

EDITORIAL

By Paul Beasley-Murray

We were very grateful to those many readers who kindly took the time to complete a questionnaire with a view to making *Ministry Today* and RBIM activities as relevant as possible to the needs of those involved in Christian ministry.

We were delighted with the response - and even more so when we discovered that almost without exception, the comments were highly favourable. To mention just a few:

- 'Super journal that addressed many of the issues facing me and speaks with a sensible voice. It's jargon free and invariably "rings true"'
- 'I look forward to receiving *Ministry Today*. Thank you for a most informative and valuable journal'
- 'I have found many of the articles absolutely fascinating and very relevant'
- 'Keep up the good work'
- Perhaps one of the best read:
- 'I am very satisfied with RBIM. The conference I attended was very helpful and stimulating and I find the articles in *Ministry Today* stimulating, challenging and encouraging... Please send thirty recruitment leaflets for me to take to Fraternals'.

We would be more than happy to send RBIM flyers to all our readers - the more members we have, the more we can keep the subscription down!

Almost everybody felt *Ministry Today* to be the right length - only one reader felt it to be too long, while three felt it to be too short. 62% of those responding thought the balance of articles and reviews is about right - on the other hand, 27% thought there are too many reviews. Nobody thought there were too many articles! Almost everybody said the articles were 'at the right level', 'interesting', and 'helpful'.

Comments on the reviews section were somewhat mixed: 75% thought the reviews helpful; 27% thought them sufficiently detailed, but 18% thought them insufficiently detailed. So where do we go from here? It is true that some reviews are very brief -

but we have felt that for readers who lack easy access to a decent bookshop, even a brief mention may be helpful. The Board of Management will give more thought to this issue.

As editor, I particularly appreciated the comment that 'it would be good to have a lively correspondence column, inviting comments on the articles from readers'. Agreed! The more the better. So over to you!

THE MASK, MADONNA & POSTMODERNISM

By Jock McGregor

For the last decade, one woman has dominated the entertainment media across the world. What is the philosophy behind Madonna's constantly changing image and her outrageous antics?

You have probably seen his bright green face grinning at you from a poster. This is Stanley Ipkiss, hero of the late summer comedy hit *The Mask*. A feel-good film, featuring some wonderful state-of-the-art animation and a laugh-a-minute, it follows a simple nice-guy-makes-good story in a cartoon-like style.

The Mask in question is that of the Norse God Loki and has the effect of transforming Stanley from awkward loser to debonair winner. Assisted by his scene-stealing dog and the cartoon powers of the mask, Stanley manages to exact revenge on his enemies, outwit the police, defeat the bad guys and win the girl. Through it all, however, Stanley realises that he had it in himself all along and that he does not really need the mask. The film ends with our hero, girl on arm, throwing the mask into the river - and another satisfied audience leaves the theatre.

The Mask and Reality

This film succeeds, very simply, because we can all identify with Stanley. We have all been tempted to hide our weaknesses behind