

Christian Ministry in its Theological Context

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We welcome this first contribution from Craig Watts a scholar who is studying theology in the United States. He has completed his first degree and is pursuing a course leading to entry to the ministry.

The results of any attempt to conceive a theology of ministry apart from the central doctrines of the Christian faith will come forth still-born. Christian ministry can be adequately understood only in relation to the great themes of the faith. Perhaps one can speak of *ministry* in isolation from the doctrines of revelation, Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology, but the ministry of which one would be speaking could not be *Christian* ministry. The identity of ministry as Christian is preserved only when it is seen in the context of Christian theology as a whole. For this reason the minister dare not view the task of the theologian as peripheral to the activity of ministry.

This essay is an attempt to see ministry in its theological context. Because of the nature of the subject matter, many questions must remain unanswered, and some important issues must be left unaddressed. What is offered here is a broad—though hopefully suggestive—outline that is not so much a developed argument as it is an affirmation. It is an affirmation that Christian ministry is first and foremost the ministry of God in Christ, and as such is an outgrowth of God's will, rather than human need, of God's purpose, rather than human plans, of God's faithfulness, rather than human technique. This ministry is ours only because it was first God's and it remains Christian only in so far as it remains His.

1. The Revelational Presupposition

The ministry of the church is called into being and is guided by the revelatory Word of God. This indicates that revelation precedes the church both temporally and in terms of pre-eminence. It is the given data of faith with which the church must reckon. This revelation must never be equated with any aspect of the life of the church, nor with the experience of the Christian. Hence, by referring to revelation as the 'data of faith' we mean that faith 'lives by the power which is power before faith and without faith. It lives by the power which gives faith itself its object, and in virtue of this object its very

existence'.¹ Thus revelation can be present to the church only because it was first past. By faith we can now be recipients of the saving activity of God, and, indeed, we can participate in a mission of salvific significance. Yet these present experiences are not to be compared with or considered equal to the original revelatory acts of God, for it is upon these latter that the former are based and by which they are conditioned. Therefore, faith is a subsequent act which appropriates in the present the power and meaning of that which has taken place in the past. The present experience is dependent upon the past activity. Hence faith is relativized.²

It should be clear from what has been said thus far that when we speak of revelation as the Word of God what is meant is not man's word about God, but God's own Word as God lives and speaks it.³ There is a profoundly irreducible otherness about revelation. The Word of God is neither man's word about God, nor primarily God's Word about God. Revelation, then, is divine self-disclosure. The author of revelation is its contents.

The fact and form of revelation reflects a personal quality which is inseparable from the revelation itself. This is as it should be since the content of revelation is not a thing or an idea, but a person. To speak of revelation as God's Word suggests an intentionality which is appropriately attributed only to a person. The truth of revelation is the truth of God as a speaking person. What God speaks cannot be true abstracted from Himself for it is true through the fact that He Himself said it and is present in and with what He has said.⁴ This personalizing of the concept of revelation should not be seen as a mere anthropomorphism since God Himself chose to give us the fullest revelation of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

This personal quality of revelation points to the fact that though revelation is characterized by an otherness, both in reference to its source and its content, nevertheless, in intention it encompasses

¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1 ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936), p. 154.

² Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith*, I, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 129.

³ Thomas F. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 137.

⁴ Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

the human hearer. In fact, there can be a human hearer only because of the divinely directed Word, for though such hearing is a human impossibility, yet it is a divine possibility for human being. Thus, we can say that the hearing person is the object of the purpose of the speaking God, and, therefore, is included in the concept of revelation. Karl Barth has made some significant observations in regard to the purposiveness and intentionality of revelation as it relates to the hearer which are worthy of our attention.⁵ First, revelation is directed to us as a Word which could never arise from within ourselves. Every human word fails to be fully genuine and is incapable of entering into an irrevocable encounter. Encounter with the revelatory Word of God is an irrevocable encounter in which the Word can be neither compromised nor dissolved, nor can the encounter be diminished through union with the human subject. The Word of God always confronts us with something fresh which we have never heard before. 'The rock of a Thou which never becomes an I is thrown in our path.' This otherness of revelation is the mark of the Word of God which sets it apart from all other words, yet God makes it known to us and it is always distinguished from us.

Secondly, this revelatory Word that is directed to us is a Word which 'smites us in our existence' in a way that a human word is incapable of doing. This Word both questions and answers us at the most profound depths of our existence. In this it is like death, though death lacks the transcendence and vitality which is to be found in this Word. This Word comes from some point external to us and stands over us. It is the case that the revelatory Word of God applies to us as no other word can precisely because it is the Word of our Creator, who encompasses and preserves our existence from beginning to end.

Thirdly, the Word of God as both revelatory and creative Word comes to us of necessity in order that a renewal of our relationships with God occur. The fact that God comes as a speaking God, revealing himself in a totally new way, making the unknown in himself known, implies both a criticism of the present state of the relation between Him and us, and a declaration that He intends to re-establish and sustain the relation despite His criticism of its inadequacy and imperfection. This cannot be the content of a human word. Only the One who has instituted the relation has the right and power to confirm and renew it when it is disrupted.

Fourthly, the Word of God which is directed to us is the Word of reconciliation that speaks not only of a present reality, but also of a future in

which God promises Himself as the content of our future and as a presence which meets us as we move towards the end of all time. God announces Himself as the One who is coming for the fulfillment and consummation of the relation He established between us as creation and Himself as Creator. Words of such finality are not human words. These are words of promise and hope for a fulfillment which is beyond our imaginations and are based only on a promise that the speaker of this Word is the coming Other.

This revelation, this Word of profound otherness, this Word of disturbing and disrupting relevance, this Word of creation, reconciliation and hope is God's ministry to us which precedes any and every act of ministry or theological reflection on the part of the Church. This divine revelation evokes human response, calling a people into being. The people share something of an impression or image of that to which they respond; hence, their response is in keeping with and a reflection of the revelation. This being the case, theological activity must emerge out of ministry and cannot be isolated from it. Theological activity is both a result of and for the sake of ministry if it is to be consistent with the divine modality. Understood in this manner the revelatory ministry of God becomes the foundation and presupposition from which all subsequent insight into the nature and strategy of ministry must arise, and to which the Church must refer as a criteria of its own ministry. The nature and structure of Christian ministry is determined by God for the world, rather than by the world for the sake of the world. Therefore, one can say that 'we cannot contemplate the nature of God in His revelation without contemplating our own nature and purpose'.⁶

Only in relation to the revelation of God can the Church know itself, for its identity is not self-grounded. It is derived from that which calls it into existence. For both its existence and its identity the Church must refer to that which is other than itself. This is just as true in the case of the individual as it is in the case of the corporate body of the Church. A loss of identity occurs when the creature no longer looks to the revelation of God to answer the question, 'Who am I?'. Any attempt at self-definition independent of the creative and revelatory Word of God is an illegitimate and faithless manifestation of self-assertion in which there is an implicit rejection of the category of 'creature' as applied to one's self, and a demand to be a 'creator' in one's own right. Relative to this problem Helmut

⁶ Ray S. Anderson, 'A Theology for Ministry' in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, Ray S. Anderson, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 141ff.

Thielicke has insightfully remarked, "The 'I am' is a statement about being in relation, for in every dimension of life I am characterized by what God is for me. I am created, fallen, and visited. I am judged and blessed. The I is thus determined from without by what is done on it, by what God is for it. . . . When things are viewed thus, it is impossible to begin with a self-understanding or pre-understanding. For this would mean excluding the I from that relation and seeing it as a prior entity. Who I really am I learn only from the word that proclaims to me God's condescension, His covenant, and His mighty deeds."⁷

Rather than attempting to explicate further the relevance and ramifications of the doctrine of revelation for a theology of Christian ministry, perhaps it is best at this time to turn our attention to the form of revelation in Jesus Christ in order that we might move towards a clearer vision of the shape of ministry.

2. The Christological Form

Because divine revelation is the presupposition and source of Christian ministry, the contour and form of ministry is determined by the shape and mode of the revelation. It is in recognition of this that we speak of the Christological form of Christian ministry.

Revelation is not a thing which is neither God nor man. Rather it is God addressing humanity in such a way that the Word becomes flesh in a concrete and identifiable individual who in his particularity is inextricably identified with the revelation of God. In Christ that which is beyond and before human existence participates in it. The ground of creaturely existence comes as a creature to be both God for man and man for God, to be both the Word addressed to humanity and the obedience rendered to God in order to overcome the estrangement of humanity from God.

In Jesus Christ the revelation of God takes on a personal and verbal form. The verbal is not to be detached from the personal as occurred in Protestant scholasticism, since the revelation is the revelation of the infinite-personal God. Revelation is not simply a deposit of information which is detachable from the personal encounter with God. The verbalization of revelation is possible precisely because it is personal. Thus in Christ, God reveals Himself in Word and deed, as He interprets the meaning of His own activity. There is no personal revelation without the verbal dimension since the acts of God become revelation in their interpretation. In fact we can speak of the acts of God as

revelation only if we understand the verbalization or divinely given interpretation of these acts as an aspect of the act itself. In Christ, 'God's Word has become speech to men as man to man, for in Him God has graciously assumed our human speech into union with His own, effecting it as the human expression of the divine Word, and giving it as such an essential place in His revelation to man.'⁸

Revelation of God always involves divine accommodation to the limitations intrinsic to the human condition. The Word of God comes in human form as human words and acts—truly human, but never *merely* human. It comes in a way which is available to human comprehension, but that frustrates our expectations. The manner in which deity is expressed in the humanity of Jesus, and most especially in the cross, contradicts all our familiar ideas about God. Rather than revealing himself in the power and glory of a king, he comes in the powerlessness, humility and unsightliness of a servant to challenge, not only our conceptions of God, but our visions of ourselves as well. The revelation of God in Christ is the revelation of One who gives himself through self-limiting and self-emptying (*kenosis*). As Walter Kasper has observed, 'God evidently exercises such supreme power and freedom that he can as it were renounce everything without "losing face".'⁹ But this renunciation must be understood in positive, rather than negative terms, for it is not a renunciation of His fundamental nature; it is a renunciation of a negative self-existence which is contrary to the nature of divine existence. It is an affirmation of 'the dynamic dimension of love as activity'.¹⁰

God loves freely, and in freedom he loves absolutely. This is the central Christian confession concerning God. In creation God enters into relation with the world. Such a relation entails limitation on the part of God. However, the physical creation does not require a limitation of God to any significant degree, since He could, if He willed, completely control all aspects of this creation. But real limitation is required if God is to enter into relationships with another who has a

⁸ Torrance, *op. cit.*, p. 149. Also see Torrance, *Theological Science*, 'In theology this Logos is encountered as a Word to be heard, as Truth to be acknowledged, not just a rationality to be apprehended and interpreted, so that we have to learn how to distinguish the given *in its own self-interpretation* from the interpretative processes in which we engage in receiving and understanding it. This means that theological thinking is more like a listening than any other knowledge, a listening for and to a rational Word from beyond anything that we can tell to ourselves and distinct from our rational elaborations of it' (p. 30).

⁹ Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (London: Burns and Oates, 1976), p. 168.

¹⁰ Ray S. Anderson, *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 179.

⁷ Thielicke, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

free, relatively autonomous existence of his own. If creation itself is to be creative and free, God must limit Himself. It is the creation of humanity with the capacity of freedom which requires a self-imposed limitation of God, lest the fragile, finite freedom be destroyed, and reciprocal relations rendered impossible. Hence, the creation of human being by the free act of divine love by its very nature is kenotic.

The personal quality of God's relation to the world is observed in the fact that the world does not stand in perfect relation to God. If the relation of God to the world was primarily based upon his omnipotence there would be no lack of perfection in the relation, but such a relation would be mechanical and finite freedom would be impossible. The alienation of creation from God could be resolved by God through an abolition of human freedom. But God seeks to establish a reconciliation which preserves freedom. Just as alienation is possible through human freedom, so also is the fulfillment of the divine purpose possible only if human freedom is retained. Thus the manner by which God seeks to fulfill this purpose must be responsive to the concrete and ever changing situation of the human race. Therefore, He perfectly relates the constant flux of reality to His overarching purpose. The diverse and changing actions of God reflect His perfect and unchanging love. In the words of Karl Barth, 'There is such a thing as a holy mutability of God. . . . His constancy consists in the fact that He is always the same in every change.'¹¹ God is absolutely relative yet absolutely faithful to His purpose. Hence, the absoluteness of God can accurately be defined as the unlimited capacity to respond to the changing concrete situations in a totally appropriate manner so as to perfectly relate them to His eternal purpose. We are likewise capable of relating changes in the world to our overarching goals, but we do this in a very limited way. It is God's unlimited capacity that sets Him above us in this regard.

The answer to the question of how God can accept the limitations of humanity while remaining divine can best be considered by viewing the self-emptying of God in the incarnation as a stratagem by which God expresses His salvific intention to humanity as a human Himself. In light of this several factors emerge.¹² First, the self-emptying of God in the incarnation is not entirely discontinuous with God's relation to creation as a whole. Divine life in relation is divine life in limitation.

Kenosis is present throughout the history of God's relation to humanity. However, the kenosis in Christ is the supreme demonstration of the kenotic love of God for humanity.

Second, in becoming incarnate, God has shown that humanity is not something alien to himself; it is not necessarily contrary to deity. To coin Barth's phrase, there is a 'humanity of God' in his manward movement. In the divine affirmation of human being and in His substitution for the race, God indicates that He need not exclude humanity in order to truly be God. Rather 'his deity encloses humanity in itself'.¹³ Finitude is not intrinsically in alienation from the divine. This idea has bearing on the concept of enhypostasis, as well as implications for the imago dei. Frank Weston has indicated awareness of this in his observation that 'the fundamental error of all who seek a human or divine-human subject of mankind lies in the false belief that the ego of manhood must, in some sense, be necessarily a man. . . . If man be God's image, may not the Son of God be presumed to possess, at least, all those characteristics that are essential to man's ego'.¹⁴

Third, kenosis is the supreme manifestation of divine absoluteness and the intentionality of God. This truth is enshrined in Gottfried Thomasius' formula: 'Self-limitation is self-determination.' Self-determination is an essential, if not the central aspect of personal life, and there can be no absolute self-determination if self-limitation is not a possibility. If self-limitation could not be included in the divine life, the will of God would be subservient to power. Divine self-limitation is itself an expression of divine power as it is controlled by the purpose of God. Hence, the self-limitation of God in Christ is the highest manifestation of the freedom of complete self-determination.

A church whose existence, identity and purpose is rooted in the revelation of God in Christ cannot believe that the way of kenosis was taken by the Son of God so that the Church could go another way—the way of individualism and self-interest.¹⁵ Christian ministry is the ministry of Christ as continued through the Church for the sake of the world. Therefore, we dare not limit the notion of self-emptying to a single vicarious act of one on behalf of the many. The 'law of kenosis' is intrinsic to the divine life and forms the ontic structure of the community into which persons are called in Christ;

¹¹ Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, trans. John Newton Thomas (Richmond: John Knox, 1960), pp. 50-51.

¹² Frank Weston, *The One Christ* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914), pp. 107-108.

¹³ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

¹¹ *Church Dogmatics*, II/1, p. 496.

¹² Donald H. Dawe, *The Form of a Servant* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), pp. 195ff.

the kenotic way of life is the way of community.¹⁶ True community always entails self-emptying, for it can endure in no other way, and apart from community there is no Christian existence.

As Bonhoeffer described grace without works as 'cheap grace', we might aptly designate ministry without self-emptying as 'cheap ministry'. The kenotic way of life is threatening since it is contrary to self-interest, and at times even to personal safety. But this aspect of Christian ministry was certainly not unknown to the one who said, 'He who loses his life will find it.' The preservation of the identity of Christian ministry is possible only if the ministry of the Church is an embodiment and re-enactment of Him who, 'being found in human form humbled himself, and became obedient unto death' (Phil. 2: 8). This identity is lost if the Church seeks to preserve itself by asserting itself over against the world or through protective self-containment. 'It is most surely separate from the sinful world when it most fully embodies and humbly expresses the Servant-form of the incarnate Lord, and becomes the Servant suffering for the world, bearing in its body the dying of Christ for men, and thus demonstrating in action its willingness to make the world's suffering its own.'¹⁷

Christian ministry is ministry in word and deed. The Church both proclaims the great work of God in Christ and continues the ministry of Christ in the world through various forms of direct service. Christian ministry is never to be mistaken for mere humanitarian service since it is not simply grounded in human need, nor motivated by a notion of the intrinsic worth of human being. Rather it is the free service of those who have been freely served by Jesus Christ. It is the expression of thanks-giving that bears the image of Him to whom thanks is being given.

3. Ecclesial Context

By referring to the ecclesial context of Christian ministry we mean to indicate that ministry takes place, not as individuals go out from the Church into the world, but as the Church lives and acts out its calling in the world. Christian ministry is the ministry of a community, or to use a Biblical image, we can say that Christian ministry takes place in the body of Christ in which each member has a function which contributes to the whole. There is

an interdependency which forbids us to identify the activity of any individual with the ministry of the Church except insofar as it relates to the whole. Christian existence is never simply the relationship of the individual to God, nor is Christian ministry ever merely the service of the individual to the world. As W. A. Whitehouse has observed, 'To live in Christ by faith is to take one's place in the community of the Church. The discipleship of each individual, called to live in his neighbour by love, is caught up into a corporate service which has direction, scope, and shape of its own. It is in this fellowship of service that believers receive their high privilege, granted by grace, and secured only through the Holy Spirit, that God's own service to His world in the person of Jesus Christ should be mediated through their persons and their actual worldly service.'¹⁸

Since the existence, identity and purpose of the church is derived from the revelation of God, our ecclesiology must be Christologically determined, and therefore, a theology of the church in ministry must bear the image of Christ. This means that the Church must first and foremost be a community that is the servant for God and because it is for God it exists for the world. The stance of the Church for the world is conditioned by its primary commitment to God, therefore it cannot simply identify itself with the position of the world so as to conform to the world. Hence, there are times when the Church must stand against the world in order to be truly for the world. In all of this the Church is to remain the servant of the world, 'the kenotic community' (Anderson).¹⁹

The Church is not in the world and for the world by any power, right, or dignity of its own. Because it shares a creaturely nature with the world we might ask whether there is any basis to the claim that the Church exists for the world in any special way that the world does not exist for itself. To this we must answer that it can be for the world in a unique manner only because it is not 'of the world',

¹⁸ 'Christological Understanding' in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson, p. 221.

¹⁹ The ecclesiology developed herein primarily is along the lines of the model that Avery Dulles would label 'The Church as Servant,' though it is clearly distinguishable from the secular form that he criticizes. See chapter six of his *Models of the Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974). The servant ecclesiology need not be defined in such a way that it excludes the other models that he discusses. For example, I see no reason why the servant model should be set over against the notion of the Church as Herald. In view of the concept of revelation outlined above it should be evident that these ecclesiological models belong together. Also see G. C. Berkouwer, *The Church*, trans. J. E. Davison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, pp. 410ff.) on presence and proclamation.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁷ *Report on Christ and the Church* ('Faith and Order Papers,' No. 38; Geneva: WCC, 1963), p. 24. Quoted in 'Christ's Ministry Through His Whole Church and Its Ministers' in *Theological Foundations For Ministry*, ed. Ray Anderson, p. 436.

just as the One whose life it shares and who sends it forth into the world is Himself not 'of the world' (Jn. 17: 11, 16). Its life and ministry is derived from Him who precedes it into the world. As the community that follows Christ the Church can do no other than go into the world as a servant for the sake of the world.

Several aspects of this relationship can be observed.²⁰ First, it is in and through the community of Jesus Christ that persons can know the world. The world's self-knowledge is defective because without the knowledge of God and His covenant the world does not know its origin, its condition or its goal. It knows neither the depths of its damnation nor the heights of its salvation. The Church is given to the world to know the world as it is and to be the point where the world can come to know itself. The Church could not truly minister to the world without its knowledge of the world, a knowledge that can come only from the revelatory and redemptive act of God accomplished in Christ. This knowledge is of both judgment and promise. It calls into question the possibilities, goals, and achievements of the world. It unveils the corruption, guilt, and false meanings in human existence. On the other hand, it affirms the world as God's good creation, as the object of His love, and the recipient of His grace. The Church knows the world as the world can never know itself because the Church knows God and is known by Him.

Second, the Church is the community that stands in solidarity with the world. Yet it maintains this solidarity without slipping into conformity. Conformity occurs only when the Church's presence in the world loses its 'not of' quality, at which point it no longer retains its distinctive ability to be truly for the world. If, on the other hand, the Church attempts to avoid conformity by shunning solidarity with the world the Church inadvertently shuns the love of God who for love sent His Son into the world. Solidarity with the world entails full commitment to it and full participation in it. Certainly there are times when the Church must contradict or oppose the ways of the world in order to be for the world but the value and meaning of such actions cannot be perceived except where there is deep commitment to the whole of humanity. To quote once more from Karl Barth:

The solidarity of the community with the world consists quite simply in the active recognition that it, too, since Jesus Christ is the Saviour of

the world, can exist in worldly fashion, not unwillingly nor with bad conscience, but willingly and with good conscience. It consists in the recognition that its members also bear in themselves and in some way actualize all human possibilities. Hence it does not consist in a cunning masquerade, but rather in an unmasking in which it makes itself known to others as akin to them, rejoicing with them that do rejoice and weeping with them that weep (Rom. 12: 15), not confirming and strengthening them in evil nor betraying and surrendering them for its own good, but confessing for its own good, and thereby contending against the evil of others, by accepting the fact that it must be honestly and unreservedly among them and with them, on the same level and footing, in the same boat and within the same limits as any or all of them. How can it boast of and rejoice in the Saviour of the world and men, or how can it win them—to use another Pauline expression—to know Him and to believe in Him, if it is not prepared first to be human and worldly like them and with them?²¹

Third, as the community of Jesus Christ the Church is under obligation to the world. Knowledge of and solidarity with the world is insufficient. The Lord of the Church is the Lord of the world. As such he suffered with and for it. While the Church cannot assume responsibility for the creation and redemption of the world, it is called to co-operate with God in His work within the limits of its ability. Faith in One who came in the form of a servant can never be an inactive or neutral faith in relation to those for whom Christ died. Because the Church is to be faithful to God it must be responsive to the suffering and lack of the world. While the world is not the object of the Church as God is, 'the Church lives and defines itself in action vis-a-vis the world'.²² For the Church to exist in itself and for itself alone is to conform to the world and to betray Him who called the Church into being.

The relations of the Church and the world are infinitely variable, but through it all is the realization that the Church is servant only because it was first served. The creative call and the radical imperative that the Church be emptied in service, to be the kenotic community comes from the kenotic Christ. The fact that Christ the Servant is Christ the Sacrifice should lead us to question to what extent our painless acts of 'service' deserve to

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 774-775.

²² H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 26.

²⁰ For the following see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/3, pp. 769ff.

be designated 'Christian ministry'. If it is in fact the case that 'the hermeneutical task of the Church is to continue to search out and seek to be conformed to the hermeneutical structure of revelation itself',²³ then it seems fitting that we recover the Biblical image of ministry as a 'living sacrifice' (Rom. 12: 1).

It is difficult to see how it is possible for the Church to fully participate in the ministry of Christ if the element of suffering is deliberately diminished. The sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of the Church as it follows Him in ministry are intimately connected with the suffering of the created order. The ministry of Christ is radical service for the sake of an extreme situation. W. A. Whitehouse has written, 'What is scandalous about the teaching and example of Jesus is the suggestion, embodied in His choice of model, that those who follow Him must spend themselves in direct personal service to

²³ Anderson, 'A Theology for Ministry,' p. 19.

any who call upon them, without calculation and without any safeguards of dignity. Their true dignity will emerge precisely in so doing, but it will not commend itself as such to those wise in the ways of this world.'²⁴ While this is certainly true, it seems that most scandalous aspect of Jesus' ministry is exhibited in the radical obedience which leads to the cross. A Christologically determined theology of ministry would do well to be guided by these words from the epistle to the Philippians: 'Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross' (2: 5-8).

²⁴ Whitehouse, p. 217.