

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH - A DRAFT SUPPLEMENT

We take as our starting point the recognition (para.23) that the unity in love and truth of the whole Christian community needs to be served, within the communion of all the bishops, by an episcope at the universal level. This episcope should be realised in both conciliar and primatial forms. In order to exercise this episcope the universal primate must be endowed with the powers necessary to carry out faithfully this office - neither more nor less. This is, in fact, what we mean by his 'jurisdiction'. The powers which are associated with the office are strictly subordinate to the fulfilment of its purpose (ordinary jurisdiction). Because his office is concerned with the unity of the whole Church, his jurisdiction is universal. If, for the sake of the unity of the whole Church, the primate may have to intervene in any local church, ('immediate' jurisdiction), he must do this in such a way as to strengthen the life of this church and to help bishop and people to be in the fulness of communion of faith and charity. Within the strict limits inherent in his office which is "for the building up of the Church and not for its destruction", he may not infringe the responsibility of the local bishop for his own church.

Since the episcopal ministry (episcope) belongs to the Church^{'s} fundamental structure, willed by God to maintain the koinonia, this episcopal ministry is an indispensable element of the Church's wholeness that may not be discarded (ius divinum). Anglicans today, as well as Roman Catholics, are recognising the need for a universal primate in order to enable all those exercising episcope to fulfil

their ministry together. This recognition implies that for Anglicans also a universal primacy, such as has already been described, would now be in harmony with God's will for his Church. Since this means strictly the office of a bishop for the service of all the bishops, it would necessarily be regarded as an element in the episcope required by the Church. For this reason something of the necessity attached to the whole episcopal ministry would be true for this primacy also.

The Roman Catholic tradition has always felt the need for a universal primacy and maintains that the apostolic tradition understood this need to correspond with the explicit will of Christ for his Church.

The Anglican tradition has generally denied that the Roman primacy is rooted in the explicit will of Christ and consequently believes that acknowledgement of it is not an absolute condition for being in communion. It holds that a community having a real apostolic ministry and a real eucharist, but not in communion with the see of Rome, is no less a church in the catholicity of the Body of Christ.

Both traditions agree that the acknowledgement of the primacy should be seen not as affecting directly ecclesial being but the realisation of catholicity.

Communion in the profession of the one faith is at the heart of the unity of the Church, and is consequently one of the preoccupations of episcopate in the Church. What is called magisterium is that element of episcopal jurisdiction which is concerned with maintaining the Church in truth. Consequently the magisterium of the universal primate is the corresponding ^{aspect} ~~facet~~ of his universal jurisdiction. So it is essentially concerned with leading and confirming the episcopate in its responsibility for the faith of the Church. Since the New Testament shows that a major role of the Holy Spirit is to preserve the Church in the truth, this function of the primacy may be described as an instrument of the Holy Spirit to keep the Church in the will of Christ.

The Roman Catholic tradition asserts that in some of his declarations the Bishop of Rome, who is the universal primate, was and can still be 'infallible'. By this word it means that, if the rigorous conditions laid down in the First Vatican Council are followed, these declarations are preserved from error but that they do no more and no less than express the mind of the Church on issues related to the substance of the faith. These solemn interventions are given only when the situation of the Church requires them. In the other instances of his magisterium, the weight of the statements of the primate is determined by the nature of the truth which they express and their consonance with the mind of the whole episcopate.

Anglicans for their part have no difficulty in recognizing that the primate who has to speak in the name of his fellow bishops for the sake of koinonia, especially when the issue is a crucial one, is assisted by the Spirit of Christ to express the mind of the Church. For Anglicans

there must always be the further criteria of consonance with Scripture and the promotion of unity; they do not consider the two infallible definitions given by the Bishop of Rome fulfil these two conditions and therefore call in question the concept of papal infallibility and the manner in which it has been exercised.