



# OFFICE OF PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS

July 17, 1985

Dr. Edward Powers  
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Competency  
American Management  
Associations  
135 W. 50th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10020

Dear Dr. Powers:

Enclosed please find a copy of a paper entitled "The Theology For and Practise of the Episcopate in the Anglican Communion" which I referred to in our telephone conversation of July 11th.

As soon as I can communicate with Bishop Witcher I'll be able to let you know whether or not it seems likely that we could meet together either on September 3rd or September 4th.

I look forward very much to this opportunity.

With every good wish,

Faithfully yours,

Rt. Rev. David E. Richards,  
Executive Director  
Office of Pastoral Development

DER/jjf  
Encl: Documentation:(see above)  
cc: Rt. Rev. Robert Witcher

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Why a Research Training Programme?

1. Origins of the Programme.

In a period of great change many people will question the Church's wisdom in giving any priority to such a domestic matter as the state of episcopacy. Faced with a rapidly declining economy, dramatically high unemployment, increasing social divisions and accelerating crises in Church finances, what is the point in talking about Bishops? Yet the response to such challenges in society and Church invariably raises questions about leadership. An examination of episcopacy in the 80s could make an important contribution to the Christian response to these signs of the times.

The Research-Training Programme for Bishops in the Church of England had three origins.

- i. It reflected an Anglican-wide concern over episcopacy. The 1978 Lambeth Conference expressed this concern when it asked "each member Church to provide training for Bishops after election in order more adequately to prepare them for their office; and to provide opportunities for continuing education". This recommendation was translated into a proposed Research-Training Programme for Bishops in the Church of England by the Urban Ministry Project and the William Temple Foundation. The proposal was accepted by the House of Bishops and implemented by the two sponsoring bodies in a Programme which ran from 1981 to 1983.[1] This Report has emerged out of that Programme.
- ii. It reflected a widespread concern over questions of leadership and authority in a period of increasing turbulence. The emergence of more presidential styles of government in Church and State are symptomatic of that concern's propensity to generate firmer and clearer forms of leadership and lines of accountability. Recent General Synod debates on authority and episcopacy are also illustrative of that concern.[2]
- iii. It reflected the absence of generally-accepted understandings and definitions of contemporary episcopacy, and a corresponding absence of adequate induction and in-service training for Bishops.

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[1] A second and final Course is running from 1982-84, and includes a Roman Catholic as well as Anglican Bishops, a United Reformed Church Moderator, and Methodist District Chairmen.

[2] See "Episcopacy and the Role of the Suffragan Bishop", (GS.551), and "The Anglican Consultative Council within the Anglican Communion". The convergence in Church and society of the concern over leadership is also reflected in the similarities between the Training Programme for Bishops and a British Gas training programme for middle management!

# Recommendations

1. Induction Training: the Church of England should organise the induction training of new Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops:
  - on an annual basis.
  - with an agenda consisting of the questions faced by new Bishops.
  - using the system developed by the WTF and UMP (including the allocation of new Bishops to course staff, and developing essential knowledge about dioceses).
  - with a theological dimension at all stages.
2. In-Service Training: the WTF-UMP should make suggestions to the House of Bishops for the further training of Bishops and leaders of other denominations out of the 1981-2 and 1982-4 Church Leaders Training Course.
3. Organising Episcopacy: the Dioceses' Commission should examine this Report as a contribution to the needed assessment of the emerging patterns of corporate episcopate, and the feasibility of episcopal collaboration in dioceses with only one Suffragan Bishop.
4. Register of Episcopal Skills and Experience: the House of Bishops should explore the feasibility of such an audit as an aid to new and experienced Bishops, and to the appointment of Bishops (to ensure a proper balance of skills within the episcopate).
5. Resourcing Bishops: the Church Commissioners should be asked to review with urgency the administrative and organisational support given to Suffragan and Area Bishops.
6. The Church of England and Episcopate: the House of Bishops should raise the findings of this Report with the next Lambeth Conference as a contribution to the much needed debate in the Church about what kind of episcopacy for what kind of Church in what kind of society.

THE THEOLOGY FOR AND PRACTISE OF  
THE EPISCOPATE  
IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

This paper suggests the need for a theological framework for the Episcopate. A theoretical concept which includes seven themes is stated. These themes are rooted in the Divine Nature and in the dynamic relationship between man and God. The themes include: creativity, love, truth, righteousness, order, unity and incarnation. These themes relate to the function of the bishop as he fills certain clearly defined roles. These roles are prophet, pastor, teacher, leader, overseer, unifier, and the totally undergirding role as personal witness to the Incarnate Christ.

In all times and in all places bishops are called to these roles, but the manner in which the roles are implemented depend upon and is influenced by cultural, economic, and social factors which vary widely depending upon levels of development.

The basic assumption of the paper is that theory guides practise, and if we are clear about the theological or conceptual understanding of episcopate we will be helped greatly in planning training and skill development for bishops throughout the Anglican Communion who are called to implement these theological realities under very different circumstances and conditions.

The Episcopate  
in the  
Anglican Communion

Introduction

The thesis of this paper is twofold. First, it suggests that there may exist throughout the Anglican Communion a common theology or conceptual framework for the episcopate. This is seen as a theoretical or theological view of the meaning of the role of bishop. This conceptual understanding of what it means to be a bishop is based upon the apostolic presence as referred to in scriptures and upon the apostolic tradition that emerged in the early life of the Christian Church. The conceptualization of the episcopal role has been elaborated over time, but the unarguable fact is that there existed from the beginning a concept of bishop which was viewed as essential for the full and authentic life of the Church. That concept has remained constant and is found at all times and in all parts of the Church. It is a universal so far as time and place are concerned. Wherever the church is there are bishops; and there is a common theological and conceptual foundation upon which this universal episcopate is based. This conceptualization of an essential role which is a necessity for the Church is understood to be an aspect of God's design.

The second point in the thesis is that human agents over time have attempted to implement God's design through the practise of episcopacy; and in the practise of episcopacy there has been great variety. Throughout the history of the Church the bishop has remained a key theological factor with broad, theoretical descriptions of his functions; but in practise specific expectations have varied greatly depending upon cultural, economic, and political developments; and upon the characteristics of place and time. The manner in which the theory has been implemented has

differed and changed throughout time and from place to place. While bishops have always been the same, they have not always looked and behaved in the same way.

## I

In testing this thesis some attempt needs to be made to articulate the conceptual, theological frame which - in turn, contains the myriad forms of expression or practical implementation of the theological reality. If there is, in fact, a common theology for episcopate throughout the Anglican Communion then any effort to stir up interest in and activity for the training of bishops needs to begin with this common understanding of the concept or the theory which in turn guides the practise. The practise will vary greatly around the world. The question is do these various practises, conditioned by culture and by levels of development, all stem from a common understanding of the nature or being of episcopate? Is the episcopate, conceptually speaking, one; or is it many?

If there is agreement that episcopate refers to a single theological reality, then the definition of that reality is the correct beginning point for training for 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 concern, at the start, is to determine whether or not the current theory of episcopacy which guides today's practise 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 is based on two assumptions:

- #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.

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 times 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 through 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 it's strength can be continuously productive.

This human agency that:

- 1) perceives and discerns God's will for creation; that
- 2) Cares for the people of God in the midst of His creation; that
- 3) points the way and teaches the faith that makes life meaningful and purposeful; that
- 4) leads the faithful in their continuing faithfulness;
- 5) that oversees the structures that sustain life and assure continuance; that
- 6) unifies the corporate body in harmony, peace, and perpetual productiveness - 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
2. Communicating love
3. Devotion to ultimate and universal truth
4. Leading toward all that is purely righteous
5. Ordering human capabilities and institutions so as to transmit life and truth
6. Unifying diverse and conflicting elements thus bringing peace and order out of chaotic human nature
7. Witnessing personally to the redeeming power of the Incarnate Lord, Jesus Christ.

## II

Dedication to these theme's 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.

The scheme that follows is a suggested way of examining the implementation or practise of episcopacy. What is reflected here is the way implementation occurs to a western, twentieth century observer, living in a highly developed culture.

Theology	Practise
God's Design	Man's Implementation

1. Prophet

1. Possessing a vision ( seer);  
reading the signs of the times (watchmen)
  - a) Possessing a view of God's will for His creation.
  - b) Seeing meaning and purpose in life.
  - c) Understanding culture and the implications of science, politics, economics, social trendsetc.  
i.e. Understanding the world as it is.

2. Skills required

- a) Ability to discern reality
- b) Ability to integrate facts
- c) Capacity to see where and how new knowledge is relevant to established values.

2. Pastor

1. Giving care; providing spiritual formation; fostering growth

- a) Meeting emergencies and countering threats to physical and emotional well being i.e. crisis ministry: individual and social,
- b) Feeding the spirit, resolving moral (inner) dilemmas, discerning the spirits at work in human soul's and in society i.e. spiritual formation.
- c) Enabling the use of talents, the realization of potential, the enhancement of the human factor i.e. reverence for the use of life.

2 Skills required

- a) Discernment
- b) Spiritual Direction
- c) Counseling and guiding

3. Teacher

1. Transmitting Faith and Doctrine:

- a) Capturing attention
- b) Instructing, training, forming

2. Skills required.

- a) Assessing readiness to learn
- b) Selecting methods for instructing, training and forming.
- c) Capacity to convey and convince.

4. Leader

1. Influencing others in the choice of direction and values.

- a) Understanding authority in the use of power and influence.
- b) Modeling the servant leadership of Jesus.

5. Overseer of the Church

- 2 Skills required
  - a) human relations skills
  - b) effecient use of one's own talents
  - c) Ability to discern talents of others for purposes of collaboration and delegation.

- 1. Providing for the care of all the Churches.
  - a) Understanding the requirements of organizations.
  - b) Recognizing and accepting the role of ad-ministrator
  - c) Being accountable for effectiveness in the corporate life of the Church.

- 2. Skills required.
  - a) Competence as a manager
  - b) Self-awareness and compensating for deficiencies in self for the sake of effective management.

6. Symbol of Unity

- 1. Resolving conflict; forming community; building the Body of Christ.
  - a) Removing barriers to harmony and creating peace.
  - b) Enabling community to be dynamic (not static) and Fruitful (not sterile)
  - c) Recalling thru liturgy and example

the people of God to obedience to the Lord. ( Priestly role )

7. Witness, as a person, to the Faith.

1. Affirming the Truth thru personal example.
  - a) Growing in the gifts of the Spirit ( Gal 5:22)
  - b) Stewardship of physical, mental, and economic life i.e. care of body, mind and use of possessions
  - c) Internalising the vision.
  - d) Articulating self-understanding in relationship to the story of Christ.
2. Skills required
  1. Capacity for self-knowledge.
  2. Ability to discipline and control self.
  3. Self-maintenance or self care.
  4. Capacity to learn and grow.