

Don't Toss It ...

by Barbara Bishop & Bryan Harris

At our April Gathering we discussed the McMaster issue, hoping we might be able to set it aside. We wanted to assess the need, if any, to address the "Final Report" at '97 Assembly. However, in light of the issues it represented and the process followed in its creation, it became clear that the "reconciliation" and "healing" it claimed to seek could never happen from such a document.

Our concern was greatly increased by the language of "celebration" surrounding such a questionable document. It became clear that this report only served to fan flames of discontent and suspicion. For example, the report demands that it be regarded as *"the official report on this matter and no other report should be distributed."* The implication is that the real goal of that pink-coloured report mailed to Assembly delegates was to suppress any other report, or any other information, which could contribute to a fuller understanding of this matter.

Unless this fear of full disclosure is faced, healing and reconciliation remain impossible. The former faculty, the alumni, and the friends and former supporters of the College have consistently asked for more openness and fewer secret meetings. Now, even those who have been uninvolved are beginning to ask what it is that is being

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Reflections on Leadership

Any "contextualization" of the ideas found here in any modern church context is up to the imagination of the reader! It will be followed by comments on opposition to leaders, and the nature of followers.

Leadership is a common theme for those who write about and work within the church. Granted the fact that the language we use is often in inverse proportion to the reality it is describing, so it is usually in times of weak or aberrant leadership that people think, write and talk about it.

Since, by its very nature, leadership is understood as the prerogative of a chosen few, it is usually seen within very strict limits. Max Weber wrote of "Charismatic" leadership and "institutional" leadership. Others have spoken of "centralized" or "decentralised" leadership. But these epithets are concerned with matters of form and style, and rarely, if ever get to the *moral* questions which surround the notion of leadership. Leadership, of course, involves humans and human relationships, which, although political matters, are also moral matters.

Questions of style also lend themselves to a superficial analysis of actual life-situations, and of the nature of leadership. Observers who

persist in viewing the world of human relationships through this rather narrow lens reveal not only that world view (an "either-or" one), but also their fears. Upsetting the balance of the "either-or" must be redressed. Thus it is that we are stuck with visions of leadership which are either one or other of the two categories I have outlined above. Nowhere in this thinking is the possibility allowed of a third, or even a fourth way of doing things.

Dominant in some studies on the topic is the notion of the great leader who is psychologically superior (Rousseau's "Great Legislator" for example) and who stands out from the

crowd as a person "fit" to lead others, and who carries some power over those who follow for good or ill. In the last 50 years, however, leadership studies have moved in different directions. Some have bureaucratized the notion of leaders so

that it becomes little more than an extension of management studies, while others have regarded the "great leader" phenomenon less of a sign of the suitability of good leadership, and more a sign of psychotic behaviour.

One writer who has explored matters of leadership in a profound way is anthropologist F.G. Bailey, who has penned such interesting and often

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**This brief paper is
part of an ongoing
study on the notions
of leadership in
Biblical documents
and church life.**

The next Gathering is Saturday, October 25, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
at Highland Baptist Church, Kitchener with speaker
Dr. Stan Hasteley, Executive Director of the Southern Baptist Alliance

What Makes "Good Ministry"

a conversation with Heather Gilmour & Bert Radford

"Bert, we've been asked to write an article on what makes 'good ministry,' and I confess to feeling quite beyond my depth. I wonder if a better way to approach the issue would be to focus on what makes 'faithful' ministry instead. I at least believe there is some framework for that discussion."

"I agree Heather. We're all striving for good ministry, but there are different ideas about what good ministry is. For some, it's building the church, for others, good counselling, for others preaching the gospel. Tell me about your idea of 'faithful' ministry."

"OK. For me, an important and essential component of ministry lies in taking the incarnation seriously. What I mean by that is the ministry of the gospel can only happen when God's work takes on human flesh and is mediated in human relationships. As God is incarnated in Christ, Christ through the Spirit is incarnated in each of his followers. Christians are called to embody Christ by forming relationships within the community of faith, and by fostering relationships among the members of one's particular community. Looking to Jesus as an example, it's important to base those relationships on a deep love of others and demonstrate that love in acts of compassion and mercy, in honesty and integrity, and through courage and costly grace."

"When I think that incarnational ministry willingly walks with the bruised and broken, the outcast and despised, and advocates for them; that it speaks the truth in love and has the courage to admit limitation and error; that it dares to live with the messiness and ambiguity of human life, and attends carefully and prayerfully to where God is in the midst of it all, I confess to being somewhat resistant because of the potential physical, emotional and spiritual cost involved. Yet, incarnational ministry calls us to see others with the eyes of Christ and

takes others with utmost seriousness, valuing each person as a precious child of God. Some days I do a better job of this than others. But it remains an important growing edge in my practice of ministry."

"How does incarnational ministry work out in church life?"

"I've experienced incarnational ministry in the church when the people of God rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, when they welcome in the stranger and cherish the children, when they take on another seriously and pay special attention to the vulnerable ones in their midst. It's amazing what transformations happen in human lives when the people of God allow God's word to take on their human flesh!"

"What's important to you, Bert, when you think of faithful ministry?"

"Heather, I have been really interested in better understanding worship as part of the ministry of the church, particularly in these days when people are staying away in their thousands. I mean, how do you make worship relevant?"

"Bert, that may be the wrong question. Maybe you need to ask how to make worship meaningful and faithful to our community."

"That's an interesting idea, Heather. We may be so concerned to make worship relevant that immediate human perceptions become the focus of our worship. Meaningful worship should meet people's real needs and remain true to our Biblical and church traditions. Sometimes in the pressures to be successful we may forget about being truly Biblical and an authentic community. Clergy today face constant pressures to go in many different directions for the sake of 'relevance' and you may be right, that relevance isn't the central issue."

"Yet the cry for relevance is echoed all around us, isn't it?"

"Yes, and I think the relationship of worship to culture is a large part of this relevance bit. I once got into

a lot of trouble with a few people because I held a jazz worship service. My critics felt that jazz was not a worthy type of music for church. Surely music used in worship, whether it be classical, country, modern gospel or revival hymns, is an issue of culture not faith. The criteria for choosing music in church, I think, is taste, not orthodoxy.

"So, back to ministry. The challenge for the clergy is to help a community of faith find a form of worship that is a meaningful expression of faith and is true to the Bible and our historic faith. It should also be a real part of the culture of the people. For me, that means country music."

"Bert, that might be a hard sell in some of our churches!"

"Heather, it's been good talking with you. We seem to have a few unanswered questions about ministry, such as where church administration fits into a clergy's responsibilities?"

"I'm more concerned about where it fits into the schedule. But another question out there is exactly what is our Baptist heritage, and how important is it in our church's life?"

"How about the 'boomers.' I read in the paper that they are looking for meaning. Can you just overlay a consumer society with meaning, or do you have to change the values of that society?"

"Good questions. Let's talk about this again."



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 25 to give us a lunch count.
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Don't Toss It continued from page 1 hidden. (It was a little encouraging that a third of delegates present actually voted to table it, and a quarter, when asked to "receive" it, actually said "No.") It would seem no one dared to ask us to "adopt" it.

In reflecting on this deeply troubling matter at our April meeting, Bryan Harris suggested that we undertake our own collection of articles and documents related to the McMaster issue during the past decade. The Steering Committee considered the idea and likes it, for the following reasons, among others:

1) One of our difficulties has been our individual and collective awareness that truth has been silenced, as we ourselves have been. So many of us, over the years, have tried to raise concerns at various points. Beginning with the treks to the principal's office at first, then moving on the many, many letters sent to Board of Trustees over the years, the endless visits and delegations to those in position of trust, bearing our stories, deep and well-considered concerns, documents, and pleas for a just intervention, we have tried to be heard. Some even met with the de-

funct "McMaster Review committee"— the one that was "dismissed with thanks." All of this has led, at each step of the way, to more secret meetings, more public relations blitzes, more spin doctors. We have given up hope of repentance or respect from the College or BCOQ.

Sadly, that is the one thing they have persuaded us to "leave behind." However, while we do not need that repentance any more for our own closure and healing — that moment has long passed — we do

need the real truth as we have known and experienced it to be honoured. An archival collections would do that.

2) Perhaps one day this story will be told. We should like to leave it for now (we do keep trying, but it keeps getting placed in front of us in new and painful ways — like this "Rosy Report"). Knowing it is being kept will help us to leave it for now.

3) And then there is our discipleship in this. Jesus told a story once of a widow who kept coming to an

unjust judge saying, "grant me justice ..." Jesus said, "Will not God grant justice to God's own who cry to him day and night ... And yet when the son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:1-8) As Baptists who gather "to foster wholeness and integrity following the ex-

ample of Jesus," we feel the need to keep the faith here in BCOQ. For the sake of Jesus' coming to us.

Our committee is fledgling and will be seeking help from people with the expertise

we need to protect these materials and their owners. If you have materials you feel should be kept safe and together, we commit to respect you, your story, and your materials, however you wish. Pass it on.

Please contact Bryan Harris, c/o Burlington Baptist Church 2225 New St., Burlington, ON L7R 1J2 (805) 634-2477 or Barbara Bishop (416) 467-1462, or robert.bishop@sympatico.ca. If you'd like to help with the project let the Steering Committee know.

If you have materials you feel should be kept safe and together, we commit to respect you, your story, and your materials.

Reflections on Leadership continued from page 1

amusing books are *Kingdom of Individuals* (1993), and his excellent, and metaphor-laden title, *Humbuggery and Manipulation: The Art of Leadership* (1988), both of which are published by Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. In a recent article Bailey suggested that the Weberian dichotomy is too simplistic and does not explain the complex variety of leadership styles and the variation in levels of "success" by certain leaders. Nor does it take into account why "promising" leaders fail. Bailey posits another notion of leaders who are dependent upon the process of *numenification*.

The rich term *numenification* is derived from the Latin word "numen," which was adopted by Rudolph Otto in his book, *The Idea of the Holy* (1928). The "numinous" is that which is out of the ordinary, and beyond normal human experience, enough to inspire awe. It is used by Otto for his notion of God as the "wholly Other," the *mysterium tremendum*.

Numenification is a social construct, that is, the *presentation* of an individual as larger than life, as Bailey terms it "suprahuman." Such an individual, when placed in a position of leadership is consciously given an impossible task, and appears to accomplish it, for a time at least. The operative word here is "appears," because *numenification* is not

about the observable and tangible reality, but about the manipulation of the environment to make the unreal appear real. It is what spin-doctors call "optics." Of course, such a person must have willing followers, and some have suggested that such leaders fulfil the unmet desires for power in those followers.

Now this is a "model" of human behaviour, and Bailey and others have used such models to understand and to interpret what is observable in the activities and behaviour of people, especially when they adopt leaders of certain types. It is also clear that the old dichotomy mentioned above does not begin to get to the heart of these dynamics of behaviour. The old dichotomy is only superficial when it comes to an interpretation of the ways of leadership actually work. As Bailey often points out in many of his works, leaders to be leaders, need followers, preferably followers who are impressionable, and who buy into the system which keeps the leader in power. Any leader, to stay in power, must manipulate the followers, or at the very least what the followers perceive. Such followers follow for various reasons. Some follow out of personal psychological needs, other follow for material gain, and others even follow because they believe in the cause that the leader stands for, and shape their worlds accordingly, others follow because of what is called "a failure

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of nerve." In other words, they are desperate to see something happen in what they perceive to be a threatened and boring world.

To provide a Biblical example I turn to the request for a king, as recorded in 1 Samuel 1-12. In tough and difficult times, and when it appears that old regime of Samuel and his sons no longer functioned up to expectation, the elders of Israel ask for a king. But on to this individual they place certain expectations. First, he is a king, an entirely different type of leader. Second, he has a specific goal, "... to rule over us and to fight our battles for us." But, on reflection, this is an impossible task, and I cannot help but wonder whether this request is presented in the narrative with a considerable degree of irony. This is the same people who have been dragged kicking and screaming out of Egypt and into the promised land from one disaster after another, and now their leadership is to be placed into the hands of one man. But, this is what is expected of kings in the ancient near east, and this is what ancient near eastern kings claimed for themselves. To their incessant lists of battles — always fought alone, it seems — they added statements about their overpowering character and individual splendour, and encourage the process of *numenification*. It is this style of leadership into which ancient Israel bought, and they did, I suspect, with the best will in the world.

Old Testament scholars have written much on what followed in the Old Testament and have couched the trends in terms of the development of the "Davidic-Zion traditions," in which words like "elect," "anointed one" are used. But since the Bible's own judgment on this king is that he was only too human after all, and that it was he and his cohorts who led ancient Israel astray (2 Kings 17; Jer. 5), these epithets which are drawn from the Old Testament itself might well be part of the age-old process of *numenification*. However, in times of a perceived crisis, whatever the motivation might be of those who so respond to it, it is one of the easiest and most empty things in the world to look for such a saviour. To convince an audience (in the case of the Old Testament, "the people") and even themselves, they attribute to the individual-turned-numinous-leader, all sorts of suprahuman traits. The next stage is to manipulate the environment, which includes the expectations of the office, traditions about the past, hopes for the future, and to present and perpetuate what is in essence something unreal — a human who is regarded as more than ordinary.

Such can be interpreted as part of the process of *numenification*, and it is witnessed at all levels of political life. It develops its own momentum which at first seems good and positive. But those who stand in its way, or who raise objections, or who are too closely associated with the past are — like Joab, Abiathar and their friends (1 Kings 1-2) — ignored, dismissed or banished. Thus it is that, to use another Biblical metaphor "the kingdom is established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kings 2,46). New and unlikely alliances (Solomon and Hiram of Tyre!) are made, and new prosperity seems guaranteed with tangible demonstrations like a building programme or displays of wealth. The consolidation of the new leader's power and position is furthered. At this stage of the process the people, or the majority of

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12:00 Noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Stan Haste • 2:30 Business
3:30 p.m Adjourn

To get to Highland

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