

28 Pigott Street,
Limenhouse,
London, E.14,
September 22nd, 1963

The Editor,
The Church Times,
7, Portugal Street,
Kingsway, W.C.2.

Sir,

As a "college-trained worker-priest" I very much appreciated W.A. Bretherton's article, "Non-Professionals as Priests" (Sept 13th) despite his doubts about people of my ilk.

The Church cannot much longer resist the force of the ideas of Roland Allen (to say nothing of St Paul) about the wisdom of ordaining the natural "fathers" of a community instead of relying entirely on a professional clergy recruited from "bright young men",

In answer to his thoughtful and by no means hostile remarks about us few professional-clergy-turned-industrial workers, I would ask him to reconsider his assumption that "the sending of professional clergy into industry is primarily for the benefit of the world", in other words that our purpose is an evangelistic one. If he came to one of our annual meetings he would realize at once that we do not think of our vocation this way. In fact, when he says "...what is most required is a real 'dying' to worldly splendour, ambition and privilege on the part of our ecclesiastical corn and wheat..." he comes very close to the root of our own desire.

May I make a plea for Church people to put out of their minds the idea that the English worker-priests think of themselves as an evangelistic spearhead in industry? Not because they do not want to evangelize but because evangelism is not the point in industry at the moment. They do not wish, either, to make an "impact" upon the public through being known as a "movement" and being lionized by the Press and Television. They wish to act out a certain Gospel emphasis, but even less for the benefit of their fellow-workers than for the Church, which has not been ~~xxx~~ any too well aware of that emphasis - and for themselves, being no better than their contemporaries. They are trying to do something religious, not to pursue a strategy.

There is no more reason to exclude priests from this way of life than to exclude them from Religious Orders. Nor any reason to confine it to them. There is a garment of witness, of this style, all cut out and waiting for the educated and gifted layman who decides to be ambitionless in this world in order to seek advancement in the Kingdom of God.

This is quite a different question from that of livening the laity already at the workplace to their witnessing responsibility. Let no-one imagine that we depreciate the urgency of this or ~~xxx~~ conceive of ourselves as some kind of substitute for it.

Yours sincerely,

The Rev. J. G. Rowe

CHURCH TIMES

7, Portugal Street, London, W.C.2

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 0844

24th September 1963

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the letter which you have submitted for publication. I have read this with interest but am bound to say that I do not feel that you have really successfully made your point clearly to the ordinary layman. I suggest that you might look at this letter again (enclosed) and see if you could not express your meaning a little more clearly and also, if possible, a little more briefly.

Yours truly,



Editor.

The Rev. J. G. Rowe,
28 Pigott Street,
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