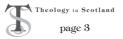# Editorial

In an essay on John Calvin's understanding of ministry formation, Jean-Marc Berthoud reminds us that Calvin linked this very closely to preaching. In preparation for ministry the main content of the university Divinity curriculum was to consist of the study of the Bible alongside the study of science, the realm of nature being the theatre of God's revelation. As to the task of *le serviteur de la Parole* – Calvin spoke of four aspects. First, the minister was to follow the biblical text in seeking its exact sense as the only norm of the Church. Second, the preacher was to utilise the appropriate linguistic tools to examine the structure and meaning of the biblical text. Third, the desired result of such study and preaching would be to purify doctrine and resist heresy. Fourth, the Word of God was to be applied to the personal *and* social elements of life with the aim of opening the way to the doctrinal and intellectual *metanoia* of the believer.[1]

The papers in this issue of *Theology in Scotland* feature some perennial elements in the *formation des pasteurs*. Martin Scott and Michael Fuller reflect on ministry formation and theological education in the context of the profoundly changed circumstances of Scottish secular society. Their respective papers offer interesting material for comparison. For Martin Scott one of the main challenges for the Church of Scotland lies in the integration of the intellectual, practical and spiritual aspects of ministry formation with structured theological reflection. While, of course, there will be a broad ecumenical outlook in this, ministry formation in the Church of Scotland will also be related to its Reformed origins. However, theological training patterns of the present and future will be distinctively different in structure – the reflective and formative components will require to be much more collaborative. A theological education of this kind will seek to foster a learning community engaging in education for mission and leadership. This will involve both academic partners and a wider range of interactions in the course of flexible, accessible training.

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[1]    Jean-Marc Berthoud, "La formation des pasteurs et la prédication de Calvin", *La revue réformée* 49 (1998):19–44.

There will also be a recognition of the importance of lifelong training as an entitlement. Dr Scott writes of this type of theological reflection as 'connecting head, hands and heart' in a seamless integration with ongoing learning and development. This, he argues, is how the Gospels portray Jesus Himself – as offering a foundation in discipleship for His followers and modelling life for those who minister in His footsteps.

In his paper, written from the perspective of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Michael Fuller argues that attention to the formation of those called to authorised ministry in the church has never been more essential than at the present. The churches are facing challenges from within and without as they witness to the Christian faith in word and deed in twenty-first century Scotland. Traditional models of formation which, in the Anglican tradition, have involved candidates for ministry spending time together in learning communities, are now under acute pressure in terms both of financial viability and the fewer numbers called to full-time ministry. The necessity remains, however, for the provision of a fully validated programme that is pedagogically and academically sound. The goal is to provide a range of foundational competencies within the framework of a programme offering a system robust enough to include small student numbers dispersed across the whole of Scotland.

For Calvin, understanding of doctrine was, of course, an essential element in ministry formation. In the course of reflecting on Tom Greggs' recent claim that Barth 'did not reject universalism [...] only problematic elements associated with it', Mark Koonz raises the fascinating question of Barth's doctrinal position on universalism. That is, the question as to whether limited atonement *or* universalism are two separate, mutually exclusive alternatives. Koonz, by contrast, argues that Barth's understanding is a good deal more complex. Limited atonement and universalism are related, not by way of paradox or as contraries, but through the absolute freedom of the grace of the living God in Jesus Christ. He draws on T. F. Torrance to illuminate further the way in which these doctrines might be harmonised coherently.

In this issue, we also include a paper by Douglas Kornahrens. Here the earlier theological tradition of the Scottish Episcopal Church is set out in historic form through examination of its leading representatives. Key texts and their place in the Episcopal tradition are approached

through a close, scholarly study of *prayer for the dear departed*. Some theologians in this tradition may already be more familiar to students of T. F. Torrance – John Forbes of Corse, for example. Others, such as William Forbes and Thomas Rattray may be less familiar, however. The significance of this paper is that we have not only a doctrinal discussion on the range, scope and legitimacy of prayer for the dead but also an introduction to some of the riches of the Scottish Episcopal theological tradition.

You are invited to respond to any of the above papers at the following weblog: www.kirkofield.com/Theology in Scotland

*Ian Maxwell*
*Editor*

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