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"Episcopé in Relation to the Mission of the Church Today"

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Background for:

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CONTENTS

EPISCOPE AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Introduction

In seeking to probe the nature of mission as it relates to episcope, it may help to realize that the reformers of the 16th century seem to have gotten along without the noun "mission." Their word was "ministry." When they spoke of people obtaining faith in Christ, they referred to God having instituted the office of ministry for that purpose.[1]

A Lutheran World Federation study understood this Reformation view: "All ordained ministries in the Church, including the episcopal office of pastoral leadership and spiritual supervision (episcope), are founded in the mission of Jesus Christ."[2] Christ's mission was to reconcile the world to God and to work such salvation for all who would believe. "All ordained ministries in the Church are sent by Christ to proclaim and celebrate this Good News which is for all people."[3] The mission of episcope cannot be stated in any more fundamental manner.

I. Episcope and Mission, A Ministry of Word and Sacrament

The first thing to be said about a Lutheran understanding of the episcopal office, that is likely to be carried into the 21st century, is the view in the Augsburg Confession that bishops share with pastors the ministry of word and sacrament.[4] It has been common to emphasize that the ordained ministry is one ministry, regardless of a variety of forms.[5] The distinctive feature of the bishop's ministry is its scope. That ministry exists "within and for a communion of local communities"; whereas a pastor serves "within and for a local community of believers."[6]

How the ministry of word and sacrament is part of the church's mission can be seen in some of the papers from the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues.

Robert Jensen spoke of communicating the gospel to people of another persuasion or to one's own children; and I would add, to

one's own generation (in one's own culture and in one's own church) as it constantly faces new situations. For him the gospel is a message but not a set of propositions, a tradition but not a deposit. It is a viva vox, a living handing on, an occurrence; so new understanding and language are continually generated. Yet the process is not self-sufficient, because the gospel is more than a message; it is a message about the living Christ, and still more, for Christ. In other words, Christ is the subject of the utterance before becoming the object of it. The newness of language develops in a conversation where Christ is partner.[7]

With more explicit reference to mission, Robert Bertram pointed out that mission threatens to interpose gaps, but not between out there in some distant mission field and back here at some sending base. The "mission field, whether that be across the seas or downtown or just as likely on the seminary campus, is as distant theologically as it is distant from the Commissioner." There is (1) a time gap of the most drastic historical change and there is (2) a gap of unbelief about the skandalon that has existed from the beginning.

"Lutherans believe", Bertram said, "that confessional testimonies of the sixteenth century, like ecumenical creeds centuries before, faithfully crossed the horizontal gap between bygone times of their Sender and the much later times of their own mission." They did not thereby displace Scripture which retains a prior authority, with which we must engage in dealing with the historical gap for our own time.

Elaborating on the second gap, he held that the credulity gap is not a matter of unbelief about events because they are unusual --after all, a scandalous crucifixion is not all that unusual-- but unbelief about our need for those events. The Lutheran Confessions dealt with this vertical gap by championing a biblical sola fide.

Bertram concluded, "Promissio is the secret of missio." In other words, the promise of the gospel is the very substance of mission, as it is of ministry.[8]

As a bishop pursues the particular responsibilities of a ministry of word and sacrament in terms of oversight, it is good to be reminded that such responsibility is shared with other ordained clergy and with the laity.

Speaking of ministries of the whole people of God, a Lutheran World Federation study on the Lutheran Understanding of Ministry (LUM) asserted that some are shared by the laity, as for example, "the exercise of oversight (episcope) by parish councils or other groups...."[9] Then ordination is described as "a calling into pastoral leadership (episcope) through Word and Sacrament in the Church of Jesus Christ."[10] Yet, a special place is acknowledged for episcopal ministry.[11]

As we look at the bishop's ministry, I wish to note how oversight is shared with others and how it finds a place in the church's mission for the 21st century. We shall consider over sight of (1) congregations and (2) pastors, (3) the unity of the church and (4) the teaching of the church.

II. Episcope and Mission in Visitation

In the LWF study on the Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office (LUEO), a list of duties for episcopal ministries places as the first, "advising and supporting congregations in their life of worship, witness and service, by visiting them, listening to their needs, responding to their questions and helping to solve their problems."[12] Visitation has been referred to as belonging to the proprium of the episcopal office.[13] The visitation of parishes usually gives a bishop abundant opportunity for preaching and for serving, often presiding, at the eucharist. Thus the bishop is involved first hand in the mission of the ministry of word and sacrament.

Much of the bishop's involvement in mission, however, might be considered to be second hand. For example, the LWF study includes among episcopal duties, "planning and soliciting support for mission outreach both in the church and in the world."[14] While others would be doing the actual mission work, therefore, the bishop would be participating as an implementer or enabler. In this way visitation might be a major opportunity for encouraging mission, but more than support of special and distant missionary outreach would be included.

A bishop may show a congregation how it is the recipient and beneficiary of God's mission and how it is a center for engaging in God's mission.

The mission of the congregation has received a great deal of attention in recent years, one impetus being the study in the 1960's of the Missionary Structure of the Congregation. This study had a strong influence, especially among churches that were members of the World Council of Churches. The "wider evangelism" began to emphasize a congregation's concern for service in its neighborhood and for issues of social justice as ways to manifest Christian witness. Although growth in membership and concerns for budgets were not set aside, other criteria for measuring a congregation's vitality were developed.

A bishop is in a particularly good position for developing relationships between congregations located in different situations so they may learn from each other and support each other. An affluent congregation may see its mission to one less affluent in terms of sharing material and personnel resources, but it will need to learn from the other the experience with poverty and how it may be overcome.

A bishop's work with congregations in the 21st century could become increasingly difficult. Demoralizing decline in membership could plague many congregations as the post World War II baby boom generation reaches retirement and population growth levels off. Entrepreneurial, nationalistic or escapist religions on television or in competing congregations and movements could continue to be the main attraction for unchurched, unsettled or dissatisfied individuals. If political freedom and economic affluence prevail, so will varieties of life style, mobility, materialism and probably privatism. On the other hand, the complexity of society and the depersonalization in ever bigger organizations of government, business, health and education, could make personal relationships in a congregation desirable. Or a willingness to escape into authoritarianism could set in, that would want a bishop who could solve all problems. Polarization between various segments of the population could well be more intense than it already has become.

A bishop may need to help the congregation with its internal life, in order that it may be a fitting sign and witness for Christ. With growing diversity, a bishop has to work for reconciliation among factions in a congregation, or for more caring relationships among different groups of members, or for inclusive membership and leadership, as well as for developing concern for those beyond the present membership or parish boundaries. The congregation needs to see itself as a collection of ministries and not just a gathering of members and families. It needs to see that it has a corporate mission and not only many dispersed individual responsibilities.

In the visitation of parishes in North America, a bishop does not work alone. He is likely to have assistants, and committees that enlist volunteers, both ordained and lay, who represent various specializations. It might be hoped that a bishop's own contact with a congregation might emphasize the wholeness and unity of mission. At the same time, the specific circumstances of each congregation would need to receive attention. Personal acquaintance in a congregation may breed the trust that is needed for a bishop to be effective in some of the more difficult leadership demands upon the office.

Naturally, a bishop ought not to displace or weaken the initiative of pastoral or lay leadership in a congregation. Often a bishop provides support or inspiration for such initiative. Passive dependence upon the bishop's office needs to be avoided.

In fact, a bishop's visit may often be related to a congregation's pastoral leadership. Recommending a pastor to the congregation, resolving a difficulty between pastor and congregation--these are the aspects of episcopal ministry that have a strong bearing on the parish ministry of word and sacrament and therefore upon the congregation's mission.

III. Episcope and Mission in Ordination

Like visitation, ordination has been said to belong to the proprium of the episcopal office.[15] In North America, Lutheran bishops usually lead in the ordination rite or hold the prerogative to delegate the responsibility. The LWF study speaks of the duty of "ordaining pastors, or authorizing others to ordain, and serving pastors as a pastor."[16] Since those who are ordained are ministers of word and sacrament, the bishop is once again involved in implementing mission.

Actually, much more than the act of ordination is included, as the LWF study indicates when it adds, "being involved in approving, training, calling and placing of pastors, and in concern for the situation and tasks of other church workers."[17] These activities show, however, how much a Lutheran bishop in North America shares oversight with others. There are committees for guiding candidates for ordination during their preparation and for examining them and approving them for ordination. There are theological faculties for the candidates' training. A congregation votes on the call of a pastor and usually has a call committee to recommend the candidate. The bishop usually serves on the preparatory and examining committees and on the board of trustees of the theological school, and meets with candidates and call committees to facilitate placement; but all of these functions may be assigned to assistants.

Serving as pastor of pastors has proved difficult for many Lutheran bishops in North America. A common explanation points to administrative duties that allow little or no time for pastoral work. Some would maintain that a bishop's responsibility for placement of pastors makes the episcopal office unfit for ministering to a pastor with personal problems or difficulties. The pastor will be reluctant to deal confidentially with the person who can determine the future of one's career. One might wish it were otherwise; and that knowledge of personal matters would allow for improved evaluation in placement, which would benefit a pastor as well as those served.

The fact is that specialized resources are often needed to meet the pastor's need. Professional counselors, career assessment and development centers, continuing education opportunities, enrichment and encounter sessions--all have grown up to do what once a pastor of pastors may have been able to do. Some bishops have brought professional counselors on to their staff or have developed support networks among pastors or with volunteer lay specialists. As the recently organized Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was electing its 66 bishops at as many conventions, the conviction expressed most often asserted that a bishop needed to be a pastor first and foremost.

The needs are not likely to decline as society continues to grow more complex, expectations of pastors become more varied, role models less clear, standards of morals and life style less definite, conflict between secular and Christian views more intense, and pressures from competing claims mount. Family problems and marital difficulties alone have intensified and multiplied among the clergy to the point where they could demand a major portion of a bishop's time.

In discussing the oversight of ordination, we have been considering those who have been officially set apart for the ministry of word and sacrament by which, according to Augustana V, people come to faith. For those who are entrusted with this great mission task, it is easy to see why the best pastoral care should be available.

The dimension of pastoral mission was clarified by a missionary from overseas who had returned and had become a member of a congregation in the U.S.A. He wrote:

> "Our participation in the life of this Lutheran congregation, however, proved to be one of the most difficult aspects of re-entry into American society and culture. We soon discovered that many of our new friends saw their church as a bulwark of defense, a circle of safety, in the midst of the unremitting threat of change that swirled around them. This pervaded the life of the congregation. Almost intuitively, I resented this and wondered why... until I realized that their attitude called into serious question my vocation and entire ministry.
>
> "For seventeen years, on behalf of the church, I--and others with me--had been introducing into the lives and social circumstances of people in Liberia radical, sometimes dramatic, life-disturbing change. As a missionary of the Lutheran Church in America, I had been inviting my African friends and neighbors to become believers in and followers of Jesus Christ, involving a change in attitude, an alternative world-view, a different relation to God and others that entailed change in their lives, communities and culture every bit as undermining of the status quo as that experienced by the members of this American congregation in the late 1960's."[18]

The quotation helps to illustrate a statement in the LWF study of ministry. "Ordained ministers stand both within the congregation and over against it. They stand with the whole people of God because all share in the one ministry of the Church. They stand over against the congregation because in God's name they proclaim the saving Gospel to God's people, and therefore bear the authority of God's word--but only insofar as their proclamation is faithful to the Gospel."[19]

The references show how a local pastor is engaged in mission and how demanding that mission is. One might say that ordination makes a minister a missionary sent by Christ, who instituted the ministry, and by the whole church, which serves as God's agent in sending the minister to a particular parish. As such, the pastor is God's agent for sustaining with word and sacrament the ministry and mission of the laity in their service in the church and in the world.[20] Fortunately, support of the laity does not fall entirely upon pastors, since the lay people do a great deal of supporting each other. Yet, the pastor's responsibility can be overwhelming enough as to need considerable support from the bishop, or from others who are a part of the resource network that has been organized, usually with the bishop's considerable participation.

If visitation and ordination bring into focus the two fundamental responsibilities of the episcopal office, responsibilities through which a bishop participates in the mission of the church in a major way, there are two additional areas of work that have been typical of episcope--unity and teaching. These two emphases are described in Christ's prayer for the apostolic mission in John 17. The mission concern is clear in the purpose--"that the world may believe"--and in the strategy--as God has sent Jesus, so are the disciples sent. One way the world will know is by the word of truth (verse 8), hence the importance of teaching. The other is by the disciples being one as God is one (verses 21 and 23), so the importance of unity. We consider unity first.

IV. Episcope and Mission in Unity

A connection between unity and ordination and mission is made by the Faith and Order Commission of WCC at the beginning of its statement on ordained ministry: "In order to fulfil its mission, the Church needs persons who are publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus on its unity. The ministry of such persons, who since very early times have been ordained, is constitutive for the life and mission of the church."[21]

For bishops, the Faith and Order document assigns a specific role: "They provide a focus for unity in life and witness within areas comprising several eucharistic communities."[22] The truth of this statement is evident in Lutheran practice in North America, where the pastors and representatives of congregations in a regional unit of organization elect a bishop to relate to all of the congregations and pastors in their ministry and mission and to all the work which they have chosen to do together as their corporate mission. This regional bishop fulfils, then, the further statement in the document which indicates that bishops "have responsibility for leadership in the church's mission."[23]

Since the bishop's part in facilitating local mission has been dealt with previously, the part in corporate mission needs attention here. Traditionally, this has referred to institutions and agencies of higher learning and of social service, and to the organization of new congregations and ministries. The work is done mostly by experts. A bishop plays a fairly minor role as a more or less influential member on a governing board.

So the manner of the bishop's involvement is likely to be collegial, with authority asserted as guide and leader. This method would contrast with a hierarchical system where the bishop might exercise governing power in a regional jurisdiction and hand down directives to the lower echelons. Lutheran practice appears to follow fairly closely the concept of one ministry, whether that refers, as it has more recently, to the priesthood of all believers, or

whether it refers to the ordained ministry, according to the older more traditional usage. In a variety of ways, laity and clergy are involved in each of the various aspects of the oversight function that unites a region.

A less traditional kind of unity in regional church jurisdictions, but a growing form of witness, is advocacy of policy to state government, and occasionally to institutions of the business world. While again, there are committees involved, and a favorite method relies upon enlistment of the people of the church to communicate with their elected officials or to use their influence as clients of businesses, a bishop may exercise important persuasive power.

At this point, unity often extends beyond the region of a particular denomination, and in two ways. First, the national organization of a denomination may have developed a policy and program that seeks the participation of regions and their local communities. The BEM statement of WCC had noted that bishops "relate the Christian community in the area to the wider Church, and the universal Church to their community."[24] In this way the bishop is a connecting link between local mission and regional mission, but also between regional mission and churchwide or global mission.

Second, the denomination may opt for interchurch cooperation. A council or conference of churches may have initiated the activity, in which case, "bishop types" in several denominations may have been a major influence. Or bishops may have come together outside of any continuing organization. The development of ecumenical relations has been a great help for finding cooperative solutions for issues. It is worth noting that some cooperative organizations had their beginning under the stimulus of a crisis in society.

Examples of such demonstrations of unity continue to multiply. Bishops of several churches have been included in boards of new specialized organizations to deal with problems such as unemployment or racial prejudice and discrimination. Bishops have come together on an ad hoc basis to serve as reconcilers between demonstrators and government officials or between strikers and managers.

We need to note that we are not considering uncontested unity. Since opinions are likely to differ about political and economic issues, some bishops may unite while others quietly demur or loudly disagree. When an Episcopal bishop persuaded other church leaders to take action on plant closings, unemployment and general economic decline, Lutheran bishops in the area were not so enthusiastic. So the demonstration of Christian unity for human suffering always runs the risk of manifesting disunity and of dividing the Christian community.

We need to note also that much cooperation takes place without any help or hinderance from bishops. Local congregations have relied on their own combined resources to provide soup kitchens,

food pantries, shelters for the homeless and much besides.

Yet, unity at regional levels has expanded to the point where ecumenical officers and committees on ecumenical affairs have been appointed to assist and augment the bishop's work. Under the press of social change and within the freedom permitted by democracy, the churches are likely to expand their cooperation and bishops will take a leadership role in it. Declarations and actions to alleviate social ills provide a witness and service to the world, that deserves to be considered a part of the church's mission. More attention must be given to this aspect of mission as we turn to the church's teaching.

V. Episcope and Mission in Teaching

The bishop's office is a teaching office. From a Lutheran perspective this principle identifies the bishop with the pastoral office. As a minister of the word, the bishop has been identified with mission. It remains to spell out certain specifics deriving from this major thesis, and to deal with certain issues which are likely to prevail into the 21st century.

Unity in doctrine [the teaching of the church] deserves attention here, and not only as a transition from the previous section. Theological exploration is native to the church. So any bishop ignores it at some peril. The peril has increased from the effect of several trends. Elevating interchurch relations to new importance has led some people to conclude that theolgical specificity is out of date. The expansion of scientific explanations has caused people to go further and to conclude that any and all theology is out of date. An emphasis on practical administration and service often puts theology in second place. A free society spawns new religious movements and new powerful representations of Christianity that influence some of the laity and some of the clergy in the churches.

The problem was expressed poignantly in LED I by Robert Jensen, who pointed out that "despite the Lutheran denominations'... official fervor for their dogmatic tradition, the Book of Concord has little if any...communal effect among them.... The Lutheran denominations live--or do not live--by the same mixture of fundamentalism, helplessness before every wind of doctrine, tag-ends of denominational tradition, and occasional saving theological miracles by which the other American denominations live."[25]

In the middle of this situation, the resources mentioned earlier become crucial for engaging the church's leadership, both lay and clergy in theological exploration. These resources include continuing education, retreats and conferences, lectures and discussions, books and tapes. Their use requires encouragement from the bishop and events planned with help from the bishop's office.

Like a parish pastor, a busy bishop in the American environment may find it difficult to keep the mission of the church clearly in view. Much of the work may appear as no more than promoting the church as an institution to attain or maintain a secure financial position, a respectable or privileged status. Such conclusions are easily drawn by those who have not been attracted by the gospel or who are only marginally related to the church, or who like religion only as a private comfort and support, or who themselves are religious as a way to personal well-being on earth that will finally be continued in heaven. Yet at times, such impressions infect even the most faithful.

Like a parish pastor, a bishop has the difficult job of showing that the church has a transcendent nature and message and yet is significantly relevant to earthly life. It is the task of clarifying how the church and, indeed, Christian life are "not of this world", as stated in John 17, and yet how they are means by which "the kingdom of God has come near", as told in the Gospel according to St. Luke 10:9.

One concern of the church must focus on personal and family life, as has been true since New Testament times. Changes within society since World War II, and even more since the 1960's, have intensified conflicting views, and there is no reason to think that the situation will ease. A pastor or bishop might prefer to adopt a laissez faire attitude or to restrict involvement by dealing with problems in private counseling. Fortunately, denominations have been willing to mobilize expertise in theology, psychology, sociology, medicine and education in developing policy statements and to move them through precarious legislative processes in providing teaching instruments. The vital functioning of the teaching office is still crucial.

Daily life becomes more public as it grows more complex and dependent on professional specializations, commercial products and services and governmental protection and programs. Though some products allow for more privacy, such as television with home entertainment, and the automobile (as the word indicates) with self-controlled transportation, they only accommodate a need for escape from an excessively public, remotely determined, and often oppressive social environment. Some people find satisfaction by attaining positions with sufficient power of determination and control. Others enjoy sufficient affluence for material and recreational satisfaction. Still others escape into drug or alcohol abuse, or licentiousness; or take exactly the reverse route toward self improvement, social reform, or a dedication to helpful service for others.

Recreation and self improvement hold a respectable place in the programs of the church and bishops may even wish to do some teaching about them. However, social reform and helpful service deserve more of a bishop's attention. Service activities have held a respectable place in the life of the church from the beginning and I include them as a part of the mission of the church. "Go and do likewise," at the end of the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:37), stands on a par with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15).

Social reform has had a less secure place in the mission of the church. Dom Heldar Camera has remarked that when he cares for the poor, he is praised, but when he asks about the cause of poverty, he is criticized. Arguments and questions have been many. Should the church attempt to change society without first changing individuals through conversion to faith in Jesus Christ? Do not the orders of creation dictate that government should provide justice for people while the church teaches justification before God? Should not the laity of the church work for a good society through their daily vocations, while the clergy confine themselves to the distinctive vocation of ministry in and for the church? Does not the displacement of both theocracy and the establishment of religion, as they existed in colonial America, remove the church from influencing public policy? Affirmative answers to these questions could prevent bishops from exercising much of a role for social improvement.

If the church draws a different conclusion, it may start from its claim of one God for all the world and for all of life. Even if the church's concern were limited to individuals before God, that concern would stretch to the whole life of those individuals, public as well as private. Consequently, the episcopal office is concerned that means be available for thinking through vocations in the world from a Christian standpoint. Whether those means are located in parishes or are developed regionally, the bishop's office is likely to play a facilitating role.

Two developments have intensified the need for the church's corporate address to public issues. One is the growth of participatory democracy, which increases individual, both lay and clergy, social responsibility as citizen, consumer, investor, manager or worker (unionized or not), teacher or student, health care provider or patient. The other development relates to the growth of large organizations and of the public domain as noted earlier. The once popular and neat separation between orders of creation has been relativized. It is less possible for the church, even if it wished to do so, to maintain isolation from so-called secular orders. The church has insistent reasons from persistent experience to take its place among other institutions in addressing social issues. Even if denominations differ over the ethical principles, the variety in rationale needs to be presented to the decision makers. Public statements, including those developed in cooperation with non-church organizations, are a form of proclamation and witness. The bishop's voice as regional leader of the church is another.

The primary responsibility of the church continues to be the education of its membership. Methods of proceeding will wisely allow for contributions from the laity in terms of insights from both specialized occupations and deliberations on Christian vocation. Clergy will often find dialogical participation to be best.

Yet, the clergy often have fairly direct contact with social causes of individual problems and suffering. Such insights from pastoral care lend credibility to such interpretations of Scripture and doctrine as may suggest social reform. The bishop serves in this regard as any pastor might, with the sole difference of a regional base for gaining experience and for proposing structural change.

Lutherans in North America have been known to intimate that their bishops should have the authority to make proclamations about social justice as Roman Catholic bishops do. The prevailing view has commended the practice, however, that official church policy on social concerns should continue to involve study commissions and legislative bodies which include both lay and ordained participants from a variety of positions. Then bishops, like other ordained ministers, would have a part in determining policy. Their teaching on social issues would then be conformed to church policy while they continue their fundamental responsibility for the interpretation of Scripture. They may even find it necessary, as a matter of conscience, to vary from the church's position; but then should still make clear the church's official teaching.

Lutherans now debate the basis for their social ethics. The distinction of law and gospel probably still prevails in official circles. This position holds that divine law accords with natural law and is applicable in the realm of creation; whereas the gospel pertains in the realm of salvation. Inroads have been made by liberation theology, however, and the coming of the Kingdom of God receives a great deal of attention. Of course, there are various ways of developing each of these two basic theological emphases.

In spite of the intensity of the theological debates, there is considerable concurrence that the church should speak and work for human rights, for equal opportunity, for adequate availability for everyone of the necessities of human life and with dignity and self determination, for international peace, for the sustaining of creation and much more. In a church that thirty years ago rarely addressed social concerns, and then rather timidly, there is now constant staff involvement, regular statements by legislative bodies--and by bishops.

The authority is still canon, creed, and confession. The power is God's Spirit. The integrity and credibility is enhanced by compassionate worldly involvement. The means is the church, lay and clergy. The official teachers are the ordained ministers of word and sacrament with bishops properly in the lead.

Robert J. Marshall

NOTES

[1] cf. Augsburg Confession, Article V.

[2] Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office (LUEO), Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, 1983, p. 7.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, 5; also see Stephen W. Sykes, "The Ministry and the Episcopal Office: An Anglican Approach to the Confessio Augustana", LWF Report 6/7, The Augsburg Confession in Ecumenical Perspective, Geneva, 1980, pp. 34 f.

[5] Report of the International Anglican-Lutheran Conversations (IALC), SPCK, London, 1983, section II, 76.

[6] LUEO, p. 8, ¶ 6.

[7] Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue (LED I), Forward Movement, Cincinnati, 1973, pp. 50 f.

[8] The Report of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue Second Series (LED II), Forward Movement, Cincinnati, 1981, pp. 74 f., 77, 82 f., 87.

[9] The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry (LUM), Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, 1983, p. 10, ¶ 22.

[10] Op. cit., p. 16, ¶ 49.

[11] Op. cit., p. 11, § 28.

[12] LUEO, p. 10, ¶ 17.

[13] Jurgen Roloff, "The Question of the Church's Ministry in Our Generation", Lutheran World XI, 4; October, 1964, p. 394.

[14] LUEO, op. cit.

[15] Jurgen Roloff, op. cit.

[16] LUEO, op. cit.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Gerald E. Currens, "Empowerment for Change: A Strategy for Mission, Trinity Seminary Review, (Columbus, Ohio) Fall, 1986, p. 9

[19] LUM, p. 10, ¶ 24.

[20] LUM, p. 10, ¶ 24, "...persons are ordained by the Church at large, and their Gospel-authority is recognized beyond their specific place of service..."

[21] Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1982, p. 21, II, A, 8.

[22] op. cit., Ministry, III, 21, p. 24, see also p. 25, ¶ 23; p. 26, ¶ 27, 29.

[23] op. cit., ¶ 29, p. 27.

[24] Ibid.

[25] LED I, op. cit., p. 131.

HOW IS EPISCOPE RELATED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD?

FOCUS

1. This paper does not pretend to be a full statement on episcopé. It assumes and endorses the theological convergence between us on the apostolicity of the whole church and the place of episcopé within it, but focusses particularly on the Anglican experience of "bishop in synod" of a diocese as the way into the historical, theological, constitutional and pragmatic dimensions of the subject.

   There are several reasons for this. For Anglicans, the paradigm of "local church" is the diocese rather than the parish congregation, and it is in the dynamics of the pastoral oversight of a bishop that the various dimensions of episcopé are clearest: though, of course, this paradigm has implications for oversight at the parish level as for the wider level of collegiality and the unity of the Anglican Communion and beyond that.

   Another reason for focussing on the bishop-in-synod is that, in Anglican ethos, it is not possible to separate the episcopé exercised by a bishop from pastoral oversight exercised by many different people in different ways and at different levels in the Church.

2. Episcopé in this paper is thus taken to mean "oversight", "pastoral care", "authority", "leadership" in accordance with the Pullach Report (79):

   > "Episcopé or oversight concerning the purity of apostolic doctrine, the ordination of ministers and pastoral care of the Church is inherent in the apostolic character of the Church's life, mission and ministry. This has been embodied and exercised in the Church in a wide variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal. Both communions have continually held and exercised oversight in accordance with their respective understandings of church order."

"STYLE"

3. What follows will no doubt reflect certain Australian, as well as Anglican, characteristics! It is perhaps significant that the Church first arrived in Australia in 1788 in the person of one Samuel Marsden, a military chaplain - on the side of established authority - and the highly ambiguous reactions of many Australians to authority of any kind, which is both reviled and conformed to, seems to be one by-product of our founding as a gaol! Marsden, whose first church was burnt down, probably by convicts, gained the dubious title of "the flogging parson", due to the fact that he combined his pastoral oversight with the work of a magistrate. Our founding forefathers were a migrant people,

for the most part forcibly transplanted to establish penal colonies in the various States. The exception was South Australia, which being a free settlement became a "paradise of dissent" for Christians escaping the structures and oppressions of established churches and states in the "old countries", but nevertheless bringing with them their bitter sectarian rivalries.

This historical experience has had its effect on acceptable 'styles' of episcopé - it is harder to get away with 'prelacy' in Australia than it may be in some other parts of the Anglican Communion. But apart from the personal styles of individual bishops, it has also had its effects on the constitutional forms of episcopé - as will appear.

CONTEXTS

4. Contexts may be ecclesiastical, political or cultural. We will all have noticed that in the last decade or so there seems to have been a shift in ecumenical dialogue from the formulation of theological statements (important as they are) to the total existence and historical praxis of churches and Christians as their faith becomes operative in their total life and mission.

   This shift is not, I believe, just a mere rhetorical flourish of anti-colonial liberation theologies, nor even a point about the need for greater sensitivity to the way the Gospel impinges upon non-Christian cultures: rather, it goes to the heart of theological method. Whatever we make of the insistence that theology is always embedded in context, the subject of episcopé at least forces us to grapple with the real connection of faith and "order", in the sense of the ordering of the Church.

   As one Australian commentator on the ecumenical scene has put it, the question before us is -

   > How do we move from trans-confessional convergence to trans-contextual unity? [1]

5. How, then, is episcopé related to the ministry of the whole people of God? First, at the risk of preaching to the converted, I want to commend a Trinitarian basis for our consideration of Church and Ministry. Secondly, the paper explores the Anglican system of bishop-in-synod as a paradigm of oversight; and, thirdly, it attempts to draw out from that experience certain theological principles which seem to be important for our consultation.

THE MISSION OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD: SYSTEMATIC QUESTIONS

6. My first major point is that the ordering of the ministries of laity and ordained can best be shown from a systematic which begins from a consideration of the Holy Trinity in the economy of salvation: and here I quote from the Lima statement:

7. "In a broken world God calls the whole of humanity to become his people. For this purpose God chose Israel and then spoke in a unique and decisive way in Jesus Christ, his Son. Jesus made his own the nature, condition and cause of the whole human race, giving himself as a sacrifice for all. Jesus' life of service, his death and resurrection are the foundation of a new community which is built up continually by the good news of the Gospel and the gifts of the sacraments ... Belonging to the Church means living in communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

   The Church is called to proclaim and pre-figure the Kingdom of God. It accomplishes this by announcing the Gospel and by its very existence as the body of Christ ... This mission needs to be carried out in varying political, social and cultural contexts. In order to fulfil this mission faithfully they (all the members of the Church) will seek relevant forms of witness and service in each situation ...

   The Holy Spirit bestows upon the community diverse and complementary gifts ... these are for the common good of the whole people of God and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world ...

   In order to fulfil its mission, the Church needs persons who are continually and publicly responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within the multiplicity of gifts, a focus of its unity. The ministry of such persons, who since very early times have been ordained, is constitutive for the life and witness of the Church."[2]

8. The economy of salvation provides, in systematic terms, an integrated sequence: God, Christ, Spirit, Church, Ministries (lay and ordained) and it has not escaped notice that ecumenical dialogue which gives full weight to this sequence has surprising power to break up the log-jams that have be-devilled ecumenical relations in the past.[3]

9. One negative example may serveto underline the importance of the Trinitarian ground of Church and ministry. Edward Kilmartin accuses the Second Vatican Council of what he calls a "Christological short circuit":

   "Because of its Christocentric orientation, the Second Vatican Council was unable to show how the ministries of laity and ordained grow out of the mystery of the priestly people of God without the one simply being under the control of the other .... Through this Christological short circuit, the ordained are depicted as sharing in Christ's Spirit, i.e. the Spirit of the risen Lord as distinguished from the Holy Spirit. They are thus placed over against the Church rather than with the Church over against the world, i.e. humankind in need of the gospel."[4]

There is a great deal more to his argument, but his main point is clear enough - we cannot move straight from the person and work of Christ to the ordained ministry without considering the co-missioning of the Spirit and the Church. His plea for a "Trinitarian" view of Christian ministry needs to be taken seriously.

10. Although Kilmartin does not draw attention to it, there is also the other possible distortion: that of a Pneumatic or "Prophetic short circuit", if we move directly from the Holy Spirit to the charismatic, prophetic gifts of individual Christians while leaving out of practical consideration the centrality of Christ and the Church in the mystery of salvation.

To get around the "systematic circle" is important if fuses are not to be blown. This has clear implications for our discussion of episcopé. We are, of course, dealing here not so much with doctrines as with mysteries - realities only partially transparent to rational analysis and articulation but fused together at the intuitive level of worship.

With this in mind, I turn now to the Anglican praxis of episcopé as this is expressed in a system which is both "episcopal" and synodical, against a background of what has come to be called a "theology of dispersed authority".[5]

THE BISHOP IN SYNOD AS PARADIGM

11. The Historical Context

When in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the colonial churches gained their independence from the Crown, Anglican Churches outside England found the seat of their authority in synodical government of a special kind. The formal principles and practical operations of authority in these Anglican Churches are contained in the constitutional documents of the various dioceses and national Provinces, and amid their variety they reveal a common pattern; namely, that legislative authority resides neither in the 'house of bishops', nor in the various bureaux or committees of the church and certainly not in the State, but in diocesan synods and to a lesser degree in provincial or national Synods.[6] (In some Provinces of the Anglican Communion, the national Synod has more direct legislative authority than in Australia.)

Other structures of authority within Anglicanism such as national Bishops' Meetings, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council and the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury are advisory, collegial and relational, but not legislative. The conscious decision to give them no legislative power has led to a repudiation of centralised government and a refusal to have a legal basis of union.

> "The positive nature of authority which binds the Anglican Communion together is therefore seen to be moral and spiritual, resting upon the truth of the Gospel and on a charity which is patient and willing to defer to a common mind."

This distinction between legislative authority (jus) and moral authority (auctoritatem) is vital in safeguarding the Church from legalism, and in giving full weight to a moral and pastoral authority which carries weight according to the truth of its statements and the wisdom of its moral judgements and to the extent that it expresses a common mind in the Church. Both legislative and moral authority are necessary though distinct expressions of episcopé.

12. The Diocesan Bishops in Synod

Modern synodical government, with bishops and synods sharing episcopé, and with elected lay representatives going back over a century, is typical of the Anglican Communion (outside England, that is, where the Church of England has formal connections with the Crown and Parliament). Although there are local adaptations according to local circumstances, there is a family likeness detectable, the salient features being:

12.1 The diocese is the basic unit

"A diocese shall in accordance with the historic custom of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church continue to be the unit of organisation of this Church and shall be the see of a bishop." (Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia, Section 7)

Within his diocese, the duties and functions of a bishop are as described in the Report of the European Regional Commission. 1980-82, Section 42, quoting B.E.M. Ministry 29:

> "Bishops preach the Word, preside at the Sacraments and administer discipline in such a way as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight of the area to which they are called. They serve the apostolicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission. They relate the Christian community in their area to the wider Church and the universal Church to their community. They, in communion with the presbyters and deacons and the whole community, are responsible for the orderly transfer of ministerial authority in the Church."

When Anglicans think of "local church" they think primarily not of a parish but of a diocese under the pastoral oversight of a bishop. The full presence of the Church as "Church" is regarded as subsisting in the diocese. Every local church is to be understood "not as a part of the great superstructure of the Catholic Church, but as an authentic embodiment in that place of the one holy Catholic Church of Christ. Each such embodiment is able to exercise the authority of the Catholic Church, but it carries weight to the degree that it is of one mind with all the Churches".[7]

12.2 The Synod of a diocese is a duly constituted body of three "houses" (of bishop, other clergy, laity) who together share in different ways in overseeing the life and growth, the order and good government of the diocese. Thus the Synod is not the diocese but that organ of it which exercises episcopé.

The system of voting by houses on important matters and the requirement that the three houses concur renders episcopacy constitutional while giving the bishop the power of veto. Episcopé is thus shared between the bishop and synod, but the bishop has certain powers and responsibilities which do not derive from synod nor are they delegated to it. These include such things as ordination, the licensing of other ministers, confirmation and certain cases of ecclesiastical discipline. The bishop has power to act proprio motu and to initiate things which synod could not or would not be able to do, as well as being the official spokesman of the Church on public issues. What is said about the personal, the collegial and the communal aspects of episcopé in the Lima document describes fairly accurately the Anglican paradigm of episcopé (see section 14 below).[8]

12.3 The question which then arises from this constitutional ordering of episcopé is naturally, whether this is purely historical accident or whether it enshrines principles of theology which spring from the Gospel. The further question is whether Anglicans always discern and live out those principles which are enshrined in their formularies.

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

13. Recent Anglican writing on authority as expressed in constitutional episcopacy has seen enshrined in it certain theological principles held in balance.[9] Briefly summarised these are:

13.1 The Lordship of Christ

Authority while single as deriving from God and expressed concretely in Jesus is nevertheless mediated in many ways: it is "distributed among Scripture, Tradition, Creeds, the Ministry of Word and sacraments, the witness of the saints, and the consensus fidelium which is the continuing experience of the Holy Spirit through his faithful people in the Church. It is thus dispersed rather than a centralised authority having many elements which combine, interact with and check each other: these elements together contributing by a process of mutual support, mutual checking and re-dressing of errors or exaggerations to the many-sided fullness of the authority which Christ has committed to his Church."[10]

Thus while Anglicans recognise the traditional episcopal, presbyteral and congregational elements inherent in the structure of a Synod, the bishop's authority is not regarded as deriving from his Synod, but from God in Christ acting through the Church.

13.2 The Holy Spirit is given to the whole Church: Sensus Fidelium

The Spirit is not given to a privileged few, a hierarchy or a theological or spiritual élite but to the whole church.

Every Christian exercises authority according to the measure of faith bestowed upon him or her and the charisms of the Spirit who divides to each severally as he wills.

The sensus fidelium is a reality and the house of laity acting in conjunction with the clergy and bishop in synod is one of its concrete expressions. The sensus fidelium in Anglicanism takes on a distinctive meaning. It is not understood as unanimity in the sense of everyone being of exactly the same opinion, nor is it shown by majority vote in synod. Synods are not parliamentary democracies any more than they are autocracies or oligarchies. "The authority of Christ which is described in the Scriptures, ordered in the Creeds and continuing theological reflection, mediated in the ministry of Word and Sacraments, is verified in the witness of the saints and in the consensus fidelium." This graced sensitivity and discernment given to the faithful to be able intuitively to lay hold on the truths of the Gospel does not convey infallibility. Rather than truth or wisdom being "democratically" determined, consensus emerges with time, patience and an often costly love which is willing to defer to the common mind, even when on a particular issue it may not have emerged. The authority of doctrinal formulations or moral judgements, by General Councils or otherwise, rests in part on their acceptance by the body of the faithful.

13.3 Sacramentality of Order

Episcopacy (as a distinct order) is the source and centre of our order. The bishop wields his authority by virtue of his divine commission and in synodical association with his clergy and laity, expressing it in humble submission as himself under authority. Episcopé, if it truly reflects the Lordship of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to his whole church will be a real authority.

This authority is not mediated by "tactile succession" alone. Whatever 'theologies' of episcopacy are advanced, the essential point concerns the notion of sacramentality. The 1948 Lambeth Report describes this when it says that in our experience the authority of Christ is "mediated in the Ministry of Word and Sacraments by persons who are called and commissioned by God through the Church to represent both the transcendent and the immanent elements of Christ's authority." (Italics mine)

Just as the pattern of our Lord's authority is that his power operates simultaneously as immanent in and transcendent of the structures and limitations of human life, so this is represented by the bishop who is both a part of his synod and yet his episcopal authority transcends it. What is 'sacramental' is not just the act of ordination but the subsequent life and work of the person admitted to holy orders. "For you I am a bishop, but with you I am a Christian." (St Augustine)

Much more could be said about the sacramentality of orders, but perhaps enough has been said to indicate that the tension between a bishop and his synod is experienced, when Anglicans are true to their tradition, as a sacramental reality which lies close to the Gospel of the Incarnation. For this reason Anglicans are reluctant to regard episcopacy as a purely administrative appendage.

13.4 Collegiality

Episcopé, again if it truly reflects the Lordship of Christ and the gift of the Spirit to the whole Church (its Trinitarian basis) will involve the practice of collegiality at various levels. Not only does the bishop share episcopé with his synod; he shares it with his fellow Anglican bishops and beyond that. The problem of episcopé in a divided church thus arises, with the obligation to consult with those who exercise episcopé in other denominations. Furthermore, since the authority of God is one, though mediated in many ways; and since the Lordship of Christ, of which the bishop is a sign, is universal; this raises the vexed questions which surround "primacy" and the question of a universal primacy. I do no more here than place that on the agenda.

13.5 Worship

Granted that, to the casual observer, the Anglican experience of episcopé may appear to be what one Australian observer has called "chartered anarchy", I hope I have said enough to show that it rests upon a rich and complex yet coherent theology of the Church and its authority. My final theological point concerns 'theology as doxology'.

> "Liturgy, in the sense of the offering and ordering of the public worship of God, is the crucible in which these elements of authority are fused and unified in the fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the living and ascended Christ, present in the worshipping congregation who is the meaning and unity of the whole Church. He presents it to the Father, and sends it out on its mission."

The diverse elements of episcopé, precariously held in balance at the level of critical theology are, or can be, experienced as fused together at the level of worship, particularly eucharistic worship.

14. Conclusion

By taking the bishop in Synod as the paradigm of how episcopé is related to the mission of the whole Church, I do not wish to suggest that it is the only paradigm. It is, however, the primary way in which Anglicans experience it. When that experience is understood in any historical and theological depth, it throws up the theological

issues which are at the centre of the Anglican agenda for discussion: the Lordship and authority of God in Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit to the whole church and the sensus fidelium as a reality, the sacramentality of order, collegiality, primacy and the centrality of worship.

Anglicans do not always discern or live out these principles, and distortions of episcopal ministry occur (e.g. the unwieldy size of some dioceses, loss of a distinctive diaconate, bureaucracy, bad management practices, inadequate supervision of priests, technocracy, over-specialisation, authoritarianism, legalism, "democratisation", prophetic isolation of bishops, etc.)

Let me conclude with the oft-quoted words from the Lima document:

> "The ordained ministry should be exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way ... (26)
> These three aspects need to be kept together.
> In various churches, one or the other has been overemphasised at the expense of others. In some churches the personal dimension of the ordained ministry tends to diminish the collegial and communal dimensions. In other churches the collegial or communal dimension takes so much importance that the ordained ministry loses its personal dimension.
>
> Each church needs to ask itself in what way the exercise of the ordained ministry has suffered in the course of history. We therefore recognise that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study have a place in the order of life of a re-united church ... (Commentary on 26).[11]

K.S. Chittleborough

NOTES

1. Dr Richard Campbell, St Mark's Review, 81, 1975, pp 13-20.

2. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (B.E.M.), Faith and Order Paper No.111, W.C.C. 1982, Ministry, sections 1 - 8. See the whole statement.

3. Nils Ehrenstrom and Gunther Gassmann, Confessions in Dialogue, W.C.C. 1975, page 182 ff.

4. Edward Kilmartin in Concilium September 1980, pp 41-42, "Beyond Vatican II: A Trinitarian View of Christian Ministry in Episcopal Elections; the Right of the Laity."

5. See S.W.Sykes ed., Authority in the Anglican Communion, Toronto 1987. In recent Anglican writing on authority frequent reference is made to the report of a committee of the Anglican Communion at the 1948 Lambeth Conference. See Report p.34 ff. The relevant section is printed as an appendix in the above cited work and its key phrases are quoted in what follows here.

6. See H.Lowther Clarke, Constitutional Church Government, S.P.C.K. 1924 and R.A.Giles The Constitutional History of the Australian Church, London 1929.

7. Compare K.Rayner, Authority in the Church, An Anglican Perspective, a paper preparatory to Lambeth Conference 1988.

8. B.E.M. Ministry, section 26 and Commentary.

9. See Sykes 1987, pp 145-162.

10. Lambeth 1948 Report p.84, and so through this Section 13.

11. B.E.M. 26.

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Peter Moore, Bishops: But What Kind? S.P.C.K. 1982.

S.W.Sykes, Authority in the Anglican Communion, Toronto 1987.

Edward Schillebeck, Ministry, A Case for Change, S.C.M. 1981.

R.E.Brown, Priest and Bishop, Chapman 1971.

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HOW IS EPISCOPE RELATED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD?

In terms of episcopé and the ministry of the whole People of God, and, in particular, keeping in mind styles of leadership, I would like to offer:

1) some Canadian experience of a new style of leadership that developed in the early 1970's, and;

2) some research that has been going on for the past ten years by Dr. Reginald Bibby, Dept. of Sociology, University of Lethbridge, Alberta.

The first - the experience of the Canadian Churches working together in ecumenical coalitions is intended to point to ways in which the Churches work together in Canada in Social Ministry and Social Mission.

The second - Bibby's research, is in my opinion pointing to new directions in Canadian Churches' ecumenical ministry. Episcopé cannot be solely denominational - we must find ways of exercising oversight and leadership together.

First, then. The Churches in Canada have been working together for many years. They have had their denominational Councils for Social Service, written resolutions, especially for governments, on many issues; presented a united front to governments, either by a visit of Church leaders or through common submissions. For a long time, the Roman Catholic Church did not belong to the Canadian Council of Churches, rather they cooperated with the C.C.C. through a Joint Working Group.

In 1968, something new began to happen on the Canadian Church scene. At a Conference on Poverty in Montreal, there was a consensus to move in the direction of identifying the causes of poverty and not simply addressing the symptoms. A decision was eventually made to send Church observers to the UNCTAD III conference in Santiago, Chile in 1972. The issue was the terms of trade and aid. The controlling actors were GATT and the IMF. Following that experience and after some intense theological reflection, the Churches agreed to work together in a new way - to organize as a coalition that would address the global/local issues of trade. The new ecumenical coalition was named GATT-fly and the initial issue was the terms of trade for sugar - it involved governments, sugar corporations and sugar workers.

The trade and aid issues eventually led to a deepening of the perspective and analysis around the moral and ethical questions of economic justice for the Third World countries. One example of GATT-fly's work, on behalf of the Churches, was decisive involvement in the United Nations Food Conference in Rome in 1974. That model - as a way of

undertaking social mission - led to engaging in other issues in a coalitional style:

- inter-Church project on Population and Immigration - UN Conference in Bucharest, Romania, 1974;

- Project North - empowerment of native peoples on land claims and development issues;

- Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility - especially South Africa and Chile;

- Human Rights in Latin America - refugees.

It is now a 15-year history. Along the way, there have been ecumenically generated statements, wide-ranging pastoral and political action, involvement in a number of wide-ranging issues with governments, corporations, business, labor, farmers, fishermen and so on.

Here then, was a new way for Anglicans, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, United, Mennonites, Baptists to exercise ministry together. And, it had implications for the Church leaders and the way they functioned - acting and speaking together at local, national and international levels. When one thinks of the leadership of particular persons in this regard, and I think it reflective for the subject of this consultation, it is worth noting that in some of the Churches, the leadership role changes - some every two years, others every year, but in the Anglican case, the leadership remained constant in the person of Archbishop Ted Scott. So as we think about bishops, for example, it would seem to me that there is tremendous value in the tenure of leadership apart from the other questions of the nature of episcopacy.

I believe that the style of coalitional leadership is a way of understanding that it is imperative we work together and that we find a way of achieving that kind of unity at the very heart of the Christian Community and the whole People of God.

Secondly. The research being done by Reginald Bibby is probably the most significant in the Canadian scene ever. Since 1975 Bibby has been monitoring social trends in Canada through a series of ongoing adult and youth national surveys known as the Project Canada Series. These surveys have provided high quality data and have received fairly wide recognition. As well, in 1985, Bibby conducted a study for the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, published under the name of Anglitrends. The national study research has now been published under the title: Fragmented Gods - the Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada - Irwin, 319 pp.

Obviously, there is neither time nor space to present it in full. Suffice it here to simply offer some comments on Anglitrends. Surveyed were:

a) 1158 active Anglicans

b) 562 inactive Anglicans

The sample was adjusted so that it accurately mirrors the social and demographic characteristics of actives and inactives as a whole. Because Bibby located the Anglican Diocese of Toronto survey with the national surveys, he claims that the results of Anglitrends can be applied to all the Churches in Canada. In other words, the results are not unique to Anglicanism.

Some of Bibby's conclusions:
A major change in religious behaviour has been occurring in Canada. Expressed thusly, it has been the movement "from commitment to consumption". In other words, while Canadians have shown little inclination to abandon their traditional religious group affiliations, it seems clear that they are drawing upon beliefs, practices and professional services in a highly selective, consumer-like fashion - a belief here, a practice there, along with servicing in various rites of passage. It is as a French sociologist said of his country, Canadians are into "religion à la carte".

The Churches in Canada have been - consciously or unconsciously - responding to market realities. Today's church affiliate has the choice of being detached or involved, agnostic or evangelical, ascetic or socially concerned, unemotional or charismatic. An increasing proportion are choosing uncommitment over commitment and fragments over meaning systems. A growing number are choosing different items from their religious group's menu.

Thus Bibby's data must be taken seriously - the implications for oversight and leadership indicate new directions and new styles.

It is clear that church people are exhibiting compartmentalized commitment and consumption without commitment. The reality of compartmentalization requires the Churches to ask how much of life is faith supposed to address. Faith used to address the whole of life. There now seems to be what Bibby calls a "poverty of stability", a "poverty of content" and a "poverty of significance".

Bibby then suggests that the Churches would appear to have three options:

1) unconditional servicing
2) non-servicing
3) conditional servicing

All of these have both advantages and disadvantages and, at present, the Churches are, to varying degrees, following each of these possible routes. What adds urgency to the need to develop a clear rationale for one's choice is the accelerated incidence of the compartmentalization and consumption religious styles.

Certainly this knowledge requires a certain leadership style, onwards to the 21st century. Episcopé, as it relates to the whole People of God,

is perhaps more crucial than ever before and it is incumbent upon the Churches to discover the ecumenical nature of that leadership - for the well-being of the whole ministry of Christ. Hopefully, we are learning something of God's call to us in such in our coalitional actions and in discerning the realities of our time as, for example, pointed to in contemporary research and observations of social scientists.

G. Russell Hatton

TO BE THE BODY OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD

A friend of mine has described his experience of entering a marvelous cathedral in Venice where a large painting of the Crucifixion dominates the interior. Standing on the highest hill in this painting by Fra Stekka is the cross of Jesus Christ. Spreading out before him, far into the annals of time, is a stream of people going back into history. Streaming away from the cross into the future, the procession continues. As one gets closer to the picture, one discovers that the faces of all the people are directed not only on Jesus Christ, but also on one another. As one follows them further, one finds that Stekka has painted the people so that they are also focused on the world around them.

No doubt the painting is a portrait of the people of God. The portrait brings together on the one hand the Church's unity and on the other hand the Church's mission. These are inseparable. The Church is solidly drawn together in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the Church is corporately concerned for one another within the fellowship; and the attention of the People of God is on the world, that fragmented and hurting and yet redeemed world in which all of us live.

Or, to put the image closer to our immediate experience, imagine, will you, last Sunday's worshippers from each of our home parishes in one long procession.

There would be all ages--from infants carried in a parent's arm to the hobbling of the aged. Persons of color, persons from

all economic backgrounds, some dignified, others casual--all would be moving to houses of worship.

And what would this diverse crowd have in common? Certainly not much on the surface of things. What we share is that we are part of the people of God.

The image of the people of God is at the center of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. God calls and chooses a people, not because they are good, not because they have attained holiness, and not because they never go astray. In fact, the Scripture speaks of the journeying of a people who again and again lost their way, and again and again are called back.

One picture of the church, then, is a company of needy people on pilgrimage. After all, the early followers of Christ were called the people of the Way (Acts 9:2).

In that great procession, first impressions would be that many of the participants appear decent-looking, marching at a steady pace. But look more closely. Certainly, some are walking with confidence, a few are running enthusiastically, but others are crawling, and a number are being supported and even carried.

For, as we come to worship, we come with the joys and struggles of the past week. We bring with us, like it or not, burdens which haunt us, anxieties which trouble us, excitements which distract us. We come with all the ambiguity of being saints, already incorporated through baptism into the people of God, and we come as sinners in deep need of confession and forgiveness. We have come to bring all of ourselves before God to respond to the love which was shown in calling us, of all people, to be his people.

On Palm Sunday each year, our congregation has a procession of all the worshipers. We begin outdoors and then proceed down the long aisle to receive our palms at the altar. The hymn is usually "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" and we sing lustily. At the same time, however, as this praise is being offered, we are uncomfortably aware that this is the Sunday of the Passion. For later in the week, we too will crucify Christ once again. And finally, we remember that this worship service, as all Christian worship, is a little Easter, a concrete action and response to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

So there we all are in that procession each time we worship: a praising people, a crucifying people, a resurrected people. We are weak and fragile, limping along, and at the same time, we are strengthened and nourished by our belonging to the Body of Christ.

I have introduced my presentation with these two images in order for us to gain a perspective of our assigned topic: "How is episcopé related to the ministry of the people of God?"

That crucial question is first of all, let it be said loud and clear, neither a question of status and structure nor of governance and power. Rather, the key words are mutuality, responsibility, and the gift of the Spirit. Just as emphatically, the topic of episcopé and the ministry of the whole people of God is not to be limited to what lay people do or do not do within the church as they assist in worship and with other ministry within the fellowship. Rather, to speak of mission is to emphasize the members of the Body of Christ in the world, in those arenas of faith and daily life, in our families, our occupations, and our communities. To relate one's faith in Christ to living in the ordinary, the mun-

dane, the suffering world--that is what the People of God are called to do.

The subject of episcopé and the ministry of the people of God is not a peripheral issue to be looked at as a kind of afterthought and practical application after one has defined the office of ministry. Rather, the question involves the very nature and purpose and mission of the Church. We are wrestling not simply with who does what and why but with the fundamental mission of the Church to be Christ's living body in the world.

Therefore the question on which I intend to focus during this session is: What kind of understanding and practice of episcopé is needed in order to nurture the ministry of the people of God not only within the church but particularly within the world?

I

In worship, we are the gathered people of God. We come together as the community of faith, as the assembled body of believers, as the corporate members of Christ's body. We are a congregation, literally, collected into a flock.

This image, this understanding of the church as the gathered people, is the predominant image when we speak of the Church. We go to church, we say; we do things for the church. To see the Church as the assembled people of God baptized in Christ's name is certainly accurate. At the same time, if the question is asked: "Where is the Church at 11:00 o'clock on Monday morning?" the answer is "The Church is where each of us is, in our homes, offices, factories, school rooms, farms, and all other places; that is where the members of the body of Christ, the Church, are."

And that dimension of the church is often called the scattered church. Interestingly, that very term "scattered" betrays a doubleness which is also expressed in that image of the great procession on the way to worship. On the one hand, the connotations of "scattered" move toward dispersion, diffusion, even dissipated, diminished, adrift. But on the other hand, the meanings of "scattered" evoke the characteristics of seeds ripe for growth: widespread, disseminated, broadcast, planted in many different particular places.

The people of God in the world therefore is the Church at work. In all those particular places from Monday through Saturday, they are exercising their vocation as children of God, as followers of Christ.

Such an understanding is rooted in the belief that the Church exists not for itself, but on behalf of the world. We are called, all of us, to be the salt of the earth, not to be the salt of the salt. Only by not being an end in itself is the Church faithful to Jesus Christ. A truckdriver at a retreat which I led several years ago put it well in the last session: "I guess what I've learned this weekend is that I always thought I was in the world to go to church; now I see what I should have seen a long time ago, that I'm in the church in order to go into the world."

To put the matter more directly in terms of our subject of episcopé, the usual translation of this crucial term is, of course, oversight. The statement on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, for example, cites among the functions of bishops, that "they have pastoral oversight of the area to which they are called."[1] An important question therefore is: To what does "area" refer? Only

to the church buildings and pastors within that geographic domain? Or does the "area" include the world of the people of God as they live out their ministry on Monday? What exactly is the scope of the bishop's oversight? What precisely do those who have the responsibility of episcopé see and look over?

The answer to these questions is neither simple nor easy. One can begin by saying that the leadership of the Church has oversight to promote the good for all people in that territory, all the people who by their Creator live in that region. And the leadership has the particular supervision of all the people of God who by their baptism have formed the community which follows Christ. The bishop, to be sure, is to be a pastor to pastors, but at the same time, the bishop is to be a pastor of the people of God, to be the one who cares for and nurtures and guides and challenges them to be the body of Christ in the world.

II

What does that phrase, the ministry of the people of God, imply?

The People of God--in those four simple words from the description contain perhaps the most revolutionary of ideas rediscovered by the Church in the twentieth century. For these four words are used as the controlling image of Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church set forth by the Second Vatican Council. Instead of opening with a discussion of the structure and government of the church--as Vatican I did--Chapter 1, "The Mystery of the Church," begins with the ringing note, "Christ is the light of the nations," and goes on to speak of the Church as the people

to whom God communicates Himself in love. The groundwork is then laid for devoting the second chapter to the description of the Church as "the new people of God." And this term refers to the total community of the Church, including pastors as well as other faithful. A later chapter in Lumen Gentium speaks directly to those who

> ...by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven.
>
> They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity.[2]

Two later documents of Vatican II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" and "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity," spell out specific dimensions of what it means to be the people of God in today's world.

And, next month, from October 1-30, for the first time in history, an International Synod on the Laity will convene in Rome to discuss and assess what has happened concerning the vocation of the laity since Vatican II. All in all, what is taking place within the Roman Catholic communion could be documented within almost all of Christendom. Liberation theology as well as the rise of base communities all testify to the Church as the people of God in mission and service in and to the world.

Not only the phrase "the people of God" but ministry is also a term undergoing a metamorphosis in our time. The statement in

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry underlines the more recent dimension of the term: "The word ministry in its broadest sense denotes the service to which the whole people of God is called..."[3] The opening of "God's People in Ministry," a report of the Lutheran Church in America in 1984, is a typical example of the expanded meaning of ministry:

> We are all ministers. Our baptism makes us ministers. The God we confess as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier ministers to the world and calls us to join in that service.
>
> Ministry is so rich in meaning and takes such a variety of forms that it must be described in many ways. At its deepest level, ministry is rooted in the work of God. Ministry embraces both the calling of all the baptized and the office of the ordained. Ministry is the service Christians offer to each other and to the world as well as the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. It has its source in the unique ministry of the crucified and risen Jesus. Ministry is the response of Christians in every sphere of life to the gracious call of God. It is carried out in homes, at work, with friends and strangers, at church, in community and government. Ministry is the work of the people of God. Ministry by and among Christians is derived from the gifts bestowed by the Spirit in baptism and is nurtured within the household of faith.
>
> Through baptism, each of us is called to serve in the ministry of Jesus Christ.[4]

My thesis then is that the bishop as a leader in the Church is in an especially pivotal position to help animate the fullness of ministries not only within the Church but particularly in and to the world. One of the major understandings of episcopa therefore is to serve and enable all the ministries of the people of God.

III

In order to explicate that thesis, I would now like to sketch out in a beginning way two theological emphases which might well make a real difference in the Church as the people of God in min-

istry in the world and whose leadership promotes that mission. This discussion should give us a perspective to consider some practical implications in the final section of the paper.

The first theological emphasis is baptism. There is no other place to begin than with Whose we are. We are Christ's, for as St. Paul writes: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

The Church is a community, a fellowship of those who have been promised forgiveness of sins and newness of life through their baptism in Jesus Christ. Such a community of believers, such a priesthood of the baptized, lives in the awareness that at the cross was the place where the Good News was revealed most clearly, and is therefore challenged to live in suffering love for the neighbor. The concluding prayer of the rite of Holy Baptism in the Lutheran Book of Worship catches the nuances well:

> Through Baptism God has made these new brothers and sisters members of the priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that we may proclaim the promise of God and bear his creative and redeeming Word into all the world.[5]

In brief, baptism is, in Robert Jenson's phrase, "a commissioning to mission."[6]

The Lutheran World Federation's study on "The Ministry of All Baptized Believers" explicates the relationship between baptism and mission clearly:

> Through baptism, God calls individuals into His people. Baptism becomes the initial significant moment (kairos) of an ongoing relationship of faith into which God places every Christian--a moment with past, present and future implications.

> Baptism is inseparably tied to the past, to the gracious self-giving death of Christ for us. The present dimension of baptism is seen in the forgiveness of sins, acceptance by God and newness of life in the Spirit. The future is opened up by God's promise of continued love. Thus in baptism God establishes a covenant in which Christians live out their entire lives.
>
> Through baptism, God also sends the Christian into a ministry which can take a variety of forms and functions, depending upon the gifts entrusted by God, the particular role in family and society and the demands of a changing future. Open to God's future and sent by Him, each Christian, as a member of the pilgrim church, ventures forth in faith to minister.[7]

An earlier statement in the same LWF study begins to open up the specific relationship between episcopé and the ministry of the people of God:

> God is determined to care perpetually for what he has created. Through baptism he calls and enables persons to participate in this perpetual care. Ministry is this co-enabling of the baptized as the stewards of God's mysteries.[8]

And this ministry, this service and witness, is in and to the world. For ministry is the Spirit's gift to the whole church for the whole world.

IV

The word "world" has been a difficult word since the beginning of Christianity. I John 2:15, "Do not love the world," emphasizes sin, the flesh, temporality. Yet we are expected to be "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14), to illuminate and transform our surroundings. At the same time, the Psalmist sings his praises: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness therof; the world and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). The cosmos <u>is</u> God's world. And in the most amazing of gracious words, the Good News is that "God so loved the world..." (John 3:16).

Over the centuries the Church has often been tempted to encourage dualism, explicitly or implicitly:

sacred/secular

spirit/body

order/freedom

church/world

Such distrust, even rejection of the secular, of the body, of the messiness of life has sent strong signals that the state of being set apart, of being ordained, of being involved "full-time" in the Church is the only real Christian option.

It is no wonder that Christians therefore frequently compartmentalize their lives. God is not believed to be present in certain times and places: Sunday morning, yes, of course, but not on Monday in business or on Saturday in recreation and leisure. God may be present in decision-making about the use of income, but not in political or sexual decisions. God may be present with the nurse and the teacher, these helping professionals, but what about the UPS truck driver or the kid pumping gas? Of course, God is present in the beauty of the sunset and in the walk by the seashore, but what about in the grime of the factory or in the hectic tension of the computer center? Church spires point to the heavens, but what about the skyscraper of glass or the garish neon of used car lots and fast food places?

And so the schizophrenia grows. The world is, at worst, the domain of evil and endless confusion; at best, the world is neutral. "This is my Father's world," and "Beautiful Saviour, King of Creation," we may sing with great vitality, but that is not the way it strikes us on Monday morning. Out of fear, vulnerability, and a

deliberate protecting of self, we believe too frequently in the doctrine of the Real Presence at the altar, and in the doctrine of the real absence at the desk and assembly line and the kitchen sink.

Thus in addition to the doctrine of baptism (Whose we are), I would submit that we need to underline the doctrine of creation (where we are). The seemingly ordinary and the allegedly mundane in which women and men cultivate fields, design computer programs, empty bed pans, and vacuum carpets--this world is the locus of where we are in God's creation, and where we are to be participants in the on-going and interdependent work of his creation. The world, the arena of God's activity, always speaks with ambiguity and opaqueness. That means motives are mixed; compromises must be struck. Yet, it is in the very stuff of life that God calls us to be partners and colleagues to participate in the care and nurture of our life together as humankind in creation.

V

Edward Schillebeeckx opens his mammoth study of Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ with a citation from Jerome, the fourth century church scholar: "Ecclesia non est quae habet sacerdotes" which Schillebeeckx translates: "There can be no church community without a leader or a team of leaders."[9]

The final section of my paper will attempt to explore the kind and style of leadership which may best animate the fullness of ministries not only within the church but particularly within the world.

Two extremes, I would observe, are apparently being rejected in current discussions of the Church and its ministry.

1. Hierarchical

Recent Lutheran discussions of episcopacy, while rightly upholding the inherent responsibilities of oversight and leadership, insist that the differences between bishops and pastors is not one of status, but one of scope. In all of these discussions, the office of bishop is not spoken of in terms of power. Authority and leadership, yes, but the notion that in becoming a bishop a person is elevated to a position of power is strongly rejected.

2. Transference

A strand within Christianity, including at times American Lutheranism, has spoken of the ordained ministry as derived from the universal priesthood of the church. In the same spirit, some discussions of the ministry of the laity contend that what we need is a leveling of the ministries of the ordained and nonordained. Whether in the name of pietism or distorted Americanism ("we're all alike in this shop; no one can tell me anything"), this kind of egalitarianism has been and should continue to be rejected by the Church.

As the Lutheran World Federation's study of Ministry (1983) maintains,

> Ordained ministers stand both within the congregation and over against it. They stand with the whole people of God because all share in the one ministry of the Church. They stand over against the congregation because in God's name they proclaim the saving Gospel to God's people, and therefore bear the authority of God's word--but only insofar as their proclamation is faithful to the Gospel.[10]

If hierarchy leads to institutional authoritarianism, a transference theory of ministry leads to unrestrained individualism.

Both extremes--that differences between the ordained and non-ordained are everything/there really are no differences--are not viable positions for the church today. Too much order or too little order is neither wise nor desirable for the structure and mission of the church.

I sense a direction in thinking about ministry and episcopacy that rather than stressing the differences in status, the unity and the mutuality of the ministry in Christ are held up. More directly, the crucial question is: How does each ministry function together with others in order to fulfill the calling to be the church? That, we all know, is difficult to spell out. Discussions on ministry have almost always talked primarily about the differences and distinctions between the ordained and the nonordained. We do not have much track record (except for Saint Paul and other New Testament writers) to talk about the mutual encouragement and support for one another in our callings to ministry.

The ministry of Jesus Christ in all its forms is not one of worth, power and status, but that of calling, gifts, response, and responsibility. Some clergy still live out the "Herr Pastor" roles in dictatorial ways. And some lay persons are obstreperous in their dealings with clergy. But much more frequent are the many clergy who are uncertain of their identity and lay persons with great doubts about living out their faith. At its worst, the church is frequently both clerical and anti-clerical at the same time, failing to meet the actual needs of the laity, but also failing to be supportive of the clergy. For ministry is not only total (our whole lives are Christ's), but also mutual and shared (all of us together are Christ's). One wonders what the Church

would be like if half of the time, energy, and money spent on studies to define the distinct differences between clergy and laity were channeled into encouraging our mutual ministry in Jesus Christ.

We all are interdependent and need mutual support, encouragement, and affirmation. If one begins where John Reumann does in his writings on Eucharist and Ministry in Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV, "the church is a priesthood; it has an ordained ministry,"[11] then both clergy and lay need to be strengthened and undergirded. Episcopé and the ministry of the people of God are related in nothing more and nothing less than the servanthood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The phrase, sometimes used by Pope John XXIII, "to be a servant of the servants," meaningfully describes the great responsibility and calling of church leadership. Rather than an issue of power, the entire context of ministry is one of service and mutuality. As the body of Christ, the Church exists "not to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). In acknowledging Lordship over its own life, the Church is to be world-serving, not self-serving. And in that context, the leader is a servant of servants.

Such an understanding of ministry and leadership in no way lowers the status of those on whom the gifts and responsibilities of episcopé are bestowed. Rather, the function of episcopé to oversee the priority of the church and to promote its unity points to the task I have underlined: to care and support and equip the people of God to be Christ's Body in the world.

The bishop, according to the statement on Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry, has "responsibility for leadership in Christ's mis-

sion."[12] Part of that responsibility therefore is to have oversight that the people of God are equipped and supported in their ministry in their daily life, their occupations, and their communities. The leadership, in brief, must continue to ask not only how is the Church doing, but how in the world is the Church doing?

The Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission study, Ministry in the Church, devotes a large section to the Teaching Ministry and Teaching Authority of the bishops. The study concludes that the bishops can discharge this task "only in community with the whole church. For the entire people of God participates in the prophetic office of Christ, the entire people of God receives the supernatural sense of the faith from the Holy Spirit."[13] To be prophetic is part of what it means to be a member of the priesthood of the baptized.

In his provocative book, The New Reformation,[14] Bishop J. A. T. Robinson pointed out that the resource for theology in the twentieth century is precisely that: the church as the people of God in the world. He traces the sources of theology in the history of the church: in the early church after the New Testament, episcopal theology, the feeding and nurturing of the flock, was central. Later, monastic theology emphasized the contemplative, and medieval theology with its university setting focused on scholastic theology. Since the Reformation, the training of a professional clergy has meant a centering on pastoral theology, the development of skills of the ordained. His point is that each of these strands can and should continue to be sources for theological reflection. But the church of the twenty-first century will find that their

thinking about the power of the Gospel will be primarily in the context of the lives of the people of God in the world.

The care and nurture of the flock is and will continue to be the task of the shepherd. But that care and nurture takes place not only when the sheep are within the sheepfold, but also when they are out in the fields experiencing both green pastures and danger.

Today, the Church still hears the words of Christ to Peter: "Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17). To give one's self for the life of the sheep is what episcopé implies. For to be the Body of Christ giving itself in the name of Christ--that has been, and is, and will be the mission of the Church.

Nelvin Vos

NOTES

[1] Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), Ministry, Paragraph 29.

[2] Lumen Gentium, Chapter IV, Section 31.

[3] Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Ministry, Paragraph 7.

[4] "God's People in Ministry," Minutes of 1986 Convention of the Lutheran Church in America, pp. 240-257.

[5] Holy Baptism, Lutheran Book of Worship, (Minneapolis: Augsburg and Philadelphia: LCA Board of Publication, 1978), p. 124.

[6] Robert W. Jenson, "Baptism for Ministry," unpublished paper presented at the Colloquium on the Ministry of the Laity, May 24, 1982, sponsored by LAOS in Ministry.

[7] The Ministry of All Baptized Believers (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1980), pp. 26-27.

[8] Ibid., p. 14.

[9] Edward Schillebeeckx, Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ (New York: Crossroad, 1984), p. 1.

[10] The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1983), Paragraph 21.

[11] John Reumann, "Ordained Ministry and Layman in Lutheranism," Lutherans and Roman Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry, ed. Paul C. Empie, T. Austin Murphy (New York, Washington, D.C.: USA National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs, 1970), p. 232. This lengthy essay, the most substantial study which I found, of the relationship of the ordained and lay in the Lutheran tradition, deserves more attention.

[12] Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Ministry, Paragraph 29.

[13] Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, Ministry in the Church (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1982), p. 21.

EPISCOPE AND THE LAITY

Most discussions of episcope tend to focus on the relationship of oversight to the 'professionals' in the church or how the bishop or church leader relates to the ministry, to the preserving of doctrine and to the continuity of the church as institution. Although the laity relates in a very integral way to each of these elements, it is too easy for the 'people of God' to be an add-on, to be an 'oh, yes, of course, but...' rather than the first and essential element which one discusses and around which all the other questions: ministry, doctrine, institution, must circle. There is a renewed interest today in the doctrine of the laity, in the essential role of the 'people of God'. Nevertheless it seems as though one does not have a clear cut concept of which is the cart and which the horse. Pastors and church leaders speak glibly of being 'servants' or even 'servants of the servants' and yet seem to have little idea of what servanthood means, who is truly serving whom. In Barrie's play, The Admirable Crichton, the servant is quick to move into the master role given the opportunity and change of circumstances. There are times when the laity feels that pastors and church leaders have become Crichtons in the desert island of the church and they expect unquestioning acceptance of their decisions on the part of the laity actually functioning in the servant role.

Such a role confusion is understandable, however, given the amount of uncertainty or difference of opinion to be found, at least in the Lutheran churches in North America on the whole question of the doctrine of the ministry. It was the sharp differences on this question which came close to shipwrecking the planning for the ELCA. In fact the planning for the new church could only continue because the decision was made not to deal with the ministry issue but to leave it to a study to be undertaken once the ELCA was functioning. Although the major issues to be dealt with relate to the ordained ministry, the whole question of the ministry of the 'people of God' must be taken into account or once again the laity will be only an add-on. And that would not only divide but weaken the understanding of the church.

Donald Heiges, in his book The Christian Calling, has stressed so clearly the mutuality as well as simbiotic relationship of the ministry of the ordained and the lay: "...within the life of the church all Christians have a ministry to bring to each other, a mutual ministry to physical and spiritual needs in the household of faith." Thus pastors are appointed to a ministry of Word and sacrament and they and other 'professionals' carry the responsibility of 'building up the body of Christ'. "The

reverse is true," Heiges comments, "with regard to the church's task of evangelism and service in the world. Here the major responsibility must be borne directly by the laity of the church." (p.100)

The laity have been slow and sometimes extremely hesitant to see, accept and act upon this ministry which is theirs in the church. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which has been the tendency to see the layperson as someone who is second-rate or at least a novice. "Oh, I'm just a layperson in that field or on that subject," has come to mean in our culture someone who is uninformed. Thus one of the first tasks of a new understanding of ministry and the role of the laity will be to redeem the word 'layperson' or 'laity' from the negative connotation which it bears for many people.

This uncertainty should not deter us from discussing the issue at hand, however. As Nelvin Vos has written: The point should be clear: our subject,"The Vocation of the Laity," is in ferment in all the meanings of that word--often confusing, sometimes festering, frequently disturbing, and most of all, always exciting. (The New Church Debate, p. 91.)

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In inviting me to comment on the topic of the relation of episcope to the laity it was suggested that one ought to reflect on whether or not this relationship is affected by cultural context. It seems to me that such is clear on the North American scene. A brief look at how the Lutheran churches developed amid American democratic institutions will illustrate the point.

Alexis de Tocqueville, that nineteenth century European observor and commentator on the American scene remarked on how thoroughly involved people from all walks of life were in their churches. They not only participated in but also directed many of the affairs of their congregations. Jerald Brauer suggests six reasons for this: the American frontier and its impact on church life; the separation of church and state; the role of revivalism; the concept of equality; the development of free associations in society; the dominant theological influences among the immigrant church groups: English puritanism and continental pietism. (The Role of Laity in the Life of the Congregation, passim)

Not all religious groups which came found themselves particularly comfortable in this context. Many, including not a few Lutherans, mourned their loss of protection and support from government and their dependence upon the vox populi, a concept in which they had very little faith. Nevertheless they quickly discovered if they were going to

survive in the new world and retain their immigrant members, much less appeal to any converts, they must adjust to this different scene. This was certainly true for the Lutherans. In the colonial period they found themselves with few pastors, not a lot of support from the churches in Europe and a host of 'pretenders' who tried to pass themselves off as pastors although they had neither theological training nor ordination. The result was that early forms of ecclesiastical organization among Lutherans were almost all congregational. The model of church organization available and most frequently used was the Amsterdam Church Order of 1592. Developed in the Netherlands where Lutherans were in a minority it seemed to fit the American scene. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, upon his arrival in 1742, found this order in place and it became the chief source of congregational constitutions which he helped to put in place among German-speaking Lutherans. Such a church order assumed that all congregational leadership, including the pastor, was to be elected and, what was even more critical, "...in important matters decisions were not to be made 'by the preachers alone, nor by the other trustees alone, nor by the six elders or six deacons alone' but 'according to the custom of the country, by a two-thirds vote of the communicant members of the congregation,'" (quoted in Tappert, "Lutheran Ecclesiastical Government in the United States," Asheim/Gold, p. 158)

Such parish congregationalism was not long reflected in the larger church or ministerium where pastors began to link up with one another and where there was a growing sense of a need for 'oversight' to help in dealing with what for many Lutherans was still a foreign religious environment. Although in the founding of the Ministerium and later in separate synods lay persons were always represented at meetings in order to report on their congregations they usually did not have vote and normally did not take part in ordinations which were the responsibility of the clergy as a whole or the clergy represented by their elected president. In a few rare instances a local congregation ordained their own pastor and such ordinations were recognized. The normal pattern, however, was for ordination to be by the larger ecclesiastical body.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century this experience was more or less repeated in the mid-west with a new wave of immigrants and few pastors to serve them. On one point Lutherans in both the east and the mid-west seemed in agreement: they had no use for either the title or office of bishop in their midst. For the most part, however, they felt the need of an ecclesiastical body, be it Synod or Ministerium, to provide unity and support. Such a body was responsible for the preservation of doctrine through its responsibility for ordination. Leadership within the ecclesiastical body, however, was usually elected for a

term. In some synods such election was by the clergy alone, in others one found the practice common today that the laity participate in such votes. In local parishes, however, there still exists strong strands of congregationalism and such lay exercise of authority relates in varying ways to oversight on the synodical or national level.

This brief historical sketch has really only taken into account the problems in organization which most Lutherans found in coming to the United States. One needs to recognize that these tendencies were intensified by the six elements which Brauer indicates: the frontier, separation of church and state, revivalism, the concept of equality, free associations as well as theological influences.

EPISCOPE AND THE LAITY TODAY

As one enters the present debate, whether it is on the ministry in general or on episcope in particular, the point of view from which North American Lutherans begin is often quite different from other denominations. Timothy F. Lull, in discussing the differences between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, points this out rather strongly:

> Even if the role of bishop can be agreeably defined, there is still a fundamental difference that probably separates most Lutherans from most Catholics and will continue to do so for some time. A Lutheran tends to start with the congregation and to ask what else may be needed for the fulness of the church. A Catholic has strong theological reasons--almost demands--to start with bishops and then to ask whether parishes are necessary.
>
> Many Lutherans and many Catholics (and others) will quickly converge as they all admit the mutual necessity of parishes and of bishops. But the logical, traditional starting point for thinking is so different that true convergence will probably take a long time. A Catholic is inclined to say that 'the bishopric is logically, intrinsically and historically prior to the parish.' A Lutheran in North America is likely to think that we have districts, synods, and bishops because local congregations were willing to have them. (The New Church Debate, p. 147)

Both of these positions, Lull admits, are overly simplistic and do not form a good basis for dialogue. Nevertheless they point out the direction in which the North American context has pushed a good deal of Lutheran thinking.

The laity in eighteenth and nineteenth century North American churches assumed a large amount of leadership in

congregations out of necessity. The old world figures who had usually provided leadership: secular governors; princes; bishops; university trained theologians; even, in some instances, pastors, simply were not available. Today there is again an increased role for the laity in the church. This time, however, the movement comes not from necessity but from a new or renewed understanding of the ministry of the laity. Perhaps it would be clearer to speak of a new or renewed understanding of the doctrine of the ministry, both the ministry of the ordained and the ministry of the laity:

> ...it is clear that the office of God's gospel-rule is the ministry which the whole church as a community has to the world. To be in the church is to be appointed to responsibility for the speaking of the gospel in the world; baptism is the appointment. (Robert Jenson, Lutheranism, p. 117)

Speaking the Word of the Gospel to the world comes in two ways: direct witnessing to others or evangelism and the living of one's Christian calling in every facet of one's secular life. The latter means understanding one's responsibility to work for peace and justice in the world. Both of these roles make up the ministry of the laity. A major function of the ministry of the ordained becomes, then, to equip the laity for this ministry in the world. The relationship of the laity and the clergy in the local parish becomes their working out of mutual support for each other in the ministry they are to do.

But what of episcope? The classic claims for episcopacy have been to understand the bishop as shepherd; teacher; celebrant; source of unity; and administrator. (Joseph A. Burgess, "What is a Bishop?" paper prepared for the CNLC, 1984, pp. 10-13). How would such roles of episcope or bishop relate to the laity and their ministry to and in the world?

Too often there has been a tendency to understand the episcopal role as relating most directly to the clergy and only tangentially to the laity. A bishop is expected to be not only the one who ordains the clergy but who has a continuing special relationship with the clergy as 'pastor (shepherd) to pastors.' In the teaching and administrative roles as well, the bishop's major contact remains with the clergy. Many laypersons have little or no contact with a bishop unless they are elected to attend a Synod convention in which case they have the opportunity not only to see the bishop function but also to take part in election of bishops to their posts. Such occasional contacts for a few, however, are not enough to enable the bishop to provide support and enable a true ministry of the laity. How might

a bishop provide the same kind of support to the ministry of the laity that is provided for the ministry of the ordained?

In the first place such leadership would make abundantly clear its support of the ministry of the laity. And that would have to be support not just for the increased roles of laypersons in the lives of congregations but also support for the laity's ministry of living out their Christian vocations in the secular world. Many laity don't think their pastor, much less their bishop, knows or cares to understand what 'the real world', the Monday to Saturday world, is all about. Episcope which is going to be more than just 'pastor to pastors', which is going to be shepherd to all in the church must take seriously the total ministry of the laity.

In the second place if today's bishops are going to teach they must first be willing to learn, and much of that learning must begin with listening. Laypersons are deeply concerned about the biblical and theological roots of their faith. They don't want to be fed pablum; they need and want protein. They also, however, need to learn about a faith that is not merely couched in biblical or theological terms. They need to feel that their faith helps them to cope with the day-to-day decisions and crises which they must face. If episcope in the church is going to be able to teach, it must first know what are the questions which need answering; it must listen.

In the third place if episcope today is going to be the symbol of unity in the church then it must be willing to model that unity. That does not mean that there can be no differences of opinion in the church. There must, however, be a willingness by the leadership to tackle difficult questions, to engage knowledgeable laity in the dialogue, and to assist the church to reach consensus in the light of the gospel message. This does not mean some kind of magisterium is what is needed. Nevertheless if the church is going to be more than a safe haven for persons wanting to flee from the travails of this world then it must be willing to do more than just stand by and wring its hands as great problems are being addressed on the secular scene. The dialogue and, hopefully, consensus within the church's leadership will model for the laity a process for them. This is, I think, a particularly important role for church leadership in North America given our particular history. If the church is, as Robert Jenson says, not just people but 'the people gathered', the people locked together in an event, (Lutheranism, p. 131) then we cannot support that great American shibboleth of individualism. Episcope must model that 'gatheredness' for the church as the laity must be willing to model it in secular society.

The Lutheran church in North America has had an unusual history which saw committed laypersons determined to establish their churches on this new continent long before there were many and sometimes any clergy. In such a milieu episcope gets expressed in different kinds of ways. Today, some two hundred years later, Lutheran laity are looking for episcope which understands, supports and is committed to the whole ministry of the church, including the ministry of the laity to and in the world.

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IN THE LIGHT OF OUR COMMON MISSION, WHAT NEEDS TO BE REFORMED IN OUR ANGLICAN EXPRESSION OF EPISCOPE?

It is difficult to propose some responses to this question until we, Anglicans and Lutherans, have engaged in the previous question, What is our common mission? And that question is determined by the answers to the radical one, What is the Church? Suggestions about the reformation of episcopé have to state first the assumptions about the Church in which such reformation will take place.

This paper is based on the assumption that primarily the Church is the People of God, " a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" called to the mission of declaring ". . . the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9). This assumption seems to me to lead us to different ways of understanding church and therefore episcopé from that which stresses the assumption that "the Church is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the head and all baptized people are the members." Using the latter assumption the Church can often be shaped hierarchically with episcopé at the top, holding it together, rather than serving a sacramental and functional role within the People of God. Also, rather than episcopé standing as "one" at the top, the assumption of the corporateness of the People of God leads to perceptions of the corporateness of episcopé.

The ancient Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1916) available in my Maine cottage suggests two different understandings of reform (811-812). One is "to change into a new and improved form or condition"; the other "to restore to a former good state." Both definitions depend on a meaning of "form" as

"the aspect under which a thing appears." (Webster, 1916, 396)

This paper will for the most part be suggesting new ways in which episcopé can appear or be expected to appear which restores or fulfills that which episcopé has been in the history of the Church. However, it is critical that we not stop at that but be open to the possibility of changes of episcopé into new and unexpected forms which can better serve the People of God in mission now and in the future.

The form of episcopé does not remain static. It has been re-formed throughout the Church's history. It is being re-formed now within Anglicanism as a diversity of persons from different cultures, languages, gifts are selected to embody episcopé. The possibility of the ordination of women as bishops is pushing the Anglican Communion to wrestle seriously with its expectation of the form of episcopé. Certainly the renewed understanding of the Church as the whole People of God will occasion different expectations of episcopé. It is precisely because of the need for being surprised by new possibilities of the form of episcopé that our discussions about it must be ecumenical (implying whole world). We can only begin to consider that kind of re-form from a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

Reform of Episcopé as Guardian and Symbol of Unity

Early in the life of the Christian communities there was a recognized need for persons to be the links between the geographically separated communities, between persons in each community, and most importantly between the Christian disciples and Jesus himself. So it was natural that episcopé was given the role of "guardian and symbol of unity." This is one form of episcopé that now needs to be re-formed. We suggest that re-formation in at least three ways.

First, episcopé needs to be expressed as and expected as the unity of

the Christian community across time and space and the diversity of God's creation. This is critical in order for us to know that there is no such entity as a "lone Christian" or "a separate Christian congregation." Christians need to know they are part of a whole body, a great "cloud of witnesses" in order to be moved to and supported in mission. Episcopé is both symbol and strengthener of this linking.

Several years ago I was in Nanjing visiting the theological seminary of the Church in China. Bishop Ting, principal of the seminary and chair of the Christian Council of China, said to me, "Do not be surprised if we decide to have bishops in the Church in China. They will not be administrative officers as you know bishops but they will suit our needs in China." Although we did not discuss specifically their reasons for wanting bishops, the implication of his further remarks were that through the corporateness of episcopé in the world-wide Christian Church links might be built between the Christian community in China and the rest of the Church across space and time. What is true of that part of the People of God is true of the whole of this People, and especially so as it responds to God's call to mission.

Those links are very important also in helping the People of God to define its identity. Episcopé needs to be a constant symbol and reminder of our history, our roots. I believe it was Cicero who once said something like, "He who does not know history is condemned to live always as a child." History serves as a benchmark for where those growing into maturity might go in mission. It can be a model for where we should not go. It gives us a perspective which allows us to risk trying the mission in a different way because we can see God's action throughout all history. Whatever we do about the specific form of episcopé which is defined by "apostolic succession" it does seem crucial to form an expression which signifies the temporal links of the People of

God.

Also this People of God needs the symbol and action of episcopé to live in its interdependence and mutual responsibility. This is different from getting bishops together for meetings for it is not primarily an administrative matter. It is related to the root meaning of the word "episcopé" which comes from the same word as does "scope". It is a seeing whole, an awareness that the mission covers the whole scope. The form of episcopé needs to call forth that awareness and reality.

A second way in which episcopé needs to be re-formed to restore that which it was as "guardian and symbol of unity" is as an amalgam of being and doing, a joining of action and reflection. The People of God need to live in this joining for the mission requires both. One of the bishops I have served with was a man about whom one said with deep appreciation, "This man really was a bishop." However, he had no administrative skills and the People of God in that place did not find much support for them in their mission. There are bishops who are excellent doers; the Episcopal Church in the USA has been working to improve the executive standards of its episcopate. Recently several USA dioceses have chosen persons with proven pastoral gifts as bishops and then hired administrative persons to carry out the action of the diocese. None of these models seems the answer. What needs re-formation in episcopé is a way in which this separation of being and doing need not happen.

In the early church the bishop came to the fore as the connection with the risen Christ; recognized not for what he did but for what he was. At the same time the People of God needed persons who could help them understand who they were and what their mission was. It was through this intertwining of both necessary roles that episcopé was shaped. The People of God still need that embodiment to know that mission is essentially both being and doing.

When we consider episcopé as the place where unity is symbolized and guarded we are tempted to see this hierarchically, bringing the diversity into control. However, a third way in which we might re-form episcopé as a focus of unity is to expect it to be the evocator, user, and supporter of the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit to all the People of God. From the earliest times of the Church there has been a recognition that the gifts of the Spirit have been given in order that the Church could fulfill its mission. Much of the tragic history of the Church has been caused by the attempt to define and restrict whose gifts and ministries were acceptable and whose not. We are still putting vast amounts of energy into defining the validity of gifts based on age or sex or race or education or status of lay or ordained. Episcopé has the possibility of being a way to break through to re-formed expressions of the gift-filled community. What will be critical here is that episcopé itself be an incarnation of reconciled diversity.

Reform of Episcopé as Practitioner and Symbol of Teaching Church

Throughout much of the history of the Church episcopé has been given the responsibility for the preservation and teaching of the tradition. Although this is still accepted within Anglicanism and recognized in such places as the promises made by bishops in their ordination, we at least in the Episcopal Church seem to have lost our image of the teaching Church and our expectations of the bishops as re-presentatives of this responsibility. Therefore this is another place where episcopé needs to be re-formed in order to strengthen the People of God in our common mission. This seems particularly important in Anglican-Lutheran discussions because much of Lutheran teaching has held with Melancthon that "The 'true church' exists where one can find the continuity of authentic teaching and where, consequently, authentic faith can exist."(1)

In a recent article Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, has offered a new model for how the teaching Church may form the consciences of the People of God so that they may act in all the arenas of their lives as a whole ". . . community of believers who hold certain beliefs, values and practices."(2) In Arcbishop Weakland's model the role of the bishop is suggested as:

- asking the crucial questions of the protagonists of the various positions on specific contemporary issues;
- clarifying the tradition;
- creating the structure needed for fairness and comprehensiveness.

This is much like a suggestion made by Professor John MacQuarrie in an article, "The bishop and theologians." He says that, "Theology is the responsibility of the whole Church, and can only be rightly done if the whole Church participates." He proposes that this task of "co-theologising" be done by bishops, theologians, and laity ". . . who know better than theologians or clergy the state of play in the workaday secular world." The special responsibility of bishops would be ". . . to encourage inquiry", ". . . to get such thinking going. . . and to enable and guide the dialogue."(3)

The strengthening of the mission of the People of God requires that episcopé be reformed as the expression of a teaching community.

Reform of Episcopé as Pointer and Symbol of Vision

The Greek word σκοπος from which our word "episcopé" comes can mean "mark, aim" as well as "watcher". As we consider the ways in which episcopé needs to be re-formed in light of our mission we should expect some expression of a clear sense of the aim of our being. In 1979 the United Presbyterian Church of the USA sponsored a study of the kinds of pastoral leadership in congregations which had actively involved their members in ministry to one

another and in the community, ministries of caring, of justice and reconciliation, of witness and dialogue. One of the recurring themes in these congregations was the presence of a clear vision of mission, strong sense of the mark and aim of this Christian community, and leadership which engaged members in the ongoing definition and articulation of the vision.

Our traditional definition of episcopé as "overseer" is too often heavy, controlling, limiting. The possibility of understanding episcopé as the common aim, the mark that is among us, of who we are or are intended to be as the People of God, can provide both sacramental and functional power for mission.

Conclusion

When we concur on the re-forms that are needed, it will be necessary to bring them about in a variety of ways. Probably the most effective mode of re-form in both our churches is liturgical.

At present in the Episcopal Church there is confusion over what to do with the Sacrament of Confirmation now that we recognize that the Sacrament of Baptism is complete as initiation into the People of God and bestowal of the Holy Spirit. However, an important reason for retaining the Sacrament of Confirmation is as a way of linking the local congregation and individual Christian to the whole people of God through the bishop. The rite of confirmation does this by implication. How could this rite and/or sacrament be re-vised in order to make and be seen to make this linking?

With such liturgical revision the People of God also need teaching so that they may understand the re-formed story told in the liturgy and know how to use this story to strengthen them in mission. Probably it is through imaginative developments in liturgy and education rather than in legislative changes that episcopé can be re-formed to serve the People of God.

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NOTES

(1) Cooke, Bernard, Ministry to Word and Sacraments. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976., 291.

(2)Weakland, Rembert G., "The Church in Worldly Affairs: Tensions between Laity and Clergy," America. New York: America Press, 1986.

(3) MacQuarrie, John, "The bishop and theologians," in Today's Church and Today's World. The Lambeth Conference 1978 Preparatory Articles. London: CIO Publishing House, 1977, 252-253.

IN THE LIGHT OF OUR COMMON MISSION, WHAT NEEDS TO BE REFORMED IN OUR RESPECTIVE EXPRESSIONS OF EPISCOPE?

This paper will deal with the topic first by offering a perspective, indebted to a Lutheran theologian, on current ecumenism and suggesting a context for understanding this consultation. It will go on to make some remarks on theology, mission and unity, and then on episkope before suggesting ways of reforming our present expressions of episkope with special reference to mission. It will conclude with two contrasting examples of episkope.

i. A Perspective on Ecumenism

a) Thematic and Procedural Ecumenism

There has been a considerable change in the nature of ecumenism in recent years. One way of putting it broadly is that for many churches and theologians the balance has shifted from emphasis on key themes of Christian identity (faith, order, the need for visible unity) towards practical procedures whereby Christian communities can relate better and do Christian things together (1). Neither need exclude the other, of course, but the way in which they are related is vital to the sort of ecumenism that is pursued.

The thematic approach has been primary in most ecumenical dialogue and theology this century, reaching a climax in Vatican II and its aftermath. Its main theological support came from movements whose chief characteristic was ressourcement - going back behind the centuries of division to Christian sources in the biblical, patristic and medieval periods, and reassessing later sources, thus helping to recover an ecumenical Christian identity and giving fresh, more historically aware criteria for trying to arrive at agreement. But it is arguable that this recovery of the sources was always more popular with theologians (to whom it gave a very important role) than with either ecclesiastical authorities or the wider body of clergy and laity. For them the attraction of ecumenism was more to do with aggiornamento - updating the church, making it more relevant to modern conditions, issues and threats, and cooperating wherever possible in this, recognizing the practical and missionary problems posed by church division. This 'procedural' emphasis has become dominant and many theologians now share it.

The reasons for the change are diverse and at many levels, and partly to be traced to the failure of many attempts at closer structural unity between various churches. The most obvious symptom of the change is lack of enthusiasm for full, visible unity as a Christian priority and something valuable in itself. The frontiers between denominations can be opened up and many exchanges and much cooperation can occur, but the basic denominational identity is not threatened.

This has tremendous attractions. Some anti-ecumenical Protestants

have recognized this all along - why spend so much energy on visible unity when you can cooperate in missionary societies and enterprises and above all get on with saving souls? Those who focus more on saving societies and the oppressed can likewise see the quest for church unity as a distraction from the struggle against other divisions. Theologians who move freely across denominational boundaries can feel less need for the tortuous work of doing away with denominations. And so on through many varieties of anti-ecumenism, nondenominationalism and interdenominationalism. There are sometimes reactions in the form of a need to reinforce denominational identity (2), since all partners in a pluralistic scene need to be distinctive and have their own integrity. The result of it all is the harnessing of most ecumenical effort to the aggiornamento concerns of the church in the modern world, and a distinct lack of excitement among theologians, denominational authorities and laity for church unity as distinct from e.g. intercommunion.

b) This Consultation

How does this consultation fit in? For one coming late to the Anglican-Lutheran discussons and reviewing the results so far, it appears that they have been going with the prevailing winds. A key statement is in the Cold Ash document of 1983 where the goal of the dialogue is given:

> (24) We look forward to the day when full communion is established between Anglican and Lutheran churches.
>
> (25) By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith... (3)

This aim of full communion rather than unity is the heart of the matter.

In view of this it is natural that Cold Ash should be followed by the present consultation: concern for mission is a sensible 'procedural' option when the main traditional 'thematic' one has been suspended or rejected. It also follows that the title given for this paper is about 'common' mission but 'respective' expressions of episkope.

c) Theology, Unity and Mission

I consider that unity, not full communion, should be the goal. Even if full communion is only seen as an interim goal, unity being of course the eschatological hope, there is a danger of the good being enemy of the best, with the 'autonomy' of full communion being a more stubborn obstacle to unity than anything at present. So we need to be discussing common episkope as well as common mission.

Anything other than unity betrays the best ecumenical theology of this century. In 1959 the Faith and Order Working Committee of the W.C.C. sent a minute to the Central Committee which became the basis of the 1961 New Delhi Assembly statement on unity:

> The Faith and Order Movement was born in the hope that it would be, under God, a help to the 'churches' in realizing His will for

the unity of the Church....

> We believe that the unity which is both God's will and His gift to His Church is one which brings all in each place who confess Christ Jesus as Lord into a fully committed fellowship with one another through one baptism into Him, preaching one Gospel and breaking one bread, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all; and which at the same time unites them with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are acknowledged by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls the Church.
>
> It is for such true churchly unity that we believe we and all the World Council must pray and work. Such a vision has indeed been the inspiration of the Faith and Order Movement in the past, and we reaffirm that this is still our goal. We recognize that the brief definition of our objective which we have given above leaves many questions unanswered. We can see that its achievement involves nothing less than a death and rebirth for many forms of church life as we have known them. We believe that nothing less costly can finally suffice. (4)

That raises a radical question about the Cold Ash position.

The chairman of that working committee was Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, and I suggest him as a 'real symbol' relevant to this consultation: a participant for many years in world missionary affairs and the W.C.C., a Presbyterian influenced by A.M. Ramsey in his acceptance of episcopacy, a bishop in the Church of South India where common mission and common episkope go together, and later a professor of mission. His book The Open Secret contains some of the best elements of ecumenical theology in relation to mission. It offers a theology (a trinitarian understanding of mission which wrestles with matters of authority, evangelism, peace and justice and other religions) which is a helpful context in which to read this paper. But to get beyond the inadequacies of mid-century ressourcement more fundamental thinking is needed, and I find signs of this in, among others, George Lindbeck's so far fragmentary ecclesiology. The key issue is: how are the proper concerns of 'procedural' ecumenism done justice to in an approach which gives primacy to the 'thematic'?

To point up the issue for the Consultation: is there any adequate Christian theological justification for the goal of our two churches having common mission while retaining 'autonomy'? If not, let us revise the goal. This is essential to the topic of this paper because an appropriate form of unity can be seen as intrinsic to mission and vice versa. Above all, the eventual goal must be the unity of all in each place under a common episkope. As Ananda Rao Samuel of the Church of South India has written:

> More and more I find leaders of many churches subordinating unity to mission. I feel that this kind of subordination is contrary to the insight that we gain from the New Testament. If I might put it simply, mission is liberation and unity is

reconciliation. They go together. (5)

ii. Remarks on Episkope

There seems to be considerable convergence on episkope between statements such as the 1978 Lambeth Conference preparatory articles, Today's Church and Today's World (6), Eucharist and Ministry. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV (7), the WCC Faith and Order Paper 102 on Episkope and episcopate in ecumenical perspective (8), The ARCIC Final Report of 1982 (9), the Lima document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (10), the LWF study Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office (11) and others. The general thrust is to remove theological objections to a united episcopate, certainly as far as Anglicans and Lutherans are concerned. I will make some suggestions in the next section about how the Anglican approach could be reformed to help this process, but now want to comment on two matters especially relevant to mission.

a) Models of Authority

The first is about the relation of church authority to the power structures of society. It could be argued that in the patristic period the concept of God was revolutionized in trinitarian terms as the gospel, together with Christian worship and experience, enabled it to be reconceived. That revolution could be seen as still incomplete. But the mainstream Christian concept of church authority was never revolutionized by the gospel in any thoroughgoing way, despite the existence of perhaps more definite pointers in that direction than in the direction of the Trinity. The result might be summarized as undue assimilation to hierarchical political and civil service models of authority. Those are still deeply influential, but it seems to me that there are more hopeful signs of a widespread appreciation of the need for thorough critique of this today than at any other time in church history. If episkope and mission are to be appropriately related in modern societies there is obvious need to work out the gospel in relation prevailing secular models of authority.

I will remark on one such model, that of the corporate manager, executive or director, an international figure of great influence. Both Anglican and Lutheran churches have features shared with modern corporations and have members who run corporations. In discussions about episcopacy a recurring concern is the burden of administration. The deeper issue here is about the way large organizations are run. They may be there, but I have not found good studies of this in relation to episcopacy. How can Anglicans and Lutherans take account of the models and pressures of powerful modern forms of authority in corporate enterprises in such a way that episkope neither succumbs (as so often in the past and present) to patterns not adequately informed by the gospel, nor fails to learn from them where possible?

b) The Primary Level of the Church?

The second matter is about what might be called the 'location of agency' in the church. Some of the above-mentioned documents note the need

to combine the three main options in episkope, represented historically by episcopacy, presbyterianism and congregationalism. Episcopacy needs to be focussed in a person, but this person needs to be responsible and accountable in relation both to other holders of episkope and to each local congregation. So the agency is both focussed and distributed, with the critical questions being about how this is properly done.

But in all this there is a level of the church that is not adequately taken into account: that of the small group. By small group I mean those of extended family size in which there can be a combination of mutuality, shared life and concerted action and responsibility rarely found in whole congregations or larger units. Such groups are a major phenomenon of the contemporary church worldwide and are of immense importance in mission, acting as centres of initiative and nurture at the grassroots and in many structures of society. They vary enormously in type. I think a good sociological and theological case can be made for seeing them as the primary level of the church, rather than giving that position to the individual, the congregation, the diocese or region, the national or international church.

Episcopacy at present is not well suited to serving this primary level, and often discourages it either through non-recognition or inertia or through fear of its undoubted capacity for fragmentation and schism ('the corruption of the best is the worst'!). The best episcopacy of the future will be that which enables all the other levels to recognize the primacy of this one and which itself creatively seeks the health and multiplication of these basic 'family' groups. They cannot do without all the other levels, but the health of the whole church is vitally linked to that of these often ignored units.

iii. Suggestions for Reform

1. If the goal is to be unity, not just full communion, then we need to make it quite clear that we are ready for what the Faith and Order minute called 'nothing less than a death and rebirth' or our respective expressions of episcopacy.

The most appropriate first step in this would be repentance of particular sins committed by our churches in this area. The Church of South India would be a good place to start, because in relation to that both our churches seem to have things of which to repent.

It would be worth considering carefully the whole history of CSI from this standpoint. Anglicans might specially ask whether the following statement of Bishop Newbigin is true and whether there is here something of which to repent:

> I believe that if the Lambeth Conference of 1948 had been able to give a straightforward blessing to what had been done in South India, the way would have been open for a great movement of unity. But that moment was lost, and it may not come again in our time. (12)

Lutherans might investigate the 'non-theological' reasons why they did

not, according to the Wimbledon Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Continuation Committee in 1986, join the CSI in 1947, and why they have still failed to respond to the CSI's willingness for unity ever since.

This may seem negative, and it may seem that the churches have moved on since then, but I suspect that without repentance of particular decisions at points of krisis we will find that 'unity by stages' comes up against the same sort of barriers when (as it ought to do) it threatens autonomy.

2. The present Anglican approach to episcopacy is in practice backward-looking in an inappropriate way and acts as a fence to keep others out rather than as a help to unity and common mission. CSI can again serve as an example. In 1986 the General Synod of the Church of England refused full recognition to the ministry of the CSI because there are still in it some non-episcopally ordained presbyters. This was logical, but by a past-dominated logic. An adequate eschatological logic might be able to affirm together such propositions as the following:

the church lives by grace, and we can affirm as true churches some which lack the 'historic episcopate';

if such churches are committed to or already practising full unity with an historic episcopal church, as in CSI, then we can fully recognize their presbyters without reordination or supplemental ordination;

only through the actual practice of a united and uniting pastoral and missionary office of the episcopate (and it is significant that the CSI places special emphasis on its bishops being pioneers in evangelism) can the right sort of unity happen - and that requires, as in marriage, faith, hope and commitment to it before it is seen to work.

The anomalous Church of England position in relation to the Church of North India should be avoided: the form of service integrating presbyters in the CNI has been officially defined by C of E lawyers as equivalent to ordination. So in effect the C of E has required reordination of those of other churches, and even CSI presbyters must go through this rite if they are to serve in CNI.

3. We need fresh Christian thinking, principles and practice regarding 'the bishop as chief executive and administrator' if we are to be a sign of the Kingdom of God among other institutions. For example, the encouragement of a 'wisdom tradition' about modern corporate leadership would help both holders of episkope in the church and Christians in other corporate leadership positions.

4. The primacy of the small group level (from the 12 apostles and New Testament house churches onwards) should be considered, and episkope conceived as a service to these key 'locations of agency' in the church. This is also probably the main practical way for ordained ministry to be ordered towards the support of lay leadership and the encouragement of fresh initiatives in mission.

5. The whole question of scale constantly recurs in the literature on

episkope. The Anglican practice of dealing with large dioceses by extra suffragan bishops is most unsatisfactory and should be reformed, preferably in the direction of more bishops with smaller bishoprics. In the situations I know best, the maximum should perhaps be about 100 priests, 1500 small groups, with the priests having an episcopal role in relation to the small groups. It is far harder to see the bishop having an effective ministry as pioneer in evangelism and other aspects of mission in the context of a vast diocese.

6. Both Anglican and Lutheran communions include state churches, established by law. This has a specially great effect on the episcopate in those countries - for example, the British Government has this year refused to appoint the church's first choice as bishop in my own diocese. This has consequences for both church unity and common mission which are in my opinion largely bad. The appropriate reform is disestablishment.

7. The absence of women bishops in many churches of the Anglican Communion hinders its mission of being a sign of the Kingdom of God.

8. The visible unity of the people of God under a single episcopate should be the overarching vision, and 'procedural' ecumenism should always take place in this context. How far does this require a critique of much current ecumenism and of Anglican-Lutheran dialogue in particular? 'Reform' is probably too mild a word for the required willingness to die to long-established denominational identities and units of power and authority. As visible unity is unlikely to happen simultaneously worldwide, but rather to be worked out locally as in South India, the question facing international communions and federations will be the awkward one of gradually 'losing' members in the old sense and having to work out proper relations with new bodies. In South India the Lutherans were unwilling to leave the umbrella of the LWF, while the Anglicans outside South India have not yet worked out proper relations with the new body. How do we avoid both these problems in future?

iv. A Cadenza: Two Contrasting Examples of Episkope

a) Faith in the City

In 1983 the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed a Commission on Urban Priority Areas which reported in 1985. It went against the dominant national political trend and provoked controversy, but it has also stimulated remarkable positive responses at every level of church and society. In my own parish in Birmingham it has been the catalyst for new vision and initiatives in mission (often critical of the Report). It all happened through an episcopate which could take such a pioneering step, could draw on (among others) able executives, public policy makers and administrators, could use all the structures of the church from General Synod to Parochial Church Councils, and could personally advocate it, defend it, suffer for it and use it as an occasion for telling the awkward truth. This has been episcopacy furthering the common mission of all churches.

b) David Du Plessis

On Feb.2nd 1987 David Du Plessis died. He was an ecumenical Pentecostal (13). He was secretary of the World Pentecostal Conference before his pioneering contacts with the WCC put him out of favour with his own denomination in USA, the Assemblies of God. He was a crucial figure in helping the Charismatic Movement in USA, Britain, Holland and other places to see its future not in schism or in joining classical Pentecostal churches but as an ecumenical presence within mainstream traditions. Later he was a key figure enabling the Vatican-Pentecostal Dialogues, 1972-76. He travelled extraordinary distances year after year, hearing and spreading news, linking up Christian leaders of diverse groups and simply forming friendships. It was a form of global episkope which fits no usual categories and yet met a need and served a new possibility in ecumenism and mission. Can our idea of episkope embrace him as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury?

David F. Ford

NOTES

1. George Lindbeck, Lutheran theologian and ecumenist, has developed this distinction in an unpublished paper.

2. E.g. some major U.S. denominations, traditionally ecumenical, are making it more difficult for candidates for ministry to study in non-denominational seminaries.

3. Anglican-Lutheran Relations. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group 1983 (ACC, LWF, London and Geneva 1983) p.13.

4. Quoted in Lesslie Newbigin, Unfinished Agenda (SPCK, London 1985) p.171.

5. 'Episcopacy in the Church of South India' in Episkope and episcopate in ecumenical perspective, Faith and Order Paper 102 (WCC, Geneva 1980) p.50.

6. CIO, London 1977.

7. Ed. Paul C. Empie and T.Austin Murphy, Augsburg, Minneapolis 1979.

8. Op.cit.

9. CTS/SPCK, London 1982.

10. Geneva 1982.

11. Geneva 1983.

12. 'Bishops in a United Church' in Bishops. But what kind? ed. Peter Moore (SPCK, London 1982) p.159.

13. See Martin Robinson, To the Ends of the Earth - The Pilgrimage of an Ecumenical Pentecostal, David J. Du Plessis (1905-1987) Unpublished Ph.D., University of Birmingham 1987.

MISSION AND THE REFORM OF EPISCOPÉ

Let me begin by reflecting, briefly, on the topic of mission in the New Testament era and in the modern U.S. There is a major issue with regard to the church's self-understanding which crops up in significant ways in both periods. For the New Testament church, the great issue of mission turned out to be how to open the community of the gospel up to groups of people previously excluded from the people of God. Much of Jesus' ministry focused on drawing in the impure: the amme-ha-arets who were not rigorous observers of the Torah, women in general as well as women specifically marked by impurity, tax-collectors, and so forth. All these were people who were placed outside the pale of the holy and pure in the Israel of their day; but Jesus' ministry was open to them.

In subsequent decades, as the church took shape, two other great missionary openings to new groups of people took place. One group was the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-25). The Jewish disciples may have understood them as a kind of subcategory of impure Israelites. Their inclusion, therefore, did not represent a startlingly new departure; indeed, the Fourth Gospel even credits it to Jesus himself (John 4:1-42). The other group was the Gentiles, and they represented a major departure indeed, as the church's prolonged and sometimes bitter struggle over their admission showed.

It is important to observe the character of these missionary openings. What Jesus and, eventually, the church said to the outsiders was emphatically positive. They did not merely say, "We will not keep you out

anymore." They most certainly did not say, 'You may become one of us if you will become like us, if the impure will make themselves pure, the Samaritans will make themselves Jews, the Gentile males will receive circumcision and all Gentiles accept the Torah." There were those within earliest Christianity who wanted to make demands such as these; but the gospel forbade it (Acts 15:1-11) and, after much struggle, the earliest Christians were faithful to the gospel's demands. The result was a church that belonged equally to pure and impure, to Jew and Samaritan, to Israelite and Gentile, despite the long-established tendency of the pure, the Jew, the Israelite to exclude others.

Popular understandings of mission in the U.S. today are of a very different character. Some identify mission with service, an important and valid insight as far as it goes, but one which often ignores the New Testament's stress on bringing humanity together within the community of the gospel. Others identify mission with the conversion of individuals. Most often this means that we want to add to our community other people who are already like us in all respects except the one matter of belief or church-membership; or else it means that we are willing to accept other people into our community provided that they are willing, in turn, to assimilate to it culturally. What we do not want, in either case, is to allow the community to change in the process.

In the New Testament era, too, there were people who insisted on maintaining the purity of the holy community and were willing to admit only those others who were able and willing to commit themselves to that purity. In the Israel of the time of Jesus, they were pious sectarians: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and religious nationalists. In the church of succeeding decades, they were the circumcision party. The pious of Israel or

of the circumcision party in the church were not opposed to individual conversions. What they opposed was the enlargement and redefinition of the holy community's boundaries to include groups of people different from themselves.

There are issues of profound importance here. Where Jesus and the mainstream of Christian mission insisted on change at certain crucial junctures, their opponents stood for continuity. Yet, it is apparent that Jesus himself did not wish to abolish the continuity of Israel altogether and that orthodox Christianity requires and has always required a sense of continuity with its past. We cannot therefore merely dismiss the concerns of the pious among Israel or of the circumcision party among our predecessors. The continuity of the past with the present and the openness of the present to the future are both important. Those who wished to keep Gentiles as Gentiles out of the holy community were preserving the one; those who insisted on opening the church to them were claiming the other.

It would be wrong to reject either concern out of hand. Yet, it remains true that the New Testament pattern of mission lays stress on the second, the openness to the future. The earliest church refused to be limited to a pattern of mission that allowed only the continuing addition of like-minded souls with appropriate credentials of purity, ethnicity, or circumcision--a pattern, in other words, which stressed the preservation and enlargement of an existing community. That church chose, instead, a pattern that stressed the future. It elected to create a new community that would be equally accessible to both Jews and Gentiles in Christ. It did not abandon its past in so doing; but it did, as the author of Ephesians put it, tear down the walls that had been separating the existing holy community from outsiders (Eph. 2:11-22).

The church, like every organic being, exists in a kind of homeostasis. This useful concept from the biological sciences defines the quality that living bodies have of maintaining their existence through the constantly changing interaction of a variety of forces. Homeostasis means, among other things, that living beings remain what they are only through change and adjustment. That is the way the church lives, too. Jesus opened the gospel community to the impure within Israel; but that did not relieve the church of the subsequent necessity of making its own hard decisions about admitting Gentiles. In one sense, the church might have remained faithful to its past by doing exactly as Jesus had done and confining its membership to Israelites and a few proselytes. Yet, by imitating Jesus' precise conduct, it would have betrayed his message. It made the only decision possible under the gospel and opened itself into a new community made up of Jews and Gentiles together.

We have to say, with regret, that the church's mission has not always followed that example in subsequent centuries. All too often it has followed, instead, a pattern of subjugation and assimilation, even with regard to those who were already fellow-members in Christ with us. One thinks of the ecclesiastical imperialism of St. Augustine and his successors with respect to the British church, of the mission of St. Willibrord to the Frisians, which served at least in part as an imperialist agency of their Frankish conquerors, of the approach of European Christians to the native peoples of the Americas, which has typically demanded assimilation to Spanish, French, Russian, or English culture and submission to the invading governments as part of the price of receiving Christ. The list, obviously, could be extended to much greater length. This is not to deny that the proclamation of the gospel has often been heard even above the noise the church makes in propagating

itself. Yet, it remains true that we, like the Twelve before us, have often distinguished ourselves by betrayal rather than faithfulness.

We can remain who we are only by becoming something new. We can be the church of the gospel only by growing and changing in this fashion. What sort of role does episcopé play in this homeostatic process? Within Anglicanism, we have most often emphasized the way the episcopate ties present to past. It constitutes a kind of living image and means of the unity of Christians today with the church of all ages before us. As a result, it also serves to tie together living Christians around the world into a single tangible community. Ecumenically--that is, from the perspective of the mission of reunion--this may be both a benefit and a liability. We Anglicans are profoundly conscious of the ways in which the episcopate has served to create and sustain unity among us across sometimes difficult barriers of ethnicity, culture, politics, and theological and ritual oppositions. It seems to us that this would be a treasure for the church of the future. At the same time, we must understand that other Christians have a variety of feelings toward our episcopate. Some Lutherans, for example, agree that the historic episcopate is useful and appropriate as the church recovers its unity. Others see it as an appeal to a purely Anglican past, which must be transcended in the future and has no relevance for Lutherans at any point. Still others, identifying it with the German episcopate of the Reformation era or with other oppressive and resented ecclesiastical institutions, find it outright objectionable.

The point here, I believe, is that the past, which is the source of our divisions, cannot by itself heal them. The genius of the gospel is not just that it heals or restores the past, but that it opens up the future. We Anglicans, grateful as we are for the gifts God has given us through the historic

episcopate, must consider whether reforms are needed to make it equally beneficial in terms of the future. If there is an ecumenical justification for the episcopate beyond the fact that it is important to many existing church bodies, it must lie in the future, among those who have hitherto been excluded in some way by the holy community.

If we see the episcopate entirely in terms of the relation between past and present, we shall think of bishops as belonging at the center of the church--as points of stability, permanency, and fixity from which the church spreads out. If we see it rather in terms of the gospel's reaching out to incorporate new groups along with us into a renewed and fuller community of faith, then we shall expect to find bishops on the peripheries, functioning as agents of mission and change. They would become personal bridges to those population groups which have been marginalized in some significant way in relation to the churches. We must find ways to re-envisage the bishop so that we think of this person no longer as a holy of holies at the heart of a temple, as remote as possible from outsiders, but as a host at the door of the house reaching out to bring strangers in as members of the growing family. As the family grows, the house will have to be rebuilt, no doubt, to accommodate it; but the bishop will remain at the perimeter of construction, on the lookout for others who have not yet been welcomed into it.

In the American Episcopal Church, we have had and still have bishops who function in this way. I could instance, from the past, a Bishop Whipple who built bridges with the Dakota people, or, from the present, a number of bishops who have sought to reverse our church's increasing neglect of the smaller, more rural communities and a few others who have reached out to establish bonds with the gay and lesbian population, who blame the church--rightly, I think--for much of the violence which they meet with in our

society and who yet remain open to hearing the gospel. Yet, these bishops are, to a great degree, "accidents" of grace. They were not necessarily elected to fulfill these functions, but they saw that the gospel demanded of them a particular concern for those marginal to the church.

Is it possible to do more? To make of this outward-looking stance a part of the institution of the episcopate as we know it? The bishop has long been, for us, an institutional link with the past and a bond of unity among Anglicans in the present. Is it possible to build the host aspect of the episcopate into our institutional structures as well? In one sense, the answer is clearly "No." Breaching the boundaries of the holy community will always be an unexpected, controversial, and painful task. We cannot plan for it, any more than the earliest Christians could. There were many among them who hankered after the good old days before the Hellenists and Paul had spread the word among Gentiles and the church had to endure all those savage disagreements and even schisms. The process, we are already discovering, is equally painful in our own day. It is not easy to know what is essential to the gospel in our traditions and what belongs merely to the custom of our existing community until we are challenged by those outside and compelled to ask ourselves whether we are once again excluding others groundlessly from full membership in the church. The church will have to struggle through every such transition in its story, I fear, as if it were for the first time. There is no way to plan ahead or to institutionalize our response before the fact.

Still, there are, I believe, some institutional shifts that would help. In my own church, there has been a strong tendency for the bishop to represent the majority culture of a given diocese--a tendency directly related to our practice of electing bishops in convention from among the

order of presbyters. This is not wrong, in and of itself; but it suggests something that is wrong, namely that minority groups or those otherwise marginalized ought always to remain where they are, on the edges of the believing community. We might counteract this, in the American context, by requiring that every diocesan bishop differ from at least one of the two preceding occupants of the office with regard to some culturally significant factor, such as race, first language, sex, etc.

I am not sure whether reforms of this sort would be equally appropriate in other churches of the Anglican Communion. I think, however, that there is a common need that might be met in a related way. If the episcopate is a tangible bond of unity among Christians of the Anglican persuasion, it is vital that it include as broad as possible a selection of those persons. It is not enough that a bishop who belongs to one particular cultural segment of the household attempt to represent the faith and concerns of all sorts and conditions in the diocese. To some extent, the whole church must be present in the deliberations of its episcopate in a way that lets every group speak in its own terms. The college of bishops should be redefined in ways that will make that possible.

At present, this college is made up of diocesan and former diocesan bishops who form the top echelon of professional ministry, having risen through its ranks. There is no inherent reason, however, why the church cannot name some persons to the episcopate directly (rather than through dioceses) in order to insure that new groups within the church (or groups previously marginalized) are given voice there. In the first century, new Gentile converts might move very rapidly to positions of authority (cf. 1 Cor. 16:15-18). In our own day, the educational and electoral systems may keep groups on the margins for centuries--and have done so in the U.S. For the

sake of continuity in doctrine and life, it will be necessary for a substantial percentage of the episcopate to have received thorough theological training, but a smaller percentage may perfectly well be people selected and consecrated because they are leaders in their specific communities.

Finally, I should say that there is one particular reform required by all that I have said here and another that I believe will prove equally inevitable. The first is the full opening of the episcopate to women. The Episcopal Church has approved this in principle, but one must acknowledge that there are tensions about the matter both within our church and elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. These tensions may have played a role in the fact that no woman has as yet been elected bishop. The full inclusion of women into the church has waited a long time, and it is not surprising that this creates debate, division, anger, and at times even hatred, just as the inclusion of Gentiles did long ago. This step, however, will be enormously important in any effort to strengthen the apostolic, missionary orientation of the episcopate. A closed episcopate will not make for an open and welcoming church.

The second matter to which I refer is still more controversial. The church is wrestling publicly with the question of its relation to the homosexual community. It is becoming progressively clearer that gay and lesbian people have a long history in relation to the church, both as faithful members of Christ and as victims of Christian intolerance and viciousness. They are asserting in more and more compelling tones that the church's official exclusion of them is not based on legitimate ethical concerns, but on the same kind of exclusionary prejudices that once threatened to keep uncircumcised Gentile males outside the household of Jesus. The heterosexual majority in the American church (the dominant cultural group

in this context) has attempted to ignore this debate or to dismiss it out of hand, but it is not going away. The advent of AIDS and its association, in the U.S., with gay men have only made the conflict more intense and inescapable. Unless it can be shown that the gospel demands exclusion of gays and lesbians, we must open the doors. This means not only that the homosexual minority will rightly command the hospitable attention of bishops, but also that openly gay and lesbian persons must be included in the episcopate alongside the majority culture and the more familiar racial and ethnic minorities.

In conclusion, I should like to summarize the argument that has brought me to make these fairly controversial suggestions. I have argued that the great missionary outreach of the earliest church consisted not in adding more and more like-minded people to an existing community, but in the staggering leap implied in Jesus' reaching out to the impure among the Jews, followed up in the church's reaching out to Samaritans and even to Gentiles. This apostolic task has not been institutionally well-integrated into the modern Anglican episcopate, at least not in the United States. It can never be perfectly institutionalized. Indeed, it will tend, over and over again, to shatter existing institutions, for the apostolic task is to break down the exclusive boundaries around the holy community. Yet, we could make some movement in the direction of institutionalizing it by guaranteeing that those previously excluded and those who constitute ongoing minorities in a particular area would be present within the episcopate.

L. WM. COUNTRYMAN

EPISCOPACY AS THE FUNDAMENTAL AND COMMUNAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Some Preliminary Remarks

For a long time there has been a certain ambiguity in the ecumenical dialogue on episcopé and episcopacy: among theologians in episcopal traditions because they have had to recognize apostolicity and episcopé in Lutheran churches without episcopacy, and among theologians in Lutheran traditions, whether these have episcopacy or not, because they lack a theology or even theologies of the ministry of bishops. This is mainly due to the fact that episcopal traditions, almost without exception, have appended the theological reflection on the church's ministry to their concrete form of episcopacy; whereas Lutheran tradition tends to be so abstract in the theological thinking of the ministry that when it has to deal with the ecclesial reality there seems to be just a function left.

I think we are now in a period of transition, a period which must not last too long, when we analyse the functions of episcopé, characterize and designate the apostolicity and catholicity of the church and its ministry, discover the proper relations between the ontological and functional aspects in the ministry and the ordination to that ministry. I also think that this transitional time will lead to a mutual participation in the one episcopacy, and that this is a gift from the Holy Spirit.

There is obviously an increasing convergence in "the more comprehensive understanding of apostolic succession and in the affirmation of the essential role of episcopé within and for the Church"[1] in the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue as well as in other dialogues. At the same time the ecumenical obstacle seems to be precisely these two questions. "Concerning the question of the historical succession of bishops there still remains a difference between us because, while Anglicans cannot envisage any form of organic church union without the historic episcopate, Lutheran churches are not able to attribute to the historic episcopate the same significance for organic church union."[2]

There is also obviously in both Anglican and Lutheran churches an awareness of the need of a fundamental reconsideration of the theology and practice of episcopacy.[3]

This is the general background for some short remarks about the following questions:

1. Is it possible, from a Lutheran point of view, to let the abstract concept of ministerium verbi become realized in the ministry of the bishop as the fundamental ministry of the church and thereby overcome the medieval concept of the presbyterium as the fundamental officium and of the bishops as presbyters supplemented with a certain potestas ecclesiastica?

2. Is there a possibility, from an Anglican point of view, of allowing the concept of apostolic succession in the episcopacy to be primarily realized in national and international fellowships of bishops (formed as councils of bishops), and then secondarily in the individual bishop in the historic episcopate?

The ministry of bishops as the fundamental ministry in the church and the center and coordination function of all ministries in the church.

1. The Abstract Concept of the Ordained Ministry

The concept of ministerium in the Lutheran Reformation is an abstract equivalent to another abstract concept, i.e., preacher. This abstract concept stands for the implementation of certain functions. But in the performance of these functions, and per definitionem connected to the church by persons appointed by the church, the concept reveals ontological significance.

In the Lutheran understanding of the ordained ministry in the church it is sometimes seen as "functions" related to "word" and "sacrament". I have not been able to find the ministry of the church defined as "function" or a sum of functions in the Lutheran confessional writings. Neither have I been able to find out when in the history of theology the terminology "functional ministry" was invented. Certainly the ministry is described by its functions and cannot be separated from these functions. But the ministry is also described in terms of representation and ordination, in what one could call ontological categories.[4]

I am personally convinced that we have to question the use of the functional description of the ministry in the Lutheran tradition. There is instead, according to the Lutheran confessions, a basic ministry in the church described by an abstract terminology: "The tradition of our church recognizes only one ordained ministry, namely the ministry of the word and administration of the sacraments."[5] "Thus while the existence of a special ministry is abidingly constitutive for the church, its concrete form must always remain open to new actualizations."[6]

In a report from the LWF on the episcopal office this abstract ministry is defined as follows: "Lutherans are agreed that the ordained ministry of the Church is basically one ministry, centered on the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Holy Sacraments. This ministry embraces both the ministry of a pastor within and for a local community of believers and the episcopal ministry within and for a communion of local communities."[7]

2. The Presbyterial Office as the "Fully Sacramental" Office in the Western Medieval and Lutheran Tradition

The reason why the ministerium in the German Lutheran Reformation, as distinguished from the situation in Sweden, in principle became a presbyterial office, was due to the fact that the bishops refused to ordain Lutheran priests.[8] There is no new theology behind the fact that the Lutheran ministerium became presbyterial. On the contrary, there is a continuation from the dominating western tradition during the Middle Ages that sees the presbyterial order as the "fully sacramental" order to which under certain circumstances could be given the power to ordain other priests.[9] In the western tradition the bishop was a superintendent. He remained a presbyter to whom the church had given a number of complementary qualifications and thereby a higher dignity (dignitas).[10] Therefore the ordination into presbyterial order was a sine qua non for ordination into the episcopal ministry.[11]

The Church of Sweden, in which I am ordained priest, has preserved the episcopal order in apostolic succession during all centuries. The Church Order of 1571, basic for all later teaching on the episcopal office in the Church of Sweden and a part of its confessional writings since the National Council 1593, states: Since episcopacy in the early Church "was very useful and without doubt instituted by God the Holy Ghost (who gives all good gifts), so it was generally approved and accepted over the whole of Christendom, and has since so remained, and must remain in the future, so long as the world lasts..."[12] This episcopacy which during the 17th century was very often regarded by Swedish churchmen and theologians as de iure divino, was a part of the governing structure of the society. The theological thinking about episcopacy was consequently a part of the reflection on that structure. The discussion about the sacramental ministry referred to the presbyterate. This is the typical medieval way of dealing with the question.[13]

3. The Abstract Concept of Ministry Identified with Presbyterial Office

There is in the Lutheran tradition a sometimes implicit sometimes articulated identification of the abstract concept of ordained ministry with the presbyterial, ministry: If there is an ordained ministry, the pastor is the bishop, and if there is a bishop he is theologically nothing more than the pastor.[14] This can be traced back to Luther's unsuccessful idea of uniting the ministries of bishop and presbyter into the one ministry of the pastor. Unsuccessful, because he had very soon himself to restore the medieval superattendens and even himself ordain bishops.[15] In my opinion the ministry of the pastor in Luther is not to be identified with the concept of the modern, Lutheran pastor in a congregation. The concept of pastor is in the Reformation period another abstract concept, denoting both the ministry of the presbyter and of the bishop/superintendent (the visitator and ordinarius).

4. The Ministry of Bishops as the Basic Realization of the One Ordained Ministry in the Church

Actually I cannot see why it should be impossible in the Lutheran tradition to consider the ministry of the bishop as the fundamental expression for - and realization of - the one ministry in the church to which presbyters, deacons and lay ministers are related as responsible fellow coworkers.

In the ecumenical dialogue there is now both the question of the interrelation between ordained ministries and the one ministry and of the interrelation of the ordained ministry and non-ordained full-time ministries in the churches.[16]

What I mean by basic realization and fundamental expression of the ministerium ecclesiasticum is: There should not be an identification of this "abstract ministry" with a specific order as today is the case in those Lutheran traditions that identify the ministerium ecclesiasticum with the presbyterate. Instead I assume that the ministry in the church needs to be adapted to a manifold concrete form. The manifold ministry in the church has the shape of different ministries, ordained and non-ordained. But since the unity of the one ministry in the church should not vanish, there is a need for an integral realization of that one ministry. This fundamental and unitive ministry, expressing both unity and diversity, is the ministry of the bishop. This may be exemplified by the answer from the Church of England to BEM referring to the threefold ministry and its "character of unity in diversity" with ministers having "different but complementary functions" that will find "unity under their bishop and in collegiality with each other".[17]

In the Church of Sweden the bishop is in practice seen as having the full ministry of the church. Only the bishop can ordain deacons, priests and bishops, and the bishop has the highest teaching authority in his diocese. The ordained ministers can relate to the bishop and to their ordination and that gives them an identity.

5. The Fundamental Ministry of the Bishops and the Mission and Unity of the Church

The BEM document says that the Holy Spirit "led the Church to adapt its ministries to contextual needs", implying that this will be the fact in the present (BEM Ministry, 22).

One of the main problems in the mission of the church as I find it, for example, in the Church of Sweden is the individualistic way of performing the ministry of the church. Different types of group ministries have, as it seems, to be included in that judgment because the existence of that type of ministry depends on the individual case, and not on a specific structure practiced in the church. If I am

right, a collegial structure of the church's ministry would respond to the need of human beings in modern complex society. If so, this structure needs a uniting focus.

Another problem is the closed character of the traditional (territorial) congregations. There has been much criticism of the immobility and lack of transference of resources between congregations. Criticism is also based on the fact that the organization of the local congregations depends on structures of society that do not exist today. This has led to a formation of transcongregational communities of different kinds and also to new types of congregations.[18] Would it then be possible to reduce the scale of today's dioceses and their equivalents and transform them into local churches with dynamic structures for sharing of resources and with different kinds of ministries under the spiritual leadership of a bishop?

Episcopacy as the primarily communal and universal sign of the apostolicity of the church.

1. The Individualistic Concept of Episcopacy in Apostolic Succession

My thesis is that the discussion about the so-called historic episcopate has been narrowed by an excessively individualistic concept of episcopacy. Ordination to episcopacy sometimes seems more like a reception into an order or a conveyance of a personal possession than a signum "whereby the Church actualizes her own essence as an organically structured body".[19] How is it otherwise possible that there could have been theologians holding the view that episcopi vagantes[20] should have a more "valid" office than an ordained Lutheran bishop outside the "historic episcopate"?

Emphasis has been placed on the successio manuum while the ancient context of episcopal collegiality with its interrelation of successio manuum, successio sedis and successio doctrina has been largely neglected.[21]

Certainly today there are bishops in successio sedis but not in successio manuum and vice versa. My theory is that the individualistic concept of episcopacy, as an isolated possession transmittable from one person to another, is the main cause of the exclusive interest in the successio manuum.

2. Episcopacy as Church Polity in National Episcopal Churches: Anglican and Lutheran

There is obviously a problem when one talks about the historic episcopate to churches which never have had it. To old national churches it has given identity and even a certain self-consciousness.[22] But how can it be possible to introduce the concept of

episcopacy as an efficacious sign of apostolicity and continuity in a church with no experience of episcopacy? And how does one solve the problem that certain churches identify themselves with church polities, presbyterial, synodical etc. regarded by those churches as the opposite of episcopacy?

The theological rethinking on episcopé has shown that the episcopal ministry exists in various forms of traditional church polity. The history of the Church of Sweden, I dare say, provides a good example of how episcopacy can exist both as a part of and vis-à-vis the governing body in the church: the king, the state or democratically elected synods.

There is, however, a very significant difference between those old national churches with the historic episcopate and churches with different forms of episcopé, and that is the claim of universality and catholicity both in time and space. The ordained bishop can claim to be bishop not only for the period he has been elected and for a certain church but to be bishop in the whole church catholic. And thereby he transcends the particularities, national and organizational.[23] Is there an implicit recognition of that ideal when ministers with episcopal functions and responsibilities (and with different titles), participate in ordinations of bishops in churches abroad, e.g. in the ordination of bishops in the Church of Sweden?

3. The Communal Episcopacy as a Universal Sign of the Apostolic Succession of the Church

In the non-Roman Catholic churches today the episcopate seems to be the sum of the individual bishops. This is also the case in the Church of Sweden. Since the Reformation the bishop has the highest teaching authority in his diocese; he is the only one that can ordain priests etc. Since the 1920s there has been a conference of bishops which is gaining increasing importance, but there is no theological significance attributed to it. There exists also a Scandinavian Lutheran Conference of Bishops, even though the Swedish bishops are not allowed to participate by imposition of hands in the ordination of Norwegian and Danish bishops.

The question is whether it is possible to ascribe, in an international context, to the individual bishop or to the episcopate in a national church the role of being the basis of a theology concerning an apostolic succession of bishops.

If the Lima document is right, the bishops are representatives of "continuity and unity in the Church", they "serve the apostolicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life" (BEM Ministry, 29). According to the document the bishops "represent" and "serve" and thereby one could add, maintain the apostolicity and unity of the church. If the Lima statement is correct, the episcopate can be

carried out only in the interrelation of individual bishops and conferences of bishops, by mutual participation in ordinations and acts expressing interdependence and solidarity.

The fundamental meaning of apostolic succession of the episcopacy must be communal and collective. By the somewhat inadequate term communal I refer to the concept of communio, and I do not mean collegial. I will turn to that in a moment. The term communal episcopate refers to the ministry itself, collegial episcopate to the discharge of duties or the administration of that ministry. If the communal aspect refers to the unity of the episcopal ministry, the collegial aspect refers to the unity of the church.[24]

The communal episcopate is characterized by the perpetual reconciliation of the ministries in the church universal, expressed by the collegiality of bishops, as distinguished from the traditional individualistic concept of episcopacy that is bilaterally or multilaterally recognized by the churches. Recognition is a juridical term related to certain agreements between churches. Reconciliation is related to the expiatory death and ongoing conciliation of Christ in his church.[25]

4. Ordination and Apostolic Teaching as Interrelated Signs of the Apostolicity of the Church

There is a common conviction in the ecumenical dialogue in which Lutheran and Anglican churches are involved that there is a connection between ordination and the apostolic tradition of the church, between the apostolic succession of the ministry and the church catholic.[26]

In the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue is expressed a mutual recognition of the apostolicity of the churches[27] but not of the respective ministries. That is due to the lack of episcopal ordinations in some Lutheran churches, a fact that splits the Lutherans de facto into two fundamentally different types of churches on the ecclesial level and in the ecumenical movement.

If one takes into consideration the model of a communal episcopacy and the ministry of bishops as the fundamental realization of the one ministry of the church, indicated above, and the interrelation between the apostolicity of the church and its ministry, any unreconciled episcopal ministry in the church is a ministry with a defectus. As far as I can understand, this means for the Anglican-Lutheran relations that ministries in the "historic episcopate" as well as others have to be reconciled in order to express in a more complete way the mutual acceptance of the apostolicity of the churches involved. To me this act of reconciliation is not a juridical act of recognition but an act of God's reconciling, redeeming love, efficacious in ordination. This means that I very much question any proposal for "conveying" apostolic succession, the historic episcopate, from one church to another. For all involved churches mutual reconciliation by ordination must mean a deepening assimilation in the apostolicity of the Church of Christ.

5. The Collegial Episcopacy and the Mission and Unity of the Church

There is both in Lutheran and Anglican churches "a growing recognition that bishops need collegial fellowship with one another in fulfilling their responsibilities".[28]

Different ecumenical models, such as conciliar fellowship, need forms for concrete realization. A possibility could be a community of bishops transcending and correcting the tendencies of the churches to particularism. By an episcopal conciliarity the idea of a universal church could get a constitutional form: a college of bishops representing their churches by which they have been elected and ordained into the episcopacy of the church universal. Episcopacy then must be seen as a part of a unitive model of conciliarity.[29] The collegial aspect of episcopacy could perhaps offer a concept of conciliar fellowship that avoids the abuses of parliamentarism and bureaucratic anonymity.

In the light of our common mission, what is to be reformed in our expressions on episcopé? Summary:

1. How does one interrelate the different ordained and lay ministries, i.e., leaders and teachers standing in and vis-à-vis the people of God on the local, regional or universal levels, and unite them according to the teaching of the one ministry of the church?

My very tentative suggestion is to consider the ministry of the bishop as the fundamental ministry in the church to which both ordained and non-ordained ministries can relate.

If we could make the ministry of the bishop into a focal point, this would mean that we would have a structuring factor in church life making the question of coordination and cooperation easier. The creation of a new bureaucracy, however, is not my intention. What I refer to is a spiritual center in the middle of all administration, presenting a visible sign of unity and representing the outpouring and self-giving forces of the church in the world and for the world.

2. How does one interrelate and unite the mission of different churches in the one apostolic mission to the world in relation to the ministry of bishops?

I have tried to indicate a way that relates the defectus of the ministry of the churches not to question validity but to search for catholicity. I have also tried to suggest that the form for reconciliation of ministries is a universal participation in ordinations as a sign of the apostolicity and catholicity of the church. This is also an expression of the communal, not individualistic character of the apostolic succession of the church and of the episcopacy in the church.

This communal principle could be made manifest in the college of bishops. If so, it would be possible to carry out the idea of the concilium, in Lutheranism just a theory, however important it seems to have been in the Reformation period. Under all circumstances we ought to discuss the question of the episcopal ministry in relation to ecumenical concepts like conciliar fellowship.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam.

Sven-Erik Brodd

NOTES

1. Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue, The Report of the European Commission. London, 1983, 43.

2. Ibid.

3. Church of England, in: Churches Respond to BEM. Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text, Vol. III, ed. Max Thurian, Geneva, 1987, 77.

4. See for example Avery Dulles/George Lindbeck, "Die Bischöfe und der Dienst des Evangeliums. Ein Kommentar zu CA 5, 14 und 28", in: Confessio Augustana. Bekenntnis des einen Glaubens. Gemeinsame Untersuchung lutherischer und katholischer Theologen, Paderborn/ Frankfurt am M., 1980, 139-168. In the official Church of Sweden-Roman Catholic dialogue group we are in agreement that the functional and ontological aspects must be united into what we call an incarnational perspective. We agree that the functional aspect underlines that the ordained ministry is constitutive for the church as long as it functions as a service in word and sacrament for the church. At the same time we agree that the ontological aspect in the ordained ministry is valuable as an expression of the fact that there is an analogy between the church and the ordained ministry as a sign of the presence of the sacramental Christ in the world. The ordained ministry is not merely a function, it consists of persons which were given by God and the church in ordination the capacity to fulfill specific functions.

5. Church of Sweden, in: Churches Respond to BEM, Vol. II, 1986, 138.

6. The Ministry in the Church. Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, Geneva, 1982, 18.

7. Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office. Statement by the Consultation on Episcopé, Geneva, November 29 - December 2, 1982, LWF Studies, Geneva, 1983, 6.

8. The Ministry in the Church, op.cit., 35-36.

9. On the continuity between the medieval view and Luther's concerning presbyterial ordination, see Wolfgang Stein, Das kirchliche Amt bei Luther. Wiesbaden, 1974, 188-189.

10. About the medieval situation, see Gerhard Fahrnberger, Bischofsamt und Priestertum in den Diskussionen des Konzils von Trient. Eine Rechtstheologische Untersuchung, Wien, 1970.

11. In: The Ministry in the Church, op.cit., this is summarized: "In the late Middle Ages the distinction between bishop and presbyter was seen almost exclusively from the point of view of jurisdiction."

12. About the Church of Sweden Church Order 1571, see John Wordsworth, The National Church of Sweden, 1911, 231-137. There is a long quotation on page 232 about episcopacy. P. Louis-Marie Dewailly has translated and given a commentary to the Church Order in Istina (Paris) 30, 1985, 228-320 (L'Ordonnance ecclesiastique suedoise de 1571).

13. Apparently there must be a slight misunderstanding when it is said that "the preservation of the pre-Reformation episcopal structure in the Church of Sweden can therefore be regarded as a fortunate historical development, meaningful in practical and ecumenical dimensions but not of especial theological significance", Eucharist and Ministry. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV, Washington/New York, 1970, p. 55.

    About episcopacy regarded as iure divino in the 17th century, see Ragnar Askmark, Ämbetet i den svenska kyrkan i reformationens, ortodoxins och pietismens tänkande och praxis, Lund 1949. However, in the 16th and 17th centuries there were two ideological models competing with each other, a Swedish Reform tradition and the German Lutheranism. Professor Lars Eckerdal recently showed that in the Reformation period the Swedish Reformers designed a theology of adiaphora that differed from the Lutheran main stream in Germany at that period. Lars Eckerdal, "Församlingen till förbättring". Reformatoriskt bruk av 1 Korinthierbrevets kapitel 14, in: Kyrka och universitet. Festskrift till Carl-Gustaf Andrén, Stockholm, 1987, 91-112.

    From the 17th century until the beginning of the 20th century there was a dominating German cultural and theological impact in Sweden. Today there is a tension between this and a rediscovery of a Swedish profile in the Reformation and other actual ecumenical influences. This can be noted in the Church of Sweden Conference of Bishops' answer to the resolution on Holy Communion adopted by the Lambeth Conference 1920. First the Swedish bishops according to the Augsburg Confession V argue that "the value of every organization of the ministerium ecclesiasticum ... is only to be judged by its fitness and ability to become a pure vessel for the supernational contents, and a perfect channel for the way of divine revelation unto mankind". Immediately after that the bishops add: "That doctrine in no way makes our Church indifferent to the organization and forms of ministry... We do not only regard the peculiar forms and traditions of our Church with the reverence due to a venerable legacy from the past, but we realize in them a blessing from the God of history accorded to us." Quotation from Kyrkohistorisk Arsskrift 23 (1923), 376. In the second official statement from the Church of Sweden in modern times on episcopacy, the answer to BEM holds a similar view. Churches Respond to BEM, Vol. II, 1986, 137-139.

14. See for example the answer to BEM from the Lutheran Church of Australia "... and that the bishop's power and authority, by divine right, was no more and no less than the parish pastor's (AC XXVIII, 21)", Churches Respond to BEM, Vol. II, 1986, 96.

About AC XXVIII, 21, see Confessio Augustana und Confutatio. Der Augsburger Reichstag 1530 und die Einheit der Kirche, ed. Erwin Iserloh, 1980: Erwin Iserloh, "Von der Bischofen Gewalt": CA 28, 483-488; Harding Meyer, "Das Bischofsamt nach CA 28", 489-498. Those two essays are originally lectures held in a symposium in Augsburg 1979. In the discussion that followed, Professor Georg Kretschmar pointed out that the word pastor in the Middle Ages never did connote the local pastor and that the technical term pastor relates to the episcopal function, ibid. 518-519.

15. Stein, op.cit., 196-200.

16. The Church of Sweden answer to BEM stated: "Nowadays a comparatively large number of lay persons are employed in our parishes ... People holding these ministries ... are also part of the common mission. The relation between the ordained ministry and ministries of these kinds requires further study." Churches Respond to BEM, Vol. II, 1986, 138. The same is expressed in e.g. the answer from the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church, in: ibid., Vol. I, 1986, 49.

17. Church of England, in: ibid., Vol. III, 1987, 53.

18. See for example Christof Gestrich, Gemeindeaufbau in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Theologische Untersuchung und Neubestimmung eines Programmworts, Pastoraltheologie (Göttingen) 75 (1984), 2-15.

    A survey of the discussion and different concepts of local congregations, see Osmund Schröder, "Die Kirchengemeinde: Typen und Leitbilder", in: Gemeinde von morgen, ed. Otto Betz, München, 1969, 53-104.

19. Avery Dulles, The Catholicity of the Church, London, 1985, 119.

20. Jean Michel Hornus, "Les Petites Eglises Catholiques Non Romains", Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse 50 (1970), 155-293; HRT, Episcopi vagantes and the Anglican Communion, 2nd ed., London, 1961.

21. Yves M.-J. Congar, Composantes et idées de la Succession Apostolique, Oecumenica. An Annual Symposium of Ecumenical Research 1966, 61-78.

22. In his speech at the Faith and Order World Conference in Lausanne 1927, the Swedish Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, before he refers to the Swedish Church Order 1571, and with reference to Roman Catholic writers, says: "Åccording to that view the bishops in Sweden are schismatics, but bishops in the Roman Catholic sense as in no other part of non-Roman Western Christendom. Of course, we have never asked Rome about the validity of our orders, because we regard the Church in our country ... as at least as authentic a continuation of the Historic Church of previous ages as the Roman Communion." Faith and Order Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927, ed. H.N. Bate, London, 1927, 329.

23. Anglican-Lutheran Conversation. Pullach Report 1972, 78, in: Growth in Agreement. Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, ed. by Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer, New York/Geneva 1984, 24.

24. This distinction seems not to be carried out in the documents working with the concept of collegiality, e.g. Groupe des Dombes, Le ministère épiscopal. Réflexions et propositions sur le ministère de vigilance et d'unité dans l'Eglise Particulière, 1976, 36, 46-48, Taizé, 1976; BEM Ministry, 28 passim.

25. In for example Groupe des Dombes, Pour une réconciliation des ministères, Taizé, 1973 and Church of England response to BEM, Churches Respond to BEM, Vol. III, 1987, 71, recognition and reconciliation are used as designating two stages of a unitive process.

26. The Lutheran members in the international Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue say: "For the Lutheran tradition also the apostolic succession is necessary and constitutive for both the church and for its ministry." The Ministry in the Church, op.cit. 63; see also 64. Cf. Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, Ministry and Ordination (1973), 14, in: Growth in Agreement, op.cit., 82-83.

27. Anglican-Lutheran Relations. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, Cold Ash, Berkshire, England, 28 November - 3 December 1983, London/Geneva, 1983, 16a.

28. Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue, op.cit., 42.

29. Hans Dombois, Das Recht der Gnade. Ökumenisches Kirchenrecht III. Bielefeld, 1983, 163-164 passim, 401-402.

IN THE LIGHT OF OUR COMMON MISSION, WHAT NEEDS TO BE REFORMED IN OUR RESPECTIVE EXPRESSIONS OF EPISCOPE?

Over the past 2,000 years the Christian community has developed a wide range of structures and systems of oversight. If we were to place all of these into one large pot, we would have what shall henceforth be referred to as "episcope stew".

Some of the ingredients which were added to this stew in the course of time rapidly fell apart and sank to the bottom or evaporated into the air as the pot boiled.

Other ingredients have remained in tact: the carrots of congregationalism, the turnips of presbyterial systems, the potatoes of episcopal systems, and the multi-shaped beans of the Lutheran traditions. All together they have created an interesting culinary dish! Much of the residue on the bottom is unpalatable and can well remain in the pot untouched. But what about the remainder? Do we now put the various ingredients into separate bowls [as we have done for centuries]? Sometimes we have even rinsed off any broth that remained for fear it would be tainted from something that floated in from a different contribution to the stewpot!

Can we, in ecumenical openness and committment to the primacy of the Gospel in our Church's life and work, seek to serve the whole stew with its basic potato of episcopacy but with a variety of other flavours being intermingled depending upon how much carrot or how many beans one happens to have on the same spoonful of potatoes and broth? Perhaps in so doing we will discover that the episcope stew contains a great deal of tasty meat, not added by any human tradition but by the Spirit of our Triune God.

A few years ago I attended a large Roman Catholic worship conference at which a nun stated: "I don't care what you were taught in catechism classes but we must recognize that it is the Gospel which calls together women and men who then choose their leaders and develop their structure." Throughout the assembly black clerical collars began shimmering and a gasp (with a slight Irish accent) went up. The following day a representative of the Archbishop appeared on the platform and announced: "What you were told yesterday was wrong and contrary to Catholic teaching. It is the Priest who comes first and who proclaims and interprets the Gospel and gathers the people."

If one rejects any notion of an episcope stew so that they can dine on a meal of boiled potatoes (or carrots or beans!), they will miss the delicate flavours of historical development and diversity. They will opt for a much narrower strand and interpretation of Christian history.

Is episcope so precisely defined and divinely-given that no discussion or recognition of other flavours is possible? If so, the ecumenical feast is cancelled and family picnics consisting of a single food remain the menu for the 21st Century.

It is with an empty feeling inside that I have sometimes felt during the past few days that we are still trying (probably unintentionally and without even realizing it) to arrange our family picnic but inviting others to attend as guests. Are we failing to grasp ways in which we mix our potatoes and beans so that the 'meat' of Divine guidance can be added to what will become a gourmet's pièce de résistance?

WHAT NEEDS REFORME IN OUR EXPRESSIONS OF EPISCOPÉ?

I would approach this question more with some reflections on methodology rather than description. I believe that descriptions of episcope will develop in the future just as they have developed in the past. The question is: How do we begin and nourish this development?

1) We must begin by accepting that all forms of episcope developed within the realm of human history were not discovered outlined on gold tablets buried by an Angel in Blackpool, Peoria or Penang. Human history is subject to human limitations and error, political maneuvering and power-seeking as well as to human intellect and divinely-guided human wisdom. Episcope has developed over the centuries and it will continue to develop and face modification in centuries to come. To look at any single expression of episcope as definitive forever is to do an injustice to Christian incarnational theology.

2) The basis for church structure and episcope within the New Testament Christian community grew out of a two-fold concern: mission and unity. [Mission will, I confess, get short-changed in this paper.]

How much of Jesus' message was a call to mission? "Go and do likewise" was a basic underlying theme. The followers of Jesus were to live the Good News which they had received. Structure then followed. Structure that would enable them to support one another, to be nourished both physically and spiritually, and to welcome and integrate new believers into their midst.

But what about unity?
This task began immediately as Jesus entrusted his message to human beings!

> 'What do you want?' Jesus asked her. She answered: 'Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit at your right hand and your left when you are King.' ....When the other disciples heard about this, they became angry with the two brothers. (Matt. 20:21 & 24)

Unity, or lack thereof to be more precise, has been one of the major problems facing the Christian community. Human nature likes to be in control!

I'm right you are wrong
I'm true/real you are false/heretical
I have the complete... you have only a small piece
I am true to the Gospel you are questionable
I am confessional/sacramental you have flaky theology
I have the right connections you don't

Was Paul writing a Faith and Order paper when he said:

> "...each of you says something different. One says, 'I follow Paul', and onother, 'I follow Apollos', another, 'I follow Peter', and another, 'I follow Christ'. Christ has been divided into groups! Was it Paul who died on the cross for you? Were you baptized as Paul's disciples?
>
> I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. No one can say, then, that you were baptized as my disciples. ...Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to tell the Good News, and to tell it without using the language of human wisdom, in order to make sure that Christ's death on the cross is not robbed of its power.
> (I Corinthians 1:12-17)

Should we apply Paul's logic and his concern to our view of episcopacy? Substitute 'Peter' for Paul and 'ordination/consecration' for baptism in the above passage. [Anglican exercise]

Substitute 'Luther' or 'Augsburg Confession' or 'our Lutheran understanding of the Gospel' for Paul, Apollos and Peter and 'ordination' for baptism. [Lutheran exercise]

Does Paul's intent and message begin to ring more clearly?

If one were to construct a giant chart listing various steps in the history of the Church as teachings about episcope and structure developed (based upon such things as Council canons, bishop's letters, Papal encyclicals, sermons and theological writings) and then, beside each historical step, identify whether it was related primarily to the mission of the Church (perhaps using Paul's concern: to tell the Good News and to make sure that Christ's death on the cross is not robbed of its power) OR related primarily to the establishing of outright control of one city or one bishop over another, I have little doubt which would gain the higher score! Alexandria versus Antioch; Constantinople versus Rome; Carthage and North Africa versus Rome and Italy; Duke Frederick versus Holy Roman Emperor; Henry VIII versus papal legates -- and on these playing fields of history the battle of episcope and structure was waged.

3) The future development of expressions of episcope must begin from the present.

Again, this is nothing new in the Church's ecumenical history. We like to shift deliberations to our own ground, to use our own language and terminology, and our own theology and history. It is so much easier --for us at least! But we must place our contribution into the episcope stew!

> Some men came from Judaea to Antioch and started teaching the believers, "You cannot be saved unless you are circumcised as the law of Moses requires." Paul and Barnabas got into a fierce argument with them about this,...(Acts 15:1-2) so it was decided that they would have a Consultation at Niagara Falls.

Do discussions of episcope begin with the present position of each partner and then move ahead together, or do we first make sure everyone goes back to an earlier historical practice of our own tradition, albeit unknown to the others, and then say, 'Now we can start off, you have fulfilled the Law of Moses'?

The First Letter of Clement (and the Church at Rome) to the Church at Corinth was written about A.D. 96. It has an interesting passage about Christian caring and recognition of others' ministries.

1) Our Apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the title of bishop.

2) For this cause, therefore, since they had received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who have been already mentioned, and afterwards added the codicil that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry.

3) We consider therefore that it is not just to remove from their ministry those who were appointed by them, or later on by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and have ministered to the flock of Christ without blame, humbly, peaceably, and disinterestedly, and for many years have received a universally favourable testimony.

4) For our sin is not small, if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily offered its sacrifices.

5) Blessed are those Presbyters who finished their course before now, and have obtained a fruitful and perfect release in the ripeness of completed work, for they have now no fear that any shall move them from the place appointed to them.

(I Clement XLIV, 1; Loeb)

Two points stand out:

1) Clement appeals that the disagreeing parties do not depose each other or deny the validity of their ministry -- in any way. They were placed in office by their own community and therefore are accepted as bishops and presbyters without reservation. In fact, the 'sin is not small, if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily offered its sacrifices.'

2) These 'other' bishops and presbyters were 'appointed by them [the Apostles themselves], or later on by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church...'. The emphasis was not upon who ordained whom or whether they were to be judged kosher or not, but upon the ministry they performed and their acceptance by the whole Church. (I believe that one must assume that in 96 A.D. the whole Church meant the local Christian community and might include others who happened to know of that community.)

An ecumenical approach to episcope needs to reflect this kind of openness to one another. We do not begin by raising a part of our own history or tradition and demand that all accept it first. (Lutherans would love to have Anglicans accept the Augsburg Confession as a basic interpretation behind their theology and teachings; Anglicans would love to have Lutheran pastors and bishops ordained as they have been and stop instantaneously this wrangling about order.) It appears at this point in time that such easy solutions are not to be.

Future development of episcope will only proceed fruitfully when equal partners begin at a given moment in time to recognize and accept each other as full members of the Church Catholic and proclaimers of the Gospel. As Clement advised the Corinthians in their disagreements, we get no where by ejecting those whose work for Christ's Church has been blameless and acceptable to their own community of believers.

4) Our full understanding of episcope will not come from a Consultation, even if it lasted 50 years, or from a 20 volume report of 'findings'. It will come as we live and work and pray together!

The Dialogue at Cold Ash reported:

> By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith: (IV, 25)

We have tried for 450 years to convert each other. We have failed! And, instead of growing together, we have developed separately and in our own ways. Now we must carry that additional baggage of centuries of history, tradition, --and polemics --all of which makes it more difficult to face each other

openly and without a twinge of fear and/or one-upmanship deep inside.

If we take the risk of declaring full-acceptance of each others history, theological development and present practice, we start afresh as pilgrims in the age-old search for acceptance and unity. Form and structure will follow! Of THAT, I have no doubt!!!

We do nopt begin by trying to merge our Communions into a united Church. That requires far too much detail. We begin by committing ourselves to each other and we bring our history, our practice, our strengths and our warts .

As we then move forward we have an obligation to each other and we move henceforth in concert...at least with as much harmony as either of our communions can muster at the present!

I have no doubt nor fear that new structures and new patterns of episcope will emerge. They often will reflect a great deal of our past for that will grow out of our united life of living the Good News of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Catholicity of the Church and its unity is not to be found in the past. It lies in the future. We can move either direction.

Jan L. Womer