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- 8 Robert L. Kinast, "Theological Reflection in Ministry Preparation", *Tracing the Spirit*, pp 83—102; Browning, *Practical Theology*.
- 9 Edward Farley, *Theologia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 29—48, passim; Schreiter, 75—94.
- 10 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture*.
- 11 Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*; David P. Killen, "Indigenous Theological Education and Christian Formation", *Insight*, 11, No. 7, (1984) 3—13.
- 12 Michael J. McGinnis, "The Appropriation of New Theology By The Laity:..." (Ph. D. dissertation, Notre Dame University, 1981); Derek A. Kotze, "An Evaluation of the Education For Ministry Program in the School of Theology, University of the South". Bloomington, Indiana: September, 1984. (Typewritten.)

RESPONSE

Schillebeeckx's second book on ministry—two views

In 1984, when the Vatican condemned the argument in Edward Schillebeeckx's book Ministry that a faith-community has the right to the Eucharist, and therefore has the right to ministers (if necessary, commissioned by itself) to preside at the Eucharist, Fr Schillebeeckx said that he was writing a clarifying book.

The English translation of this, entitled The Church with a Human Face: a new and expanded theology of ministry, was published last year by SCM Press (price £8.95). Speaking of it in January 1985, the author himself said: 'I can ... say absolutely that I retract nothing from the

position I defend in the first book; on the contrary, I have radicalized it, in the etymological sense of the word. I give it sturdier roots by formulating it more soundly and purely, both historically and theologically, and have moreover removed certain inconsistencies from the first book. ...'

Here two reviewers consider this controversial book: Michael Richards, until recently Editor of The Clergy Review, and Robert Schreiter of the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, who has worked closely with Fr. Schillebeeckx.

Michael Richards writes:

This review is an admission of failure. I simply do not understand Fr Schillebeeckx. I should very much like to read a review of his book by someone who does understand what he is saying; but I shall be bold, perhaps rash, and say that I do not believe that anyone can extract from this book a coherent theology of ministry or even the beginning of a sketch of one.

Fr Schillebeeckx says that the first and second editions of his earlier book, *Ministry*, gave rise to 'unnecessary misunderstandings' because it 'was still too much a work consisting of originally separate articles'. The present, longer, book has not made things any clearer. To begin with, he is preoccupied with answering his critics, notably Pierre Grelot; but the reader who is familiar with the earlier work and with what these critics have said simply gets lost in the detail and cannot be expected to judge for himself between antagonists.

Secondly, his biblical exegesis and his survey of church history are so full of qualifications, asides, comments drawn from present-day controversies, and incidental questioning that it is very difficult to discern what conclusions, general or particular, we are expected to draw. Far from its being a 'powerful argument' or a 'basic textbook' (to quote the blurb), one can neither grasp what is being positively asserted about ministry nor envisage recommending the volume to a beginner who needs a systematic guide to the complexities of the subject.

This book is a register of current confusion by a man who seems to have lost his capacity for positive appraisal and appreciation. The scholar who serves the Word can surely find more to tell us about his share in the ministry of forgiveness and peace. We need a reflective contemplation of the mystery that the Church calls Holy Order. These are fragments shored against ruins.

Robert Schreiter writes:

This work is a continuation of the discussion the author began in his 1981 book, *Ministry*. It covers much of the same territory as did its predecessor: New Testament foundations, historical developments up to

the Council of Trent, and current church documents reflecting the controversy about priesthood and ministry in the Roman Catholic Church today. It is indeed a continuation of that book rather than a completely independent publication, and so it needs to be read in concert with *Ministry*. Indeed, one-third of this volume is text from the previous work. However, it presents a greatly expanded historical treatment of the development of ministry in the Church, in itself quite valuable. Two recent documents on ministry—one from the World Council of Churches, and the other from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith—also receive brief and incisive treatment.

The subtitle created for this translation is misleading (it is not found in the original Dutch edition). Schillebeeckx does not take a new position in this work. He does give nuance to his earlier distinction between the more pneumatologically-based theology of ministry of the first millennium and the more christologically-based theology of the second millennium. As his critics have pointed out, the two in fact coexisted through most of the second half of the first millennium, with the christologically-based model gaining ascendance.

He does make a new suggestion in the final two pages of the book, concerning the possible development of a fourth order of ministry alongside the tripartite scheme of bishop-presbyter-deacon. But this is presented as no more than a suggestion. Beyond this, Schillebeeckx takes great pains to show that he has not changed his position from the earlier work.

Secondly, this book is not really a theology of ministry; it is actually less so than the first book, whose theological stance it presumes. Rather, it is in large part an expansion of the exegetical and historical argument in response to his critics. While sometimes intricate and demanding for a general audience, it is something that has been much needed.

In the preface to *Ministry*, Schillebeeckx challenged potential critics to answer his historical arguments with counter-arguments drawn also from historical research, and not from dogmatic stances. These have come forth in abundance. Many parts of this volume are responses to those criticisms, either by name or otherwise. Some of those historical criticisms, particularly those of Congar and Crouzel, have resulted in corrections of fact. Most of the criticisms, however, have to do with how to read the facts, and here is where Schillebeeckx and his critics disagree profoundly.

There are two principle areas where this is the case. Schillebeeckx follows what is probably the majority of exegetes in saying that ministry in the New Testament was diverse in form and thus was ordered differently from community to community. More standard forms began emerging already in the first century, but did not become universal until the fourth or fifth century. His critics, mainly conservative francophone

exegetes, argue for a much earlier standardization, basing their argument on their conception of the role of the Twelve. They contend that the Twelve were the sole bearers of Jesus' intent for ministry in the Church, an intent which resulted in the familiar tripartite order. Others, however, note the virtual disappearance of the Twelve from the New Testament as a body within a decade after the Resurrection. They see the Twelve as mainly symbolic of the restoration of Israel, with ministry being shaped by the needs of local communities. One gets the distinct impression that interests other than historical play a large role in this discussion.

The second area has to do with the aforementioned theological basis of ministry. Should that basis be sought in the Holy Spirit in the midst of the community, ever shaping and reshaping ministries to meet the changing needs of the Church; or in the person of Christ, the true priest and leader of the Church? These are not exclusive alternatives, since both have been part of tradition. Schillebeeckx contends that the latter achieved an overwhelming dominance over the former in the second millennium, and that the Church is now experiencing in its grassroots a reassertion of the former. His historical research is intended to show evidence of that pneumatological basis in tradition, as a resource for current discussion and debate. Some of his critics, among them the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, are intent in maintaining a clear priority for the christological option.

This book is far from a definitive statement on ministry, but it does advance the discussion by providing important historical detail. An added bonus is Schillebeeckx's thumbnail sketch of the times and ministry of Jesus, an admirable summary of some of his historical and christological reflections from the two large volumes on Jesus. This book has emerged from a continuing conversation (or controversy), the last of which we have not yet heard.