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# Christian Ministry and Theological Training in India

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"The world is my parish", said John Wesley, and he did preach the Gospel to his accessible world in most trying circumstances and in face of much ridicule. "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God", said William Carey, and indeed he engaged himself in tasks and fields that were beyond the horizon of his contemporaries and sponsors. "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me", said our Lord Jesus Christ in a parable of the Kingdom (Matt. 25:40), himself setting the example of a servant as he washed his disciples feet, saying to them, "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." These references give us an idea of the circumference of a minister's work, if not its detailed hues.<sup>1</sup>

## I

In what might appear an oversimplified statement, I would describe the Minister's task as: To set forth Christ to the world. This setting forth is not merely the limited vocabulary of personal salvation in Jesus Christ, but a setting forth which springs or is generated from a vision and conviction of the cosmic Christ, in general, and in particular his significance in the realm of personal relationships, wherever those relationships exist—this world or the next. The vision, the logical end of Christ, is seen by man in flashing moments of equanimity and suspense when man sees in Christ the perfect harmony of all that *is* and *is to be*: His Kingdom. The kingdom is partly a reality in oneself, and is partly an accomplishment to be awaited. It is, however, the present reality,

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent survey and study material, *Education for Ministry*, by Charles Feilding, Professor of Moral Theology at Trinity College, Toronto, is available on the subject. The book came into my hands a little too late to allow me to incorporate some of its fine material in this paper. To my great encouragement I find that I have this learned Professor's support in much of what I have written.

'the peace of mind that passes all understanding', and the *a priori* character of the kingdom, that urges personal faith and ministry. It is a ministry in the kingdom and for the kingdom. A setting forth of Christ. Analysing and translating this in the world and for the world is our task. This involves:

1. Preaching the historic Christ
2. Discovering and Interpreting the Soul of man: restoring of personality
3. Transformation of the natural society into a transplanted and cultivated society, and
4. Setting forward the global evolution of man.

It is the last, that in a sense, is of primary importance, as it sets the directive for our personal faith and work. The finished state of creation where categories like 'attachment', 'possession', 'self-defence' etc., categories which by their very nature are fed on natural law, must give place to a new category of being. "They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25), said our Lord, while referring to Resurrection life. Lifting it out of its mere marriage context and applying the principle of it to human existence in general may give us a flashing glimpse of the finished product of the global evolution of man, the goal towards which we are moving. What matters is not the living as angels in heaven, but the living as angels on earth.

Is this end possible and desirable? For the mind that is not yet liberated, the answer is NO, but for the mind that engulfs the universe, the mind that has attained Christian knowledge, it is not only desirable but is inevitable. This is the great mystery revealed to us by Christ; and he himself is indeed the first born of this new creation, not in the category of time and space but in the category of "being". On a metaphysical scale we might say that the process and end is the same as the 'ascended manhood of Christ' in the Blessed Trinity: Where I am, there will my servant be also (John 12:26). I have dwelt a little on this last metaphysical and eschatological aspect first, for I hope to leave it at that and perhaps not bring it up as relevant to our immediate concern. Such an interpretation of Christian eschatology may not be acceptable to many brought up in semitic psychology. It is certainly unacceptable to those who would consider their earthly identity a thing to be grasped and jealously guarded unto all eternity against eternity itself!

To recapitulate our first three points, our task is: to preach the historic Christ; to discover and interpret the soul of man; to transform the natural society into a cultivated society.

*Preaching the historic Christ:* "Christ crucified, stumbling block to the Jews and folly to Gentiles..." (1 Cor. 1:23), said Paul as he spoke of the Cross of Christ. It still is a stumbling block to those who would guard the majesty of God in his external realm; the cross still is foolishness to the

wisdom that perceives God in terms of an impersonal Absolute and would require of him to maintain his dignity. Partial Incarnations, Manifestations, Heroes possessed of divine favour etc., are acceptable to man for their personalities stand in spectacular contrast to that of the mortal man. But a Total Presence in the midst of men, and for all appearances accepting defeat at their hands, is unthinkable; he cannot be God. It is over this natural psychology that the Christian preacher has to battle. The opposition is genuine, for they cannot allow their God to be dethroned. This agnosticism towards the historic Christ is openly expressed by those whom we would term non-Christians; but it is also present in many a baptised person, though not put into words, but perceived in their living which testifies to their unbelief.

However much we might philosophise the Christian Gospel, however much we might reduce its contents to "first principles", however much we might find parallels in other Scriptures, we cannot get away from the person of Jesus Christ, who was crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate governor of Judes. In these days of demythologising of the Gospel narratives there is a lurking danger that in the process, the less educated man reading scraps of critical literature might end up by thinking that Christ himself may have been a mythical figure. Our first sermon, then, cannot be any other than that of Peter on the day of Pentecost: Jesus of Nazareth a man attested to you by God ... (Acts 2:22 f). Says Bonhoeffer, "We must not do violence to the Scriptures by interpreting them in terms of an abstract principle, even if that principle be a doctrine of grace. Otherwise we shall end up in legalism.... our aim is not to set up a law, but to proclaim Christ."<sup>2</sup>

For us in India, where the Hindu mind is steeped in many Incarnations and many Lords, our greatest problem of preaching is to present the Unique Incarnate Christ, the Jesus of History. They indeed wonder why the Christian preacher is so foolish! Historicity and Uniqueness or Absoluteness appear anachronistic. The Minister's first task, and that a major task, is to preach Jesus of Nazareth of the Gospels and not a refined, logical Christian philosophy. Our ultimate concern in preaching is to lead the hearer to pose and find a positive answer for himself to the vital question: Whom do I say is Jesus?

"Happy are they who never saw and yet have found faith" (John 20:29)

*Discovering and Interpreting the soul of man:* The quest is as old as man himself. "Know thyself", said the Greeks, but the fact is that a man cannot know himself except as reflected in relationship with those around him. In a complex society where man is more concerned with "what others think

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<sup>2</sup> *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 73.

of me?" than what he thinks of himself, living is characterised by tensions, unhealthy competitions, relative values and even false values. It is the task of the Pastor, through individual attention and pastoral concern, to lead people to *live* rather than exist, to be an individual rather than an element in a mass, to make responsible choice rather than drift; in short, to have a unified, authentic personality of one's own and with it "the peace that passes all understanding." Such a discovery of the soul and restoration of personality is possible through seeing one's own reflection in an all-dimension mirror, the mirror of Christ. With the insight is offered the Power from Above to acknowledge and confess sins and receive pardon and grace. To discover the soul is to discover its place *in Christ*.

"What does a man gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his true self" (Mark 8:36)

*Transformation of the natural society into a cultivated society:* The natural society as we know it is characterised by exploitation and the extension of the jungle law of "tooth and claw". Ordinarily, man is satisfied with this system, though not happy. This is because the vast majority, as insignificant individuals in a mass, feel the fatalistic inability to affect any reasonable change in the system, and the small minority who thrive do not care for a change (may not even desire it) for they are happy (relatively), though not satisfied. Despondency and hopelessness is the mark of many an honest man as he crouches under the burden of an unjust and corrupt society. The tragedy is the impersonal character of the system: no one accepts responsibility for it, each one blames the other and every one blames the system!

It is the Church's task, and hence the minister's role, to transform such a society into one in which men will accept responsibility, not blame an impersonal system but blame men who govern and constitute the system. This is particularly the challenge of our own times in our country, where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, where economic poverty and unproductivity in industry are largely due to apathy, indifference and the basic failure to find an effective religion in work. Solutions to our political, social and economic problems lie in the formation of a new society based on voluntary acceptance by all of reasoned principles and sacrifice of self. Such a society can be the product of cultivation and not natural growth. The man of God has a tremendous role in affecting this transformation by being the first to plough the trodden path. His pace is indispensable in society.

"And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority to overcome all the devils and to cure diseases, and sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (Luk 9:1)

## II

If you agree with me basically with regard to what I have said about the nature of a minister's task, then the next important question for us in theological colleges is, how best can we equip and train men for this task? Religious men, priests and pundits, are not peculiar to Christianity. Every religion has its "men of God" who are supposed to be specially appointed to safeguard the interests of their gods. The majority of these men were (and some still are) 'mediums' of their deities, speaking with authority, rather than being reasoned instruments of religious and social consciousness. They best thrived on matters that could not be brought under the purview of science. Ignorance, fear and the unseen world have been the greatest aids to their trade. Many of them, no doubt, were genuine and held their office sacred.

Whatever honoured place such priests may have had in society in the past, it is becoming increasingly evident that the modern age would be quite content to do without them. For whether it be Brahmanism, Islam or Christianity, the priests have been discovered to be impotent in the affairs of men. It needed atheism and materialism to shatter the theology that "the rich man in his castle and the poor man in the slum, God intended them to be so"! Indeed, it is more than true that religion has been the opium of the people and the priests have been the drug manufacturers. To rescue the Christian priesthood from this heritage what shall we do? The recommendation often is, "Look to the Bible for an answer." Well, then, let us see if the Bible has anything to offer us on this score.

*The Old Testament:* In the Old Testament two classes of people who have been particularly associated with the interests of Yahweh are the Priests and the Prophets. Both carried the stamp of divine institution and both were directly responsible to Yahweh. God said to Moses, "You shall anoint them (Aaron and his sons) and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests." (Exodus 28:41). No member of the congregation dare feel jealous of them or accuse them, or else they will meet with the same fate as that of Korah and his company (Numbers 16). The priests had their rule of life and their duties were mapped out. The image that we get of them in the Old Testament is that of *dummies* going about their duties, rather than that of men involved in the contemporary situation, either in the field of politics or sociology. They did become involved occasionally when their personal interests were threatened, and instances of their rivalries are not unknown. They were a self-perpetuating class, "a gift of Yahweh" to the people of Israel. (Exodus 28:43)

What did the individual Jew and the community expect of the priests? They were looked upon as men set apart for

holy work, and as men who were different from others. Whether the priests demanded it or not, the people gave them an exalted place. In return they expected from them personal qualities of holiness, just dealing, and rightful performance of their defined duties which included some teaching and the post of a kind of public health inspector. They had such a pattern of life and duty that the changes and chances of the community and contemporary situation did not necessarily involve them—except perhaps in the peaceful performance of their duties. The people looked to them for relief from the burden of the sacrifices and demands of the Law, but not much help was to be found; the sons of Eli were no consolation! (1 Samuel 2: 12 f).

Thus both the people and the priest knew what each expected of the other. As far as the people are concerned, there is nothing to indicate that they expected anything of the priests beyond the faithful performances of their duties within the Temple walls; for example, Zechariah in Luke 1:8. In the context of the Old Covenant the Levitical priesthood may perhaps be justified. The tragedy was in the inherent disability of the system to be reformed or to be involved in the affairs of men.

*The prophets:* The second group of men who were zealous for Yahweh was the prophets. They were not a self-perpetuating class but were occasional men, sometimes accepted but more often rejected by their own generation, though honoured by succeeding generations. On the whole they do not appear as leaders of movements aimed at overthrowing the established order and setting up their own. There was no self-interest or calculated malice in the utterances of the prophet of Yahweh. He spoke with the authority of the Lord, "Thus saith the Lord.", and he believed that he was responsible to God who moved him to speak. Thus Elijah on mount Carmel could say, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." (1 Kings 18:36). Micaiah the son of Imlah could face the opposition of four hundred false prophets and the fury of Ahab, king of Israel, and say to him: "As the Lord lives, what my God says, that I will speak" (2 Chronicles 18:16 f). Isaiah, Jeremiah and the other prophets need no introduction in this respect.

The prophets accepted the community as *the* community of Yahweh, and one to which they themselves belonged. For this reason they were impelled to speak for its holiness and well being. These prophets existed in their own right as prophets raised by Yahweh for particular occasions. There seems to have been an order of prophets as well, but their worth and claim is not given much recognition in the Old Testament.

The involvement of the prophet in the religious, social

and political situations of the time appeared in the form of being an outspoken voice, rather than as direct action. There may have been a few who were tempted to resort to organised action, but their achievements seldom matched their words. This is not because what they spoke is not from Yahweh but simply because there is a vast and intricate machinery between the 'seeing' and the 'doing', between a vision and its accomplishment, between the perception of a truth and its execution. The prophets could see the vision, they could point to the fundamental principles of truth and holiness and when things went wrong they could feel it in their bones, but they were primarily not men possessed of learning, diplomacy and technique to be able to resort to direct action or lead a planned warfare to bring about the detailed desired changes in society, politics or religion. That must be left to the more competent hands in each field, hands which, no doubt, need the rousing of a prophet.

This particular type of involvement in contemporary situations, and the willingness often to be content with such involvement, and to ceaselessly pursue such involvement, may have something to say to us ministers of the Church in the 20th century.

The prophet then was not a very welcome figure to the contemporary establishment. He looked on himself as one of the people, but the hands that governed preferred to place him outside the order so that they might find it easy to accuse him and excuse him and expel him as a madman! But being men of independent means and stature they were able to stand their ground. This raises a pertinent and relevant question: Can any one whose security is based on the continuance of an established order be a prophet in that order? I speak of the prophet here in the sense of involvement—bold, hazardous concern for the things of God in the affairs of men. Martyrdom is the shadow that follows the footsteps of the prophet, martyrdom not necessarily physical but of various other kinds. Hence it is only natural that we should drift into the order of Levitical priesthood than in the direction of prophets.

Of these two classes, the priests and the prophets, the first certainly is not of much help to us in our search; the second, yes, but not entirely—not in their erratic and at times their irresponsible behaviour. However we have much more to incorporate from the prophet of the Old Testament than the priest as we look for a pattern for Christian ministry.

*The New Testament: Jesus Christ:* Jesus Christ was neither accepted as a priest nor as a prophet by the Jewish hierarchy. There is no indication that Jesus himself wished to be officially attested as one of these. We do not find him in the Temple performing duties like Zechariah, nor is he acclaimed as a prophet in the sense in which John the Baptist was. After his death and resurrection the early Jewish disciples



saw in him the fulfilment of priest and prophet, fulfilment of the Old Covenant. The mind steeped in sacrifices and atonement was naturally prone to establish a link between the Cross and the Passover Lamb. The climax of this move is the Epistle to the Hebrews and the subsequent nauseating theories of bloody atonement that still persist and are insisted upon by some preachers. Today it is generally recognised that the relevance of the sacrifice to the Gospel of the Cross need not commit us to any crude theories of substitution or propitiation or expiation.

Two streams of thought emerged from this sacrificial psychology: one that emphasised the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb shed once for all on the altar of the Cross, with subsequent abhorance for all earthly altars; the second also emphasised the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, with a subsequent love for the altar and with it the cult of priesthood and the sacerdotal character of Church's ministry. The latter has been the heritage of Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, the former of extreme Fundamentalism. Both developed forms of ministry that were concerned more with the soul of man in the world to come rather than his total being in this world. Christ was offered by the minister more as a soothing balm than as a disturbing remedy for this world while we are still in this world. A characteristic dualism was the result: A heaven above to be awaited and an earth beneath to be tolerated.

It is true that the understanding of the Cross in the New Testament, particularly portions in the Epistles, require of us to refer to the ideas of sacrifice. But at the same time it should be recognised that in the very passages which embody the language of sacrifice, the thought is often associated with ideas which strictly belong to a different category, viz. that of redemption or ransom from slavery and bondage (1 Peter 1:18; Rom 3:24; Mark 10:45). It would seem therefore that the New Testament when it speaks of the Cross, draws upon metaphors from two categories, without always attempting to distinguish clearly between them. Of these two categories, the Liturgy of the Church unfortunately got itself aligned with sacrificial functions to which was added power and authority. The priests became a ruling class holding the keys of the kingdom instead of being men willing to ransom their lives to save others and be servants to them. In effect this has meant the establishment of a kingdom on earth and with it the necessary contrivances to safeguard its interests.

The theological significance of Christ's ministry in its Godward aspect will ever remain in the realm of faith and speculation, but his ministry to man as a Man Sent From God can be discerned without ambiguities. If we are to look to the Gospels for a pattern of Christian ministry, it is to this aspect of Christ that we must first focus our microscopes and then and

then only our telescopes to see what Christ is doing for us in "heaven". Our advantage is that we do not have to start from heaven but we can and must start from earth with Christ. It is he who can lead us to the Father, and not we the Father to him. If this emphasis is not consciously maintained we shall end up with types and figures of the Levitical or Brahmanical priesthood.

*New Testament: The Apostles:* The ministry of the Apostles was largely a preaching ministry. They did occasionally feel the need to "attend to the tables" or find relief for fellow Christians (Acts 11:29, Rom. 12:13), but there is no indication of systematic social or economic involvement. The political utterances of Paul were more of an apologetic nature on behalf Christians than an active call for participation in nation building. "Let every one be subject to the governing authorities" (Rom. 13:1) is only a negative call to the new community, partly aimed at removing the fears of persecution by a non-Christian government.

Though I make the above observation about the Apostolic ministry I hasten to assert that the Apostolic ministry does definitely show embryonic forms and biological tentacles which should have normally developed into a structure deeply rooted in the total life of man in society. A glance at some of the following verses will justify this comment: Acts 4:32, 6:1, 9:36, 11:29, 15:6, 20:28; Romans 12:6, 15:1; 1 Cor. chps 5 to 8, 11:17, 12:25, 16:1; 2 Cor chps 8 and 9; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:15; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 4:9, 5:14; 1 Timothy 2:1, 5:8, 6:17; Titus 3:1; Epistle to Philemon; Epistle of James; 1 John. 3:17 etc., etc.

In the sub-Apostolic period for some unfortunate reason, much to the detriment of the Church, the old order of priesthood and hierarchy returned in new wine skins and has continued to our own days.

In conclusion to this section on the Bible I would say therefore that to look to the Bible for a set pattern of ministry that can be relevant to our times is futile; but to look to the Bible for the Spirit that can guide us in our concern for contemporary man in society is most rewarding, indeed, the only means of survival. It is the Spirit that gives life: "The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have told you." (John 14:26) And so to the Spirit we look for guidance in this matter as in all matters and not to a written code.

### III

We may now pose the question: On what lines shall we re-orientate the theological training of those who offer themselves for the full time ministry of the Church.

*Why the need for re-orientation?* If the traditional concept

of priesthood can be defended then there is no need, and there are many to defend it. In my short two years of teaching Ordinands I have had intelligent students who have violently disagreed with me on the principle of involvement of the type that I have ventured to describe in this paper. They genuinely believed that their ministry was *in the Church*, and that beyond exhorting the congregation to good works the minister ought not to waste his time "serving tables". No logic can change this inherited attitude. The only remedy, if you want to change them, is to throw them into the situations and let them see for themselves. If they don't perceive things when they are in a theological college they will be slow to perceive it when they leave. The majority, however, though agreeing in principle, felt that so much time and energy was required for the normal running of the parish—services, baptisms, burials, meetings, money raising efforts, etc.—that there would be no time left for any such involvement. How true to the Levitical priesthood!

If therefore we are content with the present system of training it is because we subscribe to the traditional concept of ministry as circling the altar, the pulpit and the pew. Hence there is no need to equip the minister with such wisdom as is necessary to deal with a man whom he may find lying half dead, "When he saw him he went past on the other side" (Luke 10:31). It was not his job.

My paper is based on the conviction that the traditional concept of the ministry must radically be replaced with the servanthood of Jesus, and that, not in any metaphorical sense but in a literal sense. To make this servanthood effective the student must be physically and practically helped to come out of his shell and be made conscious of the Power that can be at work in him through Christ. There is an immense gap between what is taught in the class room and its translation in the field. Lack of practical training forces him to make retreat or to pretend knowledge when he is faced with situations in the lives of those committed to his care. These first shocks psychologically prepare the ground for the young minister to withdraw more and more into "church activities" and fit the picture of a "holy parson".

With this introduction I venture to make a few suggestions on the lines on which practical training should be included in theological curriculum. They are suggestions based on the tasks already outlined.

*Equipping the Ordinand for preaching Jesus Christ:* This in the first place concerns those who teach in a theological college. We have a commitment to the Gospel. However objective we may remain in our teaching and presentation of the material, we cannot help at every stage pointing to Jesus and openly confessing: Behold the Lamb of God! No doubt the student must ultimately make up his own mind about Jesus

but the teacher's confession adds to confirm his faith. In a theological college the faith of the teacher cannot merely be assumed, it must be open and infectious. At many a lecture the bewildered child asks: "But, sir, what are we to believe? and often the answer is, "You must decide for yourself."

Freedom and objectivity should certainly be the characteristic of our approach in teaching, but objectivity is not to be taken as "neutrality" nor freedom as "indecision". Teacher and student alike should be free to be objective in the sense of responding to the facts. The student can be free to do this only if the teacher does not press his own opinions upon the student, but, is "objective" in the sense of being impartial and even impersonal, making all significant opinions known to the student and not ramming any one of them down his throat. This does not, however, mean that the teacher should fail to give expression to his own views or that he should never come to the point of personal decision, or that he should take a pride in being outside the conflict of doctrines. Such a teacher only leads his student to the brink of the precipice and it is only a matter of some one else giving the push, some one who promises to make everything meaningful and relevant by offering suicidal formulas. The teacher has an inescapable responsibility to lead his student to the faith that he himself considers vital. The conservative Bible Schools may have something to teach us in this matter. The difference is seen in the finished product. Put a man on the platform—one from the Bible School and another from a 'decent' theological college—the first will preach Christ, the second will preach philosophy; the first will be unashamed of his 'foolishness', the second will be select in his words; the first will be bold, the second will display cowardice under the cloak of decency and discretion!

Secondly, Theological Colleges should, as part of its curriculum, arrange for a week's preaching convention annually in a select area that is easily open and accessible to the public, and yet assuring a certain amount of security and public peace in the undertaking. The preaching will naturally have to be non-comparative. A straightforward preaching of Jesus Christ in the context of the contemporary situation. Foreign members of the staff should be exempted from this part of the syllabus! Well known Indian preachers could supplement the College Staff. Willing students should be given opportunity to speak, in fact, all should be encouraged. Either we share their folly (if it is so) in those few moments and make them wiser for it later, or shut their mouths to safeguard our respect and make them impotent for the rest of their lives.

Thirdly, the system of examinations must be reduced to the minimum and the conferring of Theological Degree abolished. This will eliminate the commercial outlook of theological training exploited by Dioceses and Christian Employment Agencies. This will set the atmosphere for study, research and

thinking. With it must also be demolished the pious commitment to have a syllabus that covers the ground from Genesis to Revelation. The approach must be to whet the appetite of the student for independent study and search for pearls. Theological degrees are not necessary in any department of Christian work except in the theological colleges! Paradoxically, theological colleges with more degree holders than students are a testimony to the need of finding employment for such. There have been and still are Bishops and Church dignitaries, men of ability and learning, who are recognised as such and yet hold no theological degrees; on the other hand there are men who hold great degrees (with or without learning and ability) and are frustrated for not finding posts to match their degrees. Theological Colleges are solely responsible for creating and maintaining this utilitarian psychology far removed from their usefulness in preaching Jesus Christ.

*Training the Ordinand to discover his true self* and to help others to do the same: The curriculum should include directed worship, meditation, silence and disciplined living. The intention is to provide the climate for the student to grapple with many an assumed and unquestioned way of life and to help him to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. He must be taught the art of self-examination, to see through hidden motives and ambitions and avoid self-deception.

Secondly, there must be a course on psychology and pastoral counselling emphasising the individual *person* as the unit of our ministry. This must include a course of such select activity that offers scope to the student to learn the art of establishing personal contact with individuals without waiting to be invited, and to enter into active conversation with them of a durable nature. The aim is not to make personal friends as such, but the conscious effort to reach out to all and sundry in their individual need. Problems, if any, should be discussed with the Counsellor. It follows the pattern of our Lord's own ministry, and the ministry of the Apostles who were sent out two by two. This training in practical outreach will prevent many an inexperienced minister from taking refuge in the security of the sanctuary when he is posted to a parish.

*Training Ordinands to be engaged in the transformation of society:* This should include an elementary course on sociology. Since there are no defined limits to a minister's involvement it is not easy to make suggestions in this field. Industrial society, Agricultural community, Slums, etc., each will need particular approach and handling, all of which cannot even remotely be harnessed into a three year curriculum. But what can be done and ought to be done is to break the ice through limited participation in any one aspect of social work that may be closest to the site of the College. They should have a regular programme of physical and mental participation either on a project of their own, or more easily, in collaboration with

some already existing social welfare organisation like the Bharat Sevak Samaj, the Sadu Samaj, Rama Krishna Mission, Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc. This will certainly involve a new type of time table than we are used to, and a new type of lecture schedule and an adjustment of the community life, if any. But there can be no escape from such active physical and mental involvement if theological colleges are to be buzzing centres of redemptive thought and action.

Through such practical involvement will be roused the prophet in the Ordinand as he discusses and feels in his bones the contemporary situation. After leaving his Theological College he may embark on any field or parish and it is more likely that he will continue to be a prophet and servant of the Lord than preach pious sermons from the safety of his pulpit. The best training that the Apostles had was not in class rooms or in the synagogues but in the streets and bylanes, in the crowded places, in the thick of danger and threat. Thus later when the Holy Spirit was poured upon them they knew where to rush, to the very places where the Master had trod.

What I have said in this last section is not a worked-out syllabus or course for practical training but merely indicating the lines that we must follow if we are to justify our existence as training centres for 'men of action'. The myth must be exploded once for all that there is to be a separate practical training after ordination, a diaconate, which will serve the purpose of all that I have said in this section. It is simply not so.

I have not touched the academic side much for that seems to be looked after more than is necessary; nor have I dealt with student wives who, no doubt, must be catered for.

I close with the concluding paragraph from Charles Feilding's *Education for Ministry* :

"In conclusion, the immediate task of most schools is the establishment or radical improvement of professional education of which field work must be an integral part. Its focus must always be on the student as he moves along a well-planned educational course leading from college through seminary to the eventual practice of his profession—a christian ministry. No programme can guarantee that every student will become learned or skilful, pious or wise; but programs can be designed that will enable students, with their teachers, to test the degree of competence needed for practice. Students must have opportunities for *testing where they stand as Christians and whether they are ready for the responsibilities of ministry* and, if they are, they must have *opportunities for assuming practice under supervision*. Where field education of this calibre is absent, a theological degree cannot be treated as a certificate of professional competence without deception; any student led to rely on it as evidence that he is equipped to practice the ministry is exposed to the obloquy and despair which fall to the lot of

those who have been deceived about their preparedness. Theological schools professing to be schools of preparation for ministry are responsible for field education—responsible to their students first of all, but responsible also to the community and to the churches which rely on their judgment.”

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### OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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