He considers it his duty to bring them so that there may be one fold and one shepherd. His relationship with other nations will also be as a severe judge. It has been announced that he will rule them with a rod of iron in order to fulfil the Old Testament prophecies.¹⁴

When we find that in the New Testament the Lord also entrusts the pastorate to his own, he does not limit it to those strictly pastoral duties that have already been mentioned. He also makes use of some of the functions of the old Jewish system and completes them with some others which were being used by the Graeco-Roman world of

⁴ [Numbers 27:16, 17](#).

⁵ [Genesis 48:15](#).

⁶ [Genesis 49:24](#).

⁷ [Psalm 28:9](#).

⁸ See [Jeremiah 23](#) and [Ezekiel 34](#) as examples of this.

⁹ [John 10:8](#).

¹⁰ [John 10:11, 14](#).

¹¹ [Hebrews 13:20](#).

¹² [I Peter 2:25](#).

¹³ [I Peter 5:4](#).

¹⁴ See [Psalm 2:9](#); [Isaiah 11:4](#); [II Thessalonians 2:8](#); [Revelation 2:27](#) and [19:15](#) where the ‘rod of iron’ is the ‘sword of his mouth’. Here the verb translated ‘rule’ is the same as that translated ‘shepherd’ and ‘tend’ or ‘feed’ (*ra’hah* in Hebrew and *poimaino* in Greek).

his time. He gives all of them a Christian meaning so that his Church might function effectively. The elders of old now not only judge but they also govern, preach, and teach.¹⁵ They are true watchmen (bishops) who watch over those whom the Lord bought with his own blood.¹⁶ They are priests, but at the same time they proclaim the truth of God as authentic prophets and witnesses to a new covenant. They have remained in place of the Lord to continue the work he started and to be his special envoys (apostles) to flood the world with his redemptive message. They should be examples of faith for those who are under their care,¹⁷ and they are also a race chosen to declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.¹⁸ p. 121

But we have in the Word of God several passages which are much more extensive than those already mentioned. In them we find basic principles for pastoral work that up until now have not been studied properly in our continent. Even though [Psalm 23](#) is one of the favourites, its wealth of vital material for the pastor has not been fully mined yet. Just the same, prophetic passages which contain severe exhortations to the shepherds of the people of Israel, like [Jeremiah 23](#), [Jeremiah 25:34-38](#) and [Ezekiel 34](#), must be studied carefully together with [Zechariah 11](#). At the same time, [John 10](#) deserves a thorough treatment to discover its many angles in connection with pastoral work, as it was conceived in a situation very similar to ours. We should not ignore the Pauline exhortations found in [Acts 20:28-31](#), as well as in [I Timothy 3](#) and [Titus 2](#), which were not written exclusively for lay officers of the church. It is imperative that all of these, as well as some other apparently isolated verses, should be made the object of a complete hermeneutical analysis that might serve as the basis for the formulation of pastoral theology in Latin America.

This will undoubtedly imply that the other areas of theological study should play an equally important part due to the close relationship that each has for the other. While it is true that one of the prime objectives of pastoral work is closely related to the doctrine of sanctification, it is no less important to consider the doctrines of sin, justification, and redemption. These in turn shed light on and receive benefit from Biblical anthropology with all its vast implications for the Latin American man at the present time. Some others within theology proper, Christology, and pneumatology are both inseparable from each other and theological postulates that affect directly the daily life of the believer. These should all be taken into consideration in the formulation mentioned above.

That is to say, that if up to now the practical and technical aspects of pastoral work have been emphasized, these must be balanced by a solid theoretical basis brought about by Biblical revelation, transmitted under the historico-cultural circumstances of the Near East, and planted firmly on Latin American ground and idiosyncrasies. We will no doubt see that the pastor is not just a revered personality with an easy solution for all the problems and needs nor that his intervention is limited to spiritual matters only. We will see a man of God who ministers to the sheep and who acts as an effective link between the Eternal One and his demands, and the p. 122 temporal and its impulses. He will also help his people to set up priorities on a scale of values which is according to the divine order.

¹⁵ [I Timothy 5:17](#).

¹⁶ [Acts 20:28](#); [Hebrews 13:17](#).

¹⁷ [Hebrews 13:7](#).

¹⁸ [I Peter 2:9](#).

But, we may ask, who is capable of doing all these things? Ecclesiastical structures at the present time limit the pastoral ministry to a rather exclusive group of men who have been ordained or to those who enjoy a certain degree of official recognition. And even though many agree that these men are not fully trained or enabled to carry on an adequate ministry to congregations that are growing in the midst of situations such as we have briefly seen on previous pages, there is a strong trend which favours a sort of a priestly caste which is even more exclusive and firmly established. Laymen are accorded an important place but the concept of the universal priesthood of the believer is by-passed. Men who eventually may be ordained are preferred over those who would rather remain as simple church members. We would be dreaming if we believed that the majority of our ecclesiastical bodies or local church governing boards have the idea of the universal priesthood of the believer as a goal or as a natural activity for every one of their members. This should also be one of the immediate matters for specific study and an inescapable responsibility. True, there is a need for outstanding leaders, but this does not mean that salaried experts are to take the place and obligation of every child of God. If there is the need for adequate training of an increasing number of men who are not thinking of devoting all their time to ministerial work, this is the time to take hold of the opportunity afforded by the new system of theological education by extension. And perhaps not even then will all the resources which can be used to promote a better qualified pastoral ministry be enough to take care of all the believers and their children as well as the newcomers. It is my personal fear that if we go on ignoring this vital aspect in the life of the Church, in a few years we will have inoculated a good many Latin Americans against the Gospel.¹⁹

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Abstract Article

The Kingdom of God, Eschatology, and Social and Political Ethics in Latin America, by
SAMUEL ESCOBAR (Theological Fraternity Bulletin, 1975, No. 1).

This is an article with a different slant on the subject. Escobar brings home again and again this point: "Will the people of God decide to adopt the difficult practice of truth in the same way they applaud the beauty and logic of the theory?"

Do one's eschatological ideas and theories determine a dynamic way of looking at oneself? Yes, says Escobar. He proves his point by discussing the whole concept of the Kingdom of God in Latin America and challenges the evangelical presence and its significance in socio-

¹⁹ I am indebted to the Mexican sociologist César Moreno for the idea of inoculation. In a private conversation he has indicated to me that it consists of giving the unbeliever a small dose of the message of the Gospel mixed with an acquaintance of the environment of the churches and their activities, without bothering to help him grow in Biblical knowledge.