



Authority in the Anglican Communion

Essays Presented to
Bishop John Howe

Edited by
Stephen W. Sykes



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and
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and to
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anglican Consultative Council (the meetings of the Council, from 1971 onwards, are indicated thus: ACC-1, etc.).
ARC	Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue
ARCIC	Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (the first phase of meetings from 1970-1981 is indicated thus: ARCIC I. ARCIC II began in 1983).
BCP	The Book of Common Prayer (1662).
ECUSA	Episcopal Church of the United States of America.
FR	The <i>Final Report</i> of ARCIC I.

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FOREWORD

"Anglicans," comments Stephen Sykes in his introduction to these essays "have been seriously exercised about their claim to authority for at least some forty years." An archbishop of Canterbury is better placed than most to appreciate the degree to which this issue is confronting us today. It lies at the heart of so many discussions between churches, as well as of some of the most controversial and sensitive matters which face us all. The nature and exercise of authority will be a vital issue at the 1988 Lambeth Conference.

So I welcome these essays as a timely publication on an important topic. I am especially glad that they bring together contributions from different parts of the Anglican communion with those from an ecumenical perspective. Such breadth of vision is essential if we are to deal adequately with these questions both at the Lambeth Conference and in the daily life of our churches.

That strikes a weighty note, but it is combined with one of gratitude and thanksgiving, since the book reminds us of all that the Anglican communion owes to Bishop John Howe — the first Secretary General to the Anglican Consultative Council. It is impossible to overstate his contribution to the building of coherence and unity within the communion.

I have experienced John's ministry at first hand, and the list of contributors here is eloquent testimony to the respect in which he is held by Christians throughout the world. He is a reminder that there is a profoundly Christian authority in the quiet service of true godliness and faithfulness. In all our debates and discussions that is an authority we must never cease to honour — it is the authority of the Lord we serve.

*Foreword by The Most Reverend Robert Runcie,
Archbishop of Canterbury
Essays presented to Bishop John Howe
Edited by Professor Stephen Sykes*

Towards a Theology and Practice of the Bishop-in-Synod

K.S. Chittleborough

Introduction

It is one of the mysteries of Anglicanism that we can have both bishops and synods with overlapping authority working effectively in the government of the church.

In Australia in the mid-nineteen-seventies, in the course of the Anglican-Uniting Church conversations, on the question of mutual recognition of ministries, it became necessary for Anglicans to try to explain to our Uniting Church brethren our theology of the bishop-in-synod. This essay on synodical government springs from the context of that debate, although its conclusions clearly bear upon other bi-lateral conversations, notably the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on Authority.

The original research undertaken in this enterprise began from an examination of the constitutional documents and the actual operations of synods in Australian dioceses. The attempt to thus elucidate a theology of bishop-in-synod revealed, rather surprisingly, a coherent ecclesiology and a rich and yet coherent view of authority in the church behind the variety of legal documents and constitutional history. It is only the conclusions of that research which are offered here. Those conclusions call for critical testing against the constitutional documents and experience of dioceses throughout the Anglican communion, as well as the testimony of scriptures and the doctrinal traditions of the church.

The Historical Context — Synodical Government

Synodical government, like other church institutions, grew out of the necessities of corporate life. It assumes a variety of forms down through history — depending upon response to the gospel in particular historical contexts, the personal style of the bishop, the constitutional procedures taken over from the political

societies within which churches were set, and the missionary task confronting them.

In apostolic times, councils were held at Jerusalem to define with a common authority the teaching of the church in disputed matters.¹ In the first century we know of two synods summoned in Asia for the reformation of the church and the consecration of bishops.² In the following centuries everything points to the fact that bishops acted in those days according to their temperament. No body of fixed laws limited the bishops' power to act *proprio motu*. There were arbitrary bishops as well as constitutional ones and yet the ideal of common action and consultation was never lost, and in course of time these were incorporated in the rules and canons of national, provincial, and diocesan synods. Cyprian of Carthage, for example, declares that he decided at the beginning of his episcopate to do nothing without the advice (*concilium*) of his clergy and the consent (*consensus*) of his laity.³

When in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the colonial churches first gained their independence from the Crown, they found their seat of authority in synodical government. The system of voting by houses — bishop, clergy, and laity — which this embodied, and the requirement that these houses concur, rendered episcopacy constitutional while leaving bishops with the power of veto over proceedings. Authority was thus shared between the episcopate and synod, and the bishop had certain powers and responsibilities proper to his episcopal office which he could not delegate to his synod. The reason for this was not simply a pragmatic one which allowed the bishop to take personal initiatives which synod could not or would not take. It enshrined theological principles which it is the purpose of this essay to try to make clear.

The Anglican experience of synodical government in Australia rests upon a long tradition which thus goes back beyond the sixteenth-century Reformation in England. Modern synodical government, in the form revealed by the constitutions, canons, and rules in the various Australian dioceses, with lay representation going back over a hundred years, is typical of the whole Anglican communion outside England.⁴

It is important to keep in mind that in important respects the Church of England is *not* typical, being an "established" church,

and because lay people were given constitutional rights in synods only in 1965.

The Centrality of the Diocesan Synod

The formal principles and practical operations of authority in the Anglican church are contained in the constitutional documents of the various dioceses, and these reveal a common pattern amidst their variety — namely that legislative authority resides neither in the “house” of bishops, nor in the various committees and bureaus of the church, but in *diocesan synods*, and to a lesser degree in provincial and national synods.⁵

Other structures of authority within Anglicanism, such as the National Bishops’ Meeting, the Lambeth Conference, and the Anglican Consultative Council, are advisory, relational, and collegial but not legislative. The conscious decisions to give them no legislative power have led to a repudiation of centralized 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 the common mind” (*Report to the Lambeth Conference 1948*, see the Appendix).

The focus then in this essay is primarily on the *diocesan* synod, that is, a duly constituted body of three houses of bishop, clergy (priests and deacons), and laity, who together share in different ways in directing the life and growth, the good order and government of a diocese as the key to the way in which the lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are made concrete and empirical. The constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia makes quite clear the centrality of the diocese: “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, Section 7).

The relationship between the bishop and his synod has no real parallel in parliamentary democracy, autocracy, oligarchy, or bureaucracy — as these are found in the secular world — but is a complex one which springs from a combination of theological principles held in balance.⁶ This theology which gives coherence

to the not infrequently chaotic appearance of the Anglican experience of authority has come to be called the theology of “dispersed authority.”

The Theological Context — A Theology of Dispersed Authority

The Anglican theology of dispersed authority arises from the Anglican experience and forms a common pattern behind the variety of constitutional documents of synods. A section of the Lambeth Conference of 1948 produced a statement of this theology which has not been bettered. Some parts of it might be phrased differently now: for example, the analogy between scientific method and the way in which the various factors in authority are ordered could be modified today, although the analogy still stands; there are traces of sexist language which, however, do not affect the points made; and so on. More serious work on the theology of dispersed authority needs to be done to update and clarify it, and this process of theological criticism would be in line with the statement itself.

The reader is referred to the text of the statement quoted in full in the Appendix. The implications of this statement for our subject will be drawn out in the sections which follow.

The Theology of the Bishop-in-Synod

Against the background of this view of dispersed authority Anglicans see embodied in the synodical government of their church the following theological principles:

- 1 *The Lordship of Christ*. The Anglican church accepts the traditional episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational elements inherent in the structure of a synod with its three houses as the means through which the lordship of Christ in his church may be “realized,” that is, discerned and responded to.⁷

The *personal oversight* of a diocesan bishop must go hand in hand with the *corporate responsibility* shared by bishop, presbyters, deacons, and lay people acting together. The overlapping authority of the bishop and the bishop-in-synod ensures this. What is said in the Lima Document about per-

sonal, collegial, and communal dimensions of oversight exactly describes the Anglican experience.⁸

- 2 *The Holy Spirit Is Given to the Whole Church.* The power of the Holy Spirit, which may also be called the power of the gospel of Christ, is the dynamic (*dynamis*) from which all exercise of authority proceeds. The Spirit is not given to a privileged few, a hierarchy or intellectual or spiritual elite, but to the whole church.

Every Christian therefore exercises the authority bestowed upon him or her by his or her reception (by word and sacrament) of the gospel. The *consensus fidelium* — the consent of the faithful — is therefore a reality, and the house of the laity acting in constitutional conjunction with the clergy and the bishop make it so. (See further in section 5 below.)

The risk to bishop, clergy, or laity of misusing their authority is merely concealed if it is pretended that power is not distributed in the church. This would amount to a massive self-deception. Anglicans relate lay and clerical authority by *simultaneously* assigning a presidential role to the ordained person and by giving open access to all the criteria for all decisions in the church. These criteria centre on the scriptures and the Book(s) of Common Prayer which are thus "in a language understood of the people." Anglicans remain true to their tradition when they *simultaneously* insist on the exercise of real power by those entitled to claim it and on the necessity of open criticism of the quality of the exercise of the power. Both of these principles are derived from scripture, are consistent with the traditions of the early church and the Reformation, and are enshrined in the structure of a synod.

- 3 *Episcope — The Bishop.* *Episcope* — oversight — although exercised by the bishop, is best understood as a function of the body of Christ — the whole church. This has various practical outcomes:

- (i) The bishop of a diocese is elected by the clergy and laity through the synod; and he is consecrated (if not already a bishop) by at least three other bishops.

- (ii) The synod of a diocese is not the diocese but the organ of it which exercises *episcope*.
- (iii) *Episcopacy* (as a distinct office) 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, exercising it in humble submission as himself under authority." Anglicans therefore have not regarded *episcopacy* as a purely administrative appendage.
- (iv) *Episcope*, if it truly reflects the lordship of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to his whole church, involves the practice of "collegiality" at various levels. Not only does the bishop share *episcope* with his synod, but with his fellow Anglican bishops and beyond that. "The episcopate is one, each individual bishop exercising his *episcope* as joint tenant of the whole" (*Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur* — St. Cyprian, *De Unitate Ecclesia*, 5).
- (v) The problem of *episcope* in a disunited church then arises. The Anglican episcopate shares its peculiar responsibilities with those called and chosen to exercise *episcope* in the totality of Christ's church, and acknowledges that it has a special obligation to consult with leaders of other churches.⁹ Professor Stephen Sykes puts it thus:

Since no Anglican bishop believes that he alone exercises the fullness of *episcope* in any region in which other bishops or church leaders are active, he is bound to consult. If an Anglican bishop claims to be a bishop in the *church of God* as he does, he may not restrict the exercise of his *episcope* to his own denomination. Uncoordinated oversight of the church of God is simply not oversight. There is very good reason to believe that Anglican bishops ought to feel this problem with special acuteness. Their use of the concept of "collegiality" cannot therefore be borrowed unmodified from its use in Roman Catholicism.¹⁰

No diocesan synod in Australia, to my knowledge, has written this obligation of its bishop to consult ecumeni-

cally into its canons and constitution, but it is to be strongly recommended that they do. In any case, many bishops do in fact consult over a very wide range of issues.

The bishop therefore has, in the Anglican view, a particular responsibility for teaching the faith, for encouraging, promoting, and maintaining the proclamation, in word and sacrament, of the apostolic gospel by and in the whole church, for the pastoral care of his own flock, and for making visible the unity of "the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church" of the creeds.

- 4 *The Bishop and the Sacramentality of His Order.* The question of ordination and apostolic succession has, in the past, often been debated as an isolated issue, as though "apostolic succession" was guaranteed by tactile succession of a hierarchy alone (the "pipeline theory"). Anglican experience and tradition does not support this, though Anglo-Catholics have argued that way.

Whatever the various "theologies" of episcopacy put forward, the essential theological point concerns the notion of *sacramentality*. The *Report to the 1948 Lambeth Conference* describes this when it says that in our experience the authority of God 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 Christ's authority and power is that it operates simultaneously as immanent in and transcendent of the structures and limitations of human life, so this is represented by the bishop who is, for example, both a part of his synod, and yet his episcopal authority *transcends* it. He is a "sacramental man," and by virtue of his consecration has responsibilities which do not derive from his synod, nor can these inherent episcopal powers be delegated to his synod. Cases in point are the power to ordain others, the licensing of ministers to their place or cure, and the resolution of certain cases of conscience which he may "reserve" such as the remarriage in church of divorced couples.

The Anglican system of having bishop and bishop-in-synod with overlapping powers is not just "messy and inefficient management" — it rests upon one outcome of the sacramentality of order. What is "sacramental" is not simply the act of ordination, but the subsequent life and work of the person admitted to holy orders.¹¹

For you I am a bishop, but *with* you I am a Christian. . . .
As then I am gladder to be redeemed with you than I am to be set over you, I shall, as the Lord commanded, be more completely your servant. (St. Augustine)¹²

Much more could be said about the sacramentality of orders, but I hope enough has been said to indicate that the tension between the bishop and his synod is, when Anglicans are true to their tradition, experienced as a sacramental reality which lies close to the heart of the gospel of the Incarnation.

- 5 *The Sensus Fidelium.* The authority of Christ, described in the scriptures, ordered in the creeds and continuing theological reflection, mediated by the ministry of word and sacraments is "verified in the witness of the saints and in the *consensus fidelium*." The *Report to the 1948 Lambeth Conference* goes on to say that "the Christ-like life carries its own authority, and the authority of doctrinal formulations, by General Councils or otherwise, rests in part on their acceptance by the whole body of the faithful."

The *sensus fidelium* in Anglicanism should not be understood as unanimity in the sense of everyone being exactly of the same opinion, nor is it shown by majority vote in Synod. Synods are not parliamentary democracies, although many parliamentary rules of business procedure have been adopted. Rather than truth or wisdom being "democratically" determined by majority vote, consensus government emerges with time, patience, and often costly love which is willing to defer to the common mind even when it has not yet emerged, and when it is "genuinely free."

Synods can be manipulated by bishops, theologians, lawyers, priests, or lay people; and Anglicans are not blind to the realities of partisan politics invading the church. But

this is a declension from the ideal of true consensus. The safeguards against manipulation are, first, the example of Jesus Christ, his service and humble obedience unto death; second, the constraint of the appeal of the gospel to the human moral will; thirdly, openness to theological criticism; and fourthly, time for people to reflect and reconsider.¹³

Tyrannous or psychologically manipulative uses of power are to be identified, criticized, and abandoned. It must also be noted that their very recognition depends upon fallible human judgement.

Thus a dispersed, non-centralized structure such as synodical government gives the laity as well as the clergy constitutional opportunity for the kinds of consultation, criticism, and comment which promote genuinely free consensus. Our Anglican experience is that the Christian church requires *both* the discriminating exercise of authority *and* the discriminating exercise of criticism if Christ's work is to be done in the world. The tensions, conflict, and debate as well as the time required to make the *consensus fidelium* an essential part of keeping the church in the truth of Christ, spring from the theology of dispersed authority, and are part of a "charity which is patient and willing to defer to the common mind."

There is reason to believe that "the bishop-in-synod," especially in the provision for lay representatives to be *elected* by their local congregations and for them with their clergy to go back and consult them, may in practice give more weight to the *consensus fidelium* than the concept of the bishop-in-presbytery where the synod *appoints* the lay representation. It is at least arguable.

Oversight in the Uniting Church

By contrast with the Anglican system of bishop-in-synod, oversight in the Uniting Church is exercised *corporately* by the presbytery and other councils or assemblies. This corporate *episcopate* is, however, modified in various ways by pressures and needs leading to more personal oversight being exercised by various officers. Of the three traditions which entered into union in 1973 — Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational — only one had been presbyterian in its polity. The Methodist church

though connexional in polity, had had the experience of semi-episcopal officials in its district chairmen, and especially those in rural areas who had been "separated" from parish responsibilities.

The framers of the first Proposed Basis of Union (1964),¹⁴ no doubt with an eye to facilitating wider union, envisaged a form of episcopacy through "bishops-in-presbytery" through a concordat with the Church of South India. The *Basis of Union*¹⁵ which was finally adopted in 1973, however, omitted all reference to bishops, although it left room for the development of personal as well as corporate elements in the *episcopate* of the presbytery and other councils. According to the present *Basis of Union*:

The Presbytery (the district council) . . . consists of such ministers (elders), leaders and other church members who are appointed thereto. . . . Its function is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except over those agencies which are directly responsible to the (regional/State) Synod or (national) Assembly. Paragraph 15 (c)

Some personal oversight is, however, exercised by the presbyter officer or presbytery-chairman whose duties are "to constitute, preside over and generally direct the business of the meetings of the Presbytery, to exercise pastoral oversight, and to perform such other duties as may be prescribed" (Regulation 3.4.24).

Stuart Murray reflecting on Uniting Church experience since the union, in a paper presented to the Joint Anglican-Uniting Church Committee, has said:

Neither the role of chairman nor the role of presbyter officer has more than very muted episcopal overtones. What is missing is an effective means for maintaining the purity of the faith. The Regulations locate this responsibility at the level of the Assembly, but that is rather remote from the lives of the presbyteries where issues of doctrine and adequate teaching may and do emerge. There is no person within the structure of the presbytery who is given authority to "speak for the Church." The result is that too often the Church is silent when it should speak, and that sometimes it is perceived as speak-

ing when it should be silent. This is what happens when publicity is given to the views of a churchman or woman who seems to be speaking for the Church, but has no authority to do so. There is no authentically prophetic voice speaking out of the heart of the body.

But the *episcopate* of the presbytery has great strengths. Its greatest strength is its ability to discern the body. The presbytery will seldom move at a pace which is insensitive to the ability of the whole body to follow. This may mean that it will often move far too slowly or sluggishly, but there is no doubt concerning its sensitivity to the needs of the whole Church . . . and also to the wider community.¹⁶

The dynamics of authority operating here are fascinating; and, transposed into different keys and different levels of association, will be familiar to all who reflect on authority in the church in whatever denomination. The pressures to centralize, to provide for officials with personal authority to speak and act for the whole body, the type of authority to be accorded them, and where to draw the line between legislative/judicial authority and moral authority can be seen, according to one's point of view, as the promptings of the Spirit or the very devil.

The re-opening of official conversations between Anglican and Uniting churches in Australia in 1979 again raised the question of bishops in the context of the mutual recognition of ministries. The Steering Committee drew up a statement in 1980 for approval by the two churches recommending recognition "of each other's ministries of Word and Sacraments, while acknowledging that they show distinctive marks, emphases and differences exercised within different structures and disciplines." The proposal was treated with extreme caution by the Anglican Bishops' Meeting and the Standing Committee of General Synod, who asked for more theological argumentation to support the proposal for immediate mutual recognition of ministries. Nonetheless, the General Synod of August 1981 passed a resolution (22) on conversations with other churches, which reads in part, "That this Synod . . . (b) adopts an immediate policy of working towards unity in diversity rather than organic union and strives for a mutual recognition of ministry and sacraments which will enable a free interchange between traditions" (Proceedings, p.31). The

Uniting Church General Assembly of May 1982 accepted the 1980 Statement and acknowledged the Anglican General Synod Resolution as a step along the way to organic union. It is again considering the question of personal episcopal oversight in its General Assembly of May 1985.

A survey of this ongoing debate clearly shows that many of the theological principles already referred to are held in common, although in a different balance. One of the pivotal issues is that many Uniting Church members are not able to grasp the "sacramentality of order," and Anglican woolly thinking as well as our "confusion of threefold orders" has not helped them. Much more theological work needs to be done to clarify the notion of sacramentality along the lines of the *Report* to the 1948 Lambeth Conference.

Centralized Authority: Primacy

Analogous to the dynamics operating at the level of the Uniting church presbyteries and the Anglican dioceses in Australia are those behind the development of papal "primacy" in the church. As Christian communities respond to the demands of the gospel in a variety of historical, political, and cultural contexts, many different types of personal as well as conciliatory primacy have developed. The ARCIC Statements on Authority have traced the development of papal primacy very clearly,¹⁷ and they raise the question, Is it possible to *add* centralized to dispersed authority and yet leave the theology of the bishop-in-synod intact? The short answer to this question is: Only if it leaves intact the *balance of theological principles* inherent in the bishop-in-synod.

It is clearly possible to "add" centralized authority to dispersed authority, and the church has in fact done so in response to its mission. In Australia, where we are blessed with the "tyranny of distance," there are at present strong forces towards centralism. But the questions to ask are, Is this or that primacy *necessary* for all time and in all places and for all people? Upon what theological principles is it accepted, and what sort of constitutional authority, i.e., canonical jurisdiction, is a particular primacy to be given?

In its third statement, Authority I, ARCIC claimed to have reached, or very nearly reached a consensus. It arrived at what "amounts to a consensus on authority in the Church, and in par-

particular, on the basic principles of primacy."¹⁸ All that is left to do is to pass from these "basic principles" to settle some of the "particular claims of papal primacy and its exercise." This claim to have discovered an existing consensus between our two churches on the principles of primacy is highly questionable. Fr. Adrian Hastings, a member of the Preparatory Commission which produced the Malta Report, comments on this claim:

As a matter of fact there is not today a consensus within either of our two Churches, let alone between them, and a statement of this sort cannot provide what does not exist. As a consequence it simply does not ring true, appearing instead — to put it unkindly — as a bad amalgam of Anglican wooliness and Roman double talk.¹⁹

Has the theology and practice of bishop-in-synod as the basic pattern any light to shed? The following pointers may be worthy of consideration.

1. *The Doctrine of the Church: Organic or Hierarchical?* It is clear from the theology of dispersed authority already outlined that an organic or systemic doctrine of the church and its total ministry undergirds it: "This authority possesses a suppleness and elasticity in that the emphasis of one element over the others may and does change with the changing conditions of the Church. . . . The elements of authority are moreover in *organic* relation to each other . . . so Catholic Christianity presents us with an *organic* process of life and thought. . . ." The *Lambeth Report* then goes on to refer to the scriptures, the creeds and continuous theological study, the ministry of the word and sacraments, the witness of the lives of the saints, and the *consensus fidelium* as the elements in this organic whole. It is this organic view of the church and its whole ministry which is inherent in the constitution of bishops-in-synod for here not only the bishop and clergy but the laity as well are given canonical authority and jurisdiction in matters of faith and discipline.

On this matter there are two basic ways to think of the church's nature and function. First, the church can be seen as an institution governed and directed by clergy who shape the policy and make plans for implementing it, and then enlist

recruits, the laity, to assist them in carrying out these plans. This is the hierarchical view, and Anglicans are familiar enough with it to be sensitive to its operation in the structures of the Roman communion. With this view goes a concept of the ordained ministry which thinks of the bishop as having the "fullness of ministry" while priests, deacons, and the laity derive their ministries in descending ranks and functions from him.²⁰ It cannot be stated too strongly that this hierarchical mode of operation is *not* inherent in the structures of bishop-in-synod when it is true to its own theological principles, although there are people who, consciously or unconsciously, try to impose it in practice. Secondly, the church can be viewed as the people of God, the body of Christ, in which every member by virtue of baptism has a common though differentiated responsibility for the church and its service of the word and sacraments. In this organic or systemic model there is no place for a *cursus honorum* by which one rises from lower to higher rank, status, and responsibility. Each ministry in the church has its own integrity, function, and type of authority which is not "derived" from the bishop.

Now while the ARCIC statements repudiate the word "hierarchical authority" (Elucidation 1981 paragraph 5), and claim to be "dealing with a form of authority which is *inherent* in the visible structures of the Church," the whole argument regarding the principles of primacy is conducted on the hierarchical model. Nor is it reassuring to examine *Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution and the Church of Vatican II, in which the hierarchical model is clearly paramount. When we look at the partial recovery of the organic view of the church as a result of Vatican II, and the way in which different popes have exercised their papal primacy, we see a struggle going on between the organic and hierarchical models of the church. Furthermore, the Preface to the *Final Report*, where ARCIC tackles the question of the ecclesiology undergirding their statements, we find no answer, in its treatment of the church as *koinonia*, to this quite crucial question of which basic view of the church and its ministry should be primary on biblical and doctrinal grounds.

The two doctrines of the church are to be found warring within Anglicanism itself in each of our parties, catholic, evangelical, and liberal. We, too, in common with the West

from the fourth century, have inherited a fundamental change in church and ministry from the principle of organism in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, to the principle of hierarchy in which the "greatest" is the sum of its parts. There is with us, too, no consensus. But the point to be made is that the Anglican communion has resisted, so far, giving legislative authority (*jus*), as distinct from moral authority (*auctoritas*), to its primates alone — or even its bishops or priests *alone*, because it would change the basic character of the church itself.²¹

The organic nature of the church has been safeguarded by giving legislative power to bishops-in-synods, which includes giving legislative authority to duly elected and representative lay "ministers" of the gospel. So, from a church in whose constitutional structures for more than a century the laity have been given collegial, canonical authority and juridical powers in matters of faith and morals comes the question: In a united church, is the Church of Rome prepared to grant rightful canonical standing to the legislative "collegiality" of not only bishops and priests but to duly elected, representative, lay persons? If this is not the case, it is difficult to see how centralized authority can be *added* to dispersed authority.

- 2 *Universal Immediate Episcopal Jurisdiction.* ARCIC, in *Elucidation 6*, says, "We understand jurisdiction as the authority or power (*potestas*) necessary for the effective fulfillment of an office. Its exercise and limits are determined by what that office involves (cf. Authority II, paragraphs 16-22)," and in Authority I, 24, "The First Vatican Council intended that the papal primacy should be exercised only to maintain and never erode the structures of the local Churches. The Roman Catholic Church is today seeking to replace the juridical outlook of the nineteenth century by a more pastoral understanding of authority in the Church." While we may applaud the intention of the First Vatican Council and the pastoral understanding of twentieth-century Roman Catholics, the problem is that what ARCIC understands by jurisdiction is not what is usually meant by it. Jurisdiction (*jus*) is the authority and power given by *law*, in the case of the church by canon law, contained in constitutional documents — while

moral authority (*auctoritas*) is not — it carries weight by its own intrinsic truth or wisdom. Anglicans are (usually) quite clear about the difference between a primate (or a synod) having jurisdiction and one who has moral authority. The archbishop of Canterbury, for example, has no jurisdiction in Australia, though he has considerable moral authority. The ARCIC treatment of jurisdiction, if it is really intent on exploring "what is inherent in the structures of the Church" is confusing the real issue, to say the least.

Defending the Commission's statements, Dr. Chadwick and Fr. Yarnold have written: "the exercise of the Pope's immediate jurisdiction outside Rome is extremely rare, even rarer perhaps than the exercise of his papal infallibility."²² This assertion is presumably meant to suggest that the Roman claim to universal immediate episcopal jurisdiction has been misinterpreted, and properly understood should not be hard for Anglicans to swallow.

But is it true? Is not the appointment of every bishop of the Latin rite an example today of the pope's immediate jurisdiction, and is that rare or unimportant? To add *this* sort of centralized jurisdiction to the Anglican church would certainly be incompatible with the organic principle of bishop-in-synod where (in most cases) synod elects its bishop, the people generally consent, and three bishops consecrate.

The pope has many roles. The titles of the present one are "Johannes Paulus pp II, Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor to the Prince of the Apostles, Sovereign Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the Vatican City, Servant of the Servants of God." While Anglicans are prepared to acknowledge the moral authority of the pope according to the truth of what he says and the wisdom of his moral judgements, we are entitled to ask, "In a united church, to which of the pope's particular roles or 'hats' would Anglicans be required to give legal enactment in their diocesan synods?" If the answer is, "None," what becomes of the claim to universal immediate jurisdiction? If the answer is, "One or two, or more," we are entitled to ask *which* ones? It is in the interface between theology and constitutional law that the real questions of

authority in the sense of jurisdiction arise — questions which have been glossed over by the ARCIC statements.

There may be historical circumstances in the future in which it may be appropriate for the Anglican communion to give a pope universal jurisdiction. Who can tell? "Synodical government assumes a variety of forms down through history." But response to the gospel, the personal styles of the bishops we see, the constitutional procedures taken over from the political societies surrounding us and the missionary task confronting us — these suggest that it is highly unlikely that Anglicans would agree that that time has come.

It would be wrong to suggest that no growing together, no interchange or mutual learning can take place until all the complex theoretical and practical problems concerning authority are solved. The consensus of ARCIC on the eucharist and ministry more truly reflects the actualities in our two churches, and on that basis we may ask, "Has not the time arrived when we have reached such a measure of agreement on so many of the fundamentals of the gospel that a relationship of shared communion can be encouraged by the leadership of both our churches?"²³

The Actual Operations of Bishop-in-Synod

In drawing out the theological principles detectable in the constitutional documents of Anglican synods, it would also be wrong to suggest that the actual operations of synods always live up to those principles, or that every individual Anglican always detects them. My point is that the principles are there to be appealed to, even when they are not always articulated, are forgotten, or are acted against. The theology outlined is at once a description of Anglican theology and a criticism of Anglican *praxis*.

The bishop of Bombay, in an article entitled "Christian Ministry and Synodical Government,"²⁴ describing the experience of the Church of North India has some words which should be heeded:

The main problem facing any Uniting Church is how to combine the three traditional elements in Church polity (the episcopal, the presbyterial and the congregational — and we

might add, the primatial) in such a way that, in fact, the spiritual and not the demonic predominates. In other words, the right combination of different polities can allow Jesus Christ to be Lord. But a wrong or injudicious synthesis might result in the *de facto* rule of his Satanic Majesty! If Synodical government is not to be a stumbling block but a means of grace, considerable thought and experiment will be needed. Perhaps this is also true of Churches not yet united!

Anyone who has sat through sessions of synods can say, "Amen" to that.

Notes

1. Acts 15 and 21.
2. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, iii, 20.
3. See H. Lowther-Clarke, *Constitutional Church Government* (London, 1924), 1-14. There is no space to go into the constitutional history in detail, and I do not here wish to enter into the question of the difference between ancient synods and modern synodical government.
4. See R.A. Giles, *The Constitutional History of the Australian Church* (1928), and Stephen Sykes, *Authority in the Anglican Communion*, from the Anglican Primates' Meeting, Washington, April 1981, 18-25.
5. See an important article by H. E. Thomas, "Some Principles of Anglican Authority" in the last mentioned work, 18 ff. See also *Canon Law in Australia* (General Synod 1981), 92, which calls dispersed authority "chartered anarchy."
6. Democratic, autocratic, and bureaucratic procedures have, from time to time, influenced the way in which synods operate. For the influence of sociological factors that have shaped episcopacy, see G.M.D. Howat and G.V. Bennett, "Today's Church in Today's World," in the Lambeth Conference 1978 Preparatory Articles, 215-229.
7. See Kennedy's article in *Today's Church in Today's World*, 171 ff.
8. See *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva, 1982) sections 26 and 27, pp.25 and 26. Compare *The Church: Its Nature Function and Ordering* (Report prefaced to the 1964 Proposed Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia), 45-47.

9. So the Anglican Primates' Meeting in 1981: see *Authority in the Anglican Communion*, 33, section 5.
10. Sykes, *Authority in the Anglican Communion*, 16.
11. See Rayner, *Today's Church in Today's World*, 265.
12. *Ibid.*, 241.
13. See Sykes, *Authority in the Anglican Communion*, 12-13, 17 on this whole section.
14. *The Church: Its Nature Function and Ordering* (Report prefaced to the 1964 Proposed Basis of Union).
15. *Basis of Union* (Melbourne, 1971).
16. Stuart Murray, *Episcopate through Presbytery*, 8.
17. *The Final Report* (1982), Authority I, 8-12.
18. Authority I, 24. Compare Authority II, 1.
19. "Malta Ten Years Later," in *One in Christ* (1978), XIV, 1, 28.
20. Compare, for example: "The bishop alone is the direct and immediate sign of Christ to his flock, while the priest is a sign, not directly of Christ the Priest, but of his bishop"! Bishop Guildford Young in his commentary on "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests," in W. M. Abbott, S. J. Chapman, *The Documents of Vatican II* (London, 1967).
21. For an interesting treatment of the effect of the hierarchical principle taking over the organic from the fourth century on the decline of the permanent diaconate, see James M. Barnett, *The Diaconate, A Full and Equal Order* (New York, 1981).
22. E.J. Yarnold and Henry Chadwick, *Truth and Authority* (London, 1977), 34.
23. Archbishop Coggan, *The Times*, 29th April 1977.
24. Kennedy, *Today's Church in Today's World*, 176-177.

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