

The call to be a Christian and thus to the general ministry of the church should be understood to include a variable as well as a constant aspect and, in this sense, to be itself the call to a special ministry.

It is the call, however to *a*, i.e., *some*, special ministry, not the call to *the*, i.e., one particular, special ministry. The second, *the* special ministry, is the matter of a further call beyond the call to the general ministry and, therefore, is otherwise properly spoken of as "the *representative* ministry." Of course, even the general ministry is "representative," in the sense that it represents Jesus Christ and, through him, the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But the representative ministry, properly so-called, is further representative of the general ministry itself. Although it is one special ministry among others, it is unique in representing all of them precisely in representing the general ministry. It represents all of them by making explicit that and how each of them is a special ministry, in the sense of a special way of living out one's call to be a Christian and thus to the general ministry of the church.

I recall in this connection F.D. Maurice's view that "the uniqueness of the priest's office is to be found in the very fact of his being elected to tell all men that they are called by God to a special service, and that they must receive the Holy Spirit in order to be able to act as God's servants in their respective vocations."

Of course, the call to ministry or service that is always already implied simply in one's call to be a human being itself includes a variable as well as a constant aspect and, in this sense, is the call to a special ministry.

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