

REFLECTIONS ON THE THEOLOGY FOR  
AND  
THE PRACTISE OF THE EPISCOPATE

This paper has been written in preparation for the 1988 Lambeth Conference.

Lambeth 1968, Lambeth 1978, ACC 1971, and ACC 1984 all emphasized the importance of training for the episcopate. This paper suggests that the emphasis on training be broadened to include both preparation for episcopal ministry and continuing support throughout.

Preface

The enclosed document has been prepared as a means of assisting the Lambeth Conference to deal in some useful and constructive way with substantive issues having to do with the role and function of the bishop in the Church in the 20th Century.

This document avoids any effort to make a definitive statement about the episcopate. Its intention is to stimulate reflection and discussion and thus to foster thoughtful consideration of the episcopate at the local level.

The group that was convened by the secretary of the Lambeth Conference to work on this preparatory statement attempted to identify a series of major issues or areas of concern regarding the episcopate. Each of these issues is briefly delineated. Questions are then suggested that might lead to further consideration regarding the episcopate in a particular province or geographical area. There are more issues of concern to bishops than appear in this listing. However, the goal of this statement is to begin creative dialogues with the expectation that additional issue areas pertinent to a given region will emerge.

It is hoped that that this document will commend itself to the Primates of the Anglican Communion as a tool for Provincial Houses of Bishops to aid and facilitate reflection upon and discussion about the episcopate as it is called to witness and function in the various provinces throughout the Anglican Communion.

Whatever good may come out of a document such as this will be measured in terms of whether or not it aids a group of bishops in their perception of a valid theological framework within which they can carry out the varied tasks of episcopal mission and ministry; and further, whether or not it aids them, in some way, in understanding from a fresh point of view the practice of episcopacy. The goal is to generate peer discussion in such a way as to help bishops gain mastery in sorting out and prioritizing the competing duties and requirements of the office which frequently carry with them bewildering and conflicting expectations. This document will be most useful if it is viewed as an opening statement which awaits and expects response from bishops all over the world who carry out the ministry and mission of episcopacy under conditions so varied as to defy detailed description and classification.

### Introduction

In 1968 the Lambeth Conference made the following statement: "in common with others called to positions of leadership, bishops should have opportunities of undertaking a course of training for their office."

In 1971 the Anglican Consultative Council (Limuru, Kenya) stated: "Bishops are admittedly leaders of a special kind with spiritual responsibilities different from those of a headmaster or managing director. But they need many of the same skills.....there is now no region in the world which does not contain consultants able to help leaders obtain these skills." This statement then encourages "new bishops to be put in touch with these professional consultants as well as with those who will help them understand the tasks that fall only to bishops."

In 1978 Lambeth recommended "that written guidelines be prepared for episcopal training" and that "member churches of the Anglican Communion prepare their own versions of these guidelines in order to cover the training requirements of bishops' functioning in their particular circumstances." A table of contents for the initial guidelines was then suggested (Lambeth Conference 1978 Report, p 78). see

In reviewing these statements one gains the impression that both the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council were rather narrowly fixed on the term "training". While the word "training" represents something of value there is a more important consideration claiming attention in terms of the question, "Training for what?" Neither the purpose not the rationale for training is described either by Lambeth nor by the ACC. It would appear that the claim for the importance of training is based on a series of unstated assumptions; and the proposal that guidelines be drawn neglects and overlooks the larger purpose

to be served by suggesting that something be done to help bishops learn certain skills that are intimately related to their leadership responsibilities.

Any plan for training needs to be based upon a more comprehensive or substantive concern for the episcopate than appears in any of the documents referred to above. A view with regard to training needs to include considerations that are related to the theology for the episcopate and needs to include reflections on those aspects of the practise of episcopate that especially challenge and perplex us in the 20th Century. Further, any proposals regarding training need to carry with them some plan for implementing action in the various parts of the Anglican Communion. It is suggested that Lambeth 1988 go beyond the term "training" and use the opportunity provided by a Lambeth Conference to look more deeply into both the theology and practice of episcopacy.

As we may anticipate addressing the enlarged picture it is important to note how the various parts of the Anglican Communion have responded to date to the urgings of both Lambeth and the ACC. In some areas steps have been taken.

? Appendix "A" (attached) is a summary of programs or activities that have been developed in various provinces to assist bishops in their ministry. A review of this appendix will provide information about what has been developed and may suggest ideas and experiences that can be replicated in other regions.

### I. Training and Broader Dimensions of Concern

Through this examination of activities and programmes for training it is evident that in some parts of the Anglican Communion significant steps are being taken. By moving now beyond the rather limited term of "training" it is hoped that the broader field of both preparation for and support of the episcopate can be addressed.

Entry into the episcopate begins with election or appointment. Often this commitment comes rather suddenly and begins a process of transition that greatly alters ones life style and established work patterns. Following consecration the new bishop begins an induction period which is full of new experiences. Intense involvement with the new task frequently proves to be taxing as familiar supports are relinquished but new ones not yet supplied. In the episcopate peer support is an essential feature in the bishop's support system. A highly individualistic approach that rules out mutuality will ultimately impose severe hardships on the bishop. He will need interaction with peers in order to foster creative reflection, and out of such reflection will come insights about what he needs and requires for his own continuing education. During this early stage of induction thoughtful reflection about how one's gifts and previous experiences fit constructively into the new pattern of work and ministry lead one to new self-understanding and reflective planning for equipping oneself for episcopal ministry. Living into the role seems to be a pre-requisite for perceiving what one needs to master in order to become an effective bishop. Skill development and cognitive learning about the office of bishop are both required. Specific curriculum suggestions will depend upon background, experience, previous training and education, and local requirements. Effective curricula are developed, generally, in response to identifiable problems and needs.

In a given province it will perhaps be of value and of practical assistance if bishops will examine the local custom and tradition that prevails with regard to the incorporation of newly elected or appointed bishops into episcopal mission and ministry. Each province may find it helpful to assess and evaluate its own reality in this regard. Two sets of questions may perhaps be profitably raised: First, what generally happens? What resources or orientation experiences are provided for new bishops? As bishops move into the office and gain experience

what continuing education opportunities are available? What support mechanisms are in place so as to encourage and assure the development of mastery in this key role?

The second set of questions are directed to the bishops themselves and are designed to invite each bishop to examine his own entry experience. What was offered? How did he feel about the resources or experiences that were made available to him? How, in fact, does he feel about how he was prepared and now is supported in episcopal mission and ministry? Out of his own experience and need, what recommendation does he make?

This inquiry is a kind of analysis or evaluation and provides a reality base upon which plans and projections regarding the development of provincial resources for the preparation and on-going support of the episcopate can be erected. Plans and recommendations will vary widely from province to province depending upon needs and resources. The goal might well be that - given its particular circumstance - every province in the Anglican Communion would view this need with urgency and profound importance and would find some way to do something in the future that had not been accomplished along this line in the past.

## II. The Ordinal and Theology for The Episcopate

While bishops around the world come to the office in a great variety of ways - some by being named or appointed and others through elective processes that differ greatly - the one common experience that is a part of every bishop's life is his consecration. Associated with every consecration service is an ordinal which reflects Anglican doctrine and piety. Ordinals in themselves differ somewhat, but one of the key issues for study and discussion is precisely how a given ordinal sets the theological, spiritual, and practical tone for the exercise of episcopal mission and ministry. Ordinals throughout Anglicanism have never been compared,

*Task to compare*

and it is possible that this is a task that needs to be done.

Questions to be raised here might be: What theology for the episcopate is stated in a given ordinal? What influence or impact does the statement contained in the ordinal have upon the attitudes and resulting behaviour (or style) of the bishop? How does it influence the attitudes of the clergy and laity and their manner of responding to him?

The articulation of a theology for the episcopate is the responsibility both of the Church as a corporate entity and of each bishop as an individual participant. It is essential that in theological definition there be some interplay between the community and the person. While the community mandates, the individual implements. For this reason there must be a theological resonance between the two parties. If this assertion is acceptable then it suggests that each bishop is responsible - in a personal way - for theologizing about his role and function.

The practise of episcopacy will be influenced largely by the theological position one holds. This is so self-evident that it hardly needs to be stated: Theory guides practise.

Appendix "B" (attached) is included as a suggested theological statement regarding the episcopate. It is recognized that no such statement can be totally comprehensive, however, this statement attempts to provide a theological or conceptual framework for the practise of episcopal ministry. Seven theological themes are suggested in this statement. The actual implementation of these themes will vary greatly depending upon culture, levels of development, resources etc. One of the major questions raised regarding theology for the episcopate is the question of whether or not we have, throughout the Anglican Communion, a common theology which guides our various implementations. A review of this appendix will perhaps encourage discussion among bishops and will invite theological reflection as a means for guiding the many and varied activities a bishop necessarily becomes involved in as he pursues his episcopal ministry and mission.

While the Anglican Communion devotes attention and effort to its understanding of the ordained ministry and particularly to the role of bishops, other churches are doing the same thing. In ecumenical settings this same issue receives significant attention. There appears to be a convergence in the understanding of ordained ministry by the various parties that participate in modern ecumenical dialogue.

Among the efforts in this area are reports from the Anglican Roman Catholic International Consultation, The Anglican Lutheran Dialogue, The Anglican Reformed Conversations, and the Commission of Faith and Order of the World Council as represented in their publication entitled "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry".

Appendix "C" (attached) supplies a brief summary of ecumenical convergence regarding ministry. In ecumenical dialogue there is an inevitable preoccupation with questions of authority, oversight, and leadership. As we examine our own history, attitudes, and doctrinal position we need to remain sensitive to ecumenical concerns of ministry in general and episcopate in particular.

Theological reflection by bishops about bishops is a necessary preparatory step if the Lambeth Conference is to be more than an ecclesiastical debating society. Along with bringing one's diocese to Lambeth it is hoped that each individual bishop - stimulated and enabled by thoughtful discussion with peers - will bring his theological understanding of the Office he occupies. Leaving Lambeth with a sense of genuine theological and spiritual renewal of one's episcopate would, indeed, be a happy issue from the Lambeth experience, and would, in turn, have a profound effect at the practical level in the back home situation. What begins with the ordinal touches the most prosaic and mundane task that the bishop is called upon to perform.



### III. Personal Aspects of Consecration and Effects Upon Marriage and Family

The impact of election and consecration is felt strongly upon the bishop's wife. Often, children - still in the process of maturing and being nurtured in the home - are significantly affected. So far as marital and family life is concerned election to the episcopate begins a process of major change and transition. The questions here have to do with how sensitive the local church is to the demands that it places upon the bishop and his family and how well they are supported as they make their way thru a period of transition and adjustment. Different persons and different families may need different things. The principal question has to do with how the individuals affected are helped to handle the requirements of the new life style and the new position.

No matter how talented or how well prepared a bishop may be the quality of his domestic and familial life will influence the quality of his episcopal ministry. The way one is at home with his family will determine in an important way how he will be in his relationships with others as a bishop. The link between personal and vocational/professional life cannot be denied.

Therefore, in a given region it is important to ask: What is the tradition or custom with regard to being concerned for the bishop's wife and family? What expectations exist with regard to the role of the bishop's wife? Who is concerned for her welfare? How sensitive is the diocese to the need that the bishop has for time for his own family? To what extent is the bishop's wife free to be herself? And to what extent is she required to deal with stereotypical norms or expectations that may prove burdensome? What provisions are made to support and encourage the bishop and his wife to enrich their marital and family life? Family life education is becoming more and more prominent and valued in many parts of the world. The question is are we taking it into consideration as a normal developmental resource for primary leaders in the Church?

#### IV. Three Levels of Collegium

In 1922 the Commission of Christian Doctrine appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York published a report entitled: "Doctrine in the Church of England". In the passage devoted to the Episcopate (pp. 121-123) the following statement is made ".....the Bishop cannot be a true representative of his diocese in the Councils of the Church at large if he administers it in a autocratic spirit, but only if he is in close and sympathetic relations with both clergy and laity."

Since 1922 increasing attention has been paid to collaboration in leadership style. Autocratic and monarchical and authoritarian leaders may have been appreciated generally in times past. However, current trends seem to be in favor of shared leadership and collaborative styles.

The questions here have to do with regional norms and the extent to which a bishop is both encouraged and expected to share leadership in a collegial way. Community and cultural attitudes as well as personal temperament and preference will combine to produce a prevailing style of leadership. In the movement away from an autocratic manner toward a collaborative style there are three levels of collegial interactions that bishops need to examine.'

① First, there is the collegium of the whole people of God as expressed in the life of the diocese. At this level what degree of participation do laity and clergy have in planning, in policy formation, and in decision making? Does the bishop function truly as a symbol of unity in this collegium? Does his manner of relating to this primary collegium foster strength in the body? Does he assert leadership in such a way as to develop and train leaders? What is the quality of diocesan community life?

② Secondly, the bishop is a part of a collegium of peers in the House of Bishops to which he belongs, and the same questions can be asked about how his participation there influences the quality of community life at that level. Enhancing the corporate leadership function of the House of Bishops is a responsibility in

which all members share. Does he share actively in the life of this collegium? Does he both contribute to it and take from it? Is it for him a medium of mutuality? Does he bring harmony or discord to this community?

And there are important questions on the other side of this coin: Does life in the House of Bishops help to renew the individual participants? Are there rewards to belonging to the House? Is it supportive, inspiring, and helpful in practical ways?

② The third level of collegial life looks beyond the province to the region and the world. Interactions at this level are not as much a part of the common experience, but opportunities for participation are provided thru national, regional, and international committees, commissions, and other forms of involvements. Lambeth is one form of collegium at this level as is Partners In Mission. To what extent do bishops in a province share in these involvements? What are the pros and cons for such involvements? And how are such experiences shared with the other two collegiums?

#### V. Handling Expectations: Expressed/Unexpressed - Real/Unreal

*knowing what they are first!*

One of the most perplexing issues for a bishop is knowing how to respond to expectations. This is true at least in part because expectations of the episcopal office are not clearly expressed. The ambiguities that result may leave the bishop either torn by attempting to respond to conflicting expectations or exhausted from attempting to respond to expectations that are emotionally reinforced in his constituency, but never clarified to the point where he can be reasonably sure that he has done what is expected. Ancient custom and episcopal stereotypes still set expectations for some people.

Additionally, bishops easily fall into the trap of attempting to be the omniscient and omniscient father charged with the responsibility of meeting

the unending dependency needs of all the clergypersons and lay persons who call upon them. In this regard they are the victims of transference whose orientation to duty and predisposition to service and goodwill require that they deal with every need or expectation that is transferred to them.

While some expectations of the Office are stated many - perhaps the majority - remain unstated. Some bishops report that they did not know what was required of them at the time of election or appointment. The full dimension of the task was revealed only over time. Their episcopate was full of surprises. Of the expectations that were encountered - both expressed and unexpressed - some were found to be real and valid; but others were found to be unreal, imagined and not authentic nor relevant to the work of being a bishop in the 20th Century.

The major question here is: "Does it have to be this way?" Coping with unexpressed and unreal expectations uses up tremendous energy. Furthermore, some of these expectations are in conflict with existential reality and seem to be designed primarily to keep the bishop either perpetually guilty or hopelessly weary or both. How can expectations be surfaced, examined and evaluated, and then more or less agreed upon by the bishop and those whom he seeks to serve?

Perhaps this issue can best be dealt with in terms of establishing - or attempting to establish - reasonable performance standards for the bishop. Is this possible? Whose task might it be to try? To what extent is the bishop himself entitled to participate in stating realistic expectations for the performance of his ministry and mission? Each of us is gifted in different ways. This is part of the uniqueness that God has built into individual human lives. One bishop differs from another. How can expectations be adjusted to the reality that some persons are talented for one kind of ministry while others are equipped by temperament and training for a quite different ministry? Blanket statements about what bishops "ought" to do are singularly unhelpful at this point. The question is:

"What would be helpful?" How can the system in the diocese and the province lend support or even take initiative in the process of clarifying and stating expectations so that bishops can be less burdened and more effective?

## VI. The Classical Tensions in the Role

*conflict*  
Of all the issues that emerge in the consultation with bishops about their ministry and mission the most commonly mentioned ~~is the tension arising from the requirement that the bishop be both a competent and efficient administrator and a loving and compassionate pastor.~~ The bind created by these companion responsibilities is often painful to the bishop and frequently confusing to his constituency. There are many ways that the presence of this tension which appears to be inherent in the role can be described.

*A Ministry Ministry*  
For instance we can think of it in terms of the bishop's dual commitment to his ministry and to his mission. Mission has to do with the direct proclamation of the gospel and this includes all the administrative, management, supervisory, and organization tasks with which the bishop must comply in order to make the strength of the Church continuously productive. Ministry we tend to see as focusing on the material, psychological, physical, and spiritual needs of people so that they can be healed when necessary and empowered for mission when ready, motivated, and available. The question is: Which comes first? The answer is: "Both"; and this is precisely where the Bishop's tension begins.

✓ In 1984 the Urban Ministry Project and The William Temple Foundation (England) conducted an ecumenical training programme for Church leaders. They quickly identified tensions that they had in common. In a section of their published report entitled "Living with Tensions" (p. 6) they make the following comments:

"Despite acknowledged differences, as the course continued not only were there growing common convictions about the nature of Church leadership, tasks to be done, and a style of operating that all wished to aspire to; there was also a common recognition of the pressures and tensions under which Church leadership has to be exercised today."

The course highlighted five particular tensions which arose out of members' experience:

Chosen and set apart for leadership.....

yet.....seeking at every point to share that leadership with others.

A guardian of the faith and practice of the Church.....

yet.....an interpreter of that faith and practice in new ways.

A manager and decision maker.....

yet.....an enabler and encourager of others to make their own decisions.

A focus of unity.....

yet.....a promoter of a variety of styles of being the Church which are appropriate in some but not all circumstances.

An administrator of discipline.....

yet.....a caring, sympathetic and forgiving pastor.

*Imbued with spirit of BP*

*5 Tension points*

It is not likely that these tensions will go away. Consequently, ways need to be devised to help bishops cope with the tension, but how? Tensions create anxiety, and anxiety causes burnout. How can peers help one another to live with tensions? Access to peers is a luxury some bishops enjoy. Others live at great distances from peers. What must the individual do for himself to sustain the strain of living in tension? What imaginative ways can peers devise for supporting one another? When gatherings do occur how can they be planned and designed so that participating bishops who live in isolation from their brothers can receive benefits and support that respond to real issues in their lives, ministries, and missions? How can it be arranged so that they do not return home further drained?

## VII. Living and Working in Context

When the last hymn is sung and the elaborate service of consecration with its color and excitement is over the new bishop now feels himself in the line of succession from the Apostles. At the same time he is now face to face with a particular diocese that is unique and different from every other diocese. Being a bishop is not all the same thing. Hopefully, he feels enthusiastic and optimistic about his apostolic commission, but it can only have meaning for him within the context of the diocese to which he is now committed. His first task is to understand the context of this diocese accurately and perceptively. Everything he ever learns about administering and pastoring will have to be adapted to this particular context. The climate that prevails there is made of different factors. Every bishop needs a way or a method for assessing and learning the context to which he is called.

*Context of particular diocese*

Elements to be examined in understanding the context include these:

- Tradition (i.e. history of existing practices and customs) *& may the legacy*
- Administrative policies *& laws thereof*
- Personalities of the leaders *- present & past*
- Physical (geographic) characteristics
- Cultural characteristics of the area
- Organizational structure of the diocese *- helpful in organization*
- Diocesan values (as reflected in budgets and in time use of diocesan leaders)
- Size (numerical and geographic)

Mastering the context is the bishop's individual responsibility, but it is possible that this is an area where a bishop from another diocese can help a brother bishop see his own reality chiefly because as an outsider he has distance and objectivity. Using a peer who can be objective is one resource in assessing one's context, but what other resources are available? How does a bishop use his

lay and clergy leaders to gain accurate contextual perception? The resources of the social sciences can be helpful here, but if the use of such resources generates costs how is the decision made and what is the rationale for justifying such expenditures? Dioceses are unequal in size and hence in resources and in levels of responsibility. How is it possible to create unity in a province when units of administration differ so widely?

### VIII. The Role of the House of Bishops

Much of what is written above assumes that sometime prior to Lambeth 1988 bishops will meet by groups to reflect upon these and other issues. This assumption in itself suggests the critical role played by the House of Bishops in the life and work of every bishop wherever he may be. It is the House of Bishops which provides to the bishop the apostolic collegiality that relieves the aloneness and isolation that may threaten every bishop. This is more than a social function. Often the social function is the least well fulfilled of all the functions and expectations held with regard to the House of Bishops. More than being a social group a House of Bishops is a sustaining spiritual fellowship. Its life must come from such a center, otherwise it will remain only a social unit held together by certain political realities. The House of Bishops has as an important part of its mission servicing as a support community to its member. As suggested in various ways above the House of Bishops is the arena for mutual reflection. It is the one unit in the Church which could be held accountable for providing encouragement to bishops and taking their needs seriously. The quality of life in the fellowship is a critical issue. What is the quality that now exists? How does the House see its corporate mission and responsibility? What influences the House for good? and, on the other side of the coin, what negatively influences the function, morale, and performance of the House of Bishops? How well does it provide encouragement and support?



Is it possible that affiliation with the House takes more out of bishops' lives than it puts in? What are the factors that cause a House to flourish? What factors detract from it? Such questions as these invite bishops to examine their corporate life, and in examining it they are then in a position to take responsibility for affecting the quality and the effectiveness of corporate episcopal life.

IX. Other Issues: What Has Been Left Out?

*Practical factors*

Since the purpose of this document is to stimulate reflection and focus discussion the concluding question is: What is important to you that has not been included here? The range of specific topics or issues that need consideration is vast. In some areas of the world unique conditions and cultural factors may make an issue one of primary importance while in another part of the world that issue may barely exist. Whatever yours may be it may require both individual and corporate consideration. As we bring our issues to Lambeth, we enter the largest forum provided in Anglicanism, and we enter a forum where we may discover valued solutions, and fresh insights that could come to us in no other way.

It is hoped that each House of Bishops will examine the issues raised here, but even more importantly - each House may then find in such shared reflection an opportunity to identify its own critical issues about which specific steps can be taken to enhance its own life and to bring to Lambeth insights and recommendations that will benefit the Church at large.

A Theology For The Episcopate

"Can we assume that all Provinces within the Anglican Communion say the same thing when asked: "What is the episcopate?" We know that answers will differ widely when asked: "What does the episcopate do, and what are your behavioural expectations of bishops today in your area?" However, our primary concern here is to determine whether or not the current theory of episcopacy which guides today's practise *don't it!* coincides with the original concept of the role of bishop. If this is so then we can perhaps safely conjecture that the many varied forms of episcopacy in the world today are all valid expressions of one central theological concept.

The framing of a theological concept for episcopacy suggests the examination of assumptions such as these:

- #1 God has designed a leadership function or better stated, a series of functions to be fulfilled by some human agency for the purpose of communicating Himself to the world in the light of the Incarnation.
- #2 According to His own wisdom, and in various ways, He designates or calls certain individuals to the task of fulfilling these functions of apostolic leadership.

Following these assumptions and for the purpose of our discussion, a theological or theoretical concept of episcopate, stated in broad terms, might look something like this:

- 1. From the beginning God ordained that among His people there should be designated persons; a) who would seek at all time to discern the will of God for his creation; b) who would find meaning and purpose

in that creation; and c) would remain sensitive to the continuing revelation of God within the created order.

● 2. As His people experience the created order God knows of the risks to which human nature is submitted and the resulting tension, pain, crisis, and opportunity for growth provided in the human experience. He has prepared means of protection and healing to be communicated thru the human agency of His pastors who minister to pain and to conflict, as well as to opportunities for continuing growth.

● 3. In this ministry man's faith needs strengthening through teaching and the careful and consistent transmission of His truth from generation to generation. This truth upholds the meaning and purpose of life as set by the Divine Will, but in each generation human nature needs to be upheld by the Faith entrusted to Teachers who will teach in God's name.

● 4. Once taught and once committed to a faith, men and women come together for mutual support and for the sharing and spreading of their faith. In this dynamic of group commitment to truth leaders are required who will choose direction for the group and form the group and influence the life of the group through the selection of value - laden goals that are consistent with the Truth upon which creation and the meaning and purpose of human life are based.

● 5. In the providing of such leadership, structures for group life must be created. These structures are essential to the transmission of the truth over time and to the extension of the truth throughout the world. Just as the human body requires material nurture in order to survive, so the organizational body must be wisely nurtured and efficiently managed in order that it may both survive and be effective in extending the Church.

~~Leader/Managers~~ are held accountable for the effectiveness of the Church in both ministry and mission.

● 6. Since the organizational body is made up of beings who partake of human nature with its mixture of strengths and weaknesses there are repeated threats to its well being and a constant need for some agency to hold it in unity, harmony, and peace so that its strength can be continuously productive.

This human agency that:

- 1) perceives and discerns God's will for creation;
- 2) cares for the people of God in the midst of His creation;
- 3) points the way and teaches the faith that makes life meaningful and purposeful;
- 4) leads the faithful in their continuing faithfulness;
- 5) oversees the structures that sustain life and assure continuance;
- 6) unifies the corporate body in harmony, peace, and perpetual productivity.

This agency must also,

● 7. Witness personally to the creative power of God in His Incarnation and must order his life so that his behaviour is consonant with his declared faith."

This conceptualization of the essential human agency in the life of God's Church in the world, ordained to fulfill His will for His Body, suggests that as bishops fill this role they are called to be: 1) prophets, 2) pastors, 3) teachers, 4) leaders, 5) overseers, 6) symbols for unity, and finally 7) personal witnesses to the One Faith that binds Christians together in the Body of Christ.

These seven elements are identified as the essential ingredients of episcopacy. They are perceived as theological in nature because each finds its roots in some particular aspect of the divine nature:

1. The prophet attends to the created order and discerns there the meaning and purpose of the sacred life created and continuously

- renewed by God.
2. The pastor attends to the needs of God's people communicating the love of God thru care, concern, encouragement, and understanding.
  3. The teacher attends to the ultimate truth about God and transmits this truth so that it is seen, appreciated, and preserved.
  4. The leader attends to the community and sensing the transcendent reality of God influences human nature toward all that is righteous.
  5. The overseer attends to the orderliness of the Divine Nature, and forms and supports structures which transmit life and truth from generation to generation.
  6. The unifier attends to the perfect harmony and unity of the Divine Nature and enables the people of God to dwell together in Unity and Peace.
  7. The witness attends to God Incarnate and seeks at all times to allow his life to be caught up in and to reflect the life of the Incarnate Lord as the highest expression of human devotion to Almighty God.

● Seen in this light the bishop in the Church of God builds his function around these seven themes;

1. Discovering meaning in the created order (Prophet)
2. Communicating love (Pastor)
3. Devotion to ultimate and universal truth (Teacher)
4. Leading toward all that is purely righteous (Leader)
5. Ordering human capabilities and institutions so as to transmit life and truth (Manager)
6. Unifying diverse and conflicting elements thus bringing peace and order out of chaotic human nature (Symbol of Unity)

7. Witnessing personally to the redeeming power of the Incarnate Lord, Jesus Christ. (Witness to Christ and His Resurrection)

Dedication to these themes is God's design for the episcopate. This is the conceptual frame out of which the practise of episcopacy is derived. Each theme requires implementation and in the implementation the specific goals established and the manner in which they are realized are influenced by culture, by levels of development, and the existential realities of a given situation. In order to attain the goals certain skills are required. Effectiveness in episcopacy does not depend upon possessing certain character traits or aspects of temperament. Many varied traits and combinations of temperaments are useful to God. What is essential is the development of the skills required for the effective implementation of these themes.

Ministry and Episcopé in the Ecumenical Setting

Ecumenical convergence regarding ministry can be summed up as follows:

1. All those who are baptised are called by Christ to proclaim the good news of the conquest of evil and the inauguration of God's Kingdom by Christ, and to be a "sign and foretaste of the Kingdom".
2. Within this "royal priesthood" there are those who are called and ordained to serve all God's people, to nurture their relation to their Father in heaven and thus in fellowship with each other, so that the whole People of God can fulfill their calling to bring humankind and all creation into the Kingdom. Ordained ministry is seen as intimately tied up with the ministry of all Christians and never separated from it.
3. Ordination is a sign and pledge of the giving of the Spirit to those ordained to enable them to fulfill their ministry.
4. The ordained ministry is one of Word and Sacrament, through which the Church is built up and strengthened. As ministers of the Word, they are given authority to relate scripture and tradition to the world in which they live, and to discern the signs of the times. This ministerial authority is never exercised apart from the ministering Church, in bringing the Word to the world in the power of the Spirit.

If Anglicans can pick up the ecumenical vision they could offer much to the ecumenical movement in embodying an ordained ministry which is the servant and not the master of the Church, a ministry which reconciles and releases the People of God for obedience to the call to bring the Gospel to all nations. In this ministry Bishops can be

leaders and their position allows them influence felt far beyond the structures of specifically Anglican institutions. A stated theology for the episcopate is relevant to the ecumenical effort to understand the nature and the purpose of ordained leadership in the universal Church.

All of these considerations.....that is, our own Anglican doctrinal position as well as current ecumenical thought as it may relate to ministry and the episcopate.....these various perspectives challenge us to be more precise and articulate with regard to our Theology for episcopacy.