

# EDITORIAL: My Job Description

By Paul Beasley-Murray

Following my appraisal last year it was suggested that I draw up a job description for myself. Eventually, I sat down somewhat reluctantly to write a job description.

My reluctance arose from the fact that like many others I enjoy the freedom given to me as a minister of Christ. At the end of the day, I am accountable to Christ and to Christ alone. Here lies my authority for and security in ministry. On the other hand, I recognised that if I wish to enjoy the benefits of appraisal, then clearly some kind of job description is necessary.

I thought it might be helpful to share the bare bones of my job description. Inevitably, it reflects the particularities of my ministry. Furthermore, the actual job description which I have submitted for appraisal has had to be a good deal more specific - otherwise it would be difficult to evaluate the degree to which I have been 'successful' in fulfilling my ministry. Needless to say, I recognise that the term 'successful' is ambiguous -at the end of time the Lord's judgements may be very different from ours.

So let me quote from my job description:

My first responsibility is to be an **exemplary pilgrim** to my fellow church members. Although by its nature my very humanity means that I will always fall short of the mark, nonetheless the way in which I live and cope with the ups and downs of life must be a spur and an encouragement to others in their walk with Christ. Something of the Spirit of Jesus must be discernible in me.

My commitment to a discipline, a 'rule' of prayer is a prerequisite for all that I seek to do. Every aspect of my ministry must be rooted in prayer, so that it may be both responsive to the Lord's leading, and exercised in his strength.

My second responsibility is to be an **effective leader**, enabling the church to fulfil her God-given mission.

This leadership task involves constantly defining and clarifying the church's mission and resultant strategy. It also involves building and welding together the church as a team with a view to

enabling it to be an effective mission force. Recognising the value and need to share leadership with others, another leadership task, implies encouraging and empowering others to serve with me.

Effective leadership must be pastorally sensitive -which requires that as senior minister I seek to live in tune with my people, setting a pace appropriate to them, while at the same time encouraging them to fulfil their God-given potential.

My third responsibility is to be a **charismatic preacher**: i.e. one whose sermons are vehicles for God's Spirit to touch and transform individual lives as well as the corporate life of the church. Wow! Here is a challenge not simply to teach God's Word, but to act as a prophet and an evangelist at one and the same time. Ideally Sunday services will be occasions which people will not want to miss. for they will be coming eagerly and expectantly to hear what God is wanting to say!

My fourth responsibility is to be a **creative liturgist**, who through the regular Sunday worship as also through occasional pastoral offices enables God's people not only to celebrate their faith, but also to discover resources in God for daily living.

My fifth responsibility is to be the **senior caregiver** responsible for the pastoral oversight of the church. This is a multifaceted task. for it involves not only caring for the 'weak' and for those going through the various crises of life, but also promoting the spiritual development of the 'strong'.

As senior minister I need to know all those in my pastoral charge. On the other hand, the pastoral load must be shared if the full range of pastoral responsibilities is to be fulfilled. I have a special personal responsibility for my fellow leaders.

Finally, as one who has now been engaged in Christian ministry for some 25 years and who has had the opportunity to read and reflect on pastoral practice, I find myself in the position of being able to serve others as a **pastoral consultant and/or theologian**. I seek to discharge this role firstly by sharing my insights and expertise with other members of the church staff, and secondly by exercising a wider ministry beyond the church to other ministers and churches.

As I have sought to summarise my job description, I am very conscious of its imperfections. If it provokes readers of *Ministry*

*Today* to produce something better, all to the good. The point I wish to make is that ministers striving for excellence in ministry need to put their minds to the mundane task of producing a job-description. Only so can they truly enjoy the benefits of appraisal.

## **THE POWER & THE GLORY**

**By Paul Goodliff**

*Reflections on the Conflicts of Interest Between Local Churches and Church-based Counselling Centres*

One of the fastest growing developments in local church ministry in the last 20 years is the proliferation of counselling centres and ministries in Britain, mirroring the explosion of counselling in the secular world. From the early days of the London based Westminster Pastoral Foundation (WPF) the Church Army Counselling Service, the Clinical Theology Association (CTA), and Care and Counsel, has emerged a nationwide (though patchy) counselling movement. Many Pastors have seen in this ministry an answer to their pastoral overload, either in becoming counsellors themselves, and aspiring to helping wounded people more effectively, or in establishing a counselling ministry in their church staffed by members of their congregation, trained or otherwise. There may also be a loss of nerve on the part of some pastors who trade the birth right of pastoral ministry for the pottage of humanistic counselling in the hope of more effective helping skills.

Ken Leech a decade ago rightly saw in the search for counselling skills among some clergy a symptom of their own profound loss of direction and purpose in our secular age: "So we have seen the retreat of many clergy into the 'caring professions' where they can at least feel needed and useful, earn their keep for a job well done, and retain something of their priestly role on Sundays and after office hours So the pastor becomes concerned primarily with the non-copers, with the broken and the casualty, with 'crisis