

How in the Church: A Study of Authority
A joint EDEO-NADEO statement
1987

PREFACE

“Authority is exercised in different ways within each Church. The Committee will report on progress toward mutual understanding of authority.” So we wrote, bravely and naively in 1984, announcing the subject of this 1987 report.

In one respect, it seems there has been no progress at all toward mutual understanding of authority, only regression toward mutual misunderstanding. In another respect, however, relations between the churches may be viewed as maturing and realistic.

Episcopalians have watched with dismay and a sense of betrayal the Vatican’s handling of the Curran and Hunthausen affairs, for example. This has stirred up within many their almost-forgotten prejudices about Roman rule, with its sometimes despotic use of inquisitional and coercive power. ARCIC’s accommodating and benign discussion of the “immediate ordinary jurisdiction” of the Bishop of Rome now seems to some Episcopalians to be a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Roman Catholics are confused and troubled to observe the Episcopal Church moving fitfully toward the election and ordination of women to the episcopacy, even while some other provinces of the Anglican Communion do not permit women to be ordained to the priesthood. What sort of strange beasts are this Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion?—in part recognizable as Catholic church, but also looking suspiciously like a protestant denomination, or even like the platform committee at a political party’s convention.

And yet, it may be that this current strait in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations is salutary. We are both forced to take a second look, to have second thoughts: do we have enough in common to go forward, or should we call the whole thing off?

After the Second Vatican Council, Anglicans and Roman Catholics discovered each other. It was heady, and sometimes giddy—not unlike adolescent romance. Teenagers in love characteristically talk in enthusiastic torrents, eagerly telling, trying out, and discovering their own identities and happily identifying interests, experiences and feelings they share in common; this has happened in all the ARC dialogues. Physical expression of affection is vitally important: adolescents hold hands, sit closely, kiss goodnight, wonder how far to go; the ecumenical relationship thrives on such matters as jointly eating meals, singing, worshipping, passing the peace, and wondering about eucharistic sharing. New, young romance thrives on “little

misunderstandings” which are talked through and resolved; isn’t this something like the 1971 Windsor Statement on “Eucharistic Doctrine” and the 1973 Canterbury Statement on “Ministry and Ordination?” Adolescents falling in love do a lot of fantasizing and projecting: they assume that because each likes Spielberg, adores Springsteen or appreciates Bach, *all* their artistic preferences will be identical; that because both are misunderstood by their own parents, somehow they must understand each other; he is her perfect dream, she is his ideal woman. Might the 1981 Windsor Statement, “Authority in the Church II,” be an ecclesiastical analogue?

Now, ARC relations have become like the courtship of two mature adults. We know that we each have a lot to lose by getting deeply involved; each party behaves more as a negotiator than as a puppy. Even though in love, we have few illusions or projections. We realize that such a serious relationship is not just private and interpersonal, but that it is social, occurring in a system or matrix of others who are concerned and who will be affected. We understand that the relationship will challenge the assumptions and expectations and customs that have been bequeathed to us through our separate family traditions.

In short: Help! This is *for real!* What am I doing here? And who is this other? These feelings and questions must be faced and answered in order for the relationship to move on, in truth, toward some consummation or toward a respectful, but distant, friendship.

This report will focus on ARCIC I’s Venice Statement, “Authority in the Church I.” First, we will identify some special features of the American context which influence the perception and reception of institutional authority. Briefly, we will review the *koinonia* ecclesiology of the Venice Statement. Next, we will look at how in the United States, Roman Catholics and Episcopalians have established organs of decision-making and administration. Then, we will broadly review the history of *episcopate* within our common catholic tradition.

Next year, we will follow up on this report by surveying ecumenical officers about their own understanding of authority, and their own experiences in ministry of obeying and exercising it. In so doing, we will not undertake the study of “ethics” envisioned in our 1984 *Progress Report*. That subject really warrants a series of studies, for which we have neither time or expertise, and such inquiry would take us away from *The Final Report* of ARCIC I, which has been at the center of our work. (Neither will we treat “Authority in the Church II,” which is a futuristic speculation about the Petrine ministry, under which primacy Roman Catholics and Anglicans alike have no experience, yet, of living.) Our methodological approach continues to be based on the “lived experience” of both churches.

We are honored to have received, and include herein, comments by Dr. Nelle Bellamy of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest at Austin, Texas and the Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., currently at the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Collegeville,

Minnesota. Fr. Jelly also spent one day in conversation with the committee. We are deeply grateful for the encouragement he gave and the wisdom he shared. The Committee met at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, Texas on November 17-20 1986, and we are happy to express publicly our appreciation for the gracious hospitality and assistance provided by the Rector, faculty, staff, and students.

The EDEO-NADEO Standing Committee

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THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

Reports by early explorers of the American coast, from Christopher Columbus to John Smith, created a stir of excitement in Europe—not only among merchants seeking riches, kings seeking empire, or geographers seeking knowledge, but in the popular imagination of the general populace. “O brave new world,” wrote Shakespeare; “America my new-found land,” wrote Donne. From the beginning, the *idea* of America was appealing and inspirational to those with a pioneering, adventurous spirit and to those who suffered and labored under various sorts of oppression.

So they came from the countries of Europe—Pilgrims and Puritans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Quakers and Baptists, yeomen and artisans, upstarts, and scoundrels. The successive first-generations all shared the common experience and memory of pulling up roots, making a perilous ocean crossing (a secular Red Sea), and settling with little more than their pluck, wits, hope and faith, in a land of opportunity. Here, hereditary titles and rank meant little: everyone was given a fresh start, unencumbered by the customs and castes of their native land. With these immigrant, pilgrim people a new American identity began to emerge.

For those who lived on the farms and in the villages and cities of the Eastern seaboard, there was still the inland frontier. Always, if dissatisfied, restless or ambitious, Americans had the option of picking up and lighting out for new spaces in open land.

All of these helped to shape the distinctive character of what Crèvecoeur called a new thing on earth: the American.¹

This hardy and vigorous new people who resented interference with their “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” claimed, fought for, and won their independence from England. The Founding Fathers, in debating, framing and voting on a constitution for the new nation, were anxious to avoid what they considered the excesses, abuses, and mistakes of the “Old World.” They established not a monarchy but a representative democracy, with an elected president. The Magna Carta and British common law lay behind the system of government they devised. There were “checks and balances” on each branch—executive, legislative and judicial—of the federal government. Certain rights and responsibilities were reserved to the states, while others were allocated to the central government; very importantly, also, the Bill of Rights specifically preserved some for the individual citizen.

The preceding evocation, historical yet romanticized with mythical aspects, is a standard interpretation of the American character and government. Tocqueville, school textbooks, Thanksgiving celebrations, re-enactments of Revolutionary War battles—all these tell the same story, which shapes the national consciousness and self-understanding. We call attention to it at the beginning of this report, not in order to extol “Americanism,” much less to suggest a model for the Church’s ecclesiology, but to assert that our singular historical experience and unique, common heritage (what might be called an “American ethos”) does powerfully affect the way in which Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in the United States perceive issues of institutional life and the exercise of authority.

Some examples: we expect the consent and representation of the governed in decision-making; we esteem rights of the individual, equal opportunity, fair play, and due process; we respect truths which are self-evident, not merely promulgated by officials; we are touchy about foreign involvement in our own national affairs, or federal intervention in matters of the states; and we are inveterately suspicious about the corruptive possibilities inherent in power.

¹ J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), Letter III. “He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, the new rank he holds. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterities will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims... The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles...” Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), p. xii.

This national ethos must be reckoned with by authorities, whether secular or ecclesiastical, even if they do not appreciate or value it. Anything too discordant with it only sets off alarm bells in our minds. (The Watergate debacle still looms large in our collective memory.)

All this sets a context for what is affirmed in “Authority I”:

All who live faithfully within the *koinonia* may become sensitive to the leading of the Spirit and be brought towards a deeper understanding of the Gospel and of its implications in diverse cultures and changing situations.²

The culture of North America is not that of England, Italy, or Poland. There must be a special sensitivity to this peculiar American context, if “reception” of statements, policies, or decisions are to be affected through the dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

THE DESIRED ECCLESIOLOGY

Surely the charism of the Anglican Communion would be to witness the collegial character of the exercise of authority. Is this not at the heart of where our rheological discussion still is passionate, unfinished, and raises the sense of absolute identity issues for Anglican partners in dialogue? Among my Anglican and Roman Catholic students, their anger and passion against each other focuses on the misuse of episcopal authority. Anglicans and Roman Catholics are fighting over a very narrow set of issues; in fact, they are like two siblings with the same set of values, each expressing this dearly held set of values in slightly different ways. It is for love of the very same values—the right use of episcopal authority—that we struggle with each other in a family feud. In this struggle, while we have just managed, in *The Final Report*, to achieve a germinal understanding of “the desired ecclesiology,” we have not yet fully achieved in our communions “the desired praxis.” In the absence of such praxis, Anglicans appropriately seek “assurance that acknowledgement of the universal primacy of the bishop of Rome would not involve the suppression of theological, liturgical and other traditions which they value or the imposition of wholly alien traditions.” It is their charism in the Church of Christ to insist on such assurance.³

So Professor Margaret O’Gara, a Toronto theologian and ecumenist, summarizes the state of Anglican-Roman Catholic convergence on the issue of authority. Her trenchant analysis points to

² Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1982), “Authority in the Church I,” para. 6.

³ Margaret O’Gara, “Understanding ‘A Certain, Though Imperfect’ Communion Between Anglicans and Roman Catholics,” *Mid-Stream* 25 (1986), p. 198. (The text quoted from *FR* is from “Authority in the Church II,” para.22.

the fact that a consensus ecclesiology of *koinonia* remains to be complemented by lived experiences of collegiality—both within our distinct communions, and between Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.

The discovery and recognition of such collegial praxis to express ARCIC I's understanding of the Church promises to renew our sister churches' pilgrimage to unity. In re-reading the 1976 Venice Statement ten years later, we discern two carefully developed emphasis: (1) the *koinonia* ecclesiology; and (2) the role of the baptized, or the authoritative contribution of the laity to the Church's collegial expression.

(1) The *Koinonia* Ecclesiology

From the text on “Authority I,” there are specific, cogent statements grounding the *koinonia* concept which the Commission describes as “fundamental to all our Statements.”⁴ ARCIC I's genius resides in that conviction: “In the early Christian tradition, reflection on the experience of *koinonia* opened the way to the understanding of the mystery of the Church.”⁵ With specific reference to both “Authority” Statements, the Commission remarks, “All ministers of the Gospel need to be in communion with one another, for the one Church is a communion of local churches. They also need to be united in the apostolic faith.” This will be assured by the “necessary link” between *episcopo* and *koinonia*, which is primary.⁶

The following excerpts from “Authority I” highlight a catholicity that seeks unity in legitimate diversity:

The *koinonia* is realized not only in the local Christian communities, but also in the communion of these communities with one another. In spite of diversities each local church recognizes its own essential features in the others and its true identity with them.⁷

The teaching of these councils (Vatican I and II) shows that communion with the bishop of Rome does not imply submission to an authority which would stifle the distinctive

⁴ *FR*, “Introduction,” para. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 6.

⁷ *FR*, “Authority in the Church I,” para. 8.

features of the local churches. The purpose of this episcopal function of the bishop of Rome is to promote Christian fellowship in faithfulness to the teaching of the apostles.⁸

If primacy is to be a genuine expression of *episcopo* it will foster the *koinonia* by helping the bishops in their task of apostolic leadership both in their local church and in the Church universal. It does not seek uniformity where diversity is legitimate, or centralize administration to the detriment of local churches.

A primate exercises his ministry not in isolation but in collegial association with his brother bishops. His intervention in the affairs of a local church should not be made in such a way as to usurp the responsibility of its bishop.⁹

Although primacy and conciliarity are complementary elements of *episcopo* it has often happened that one has been emphasized at the expense of the other, even to the point of serious imbalance. When churches have been separated from one another, this danger has been increased. The *koinonia* of the churches requires that a proper balance be preserved between the two with the responsible participation of the whole people of God.¹⁰

We find here the essence of the *koinonia* ecclesiology retrieved by ARCIC I. In this context, episcopo is understood as “service to the whole community” and “preserving and promoting the integrity of the *koinonia* in order to further the Church’s response to the Lordship of Christ and its commitment to mission.”¹¹

(2) The Role of the Laity

In light of last year’s study on ministry, *Who In The World?*, we are keenly aware of the ministry of all the baptized. The authoritative contribution of the laity looms large on the horizons of our future Church. The contribution of all the baptized is essential for the authentic collegial expression of authority.

The following excerpts from “Authority I” highlight the role of the laity in a praxis of *koinonia* ecclesiology:

⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, para. 5.

Shared commitment and belief create a common mind in determining how the Gospel should be interpreted and obeyed. By reference to this common faith each person tests the truth of his own belief.¹²

The Church is a community which consciously seeks to submit to Jesus Christ. By sharing in the life of the Spirit all find within the *koinonia* the means to be faithful to the revelation of their Lord. Some respond more fully to his call; by the inner quality of their life they win a respect which allows them to speak in Christ's name with authority.¹³

In guarding and developing communion, every member has a part to play. Baptism gives everyone in the Church the right, and consequently the ability, to carry out his particular function in the body. The recognition of this fundamental right is of great importance. In different ways, even if sometimes hesitantly, our two Churches have sought to integrate in decision-making those who are not ordained.¹⁴

Through these two lines of development in ARCIC I, we trace the prospect of what the Commission offers as an antidote to two extremes undercutting a *koinonia* ecclesiology and collegial praxis: on the one hand, over-centralization; and on the other, doctrinal incoherence. This poses specific questions to our communions. How will the Roman Catholic Church evidence such an understanding of *koinonia* and express itself in valid forms of decentralization? How will the Anglican Communion evidence such an understanding of *koinonia* and express itself in valid forms of doctrinal coherence?

“Authority I” concludes with a hopeful vision of its geminal understanding of the Church:

Faith, banishing fear, might see simply the prospect of the right balance between a primacy serving the unity and a conciliarity maintaining the just diversity of the *koinonia* of all the churches.¹⁵

THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

The EDEO-NADEO Standing Committee's declared task has been to surface the lived experience of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in the United States, in light of the Agreed Statements of ARCIC I. Our approach has been to explore pastoral practice, and problematic aspects thereof, relating to those theological statements. In 1985 we looked at pastoral

¹² *Ibid.*, para. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

¹⁴ *FR*, “Elucidation (1981),” para. 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 8.

dimensions of eucharistic sharing, and in 1986 we examined pastoral dimensions of the ministry of the baptized and the ordained. Now, the praxis of *episcopate* in the service of *koinonia* receives our attention.

In the ways in which decision-making and administration is structured, both churches have similarities and parallels. Local churches are headed by bishops, and have consultative bodies, staff, and committees. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops with its president, and the House of Bishops with its presiding bishop, are collegial bodies which address matters of church and society. Parish churches have an ordained rector or pastor, who shares responsibility for program with a vestry or pastoral council and finance council. Both churches are part of a wider communion throughout the world which exercises authority.

New structures now exist within dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church, as decreed by Vatican II and mandated by the 1983 Code of Canon Law. Through them, *episcopate* is shared with the local bishop. While *episcopate* is chiefly invested in the bishop of the diocese, authority is shared with a presbyteral council, a pastoral council, and a finance council. The presbyteral council is composed of elected representatives of the presbyterate and appointees of the bishop. Membership may include the canonically-required diocesan consultors. The pastoral council and the finance council may include members of the laity, priests, and religious of the diocese.

On the parish level, two councils now share in directing parish life: the pastoral council and the finance council. Elected members of the congregation and appointees by the pastor form these councils, which advise the pastor.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops reflects the vision of Vatican II which called for collegial episcopal conferences on the national level. Advising the NCCB are various clergy and laity, who are appointed to commissions and staff positions.

Many of these Roman Catholic structures and processes are still very new. In some places, bishops might attempt to rule “their” dioceses and pastors “their” parishes, autocratically. Clearly, though, this is not intended. The actual practice will be determined largely by the laity.

The Episcopal Church has a considerably longer history of shared *episcopate*. The General Convention of 1789 adopted both democratic and representative principles of self-governance. Some salient differences from the Roman Catholic praxis are identified, with some strengths and weaknesses noted:

1. The Episcopal Church has a constitution and canons, which may be amended by General Convention; each diocese has its own constitution and canons, which may be amended by Diocesan Convention; each parish church has a constitution and by-laws,

which may be amended by Parish Meeting. “Higher” levels may restrict the scope of matters decided by the constitution and canons/by-laws at “lower” levels.

An advantage of this system is that members of the church, at whatever level, have considerable “say” about their mission, ministry, policies, programs and finances. Another is that the system cannot be changed arbitrarily or capriciously by persons serving in positions of authority. A notable disadvantage is that each “unit” of the church may understand and conduct itself in parochial, diocesan, or national terms only—not as part of a worldwide communion.

2. At each level, there is mandatory representation and voting rights given to the laity. Each parish church has an Annual Meeting, modeled after the Town Meeting of New England, at which all lay members are entitled to vote, electing their Vestry and parish delegates to diocesan convention. Each diocese elects lay deputies to General Convention. Voting within the House of Deputies is by “orders,” lay and clerical.

The strength of this praxis is that laity are treated as informed, capable decision-makers who can also be effective in taking over administrative responsibilities. A weakness is that because they do not usually have much time or opportunity for caucusing and coalition-building, their “power” is not as great as their numbers.

3. At each level, those who will serve under the authority of one who holds a ministerial office participate in the election. Members of each parish church elect their rector (diocesan canons or parish by-laws may relegate this election to the Vestry, or reserve it to Parish Meeting); clergy and lay delegates at diocesan convention elect their bishop(s); the bishops elect their presiding bishop.

The fact that there is popular election of rectors and bishops, who are granted what is effectively life tenure, results in a very special bonding of pastors and people. Because they’ve each decided together to consider and then to enter the relationship, and because they know that very probably they’ll be stuck with each other for a long duration, they begin and may continue with goodwill, trust, and affection. One weakness is that certain types of candidates are more easily electable than others. Another problem is that the elected leader may feel beholden to the elector’s, who may feel the wrong kind of “ownership.”

4. At no level does a rector or bishop decide policy independently or solely: a rector is chairman of the Vestry and Parish Meeting, a bishop is president of the diocesan convention and council, the presiding bishop is president of the House of Bishops.

An advantage of involving so many grass-roots people in decision-making is that decisions are likely to be widely known and well understood, and they may be, therefore, implemented. A

disadvantage is that those who make decisions may have little expertise or competence in some matters.

The pastoral eye, however, looks not only at structures, seeking facile parallels or sharp differences. The real question is not *how*, but *does, episcopo serve koinonia?* Good pastoral practice occurs in both churches, not because of or in spite of, the structures; good pastoral practice occurs in both churches because there are good pastors and good people. This “goodness” always involves repentance: “The authorities in the Church cannot adequately reflect Christ’s authority because they are still subject to the limitations and sinfulness of human nature. Awareness of the inadequacy is a continual summons to reform.”¹⁶

Ecumenical officers can make a significant contribution to facilitate the communion of their church with the other. By observing how the sister-tradition sets policies and establishes norms, they are able to foster growth in mutual understanding. They may initiate educational encounters, in which dialogue dispels stereotypes and clarifies misconceptions. Appreciating the other church’s strengths and weaknesses in the exercise of *episcopo* contributes directly to the summons to reform. Learning about each other’s *modus operandi*, false expectations are avoided. When both traditions meet pastorally, collaborative efforts of all sorts can occur: joint pastoral letters, joint programs in prison ministry, youth ministry, marriage preparation, seminarian formation, deacon’s training, clergy retreats, and continuing education for the clergy. Diocesan and parish authorities have virtually unlimited opportunities to enrich each other while serving the world.

THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

Christians profess to believe in the Church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These four ecclesial marks or qualities are in dynamic, creative, living relationship. Two of them—oneness and catholicity—are not opposed, but do involve polarity and tension.

Concern for orthodoxy in the Church has always been a major concern. Yet equally important is concern for appropriate diversity within the Church. Sailing the waters of history, the Church has tried to steer clear of Scylla and Charbydis—heresy or schism, errors of excess or deficiency; this has not been easy, and on occasion it has failed.

Orthodoxy and unity require that wrong differences be eliminated for a common expression of belief and a common understanding of God’s revelation. But catholicity or diversity requires that the one faith be incorporated into a myriad of forms and expressions. The Lord who created the

¹⁶ *FR*, “Authority in the Church I,” para. 7.

variety and richness of human persons with their distinct charisms, personalities, and potentials, requires that respect for diversity parallel concern for orthodoxy.

The weight of the Roman Catholic Church's concern, especially since the Reformation, has been with orthodoxy, or unity. The weight of the Anglican Communion has been on "comprehensiveness," or diversity. Contemporary ecumenical efforts must rediscover that the fullness of the Church's true catholic tradition involves both equally: living the one faith in a diversity of contexts. Indeed, it might be asked if the present breakdown of Christendom might be traced, at least in part, to a failure to keep the concern for orthodoxy equally a search for catholicity.

What follow are, in broad-brush strokes, some scriptural and historical pericopes, vignettes and fables which illustrate that the catholic tradition of the Church, at its best, does not involve a coerced uniformity but rather unity in diversity.

(1) New Testament

As modern Biblical scholarship has demonstrated, each of the four Gospels conveys a distinct and unique view of Jesus and his teaching. And Paul makes five. Yet has there not always, even today, been communicated through the various gospels and epistles a core *kerygma* and a common faith?

The disciples were vexed and wrathful when one not of their company cast out demons in Jesus' name. Expecting to be thanked, they told the Lord that they had forbidden the man from doing this. To their surprise, Jesus heard their report with equanimity, saying, "Do not forbid him... For he who is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:39, 46)

New and difficult questions were raised for the Church in the apostolic era, as it successfully penetrated the Gentile world. Would circumcision be required of converts? Was Mosaic law binding on them? Different opinions were held, and arguments raged, about these questions. Acts 10 recounts a lovely story about a vision Peter had on a housetop in Joppa, which led him to realize, "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34). Acts 15 tells of the decisive apostolic decree at the Jerusalem Council: "it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you (Gentiles) no greater burden than these necessary things." (Acts 15:28)

(2) Early Church

In the last one-third of the first century, the period Raymond Brown calls the "Sub-Apostolic" era, there was a remarkable variety of thought and diversity of practice among the seven distinct churches discussed in his book, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*. In his conclusion, Brown

notes, “No one can show that any of the churches I have studied had broken *koinonia* or communion with another.¹⁷

As the Church moved more widely into the Gentile world, there came to be regional churches of distinct cultures. Gradually, bishops of prominent cities, the so-called Apostolic Sees, gained special responsibility for oversight of other bishops in their region. Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Rome (and later Constantinople) had such *episcopate*; Rome of course eventually attained preeminence.

Many see the Patristic Age as a “golden age” of catholicity, and a model for the exercise of episcopate. Many distinct churches, with their own languages, customs, liturgy and practices, were bound loosely in regional churches which focused on Rome. There was one Church, Catholic and Orthodox-Christian.

(3) Separations

The tensions concomitant with unity in diversity were real. Allowing diversity while on the lookout for heresy was not easy. The spread of the Roman Empire occurred, at least in part, because it allowed local autonomy. The growth of the Church followed a similar pattern. But once established, there was always a temptation to blur differences because of an excessive zeal for uniformity.

Western requirements for celibacy of the clergy did not sit well with the married clergy of the East. Eastern mysticism did not always blend well, and never easily, with Western theological precision. Roman Law and Eastern “*economia*” were often at odds. Eventually Rome and Constantinople broke into Western and Eastern Churches, Orthodox and Roman Catholic—although political tensions and cultural differences may have been more important than theological or doctrinal differences, in effecting the break.

Later, the Reformation broke apart the Western Church.

Separation at least temporarily solves the problem of tension between oneness and catholicity. No longer is there a polarity between orthodoxy and diversity. Each separated church abandons the search for wholeness, letting go of the hard work to maintain unity in diversity, takes it easy, and falls into a comfortable caricature of itself. Is it not possible that this insight, attained by the

¹⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), p. 147.

ecumenical movement, may spark the energy to revitalize the separated churches by helping them to work toward the unity in diversity which has been the genius of the catholic tradition?

(4) Religious Orders

While working for visible and corporate unity of the Church, ecumenists do not envision the goal to be a “super church” in which all diversity is eliminated. In this regard, the religious orders suggest a model.

Each religious order has its own history and tradition, its own charism and ministry. Often they differ in theology, spirituality, and philosophy. This diversity enriches the Church and exemplifies its catholicity.

At one time, Jesuits and Dominicans were involved in a bitter controversy on the question of grace and free will (*De Auxiliis*). Each attacked the other’s position as heretical. Rome intermittently attempted to decide the question. Final resolution came with a decree that both views were to continue without acrimony. Neither was to call the other heretical. The Church could tolerate such diversity (Denz. 1997).

(5) A Metaphor

Robert Kennedy (of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.) has explained how decision-making is a collegial process. The “power” does not necessarily reside in those who actually make the decision. (Thomas Jefferson influenced the Constitutional Convention perhaps more than anyone else. But he was not present—his ideas were.) The best decisions involve many people: creative thinkers, critical evaluators, practical implementors, far-sighted prophets, hard realists, people of vision and pragmatists. The best decision-making involves all these talents—and *leadership*.

The best example of a leader, for Kennedy, is the musical director of an opera. He does not sing a note or play an instrument. His work is done off stage and largely in the dark. Yet he ‘is essential to the entire production. All those who play a part in the performance are influenced by his leadership and depend upon it. He coordinates, encourages, inspires and facilitates the talents of all the artists. Without him the show simply could not go on.

Episcope is not primarily control or power. More precisely, it is the facilitation, empowerment, encouragement and guidance of those who act. Confrontation is sometimes necessary. But usually and desirably, the exercise of *episcope* is leadership of the pastoral kind suggested by Kennedy’s metaphor.

(6) The Current Situation

The ecumenical movement is a two-way street. If Anglicans are concerned about the image of Roman power and domination, Roman Catholics are equally concerned about Anglican comprehensiveness and ambiguity. Democracy has its limits, as does authority. If Rome has leaned too heavily on the model of the Roman emperor, perhaps Canterbury has leaned too heavily on the model of the constitutional monarchy.

The American experiment has much to teach the universal Church. Democracy as respect for the rights of each individual is something to be prized. Conflict resolution requires respect for freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of inquiry, and the right to due process. Such concerns must continue to be pressed in the ecumenical dialogue.

The search for truth, with effort to maintain the creative tensions of unity in diversity, orthodoxy and catholicity, is not an easy task. It will take time, trial and error, and much patience for each separated church to recover the catholic tradition of the Church.

CONCLUSION

Originally, we expected to treat the subject of authority in one report, using our familiar method of surveying ecumenical officers and analyzing their responses—opinions, thoughts, feelings, and experience.

As we got into serious conversation about the subject, it became apparent that the kind of preliminary or background work represented in this 1987 report was required. It is more speculative, reflective, and argumentative than our prior reports, but we hope not less valuable.

However, we are happy to anticipate next year, when all of the ecumenical officers may again speak for themselves.

CRITICAL RESPONSES to *How in the Church*

1. V. Nelle Bellamy, Ph.D.

This study of authority in the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church, USA comes from the EDEO-NADEO Standing Committee. The task of the Committee is to provide a more practical approach to ecumenical issues than is found in the formal national and international dialogues. To quote from the study, attention is focused on how “the praxis of *episcopate* in the service of *koinonia*” may be seen in the churches. How, then, does authority manifest itself within our churches?

Before responding to the basic issues in the study it may be useful to comment on the general Roman/Episcopal ecumenical scene. My concern here is that Episcopalians may become discouraged in the light of recent actions of the Roman Church. Episcopalians must recall that dialogues have not basically changed the hierarchical and canonical structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Intellectually we all realize this. The Roman Church and the Episcopal Church alike have made formal appointments to ARC and ARIC but neither church has made basic canonical changes because of the dialogues. Episcopalians seem to be more apt to forget this than our Roman brothers and sisters. Episcopalians are often prone to forget history although we are informed by an ancient tradition; we are surprised that the vast machinery of canon law and the authority of the hierarchy remain in place. We do not understand the power of the Bishop of Rome in the dioceses in the United States. All of our dialoguing has not changed this. Episcopalians may, therefore, misread or misunderstand ecumenical statements and push their Roman friends a bit further than that church is prepared to move. It is much easier, it seems to me, for this to occur on the grassroots level than in the more formal, structured discussions of ARC and ARIC. These comments are not intended to be critical of ARC, ARIC or EDEO-NADEO; the intent is to be realistic in all descriptions of the present ecumenical scene. It does appear that the Roman Catholic ecumenical people may be a bit more realistic about the stance of the Episcopal Church. They simply have difficulty understanding *episcopus* in our tradition as it is surrounded by the freedom of praxis in many areas.

The EDEO-NADEO study rightly emphasizes areas of similarity where *episcopus* serves *koinonia* in the praxis of each church. There are similarities and this is where all responsible ecumenical dialogue must begin. The bishop is a familiar figure in each church and he has authority. The participation of the laity is traditionally stronger in the Episcopal Church; in the Roman Catholic Church where this is a more recent phenomena the influence of the laity seems to be expanding. Roman Catholic laity are involved in the affairs of their parishes and may at times influence financial and other important decisions.

This similarity, however, is less obvious as one observes more closely the activities in our two communions. It is difficult to imagine the laity in a Roman Catholic diocese able to limit the authority of a bishop to the extent that it may occur in a diocese in the Episcopal Church. Certainly the Roman Church has nothing comparable to the authority of the House of Deputies in the Episcopal Church or the power of a strong vestry in an Episcopal parish. Episcopalians applaud their democratic processes and guard closely the traditional rights of the laity in the councils of the Church. Historically this has been the case since the Church of England came to the New World and an early Colonial church existed for nearly one hundred years under the Bishop of London. The first bishop was consecrated for America in 1784. It might be a bit salutary for Episcopalians to ask themselves about basic problems that may occur for a traditional church with strong lay participation if that laity is less informed than might be

desirable. Lay participation requires, so it seems, an informed laity knowledgeable in history and doctrine as well as democratic processes.

My basic response to this study is that the praxis of authority in our two churches seems to be less similar than this study indicates. There are wide areas of our lives where we disagree on authority and its practice. Quickly one must add that the EDEO-NADEO Standing Committee is no doubt cognizant of this and sees its task as one of a more positive approach. Such affirmation is important. My response, nevertheless, seeks to recognize our dissimilarities and even to emphasize them for positive reasons. If these dissimilarities are not noted, there must surely be discouragement on the part of Episcopalians as they witness the *episcopus* in recent actions of the Roman Catholic Church. Rather than moving to discouragement one must try to understand that the powerful authority of *episcopus* remains central to the Roman Catholic Church. When we recognize this our dialogue may then move along.

In light of all of the above, one may ask whether or not the ecumenical dialogues should continue in our two churches. Should the formal dialogues of ARC and ARIC convene? Should the awareness that the praxis in our churches is less similar than we might desire move us back to the days when there was little if any conversation on any level?

The dialogues should and must continue; therefore, each church must try to understand the other with its polity and doctrine. False assumptions or uninformed idealistic approaches may bring about rather undesirable situations in our dialogues. We must not burden the dialogues with more expectations than they can carry. The Episcopal Church can learn from the Roman Church and the Roman Church can learn from the Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church might profit from a clearer recognition of the authority of tradition and doctrine in the *episcopus*. On the other hand, the democratic processes that depend on extensive lay participation may offer insights to the more hierarchical tradition of our sister Roman Church. And certainly EDEO-NADEO must continue to examine on a grassroots level the praxis in each church and the areas within which we are able to cooperate. The ecumenical task does not necessarily require that we *do* something concrete to lessen our great differences; it does require patience and Christian love as we seek to understand each other.

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2. The Rev. Dr. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., S.T.D., S.T.Lr.

Before making any specific comments about this very useful study of authority as it is exercised in the ministry of *episcopus* in the local churches of the Anglican and Roman Catholic

Communions, particularly in the U.S.A., I should like to commend the members of the Standing Committee for the practical contributions that they make to “grass-roots” ecumenism by their studies of significant issues in the dialogue between our sister churches. As one who has been serving on ARC since 1975, I am well aware of the need that the ecumenical conversations on the national and international levels reach as many clergy and laity as possible. Otherwise, our careful and prayerful plans for organic unity, as promising as they might appear on paper, will wind up as good ideas without any real results. And so I take this occasion to thank the members of the Standing Committee and all who collaborate with them for their important and indispensable ecumenical efforts.

The “Preface” to this year’s study of authority is certainly clear about the content and method of the report as well as realistic about the hard questions that Episcopalians and Roman Catholics are raising in light of recent events and developments in our churches. Focusing upon ARCIC I’s Venice Statement, “Authority in the Church I”, particularly its *koinonia* ecclesiology, and continuing to base the methodological approach upon the “lived experience” of both churches, are to be especially noted as providing a good theological and pastoral consistency in the report.

“The American Context” section of the study gives to the reader a brief but convincing picture of our national ethos which is profoundly influences our perceptions of the institutional structures and exercise of authority in both our churches. For the sake of our own self-understanding and mutual relationships we must bear this in mind. At the same time, we must be critical not only of ecclesiastical polity, but also of that very “American ethos” when its demands for “Freedom” or for “due process” may be more in keeping with secular humanism than authentic Christianity. This important point should have been made in this section of the study, at least with greater emphasis, since we Americans are tempted to think and act as though we were in possession of the single model for all expressions of liberty.

The next essay, “The Desired Ecclesiology,” is a good reflection upon the 1976 Venice Statement on “Authority I.” It provides the doctrinal context in its references to the document’s theology of the Church as a *koinonia* or a *communio*. Special attention is given to the role of the laity required by such an ecclesiology so that authority in our churches may be expressed in a truly collegial manner. Although this section of the study identifies the perennial tensions between unity and diversity or doctrinal coherence and collegial practice, a few more applications of the ecclesiological theory to the pastoral praxis in the Diocesan Bishop’s or Ordinary’s exercise of *episcopate* (overseeing) would have helped make it a more useful part of the whole study.

While the following section, “The Actual Practice,” does address this to a certain extent, I do not know that readers will make the necessary connections unless they are more clearly explicated. Just how does greater participation on the level of our local churches help bring it about that the

bishop will both safeguard the rich diversity within his jurisdiction, and, at the same time, see to it that the universal claims of catholic Christianity are not neglected, namely, a basic unity in faith, worship and discipline. In this context, perhaps my own reflections that have been published may be useful (cf. "The Local Church in the Anglican/Roman Catholic Consultation: Ecclesiological Presuppositions and Ecumenical Implications" in the *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, 1981, pp. 145-154; see also Fr. John Paul Boyer's reflections on the topic as an American Episcopalian Parish Rector in the same issue.) For instance, it seems that good *episcopo* calls both for a presence of the local bishop to all who assist his stewardship (not ownership) of the diocese, and also for a continuous concern on his part that there will be adequate contact with the other local communions in the church catholic. Just what style of spiritual leadership best serves such centripetal and centrifugal thrusts, both of which are necessary if diversity is not to degenerate into divisiveness and if unity is not to become uniformity?

Now the final essay, "The Catholic Tradition," does contribute towards a clarification of the delicate dialectical balance of the tensions involved when a church prayerfully strives to experience and express before the world both concern for Christian unity and Christian diversity. The emphasis of this section is that the concern for orthodoxy be paralleled by a comparable regard for diversity, and that indeed the lack of the latter may be responsible for the breakdown of Christendom. It does extend the dialogue about the desired traits of *episcopo* in our local churches which will help strike the happy medium in the matter.

My overall evaluation of this year's study is that the important elements of the report are there, but that the reader is well advised to make sure that he/she examines the contents of each section in the context of the whole. This is not pointed out so much as a negative criticism of the study as a caveat to the reader who wishes to be enriched by the report. Finally the "Annotated bibliography" should prove invaluable to those who wish to share more fully in the ecumenical movement.

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bi-lateral and Multilateral Statements

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. *The Final Report*. Washington, DC, USCC Office of Publications, 1982.

*This Agreed Statement is a consensus statement of “substantial agreement” on Eucharist and Ministry. The statement on Authority states the ideal of *episcopo* for both Churches. While Authority II does not express substantial agreement, it does surface points of agreement and conflict.

The EDEO-NADEO Studies since 1984 have centered on this document.

Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission. *Facing Unity: Models, Forms and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Church Fellowship*. The Lutheran World Federation, c1983.

*This Agreed Statement at the world level proposes various models of unity which might eventually unite the two world Churches. Various forms of unity and various ways in which unity might be achieved are suggested for the world and the local levels. The document suggests that various attempts need to be made with appropriate authorization from the world bodies so that experience gained might profit unity at higher levels. Recognition of ministries and apostolic succession form the heart of this discussion.

World Council of Churches of Christ. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Geneva, 1982. (Faith and Order Paper #111).

*This is a convergence document, i.e. indicating the amount of agreement existing among the member churches of the World Council and other Churches which are members of the Faith and Order Commission. Other Churches were also invited to participate in the formulation of this convergence so as to be as inclusive as possible. Fifty years in formation, this document reflects ecumenical progress achieved in bi-lateral consensus and the important issues that must be resolved for visible unity.

2. Individual Works

Brown, Raymond E. SS. *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*. N.Y. Paulist Press, c1984.

Brown, Raymond E. SS. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. N.Y. Paulist Press, c1979.

Brown, Raymond E. SS. *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections*. N.Y. Paulist Press, c1970.

Brown, Raymond E. SS. and John P. Meier. *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*. N.Y. Paulist Press, c1983.

*Fr. Raymond Brown, SS. has been contributing solid biblical scholarship to the ecumenical enterprise and thus enlightening many questions which have long divided the Churches. The

works singled out here indicate the great diversity of the Catholic Tradition beginning with Apostolic Times and continuing into the Age of the Fathers of Church.

Congar, Yves, OP. *Diversity and Communion*. Mystic, CN. Twenty-Third Publications, 1985.

*Active for many years in the Unam Sanctam movement of France, Father Congar influenced the Vatican Council and the ecumenical movement with his scholarship. In this work Father Congar studies unity in diversity as fundamental to the life of the Church. He applies this principle to current ecumenical dialogue. This is a basic text for an understanding of the topic under discussion.

Hale, Robert. *Canterbury and Rome: Sister Churches. A Roman Catholic Monk Reflects upon Reunion in Diversity*. London. Darton, Longman and Todd, c1982.

*Hale reviews the “catholic” tradition in Anglicanism (he is a Roman Catholic convert from that Church). This tradition is Benedictine in character and lay orientated. The concept of Sister-Church would allow Anglicanism to retain its specific diversity while enriching the Church universal.

Rausch, Thomas, SJ. *The Roots of the Catholic Tradition*. Wilmington, DE. Michael Glazier Inc. c1986. (Theology and Life Series #6).

*Father Rausch traces the great Christian Tradition from Biblical times to the present. This is both a historical and theological treatment. The ecumenical implications of the evolution of the Catholic Tradition are drawn as the author considers some of the bi-lateral and multi-lateral theology underlying agreed statements.

Sykes, Stephen W. *The Integrity of Anglicanism*. New York, The Seabury Press. 1978.

*Written from a Church of England perspective, Sykes’ book asks tough questions about Anglican comprehensiveness. At some point, “a serious, but corrigible state of muddle shades off into a loss of integrity.” Sykes finds Anglicanism perilously close to that point, and insists it will be saved at the brink only by systematic theology. Among his conclusions: “it is essential to the health of the church that it learn how to conduct controversy constructively and openly. Authority is not embodied, it is dispersed; and the reaching of authoritative decision is a continuous process involving all the participators.”

Tavard, George H. *A Theology for Ministry*. Wilmington, DE. Michael Glazier Inc. 1983 (Theology and Life Series #6).

*This work is principally concerned with the theology of ministry and its reconciliation. However it has excellent treatment of the catholicity of the Church (ch. 1) and the cultural development of the Catholic Tradition (ch. 3).

Tillard, J.M.R., OP. *The Bishop of Rome*. Transl. by John de Satgé. Wilmington, De. Michael Glazier Inc. c1983. (Theology and Life Series #5).

*This work is specifically about *episcopate* as primacy. It studies *Pastor Aeternus* to see what it says about the primacy. It also examines Vatican II's interpretation of this document of Vatican I for Authentic interpretation (against some ultramontane views which prevailed between the two Councils). It also views the exercise of primacy in a united Church. Father Tillard brings a wide range of experience in faith and order and bi-lateral dialogues to this work. He is well aware of the issues and seeks to shed light on their solutions.

Wainwright, Geoffrey. *The Ecumenical Moment: Crisis and Opportunity for the Church*. Grand Rapids, Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1983.

*A Methodist involved in the Faith and Order Commission and in the bi-lateral dialogues, Professor Wainwright brings to the study of the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry document a rich background in liturgical studies. He rediscovers in Wesleyan theology and spirituality the rich catholic heritage. He sees a return to the authentic catholic spirit of unity in diversity as the way to visible unity. Methodism can form a bridge between Protestant and "Catholic" traditions in the rediscovery of the roots of Christianity.