



Editorial

The articles in this issue have little in common apart from the fact that they are all particular current manifestations of 'theology in Scotland'. Significantly, three of them come from the pens (I am sure we should now say word processors) of people who are, or have been, deeply involved in the practice of ministry. They also have a nice ecumenical balance coming from Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal and Roman Catholic sources. It is also good to note that two of them arise from work undertaken as part of intensive programmes of continuing ministerial education/ professional development.

The writings of W H Vanstone have been an inspiration to many as they have reflected upon their own ministry. Yet not much has been known about the man himself, nor of the ministry which was the context of the books which have been such a rich source of creative insight. Robert Glover has done us a service in researching the life and ministry of this Anglican priest. This pen portrait brings to us an awareness of the realities of the parish life and the personal struggles which shaped the writing. Our appreciation of Vanstone's writing is enhanced by the knowledge that his writing came out of his struggles to be a faithful minister in a real parish situation, unique as all parishes are yet no more special than any other.

Michael Burns, having been parish priest in a number of Roman Catholic parishes in Scotland, took himself off to Boston, registered in a traditionally Protestant seminary and enjoyed the academic riches of the city. Some of the thinking behind his D.Min. dissertation is now shared with us, introducing us to the concepts of Action Science as a tool for reflecting upon ministry. It is true that such theories will do nothing to prevent the institutional and personal quandaries which are the stuff of ministry; if however they provide a conceptual framework for 'naming' and understanding them, that will surely go a long way to draw from them the negative power which can so easily damage that ministry.

Brian Hardy is writing about contemporary issues in theology and sexuality but seeks to move beyond the current heated debate into a wider discussion of what it means to be human. On this issue the debates are not between, but within, churches and if we are to transcend the present fractious debate then we will require more articles like this to help us to re-consider the sincere and deeply held convictions which cause polarisation.

In the last article, Louise Lawrence introduces us to the theology of Stainer's *Crucifixion*, taking us beyond the alleged 'vulgarity' and 'sentimentality' to a fresh consideration of the biblical text of this Victorian masterpiece.

10 Years On

This issue marks a significant milestone in the life of *Theology in Scotland*. We are ten years old! Reflecting upon the process which led to the launch of the journal, Bill Shaw wrote: 'It was envisaged that the readership would consist largely of parish ministers, but by no means exclusively so. It was also intended as a resource for the Church of Scotland, but it was inconceivable that these days the ecumenical could be ignored'. Hopefully the articles in this edition are congruent with that original vision. He also wrote: 'It is clear from original responses that many ministers would like the opportunity to contribute'. That invitation remains open (with or without a dissertation waiting to see the light of day). Original contributions or even brief responses to articles published will always be welcome.

David Lyall