

SOME NOTES TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF THE OFFICE
OF BISHOP IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

"CHURCHES APOSTOLIKE DID KNOW BUT THREE DEGREES IN THE POWER
OF ECCLESIASTICALL ORDER, AT THE FIRST APOSTLES, PRESBYTERS,
AND DEACONS, AFTERWARDS IN STEAD OF APOSTLES, BISHOPS."

HOOKER E.P.V., 78.

1. INTRODUCTION

This monograph is intended to make some critical appraisal and theological analysis of the office of Bishop. Convinced that this office embodies in the church an essential form of sacramental activity on the part of God our Creator-Redeemer (i), I am seeking to expose the foundations of this belief and, as I should like to hope, to offer adequate, authoritative justification for it. Whereas Anglicans are not prepared to deny the name of "Christian or "Church" to congregations and communions bereft of Episcopal Order, we believe nevertheless that Bishops are essential to the continuous integrity of the Gospel throughout the ages. They represent one of the things which, in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, "are neither Anglican, nor Roman, nor Greek, nor Lutheran, nor Calvinist, but belong to the one People of God". (ii). They exist as a fact in the whole Anglican Communion, whatever be the interpretation of their office, and all the ministers of the Church are ordained by Bishops and live in canonical obedience to them.

Arguments designed to show merely the antiquity or expediency of Episcopal Order do not go far enough. What is merely "useful" or merely "historic" may be either preserved or discarded as necessity dictates. The "historic episcopate" in its merely historic character as an institution does not commend itself of necessity to the judgment of modern man. Other offices survive in Church and State from the classical and mediaeval worlds - and ancient errors! To preserve episcopacy merely as an (historic) institution, without concern for any meaning of it, is, in the word of the Archbishop of Armagh, "the rankest ritualism". (iii). It can become a form almost of idolatry, and, in my opinion, some preoccupations within Anglicanism with this particular issue, to the exclusion of consideration of the nature of the Church, have such a character. Bishops, preserved in isolation from other members of the Body of Christ, are inexplicable, or meaningless. The primary reality for Christianity is the Ecclesia, "a body of men praying, fasting, doing penance, asking for grace, engaging in spiritual combat and struggling for the triumph in themselves of the spirit of Jesus Christ". (iv).

(i) "It speaks, as we believe nothing else can speak, of the way in which the Fatherly rule of God is exercised among His people...", Bishop of Bristol, quoted in David M. Paton, Anglicans and Unity, P.100.

- (ii) A. M. Ramsay, The Gospel and The Catholic Church, P.213.
 - (iii) Dr. Gregg, Archbishop of Armagh, cited in E. L. Mascall The Recovery of Unity, P.156.
 - (iv) Y. Congar in J.M. Todd, Problems of Authority, P.133.
-

Only in this context of community, fulfilled as a divine commission, is the office of Bishop meaningful. The meaning must be theological, because the office and work are of divine origin and have a special "priesthood of ministry" (i), which is addressed to persons and pastoral. This meaning, or plurality of meanings, Anglicans believe, constitutes the essential reason why there are Bishops and why their office should be retained, with its character and significance clarified and renewed, in modern projects of reunion. Anglican Church Order, it has been said (ii), although it retains the names and titles of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, is no more like that of S. Ignatius of Antioch and S. Hippolytus of Rome in fact than that of any other modern "communion". This is because the Anglican Church, possessed of its "historic episcopate", does not perpetuate the primitive, pre-Nicene Church Order, but a drastic Fourth Century modification of it. (iii). To suppose that this is "historic" is true, but it is not "historic" enough! To impose it on others as such, as a condition of unity, is to betray at once ignorance and arrogance. There are good reasons for not having Bishops now, just as there are impressive arguments for not believing in God. If Bishops are to be retained, it must be because they fulfil a function of unique importance in relation to the Church's Faith and Ministry and Mission. Critical appraisals of conventional opinions should serve to renew our common faith and practice, in order that we may all come to worship in truth Him Who is Chief Shepherd and Bishop of the Flock. The challenge which I am taking up is that of David M. Paton's book, Anglicans and Unity, where it is said: "What we have failed to do effectively is to communicate the first thing other people want to know; why, positively, we are so convinced about bishops". (iv).

- (i) G. Dix in K. E. Kirk, The Apostolic Ministry, (1957 edition), p.295.
- (ii) G. Dix in K. E. Kirk, The Apostolic Ministry, (1957 edition), p.295.
- (iii) "The offices of Bishop and Presbyter came within one century to take the general shape which they have retained ever since".
A. G. Hebert, Apostle & Bishop, P.67.
- (iv) Op. cit., P.99.

2. THE BISHOP-IN-THE-CHURCH

"The Church is the living presence of the divine Word. This presence is made concrete in those persons (the bishops) whose basic function is to hold fast to the word, who are, then, the personal embodiment of "tradition" (παραδόσεις) and to this extent are in the apostolic line of "succession" (δεδοχρή) (1).

These words of Josef Ratzinger may serve as introduction to the argument because they contain within a striking unity several themes of the utmost importance. Studies in Biblical Theology have illuminated the wholeness of primitive Christian (and Hebrew) Truth. The thought-mould of both Testaments is one in which human-kind is treated as a single corporate solidarity and individual men are seen in the totality of their human presence. The concept of truth itself retains in biblical revelation a rich interiority and wholeness, so that no part or aspect of it is ^{intelligible in isolation, but only in relationship with the total pattern} of orthodoxy. Much christian discussion and controversy have been invalidated and even bedevilled by the failure to discern this essential character of Catholic Theology. Even today theories about the nature of the christian Orders of Ministry are discussed in disengagement from any explicit doctrine of the Church.

There are also groups of Christians who have been by-passed by the new understanding of the sources of revelation and who cling with desperate earnestness to outmoded concepts of both Church and Ministry, developed under the impact of old quarrels devoid of any scientific or consciously biblical orientation. To remain wilfully conservative (or ignorant) is the attitude of a mere sectary. It cannot be the claim of any christian who acknowledges his cognomen "catholicus". The nature of the Church, therefore, is always to be taken as the permanent foundation of the nature of its sacred Ministry. It is only within the context of what the Church is as a unique society indispensable for the salvation of man that questions as to its internal ordering have meaning or can expect fruitful discussion and solution. The attitude of those who would preserve episcopal government in the Church on the grounds only or principally of its antiquity or usefulness is positively damaging to the claims of the enquiring intellect and to the challenge of ecumenism. It is scarcely a time to posture ostrich-like in the sand, for the season of denominationalism with its confused and conflicting loyalties is past, and it is incumbent upon every christian to lower all barriers which pride and prejudice have built. Is the Anglican doctrine of Church and Bishop, interlocked in one integrity of faith and practice, one of these?

(1) K. Rahner & J. Ratzinger. The Episcopate & The Primacy, Herder, Freiburg; Nelson, Edinburgh & London, 1962. P.59.

Protestant theologians frequently deplore Anglican intransigence and object that much of this is based on the allegedly false or misleading notion of Church - and - Incarnation. It is true that "incarnational" theology has played a large part in Anglican thinking and that, aware of their deep backdrop of history receding to Jerusalem, Anglicans have readily embraced the concept that the Church is "an extension of the Incarnation". The sense of the importance of history as the locus of revelation and redemption has encouraged this belief, although it is now claimed, even by some Anglicans, that it should be rejected or transcended by a more "dynamic", "existential" or "eschatological" understanding of the Church.

The Church we understand to be at once the prolongation and the plenitude of Christ. It may be conceived under several guises, theological - mystical, social and juridical. Essentially it is visible in this world and is a People with a history and an organisation. Although a creation of God, it is as concrete an actuality and existent as any creature of His original work and as embodied and "fleshy" as the Incarnate Word. The unique unity between Christ and His People is not confined to the age of His historic ministry, but, with His Ascension and the Coming of the Spirit, the Lord inserts His life, as it were, between the leaves of our human history in such a way that neither change of place nor time, and not even death, can destroy it. The "scandal" of this mystical identity, of course, is that, on the human side, sin, error, fallibility, limitation remain. These disfigure the continuing Presence of the living Word in our midst, but they do not reduce Him to a phantom. Despite the encumbrance of its own weakness or apostasy the Church remains a visible reality designed by the very fact of its visibility to point men into the fold and flock of Christ. It retains tangible links with the wholeness of its primitive truth and history in its actual possession of Scriptures, Creeds, Sacraments, and Episcopate. These are all tangible "notes" formulated and recognised in the processes of history. The Word continues to live as Lord among His People.

The Church exists, therefore, by virtue of a new and distinctive act of God achieved in the Incarnation, Ministry, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. It derives in a sense also in an historic succession from the Old Israel (an equally concrete and corporate entity), although only in the character of Nation transformed and universalized as Ecclesia of God. Nation and Church exist on different levels of reality. The Hebrew Nation belongs as such wholly to the order of history, but the Church, although embodied in history, has an origin and a meaning which transcend history. It is as much a new creation of God within the context of human life as the flesh of the Word "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary".

Within the Church the Episcopate presents itself to us as an institution in which are discernible successive moments or types. Recognition of this fact helps to modify to some extent the harsh judgment which we have already made on the post-Constantinian form of the Anglican Episcopate. That represents one dominant type of Episcopacy current in the Western Church since the Fourth Century. It embodies, therefore, merely one moment in the succession of meanings which this office fulfills. Now it is ready for renewal.

3. A Glance Backwards

In pre-Nicene times it was customary to interpret the place of the Bishop in relation to the Church's primary function of worship (i). In the Apostolic Tradition of S. Hippolytus of Rome, c.A.D.215, a clear distinction is made between "ordination" (χειροτονία) and "appointment" (κατάταξις). Those who receive ordination do so in order to perform a "liturgy" (λειτουργία). Every "order" (τάξις) has its own "liturgy" in which it is irreplaceable. Thus "widows" are "appointed", and minor orders (like the acolyte and sub-deacon) need no ordination because they have no special liturgical functions (as yet) at the Holy Eucharist. It is only the clergy (κλήρος) who receive ordination to equip them for their liturgy. To the "liturgy" of the Bishop's "order" it appertained to preach the sermon at the Synaxis and "to offer the gifts" at the Eucharist. No doubt in these aspects of his office he is descended from the preaching Apostle or prophet, and president of the fellowship-meal seen in the New Testament and Didache and S. Justin Martyr. A conception of the Episcopate as historic and apostolic and liturgical is present in Hippolytus, who professes to be testifying to traditional use, as early as the beginning of the Third Century. The Bishop alone ordains (and co-consecrates other Bishops), although presbyters assist at the ordination of other presbyters. These presbyters are primarily teaching and administrative officers. The deacons, however, are made by the Bishop acting alone. They form his personal staff, assisting at the administration of the Eucharist, and elsewhere, but are wholly dependent upon the Bishop for their office and ministry. For the creation of a Bishop the choice of a man from his own Church, by a free vote of the People(ii), is as essential as his sacramental consecration. Bishops are not translated from see to see, a practice deplored even after Nicaea and likened to adultery! Holy Orders are not conceived of as a personal possession inhering in the recipient, but as an office in the Church in one place involving the orderly fulfilment of specific functions.

-
- (i) See Gregory Dix in The Apostolic Ministry, P.196-227, where a careful analysis of the evidence is offered. Cp A.G. Hebert, Apostle and Bishop, P.67: "The important thing, for the ordinary Christian, was the presidency of the Eucharist".
- (ii) "At every stage in the ministerial succession in catholic congregations, all things have been done with the co-operation of all the people", W. Telfer, The Office of a Bishop. P.119.

It is the Bishop who baptizes, confirms, shepherds, ordains, consecrates (i). This is in line with the New Testament in which "Particular functions or offices are indicated by terms which refer to a task or activity viewed as a service to be done in the community". (ii)

4. Looking Forward

There are several points to be made about Bishops of critical importance to Anglicans in ecumenical discussion. Two of these are as follows:-

1. The office of Bishop is personal, that is, it is conveyed to and embodied in an individual human life. This is not to deny the mutual concern of Christians for each other, or the concern of the Church in the totality of its life and action for the World. The fundamental reason why episcopacy is entrusted to a single person is that the final self-revelation of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is a Person. In Him God addresses Himself to us as persons. It is true that He speaks and acts in other ways - (πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπῳ) (Hebrews 1¹), but never so compellingly as in His Son. In this sense, and subject to this august Archetype, it must be considered that Christ is present in His Church in the person of His Bishop. (This does not deny the Lord's presence in other ways).
2. The office of Bishop is historic. In defining the meaning of this statement, we are recognizing first that the office has an immense presumption of antiquity in its favour. Even if it were undisputed that "varying patterns of the Ministry" existed in the pre-Nicene Church (iii), it remains true nevertheless that the whole of Christendom was governed by Bishops from the Fourth Century to the Reformation and that the greater part of the Church remains so governed today: "even today more Christians adhere to it" (Episcopal Order) "than to all other forms of Church Order together" (iv). The Preface to the Anglican Ordinal claims apostolic origin for the office. Even if we concede that "the word episkopos .. does not anywhere in the New Testament denote an office, or mean what we mean by "a bishop" (v), the Apostolate does exist in the New Testament and so does the "regional apostolate" of Timothy and Titus. Apostleship and Presbytership and Deaconship are all offices in the New Testament.

(i) "During the pre-Nicene period the bishop was the president of the local church, celebrating the Eucharist ever Sunday with its people", A.G.Hebert, Apostle and Bishop, P.66

(ii) Y. Congar in J. M. Todd, op.cit., P.120.

(iii) Second Report of the Joint Commission on Church Union, p.33, Aldersgate Press, Melbourne, 1963

(iv) The Anglican Inheritance and Episcopacy, S.P.C.K., 1960, p.4.

(v) Gabriel Hebert, Apostle and Bishop, P.51.

Episcopate is exercised most often by presbyters (Acts 2-,28), but some of the most notable of apostolic functions are claimed and exercised by the later Bishops to whose presence and character "ancient Authors" bear witness. What is "historic" in the Episcopate, however, is the commission of the apostle to act in our Lord's own Person (i). This is not merely an appeal to antiquity, but a spiritual claim of the utmost moment. Only our Lord's own words, received by Tradition, could and do confirm it. "The historic episcopate as we understand it goes behind the perversions of history to the original conception of the apostolic ministry" (ii). It is a fact and an institution, characterized by succession in office and consecration, and entrusted with certain functions (iii). It forms an organ of continuity throughout the ages, endowed with rich meaning, and a personal link with the Lord from whom (in history) and in whom (ascended) "the episcopate of all generations is rooted, who is the ultimate agent in every ordination and consecration" (iv).

The Episcopate does indeed contain essential determinants of character as far as the functions of Bishops are concerned. These have been stated by Anglicans as (v):

- (i) The general superintendence of the Church, more especially of the clergy;
- (ii) the maintenance of unity in the one Eucharist;
- (iii) the ordination of men to the Ministry;
- (iv) the safeguarding of the Faith;
- (v) the administration of the discipline of the Church.

The "historic Episcopate" is not the Episcopate as it appears at any moment in history, still less at stages concerning which the historical evidence is disputed. An Episcopate in which Bishops are made only by other Bishops, despite the faults and distortions of its history, contains, we believe, "something of permanent value, something which really is a gift of God to his Church (vi). This belief is supported in Anglican tradition by a very strong doctrine of vocation by which is ascribed to God Himself the appointment (among His other gifts) of "divers Orders" in His Church. The three orders of Ministry, we believe, exist by divine authority. They are sacred Offices to which men are called by God.

-
- (i) K. E. Kirk, Apostolic Ministry, P.52.
 - (ii) The Anglican Inheritance and Episcopacy, S.P.C.K. P.9-10.
 - (iii) ibid. P.10
 - (iv) ibid. P.8
 - (v) ibid. P.10
 - (vi) The Anglican Inheritance and Episcopacy, P.4.

The Anglican Ordinal speaks as follows:

To the men to be made Deacons--

"Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the due order of this Realm, to the Ministry of the Church?"

To the men to receive the Order of Priesthood:-

"Do you think in your heart that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church of England in Australia, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?"

To him that is to be consecrated Bishop:-

"Are you persuaded that you be truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Realm?"

It is the function of the Church to recognise God's call in the persons of those who present themselves for ordination or consecration and to hallow them to it. This is radically different from a mere assignation of different functions. It involves, of course, the fulfilment of functions, but, in each Order of Ministry, the functions depend upon the nature of the office to which God has called(i).

If then, in conclusion, we ask what is the meaning of the "historic Episcopate" as a condition of union in the Lambeth Quadrilateral, our answer would be formulated with inclusion of the considerations above. Others could be urged as well (ii), but these alone suffice to prove that ANGLICANS do not commend episcopacy merely because it is "historic", but rather believe that episcopacy is essential to the continuous integrity of the Gospel throughout the ages. In this sense Bishops are essential to the Church, so that, without Bishops, the Church does not exist in its fulness. Is this not the same thing as saying that, without Bishops, the true Church does not exist? Would we believe that the true Church existed, if it were deprived of Sacraments, Creeds or Sacred Scriptures? Is it ever necessary to turn the positive statement, qualified as indicated, that Bishops are essential to the Church, as the Church is essential to the Gospel, into a self-conscious negative? This approach always reflects adversely on the 'pedigree' of non-episcopal communions, and if we are resolved to go forward together, it would seem wasteful and arrogant to talk of the 'illegitimacy' of some of God's children! Conversations with these premises would indicate that we had not really accepted each other as we are, in our sins (some of them 'historic' ones!), but stabilized in hope by the fact and grace of our common Baptism.

(i) Cp. "By 'historic episcopate' is meant the episcopate which has continuity in history and intention with that of the undivided Church; but no other theological interpretation of episcopacy shall be required from any individual minister or member of the Church of Lanka". The Case against the Scheme of Church Union in Ceylon, P.21.

(ii) e-g. the Bishop as 'apostolic person', 'ruler', 'guardian of Faith', 'Minister of the Liturgy', 'Centre of unity', etc.

It seems therefore, that the Episcopate, however derived from or related to the Apostolate of the Twelve, emerged in the Second Century as a separate order of ministry, possessed of functions exercised within a fixed locality. It represents part of the victory of the Church over Time. Whether mon-episcopacy emerged by evolution from among a college of peers, or by devolution of authority from the Apostles themselves, is a question for the resolution of which adequate historical evidence is lacking. The three-fold ministry of Bishops, presbyters and deacons appears in the Second Century as an uncontested feature of the life of the Church as institution. Even if all presbyters were originally, under the founding Apostles, presbyter-bishops, monarchical episcopacy/mon-episcopacy soon prevailed throughout East and West alike. Possible remnants of the former, 'primitive' order may be recognized in the practice of concelebration of the Liturgy and in the customs observed in the Ordination of Priests. There is no evidence, however, that anyone then wished, out of archaism or on any other ground, to revert to the original order of Apostolic times. The divine 'instant' of Incarnation was seen to be re-iterating itself in the continuing life of the Church in history, and development took place, not discontinuity. Once Bishops came to exercise authority in and over the Church, it does not seem that any group of presbyters (or deacons) considered that it could act properly without them. This would suggest that we may recognize two phases of the same situation: one in which the Church is cared for by itinerant Apostles, communities of presbyter-bishops and deacons, and one in which, with the death of the last Apostle, the Church is stabilized in Time as an on-going institution. It has a corporate reality of life, a strong sacramental system, a canon of sacred writings, and a personal episcopate/mon-episcopate. Such formation suggests natural organic evolution. It would not seem unreasonable, therefore, that an unbroken succession of episcopal orders should be assumed to lie behind the Episcopate of the Anglican, Greek and Roman Churches. Do we not assume that the Baptism of the Lord Jesus, and of countless unknown multitudes of Christian people, the records of whose Baptism cannot now be traced, lies behind every Twentieth Century act of Holy Baptism? We do not find it necessary to dispute the unbrokenness of this historic succession. There is an important sense in which we belong to the Body of Jesus Christ in Time and are solidly interlocked with the temporal history of the Church as institution. It is just as desirable (and 'essential') for us to know ourselves members of the Church of Jesus Christ, identical in status and responsibility before God with the first Christians, as it is essential for every Catholic Bishop to know himself standing in the succession of the Apostolic Faith and Order.

He does not presume for the most part, to trace his 'pedigree' to any particular Apostle, but the Order of Bishops to which he belongs exercises corporately in the Church the offices and functions which the Apostles fulfilled. Individually, in his diocese each Bishop also represents the principle of unity and is given to the People by God as the fount of their Holy Order. From him the other Clergy derive their authority to minister and exercise in particular places his general functions of episcopate, priesthood and diaconship. By his authority transmitted to them in the laying-on of hands the faithful are baptized and the Church caused to increase with the increase of God.

When Anglicans speak of "the sacred regiment of Bishops" (i) they do not mean, therefore, merely the historical fact of episcopacy. When they urge other Christians "to take episcopacy into their system" (ii), they do not mean that the mere acceptance of episcopacy as an institution will satisfy their conscience as to what the Catholic Order of the Church, restored to fulness of unity in truth and love, demands (iii). No rigid, exclusive, particular interpretation is being asked for as a condition of union, but this does not mean that no interpretation of the fact of episcopacy is considered desirable and necessary. The "historic Episcopate" represents the Episcopate as it has come to be developed within the temporal, incarnational structure and experience of the Church. It confronts us with a single office recognized as authoritative in a unique sense by the vast majority of the faithful, and endowed with a plurality of meanings. We may no more dispossess ourselves of Episcopate now than of Sacraments, Canon or Creed, and it belongs as much to the life of the Church in time as they do. The departure of non-episcopal communions at this point of Holy Order from the norm of Catholicism is a deviate development. Whether such deviations as have occurred, with their consequent imbalances of faith and practice, involve also some loss of spiritual power and efficacy of ministry we are not in a position to judge. By their departure from us, or by our exclusion of them, it has involved this loss for us. The Lambeth Conferences of Anglican Bishops have acknowledged publicly already the reality of Christ's spiritual power in them and in their work.

When some Anglicans have said that the ministries of non-episcopal communions are "irregular", we mean that they are not fulfilled within the sphere of historic catholic ecclesiastical order. When others affirm them to be 'invalid', we mean that they are not commissioned to them by episcopal authority.

-
- (i) Hooker, E.P. VII. 1.4. (Red-coats, purple-coats or turn-coats?)
(ii) The Cambridge Sermon of the Archbishop of Canterbury, 1948.
(iii) "Episcopacy is meaningless apart from that which it exists to signify".
The Apostolic Ministry, p.xxvii.... "Without this controlling principle,
the championship of the episcopal system is mere archaeological perversity".
(ibid).

We do not mean in either case that they are ineffective or spiritually barren. We acknowledge that it is possible to have Orders regular and valid, as we believe our own to be, but spiritually ineffective and therefore defective. We also acknowledge that one historic reason for the schisms between us has been spiritual powerlessness in our own 'historic' Orders. We all need to be delivered from a situation of fragmentation in which a heavy burden from the past still remains upon us in the form of what St. Paul calls "a body of death".

5. Conclusion

Christian authority, whether episcopal or otherwise, becomes intelligible only within the context of christian community. This community ($\kappa\omicron\iota\upsilon\nu\nu\acute{\iota}\lambda$) contains within itself a most varied distribution of functions, but, despite some New Testament and Patristic evidence to the contrary (i), it is doubtful whether any of these may rightly be said to possess 'a power of command'. St. Paul, it is true, acts with such an authority (I Tim. 1.²⁰) and claims it for himself (II Cor. 10.⁸, 13.¹⁰). Clearly it is not merely moral influence or persuasion, because it is given and proves effective in the expulsion of demons (Mk 3¹⁵, 6¹³, Lk 10¹⁷⁻²⁰)— On the other hand it cannot be 'naked power', as this would betray the nature of the Gospel itself (Mk 10⁴⁵, Lk 22²⁶). The complexity and fragility of the christian concept of authority requires that it be invested always with the positive moral qualities of truth, humility, holiness and love. This moral clothing of authority makes it credible and acceptable to men whom Christ has freed from the enslavements of this world, including those of its religious authorities.

"Since a man in authority only holds it in the interests of his subordinates, since men are essentially equal, authority is necessarily limited to what is demanded not by the interests and advantage of the man exercising it, but to the advantage of his subordinates and of the community.... every time he makes use of his power, the question arises as to whether the common good requires that he should". (ii) Neglect or over-riding of this fundamental principle that christian authority is a commission to service, which excludes all rights of domination (I Peter 5³), has been a major cause of the disrespect into which authority has sunk even within the Church. Service, on the other hand, "is a universal value co-extensive and identical with Christian life itself". (iii)

-
- (i) Yves Congar, The Historical Development of Authority, in J. H. Todd, Problems of Authority, Darton, Longman & Todd, London; Helicon Press, Baltimore; 1962, P. 120. See also in A. Patristic Greek Lexicon, Oxford, 1962.
(ii) Jacques Leclercq, The Use of Authority, op.cit., p.249-250.
(iii) Yves Congar, op.cit., p.121.

The episcopal ministry, we conclude therefore, is likewise intelligible, not in isolation, but within the whole context of the life-in-Christ, and, as an historical phenomenon, has been subject to changes and development. A chronological succession of types of episcopal ministry is discernible in the ordering and progression of christian community-life. In understanding episcopal ministry the primary reality of the Church itself must be affirmed, and a union established between its hierarchical structure and the communal exercise of all christian activities and responsibilities. (i).

(i) op. cit. p.125.

Harry Reynolds Smythe
Rome, March 1971.