

Schillebeeckx, Edward. *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ*. New York: Crossroad, 1981. ix + 165 pp. \$12.95.

The "crisis of the priesthood" may be an overworked phrase, but the reality behind the expression is an inescapable fact of contemporary Catholic life. Over the last fifteen years the decline in priestly vocations, the proliferation of various kinds of lay ministry, a steady growth in numbers of ordained deacons, and an insistent call for greater equality for women in the life of the church have provoked a search for a better understanding of priesthood and ministry in the light of the Catholic Church's tradition and the contemporary pastoral needs.

Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ is Schillebeeckx's latest contribution to this search. The method he employs is to give an historical study of ministry in the church, comparing the second millennium A.D. to the first, raising questions from this comparative study, and finally offering suggestions for present and future practice of ministry.

The eminent Dutch theologian holds that we do not necessarily find the best and truest form of an ecclesiastical institution by identifying its shape in a certain period, either that of the NT or the time of the Council of Chalcedon or the era of Trent. The purpose of an historical study like *Ministry* is to find out which elements of the ministry are variable and which are essential by virtue of having remained constant during changes.

From NT times through the twelfth century, the author finds the essential notion to be that of leadership. Leadership is the "right" of each Christian community. It does not develop directly out of the liturgy, but whoever leads the community is *ipso facto* competent to preside at the eucharist. In such a context, ordained ministry is not a "state" or "status," but a "function," a "service." The notion of "absolute ordination"—the ordination of men without assigning them to minister to a congregation—was clearly a contradiction in terms, and thus explicitly condemned as "invalid" by the Council of Chalcedon.

With the Lateran Councils of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a major shift took place. The essence of ordination was held to be the production of an indelible priestly "character" and the conferring of grace for that particular state. This character could be conferred even if the ordinand was not being appointed to a particular community and was granted no jurisdiction. The election of the community became a formality. The priest was increasingly considered as a man apart, the one who conferred sacraments on the people. Trent gave this late medieval change great emphasis. Even the second Vatican Council, affirms Schillebeeckx, seemed to accept this new interpretation of ministry rather than the model offered by Chalcedon.

Most of Schillebeeckx's argument is not new, and much of it expresses the consensus of modern Catholic theologians. He is most original and exciting when he applies these ideas to a variety of present-day ecclesiological problems. For instance, if the priest is first and foremost the person marked out by the local Christian community as its leader, and ordained as such, a shortage of priests would simply be an ecclesiastical impossibility. Likewise, if the value of priestly celibacy—obligatory only since the twelfth century—is said to be an eschatological sign, this sign would be much more powerful if it were exhibited optionally rather than regarded as the necessary price to pay for the priesthood. Equally challenging is the implication that if any group of Christians seeking to live in fidelity to Christ has the right to leadership and to the eucharist, the question of the recognition of another church's ministry ceases to be an ecumenical problem.

Schillebeeckx has given us a very powerful and persuasive study of ministry. The book, it is true, is the reworking and expansion of four recent articles—a method which causes some overlap and lack of coordination, but its argument is convincing. Not every reader will agree with its conclusions, and reactions should not be long in coming. To assail the historical findings of the book, however, one will have to produce evidence contrary to that advanced by the author and documented in his copious footnotes. Regrettably, in such a learned volume there is no index.

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Turner, R. Edward. *Proclaiming the Word: The Concept of Preaching in the Thought of Ellen G. White*. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1980. 183 pp. Paperback, \$7.95.

Proclaiming the Word is not intended to be a homiletical textbook. Rather, as a revised form of the author's Ph.D. dissertation at Claremont University, it provides a critical analysis of the preaching concepts of Ellen G. White (1827-1915), a pioneer leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Recognizing initially that White made no claims to be a trained homiletician, nor that she ever conceptualized or systematized her concept of preaching, Turner bases his analysis on what he terms her "growing stream of consciousness" about her own preaching experience and reflection upon it. Therefore, it is his understanding that the student's approach must be ontological as well as epistemological, which is one of the major strengths of his study. He recognizes that White approached preaching not