SEMINAR ON THE MINISTRY

Change is the great enemy of every establishment. Whether we speak of politics, societal mores, or religious values, the danger is always immanent that these structures will be shouting their influence in a barrel of emptiness - recently evacuated by a world which has moved on. The Church, whether we like to admit it or not, is one of the establishments. It calls for the preservation of eternal and spiritual values in a world too often occupied with the temporal and material. And the minister, as a representative of the Church, often finds himself clashing with this world. He cries for a faith in God to a world which has a confident faith in itself. But the danger is that while the world is interested in "getting on", he will be found to be standing still. We do not think he ought to stand still. There is no virtue in deepening the entrenchments on the fields of France, when the battle has moved to the streets of Germany. If, as our President has said, we ministers and our people have access to the only Answerer, we had better make sure we understand the questions. As the world is not standing still, so neither are its questions.

A MINISTRY TO PEOPLE

by David L. Erb

As we carefully listen to the symphony of our society, two dominant cords can easily be distinguished. To begin with it is very impersonal. Persons have become objects. They are manipulated, stepped on, used and ignored. People are pigeonholed, labeled and dehumanized. Secondly, we find a frantic search for meaning among people. They flock to religious cults, sex perversion, and intellectualism like parched throats seeking water. The world of which these symptoms speak is wretched and difficult to face.

With this picture planted firmly in our minds, we turn to the New Testament to discover that the Lord seems to urge the Christian to live in the midst of this darkness. He is to bring the love of God to these dehumanized objects that they may be reestablished as persons and be given meaning in life. This is only possible because God has chosen to speak through human flesh today as he did two thousand years ago. Paul so aptly states, "...the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The Christian has not been left untouched by his encounter with society. On the contrary, he has been scarred and wounded. This task of redemption has involved a risk, and he has paid dearly for the obedient following of the Lord. Therefore, the New Testament also commands the Church to gather, so that these wounded believers

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can experience the warmth and love of God anew. But, alas, the church today has often failed to provide this experience. Instead of acceptance we find competition; there is coolness in the place of warmth, and masks rather than persons. The pastor is responsible to investigate this tragedy and attempt to provide an opportunity for more healing to take place. He must initially recognize that there are many people who will never be healed if he depends solely upon his own counseling ability. God has chosen to live in each of the parishioners, not just the pastor. Therefore he must attempt to help them minister to each other. This involves a place in the program where people can meet face to face and address each other as Thou rather than It.

The small group seems to be one very strategic answer to this overwhelming problem. Here we have a place where the warmth and love contributed by each member can be experienced by all. An atmosphere of acceptance allows the members to adjust their well worn masks so that they don't confuse them with their person. Mr. Jones, the factory superintendent, can give up his role of authority and express his fears and frustrations. Mrs. Smith, the housewife, can express her joys of raising a family. The need for love in both of them can be met by the other members in the group.

The believer has a storehouse of riches which can provide healing for another Christian, but rarely is he given the situation in which he can give of himself with a minimum of fear of rejection. This is needed so badly because we receive our feelings about God through human channels. It is much easier for Mrs. Smith to understand that God loves her if Mrs. Jones loves her. Similarly, it is easier for Mr. Jones to understand that God forgives if I have forgiven him.

We as seminary students need to experience this healing as well as see its possibilities for our own parish ministries.

A SIDE SHOW ACT: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
by Rev. Donald Williams

Who in his right mind would go into Christian Education today as a "calling" and not just as a side show act while preparing for the main event -- the Pulpit? I don't know anyone.

The reasons aren't remote. Christian Education is looked on almost "officially" by the church as a training ground for bigger and better things (more status, money, and power) in preaching. Most CE courses in seminary are dull, stupid, Mickey Mouse and insulting. As one student from Australia said to me, "No self-respecting theologian would get higher than a 'D' in this CE course." Few professors of CE project much of a masculine image, fewer are excited about their subject except for grandiose meaningless claims, i.e. "The whole church is engaged in CE all the time in every place." So what? Rather than seeing CE authentically from the viewpoint of Biblical Theology, Christian Educators have aped the world in vast imports of psychological and sociological theory and data, all the while pretending that this is authentically Christian (Welcome camel -- here's the tent!). Thus we get such nonsense as "Remember, we are teaching children,--not lessons."

Again, who would want to teach any subject when the pupils were seen for one half hour a week (the other half hour being absorbed in "opening exercises" -- exercises in rowdy singing or boredom) for two or three times a month with good long vacation breaks for a total of maybe 15 hours a year. Would you like to teach multiplication tables or the Civil War under such circumstances? Well I guess the assumption is that the Christian faith is so "simple" or worthless that it can be
done this way anyway. That's fine - for somebody else.

If this doesn't make you excited to enter the field remember a few more facts. Your great CE plant will stand vacant about 98% of the week. Most of your pupils will drop out before they finish high school and most of the rest will lose their faith on the college campus. Even if they struggle through they will be largely Biblically and theologically illiterate. That's why we have so many introductory courses in seminary. Most seminary students, the cream of the CE crop, come to seminary dumb in their faith. What then is left for the poor layman?

Still interested? If you are it must be the Holy Spirit's conviction in spite of the woeful facts. But good. Go back to the New Testament. Study Jesus and Paul as teachers. Learn what they mean when Jesus calls his disciples: "Follow me" and Paul calls to his churches: "Imitate me." Forget lectures, visual aids, seminars and the like. See yourself, the Christian Educator, living with your students 24 hours a day. Be prepared to say to them, "Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings (II Timothy 3:10-11)." Learn again the reality of the personal relationship in education, seeing and doing by example and close personal ties, long term observation and fellowship, theory and practice united as one in teacher and student. Learn again the importance of the spoken word -- direct and personal -- to be heard and retained. Learn to pass on the Word of God through memory, not mere reading. Be prepared to sacrifice everything to present men 'mature in Christ', and CE may again become what God intends it to be. Otherwise head for the pulpit, Son, and don't waste a minute.

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THE MINISTER AND PREACHING
by Samuel A. Mateer

Since I am neither a minister nor the son of a minister, my views about preaching are probably not only idealistic but downright naive. Yet if I feel this about myself, so do I of my contemporaries who think little of preaching and its place in our church, for they may be accused of the same naivete and idealism - only theirs comes to the problem from a different direction.

Most students I talk with are not really enthusiastic about preaching. It is as if we will put up with it because preaching is an institution of the church, but as soon as something better comes along we will be ready for that. Perhaps we should be, for who has not been embarrassed by some pastor's poor preparation, organization, annoying mannerisms, voiced pauses, and so on. Do not forget that the layman is bothered just as much as you are and this may cause him to stay away from church or to think that Christ is irrelevant to his life. Certainly we face a need for men who can preach well because we, of all people, really have a message to proclaim.

I know it is not all so easy to be a good preacher. The whole process starts with a right standing towards God and a sensitive communication with him, but you

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know that is not all. One of my high school coaches used to say football is ninety per cent desire and ten per cent ability. At the time I did not believe him, but I do now. Is it not God's will that he wants the best for his children, and if so, does he not also want us to be his best preachers? So then why not believe that, and work towards it? Shades of Dr. Lantz. But this just clears the way psychologically for the mechanical work. We need to take the time and cut in pride to get all the speech training we can, even to the extent of repeating a course two or three times. God wants and needs the best.

The other hindrance to good preaching lies beyond seminary. In the pastorate our time will be more or less our own to schedule. Good things will crowd out sermon preparation more and more. No one is going to push us for a clear outline or amplified text, which is one way of saying sermon preparation is hard work, especially when it comes to original thinking. Who is to say Dr. Lindquist is the only man who can afford at least twenty hours a week to prepare a sermon? Only you.

One more thing. I have often felt that some men fail because they do not put as much work in on the first part of the service as they do on the second. Yet a man can meet God here too. Do you know your people? Do you know their problems? Can you lead them over ground they have not been able to travel to meet God face to face? If you can do this, by your attitude, your prayers, and your love—if you can bring them face to face with God in worship—then your people will be willing to listen to what you have to say about God in your sermon. For then they know that you know what you are talking about.

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THE MINISTER AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION

by Jaymes P. Morgan, Jr.

In discussing the question of the evangelical minister and social action, the primary and highly unresolved issue, it seems to me, is not the problem of practices, but the question of whether the minister ought to become involved at all.

I submit first of all that the evangelical minister should involve himself because he is already involved. Taking as a broad definition of social action, activity purposing to influence man's condition and behavior through structuring his environment, we can readily see the evangelical's participation. Membership in the PTA is social action. So is voting. Surely the evangelical clergyman has the privilege of defending his political preferences when asked, yet this is social action, however insignificant. Of far greater import is the average evangelical minister's participation in the politics of silence. This is nothing less than forceful social action in the support of the status quo, a course of action highly favored in the South, in Suburbia, and elsewhere. Since we are involved in social action as a matter of fact, let us be involved consciously, conscientiously, and with a spirit of compassion.

I submit secondly that the evangelical minister has a responsibility to participate in Christian social action. This denies neither the primacy of regeneration as a solution to man's ills, nor the eschatological triumph of the living Lord as the ultimate solution to evil. But these twin truths do not restrict the evangelical to the choice of regeneration, Second Coming, or nothing. Many evangelical clergyman

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doubtless preferred regeneration as the solution to the problem of slavery. Lacking this, they worked for abolition. Many evangelicals doubtless wanted national conversion for Nazi Germany. Lacking this, they dedicated their energies to resisting Hitler's pogroms. The apocalyptic portraits in Scripture serve to disabuse us of facile optimism, but we should not be led thereby to abandon the effort to improve society, through the conversion of men, and where this is lacking, the structuring of man's environment. The tension between a realistic appraisal of society's prospects and the attempt to improve society nevertheless is rather similar to the tension between the command that we sin not and the witness of Scripture that the claim to sinlessness is sheer self-deception.

I believe thirdly that evangelical ministers should participate in Christian social action because they can bring to it an evangelical perspective. They can so contribute to the GOAL of social action. When the goal is assumed to be the utopianization of society, then it is perforce vulnerable to the criticism both of common sense and the Biblical assertion that the living Christ alone can redeem mankind. Evangelicals can insist that the goal is not that of "bringing in the Kingdom", but of influencing man's condition and behavior through structuring his environment, for the love of Christ and our fellowmen.

Further, evangelical clergymen can contribute an evangelical evaluation of the means of social action. They can remind Christian social action to whom it is in bondage—to our Lord, to His Word, to the Gospel. They can also insist that Christian social action remain free from bondage to any class, any status quo, any other loyalty; that it remain free to enunciate the implications of the Gospel (not just "human rights"); and that it remain free to bear the ministry of reconciliation wherever that ministry is needed.

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THE MINISTER AND THE LAYMAN

There is a resurgent interest today in the role of the layman in the Church. Emerging from this is the realization that the place of the layman is key to both the existence of the Church and to the Church's mission. We are discovering that our greatest unexploited resource is the laity. Yet, most of Protestantism while affirming the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, makes a clear distinction between the minister and the lay person, relegating the layman to a place of minor importance in the work and ministry of the Church.

The word "layman" comes, of course, from the Greek word "laos" which means basically "people". Applied to the Church it is the people who make up the worshipping community, and thus the entire membership of the Church is primarily "laos." In the New Testament the word for clergy and the word for laos, denote the same and not different people, and the historical affirmation of the Church has emphasized that every layman possesses a priesthood. The New Testament Church know nothing of the distinction between priests and laymen. Thus the Church and her ordained ministers must recognize that a distinction between the ordained clergy and the lay members of the Church is certainly artificial and false when it is conceived in terms whereby the laymen are mere spectators or equipment managers watching and supporting the ordained minister in his ministry. The minister today must recognize that theology in its practical expression signifies that all Christians are priests, are ministers

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of the Gospel, and are given the responsibility and privilege to witness.

We are to understand the Church, then, not in terms of a building or of an ordained ministry, but rather as existing by the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the laity. During the week, then, the Church is to be found not in an empty building or with the paid minister, but dispersed in the secular community where people live and work. This means that on Monday morning the Church and its witnessing ministry, is to be found in the factories, offices, schools, homes, stores and on the street corners throughout the city. Through the week the Church which was gathered as a fellowship on Sunday is scattered and given the task of witnessing, by their words and by their life, to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on behalf of each and every man. Therefore, the minister must build into the Church's fellowship and activity the total mobilization of its membership for evangelism. "Evangelism is not a professionalized job of a few gifted or trained men, but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs, even in the most modest way, to the company of Jesus" (Elton Trueblood, Company of the Committed, New York: Harper, 1961).

Being out in the world, working, living, and rubbing shoulders with the people of the world, the layman is able to engage in situational evangelism using the normal and natural setting of life to proclaim Jesus Christ. He is out in the world living among pagans who desperately need to see and experience the love of Christ and is able thereby, to be an immediate instrument of God's loving concern.

The role of the minister in relation to his layman, can be compared to the role of a football coach to his team. He trains, encourages, strategizes, and challenges his team. The team huddles to get the signals and then disperses for man to man and team combat. The real battle is not in the locker room in the pre-game briefing. It is out on the field where the game is won or lost. It is in this face to face encounter by the Christian layman, that the most basic and essential work of the ministry is to take place. This is the rhythm that must take place and which the minister must encourage: the Church gathered for worship and for instruction and the Church scattered to witness. What is required on the part of the minister is an acceptance of his servant role. He must help the layman to fulfill his calling.

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ONGOING EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY
by Dr. Geoffrey Bromiley

It is commonly recognised today that, while theological education is as thorough as it has ever been, the ongoing theological education of ministers is in many ways neglected. It does not in fact "go on". It may be admitted that theological knowledge is not the only essential in a true ministry. It may also be conceded that only the exceptional minister will probably make a real contribution to scholarship. It must also be recognised, however, that an ill-educated pastor will produce an ill-educated people, and that in the majority of cases a shallow ministry will be the result of the arrest of what should be ongoing education.

How is the movement to be restarted? Many suggestions are made, and they all have their place. Denominations can make certain requirements. Theological seminaries can offer summer courses. Reading lists can be circulated. Societies of

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sacred study can be formed. Higher degrees can be offered as a bait to those who have the ability and incentive. It would seem, however, that in and by themselves these are only palliatives. Certain more radical steps are needed if the problem is to be tackled in depth. Some of these steps are now suggested.

First, it is essential that theological training be training in the habit of study, so that when the props of curricula and examination are withdrawn, the study can go on. Here the spoonfeeding of so much theological education is self-defeating. Students who have now passed their academic novitiate have to develop initiative to know for themselves what to read and how to do it. This is like learning to ride a bicycle or to swim. You learn by doing it, not by having it done for you. The first attempts will be wobbly and uncertain, but they have to be made.

Secondly, it is essential that a true conception of the ministry be developed and taught. The minister is a man of the word and of prayer. He is not a business executive, or a hired hack, or a builder, or financier. Once a clear picture of the ministry is gained, there can be a clear picture of the minister's responsibility, and a clear picture of the allocation of his priorities. Ongoing study is not a nice extra; it is vital to the fulfilment of the ministry.

Thirdly, it is essential that radical steps be taken in the parishes and denominations to let the minister be what he should be, to free him from his enmeshment in telephones, committees, engagements, business routines, and to get him back in the place of prayer and study. I could wish that Fuller alumni might head a revolution in the churches to accomplish this. One man can hardly do it; he is at best tolerated as an oddity. Only determined movement in concert can rescue the ministry from this futile busyness of routine which hampers prayer as well as scholarship, makes a mockery of preaching, and prevents the church from making the contribution it should in an age of increasing higher education.

Finally, it is essential that the relationship of theology and ministry be firmly established again. The theologian is not just the man who goes on to graduate work, nor is the minister just the man who goes to the parish. This division, which is an evil legacy of almost three centuries of development, and which has had all kinds of dangerous consequences, is false from the very outset. It rests on a putting asunder of what God has joined. Not surprisingly it will hamper both ongoing ministry on the one side and ongoing theology on the other.

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MINISTRY AND THE MIDDLE CLASS ETHOS
by Jerry E. Warren

(Ethos: character or disposition of a community or people, considered as a natural endowment)

The middle class dominates American society. Some claim to belong to the upper-middle class; most to the middle-middle class; and some to the lower-middle class. Thus Americans prefer to be considered professional or white-collar workers. Thus, sociologists classify people as belonging to the "affluent society". The United States prides itself on being a middle class society.

Gibson Winter describes the role of this middle class within the rapid urbanization or modern society in his book The Suburban Captivity of the Churches. Within

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the evolving metropolis, the "high potential areas" of say Los Angeles, Chicago, or
New York are the suburbs. The phenomenal growth during the last decade and a half
of these satellite areas which ring the center of the urban complex has been domi­
nated by the middle class. The inner city is now populated primarily by the working
class and minority racial groups.

How has all of this affected the church? In this same period of time white
protestantism has experienced a growth parallel to that of the suburban middle class.
The reason is that the exodus from the city was led by white protestantism. Today
the protestant constituency of the church is composed predominately of white mid­
dle class, suburban people. The city and the rural church have been eclipsed by the
power of the emerging suburban church. This church is a church which may be called
a "fellowship by likeness". The emphasis is upon social compatibility, economic
equality, and "mission by friendly contact" to others from similar circumstances.
In such a situation neither the blue-collar man nor the member of a minority racial
group has a place. Winter states emphatically that the protestant congregation would
in fact collapse if it could not recruit a socially homogeneous membership.

Furthermore, the new middle class congregation functions with a "new religious
style". The communal ties of the older rural congregations are passe'. Although
economically the metropolis is inextricably interdependent, as a place of residence
it fosters m-isolated and impersonal existence. The church by passively accommodating
to this condition has become an organizational body whose members major in activities.
The minister is now the "pastoral director" of an administrative enterprise. For
only in this way can the church cope with interpersonal estrangement. And only by
the gaining of self-esteem through achievement in activities can the middle class
protestant acquire inner satisfaction. "They are because they do." Success is
measured by the amount of activities on the program, by the number on the membership
role, by the size of the minister's salary, and by the prestige of that supreme status
symbol -- the church building.

 Granted, this analysis has made no provision for the power of the Spirit. Yet
to the one who engages in "the work of ministry" it is a sobering appraisal of the
church. It provokes the minister to question the middle class ethos.

What responsibility does the church have to the whole society? Does Winter's
study discern a trend whereby commitment to Christianity had undergone a fatal iden­
tification with commitment to society? For example, consider the movement within
middle class white protestantism which equates Christianity and anti-communism. Is
not this an attempt to defend the middle class stereotype of "Christian America"?

What should be the nature of the participation of the church in society? Is it
enough to have a socially homogeneous church? What about Negroes and other min­
ority groups? Is the church ministering to them in its introverted middle class
ethos? Is the working man in the urban industrial complex to be abandoned to an
understaffed beleaguered church, to cultic groups, or simply to a religious vacuum?
When a young girl from the working class has lost all hope for advancement and has
been transformed into an apathetic, cynical, depersonalized individual, is this just
another unfortunate incident beyond the pale of the middle class protestant church?

How deep is the commitment within the middle class church to Christianity? Is
intensive involvement in religious activity, no matter how "evangelical", any guar­
antee of encountering the Christian message? Or rather may it not be a device pro­
tecting against such encounter? Is the success oriented ministry an adequate res­
ponse to the reality -- the earnestness -- the innerness of human existence in the
revealing light of the Christian message?

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A pastor, like any other thinking man, often finds himself a convinced advocate of one side or another of live social issues. Like any other man, he will from time to time seek to convince people of the superiority of his position. However, when he enters the pulpit as a preacher of the Gospel, he is no longer in the position of just any other man. At this point he must carefully consider the question of the extent to which he may use the pulpit to urge people to take his view.

To answer this question he must first consider his calling. He has been called to "preach the Word", to give himself "to prayer and to the ministry of the Word". The Gospel is concerned with justice, and broad principles of social justice are a part of the teaching of Scripture; but only rarely are specific measures suggested, even by our Lord. This perhaps constitutes the timeless quality of the Bible. The preacher’s call to preach the Word is a call to clearly enunciate these basic truths, not to neglect to declare the whole counsel of God.

This call does not assure him of special insights into the best way to apply these principles in society. The probability is that if a preacher really gives himself to studying in the area of his call—that is the Scriptures—he will be in a relatively poorer position to know the precise way in which the principles apply to a specific social problem than will many members of his congregation. The businessman will go wrong if he ignores Christian ethics in his business. The preacher will go wrong when he seeks to apply Christian ethics to a specific business of which he is ignorant. The pattern is for the businessman to live out his Christian life in the business world nurtured by faithful ministers of the Gospel. His calling, therefore, cannot be considered to include the right or responsibility to make a single point of view a part of the preaching ministry.

Right social action, the expression of the Gospel in social relationships, is achieved by the presence of genuine disciples of Christ in society, not by pulpit pronouncements. The relevance of the Gospel is achieved when people live by the Gospel in society. The preachers task is to so train men in the Scriptures that they begin to think with the mind of Christ. A loving act is never any specific type of act, but one which is prompted by love. That is why both a gift and a spanking for the child may be loving acts. In society, Christian social action is action that springs directly from a Christian conscience. That is why true Christians can be opposed on a specific issue, even one such as Proposition 14.

It is the privilege and high calling of a preacher to help produce such Christians. His is a task of nurture faithfully and lovingly declaring the whole counsel of God. Having fulfilled his call, he must trust each individual to the Spirit of God. Convinced by the very Word he preaches that each man must stand or fall before his own master. If he insists on informing his congregation which way the Holy Spirit would have them vote, either he is assuming a position of inspired authority, and turns toward Romanism, or he is simply expressing his own opinion and in the interest of equal rights ought to grant equal pulpit time to anyone with a different opinion.

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Seminary education is presumably something loftier than a formal workshop where skilled technicians provide self-conscious ministerial aspirants with bushels of data with which to support their preconceived notions on scattered topics of divinity. Students of integrity, who have sensed something of the limitations of their own knowledge, are supposed to be engaged in a humble search for truth. They may have come to seminary thinking that the most significant truths were to be found there, but they ought not to have come professing to know precisely what ideas would be available. Nor should they have thought these ideas, once presented, would necessarily be found acceptable. In short, no student who takes his ignorance seriously will "search for truth" determining beforehand what is to be found.

But when we get into the pulpit it seems that the search is over. We've finished the course now. Our BD degree is boldly displayed on the study wall, and we are now called to "put into practice all that theoretical stuff we learned in seminary." As I heard one conservative minister say not long ago, "we in church are not concerned with theorizing. We are concerned with assured results. People are coming to us with desperate problems, and we are bound to give them not something which may work nor which we hope will work, but something which will work." And even if we upstart students should judge this minister to have a wrong emphasis, we can be assured that the people we shall attempt to serve will agree with him. They will be coming to hear from us the words of God himself. They do not want to be buffaloed by a lot of "human speculation".

So the tension begins to make itself clear. On the one hand we have ourselves to contend with. Having dabbled at getting information first-hand, we may have come to see how preposterously difficult this really is. We face the trauma of having to live too much of life on second-hand information. Because we sense the difficulty of getting the facts and also the distortions imposed upon them by our own subjective involvements, we tend to have great sympathy for alternative positions. "The Roman Catholic and the Buddhist and the humanist may be wrong" we say. "But after all, the odds were so small that they should find the truth." Sympathy, empathy, and tolerance exude from every corner of our being.

On the other hand we have our people to understand. If living on second-hand information is trauma for us, living on fourth-hand information is perfectly adequate for them. If we go out of our way to become conversant with problems, they are determined to close themselves to anything but answers. Knowing well the psychology of the uncertain trumpet, they ask for an equally clear and authoritative blast in every situation. They know the answers are all in the Bible. It is their ministers' job to preach them.

The irony of our plight begins to dog us. We started our quest for learning with the hope that we would thereby be better equipped to help the people of God. Now we find that the very equipment we have acquired has become a barrier to service. Education has reopened the gap between clergy and laity.

Is there a ready solution to this problem? If there is, I do not know it. I am not sure it would be good that I did. But there are some attitudes which will be fundamental to any working solution. These are now offered:

First, honest realism demands our acknowledgment that the gap will never be

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fully bridged. If it could be, we would have let go our right to leadership. Being a leader means knowing more than those led and seeing more clearly what needs to be done.

Second, when those around us press for black and white answers to grey questions, we must, with gentleness and firmness, refuse to give in. We must not let our openness to truth be closed by those who would drag us down.

Third, our "humility in search of truth" becomes a farce when we forget how to learn from our parishioners. We may not need to know any more about Bultmann, but we may need to know much more about life. This they can teach us.

Fourth, our calling is to serve. Whenever our commitment to truth has a detrimental effect on our people, we seriously need to question its validity. The minister exists to strengthen the body of Christ, not to rend it limb from limb.

The Gadfly

A new era now confronts the church, namely the Era of Secularism. No longer can the church make pronouncements and expect to be heard. For if the church is to be heard, it must rid itself of archaic views that detract from the Gospel message making the church irrelevant in the eyes of the intelligent contemporary man.

For illustration we need look no further than Sex. In the day of the pill and when teenagers can improvise contraceptives out of Saran Wrap need the church still condemn pre-marital sexual intercourse? While anxiety has not been eliminated, no longer are the health factors and the problems of pregnancy necessary fears for those indulging in such relations. Sex has now been partially liberated to the point where one can try Sex for the sake of Sex; or perhaps Sex for the sake of love, outmoded social and legal sanctions notwithstanding.

It is provoking that the Bible is not anti-sex but against its misuse. Jesus lays down no absolute ethic for man to follow. In fact Jesus nowhere ascribes to the state of virginity a special sanctity. It is only the early church and the later ascetic movements which made virginity a special virtue. Such perversion followed from the misconception that through ascetic behavior man can attain and possess a certain ideal or saintly quality. Twentieth century morality codes still reflect such distortion of human nature, much to the detriment of modern man.

Sex is one of man's primary drives. If he is continually prohibited from fulfilling his needs in this area, debilitating frustration and inhibitions will result. If we proclaim a Gospel which releases man from law and offers him freedom, should this not also allow him to live a sexually liberated life? Let the theologians re-examine our traditional doctrine of Sex not only in light of modern scientific advances, but also with regard to Scriptural injunctions. Let them study not only Paul, but let them examine the Patriarchs and the Kings and the Prophets. From such a study then let us not be surprised if we find that we will have to adjust some of our Victorian standards of Sex to a more Christian position.

Pax

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THE CHURCH AND THE CHALLENGE OF ALCOHOLISM

The Fifth Annual Conference on the Pastoral Ministry will be devoted to the minister's work with the alcoholic. Sponsored by the Southern California Council of Churches, the conference will be held on November 17th. Dr. Howard Clinebell who has done extensive research in the area of alcoholism will be the chief speaker. Moderating the panels is Dr. Donald F. Tweedy, the head of the Fuller counseling center. One of the panels features an intriguing interchange among a bartender, a researcher, and a minister.

The Social Action Committee of the seminary will be providing brochures for all students later in the week. They encourage as many as possible to attend. The registration deadline will be November 10th.

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the opinion welcomes Mr. Clifford L. (Monte) Swanson to its staff. Monte has been appointed Literary Editor for the balance of the year. He replaces Mr. Laurie Lampert who transferred to Drew Theological School.

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POSTSCRIPT IN THE HEREAFTER

by William Walker

In God's heaven
Brassy curtains
Of tinkling cymbals
Turn His ears deaf
To the noisy pretensions
of "His own"
Who clamor and praise
Before altars of soul and stone
Their oneness with Him
Mocking tragic comedy
That confuses the form of priests
With the sincerity of the soul;
The prattlings of the mouth
With the realness of Him
Leaving man to his blind illusion
Of finally achieving------
When yet he can't see a tear
Nor cares to know a heart
Self-destined by formula
Never to know------
But hollowness of jargon
And empty earnestness...Selah

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WILLIAM WALKER is a junior at FTS. He received his AB in History from Wheaton College in 1963.

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