

3. The Spirit of the risen Lord, through whom the Christian community exists, keeps the People of God in obedience to the will of the Father. Thus he safeguards their faithfulness to the revelation of Jesus Christ and equips them for their mission within the world. By this action of the Holy Spirit, the authority of the Lord is active in the church. Obedience to the Lord opens Christians one to another and makes them responsible for each other. But since the Lordship of Christ is universal, the community also bears a responsibility towards all mankind. The experience of the koinonia gives to each individual and to the whole community what is required to fulfil this responsibility, as they perceive the traces of God in human affairs and become aware of human need. Because of their faithfulness to Christ they are enabled to act and speak in such a way that the authority of Christ is mediated through them. At this first and basic level Christian authority means that Christians may speak in the name of Christ in such a way that through their words men can hear the authoritative word of Christ.
4. The Christian church is that community which consciously seeks to submit to the Lordship of Christ. Each member of this community by sharing in the life of the Spirit finds within the koinonia the means to be faithful to the revelation of Jesus Christ; but the Holy Spirit gives to some individuals or communities special gifts for the benefit of the church, while others respond more fully to the call of Christ. For this reason they win a respect within the community that qualifies them to speak in the name of

Christ with a certain kind of authority to their fellow members. This second level of authority concerns the right to speak within the Christian community and to be heeded because of some special endowment of the Spirit or of the inner quality of their life.