

# Trustees of the Universe: Recovering the Whole Ministry of the People of God

by Richard Broholm

*In this essay, Richard Broholm reflects on Jitsuo Morikawa's prophetically inclusive vision of ministry and its shaping influence on our understanding of the relationship of faith to daily life and work and particularly on our theological understanding of institutions.*

For a man who spent his whole professional career in the institutional church, Jitsuo Morikawa had a passionate concern for the world. And while his ministry took expression as a pastor and, in his words, as a "church bureaucrat" his commitment was to recover the whole ministry of all the people of God; to declare that for most laypersons the locus of their ministry is their daily work.

For Jitsuo, the evangelist, there was always the insistence that "a personal decision for Christ is a decision to link one's frailty to ultimate reality" and to understand that that decision shapes every aspect of one's life. Further, he believed deeply that American Baptists had a unique contribution to make in empowering laity for ministry. In a letter written only a few months before he died Jitsuo reflected on the mission of the national agencies of the ABC when he wrote, *"Because of our smallness and hence flexibility we have less to lose. We should identify a 'driving force'; a singular, unique, most urgently needed missionary-evangelistic spear point around which our total resources be focused. That spear point or driving force in my judgment is the ministry of the laity in the institutions of our society. It should be informed by a theology of institutional accountability, to*

*transform institutions to fulfill their true vocation and calling, namely, to serve the common good. There is no question that this is the urgent, most critical mission of the Church today and in the years ahead."*

It is this vision, one which framed Jitsuo's lifework and influenced those of us who took up his call, that I want to address in this chapter. I will attempt to trace the history of his influence on this work and on my own person, to describe what was learned over 30 years, and to suggest some directions for the future. I have some discomfort in using my own journey to talk about Jitsuo and his ideas. But, at the same time, I gain comfort from the conviction that it is faithful to the kind of incarnational theology he so eloquently expressed. It is a modest attempt by any standard. I pray that it is faithful to his witness and to the vision he so powerfully described.

## The Early Years

Jitsuo had a profound effect on a whole generation of seminarians. Paul Clasper once wrote, "I believe that he set more people thinking--sometimes thinking ferociously--about basic issues than anyone in the American Baptist Convention. He forced us to think about the message of the Gospel for our time, the nature of the Church's witness in the social order, the underlying tensions of East and West, and the kind of mindset that would be needed in the age that is dawning. He never seemed to worry about his "image." Like a Zen Master with a big stick he went about prodding the dozing and seeking to awaken us from our dogmatic

slumbers. Certainly he provoked plenty of resistance, but many of us were forced to think afresh because of his relentless courage and passion."

My first exposure to Jitsuo was at the annual Seminary Senior's Conference held each spring at the American Baptist Assembly, Green Lake, Wisconsin. The conference was designed to introduce about-to-be-graduated seminarians to the programs and leadership of the American Baptist Churches. The schedule for the week seemed rather pedestrian, as I remember it. So I was totally unprepared for the encounter with this 5'7" intellectual giant who was Director of Evangelism.

As a young man growing up in a large and active Baptist congregation in Detroit, I frequently heard others use the expression "full-time Christian service." I accepted without challenge the idea that some Christians were called by God into Christian ministry on a full-time basis. This meant that they, following the appropriate training and service of ordination, would become pastors of congregations or missionaries in some foreign land. I never questioned the fact that to speak of those forms of ministry as "full-time Christian service" implied that all other Christians not similarly called were "part-time Christians."

The theological absurdity of this oft-stated expression didn't hit me until the day I heard Jitsuo paint a vision of the ministry of the whole people of God and the role of clergy as "pastors to a servant people." Seated with my seminary colleagues, I found myself mesmerized by the power of his

ideas and the passionate way in which he articulated a vision of evangelism that encompassed all of life, including the institutions in which Christian laity spend so much of their time and energy. On that warm spring afternoon in a refurbished cow barn I came to understand that the recovery of a vitally alive and faithfully healthy Christian church is dependent upon a re-discovery of the Biblical truth that all Christians are ministers. Further, it also became clear that the primary arena for expressing our ministry as members of Christ's body is, for most of us, in our daily workplaces and not the institutional church.

As I began my own ministry within a local congregation in 1954 I began to realize the sad truth that few congregations are committed to this understanding. The result, I believe, has been an impaired church and a wounded laity. This wound which resides at the heart of most Christian laity stems from the alienation we, who minister "outside the wall," experience between our daily work and our call-- as Christ's people--to minister. This wound inhibits the faithful service of both clergy and laity, often alienating us from each other and denying to each other the unique gifts and support we have to bring. This alienation saps our energy, marginalizes our faith and disempowers our witness to the reconciling and healing love of God. Further, it leaves "secular" institutions with little sense of accountability for the way in which they hold in trust God's world.

### **The MAP Years**

Jitsuo invited me to join the staff of the Division of Evangelism of the ABC in the spring of 1964. The Division, under his leadership, was winding up a major five-year emphasis in evangelism called the Baptist Jubilee Advance. Run concurrently with

other Baptist denominations, the American Baptist effort focused heavily on an attempt to recover the deeper meanings of Christian witness in the life of the world. It was influenced by several of the streams emerging out of the 1954 Evanston meeting of the World Council of Churches in which there was a powerful call to address the Reformation mandate to recover the ministry of the laity.

For months Jitsuo had been leading his staff in discerning what were appropriate next steps. For a while they considered the possibility of establishing an American model of the German Evangelical Academy--a center for theological dialogue between theologians and leaders in government, business, media, etc. regarding the formative issues shaping the future of the society. But Harvey Cox, who was then on Jitsuo's staff, returned from a three month sabbatical spent in the Gossner Industrial Mission in East Germany. He urged his fellow staff members to consider the option of establishing an American mission within a major metropolitan city; rather than only serving as a center for dialogue this mission would seek to engage in a mission to the city and, in reflecting on that mission, serve as a signpost to the denomination about what it might mean for Christian laity to take seriously their ministry in the workplace.

So the idea of Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia (MAP) was born though the name was not selected until well into the first year. A fourth floor office was rented across from the famous John Wanamaker department store in the downtown heart of the city of brotherly love. As the first staff member on site, I can still remember sitting at a desk in a rather barren office wondering where in the world to

begin. What would I have to say out of my very sheltered pastoral experience to laity in the world of business and industry? Even more devastatingly came the realization--I don't even know what questions to ask.

With his boundless energy Jitsuo decided that he would continue to serve as the Executive Secretary for Evangelism of the ABC and simultaneously serve as the Executive Director of the newly formed MAP. He divided his staff at Valley Forge and two of us joined him in Philadelphia at MAP and two continued to work with him as evangelism program officers at Valley Forge. While the balancing act between two full-time positions must have been arduous to say the least, Jitsuo rightly believed the two efforts would feed and inform each other.

Within a few years Jitsuo had involved five other denominations in MAP: The Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, The Presbyterian Church USA, and the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church. By the end of the fourth year the "staff" of MAP numbered close to 140 persons and included:

### **8 Worker Ministers:**

Clergymen who, like the worker-priests in Germany and France, found employment in a variety of "secular" occupations in the political, business, social service, and educational sectors of the city.

### **6 Urban Agents:**

Clergymen who were salaried by their respective denominations and assigned to MAP to serve one of six sectors of the city as a kind of roving reporter--seeking to be present wherever significant events were occurring.

### 125 Lay Associates:

Men and women employed in a vast variety of organizations throughout the city who sought to think reflectively about what might constitute "ministry" in their workplace.

The staff of MAP was formed to be something of a microcosm of

the city itself with its diverse secular involvements, church affiliations, and ethnic backgrounds (though in retrospect we were much more homogeneous than we wanted to believe). In order to create a dialogue across the various institutional sectors of urban life we actively recruited

our lay associates from what we described as the six sectors of the city: Education and Arts; Business and Industry; Social Organization; Politics and Government; Health and Welfare; and Physical Development. Urban Agents were assigned to each sector to support and resource these Associates and, as already mentioned, to serve as roving reporters in identifying key issues that seemed destined to shape the future of their sector of the city.

The stated purpose of Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia was to engage in experimental missionary action for the sake of a common witness to and par-

ticipation in Christ's work of renewal in the city.

In undertaking this mission we were confronted with two great overriding realities.

The first was that urbanization and secularization were increasingly characteristic of life in the 20th century.

The second, formed in part by the first, was the need for a fresh understanding of the meaning of biblical faith in a world dominated by large institutions. It was in the juxtaposition of these two "facts" that MAP began its mission.

The work of MAP found its expression in:

Research on the ministry of the laity in institutional

life provoking, supporting, upholding and equipping them for that involvement;

Participation alongside other groups in action for the renewal of the city; and

Development of a close relationship with local, residential congregations to test their interest in such a strategy.

MAP lived out its life during the turbulent sixties and early seventies (1964-1974) but Jitsuo kept reminding us, "Our job is not to jump on this hot issue or that. We are an action-research project

for the church, to help illumine, provoke and summon the institutions of the city to their calling. We are here to try and discover a form of public ministry in the business, governmental and social organizations of this city." He insisted that our aim was to discern what issues were critical for Philadelphia, learn how decisions are made affecting the city's life and suggest how Christians can help institutions realize their God-given role in the society.

When asked why the church was becoming involved in secular organizations in Philadelphia, Jitsuo Morikawa answered, "In order to discern, participate in and celebrate God's activity in the city. The church today is immersed in talk about mission. But little is being done to test out how the laity can participate in missionary action in the public institutions of a modern metropolis.

"If humankind is called to affect history and the reshaping of the world," reasoned Jitsuo, "then men and women in the business, political, social, health, educational and physical planning institutions must see themselves under the mandate of calling; a calling to corporate responsibility. This means that every institution is confronted with the pressing question, 'To what end?' To what purpose do we produce chemicals, educate children, build highways, elect officials, administer medicine, and provide social services?"

For those of us who are old enough to remember, the decade that paralleled MAP's life was a time of enormous social upheaval in the States. Many of us believed social change was not only inevitable, but also good. Less sanguine about this premise, Jitsuo said, "Biblical faith finds change and revolution basic to the way God acts in the world

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and enables men and women to be free to enter into that change."

Those forces of change and resulting conflict were often evident within the staff of MAP, itself. For example, when the emerging reality of black consciousness broke, in what was then called "the black power movement" many of us found our basic presuppositions being challenged. Our belief that integration and therefore assimilation of minorities was more consistent with a Biblical understanding of God's intentions for humankind was radically challenged. MAP held two conferences a year focused on what we perceived to be "historically decisive issues." The conference on "black power" hooked us at such deep emotional and belief levels that many of the staff ended up shouting at each other, almost coming to blows. We quickly discovered that among MAP's Associates there was often no common agreement on what constituted a "Christian position".

Lay Associates and their organizations represented very divergent points of view and legitimate self-interests. Was there any such thing as a "common good" to which we all could attest? And further, was it possible for us to be the body of Christ in any kind of meaningful way and address the most pressing issues that threatened the very fabric and stability of a community like Philadelphia? Given the broad diversity of perspectives present in any meeting of the whole staff, we were finding that our neat theological formulas were often inadequate vehicles to carry the full freight and weight of the issues and events incarnate in our daily work.

At the same time there were moments of fresh theological insight; times when, for example, the meaning of being "in the

body of Christ" came with new power and vigor (albeit also with the awareness of pain and loss). We came to realize that ministry in isolation--that is, one person acting alone without reference to others in their organization--if not a Biblical heresy at least was foolhardy. So we struggled to understand what it meant for persons to work collaboratively for change within a given organization. We set up what we called "change agent teams": persons from different levels of the organizational hierarchy who shared a common vision of what their organization could become.

One such group within a large Philadelphia insurance company met together regularly to envision and strategize about how they could move their company to become more socially responsible, making changes in personnel practices such as the hiring of minorities and the provision of housing loans within the ghetto. In spite of the fact that one of their number was a Senior Vice President, after a year of significant progress they were stunned to find that they had been fired.

Within a large chemical company a similar group was formed. This change agent team or support group again crossed the traditional lines of power and authority in the organization's hierarchy. It included a black, blue-collar employee named Ed, three middle-level managers--two of whom were in the International Division of the company--and an Assistant Vice President who was responsible for personnel practices within the company. In their early meetings together they decided to focus their attention on examining whether or not any of the company's practices reflected institutional racism. They agreed to act collaboratively if they discovered such was the case. For weeks the group met together to simply get to know each other,

build a common level of trust, and to share their perceptions about company policy and practice. Norm, the Assistant Vice President, felt--not without some justification-- that the company was a pioneer in the industry in human relations policies and had been aggressive in actually hiring and promoting blacks. He acknowledged that he was frustrated in his efforts to get managers in the sales department to find and hire qualified black salespersons. He heard the typical complaints from his sales staff such as "Blacks don't want to go into sales because they fear facing the discrimination of some of our clients. And you know, Norm, while we can control our company's behaviors we can't control the responses of our customers," or "We have recruited hard but we just can't find any qualified candidates." Norm acknowledged that some of these responses probably reflected an underlying racist attitude but as far as company policy was concerned he felt they were doing everything they could. On the other hand, Ed felt the company was dragging its feet and was not as innovative as it could be in the hiring and promotion of minority workers. The discussions in the support group were often heated though there was also considerable energy spent in trying to hear each other out.

Two of the middle managers tended to support Norm's evaluation of the situation though one of them, George, shared some of his own frustrations in trying to effect change. He had been working overseas as a consultant to one of their plants in India and had been pressing for a change in the wage scale for Indian unskilled workers which would be more equitable. He also shared how he had tried to persuade his boss to purchase the technology to produce fertilizer in India, thus impacting the hunger problem in that country. The group listened

attentively for a while but India seemed a long way off and, with Ed's pressure, soon shifted their attention back to company practices in the States. Bob, who had been particularly influenced by some of the position papers of his national denomination on racism, tended to support Ed. The frustration over apparent inaction continued to build within Ed. He was also experiencing pressure from some of his friends outside the company who were active in the emerging black power movement in Philadelphia. Without the knowledge of his fellow support group members, Ed stormed into the office of the Senior Vice President of the company and poured out his anger. The startled executive, angry and put off by Ed's manner, was prepared to fire Ed. He called Norm, his staff person for personnel, into his office to take appropriate action without any knowledge that Norm knew Ed and, in fact had been a part of a support group examining company policies.

Up to this moment Norm had been convinced the company was moving as rapidly as possible. However, as he reflected on the threat to Ed and his heightened sensitivity to the anguish of blacks generally (largely a consequence of the conversations in the support group) he decided to stick his neck out. He acknowledged to John that Ed's outburst may have been inappropriate but he also suggested that perhaps the company might not have been as aggressive in hiring blacks in the Sales Division as it could. He offered some strategic options to the Senior Vice President, which, along with the possible firing of Ed, included an aggressive program of recruitment of blacks on black college campuses, and the establishment of performance objectives for the Sales Department of three new black salespersons hired within

six months. After some reflection, the Senior Vice President decided not to fire Ed and invited Norm to present his proposals to the company's Executive Committee. Within a matter of a few months, there was a major change in corporate policy and action: four new black salespersons had been recruited.

This experience was an eye-opener to us on many levels. It heightened our awareness of how the body of Christ comes alive in the workplace where denominational distinctions have little significance. We saw the three-fold ministry of Christ as prophet, priest, and king in evidence (though it was almost 12 years later before we understood the meaning and implications of this for a theology of workplace ministry). Ed, the social activist and prophet, had initiated a series of events which clearly depended on the ministry of others such as Norm to create a more just and humane organization. Norm's ministry, given his personality and position in the company, might be described as reflecting the "kingly" or "administrative" ministry of Christ. Bob and George embodied the "priestly" or "pastoral" ministry of Christ's body. Together they demonstrated the profoundly inter-connected nature of ministry.

This incident underscores how ministry happens. The prerequisite to "success" was an active ministry to persons going on in the support groups: individuals respecting each other enough to listen to expressions of pain and anger even while disagreeing with the assumptions being made; struggling for clarity of call while respecting that each person may hear a different call or that it may involve very different responses. The caring for each other in this support group was a critical foundation, but it was not enough. Ed performed

the prophetic function in a manner which points up both its effectiveness and its limitations. Without Norm's administrative response Ed would have been simply another prophet, scorned and rejected. As it was, his confrontation of power prepared the way for Norm to put forth specific proposals for change. The actual shift in corporate policy represented the exercise of an administrative ministry. Many people cooperated in bringing that ministry to fruition and many people benefited from it. Norm was not a solitary actor.

The story of this company and a group of faithful Christians within it is one small illustration of how the diverse callings of Christ's people, exercising different gifts, comes together to reshape the policies and practices of an organization and to lead it toward a more faithful discharge of, as Jitsuo would say, "its own call to ministry." But I'm getting ahead of my story. Back in 1972 we were only beginning to catch a glimpse of the implications of Jitsuo's vision of the ministry of institutions.

After much personal struggle, Jitsuo left the Directorship of MAP early in 1970 to focus his full energy on implementing much of what he had learned in MAP in the structures and programs of the ABC's Board of National Ministries.

For the next five years--until MAP closed its doors--the major resources of this mission were focused on trying to better understand the process of change within institutions. In addition we pursued the development of resources for local congregations to help them become communities of support and empowerment for laity who saw their primary ministry in their daily workplaces. We called this strategy our "wager" on the local congregations.

gation. Clearly, as it turned out, we misjudged the readiness of congregations to adopt this vision, and the willingness of clergy to see themselves as "pastors to a servant people." A resource designed to help Christians form support groups within congregations and change agent teams within their places of employment was produced. We called it *A Strategy of Hope*. Here and there in a few congregations around the country it received a warm reception. In fact I know of one congregation where a support group for workplace ministry formed out of this resource is still in existence after 17 years. However, for the most part the institutional church could not have been less interested. I took the last remaining copies of this resource to the town dump two years ago.

I left MAP in 1974 to join an international consulting firm, work-

ing out of their Boston office. For the next three years I experienced directly the world of the laity. I came to understand more clearly than ever before what it means to minister in the workplace with little or no support or recognition from the institutional church, with no confirmation that I was involved in a valid ministry. But it was also a rich time of discovering what incredible opportunities there are for ministry and how Christ's body forms in ministry in so-called

"secular" organizations. I found faithful people, sensitive to the issues of justice, open to the leading of the Spirit, and sustained by God's gracious love.

I also discovered that the flame of Jitsuo's passion for the laity and the power of his vision were still very much alive. With his encouragement, I left Hay Associates and returned to Andover Newton Theological School, the seminary from which I had graduated in 1954. I approached it as an unpaid "sabbatical year" of graduate study and reflection on what we had learned during

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the MAP years--unclear as to where this would lead but certain that somehow my calling was to once again address the church around this vision of ministry.

#### **The Andover Newton Laity Project: Work on The Content of Ministry**

That year was a deeply moving experience. The opportunity to think theologically

about 23 years of ministry was a gift. I found support and interest among some of the faculty for a larger vision of ministry--especially Gabe Fackre who holds the oldest Protestant chair of theology in the country. I was also warmly welcomed by the Dean of the faculty, the late George Peck, who became a powerful advocate for laity and clearly saw the important role a theological school could play in their empowerment.

During that year of study I was approached by Kim Jefferson, head of urban ministry for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministry. Kim had been a Board member of MAP and continued to carry a strong conviction about the significance of workplace ministry. He asked if I would undertake a study for the Methodists which would reflect what Christian laity were already doing in ministry and what the Church was doing to support them. The grant for this study and the resulting findings served as the unanticipated launching pad for what came to be known as the Andover Newton Laity Project.

With George Peck's enthusiastic encouragement and the involvement of a core group of ANTS faculty, I recruited six congregations in the Boston area to become partners with the seminary and three denominational agencies in a five-year research project. The goal of the project was to uncover those factors or forces in the life of a congregation which either block or enable the full ministry of the laity. The principal strategy for this action-research was the Model Congregations Task Force. It met once each month for five years in the Faculty Lounge of the seminary. The pastor and five lay members from three United Church of Christ and three American Baptist congregations gathered faithfully at the end of long working days to munch on tuna sandwiches and reflect on their experiences in ministry. We were joined by five members of the Andover Newton faculty who became full and active participants in this work. As I think back over those five years of long meetings and cold suppers it seems almost irreverent to dismiss their work in one brief paragraph. They were a very faithful and insightful community. The findings from their re-

search have been shared around the world and have informed the thinking and work of church leaders from a broad spectrum of denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church.

During the MAP years we somewhat simplistically thought that the key to empowering laity for workplace ministry in the local congregation was to provide small support groups where men and women could prayerfully share their struggles and triumphs and help each other think strategically about proposed actions. As a result we published a support group resource: *A Strategy of Hope*. The findings from the Model Congregations Task Force, however, revealed a much more complex and many-layered set of forces which work to block men and women from effective ministry. We discovered nine critical factors (we called them the nine enabling/blocking forces) that were instrumental in either positively empowering laity in their workplace ministry or blocking them from that call. (Note: These forces have been written up in a variety of ways but a fairly quick introduction to them is contained in a resource entitled *Empowering Laity for Their Full Ministry*, available through Seeing Things Whole.

For the purposes of this paper I want to focus on the blocking force: The Content of Ministry. The problem statement for this force reads: "Even once we accept the idea that all Christians are called to full-time ministry, it is not easy to apply this concept to our own personal lives. The Church has provided little insight into what it means to be a Christian banker, homemaker, educator, or plumber. Before we can claim our work as ministry, we need to identify the particular ways in which the tasks and responsibilities we perform 'on the job' give expression to our

Christian faith." As a result we began to focus more and more of our attention on the question: Can we find a way of helping people think theologically about the nature and content of their very diverse ministries?

Beginning in the fall of 1979 we launched a series of task forces of laity and seminary theologians to pursue various aspects of this question. Our overarching goal was to try and bridge the gap between the church's theology and the workplace.

### **Working With The Three-fold Office of Christ**

One task force developed an approach to interviewing men and woman about their work, writing a job description to capture the central characteristics and key accountabilities of each position. These descriptions were then fed back to the layperson to check for accuracy and clarity. After a number of "job descriptions" had been gathered from very different types of workplaces, the task force then set about the challenging task of analyzing them to try and identify common themes and patterns which might describe different types of ministry.

Alongside this effort another group was working to deduce types of ministry from the classic theological formulation regarding the ministry of Jesus Christ called the three-fold office of Christ-- prophetic, priestly, and royal. Historically within the Reformed tradition this formulation has been used to describe the various roles and functions of clergy. For example, as Gabe Fackre helped us see, the ministry of the pastor is often construed in this three-fold manner: "preaching and teaching as the prophetic role; the leadership of worship and the celebration of the sacraments as the priestly role; and sharing in church governance as the royal office."

We decided that what is good for the goose may also be good for the gander; if ministry is an unbroken whole with distinct but integrated parts then a formulation which has served to define the different types of ministry that constitute the job description of the pastor may also be useful and formative in describing the "office" of the laity.

Over a period of many months the work of these two groups, illumined by the insights of others, came to describe nine types of ministry. These types were then used as lenses to examine the workplace ministries of both clergy and laity in a wide variety of settings. In the succeeding years of research these nine types were refined and revised so that today they are described in the table on the following page.

These descriptions are deceptively simple and, at first reading, would seem inadequate to define and illumine the complex and sophisticated work that engages the energy and gifts of most laity. Further, in the beginning, we thought we were about the task of defining patterns or types of ministry that would discreetly distinguish one person's ministry from another. While in certain cases this proved to be the case, more frequently we found these nine types provided a way of examining any action or proposed strategy from a more holistic perspective. The types served as lenses or vantage points from which to examine one's work and possible options for more effective ministry in one's work. A specific case might be most helpful in illustrating this.

### **Polly Smith And Foster Care Drift: A Case Study**

Polly Smith was the Director of Administration for the Foster Care Review Unit of the State of Massachusetts. This Unit was brought into existence by an act

<b>Priestly Office:</b>	
<b>Modeling</b>	Whenever we choose to live and act in certain ways with an awareness that our own life and experience is an example to those around us, we are modeling. Modeling takes place when we use God-given abilities to care for the world around us, helping others to understand what it means to become a "living sacrifice."
<b>Hosting</b>	Whenever we provide a relationship or environment which nurtures, heals, and empowers others, we are hosting.
<b>Celebrating</b>	We celebrate whenever we rejoice in the world's goodness or grieve its pain, calling attention to the often subtle signs of God's new order in the midst of everyday affairs.
<b>Prophetic Office:</b>	
<b>Critiquing</b>	Whenever we challenge the existing order and way of doing things we are engaged in the ministry of critiquing.
<b>Envisioning</b>	Whenever we provide others with an alternative vision of things as they ought to be, we are engaged in the work of envisioning.
<b>Teaching</b>	Whenever we care for others through providing them with skills and knowledge which help to empower them we are engaging in the ministry of teaching.
<b>Royal Office (sometimes referred to as Servant Leader):</b>	
<b>Making and Distributing</b>	We are engaged in the ministry of making and distributing whenever we do work that creates and provides necessary goods, service, or physical structures in the service of others.
<b>Managing</b>	Managing takes place whenever we work to help others make faithful use of their own unique gifts and abilities. Stewarding the talents and resources of others is central to this ministry.
<b>Building</b>	The ministry of building takes place whenever people are at work creating environments, communities, or organizations which enable people to safely grow and develop.

of the legislature in 1984 in response to national concern over how well the social service system was handling children in foster care situations. Children who are removed from their natural home because of abuse, neglect, or the inability of parents to provide adequate care are placed in substitute homes--hopefully on a temporary basis until they can be returned to their natural home or, if necessary, placed in a long-term stable home. With over 8,000 substitute care placements each year in Massachusetts alone, national and local studies were revealing that the system was not

functioning well. Kids were being taken from their natural homes more often than was needed; staying in foster or substitute care longer than was needed; returning home much less often than they should; and some were even getting lost in the system, with Social Services not knowing where specific children had been placed. This was especially true among minority children. The phenomenon was called "foster care drift;" kids leaving and not getting back home.

The end goal of the foster care program is to get children back into their natural home as quickly as possible, and this was not happening. So in the early 1980s national legislation was passed which established certain social work requirements thought to address the problem of "foster care drift." One requirement was that every family would have a written service plan which clearly spelled out the goal for each child, a date for the attainment of that goal, plus specific tasks for the family and the social service agency to help reach that goal. In addition, a case review was

mandated every six months for each child, with one of the reviewing team coming from outside the social welfare system; a kind of ombudsperson for the child. This was instituted in order to provide an outside perspective, an advocate for the best interests of the child.

After this national legislation was passed, it took Massachusetts four years of discussion with child welfare advocate groups to agree on how this review was to be handled. It was finally decided that a team of three would conduct the review of each child. One person would be a manager from the Department of Social Services who was not the supervisor for the case; the second, a social worker from Polly's Foster Care Review Unit (there are between 30-40 persons who spend their full time reviewing cases); the third person was to be a citizen volunteer who reflected the socio-economic and racial background of the child under review. So it was that in September of 1984 Polly was hired to staff the Foster Care Review Unit. Legislation mandated that the annual report from this Unit, evaluating how well the system was actually functioning, would go directly to the Governor and then on to the legislature. But the unit Polly headed was actually a part of the State's Department of Social Services. Thus she was given the difficult and politically charged task of "grading" the system's performance and presenting its "report card" directly to her boss. This Unit had the power to recommend how the entire system should be modified or changed to better serve the needs of children. It did not have the power to implement these changes. Child advocate groups applauded its formation; the Department of Social Services looked upon the Unit with some suspicion, and a good deal of apprehension.

Polly's responsibility as the Unit's Director of Administration was to design and implement the support systems essential to enabling the review and evaluation of 12,000 cases each year, which would provide the data for the annual report. The first case reviews were conducted in July of 1985, and the first "report card" was due before the Governor in July of 1986.

Polly was a member of a Center task force struggling to develop and refine a way of thinking theologically about workplace ministry. One cold January evening in 1986 Polly shared her situation with the other members of her task force at the end of what, for each of them, had been a long and grueling workday in their respective offices. At that time she acknowledged that her sympathies stood firmly on the side of the children the Department of Social Services was supposed to be serving. From the data that was beginning to emerge from the review process she had helped to set up, it was clear that the foster care system was not functioning as well as it could or should. For example, they discovered that at least 10% of the cases reviewed did not have the required service plan outlining goals and proposed services for the child. While 10% may not seem like a major problem, the service plan is basic to quality care for foster children. Numerically it meant that 1,200 children might be caught in "foster care drift."

However, if the report headed for the Governor and the legislature focused on the shortcomings of the system it could, by its negative critique, seriously undermine the morale of those staff and case workers who were valiantly working to improve the system, leaving them exposed to the indiscriminate charges and condemnation of those who were consti-

tutionally opposed to welfare. Such a report could also provide ammunition for those who would like to dramatically cut back all expenditures for social services, thus crippling the system even further.

There seemed to be an intolerable tension between a commitment to providing data that would call attention to the shortcomings of the system's effort to serve children and their families; the need to encourage and support staff who were struggling to make the system work; and the recognition that disaffection with the system on the part of the legislature and general public could make its future funding even more problematic, and thus further reduce the quality of service provided.

The problem Polly faced and presented to the task force was: How to faithfully balance the legitimate concerns and self-interests of each of the stakeholders in the system (e.g. foster care children, families, and child advocate groups; the staff of the Department of Social Services; the Governor, legislature, and general public who want their tax dollars to make a difference).

Polly's responsibility was to design the process by which the data was analyzed and the report prepared.

Using the theological reflection process it had been developing over several months, members of the Center's task force listened to Polly describe the problem she faced and, with her, attempted to identify the institutional values that were in conflict and which reflected the needs and interests of each of the stakeholders (i.e., concerned parties) in the state's foster care system. By stepping back and attempting to "see things whole". Polly and the

members of the task force were helped to see that by serving the interests of only one group of stakeholders the institution as a whole would not be well served, and in the long run not even the interests of any one of the stakeholders. The path to faithfulness in ministry seemed to rest in the institution being helped to keep the needs and interests of all stakeholders in creative tension (or to frame this theologically: to hold in tension the values and goals of each of the three offices of Christ).

The members of the task force were then invited to suggest perspectives or strategies for Polly around the design and development of the annual report to the Governor by using as "lenses" the nine types of ministry. These ideas were recorded on newsprint. Polly was then invited to comment on these as they seemed appropriate to the requirements of her situation. Together the group, with Polly, worked to refine these options until they seemed to provide a coherent and faithful approach to ministry. Then the long evening was closed with a prayer of thanksgiving for Polly's ministry with the Foster Care Review Unit.

What actually happened and how was it informed by this theological model of ministry built on the three-fold office of Christ? Based on the insights and perspectives enriched by the task force, Polly pulled together 10 persons who represented the review process: Department of Social Service Supervisors and Case Review Workers. She built them into a team which created both the process by which the report was developed and the report itself, deciding the criteria for what was to be included, how it would be reported, who would see it ahead of time, and the target dates for completion.

One of the keys to effectiveness was the decision, developed in the Center meeting, to have the Foster Care Review Unit model a style of self-critiquing as they also critiqued the performance of the whole of DSS. In doing this, the report team demonstrated what it means to share responsibility for failure without having to find a scapegoat and blame someone else. They modeled a form of institutional confession, demonstrating that an organization can acknowledge failure as a basis for learning and growing. In so doing they also incarnated the belief that organizational honesty can serve as the basis for genuine empowerment.

Secondly, the facilitation of shared leadership by Polly also enabled the team to own the outcome and accept the risk of possible consequences. Together they built a new sense of community and began to learn to take greater initiative, taking greater personal responsibility for achieving results.

They also decided to focus on a vision for the system, describing what had been achieved and setting forth failures and shortcomings within the context of what was being accomplished. In so doing it made it possible to deal with a critique without destroying staff members' motivation for action.

In reflecting back on the process using the nine types of ministry and the helpful insights which emerged from her fellow task force members, Polly said, "Faithfulness in ministry is a creative process which is lovingly based; which really celebrates our ability to creatively make things more whole and more just. The process helped me to 'see things whole' and in doing so, to expand my understanding of what could constitute faithful action, not only for my-

self but for all those involved in caring for and leading this institution."

### **The Movement Toward Developing A Theology of Institutions**

During the five years of the Laity Project's research on the nature and content of ministry, we came to see that our daily ministry was inextricably linked to institutions as well as other persons. We saw that the current movement within the Church to reclaim the Reformation insight that all persons are called to incarnate Christ's ministry in their daily workplaces needed to be taken one step further. In addition to our effort to explore the rich dimensions of what it means to minister in our work, we were being challenged to think theologically about the mission and ministry of the institution, itself. We were reminded that these institutions are, in a profound sense, the hands and fingers by which people are served or diminished, empowered or disenfranchised.

Thinking about God's design and intentions, not only for the great variety of persons who are scattered across the world, but for the great variety of institutions which frame and shape our existence, seemed to be a theological frontier waiting to be crossed.

After thoughtful consultation with George Peck and with the strong encouragement of Jitsuo we decided to launch a parallel effort to our Task Force on the Content of Ministry in which Polly was a member. We drew together a second group of laity and faculty to work on developing a theology of Institutions. Our goal in this task force, chaired by an ophthalmologist, Ernie Sutcliffe, was: "To find a way of thinking about God's design and purpose for all institutions, including the institutional church. We want to understand

as fully as we can how institutions might be formed and managed so that they are better stewards of God's whole creation and more effective instruments of God's redemptive concern for the whole created order."

This goal assumed that God cares about institutions as an integral part of the created order and that their reconciliation to God is also of ultimate importance. It assumed that

we cannot speak about God as Creator and Redeemer without examining what this means for institutions as well as persons. It also assumed the possibility that institutions have a calling under God and therefore a "ministry."

The apostle, Paul, sets the boundaries and scope of this task in his letter to the church at Colossae when he writes (Col. 1:13-20) that God, in Jesus Christ, chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself--"not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities, and powers." Thus, the mission of God is the redemption and reconciliation of the world; the restoration of both persons and structures; of families and institutions to that state or condition originally conceived in God's loving act of creation. We proposed that one cannot really speak about God as Creator and Redeemer without examining what God's creative activity and intentions are for all

of life, institutional as well as personal.

***In addition to our effort to explore the rich dimensions of what it means to minister in our work, we were being challenged to think theologically about the mission and ministry of the institution, itself. We were reminded that these institutions are, in a profound sense, the hands and fingers by which people are served or diminished, empowered or disenfranchised.***

Why did we think this work was so important? There were four lines of reflection which seemed to push us into this work: 1) the emergence of a society of organizations; 2) the failure theologically to address this phenomenon; 3) the clear need to provide theological re-

sources to laity who understood themselves to be "loving critics" of their institutions; and 4) the power of Jitsuo's theological vision.

### **1. The Emergence of a Society of Organizations**

With much discomfort and at times a good deal of consternation, we have come to accept the fact that rapid change, like death and taxes, is a fixture of our age and will not go away. Yet one change that has slipped by largely unnoticed (or else we have been too close to fully comprehend its significance) has been the emergence of a society of organizations.

A little over seventy years ago most of our physical and emotional needs were provided either by the direct relationship of one person to another or through small family-sized organizations like the corner grocery store. But in less than one person's lifetime all this has changed. Peter Drucker in his book *The Age of Discontinuity* wrote, "We have

seen the emergence of a society of organizations in which, with few exceptions, every single social task of importance has been entrusted to a large institution." While at first blush this may seem something of an overstatement, it is hard to think--when one takes a moment to reflect--of a single action that one engages in during the most routine of days which is not directly or indirectly impacted by a large institution and/or a system of institutions.

### **2. The Problem of Our Current Theology of Ministry**

Given that phenomenon, a problem we face is that our theology is largely focused on God's design for individual persons. Though our lives are profoundly influenced by institutions--whether it be a local parish church or a multi-national corporation--we, in the Christian church, still tend to talk and act as if ministry was limited to what one individual does with another individual. We know, however, that a seemingly impersonal vote in Congress affects the food intake of children in India or Africa who the member of Congress will never personally know. Or, that a mortgage policy established by a bank will make a difference as to whether or not black families in Roxbury can live in decent housing.

While most church members would never think of starving a child or making someone homeless, their work inside their institution can cause both of these things to happen or prevent them from taking place. We have come to a time in history when we need to understand that our personal ministry is frequently bound up with how our institution serves other people--people that we will never know in person.

In fact, these institutions in which we spend so much of our

time and energy are oftentimes the hands and fingers by which countless persons are cared for or damaged and destroyed. Boardroom deliberations, backroom caucuses, and committee meetings can be the institutional equivalent of a cup of cold water or a loaf of bread to a hungry person.

Robert Greenleaf, who for several years was a member of the corporate staff at AT&T, after retirement wrote a series of essays on "Servant Leadership" and the "Institution As Servant." Out of his passionate concern for a more caring society Bob slowly came to the conviction that a theology of institutions could be a critical resource in the development, preparation and sustenance of persons who are committed to being regenerative agents within institutions.

Though Bob Greenleaf was not a churchman he felt strongly about the role churches could play in this effort. In a letter to encourage the work underway at Andover Newton he contended "that the fundamental reconstruction of institutions cannot take place without a strong supporting influence from churches. So long as these churches have only a 'theology of persons' they cannot wield the needed influence on institutions and their leaders." He went on to say that our existing theology has given little attention or direction to what it means to minister to and through an institution. He suggested that the church's theological preoccupation with individuals tended to focus people's thinking on "how to ease the hurt of the system, and not enough on how to build a system that can have a positive, growing, liberating, and humanizing impact on people."

In addition, Greenleaf insisted that critical to the task of building transformed institutions is

the faith one must have to risk and move boldly into new and uncharted territories. He wrote, "While science helps calculate the odds on a decision, belief sustains one in the inevitable uncertainties and anxieties which the originator of regenerative action must bear. A theology of institutions could be a vital ingredient in forming and shaping a faith which empowers such risk-taking and institution building; it could also be a critical resource in the development, preparation and sustenance of persons who are committed to being regenerative agents within institutions".

### 3. Laity As "Loving Critics"

While it is important to affirm that institutions have a life of their own and are not simply the extension of those individuals who currently make up their workforce, the role of laity as institutional change agents cannot be overlooked. John Gardner has said it as succinctly as anyone when he wrote about our institutions being trapped between those persons (often on the inside) who are comfortable, complacent and unwilling to see the institution change, and those prophets (usually on the outside) who insist that the institution must change or else they will

burn it down. He described this as the battle between "the uncritical lovers" and the "unloving critics" suggesting that "love without criticism brings stagnation, but criticism without love brings destruction."

***"While science helps calculate the odds on a decision, belief sustains one in the inevitable uncertainties and anxieties which the originator of regenerative action must bear. A theology of institutions could be a vital ingredient in forming and shaping a faith which empowers such risk-taking and institution building; it could also be a critical resource in the development, preparation and sustenance of persons who are committed to being regenerative agents within institutions".***

If institutions are to more effectively care for and serve God's creation then they do now we need to develop, nurture and equip "loving critics" who operate from within, who have some stake in the institution's future and who are concerned with its vocation and accountability before God. The task of equipping "loving critics" must involve a much more inclusive theology of ministry than is

prevalent among Christians today, and it calls for a yet undeveloped theology of institutions.

### 4. Jitsuo's Vision

But perhaps the most compelling voice of all urging this work forward was Jitsuo. He wrote:

*"What then is needed 'to equip the saints for the work of ministry?' (Eph. 4:12) A new theological vision, as powerful for American laity as liberation theology is for the Latins. This new theological perception must be hammered out on the anvil of institutional crisis, perceived by Robert Bellah as "a third time of trial at least as severe as*

*those of the Revolution and the Civil War." It is a test of whether we can control the very economic and technical forces, which are our greatest achievement, before they destroy us." The church has commendably focused its theological discipline upon the welfare of individual persons, throughout most of its long history, as a sign of the preciousness of every life in the sight of God. Therefore the ministry of the church is concerned and practiced as largely ministry to persons. But today, more than in the past, the fate or welfare of human life is powerfully affected by the institutions of society; in fact, the future is being largely shaped by these economic, political and social institutions of our culture, so that the role of institutions, the moral and social accountability of institutions, becomes perhaps the number one agenda in our historical enterprise. How to confront these powerful organizations, which are our greatest achievement, before they destroy us on the one hand, and how to evoke and provoke them to a fresh discovery and discernment of their true purpose and calling, on the other hand, is the task of an American, indigenous, evocative theology."*

***If institutions are to more effectively care for and serve God's creation then they do now we need to develop, nurture and equip "loving critics" who operate from within, who have some stake in the institution's future and who are concerned with its vocation and accountability before God.***

**The Center for the Ministry of the Laity: The Work On A Theology of Institutions**

With the pending conclusion of the five-year research effort of the ANTS Laity Project the trustees of both Andover Newton and the Laity Project met to talk about the possibility of institutionalizing this work. They recognized

that the vision could easily get lost within the seminary, given all the existing institutional pressures, if it were not given a more solid footing. Andover

Newton was about to undertake a major capital campaign so it was decided that a Center

for the Ministry of the Laity would become one cornerstone of this fundraising effort. In order to protect the vision as well as to encourage the impact of the presence of the Center within the seminary it was also decided to keep the two institutions as separate entities with overlapping boards and the privilege for trustees of both to participate in the respective search processes for the chief executive officer of each institution, when necessary.

Simultaneous with this effort to provide structural integrity to the vision, the research effort to work on a theology of institutions was just getting underway. Bob Lynn, then Vice President of the Religion Division of the Lilly Endowment, provided a grant to help launch the work.

The task force, chaired by Ernie Sutcliffe, comprised three theologians from the seminary and four lay members invested in

ministry in a variety of institutions. After exploring a variety of possible avenues to launch this effort we decided to start with the theological tradition surrounding the three-fold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. There already was a considerable body of theological work using this approach to think about the form and shape of the institution of the Church and its ministry as Christ's incarnate body. In addition one of the theologians in the task force, Gabe Fackre, had already written a paper "Christ's Ministry and Ours," which built on this tradition. It had served as a provocative resource for our research in developing the nine types of ministry.

The premises we wanted to explore were:

- In what sense can we talk about "secular" institutions also incarnating Christ's ministry and therefore being, in some sense, extensions of his body?
- Is it possible to think of institutions as incarnations of Christ's ministry with diverse gifts and callings, just as persons also incarnate different gifts and calls--all potentially contributing to the larger good?
- Can we speak of secular institutions being ultimately accountable and morally responsible to the mandates of the Kingdom?
- If persons are stewards of the gifts and resources entrusted by the Creator to them, can we also talk about institutions functioning as trustees of the gifts and resources entrusted to them?

- If as individuals we are subject to the powers and principalities which often claim an ultimate allegiance from us, is it not also possible to think of institutions being seduced by these same powers and principalities, as well as being incarnations of them?

For the next several months we interviewed institutional leaders, examined much of the data which had been gathered by the Task Force on the Content of Ministry regarding examples of what might be construed as institutional ministry, and held lengthy discussions on the relevance or lack of it of the theological tradition surrounding the three-fold office of Christ.

Slowly patterns and insights began to emerge. We gathered our examples and began to make connections to the offices of Priest, Prophet, and King.

**The Priestly Office:** For example, the priestly office of Christ has traditionally been seen to focus on the human condition in its weakness and vulnerability. Jesus is understood as the High Priest who, having experienced what it means to be human, offers his life as a sacrifice, a supplication to God on behalf of all others. It is an office primarily concerned with restoration and healing. The types of ministry which best capture the thrust of this office are those which model a new way of being human; ministries which incarnate a concern for the well-being and wholeness of persons by providing a hospitable space or environment that nurtures growth and self-development; and ministries which celebrate the truth that death is not the last word so we can live in hope and confidence. Traditionally, this office has been concerned with caring for the op-

pressed, the needy, the disempowered, the wounded and those who grieve. It offers healing and reconciliation, forgiveness and the capacity to begin life anew.

As we have examined the content of this priestly office and the way in which the Church has come to understand it, we have been led to believe that it has application not only in the ministry of one person to another, but can also be incarnated in institutional practices and policies. For example, companies which are faced with the painful and debilitating task of dismissing employees can do so in a way which leaves the former employee without a shred of self-confidence and any sense of self-worth, or they can use a carefully designed out-placement program which focuses significant energy and resources on helping that employee discover his/her talents and discern where and how those talents can best be utilized.

Dismissal can be, and often is a traumatic destructive experience. Or by institutional policy and design it can become the launching pad for personal growth and empowerment, for healing and reconciliation. Townsend and Bottum, a unique engineering and construction company in Ann Arbor, Michigan, consciously attempted to model itself around Bob Greenleaf's vision of a servant institution. A few years ago it had to go through the painful process of downsizing; letting go valued employees due to business conditions. However, as a part of this process each manager was charged with the task of spending whatever time was necessary to help these employees find rewarding employment with other companies; this at no small cost in time and energy of an already reduced management team.

The death of a member of the family can often be the occasion

when a particularly sensitive fellow-worker can be an instrument of pastoral care. But it also can be the occasion, because of institutional values and policy, when a whole corporate community surrounds the grieving person with supportive care and even financial resources. Such was the case with IBM when six of its employees were killed in a tragic airplane accident in Dallas. By long-standing IBM corporate policy, when an employee or a member of an employee's family dies, the over-riding priority is the comfort and support of that individual. Business appointments are cancelled; scheduled trips are altered with the clear understanding that those closest to that employee are encouraged to make that person's well being their first concern. Thus, while it is true that no institution can mandate genuine pastoral care, it is also true that an institution can establish the climate and tradition in which employees are encouraged and empowered to incarnate the priestly office.

While it seems clear what celebrating means for clergy and those charged with leading Christian liturgy, it is less obvious how this ministry might occur in the everyday involvements of our secular lives. Perhaps part of the reason for our lack of clarity in making this connection is rooted in the fact that so much of our Sunday liturgy really fails to make clear the relationship between our work and our worship (Romans 12). If the Biblical story of our salvation does, in fact, speak of God's healing and enabling action in every dimension of our lives, then our liturgical re-enactment of this story should enable us to clearly see this linkage.

One illustration of this occurred in the executive office of a manufacturer of office products. The company, after several successes

in the development of new products, finally produced--at considerable cost--a product which dramatically bombed. The losses to the company were so profound that for months the senior officers were immobilized. Finally, the President gathered them together in his office. In the center of the office was a wooden casket. Solemnly he placed the piece of equipment which had miserably failed to attract buyers in the casket; read a brief liturgy acknowledging its "death"; and then proceeded to bury the "departed" in a grave dug behind the plant. Through this "liturgy" the company officers were finally able to lay to rest this albatross which had haunted them for months and get on with the business of serving their customers and employees. The truth of the Christian doctrine of death and resurrection had, at some level, been dramatically experienced and celebrated in the context of the workplace.

**The Prophetic Office:** When we have traditionally thought of the prophetic office of Christ we have seen Jesus as the prophet who announces the coming of the kingdom; the one who speaks the right word at the right time. This office has been understood as embracing not only the outraged critique of what is wrong and reprehensible, but it also includes the articulation of a vision of what is right and life giving. While the priestly office tends to focus on hurt, the prophetic office speaks of hope, of new life, of new ways of being and doing. Even though its message is often cast in critical terms, the underlying truth of this ministry--when it is genuinely an expression of the prophetic office of Christ--is that there is a better, more life-giving way, full of promise and of hope.

Our newspapers and magazines frequently relate stories of insti-

tutional "whistle-blowers" who challenge and expose corporate corruption or the misuse of public funds. These persons incarnate, in a very specific way, one expression of the prophetic office. But there are entire institutions such as Common Cause, Physicians for Social Responsibility, or the U.S. Government's General Services Administration which embody the prophetic office. Each of these institutions, by institutional policy and purpose, perform the prophetic function of evaluating and critiquing the way in which other institutions carry out their mandate on behalf of the public good. Through internal reports and external press releases they attempt to hold institutions and agencies accountable to their stated charters and corporate missions. This was clearly illustrated earlier in Polly's ministry through the Foster Care Review Unit of Massachusetts Department of Social Services. This prophetic office is largely reflected through a process of critiquing what is or isn't being done.

But another dimension of the prophetic office embodied by some institutions is that of providing or modeling a vision of "a more perfect way" of serving the common good. Westminster Presbyterian Church, in the inner city of Indianapolis, is a source of hope and encouragement for its neighborhood by the way it articulates a vision for the community and empowers members of the congregation who provide leadership in neighborhood organizations. This small congregation has made a special ministry of equipping neighborhood residents to become trustees of credit unions, health clinics, economic development corporations, day care centers, etc. The church has modeled a servant style of leadership which has given spirit and vision to community members who, at one time, felt they were

victims; not people of talent and power. By its own community life--the way power is shared, visions generated, and persons supported--Westminster has become a center of empowerment for those who previously perceived themselves to be powerless.

Again, Townsend and Bottum, originally a family-owned business, is a particularly interesting illustration of the prophetic office expressed in an alternative vision. Under the servant-leadership of its principal owner it created a new form of corporate life in which the company owns itself for the benefit of all the people who work for it and the clients who are served by it. Capital is understood as a working tool, available for use by each generation of employees. The role of Trustees--often perfunctorily performed in most companies in response to the direction of management--has been transformed into the role of ensuring the continuity in company performance of a unique set of values which express a concern for persons and for the society.

**The Royal or Kingly Office:** When we reflect on the traditional thought about the royal office of Christ, we see it as an office which makes things happen. It is an office which empowers and builds, which manages and directs. However, as Jesus modeled it he demonstrated a different style of leadership--a new way of exercising power. Where other kings had often used their power to make things happen in a coercive way, bending persons and institutions to their will, Jesus modeled a style of leadership which leads by serving and empowering others. When we think of institutions a critical dimension of the royal office is the creative and cost-effective use of both human and material resources in such a way that both the needs of employees and the

legitimate self-interests of clients, creditors and suppliers are served.

A particularly powerful illustration of this was the example of Michigan Baptist Homes, a retirement complex started several years ago by the church. Its original director was a clergyman who lacked both integrity and business sense. After several years of mismanagement the Homes were forced into bankruptcy. As a result of the court's re-organization and settlement of outstanding loans, many elderly bond-holders who had entrusted their life savings by purchasing MBH bonds were paid back only 10 cents on the dollar and business creditors received nothing. After five years of struggle and under the skilled servant-leadership of a former Burroughs executive and his staff, the Homes were brought out of bankruptcy and began to show a profit. Recently they were purchased by a private investment company. The leadership of the Homes took a very untraditional tack. Though the bankruptcy settlement had abolished any claim of the former creditor and bond-holders on the 11 million dollars that would be realized from the sale of this now profitable institution, the decision was made to pay back all bond-holders their full loss with interest and the business creditors as well. The Homes' leadership felt it had a covenant with those who had entrusted their savings and supplies to this institution. So they took the unprecedented action of modeling a new vision of corporate integrity. While in some ways this was an illustration of the incarnation of the prophetic office of Christ, it was made possible because the leadership of the Homes had effectively exercised the royal or kingly office.

The royal office of Christ is reflected not only in the way the institution is managed and the resources utilized, but it also comes to visibility in the products produced. Haemonetics, a well-managed blood equipment company, has developed a technology and related machinery which enables a surgical patient's own blood to be recycled during surgery. This product dramatically reduces the loss of blood during surgery and also protects the patient against the danger of infection from blood transfusions. For rare blood types, this equipment has often meant the difference between life and death. In this instance the royal office which creates, manages and produces is effectively linked to the priestly office which is concerned with healing and health. It becomes an important illustration of Christ's royal ministry of stewarding human and material resources to enhance the quality of life.

Gathering these illustrations of institutional "ministry" was helpful in breaking open our thinking about institutions. But it also seemed arbitrary. For every institutional example we could find that positively illustrated the dimensions of the three-fold office we could site ten others that illustrated just the opposite. Further, we still didn't seem to have a way of using the three-fold office to think theologically about institutions that would serve as a guide to illumine faithful action.

It was then that I stumbled across some of the earlier MAP research in going through one of my dusty files. During the early 1970's the MAP staff attempted to speak to the concern for corporate responsibility. We did some research on corporate values and identified three organizational value criteria which, when held in creative tension, seemed to be

essential to corporate responsibility. We described these three as:

Corporate Wholeness = Concern for the quality of life within the institution reflecting how well the institution meets the full range of human and material needs of those who constitute its work force.

Corporate Accountability = Concern for the way in which the institution attempts to serve the needs of the larger society through the service and/or products it provides. In other words, how well and in what way it justifies its existence.

Corporate Effectiveness = Concern for how well the institutions stewards the human and material resources in its possession.

These three criteria and a related set of values were a crude attempt to get at the dynamics of institutional decision-making and the issue of corporate responsibility. We had no idea in the 1970's that we might also be dealing with the content of the three-fold office of Christ.

When the task force examined these value criteria we immediately began to make rough correlations with the traditional offices used to describe the ministry of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. The correlation as we saw it related the ministry of "Prophet" to organizational accountability; "King" to organizational effectiveness; and "Priest" to organizational wholeness.

For several months we struggled with getting the appropriate words to define the content of what we were after. One member suggested that the correlation might better be described as:

Purpose = Prophetic Office

People = Priestly Office  
Productivity = Royal Office

No one set of definitions seemed to define the qualities for everyone but the accents that they suggested felt right on target for all of us. In addition we began to see in the process work of another task force that the three offices also correlated with the traditional stakeholders in most institutions.

Clients/Society = Prophetic Office  
Employees = Priestly Office  
Owners/Trustees = Royal Office

While this explanation in the brief confines of one chapter may seem confusing to the reader, those who were working on this project began to feel the excitement that comes in the rough and early stages of any work when connections begin to appear. The structure began to take shape which provided both a means of probing our theological heritage on one hand, and a process for enabling laity to think theologically about their institutions, on the other. One task force, under the leadership of David Specht, began to design a reflection process using these insights and integrated them with the 9 types of ministry. The intent was to provide a resource to laity in a support group context to help them reflect theologically on proposed action within their workplace institution. The story of Polly's ministry within the Foster Care Review Unit came out of one such task force.

### **Emerging Insights and Questions**

Quite obviously, there is much work to be done before we can talk comfortably about the development of a theology of institutions. But what has emerged to date has provoked some thought-

ful reflection and some intriguing hypotheses.

For example, our work brought to visibility what most managers know intuitively, namely that the three offices are in tension with each other. They are not held together comfortably. The legitimate self-interests which each represent are often in conflict. Therefore, if it is possible to talk about institutional faithfulness it seems to be a consequence of keeping the values and/or stakeholders related to each of these offices in creative tension where the self-interests of one do not dominate or overshadow the interests of the other two. A particularly telling illustration of this tension can be found in the demise of Eastern Airlines. Over the years the company had had a history of bad labor relations. Under Frank Borman, Eastern management found itself in a tense standoff with the unions. However, given the pressures of economic survival and the insistence of the lending institutions, Eastern management did negotiate a new contract with employees to effect cost-savings. This contract also provided a new motivation for employee performance and with it a new level of employee commitment. The willingness of the unions to see their responsibility for the financial viability of the airline, even though it meant taking a pay cut, reflected a readiness to balance their short-term self-interests with the longer-term interest of an economically viable company. However, the dramatic changes in employee commitment and cooperation which resulted from this new agreement were undermined and eventually destroyed when the "owners" (the banks who held the loans) put pressure on management to increase profits unrealistically and thus irrevocably damaged the trust critical to success.

While institutional financial viability is essential it is not sufficient as a reason for institutional existence. Institutions must also be measured by how well they serve the common good and the needs of those who work within. Today organizational theorists and managers, alike, are attesting to this integration of divergent but legitimate self-interests with a force and clarity rarely expressed before.

Paul Sherwin, the former President of Phillips Products Company wrote an article in Harvard Business Review on "The Ethical Roots of the Business System" in which he said that business is a system of interdependent members that can thrive only when all its members are given equal emphasis. To act ethically a manager has to ensure that the owners, employees, and customers all share fairly in the business's gain. "What each member receives is constrained by what other members require, and no member can in the long run enjoy a disproportionate share. Besides being interdependent, the members of the system are entirely equal in importance. Business people often claim primacy for capital, perceiving it as the fuel of enterprise, while consumers tend to assume that the whole point of business is to provide them with goods and services. But no member of a system can be primary. Since the contribution of every member is necessary and no contribution is sufficient, the members are equal".

As the task force reflected on these words it struck us as a very contemporary expression of the insights the Apostle Paul had about the church as the body of Christ. If we are correct in our assumption that an institution (as is true with any system) is made up of interdependent parts or members and that the legitimate self-interests of these parts

or members must be treated as having equal importance then it also seems clear that we are on a collision course; that the values/interests of each "office" are likely to be in tension with each other and thus the symmetry between these offices of priest (wholeness), prophet (mission) and king (effectiveness) is not comfortably and easily maintained. The Eastern Airlines experience clearly underlines this reality, but almost any manager or union official or owner could give similar testimony.

What theological insight can we bring to this hard and sometimes painful reality? We may be helped to arrive at a point of theological illumination by exploring the idea that the three-fold office of Christ also experiences this inner tension; that the legitimate concerns embodied in the priestly, prophetic, and royal ministries of Jesus are also in tension with each other and that "faithfulness" is finally not measured by how well we embody the true marks of any one of these "offices" but rather by how well we integrate and balance the legitimate claims of the three offices together.

I believe this is what Bonhoeffer is driving at in his book *Ethics* when he writes "Whoever wishes to take up the problem of a Christian ethic must be confronted at once with a demand which is quite without parallel. He must from the outset discard as irrelevant the two questions which alone impel him to concern himself with the problem of ethics, 'How can I be good?' and 'How can I do good?' and instead of these he must ask the utterly and totally different question 'What is the will of God?'. . . What is of ultimate importance is now no longer that I should become good, or that the condition of the world should be made better by my action, but that the

reality of God should show itself everywhere to be the ultimate reality."

Making this connection to Bonhoeffer may only serve to further confuse an already complex issue, but I put forth this connection because I am led to believe that by our attempt to relate the three-fold office of Christ to institutional practices and policies we are forced onto new theological ground with a new frame of reference. I believe that it is not helpful to see the emerging theology of institutions as being primarily concerned with the problem of ethics, of doing the right or moral thing as if, in most of our decisions, the "right" or "moral" act is an obviously self-evident choice. Rather, a theology built around the three-fold office invites us into looking at reality from the perspective of the Christ "who holds all things together." This perspective compels us to turn our focus from a particular part or a specific problem in isolation to see the interdependence of the parts and to choosing an action which affirms and preserves the reality of their essential oneness.

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For a moment, let's look at a theorem from systems theory which, though counter-intuitive, provides a new way of looking at reality that ultimately might serve as a window to more faithful institutional decision-making; a theorem that may help us "to see things whole."

Russell Ackoff, the father of Operations Research and one of the pioneers in systems theory in "The Second Industrial Revolution" presents this theorem and its corollary: "If you take a system and take it apart to identify its components, and then operate those components in such a way that every component behaves as well as it possibly can, there is one thing of which you can be sure. . . the system as a whole will not behave as well as it can. The corollary is this: If you have a system that is behaving as well as it can, none of its parts will be."  
Institutional "faithfulness", therefore, may consist not in attempting to solve a problem by undertaking a "perfect" or morally

right action vis a vis the specific problem and its legitimate interests, but rather in attempting to reach a solution that relates the needs and interests of each of the "offices" and their respective values and stakeholders. The latter course will almost certainly mean that the solution will not fully satisfy the legitimate needs of any one "office"; i.e., the parts will not be able to "function as well as they possibly can." However, by creatively holding the interests of each "office" together and insisting that any "solution" must not allow the interests of one "office" to overwhelm and dominate the others, the total system (institution) and each of its parts will be better served and will be better able to serve. Conversely, institutional "sin" may be the ultimatizing of the self-interests of one "office" to the detriment and diminishment of the other two. This is not only an offense against the parts but also against the health and well being of the whole.

We have a particularly vivid illustration of this in the Eastern Airlines case. The unwillingness of the banks to give equal weight to the interests of the employees and the needs of the customers and to participate in creating a solution which held those interests as being inextricably bound together finally led to the unfriendly take-over by Texas Air and eventually the demise of the airline. Given the lens provided by the three-fold office we not only have an example of poor business judgment but an illustration of institutional unfaithfulness--the refusal or inability to "hold all things together".

By clarifying the specific values that the institution either consciously claims for itself, or those which seem to be operational, and by describing those values in relationship to the three offices of Christ we begin to see

the inevitable inner tensions that operate within any institution. We have increasingly come to believe that it is the balancing of these tensions which ultimately contributes to an institution's faithfulness to God and its discharge of its corporate responsibility.

This way of "holding things together" has many profound implications. Clearly our efforts to enlarge the Church's understanding of who is a minister has revolutionary implications for laity; but equally profound ones for how clergy see themselves, how the Church system validates both laity and clergy and how a theological school like Andover Newton trains pastors and develops theological resources. When we step back from our preoccupation with a part (i.e., the training of clergy) to examine our accountability for the equipping of the whole people of God for ministry, we find ourselves dealing with a whole new reality. For example, when George Peck visited the offices of laity engaged in thoughtful ministry in various "secular" institutions and reflected with them about the issues they confront in their daily ministry and how or whether the Church equips them theologically for that ministry, he said "everything changed in my thinking about the mission of a theological school; nothing will ever be quite the same."

One additional insight has been the interplay between personal ministry and institutional ministry. A complaint expressed in the task force was that we kept focusing on the ministry of persons. We initially explained this to ourselves by saying it was simply hard for us to get out of a very individualistic way of looking at ministry. However, the more we reflected on this phenomenon, the more we recognized that there is a very vital in-

ter-action and inter-play between personal ministry and institutional ministry.

While some would suggest that there is no such thing as institutional ministry; that it's only a case of individual persons or collections of persons who embody ministry in a given situation, we're increasingly inclined to believe that not only do individuals have their own unique ministry, but so do institutions as well. It is the interaction between individuals and institutions that creates the exciting dynamic for faithfulness.

One institution which I've been following with great interest is an air conditioning distributing firm in Dallas, Texas. TDIndustries was founded some 40 years ago by Jack Lowe, Sr. In a certain sense it would be fair to say that this particular company is an extension--the lengthened shadow--of Jack Lowe. He was a person who lived out of a very clear set of values and in his own gentle and empowering way he encouraged those who worked for and with him to do likewise. Jack was an individual who cared very deeply not only about his company but the city of Dallas. He had a vision of all races and ethnic groups working collaboratively together. He was asked by the presiding federal judge to draw up an integration plan for the city. Those who knew him reported that it was Jack's tireless effort and the incredible trust that he was able to build in each of the diverse communities that enabled that city to develop a program for school integration which was accepted across the city. In the early 1970s Jack came across Bob Greenleaf's idea of servant leadership, and it gave him a vocabulary and a way of thinking about what he was already doing. His trust and faith in people led him finally--out of a need to raise additional cash for

the company--to share the ownership of the company with all his employees.

Over the years, even since his death in 1980, this company has pioneered a set of very clearly articulated values which has made it a unique model of a servant institution. The management style of the company is very open and fluid with little, if any, hierarchical distinctions. The President's office looks like anyone else's. While there is clear accountability, with the President serving as the Chief Executive Officer, the actual style of management and decision-making reflects a very broad ownership of all decisions. An advisory committee of all employees was established some five years ago. This group is called together to review major decisions which face the company and to offer their counsel and advice. Though that counsel is not mandatory for management to act on, it is clearly deeply influential and oftentimes creatively suggestive. For example, in 1984-85 when the company experienced a downturn in business because of the cutback in oil revenues in Texas, the company had to make a decision about how they would handle the holdings of employees who were retiring and who owned significant stock in the company. Since the policy of the company had been to buy back any stock when employees retired, or if they needed ready cash, the company was now faced with a fairly serious issue. What if more persons claimed their right to cash in their stock than the company had resources to buy back?

It was brought to particular visibility when Tom, the chief financial officer of the company, made his decision to retire at age 67. It came to his attention that several employees in the company viewed his decision to retire as a sign that the company was

not stable financially. Though by company policy Tom had every right to cash in his stock and take his large holdings, he made the fateful decision to buy back his stock at a significant loss to himself. Tom did this out of his commitment to the company and to ensuring that all employees would trust management not to function out of their own self-interest in a way that would be destructive to the ultimate viability of the institution.

What seems to be quite clear about this particular institution is that an individual had a profound effect on shaping the way in which the company lives out its values. Jack modeled what he believed. What is also important, however, is that the culture he developed continues to shape and form this institution; those who have followed in leadership at all levels in the company since his death have sustained a commitment to the values and vision which he articulated. In many ways, you could say the company is more firmly grounded in those values than even when Jack Lowe was alive. They have become a part of the identity and nature of this institution. If the company is still in existence 50 years from now my hunch is that it will continue to be intentional about fulfilling the values which were so important in its inception. Here would appear to be an illustration of an institution whose history, policy and mode of operation help persons to be more whole, trusting and committed to serving a larger good.

#### **Honoring Jitsuo Morikawa**

In the fall of 1985 the Center for the Ministry of the Laity at Andover Newton Theological School sponsored a major Convocation on the ministry of the laity. It was a beautiful fall weekend, the kind for which New England is famous. A large yellow and white-stripped circus tent

stood squarely in the center of the campus quadrangle. Laity from 35 states and 8 foreign countries came together to celebrate a vision and explore the demanding challenge of how that vision could become a living reality. Hans-Ruedi Weber, who was the first director of the World Council of Church's Department of the Laity and who currently served as Director of Biblical Studies for the World Council of Churches, presented three Biblical studies on "Living In The Image of Christ."

In the early planning for this event it was decided that we would honor a few of the men and women who had mentored this movement from its inception. So on a brisk fall evening with over 300 folk seated at dinner in a lantern-lit circus tent Jitsuo Morikawa, Robert Greenleaf, Elizabeth O'Connor, Mark Gibbs, and Hans-Reudi Weber received a standing ovation--celebrating their faithful witness to the Biblical truth that all Christians are called to "full-time ministry."

As one part of this event we asked Jitsuo if he would be willing to critique a working paper reflecting our work on a theology of institutions. As one might suspect his response was better than the paper. Among other things Jitsuo said:

*There are many aspects to which I wish to respond, particularly to the theological legitimacy of the daring assumption that modern secular institutions are called to serve the mission of God! That grand assumption is rooted in a vision of a cosmic Christology, the universal presence of Jesus Christ, "that all things were created through him and for him...and in him all things hold together." (Col 1:16-17)*

*I am impressed with Robert Bellah, that corporations have an organic quality about them, so the analogy of the church as the Body of Christ is enormously illuminating. The immediate implication is the interdependent nature of all institutions: "for we are members one of another" (Eph 4:25), so that "if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." (1 Cor 12:26)*

*My experience in recent years has been with the University of Michigan, not as faculty, but earlier as minister of the First Baptist Church, and more recently as staff of the American Baptist Campus Foundation. As a Christian minister I have assumed ministry to the vast scale of human need must occur largely through secular public institutions of our culture.*

*And since the concern of the church and gospel is the health and welfare and redemption of all peoples, and the University has the capacity to make a major impact on the world, I assumed it follows that the church should have major concern that the university fulfill its true vocation in the world.*

*And how can the church express its hope, concern and faith in the power and influence and ministry of the university? Through its laity who are nurtured in the faith and valued as faculty and administrators. But how the nurtured faith of the laity can inform the university in its mission and purpose is the fundamental reason for the need of developing a theology of institutions.*

*I find the proposal of using the three-fold ministry of Christ--of prophet, priest and king, and translated into institutional criteria of wholeness, mission and effectiveness--very illuminating toward casting theological light on the life of the University of Michigan.*

*The church through its laity has an enormous opportunity to provide theological and institutional direction to the university in its global leadership, in its ministry and service to the world.*

*There is a momentous need to provide theological vision and direction and power to the history shaping institutions and corporations of our times, that they become instruments and servants and ministries of God's blessing to the world.*

Jitsuo's vision was shared with less than 50 persons in the Faculty Lounge of Andover Newton Theological School. It was a sunny Thursday morning in October, 468 years to the day after Martin Luther's fateful nailing of his 95 theses on the Wittenburg church door! In retrospect, I wonder if those of us listening to Jitsuo were not witnessing a similarly historically decisive event; a new stage in the reformation of the church and its ministry.

### **Looking Ahead To The 21st Century**

In 1970 the "Christian Century" editorialized on the "Misplaced Ministry of the Laity" saying: "In recent years there has been much preaching, mostly by preachers, about the ministry of the laity. The awful truth, however, is that there is no greater operational failure in American Christianity than the failure to make the ministry of the laity a visible reality. Not all our talk about the church as mission, nor

the crash programs on the crisis in the nation, nor our ecumenical spectaculars can bring much health to the Body of Christ unless the meaning of the laity as ministry is incarnated in the style and structures of our common life." Twenty one years later the vision of a church which encourages and equips a theologically alive and vocationally committed laity seems little closer to reality.

The great challenge before us as we approach a new century is whether or not we are prepared to boldly embrace a very ancient vision: to become stewards of God's whole creation; trustees of God's universe. Are we ready to undertake the demanding and breathtaking task of thinking theologically in a new way about our responsibility as Christian laity who are charged with holding in trust the institutions which are shaping the landscape of the future?

I believe it fitting that this reflection honoring Jitsuo Morikawa as a prophet of the 21st century conclude with his prophetic vision. He wrote these words in 1978:

*Ministry of the laity is the total human enterprise, in collaboration with God, in the reshaping of human history toward the New Creation. Ministry is the fundamental nature and purpose to which God has called the whole human family, and laity means the whole people of God, for in God's perspective, He has the whole of humankind in view as His people. Therefore when Hendrik Kraemer calls for a Copernican revolution in our understanding of ministry, it really means explosion of the miniscule conception of the ministry of the clergy, to the larger horizon of the whole worshipping*

community and finally to the farthest reaches of the whole human family. If clericalism has restricted the scope of ministry, surely church parochialism in relation to the world has fated it to become little islands and enclaves of self-interest.

Therefore a radical reorientation of our mental conception, a "conscientization" must occur in our understanding of ministry of the laity. The primary actors, the chief participants, the shapers and movers of God's history, are the people of the world, that great mass that "no one could number," "as many as the stars of heaven," most of whom have no formal identity with the church, having made no confession that "Jesus Christ rules as Lord." But they are God's own people, created in His image, reconstituted from a destiny of death to promise of life (I Cor. 15:22), called and chosen to the regal enterprise of co-worker with God in the transforming of the cosmos. "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4) he chose them also; "He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5), so also he destined them; because in the unlimited surplus of God's grace, there is no distinction, there is no division, between church and world. All are drenched in the ocean of God's love even as "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45)

Therefore, in the largest purpose of God, ministry is not the specialized activity of a special people, rendered to that great mass called the world, who become recipients

of a message and a deed rendered by a unique ministering people. Ministry is the vocation and purpose to which the whole human race is constituted and called: every life born into the world, every family and institution, every people and race and nation. Life is literally ministry.

This then is the unique ministry of the laity of the church. It is ministry of proclamation, teaching, pastoral and administrative skill in the institutions of society, possessed and empowered by the Gospel. These are all basic functions by which laity call forth gifts, as a way of helping others discover their own identity; to pierce the accumulated facades of society; demythologize powerful images which hold persons and institutions in tyranny; to dig through layers of geologic tradition and reach the subliminal subterranean streams; demystify long held religious and ideological symbols; "calling forth the gift which is the essence of the person himself" or of an institution. Obviously no formal preaching, teaching, pastoral and administrative process will be followed, but by exercising our own gifts and calling forth the gifts of others we help others discover their true identity. To use the words of Gordon Cosby, "The person who is having the time of his life doing what he is doing has a way of calling forth the deeps of another. Such a person is Good News. He is not saying the good news. He is the good news!"

This, then, is the corporate enterprise of both clergy and laity: to discern what "the Lord requires" (Micah 6:8) of the institutions of the world, what they in fact are capable

of becoming in the light of the New Age begun in Jesus Christ.

During the 1950s and 1960s the ministry of the laity was one of the most challenging subjects talked about in ecumenical circles. Hans-Ruedi Weber said it felt like "surf-riding on a ground swell of modern church history." Then the Church moved on to other concerns. Once again in the decade from the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a flurry of writing and conferencing on the ministry of the laity, now in denominational circles. Again, the wave receded. Modest residue seemed to line the shoreline to remind us that there had been a storm of interest but little else remained.

But the winds and waves of God are relentless. Perhaps, this new century will see a third and fourth wave; each coming with greater power and leaving its mark more visibly on the shoreline of the church and the world. What I do know is that the vision Jitsuo articulated with such passion is, indeed, a vision worthy of our deepest commitment. ■

Richard Broholm served as Executive Director of The Center for the Ministry of the Laity at Andover Newton Theological School in the 1980s. In 1991, he founded Seeing Things Whole, where he continues to shape the inquiry on a theology of institutions through his participation as a member of STW's Steering Committee and by serving as an Action-Research Consultant working with STW to explore the implications of faith for organizational life. For information the ongoing work on the theology of institutions, visit the web site of Seeing Things Whole at [www.seeingthingswhole.org](http://www.seeingthingswhole.org) or e-mail STW at [info@seeingthingswhole.org](mailto:info@seeingthingswhole.org).