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Significant Interpretations of Developing Structures of the Ministry-1880-1970

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SIGNIFICANT INTERPRETATIONS OF DEVELOPING STRUCTURES OF THE MINISTRY: 1880-1970

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by

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM AND LINTON'S CONTRIBUTION

Present-Day Problems of the Ministry

A historical study of the Church's ministry soon discloses a great deal of variety in the ministerial office. As Niebuhr and Williams remind us in their historical survey of the Protestant ministry, while there are a number of aspects of ministry that are agreed upon and shared in the various historic churches, there are also divergent interpretations regarding the nature and essence of the ministerial office.[1]

In its empirical application this divergence of interpretation has resulted in widespread confusion today with regard to the meaning of the Christian ministry as vocation, both on the part of the laity and in the minds of those who are members of the clergy. One complicating factor is the comparatively recent development of new types of ministries and of unique ways in which the ministry may carry out its tasks. The older, more traditional forms of ministry are being challenged and occasionally rejected.

Meanwhile, further confusion arises from the contemporary emphasis on the secularization of the church and its ministry in the world. There are those who take the position that

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[1] The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. ix.

> as the church in her visible structure has certain features which resemble those of other political or economic organizations, she too, like those organizations, must of necessity have her "functionaries" who keep the organizational machine going and who represent its interests to the outside world.[2]

Related to this is the personal tension which many a contemporary minister feels as a result of the conflict of roles between what he conceives his vocation to be--essentially the proclamation of the Gospel and the care of souls--and what the Church and the community expect of him in terms of executive and social activities.

The increased identification of the ministry of the laity with Christian vocation has also called for a new examination of the place of the clergy in the Institutional Church. Has this identification obscured the need for an ordained ministry? There are those who think it has.

Beyond all this there is the disturbing fact that the Church, too, is caught up in a period of time when individuals and groups are revolting against every form of institution and "establishment." There is an accompanying questioning of every form of authoritarianism in the structures of the Church, whether these structures are hierarchical or more simple congregational forms. As the authority figure in the Church, the minister often bears the brunt of the hostilities of members who play their part in a rebellious society.

Finally, there is continuing discussion in theological circles today about ministerial authority, about the nature and validity of the minister's call to his task, and about the meaning of ordination.

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[2]Jürgen Roloff, "The Question of the Church's Ministry in Our Generation," Lutheran World, XI (October 1964), 392.

Confronted by these and other problems from within and from without,[3] the Church and its ministers need to look seriously at the meaning of Christian ministry and its validity as Christian vocation. There is an urgency to examine the Christian ministry in the light of its theological foundations, its biblical standards, its historical development, as well as in its contemporary situation.

Historical Development of the Ministry

But even when the ministry is viewed in the light of its purely historical development from the ministry of Christ in New Testament times, the divergent interpretations remain. Christians in the Church universal are not agreed as to the form and structure according to which the Church's ministry should be organized. It is true that for more than a thousand years--from the Council of Nicea to the days of the early Reformers--the structure of the Church and its ministry was generally stable and universal. But since the days of the Reformation, with its emphasis on Scripture and the Gospel, together with a renewed study of the New Testament and the early Christian centuries, there have emerged several new adaptations of the general structure of the ministry.

The first was the Lutheran pattern. For Luther, the only ministry essential to the Church was that which was responsible for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. A man could

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[3]Cf. Robert S. Paul's introductory chapter "A Ministry Perplexed" in Ministry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1965).

not appoint himself to this office, but must rather be approved by the Church. The Lutheran pattern was congregational with respect to the local congregation and synodical in its wider organization. The second, reformed type of ministry was the Calvinist or presbyterian, which included four kinds of ministerial office--pastor, teacher, lay elder and deacon. The really new and characteristic feature of this organization lay in the eldership, and Calvin's system has become the basis of all the Reformed Churches. The third ministerial pattern emerging at the time of the Reformation was the Anglican, which was the result of both political and religious stimuli that are not easy to distinguish. This type of ministerial organization continued the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, which had existed in the medieval Church. This is the pattern of the Church of England, which has spread also to other Churches throughout the world. Following the Reformation, a fourth pattern arose, that of the Free Churches, with its emphasis on the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit, the autonomy of the local congregation, and personal commitment to Christ. It arose out of Anabaptism and English Separatism and found expression in Baptist and Congregational Churches. These four types of ministerial organization, not entirely distinct from one another, have taken their place in the history of the Church beside the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

While each of these patterns claims to find some justification for its organization in Scripture and in Christian tradition, there can be no doubt that all of them have also been influenced by external factors--political, social and ecclesiastical conditions at particular times and places. Even today, as was indicated above, new patterns of ministry

are suggesting themselves to a Church that must be alert to change and to the most effective way of proclaiming the Gospel. We are living in an ecumenical age, when we must recognize the existence of other Churches beside our own which have made outstanding contributions to the spread of the Gospel. It is not possible any longer to say, "Our Church structure is the only divinely appointed one."

A New Testament Pattern?

In the past there has been much debate as to which type of ministry corresponds most closely to the original New Testament organization. Unfortunately, a good portion of this debate has been fruitless and unsuccessful in the degree that the various Christian communions continue to maintain that theirs is the only valid ministry.[4] This situation is aptly expressed in the oft-quoted words of Canon Streeter: "In the classic words of Alice in Wonderland, 'Everyone has won, and all shall have prizes.'"[5]

Within the last three-quarters of a century, as W. D. Davies points out, a curious dichotomy has developed with regard to the organization of the ministry of the Church. While there has emerged "a marked unity as to the essential nature of the Church as the eschatological people of God in Christ," at the same time, continues Davies,

> there has emerged an equally marked disagreement as to the way or ways in which that people was organized, if, indeed, in its

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[4]Individuals within the various Christian communions, of course, have recently taken an increasingly broader view and are accepting the ministries of denominations other than their own as valid.

[5]B. H. Streeter, The Primitive Church (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1929), p. ix.

> earliest stages we could speak of its being strictly "organized" at all. The nature of the Body of Christ has become clear; but there is division as to the form or forms that that Body has assumed.[6]

The New Testament simply does not give us the specifics for determining the precise pattern or form of ministry, which, to the exclusion of all other forms, should prevail in the Church. Nor can we concede to any one form of ministry the distinction of having been instituted by our Lord or by the first apostles. We cannot say that any one system found in the Church today reproduces what was found in the New Testament Church. As J. Robert Nelson has expressed it,

> While the New Testament has much to tell us about the ministry which is both descriptive for its time and normative for all times, it simply does not give the specific and incontrovertible answers to our restless questionings about ordination, succession, sacramental administration, the ministry of women, and the like. Even a most conservative, or literalistic, reading of the New Testament does not make possible a simple restorationism, as though the Church needed only common reason, good faith, and the leading of the Holy Spirit to discover the perennially valid patterns of ministry and order.[7]

It does not necessarily follow, however, that the New Testament offers no help in dealing with the problem of diversified as well as restricted ministries. If we cannot find clear-cut patterns to follow, neither can we conclude that the special ministries are simply matters of practical expediency and ad hoc arrangements, or that they are ultimately unnecessary. What we can do is discover in the New Testament how the first generation of Christians recognized the diversity of ministries as a gift of God for the upbuilding and extending of the Church.

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[6]W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 208.

[7]J. Robert Nelson, "Styles of Service in the New Testament and Now," Theology Today, XXII (April 1965), 86.

It is not possible, however, to discuss the nature and meaning of the Christian ministry adequately without reference to the doctrine of the Church. Few will disagree with the statement that the "ministry" was given to the Church, that it is the ministry which the exalted Christ uses to build and maintain the Church. The mission of the Church determines the ministry of the Church. The importance of this mutual relationship is seen also in the way the Confessions of the Lutheran Church deal with the doctrine of the ministry. There is surprisingly little about the office of the ministry in the Confessions, and where mention is made of it, it is always, as in Article V of the Augsburg Confession, in the context of the doctrine of the Church.[8] The office of the ministry is inherent in the Church.

Scope and Organization of the Study

The scope of this thesis, however, is limited to a discussion of developing structures of the ministry. The reader is reminded that we are particularly concerned in this presentation, not with the general ministry of the total Church, although this must necessarily be included, but primarily with the developing structures of the special, set-apart ministries as they are conceived by representatives of various Christian communions. These two concepts, of course, cannot

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[8]Cf. Edgar M. Carlson, "The Doctrine of the Ministry in the Confessions," The Lutheran Quarterly, XV (May 1963), 118-131; also Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church," in Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, published jointly by Representatives of the U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (New York and Washington, D. C.: 1970), IV, 101-119.

be isolated, inasmuch as ministry does not belong totally to an individual but to the people of God. Yet it is in the technical and more specialized sense of those called and appointed to special office as "ministers" that we shall consider the development of the ministry.

The subject is a vast one; moreover, it is complex and controversail. As Williston Walker has pointed out, "No question in church history has been more darkened by controversy than that of the origin and development of church officers, and none is more difficult, owing to the scantiness of the evidence that has survived."[9] What is true of the early centuries is true of all of the history of church order down to our own day, except that now it is not the scantiness of the evidence that provides the difficulty, but the abundance of the controversial material.

The methodology to be followed is based on the attempt to discover whether there is any normative pattern for the structure of the Christian ministry in the New Testament, and in what ways the actual forms of ministry that are current in the Church have developed. The approach will be historical.

Accordingly, we shall begin with a review of the consensus of Protestant scholarship that prevailed around the year 1880. This review is based on a dissertation by the Swedish theologian, Olaf Linton, entitled Das Problem der Urkirche in der Neueren Forschung,[10] in which he analyzed

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[9]Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 44.

[10]Olaf Linton, Das Problem der Urkirche in der Neueren Forschung (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1932). For the purpose of contributing to the development of this thesis, I have translated from the German Linton's entire work of 243 pages.

critically the prevailing views of the consensus of scholarship regarding the Church and its ministry around the year 1880. Written in 1932, Linton's work is thorough and comprehensive, and he manifests a broad background of knowledge regarding the early Church, as the nineteen pages of his bibliography indicate.

According to Linton, it had come to be generally accepted in Protestant circles around 1880 that the organization of the Church was of sociological, not of dogmatic or theological, significance. Indeed, the formal organization of the Church during its subsequent history was regarded as a degeneration from the original simple structure of the New Testament. These assertions were made and accepted generally, Linton points out, under the influence of the Enlightenment and the idealism and humanism of that day. But the results of the scholarship of that day were not conclusive. The attempt to find one organizational principle for early Christian Church life failed, so that scholarship turned from its preoccupation with early Church organization to a study of various isolated elements of church life and particularly to the doctrine of the Church. To this Linton also turns his attention, as he evaluates the various theories of the Church that prevailed between 1880 and 1932.

In Chapter III we shall attempt to bring the discussion on the Church and its ministry up to date. Here again the material is vast and complex, and we have no illusions about having made a comprehensive study of even the major portion of such material. What we have attempted to do was to present a number of significant interpretations of the historical development of the ministry that are commonly held today.

We have investigated representative sources and statements from the Anglican, Anglo-Catholic, Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Free Church communions, and these are indicated in the bibliography. We have followed a pattern of organizing all these interpretations into three main groups, which appear to represent the predominant, major views on the structure of the ministry. Various aspects of one major view will, of course, be similar to those of another major view, but in general the categories, we trust, are valid. Here and there personal reactions to various interpretations will be expressed, but by and large the general conclusions are reserved for Chapter IV.

CHAPTER II

OLOF LINTON AND THE CONSENSUS OF SCHOLARSHIP OF 1880

The Consensus of 1880

The burden of Linton's work, Das Problem der Urkirche in der Neueren Forschung, is his presentation of a critical analysis of the consensus that prevailed in Protestant scholarship around the year 1880 with regard to the organization of the early Christian Church and its ministry.[1] As W. D. Davies reminds us, the Enlightenment had by that time thoroughly influenced New Testament scholars also in the area of Christian origins, with the result that

> the Primitive Church had come to be regarded as made up of individual Christians who formed a religious society . . . and whose organized life could be adequately understood in the light of that of similar contemporary religious groups, of which there were many in the Hellenistic as in the Jewish world. . . . the application of strictly theological or dogmatic categories for their explanation was largely deemed to be superfluous: the organization of the Church was regarded as a social necessity not a divine ordinance.[2]

Thus, around the year 1880, and in contrast to the traditional position of the Roman Catholic Church regarding Church organization, Protestant scholarship had concluded that the Episcopate is not a continuation of the Apostolate, that the constitution of the Church is not due to any

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[1]In this chapter we intend to summarize what Linton has to say about the consensus of 1880's. While the translation of his work from the German is mine, the content of this chapter represents the thinking of Linton completely. Olaf Linton, Das Problem der Urkirche in der Neueren Forschung (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1932).

[2]W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 200.

direct divine appointment, and that the leadership of congregations resided, not in the hands of a monarchical bishop, but in a body of elders, the presbyterate, from whose midst the bishop was subsequently chosen. This in general terms represented the position of the consensus in Protestant scholarship around 1880.

Fundamental to this consensus were the autonomy and the sovereignty of the congregation. The congregation was administered by a council of presbyters or elders. One of these elders was chosen president of the council, and thus the office of bishop arises from the presbytery. As J. B. Lightfoot expressed it, "The episcopate was formed not out of the apostolic order by localization but out of the presbyteral by elevation."[3]

Underlying these viewpoints is the basic concept of the Church as a religious association, or society, and the Church office as an office of pure administration. The office holders had nothing to do with the preaching of the Word but rather managed the external affairs of the congregation and directed its deliberations. Only later on was teaching activity combined with management affairs. In a word, the original church office, according to the prevailing view, was not a spiritual office.[4] The early Christians, it was said, thought in political and social categories, being influenced by the world around them. Further, the concept of the universal priesthood led them to formulate a democratic system of government. The individual is of first importance. The Church is not necessary for salvation, yet for practical reasons individual

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[3]Here Linton is quoting from J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (1890).

[4]Linton, p. 6.

Christians assemble together. And so the Church is an empirical, practical necessity, simply because no society of men could endure without organization. Accordingly, the Church is formed "from below." The part precedes the whole, and the whole idea of the Church is atomistic.[5] The consensus, then, represented a consistent attempt to understand ancient Christian Church organization, not in religious terms, but in the light of mundane necessities.

With regard to the scholarly use of their sources, Linton suggests that the advocates of the consensus had made some unwarranted assumptions. For one thing, he believes that they interpreted the few New Testament sources that were available in the light of their own contemporary situation and in the context of their own times. In addition, he is of the opinion that they made inferences from silence, that they conjectured, and that they modernized their conclusions. Equally significant, and following F. C. Baur, the consensus advocates operate on the a priori assumption of a rejection of the authenticity of the Pastoral letters of Paul as well as of his Letter to the Philippians (because of the mention of "bishop" and "deacon" in these Letters). For the consensus, the Corinthian congregation was the typical original Christian congregation, because there we observe the most apparent autonomy. It governs itself, exercises discipline over its own members, and determines its acts of worship on the basis of charismatic gifts existing in its midst.[6] Conclusions of this kind form one basis of the consensus, but this basis, Linton says,

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[5] Ibid., p. 8.

[6] Ibid., p. 11.

is weak because we are not certain that the Corinthian congregation was a typical congregation.

The discussion at that time really revolved around two basic questions: How Church organization originated (whether spontaneously or by following Jewish or Hellenistic patterns), and how the Old Catholic Church system of Church government developed from it. In answer to the latter question the consensus contended that at first the administration of the congregation was in the hands of a council of presbyters but that, "in the very nature of the case," a council needs a president. From this it was but a simple step for the council president gradually to become the real overseer of the congregation, with the primary task of administering not only the congregational affairs, but also those of the presbytery. While this hypothesis was regarded as well established, there was less certainty about the chronology of the development of the monepiscopacy, due to various questions of authenticity, especially those pertaining to the letters Ignatius and the Pastoral Letters. In the final analysis, the more radical scholars claimed to detect hierarchical tendencies in these Letters and on that basis proclaimed the spuriousness of the Letters, while the conservative scholars who adhered to the authenticity of the Letters renounced any hierarchical tendencies in them. Despite these divergent assumptions, the consensus prevailed. Furthermore, observes Linton, the prevailing theory concerning the very origin of Church organization also was not accomplished without questionable assumptions, namely, the president-council hypothesis. The same criticism, he continues, can be applied to the questionable applications and interpretations of the sources with regard to the

relation of the apostles to the allegedly autonomous congregations.[7] The consensus explained the later organization of the Old Catholic Church in terms, not only of development from the original system, but also of the degeneration of the original system. Thus, "later Church organization is the product of priestly and Roman pretentions to sovereignty."[8]

In answer to the other question concerning the original organization of the Church, the consensus held that Jewish and Hellenistic influences were observable. On the one hand, appeal was made to the organization of the Jewish synagogue, in which the officials were not priests and in which each member was entitled to speak. There were others within the consensus who suggested that the Christians imitated the cooperative system of the Hellenistic-Roman state organization. Jewish Christians, it was said, patterned their organization according to the former, and the Gentile congregations according to the latter. Some even suggested an imitation of the Essene communities.[9] At any rate, it was generally held that Christian Church organization depended for its origin on some outside influence. Yet, Linton notes, not all scholars accepted these theories on origins, but insisted rather on early Christian organization as an essentially original creation of Christendom. Nonetheless, the majority adhered to a definite dependence upon Judaism as the natural point of departure for early Christian organization.

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[7] Ibid., p. 19.

[8] Ibid., p. 19.

[9] An interesting comparison of the community life of the Essenes with that of the Corinthian Christians is provided in Martin H. Scharlemann's Qumran and Corinth (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962).

Ideologically, the assumptions of the prevailing consensus carried great weight also with conservative scholars of that time. While they evaluated a number of questions in a manner different from their more radical colleagues (particularly those dealing with authenticity), their basic view of the situation in the early Church was the same. This, says Linton, is to be accounted for by the fact that the fundamentals of the consensus lay, not simply in the area of scholarly thought, but rather in the very modern spirit of the times. The conservative scholars, Linton explains, were pietistically inclined. For them, the individual was more important than the Church. In other words, piety stressed individualism. But the concept of the Church was congregationalistic, even hierarchical, and they were hostile toward this. Accordingly, it was not difficult for even conservative scholars to accept some of the crucial assumptions of the consensus, not because they agreed with the more radical scholars, but because they were influenced by the spirit of the times. "Die kongregationalistischen und individualistischen Gedanken lagen in der Luft."[10]

This, Linton adds, also provides the rationale for the system of Church government that the Reformed Churches have adopted. Whereas in Lutheranism the emphasis was on doctrine, in the Reformed Churches it was extended to church order and liturgy. Thus Linton concludes that, following the period of the Reformation, the Reformed groups adopted the congregational system of Church organization, not because this was in agreement with the New Testament type of organization, but primarily

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[10]Linton, p. 25.

to indicate its opposition to the later Catholic and hierarchical type of church order, which the consensus opposed.

In addition to these considerations, the idea of the gradual development of church structure was introduced. This involved the attempt to reconstruct a coherent and historically accurate pattern of development that would link the late New Testament order with the early Catholic order. This presented severe difficulties. For the critical theologians it was a problem that demanded a continuum in which it could be demonstrated that New Testament church order had degenerated into a hierarchy; and for those with pietistic leanings it was a matter of showing that God was still at work in the small circle of believers.

The situation was further complicated by the introduction of the concept of law. In the Middle Ages the Church's claim to sovereignty was acknowledged, and that claim was superior to the claim of the State. The State's claim to sovereignty was recognized through the doctrine of the two swords, both of which were bestowed by God. But this situation was altered considerably with the introduction of the concepts of natural law.[11] To begin with, sovereignty was now explained not on religious grounds, but according to natural law, and, then, the sovereignty of the State became the predominantly recognized one, while that of the Church became controversial. As a result the Church had to accommodate itself to the categories which carried weight before the forum of natural law. These categories were those of the religious fellowship.

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[11] Ibid., p. 26.

Thus, concludes Linton, the foundations of the consensus were formed partially out of the Reformed views and partially from the Enlightenment and from natural law.

Meanwhile another observation was made. It was held by some that the outward organization did not belong to the essence of the Church but was religiously indifferent. The Church is really an inner, purely spiritual entity, while its organization is something external, incidental, human and earthly. This view did not contradict the views of those who were influenced by the Enlightenment and by natural law, for such a view was concerned only with the visible Church. The Church's divine essence was invisible, accessible only to the believers. Thus, for the visible Church the categories of society or of the State-Church could apply.

There was a reaction to this distinction between the visible and the invisible Church on the part of the advocates of the High Church movement, which was influential especially during the early decades of the twentieth century. On the basis of the New Testament they pointed to a "holy office," to authority, to supervision, which they found in the office of teaching in the New Testament apostolate. The Church, they said, has an order that was established by God. In the view of the consensus, however, these were purely theological and dogmatic considerations and not historical ones. While the office of teaching existed from the beginning, it had no continuing or organizational significance. In effect, the consensus did not see any relationship between the apostolate and the office of teaching, on the one hand, and the rise of church order on the other. For Linton, this is evidence

that the religious basis of New Testament church order was never seriously considered, and that the constitution of the Church was purely a secular creation, as far as the consensus was concerned. Linton indicates that both Lightfoot and Hatch have illustrated how the consensus of the 1880's has interpreted the first century in the light of the democratic idealism of late nineteenth century Liberalism and what the influence of this interpretation was in England as well as in Germany.[12]

The Impact of Hatch, Harnack and Sohm on the Consensus

Linton presents Edwin Hatch as a typical representative of the consensus that we have been describing. Hatch's two fundamental theses were: (1) the development of the organization of the Church was a gradual one, and (2) the clue to the various elements in that organization was to be found in contemporary human society. Thus, for example, the early congregations are merely cooperative bodies; the presbyters form a council and choose a president; the bishop has administrative duties, the primary one (and this is distinctive with Hatch) being the management of the finances in the society of Christians, much as in other societies. In one crucial point he deviates from the prevailing consensus; he opposed the commonly held view that bishop and presbyter were identical.

Hatch proceeds from the premise that it is inadmissible to read back into the New Testament situation the sequence of later historical

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[12] Ibid., p. 30. The work of Lightfoot is mentioned above. The reference to Edwin Hatch is found in his The Organization of the Early Christian Churches (1888).

developments, and that we must consider only the contemporary situation. Accordingly, he points to two impulses of the New Testament period that were influential: the tendency to organize associations, and the prevalence of social misery that provoked deeds of charity. These, Hatch claims, are clearly to be found in early Christianity. In his view, then, the episcopoi became prominent as financial administrators, in which they were assisted by the deacons. Thus, the entire emphasis in early Christianity, according to Hatch, is on social activity.[13] As far as the presbyters are concerned, their status is to be explained once more by a comparison with their counterparts in Jewish and heathen antiquity. The institution of elders, or presbyters, is old and widespread and was imitated especially by the Jewish Christian congregations. In Hatch's view, while the bishops and deacons were functionaries, dealing with the care of the poor and with worship, the presbyters had nothing to do with worship but probably occupied a position similar to that of a Roman senator. This view is a most important one because, says Linton, it forms the basis of the later development of Hatch's hypothesis by Harneck.[14] In the course of time, Hatch believes, the monarchical bishop arose as the number of congregations increased and as the need came to be felt for uniformity in teaching and discipline.

Hatch's views, then, concur completely with those of the consensus, as is indicated by his own words at the beginning of his book, which Linton quotes:

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[13]Linton, p. 33.

[14]Ibid., p. 34.

> We shall see how those to whom the Word of life is made known gradually united into fellowships. We shall see how these fellowships organized themselves as cooperating societies for the exercise of charity in the midst of great poverty and need. We shall see how they organized themselves as cooperating societies for discipline, united by the power of a strict moral law, in the midst of social confusion and laxity. We shall see how they changed from an oligarchical or democratic system to a monarchical system in the full sense. We shall see how the individual congregations ultimately combined with each other into a confederation spread over the whole world.[15]

There were some who disagreed with Hatch on some points, but by and large his work was accepted and acclaimed.

The most outstanding of Hatch's followers was Adolf Harnack, who became the herald of Hatch in Germany.[16] Harnack supported Hatch's fundamental thesis regarding the distinction that was to be made between the bishop-deacon organization and the presbyteral. The former office holders organize and supervise the congregation's functions, while the latter are associated with teaching and worship responsibilities. The presbyteral organization was the earthly, secular one, with age and experience serving as criteria of office, while the bishop-deacon organization was the specifically Christian one. The existence side by side of these two spheres of responsibility--the religious and the earthly--was something new with Harnack, insofar as the attempt is now being made to understand the episcopacy as a religious activity.

With the appearance of the Didache in published form in 1883, the views of the consensus were reinforced, inasmuch as Church officials are not

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[15] Ibid., p. 35.

[16] Ibid., p. 36. Harnack translated Hatch's work into German, supplied an enthusiastic introduction to it, and added "analects" to it.

mentioned (at least not up to Chapter 15), and bishops appeared to be chosen by the congregations, which were sovereign. Presumably, the Didache confirmed the main contentions of the consensus.

Harnack also made the Didache the subject of a monograph, in which he developed a second hypothesis, namely, that of a total united Church organization, with apostles, prophets and teachers serving as the connecting links. These men were not attached to a particular congregation, but served the entire Church as they traveled from congregation to congregation. They were, moreover, completely free from administrative and jurisdictional functions. Bishops and deacons, on the other hand, were the administrative officials of the individual congregation. Originally they did not belong to the group of honored teachers of the Word, but subsequently they were counted among them and were revered just like the prophets and teachers. This view, says Linton, appears to be one of the basic views in interpreting the history of early Christian Church order.[17] This, too, is the celebrated second hypothesis of Harnack regarding a double organization of the early Church, by which he distinguishes between a charismatic ministry belonging to the whole Church and consisting of apostles, prophets and teachers who had a direct, divine appointment, and the local administrative ministry of bishops and deacons.

There were others among the advocates of the consensus who went a step farther and conceived of a fourfold organization of the early Church: the spiritual, which included the apostles, prophets and

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[17] Ibid., p. 42.

teachers; the patriarchal, represented by the presbyters; the administrative, composed of bishops and deacons; and the "aristocratic," which comprised the martyrs and the celibate. But the distinction between two types of organization--that of the united Church and that of the individual congregation--remained the fundamental one, also in later works of Harnack.

At this point Linton evaluates the views of Hatch critically. Regarding as a caricature the latter's view of the bishop as a financial administrator, Linton points out that even in non-Christian evidences the term episcopos occurred only incidentally and infrequently in connection with the management of money, and that it was more common in its general meaning of "overseer." He observes that also Christian sources indicate that episcopos does not imply economics but rather signifies "pastor," "shepherd," "the relief of the poor." This was a fatal blow to Hatch's theory, Linton believes.

With regard to the alleged dependence of early Christian organization on secular society, Linton says only that Hatch carried his argument to absurdity, but he does not say why, nor does he refute it with evidence.

Furthermore, with respect to Hatch's fundamental distinction between the bishop and the presbyter, Linton says that throughout there was an apparent inconsistency, the relationship between the two being presented first one way and then another. He does not elaborate, but says only that the opponents of the consensus were thereby confirmed in their view of an original identity.

Then turning to Harnack, Linton regards the former's hypotheses (the twofold, and occasionally the fourfold organization of the Church) as

too complex and artificial and improbable. Furthermore, there is no reference or indication of any kind of organization of the apostles, prophets and teachers--something that one would expect in Harnack's view of an organized Church. When Harnack tried to attribute this absence or confusion to the paucity of sources, Linton says, "that, one could not believe."[18]

In passing, Linton is critical of one other advocate of the consensus in this period, namely, Edgar Loening,[19] who was a lawyer rather than a theologian. Loening attempts to provide a solution to the problem of Church organization by classifying the sources according to locality. Thus, he distinguishes three main types of organization: the Gentile-Christian congregation with the congregational assembly as the principal feature, the Jewish-Christian presbyteral organization, and the monarchical system of government in Jerusalem under James. But there is nothing new here, says Linton; everything is compatible with the prevailing consensus.

Of much greater significance is Linton's evaluation of Rudolf Sohm,[20] also a lawyer, who is known chiefly as the defender of the thesis that Church and Law stand in opposition to each other. The ideal Church is without law; it is regulated not legally but charismatically. Twice this ideal was realized--in the early Church and in the Reformation--and twice

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[18] Ibid., p. 46.

[19] Edgar Loening, Die Gemeindeverfassung des Urchristenthums. Eine kirchenrecht-liche Untersuchung (Halle: n.p., 1888).

[20] Rudolf Sohm, Kirchenrecht (Leipsiz: n.p., 1892).

it came to nought through the Old Catholic Church and through supreme hierarchical Church authority (landesherrliche Kirchenregiment). This thesis underlies the entire viewpoint of Sohm. And yet the manner in which Sohm attacked the prevailing assumptions is even more crucial and effective, Linton says. For Sohm, the Church, the ecclesia, is strictly an assembly of people, with the emphasis on the word "people." Every assembly of Christians, be it large or small, is a manifestation of the one Church of total Christendom. There is no connection between the local church and formal Church organization. All organization in the Church is charismatic and not judicial. It consists primarily of the gift of teaching. Like Harnack, Sohm insists that the Word of God is the principle of this charismatic organization, so that anyone who is endowed to teach is appointed by God and is not chosen by the congregation. He gives absolution, exercises church discipline, and governs Christendom in the name of God. This teaching authority was not of a judicial nature; it implied the consent of the congregation and rested on their free assent. Nor does this mean at all that judicial power was vested in the congregation. There is no congregational authority, so that the congregation's assent is not more than a matter of simple recognition. The administration of the congregation is from above through the expedient of the individual personality who is endowed by God, and it implies the higher moral authority, which claims obedience in the name of God.

When the congregation elects its teachers, even the choice is not a corporate act but rests rather on the testimony of God. The congregation merely gives its assent, inasmuch as the individual concerned has been chosen by the Holy Spirit. Like the call, so also the ordination with the laying on of hands can bestow only spiritual authority, not judicial.

Thus, for Sohm, there is no closed, corporate, organized congregation. Only the total Church exists, and only that Church is organized. Yet local assemblies of Christians exist, and they must be explained. Sohm conceives of them not as individual congregations, but as "preliminary stages of congregational formation." Here he parts company with Harnack, who maintained that the organization of the congregation developed around the Eucharist and the care of the poor. Sohm, on the other hand, contends that neither the Eucharist nor the management of church finances (church property is God's property and not the congregation's) is a matter of congregational administration. These activities belong to a priestly representative of God, and, therefore, they are in the hands of one who had the gift of teaching. In cases where no one with the gift of teaching is present, a substitute must be appointed, and out of this necessity, according to Sohm, the bishop came into prominence. This does not mean, in the case of the bishop, that he was first an administrative officer and was then advanced to the teaching office. Sohm believes the bishop filled the position of the teaching office originally. Bishops are always chosen from the ranks of the presbyters, who, while they do not all have the gift of teaching, nevertheless do have the gift of a practical witness to the Christian faith. In accordance with his rejection of any element of constitutional government, Sohm does not believe the presbyters formed a council. Their function, like that of the deacons, is to assist at the Eucharist.

For Sohm, in summary, there was in early Christianity no congregation in the legally organized sense, no exclusive council of bishops, no bishop with a claim to office. Every form of legal constitution is

excluded. In its pristine purity the Church was a spiritual fellowship. But conditions became unsettled, regulations became necessary, and subsequently Catholicism appeared. The conclusion that it was at Rome that monepiscopacy arose Sohm bases on the first letter of Clement.

Sohm's work, as Linton points out, includes one other significant conclusion, namely, this theory concerning the authority of synods. The ancient Church synod is not based on the idea of representation and is not a joint agency of several congregations. It has its authorization as a manifestation of the Church of God. It is an assembly of congregations reinforced through the coming together of the bishops, presbyters, deacons, confessors, and the entire faithful company of the laity. The fundamental point is that the authority of the synod was universal and spiritual, not judicial.

Linton commends Sohm for the latter's attack on the fundamental assumptions of the consensus, namely, the ideas of administration and corporation. Sohm, according to Linton, discovered the correct categories when he substituted "Church" for corporation, and the "Eucharist" for administration.[21]

Sohm's most important contribution, Linton says, is his statement that Church and Law stand in opposition. According to the Protestant view, divine Church law has arisen in two stages: law first came into the Church as human law, and then this human law became deified. Since Sohm had already denied the existence of a corporation, it follows that

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[21]Linton, p. 58.

there was no human or corporation law. The alternative was simply this: divine Church law or no law at all. Human Church law is an impossibility.

There are several factors that contributed to this fundamental thesis of Sohm, Linton points out. For one thing, Sohm's religion is a religion of the spirit; he wants nothing to do with statutory ideas. Law and legal considerations destroy religion. Accordingly, the Church also must be free from law, institutions and outward organized forms. This applies precisely to the visible Church, for Sohm does not believe that the early Church had any conceptions of an invisible Church. Secondly, Sohm's fundamental thesis is predicated upon his own view of law itself. What is the constitutive element of law? In Sohm's view

> The essence of judicial authority is not that it is to be accomplished forcibly, but rather that it is of a formal nature, that is, basically it has to do with the specific data of the past, without the possibility of criticism, without regard to it, whether at the moment it appears essentially justified or not.[22]

The essence of law for Sohm lies in formal powers on the basis of the deeds of the past. Only smallness of faith demands a system of law, formal barriers, guarantees. Accordingly, the charismatic order is a viable order. And so, there is an antithesis between formal law and living Spirit. Law is civil law and exists only for the State. The Church belongs to another world, and Linton adds, the correct conception of the Church is the Lutheran conception of the invisible Church.

Sohm's work was appreciated by Protestants and Catholics alike, even though all did not agree with his conclusions. As Linton puts it, "from now on everyone who wants to deal with the problem of Church law must come to terms with Sohm, be he theologian or lawyer."[23] But the

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[22] Ibid., p. 62.

[23] Ibid., p. 64.

problem was not solved. Protestants and Catholics alike retained their traditional views, and the debate continues, with Sohm's work forming the accepted starting point. More important for our present discussion, Sohm did not accomplish the downfall of the consensus, although he did shake the foundations, and he did provide an impetus for further investigation of the evidences, which concentrated on isolated aspects of early Christian Church life.

Special Problems

In the following decade (the 1890's) interest in the organization of the Church declined, and attention turned to special investigations. Studies of the organized life of the Church were inconclusive, so that scholars no longer attempted detailed descriptions of that organization, but turned instead to an investigation of specific individual problems. Two of these problems concerned the Apostolate and the concept of the Church itself.

The Apostles

The fundamental problem revolved around the question, "Was the Apostolate an original Christian creation or was it taken over from Judaism or Hellenism?" The prevailing view of the consensus was that in autonomous congregations the apostles were not the authoritative leaders and directors but only stimulators and advisors with a strictly personal or "moral" authority. Everything that smacked of officialdom was rejected. Christ had appointed the apostles only for preaching and for service, not for ruling over the Church. Linton then presents an extended discussion of the opinions of various scholars of the time on

the concepts of "the circle of the Twelve," the Jewish Shaliach, the limitation of the company of the apostles, the marks of an apostle, and apostles and prophets as the Church's first charismatics. We cannot enter into a detailed description of his elaborate discussion.[24] Suffice it to say here that one of the fundamental positions of the consensus was that the apostles were the first charismatics. Their charisma gives them their authority, but this authority is a spiritual, personal, moral authority, and not judicial. This is the characteristic feature of the authentic, Christian apostolate, exemplified by Paul. The traditional, official apostolate of later centuries is viewed as a political intruder. It was later introduced by various congregations, and thus the antithesis arose of a charismatic Pauline apostolate and a traditional Jerusalemite apostolate. With regard to the origin of the apostolate, opinions varied, but the general consensus was that the apostolate was an original Christian innovation that embraced a broad group of believers.

Prophets and Teachers

Linton's discussion of prophets and teachers is a brief one and concerns itself mainly with origins. He does not accept the view that in late Judaism the prophets were regarded as extinct, but he regards their appearance in New Testament times as an indication of the end-time. By the end of the second century, however, the "office" of the prophet had declined. With regard to the "teachers," Linton agrees with Harnack that the origin of the teaching "office" is to be found in Judaism. He concludes his comments on the "charismatic offices" with a few observations

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[24] Ibid., p. 70.

on terminology. Early Christianity, he says, was not acquainted with the term "charismatic," at least not in the sense in which it is used today. It did not distinguish between charismatic and non-charismatic offices. All offices were viewed as "charismatic" (pneumatikos).

Bishops

We now turn to Linton's discussion of bishops. Citing examples of the variety of meanings of the word episcopos in non-Christian literature and in the inscriptions, all of which, however, add up to the general meaning of "overseer," Linton concludes that it is impossible to find a fixed meaning with regard to the content of the word. "The word signifies only that the one so designated had been entrusted with a charge, but not over what he was to exercise control."[25] Episcopos is a "relative word devoid of content" (inhaltleeres Beziehungswort). In Christian circles there is general agreement that the word relates to pastoral care, worship and deeds of love, which were duties of the bishop.

Moreover, the word episcopos is a denotative word, suggesting that behind the bishop stands an "employer." Who, according to early Christian interpretation, is this employer? The consensus had contended that it was the congregation which elected the bishop, although Sohm had insisted upon a charismatic election. Linton believes that the most probable situation was this that the laity assented to an individual who was proposed as a candidate. With regard to the council of bishops, or presbyters, Linton suggests that the earlier view of the council as an

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[25] Ibid., p. 107.

executive council with presidents and special positions has now been replaced by a twofold view: either the council of presbyters who constitute the pluralistic leadership of the congregation, or the bishops as a narrow circle of administrative presbyters and the presbyters as the wider circle of the esteemed elders. At any rate, it is generally accepted that from this council of bishops arose the monarchical episcopacy, although the precise stimulus that occasioned the elevation of one person is explained variously.[26] The same is true with regard to the subsequent expansion of the episcopacy. Lightfoot's view evidently still holds that the episcopate was "formed out of the apostolic order by localization but out of the presbyteral by elevation."

Presbyters

The old view of the consensus regarding presbyters was that they formed a kind of congregational council. Since then Sohm had developed a different interpretation, according to which the presbyters are the esteemed elders who sit with the bishops at the altar table. The Jewish origin of the word presbyteros is still generally accepted.

Deacons and Minor Orders

The office of deacon has been far less controversial than the higher offices of early Christianity, says Linton.[27] There is general agreement concerning the function of the early Christian deacons. They were helpers

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[26] Ibid., p. 111.

[27] Ibid., p. 113.

at worship and in the exercise of deeds of charity. In both areas they are intimately linked with the episcopate, and various scholars have emphasized the close connection and have seen in the episcopate and the diaconate only different aspects of a single original office. The question of whether the Seven (Acts 6) were the first deacons or whether they represented a special office is a controversial one.

The minor orders, it had been generally assumed, had evolved from the diaconate. But some doubt began to be cast on this assumption when it was suggested that the exorcists and the lectors were successors of earlier charismatics. Sohm had divided the lower offices into two classes: deaconal offices and clerical functions of the laity, and Linton reinforces this by indicating that the East knew of only two lower initiations—that of the sub-diaconate and that of the lector.

Women play a prominent role in the early Church, according to Linton, in a way that was analagous to male activities, and there is a great amount of literature to substantiate this.[28] The prophetesses are the feminine prophets, and the "young women" are the feminine ascetics. Both are "charismatics" and represent the two main types—the bearers of the Word of God and the heroines of the Christian way of life. The deaconesses, of course, are the female deacons, and the widows of the congregation conformed to some extent to the presbyters.

Linton's Reevaluations

In spite of the new direction that scholarly research had taken after the 1880's, to which we have previously referred, the fundamental

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[28] Ibid., p. 115.

principles of the consensus regarding Church organization had not died out. Linton quotes Otto Scheel who in 1912 wrote:

> The most widely circulated assumption even today in Protestant research has little to say about a churchly character of early Christianity. The "churches" (ecclesiai) were local alliances, corporations, therefore "congregations." They existed "autonomously," independent of each other. An association of congregations did not exist. Each congregation chose for itself its directors (prohistamenoi) or bishops (episcopoi), who were entrusted particularly with the management (administration) of the congregation (ecclesia) and the stewardship of the congregational monies, and therefore were administrative and financial officers. "Deacons," likewise chosen by the congregation, stood at their side. This congregational constitution--not church constitution--is naturally a completely secular structure, a societal association. The "officers" are just as "profane" as any officer in society.[29]

Clearly, the consensus of New Testament scholarship regarding Church organization had not been seriously affected by later scholarly investigations.

Yet it did become clear that agreement by all on the nature of the organization of the Church was impossible, and for this and other reasons, as Davies points out,[30] scholars began to turn their attention from questions of organization to the idea or doctrine of the Church in the New Testament. "The nature of the Church rather than the form of its life assumed primary importance." Some areas, still related to early Church organization, continued to be investigated critically, and to these Linton now refers.

On of the areas of investigation concerned itself with the idea of the "Kingdom of God" in the light of eschatology. A certain

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[29] Ibid., p. 119. The translation is mine.

[30] Davies, p. 205.

congruence had existed between the theories of organization of the consensus and the ideas of the nature of the Kingdom of God at that time. The Kingdom of God had been regarded as a kingdom of ethical personalities and, therefore, as an ethical organization of the human race. J. Weiss pointed out that this conception was entirely different from what Jesus and early Christianity had in mind.[31] For the latter, the Kingdom of God was an other-worldly, a heavenly entity. The idea of the Kingdom of God and the idea of the Church, then, are in opposition. Jesus had plainly preached of the nearness of the Kingdom of God and had not intended a continuing earthly institution such as the Church, and therefore eschatology and the Church are opposed to each other. The eschatology of Jesus was regarded as a decisive argument against the subsequent establishment of the Church.

There were other, newer investigations of the concept of the Spirit in the light of supernaturalism. For the consensus, the Spirit represented the free religious life. Spirit and person belonged together over against institution and form, and in this respect one believed he was united with early Christianity against the common enemy of formalism. In 1888 Herman Gunkel suggested a new evaluation, which proceeded from a psychological-realistic interpretation rather than from the idealistic. with the glossalalia as his starting point, Gunkel maintained that the operation of the Spirit is not simply an intensification of the innate religious quality existing in all men, but that the entire Christian

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[31]Johannes Weiss, Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1964).

life is a supernatural miracle, to be accounted for by the Spirit of God.[32] Furthermore, the Holy Spirit was active also in the situation where a fixed office had been established in the Church, thus raising the question of the coexistence of Spirit and office. The consensus had denied that this was possible, insisting that the Spirit needed no forms and that the case of Paul was a peculiarity. Indeed, a large body of literature began to appear at this time on the subject of the Spirit from philological, biblical-theological and psychological viewpoints, and Linton is of the opinion that the discussion in these works on the relationship between Spirit and office was purely academic and, therefore, worthless.[33]

Another area that occupied the attention of scholars at this time was that of worship. The fact that officials in the early Church were responsible for the conduct of worship was accepted by everyone, including advocates of the consensus. The latter held that the worship function belonged to the sphere of administration, although Sohm distinguished between the two and, with his emphasis on the Eucharist, wanted to account for the organization of the Church from worship and not from administration. In this Sohm was right, Linton says, inasmuch as later research has shown that in early Christianity the Eucharist held the central position. In the view of the consensus, public worship was formalism; worship and living religion are opposed to each other. But the School of Historical Religion now introduced the concept of living

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[32]Linton, p. 122.

[33]Ibid., p. 127.

worship, in which the Spirit is alive. The various charisma, prayer and other worship experiences are intimately connected with worship. This, Linton says, is a breakthrough in the antithesis between organization and Spirit, office and Spirit.[34]

In summary, Linton observes that the later investigations have certainly shed new light on questions of the Church and its organization and, in his opinion, have rendered the assumptions of the consensus extremely doubtful.[35] Apparent now are the dichotomies of the supernatural and eschatological and the religious life of the inner man, the worshiping congregation and individualism, the divine dynamic of the Spirit (überpersönliche Geist der Kraftwirkung) and the individual personality, worship and administration. The consensus had defended its assumptions as the true interpretation of early Church life and insisted that organization and forms represented degeneration and deterioration of the Church; it adhered to fundamentals and rejected the unfamiliar. The newer views, says Linton, accent the historical distance from early Christianity, stress the ancient and original, and underscore those things that appear unfamiliar.

The Concept of the Church

While the problem that we are dealing with in this thesis is confined to a study of developing structures of the ministry, this section on the concept of the Church in early Christianity is not irrelevant in

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[34]Ibid., p. 131.

[35]Ibid., p. 131.

view of the fact that Church and ministry are intimately related, also with reference to its organization and to our present review of the consensus of the 1880's. Indeed, it is impossible to discuss the Church's ministry at all without repeated references to the Church itself. Accordingly, we shall discuss briefly Linton's review of the newer literature on the Church of New Testament times.

In the early decades of the twentieth century the nature of the Church rather than the formal organization of its life occupied the attention of scholars. There are many intellectual, religious and social factors that contributed to this change in theological discussion, Linton points out.[36] The inconclusiveness of previous studies, the collapse of individualism, a new social awareness, a new consciousness of the total Church as opposed to individual sects, the relationship of the Church to the State, especially in Europe, and last but not least, the rise of the ecumenical movement--all of these are contributing elements in this change of interest.

The consensus had taken its starting point from individualism and humanism. The Church arose sociologically from men and was, therefore, a human organization with a human objective. No other alternative was possible. According to the newer views, the Church does not originate with individuals through a federation, but exists prior to men; the individual enters the Church. The Church is a creation "from above." Theologically, the Church is not a human creation but is from God. It is the "ecclesia" of God, the body of Christ, the operational base of

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[36] Ibid., p. 132.

the Holy Spirit. Sociologically, the Church is more than the social fellowship of the consensus. Historically, the consensus had dated the rise of the Church late, contending that it was a gradual development of the union of individuals into congregations and then the congregations into a confederation called the Church. Now the rise of the Church is dated earlier and is traced back to the life of Jesus.

Linton classifies the main areas of scholarship that have contributed to the newer understanding of the Church. These four disciplines are:

1. The Lexicographical. An examination of the ecclesia was given a great deal of detailed attention by scholars. It would, however, be going too far afield even to summarize at this point the discussion that took place among scholars with regard to the meaning of the word ecclesia. Does it signify the total Church or a congregation or both? What about the household Church? What about the use of the term within Judaism and Hellenism? How does Paul use the word? What do the synonyms and the epithets suggest? All of these questions were involved in the elaborate investigation, and Linton's conclusion is that one must be cautious in the use he makes of linguistic achievements.[37] Even when Sohm succeeds in demonstrating from the sources the religious nature of the Church as opposed to the view of the consensus that the Church was a social assembly, Linton points out, one can still understand the word "religious" in a "modern" sense.

2. The Theological. From the theological viewpoint among advocates of the consensus the Church was the creation of men from below with a

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[37] Ibid., p. 146.

social purpose. The more recent linguistic investigations have designated the Church as the Church of God, with its synonym people of God. It is from above. This is to be seen already in the light of Judaism, where God dealt with the people. The same is true after the Exile when God dealt with the Remnant, the true Israel. In the New Testament the early Christians did not establish a new society, but they were Jews whose Messiah had come and who regarded themselves as "the true Israel." They had not formed a new religious society; rather, a new age had come, and they had entered into a new period of the world. Thus, not men, but God produced the Church. It is not from below but from above. Much of the same reasoning is to be applied to the relationship between the Church and the Messiah, the Son of Man. Messiah and Messiah's congregation belong together. Indeed, says Linton, Christ is more closely bound up with the Church than with the individual, for the Church is the bride of Christ, the body of Christ.[38] Similarly, as the sphere of operation of the Holy Spirit the Church is from above. On the one hand, it is a real entity in the world and not invisible or a metaphysical idea, and on the other hand, it resides here as an alien, for in essence it belongs to another world. As Linton puts it, "it is a part of realized eschatology,"[39] and is not to be distinguished from eschatology as was done earlier.

From the point of view of soteriology, the consensus had viewed salvation as a mundane deliverance of individual human beings. The congregation and the Church arise to form a religious society for the preservation

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[38] Ibid., p. 149.

[39] Ibid., p. 150.

of common interests, with the preservation of Christianity as a secondary purpose. The Church was essentially an earthly organization. Now, Linton says, men regard salvation and admission into the Church as one and the same procedure. The Church is the salvation institution (Heilsveranstaltung) of God.[40] In this latter view the Church is prior to the individual and not the reverse. It can expand, but its essence is from the beginning. The idea of the Church of early Christianity is not collectivistic, not atomistic.

3. The Sociological. As already indicated, the consensus had regarded the Church as a religious society, an association, a corporation. When later scholarship dated the Church before New Testament times by virtue of its continuation from the Old Testament Remnant and showed further that the Church was above individual men, this sociological category was negated. Once rejected as Catholic, the category of the Church as an institution prior to the individual again became prominent. Meanwhile the science of sociology had appeared, and the question of the sociological character of the Church acquired a new significance. Since the designation of the Christians as "people of God," "saints," "ecclesia of God" or "disciples" really had theological connotations, it was held that the sociological formulation of the question is improper, inasmuch as sociology reckons exclusively with the relationships between men. Nevertheless, there were those who contrived various philosophical and speculative theories that are so intricate and difficult to understand that Linton himself admits his inability to comprehend them.[41] In fact, some

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[40] Ibid., p. 151.

[41] Ibid., p. 156.

of the new sociological categories that were invented lead right back to theology, so that "to speak of those investigations as sociological is hardly possible."[42] One thing seems clear, however, and that is the fact that the attempt to understand the Church as only one among many similar human societies that were in existence in the first century, as the consensus had proposed, was no longer acceptable. Yet the newer attempt to deal with the Church in sociological categories was equally difficult. Davies expresses it well when he says,

> The sociological approach to the Church, which sought to explain it purely in terms of human relationships, has consequently given place to a new kind of sociological approach, which strictly speaking is not sociological at all, in which the peculiarity of the Church as a divine-human society is recognized, a peculiarity which demands peculiar categories for its explanation.[43]

Quoting S. E. Johnson, Davies adds, "it is the differences between Christianity and its rivals in the first century, and not its similarity to them, that are now recognized to be significant."[44]

4. The Historical. According to the views of the prevailing consensus, Christianity had arisen on the day of Pentecost, but the Church was formed gradually "from below." The apostles founded congregations but no Church. They did not create the organization, and Jesus had never thought of establishing a Church. The newer Protestant investigations now began to question these assumptions, particularly on the basis of

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[42] Ibid., p. 156.

[43] Davies, pp. 206-207.

[44] S. E. Johnson, "Paul and the Manual of Discipline," Harvard Theological Review, XLVIII (1955), 157.

Matthew 16:17-19. The abundant literature that appeared dealt with two points: the founding of the Church by Jesus, and the role of Peter in the Church.

Protestant research had from the beginning, so Linton says, been distrustful of discussions on the position of the primacy of Peter because this was the precise position of Catholic theology for the establishment of papal primacy.[45] Moreover, it had maintained that the position of primacy did not harmonize with the general view of Jesus. In only two instances does Matthew use the term "ecclesia" (16:18 and 18:17), and in the former passage the reference is to "My Church," which is difficult to accept as long as one assumed that Jesus never intended to establish a religious community but wanted to proclaim only the Kingdom of God. The conclusion was that the word originated with the evangelist or with his circle of associates, and thus its authenticity as a word of Jesus was questioned. Harnack and others had also suggested an interpolation hypothesis, according to which the passages in question were not in Matthew's original text but were appended in the second half of the second century.[46] Yet among many scholars the assumption remained quite settled that the passages were original components of Matthew's Gospel.

Linton then presents an extremely detailed discussion of the views of various scholars on such related points as the "keys of the Kingdom," the "gates of hell," the "loosing and binding," the name Peter, the character of Peter, the testimony of the Church fathers, and the

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[45]Linton, p. 158.

[46]Ibid., p. 160.

religio-historical and form-critical interpretations, as well as the mystical views of Joachim Jeremias. By way of summary he indicates that all the arguments that have been presented can be classified under four headings: (1) the statistical argument, which refers to the infrequent use of the word "church;" (2) the eschatalogical argument, which infers that Jesus had not intended to found a Church because of the approaching end of the world; (3) the religio-historical argument, which suggests that in early Christianity Peter had not enjoyed the authoritative position that would merit such a distinction from Jesus; and (4) the psychological argument, which insists that the designation "rock" does not harmonize with the unreliable character of Peter.

With regard to the historical relevance of the Twelve, Linton is sure that the number "twelve" is symbolical and is intended to represent the new Israel. Even more specifically, he believes Jesus fashioned His twelve disciples into a Church, knowing Himself to be the Messiah. As to the precise time when this occurred--whether it was at the institution of the Lord's Supper or whether it was by the threefold stage of the call and sending of the disciples, the confession of Peter, and the institution of the Supper--Linton says, "we must be satisfied with the 'that' and leave the 'when' unanswered."[47]

Fundamental Problems of the Discussion

In his final chapter Linton attempts to sum up the three main questions of the foregoing discussion. These are: did the early Church

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[47]Ibid., p. 178.

conceive of Church and corporation or only Church?; how are the concepts of Church and organization related?; and what is the relationship between Spirit and office?

With regard to the first question, Linton seems to favor the view that the Church is to be thought of in terms of the total Church, the total people of God. Individual congregations are not autonomous and do not have supreme authority. Decisions that individual congregations may make are decisions of the whole Church, inasmuch as Christ Himself and an apostle are required to be present.[48] Returning to the element of law in early Christianity, Linton is of the opinion that, while research has consistently proceeded from Protestant or Roman Catholic presuppositions as well as from modern conceptions of law, one must understand law in the early Church in the framework of oriental law. In other words, the early Christians were conscious of the concept of law and made use of law, but they did not apply it in the Hellenistic, democratic, societal sense.

As far as the relationship between Church and organization is concerned, Linton reminds us that, according to the consensus, authority was ascribed to the person, whereas early Christianity attributed the diversity of services to the gifts and the determination of God. Some advocates of the consensus had also found the one determining principle of organization to be that of service--the service of the Word and service in deeds of love; others found it to be in worship. Finally, there were those of the consensus who regarded the congregation as a representation or image of the total "ecclesia." This latter idea, Linton believes,

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[48]Ibid., p. 194.

must be worship oriented. It is the worshiping congregation that represents the total Church, for in a mystical way the entire Church is present in worship--the Church of the past and the Church of the future, the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. Still others regarded the congregation as a fragment of the total Church which is living in the diaspora. The individual congregations are merely offshoots of the one Church, whose focal point is Jerusalem. Under this type of organization all the congregations of the New Testament are regarded as missionary congregations. Linton himself seems to prefer the idea of representation over the idea of the fragment, since to him this suggests more accurately the actual situation with regard to early Church organization.[49]

This is consistent with his belief that the representative congregation is a worshiping congregation, for it is at worship that organization is required. Indeed, somewhat hesitatingly Linton suggests that the monarchical episcopacy may have arisen from the organization of worship, in which the bishop had the role of leadership.

Thus, Church and organization, mission and organization are complimentary, says Linton.[50] The Church has not been formed from the congregations, but the congregations have resulted from the Mission. The totality of the Church is of first importance, so that in the ancient Church there were no autonomous, corporate congregations. But the total Church is truly organized. In early Christianity there was not merely

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[49] Ibid., p. 199.

[50] Ibid., p. 204.

the idea of equal brothers but also the ideal of the graded Church, or, as Linton calls it, a horizontal and a vertical solidarity.

The final fundamental question of early Church organization concerns the relationship between Spirit and office. Linton begins by attempting an explanation of the psychological experience of the "ecstatic," who claims to function in the power of the Spirit. Recognizing this as a legitimate spiritual experience, and believing that Spirit and tradition are not irreconcilable contrasts, he says that the "pneumatic" can well be the holder of an office, even the creator of an office, and the appointer of an official. Citing the case of Paul, he points out that Paul certainly was, on the one hand, a "pneumatic," and that on the other hand, he also had a positive stance toward both office and tradition. For Paul, order is "a noble blessing." In Paul the objective and the subjective meet, and for this reason Spirit and office can work together.

CHAPTER III

INTERPRETATIONS OF DEVELOPING STRUCTURES OF THE MINISTRY SINCE 1933

Since the appearance of Linton's exhaustive study of the problem of the early Church and of ministerial orders, the debate on the ministry has continued on an even wider scale and more intensely. New impetus for the debate has been provided by the ecumenical movement as well as by new methods in the study of biblical theology. It is our purpose in this chapter to review and evaluate what some representative scholars of various church polities have said since 1933 about the structure of the ministry.

Development according to Hans von Campenhausen

One of the most illuminating and thorough studies of developing structures of the ministry in recent years is Hans von Campenhausen's Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power.[1] As a basis for what we shall say later, a brief sketch of Campenhausen's position on the development of church organization in the first three centuries of the New Testament era will be helpful.

The Christian Church originated from the historical message of the Resurrection, from which it derived its particular place and task in the history of salvation. In this primitive community there is freedom but not equality of function. Says von Campenhausen,

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[1]Hans von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, translated by J. A. Baker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

> At no time is there a lack of outstanding personalities with their own particular vocation and authority; and these distinctions are not the product of the merely fortuitous diversity of individual natures and their endowments, nor do they arise "organically" out of the practical requirements of community life--though it is true that the latter call for attention at an early stage, and do lead to particular forms of organization. Instead they make their appearance simultaneously with the Church itself, and are an integral part of the story of its origin.[2]

As far as the significance of the twelve disciples is concerned, however, the widely held conception that they were the leaders and governors of the primitive community is, according to von Campenhausen, untenable. They were rather representatives of the new, Christian Israel, even as the twelve tribes comprised the people of God in the Old Testament. Stated differently, the real significance of the calling of the Twelve was not connected with the contemporary life of the community at all, but was in anticipation of that Last Day, when they are to "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[3] In the case of Peter specifically, while the whole New Testament presents Peter as an outstanding figure in primitve Christianity, there is no warrant to suggest that Peter was a spiritual monarch, or first pope.[4]

The question regarding the distinctive character of an apostle is a basic one among scholars of the primitive New Testament Church. The decisive factor, von Campenhausen says, is "the encounter with the Risen Lord, which was frequently experienced and understood as a special

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[2] Ibid., p. 13.

[3] Matt. 19:28.

[4] von Campenhausen, p. 19.

call or commission."[5] As a result of the testimony of these eye-witnesses, he continues,

> they are in truth earlier than the Church, which is based on that testimony, and must continually renew its relationship with it. They are, indeed, the inaugurators and foundationstones of the Church, despite the fact that their importance, their position, and their personal quality vary considerably in other respects, and that not even their number can be established with certainty.[6]

Moreover, since the Resurrection is a unique event in time, never to be repeated, and since the function of the original apostles as eye-witnesses is also of a once-for-all character, the authority of the apostolate is restricted to the first "apostolic" generation. Only the historical word and witness of the original apostles continue with apostolic authority.[7] It is clear from the New Testament that the explicit concept of an "apostolic office" is absent, and that Paul speaks of his calling as a divine ordinance, a ministry, and a grace given to him by an exclusive choice of God Himself. The crucial point as far as the apostles' position is concerned is that their calling is dependent upon the person of the Lord and not on any kind of system or organization. Accordingly, von Campenhausen continues,

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[5]Ibid., p. 23. This, of course applies not only to the Twelve, but also to James and "all the apostles," right through to Paul, the last apostle. Cf. Rom. 16:7; I Cor. 15:7.

[6]Ibid., p. 23.

[7]In the case of the original apostles one must also take into consideration the fact that deeds reinforced their proclamation of the word, e.g., exorcism, healing, raising the dead, etc. These miracles were "the signs of a true apostle." Cf. II Cor. 12:12; Rom. 15:19. However, the apostles' authority in this respect must be clearly distinguished from the unique authority of Jesus. Only Jesus had ultimate authority and power in Himself, whereas the apostles receive it in His name. Cf. von Campenhausen, p. 25.

> We must not in this context draw anachronistic modern distinctions between "purely spiritual" functions and those of ecclesiastical administration. Undoubtedly the first apostolic men of the primitive community also governed that community, possessed special honor within it, and took decisions concerning it. The vital meaning of Christian witness, embracing as it does the whole of Christian life, would certainly lead us to assume this, and Paul and Luke confirm it. It is for this very reason that the apostles have to be warned against self-aggrandisement and desire for power: "Whoever would be first among you must be slave to all." "You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. . . . Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ."[8]

Thus von Campenhausen cautions against the attempts made by Roman Catholics, on the one hand, to attribute to Peter a special primacy over the Twelve and the other apostles as members of a hierarchy, and that made by Protestants, on the other hand, to work out the apparent contradictions of early Church order into an embryonic constitution.

> The whole way of thinking in terms of ecclesiastical law and ecclesiastical politics implied in such a picture is completely foreign to primitive Christianity. . . . That which in spite of everything held the primitive Church and its "apostles" together was not unity of an organized Church but the unity of their witness to Christ and of their vocation. . . . For the earliest period we can discern no more than the rough outlines of the concept of an apostle. In particular we do not know how a Peter or a James or any one of the Twelve saw and understood his specific authority, so to speak, from the inside.[9]

The only apostle whose thoughts we know concerning apostolic authority is the apostle Paul.[10] As far as his own person is concerned, Paul knows himself called to be an apostle of Christ, he enjoys an equality of status with the other apostles, and the only virtue that

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[8] Ibid., p. 27. Cf. Mark 10:44; Matt. 23:8-10.

[9] Ibid., p. 29

[10] In describing Paul's thoughts von Campenhausen omits references from Ephesians and the Pastoral Letters, regarding them as non-Pauline.

is open to him to practice is that of faithfulness in his calling. "In his own person a cipher, but endued with the supreme authority, that of God Himself--that is how Paul presents himself to his congregations."[11] As far as the meaning of his "authority" to his congregations is concerned, it is apparent that Paul has a "paternal" relationship with them. The young Christians are his "children," and he is their spiritual father.[12] Yet he never attempts to develop this authority into a sacral relationship of spiritual control and subordination; he rather "rejects in set terms either his right or his desire to construct such an authority.[13] Von Campenhausen expresses it this way:

> However imperiously Paul the apostle may demand a hearing for Christ, however ingeniously he may put himself forward as a pattern for imitation, yet he cannot simply give orders. He does not himself create the norm, which is then to be obeyed without further ado, but instead the congregation of those who possess the Spirit must follow him in freedom; and it is this freedom which he has in mind when he addresses them.[14]

Even in matters that are related to the truths of the Christian faith Paul does not put himself in a position of unqualified supremacy over his congregations, but he appeals instead to their sense of responsibility and thus encourages them.[15] Clearly, Paul's conception of the apostolate is entirely "a matter of proclamation, not of organization."

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[11] Ibid., p. 44. Cf. Gal. 6:3; II Cor. 12:11; Gal. 1:1; I Cor. 15:15.

[12] Cf. I Cor. 4:14-15; II Cor. 12:14; Gal. 4:19; Phil. 2:22; I Thess. 2:7-11.

[13] Cf. I Cor. 7:23; II Cor. 1:24; Gal. 5:13.

[14] von Campenhausen, p. 47.

[15] Cf. II Cor. 3:12; 4;5; 5:14; Rom. 15:14; I Cor. 3:16; 5:6; 6:9; 9:13-24; Paul, of course, can also pronounce anathema and condemnation when the abandonment of the Gospel is at stake, as in I Cor. 5:5, but the purpose is to restore the apostolate to its rightful place of Christian fellowship.

However, not all congregations of the early Church were founded by apostles, and in the generation following Paul questions of authority and government in the community arose in new form. Specifically, the question of the relationship between Spirit and authority in the congregation became a very pointed one. According to von Campenhausen, while it is true that the Christian community is not a mere sociological entity by virtue of the fact that it has the Holy Spirit as its organizing principle, nonetheless there is need in the congregation for spiritual authority, for continual admonition, encouragement and reminder. It is for this purpose that the Spirit bestows upon the Church His many and various gifts and graces.[16] But the recipients and bearers of these gifts do not form a ruling class in the congregation, nor even a "pneumatic aristocracy," and the power or "authority" which they exercise is no "absolute" authority. Every genuine gift is an operation of the Spirit. In Paul's thought, therefore,

> The congregation is not just another constitutional organization with grades and classes, but a unitary, living cosmos of free, spiritual gifts, which serve and complement one another. Those who mediate these gifts never lord it over one another.[17]

While the members of the Christian community should acknowledge and support the work of their helpers and administrators as the activity of the Spirit, nevertheless "the most striking feature of Paul's view of the Christian community is the complete lack of any legal system and the exclusion on principle of all formal authority within

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[16]I Cor. 12.

[17]von Campenhausen, p. 63.

the individual congregation.[18] Thus, the only authority that Paul knows is the authority of the apostle, correctly understood; all other "authorities" are "gifts," functions of the life of the Spirit that lives in the congregation.

In the First Letter of Peter, however, we encounter a system of "elders" with an appearance of authority, either of an official or of a more patriarchal nature. These "honored" men are not identical with the elders of the Jewish congregations, yet the idea of organizing in a similar way to preserve the "tradition" of Jesus, as well as congregational order, may have suggested itself to the Jewish Christian congregations. While Paul's emphasis is on the Spirit, nevertheless, says von Campenhausen,

> The increasing remoteness of the Church's beginnings, the emergence of heretical deviations, the growth in numbers and to some extent also the flagging zeal in the congregations made it essential in time to develop everywhere a responsible cadre of leaders, and ultimately to arrange for the formal appointment of authorized officials.[19]

Citing the New Testament books of Acts, I Peter, James and Revelation, which mention elders but not bishops or deacons, von Campenhausen suggests that "a new 'patriarchal' overall vision of the Church" is now emerging as a result of the rise of false teaching, notably

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[18] Ibid., p. 70. Cf. also John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 1.

[19] von Campenhausen, p. 79. This does not necessarily imply the broad distinction that has been made in which "office," acquired by human appointment, is diametrically opposed to Spirit. It can become "unspiritual" when the authority of an office holder is made absolute.

gnosticism.[20] The image of the "shepherd" now makes its appearance and "serves to describe the work and status of the elders in a suitably emphatic manner."[21]

When we come to the later Roman sources (namely, I Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, Ignatius and Polycarp), we arrive at a new stage of organizational development. The leading men in the congregation are called both bishops and presbyters. In the words of von Campenhausen,

> The fusion of the two titles, of which we have so far seen strong hints, is in Rome therefore an accomplished fact; and the presbyteral constitution has completely intermingled with the elements of an episcopal system, which in Rome probably preceded it. Nevertheless, the terms "presbyter" and "bishop," "elder" and "overseer" are not equivalent in meaning. In these documents as in all other instances "bishop" is an official designation. It refers to a particular position and function, in fact that "episcopal office" which is permanently undertaken by specific members of the congregation. On the other hand, the borderline between the official and the patriarchal authority of the "elders" is fluid. The same term may indicate that they are regarded either as "presbyters" or simply as reverend "old men," and one merges into the other.[22]

Evidently the patriarchal element is now as prominent as the pneumatic.

Clement is writing to the Corinthian congregation in a situation of conflict and, according to von Campenhausen, is championing a theory of the apostolic origin of the presbyteral system which implies and includes a lifelong tenure of the office. It is actually a system of elders that was created simply for the sake of order but which now comes under the protection of "an express apostolic injunction." As a result

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[20] Ibid., p. 78.

[21] Ibid., p. 81.

[22] Ibid., p. 84.

it acquires a weight and a significance which it had not previously possessed. While it is in itself a purely formal, institutional thing, it now assumes the nature of an essential and binding part of the apostolic tradition. In this respect it may be said that "here for the first time the structures of canon law are included in the category of doctrines and dogma, and given the same sacral and immutable character."[23] Von Campenhausen adds,

> It is no longer a question of individuals, chosen on a particular occasion, and entrusted by the apostles with a function or task within the Church, but of an institution, which has to be preserved as such, and which must be respected in the persons of its representatives. The point at issue is that of "order" within the congregation. One result is to increase the formalization of the idea of "office," so that the responsibilities of the elders as "shepherds" and leaders of their community are no longer left completely open, but that their position now corresponds to a quite definite ministry, which they and they alone have to fulfill in accordance with fixed rules. They are the Christian cultic officials, and the cult now requires that a clear distinction be drawn between "priests" and "laymen."[24]

In contrast to Clement's emphasis on order and office in the Church, the Shepherd of Hermas views the leaders of the Church once more as "shepherds." Thus we hear of "the inner contradiction between the worth of the official and the spirit and authority of his office," a problem which in the history of the concept of office recurs again and again and has found no satisfactory solution.

When we come to the letters of Ignatius, we find a fairly advanced stage of hierarchical order with the appearance of the monarchical episcopacy. Important functions are in the hands of one bishop, and the

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[23] Ibid., p. 91.

[24] Ibid., p. 92.

clergy is divided into grades--the bishops, the presbyters as the bishop's council, and the deacons. This picture of a three-level clergy is the main line of ecclesiastical development in the later Church.[25] For Ignatius, the idea of the unity of the Church is basic, and this endows the person of the bishop with supreme significance. The bishop is the one around whom the unification of the Church--the universal Church as well as the individual congregation--is accomplished. All functions are vested in the bishop but may be delegated by him to others. Ignatius is not concerned with legal axioms but only with the essence of Christian fellowship, which is embodied in the bishop. "In his view of official position Ignatius is peculiarly 'ecclesiastical,' but he is never 'clerical,'"[26] and thus it is not easy to understand the authority of the bishop in Ignatius. He appears to combine the pneumatic and the official or ecclesiastical into the office of bishop.[27]

Von Campenhausen cites the Pastoral Epistles as having an important bearing on the concept of office and official authority, and he suggests that, since the "bishop" is always spoken of in the singular in these Epistles, "monarchical episcopacy is by now the prevailing system, and

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[25]Von Campenhausen insists, however, that the dogma of the apostolic office of the bishops, and their apostolic succession, is far from Ignatius' mind. As a dogma, it was a later development and does not occur at all in Ignatius. See von Campenhausen, p. 93, n. 142.

[26]Ibid., p. 103.

[27]The relationship between the charismatic ministry, emphasized in the Pauline corpus (with the exception of the Pastorals), and an official ministry is still a crucial point in any study of the developing ministry. An accompanying and consequent problem in this relationship is the whole question of ordination. In this connection see Dale Moody, "Charismatic and Official Ministries," Interpretation, XIX (April 1965), 168.

that the one bishop has already become the head of the presbyterate."[28] T. W. Manson, however, points out that it is going beyond the evidence to conclude from "these pieces of occasional Christian help" that there was a regional apostolate that would serve as a bridge between the original Apostolate and the monarchical diocesan episcopate,[29] and von Campenhausen is also ready to acknowledge that "too little is known about the precise situation at this time to allow for any conclusion on this point."[30] Nevertheless, there are some distinctive features of the office of bishop that are stressed in the Pastorals. "For the first time the office is treated as essentially and comprehensively a teaching office."[31] Another new feature is the personal question of the spiritual relationship between the office-holder and the office, with natural abilities and qualifications now listed among the conditions for elevation to the spiritual office.[32] In summary, von Campenhausen's fundamental point with regard to the Pastoral Epistles is that

> in its essential nature office in the Pastorals is not a product of Pauline tradition. It springs up in the soil of the system of

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[28]Von Campenhausen, p. 107. This conclusion, no doubt, is partially the result of his view that the Pastoral Epistles were written in the first half of the second century, and that the author was not Paul but in all probability a presbyter or bishop.

[29]T. W. Manson, The Church's Ministry (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1948), p. 61. See also Dom Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church," The Apostolic Ministry, edited by Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1957), p. 263.

[30]Von Campenhausen, p. 108.

[31]Ibid., p. 109. Cf. I Tim. 1:10-11; Titus 1:3, 9, 13; 2:1; II Tim. 1:13; 4:3.

[32]Cf. I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6.

> elders, an originally Jewish institution which was taken over at first in a "atriarchal" form. Renewed emphasis on the idea of tradition now intensifies its authoritarian quality, and at the same time gives it more markedly the character of an office. It hereby becomes even further removed from the men of the Spirit within the Pauline congregation.[33]

As far as these documents of the sub-aposotolic age are concerned, and with reference to their expressions about the system of elders and the development of official authority in the Church, von Campenhausen observes that the documents fall naturally into three definite groups, from three different provinces of the Roman Empire, and that each of the three groups portrays a different concept of ecclesiastical office and of the powers that pertain to it. Thus, in Rome the bishop is primarily the supreme cultic official of his congregation, in Syria he is its spiritual example and sacral focus, and in Asia Minor he is above all the ordained preacher of the apostolic teaching. These three main concepts of church office, which von Campenhausen calls "embryonic forms" of the Roman Catholic, the Greek Orthodox and the Lutheran thinking on this subject, are hardly ever again found in such pure form as we find them in Clement, in Ignatius, and in the Pastoral Epistles. He says further,

> In all three areas this [development of office] began from the patriarchal system of elders, which formed the load-bearing framework of the "catholic" church organization. . . . The replacement of the original patriarchal concept by one based on the idea of "office" in the strict sense was also a process which began everywhere at an early stage; and with it went the division of the single office into different grades, each with a clear technical definition. In I Clement this process is still only beginning, and in Ignatius of Antioch it is manifestly already complete, while in this respect the Pastorals fall somewhere between the two.[34]

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[33]Von Campenhausen, p. 116.

[34]Ibid., pp. 120-121.

Thus, when dealing with the beginning of the second century, caution must be observed against assuming that the system of elders was everywhere an accepted feature of Church life. Later polemical writers, "in their confused accounts of gnostic doctrines," have given us very little information about the organization of Church life, with the result that it is possible "that the orthodox, even while engaged in a struggle against certain gnostic teachings, still retained their free and flexible forms of association."

With the triumph of the presbyteral system and the accompanying beginnings of officialdom in the Church, there now arose in the second century the question of the "apostolic succession" of the bishops. With the passing of the Apostles the Church became aware of the need to safeguard the fundamental apostolic witness, to preserve the traditional apostolic teachings from dissipation and error, as exemplified particularly by the Gnostics. According to von Campenhausen, it was Hegesippus who took up the idea of the succession of traditional teaching from ancient philosophic education and adapted it to the ecclesiastical sphere.[35] Not only did he assert that there is a genuine continuity of teaching behind the bishops who hold office in his time, but he also compiled lists of the actual series of "transmitting" and "receiving" bishops in Corinth and Rome. His primary purpose was not to provide a list of the heads of the Church hierarchy, but simply to emphasize the unbroken link, the bridge that connects the apostles as the sole legitimate founders of Church doctrine. "The list proves, to use Irenaeus'

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[35]Ibid., p. 163.

words, that 'the tradition of the apostles in the church, and the proclamation of the truth, has come down to us in one and the same order and succession.'"[36] Thus the technique of authenticating one's doctrines by the gnostic method of naming series of successive teachers became a "popular feature of ecclesiastical polemic," especially in controversy with false teachers. This method is continued by Irenaeus of Lyon and by Tertullian in Africa. In the case of Irenaeus, he is concerned only with the defense of the Church's teachings against heretical doctrines and not with any special sacramental "character" of the episcopate (which is a later development), nor with the authority of the bishops as opposed to that of the laity or to that of the other non-episcopal clergy.[37]

A new thought is introduced by Hippolytus who, in addition to his concern for the succession of the original apostolic teaching, is already thinking of "the special sanctifying power present in episcopal consecration."[38] The consecration or ordination of bishops by other bishops is supposed to convey to the consecrated person a special gift of the Holy Spirit. These are but the beginnings of later consecration rites which play such a controversial role in the Church of succeeding centuries down to the present time.

We must refer briefly to Cyprian, with whom the development of the authority of the episcopacy takes large strides. Indeed, as von Campenhausen says, "The image of Cyprian, the holy bishop and martyr, controls--

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[36] Ibid., p. 168.

[37] Ibid., p. 172.

[38] Ibid., p. 176.

despite some lapses in dogmatic taste—the ecclesiological thinking of Roman Catholicism to this day."[39] In Cyprian's view the Church is not simply the sum total of all Christians everywhere but a visible human community with a definite structure and constitution and with an organized hierarchy of classes that are at once spiritual and social.[40] As von Campenhausen explains Cyprian's view,

> At all times a sharp distinction is drawn between clergy and laity; the clergy are the picked officials of the Church, and the bishop is the leader and head who sets their standards. They hold this position in accordance with the will of God and on the basis of and within a definite system, established by Christ, which already obtained in the time of the apostles. This system is not only in practice but also in principle a necessity, of fundamental importance for the very existence of the Church. Every Christian must be clear on this point, namely that not only is the bishop in the Church, but the Church is in the bishop. That is to say: without the office of bishop there is no Church.[41]

The appointment of a bishop is therefore a most significant act, and while the congregation participates in principle in the election of a bishop, it is the local presbyters and the neighboring bishops who carry out the consecration. In the case of an unfaithful bishop "the congregation is brought into the matter, and the part it plays is not

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[39] Ibid., p. 266.

[40] Ibid., p. 269. R. F. Weidner, The Doctrine of the Ministry (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1907), p. 70, makes the following relevant observation: "It must not be forgotten that the great men who built up the Western Church were almost all trained lawyers. Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine, to say nothing of many of the most distinguished Roman bishops, were all men whose early training had been that of Roman lawyers, a training which moulded and shaped all their thinking whether theological or ecclesiastical. They had the lawyer's idea that the primary duty laid upon them was to enforce obedience to authority and especially to that authority which expressed itself in external institutions."

[41] Ibid., p. 269.

completely passive; but equally it is not legally competent to act directly and independently."[42] Thus the "political self-awareness of the clergy" becomes fundamental and definitive for the Church. The bishop is the ultimate authority in the Church; through him all ecclesiastical measures are carried out. But while each bishop exercises the full episcopate, he possesses it only in solidarity with all other bishops, and von Campenhausen points out that Cyprian, indeed, believes so strongly in the episcopate that he [Cyprian] never for a moment imagines a situation in which the bishops throughout the world will not be unanimous in their opinions. "It can and it will never happen that the bishops acting as a whole should fall into error."[43] Included in the spiritual authority of each bishop is the authority to baptize, to ordain, to celebrate the Eucharist. He alone had the power of the keys, and he alone renders decisions regarding penance. This is the situation at the end of the third century.

It is becoming clear that the problem that one faces in a study of developing structures of the ministry is that of discovering the right relationship between organized legal office and a free spiritual authority. Only in the ministry of Jesus Christ did a perfect combination of official and charismatic authority exist. After Paul and the apostles the trend was toward the ascendancy of official office, undoubtedly because of the need for leaders in the Church to safeguard the Church's doctrine and tradition. By the third century the authority of office attains its full stature, and spiritual life and its

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[42] Ibid., p. 273.

[43] Ibid., p. 278.

gifts become more and more an individual and private affair. The difficulty, to the present day, lies in the fact that there is no developed doctrine of the ministry to be found in the New Testament, for the doctrine of office was not a fundamental concern of the early Christians.

Other Modern Interpretations of the Ministry

J. Robert Nelson has observed that also today the ministry remains a mystery in terms of an attempt to describe its authoritative and organizational character completely and adequately. He writes:

> The fact that it has persisted through nineteen centuries of the history of the church, despite all kinds of distortion, corruption, misappropriation, attack, defection and infidelity, is a token of its strangely insuppressible and indefinable character. It has survived the first century of formlessness and the second century of evident but inexplicable formation. It has survived the fourth century threat of the Donatists to make its efficacy depend upon the moral character of the person, as well as the prelatical corruptions of the thirteenth century and later. The Protestant insistence in the sixteenth century that the validity of word and sacraments was independent of a priestly ordination did not terminate the ministry. Nor has the recovery of the full and primal meaning of the laity, with even the current threat of "creeping laocracy," and the clamor of some Christians to abolish the set-apart, ordained ministry, served to blot out the mystery of the ministry.[44]

It is apparent that attempts made during the last half-century, particularly those related to the ecumenical movement, to resolve the differences regarding the meaning of ministry have not been wholly successful. Despite the fact that few would disagree that the New Testament must be the starting point for any study of the description and authentication of the ministry, the churches of Christendom have

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[44]J. Robert Nelson, "Styles of Service in the New Testament and Now," Theology Today, XXII (April 1965), 84-85.

not arrived at agreement. One of the reasons for this continuing disagreement is the problem of pre-conceived notions in approaching the New Testament. Influenced by their own ecclesiastical background and experience, too many have overlooked the actual New Testament evidences and have come to prior conclusions as to what the ministry of the New Testament must have been. In this connection we refer again to Olof Linton, who, in reviewing such preconceptions, distinguishes four possible current views of the New Testament teaching on the general ministry of the Church's membership and the special ministry of the appointed few. These are:

1. There is a special ministry but not a general ministry--the strictly sacerdotal view, which seems to be held implicitly by some.

2. There is a special ministry but also a general ministry--probably the most widely held view.

3. There is no special ministry but a ministry common to all--which may be called the strict "laicism."

4. There is no special ministry and no general ministry--literal "anarchy" in the sense of a pure and egalitarian fellowship.[45]

Evidently the mystery of the ministry is not solved either simply by citing specific New Testament references to the ministry. Rather, one's conception of the ministry is determined to a great extent by one's views on the nature of the Church and by his understanding of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Chances are that an individual's view has been influenced largely also by his knowledge of tradition, historical development and the contemporary scene.

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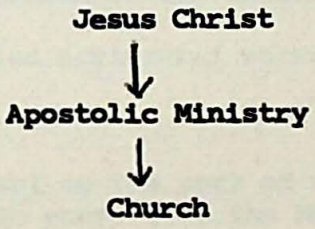
[45]World Council of Churches, Department on the Laity, Documents, VII (October 1958), 26.

Would it not, however, be much more simple--and admirably biblical--to discover a valid pattern of ministry and church order by modeling the ministry according to the earthly life of Christ with His dedication to service, suffering and witness? Even here New Testament scholarship has not reached a consensus, for not all are agreed on the nature of the relationship between Christ and the ministry and the Church, except to the extent of acknowledging that Christ is Lord of both Church and ministry.

There are essentially three views of the ministry that are being defended today, all of them having more or less biblical support. Each may be illustrated by a diagram.[46]

Jesus Christ--Apostolic Ministry--Church

According to the first view, Jesus Christ in both His earthly ministry and as Risen Lord first instituted the special ministry of the apostles, and then the Church derived from them. Thus,



This pattern presents the well-known image of the hierarchical church, based upon the assumption that Jesus gave a direct commission to the apostles, that this commission was then transferred to other apostolic

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[46]I am indebted to Nelson, XXII, 90, for these illustrations.

men, and that through the centuries the true episcopal ministry was maintained by consecration and "tactual succession."

Anglican and Anglo-Catholic Views

We consider first a number of representative views of the Anglican and Anglo-Catholic communions, partly because in no other communions has a discussion on the ministry received keener attention. The unusual amount of discussion and debate about the doctrine of the ministry that has been going on in England already since the turn of this century culminated in the publication in 1946 of a collection of essays with the title The Apostolic Ministry.[47] Edited by Dr. Kenneth Kirk, then Bishop of Oxford, it represented the best in Anglo-Catholic thinking on the subject of "apostolic succession" and was expected by many to "end all books on the subject." Recognizing that the traditional basis for the Anglican position on apostolic succession had been in the appeal to history, the authors saw that it was historically difficult to maintain an actual transmission of the episcopate. Accordingly they now made the attempt to find scriptural warrant for their views. Thus the book represents

> a comprehensive attempt on the part of the leading Anglo-Catholic scholars of the day to prove from the New Teatament and the early fathers the necessity of the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession as they conceived it.[48]

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[47] Supra, p. 58, footnote 29.

[48] Anthony T. Hanson, The Pioneer Ministry (London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 9.

In the very first essay of this book, which bears the same title as the book itself, Kirk maintains that there is one divinely ordained form of the Church, a form depending on what is called "the essential ministry," the Apostolic ministry, which was transmitted to the apostles. Expressing the view of his colleagues, he writes,

> The episcopate is the divinely ordained ministerial instrument for securing to the Church of God its continuous and organic unity, not as a club of like-minded worshippers or aspirants to holiness, but as a God-givenccity of salvation. It is our conviction that Scripture and sound theology alike point to this as the ratio essendi of the bishop . . .[49]

For the purpose of understanding episcopacy, he continues, we must think of the ministry as twofold. There is an Essential Ministry and a Dependent Ministry. Thus,

> the primary everyday duty of the ministry was the due administration of the word and sacraments; and (after allowing for occasional local variations in the immediate subapostolic period) it is clear that, in so far as the Dependent Ministry had a share in these functions, it did so by devolution, or on commission, from the Essential Ministry alone.[50]

Contending that the earliest Christians thought of the Essential Ministry as "apostolic," he concludes that "the retention of an apostolic ministry must be regarded as of the essence of early Christianity" and that "everything else is of the nature of accident."

The cornerstone of Kirk's argument is the hypothesis regarding the function of the shaliach in Hebrew society and law. Following Rengstorf,[51] Kirk and his collaborators, especially Dom Gregory

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[49]The Apostolic Ministry, p. 8.

[50]Ibid., p.8.

[51]Already in 1934, in the first edition of his Apostolat und Predigtamt, later translated by Paul D. Pahl under the title Apostolate

Dix,[52] laid great weight on the Hebrew term shaliach as equivalent to ἀπόστολος, and they based on this alleged equivalency the argument that our Lord intended to constitute the Apostles as His plenipotentiaries through whom He Himself was pledged to act, and it was this commission which they passed on to others.[53] Thus Kirk affirms that

> the apostle, as later chapters will show, is the plenipotentiary (the shaliach) of his Master—the accredited representative of the ascended Lord. He is therefore the guardian of the faith, the source of teaching, the minister of the sacraments. . . .
> . . . . . .
> The identity of function enjoyed by the second-century bishop and the first-century apostle is too close to be regarded as a purely fortuitous coincidence. The shaliach duties of the apostles must have been handed on, deliberately and with the full consent of the Church, to the resident bishops throughout the area where the Gospel had been preached. . . . It might have happened otherwise. But the continuance of the Essential Ministry was fundamental.[54]

Despite Kirk's confident assertion that thus "we are left no doubt with many gaps in our knowledge, but with few puzzles to be explained," the question persists as to whether the argument from the idea of the shaliach has proved the case for apostolic succession. In his essay "Apostolic Succession," Bishop Noel Hall says that "it cannot be said that this contribution [of Kirk and his associates] to the discussion remains more than a brilliant piece of speculation, too tenuous to

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and Ministry (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1969), Karl Rengstorf had sought to establish a connection between the Christian apostolate and the Old Testament shaliach (שליח). He sums up the basis of the institution of the shaliach in the oft-quoted words of the Talmud: "the ambassador of the man is like the man himself." See pp. 21–42.

[52]The Apostolic Ministry, p. 228.

[53]Cf. Matt. 10:2, 5, 19–20, 40; Luke 10:16; John 5:30; 14:10; 15:15; 17:23; 20:21.

[54]The Apostolic Ministry, pp. 9–10.

bear the burden that is placed upon it."[55] In a similar vein the Presbyterian scholar, Dr. T. W. Manson, remarked:

> There is a certain tendency to think that the last word has now been spoken; and that all that remains to do is to sit back and wait for the logical sequel in a reunited Church, a Church united on the only possible basis--the Apostolic Ministry as here set forth.[56]

Ironically, it was an Anglican, Dr. Arnold Ehrhardt, who, while maintaining that "the hierarchy of the Church is founded upon sound tradition in accordance with the Word of God,"[57] nevertheless applied the coup de grace to the arguments emphasized in The Apostolic Ministry. He pointed out that so far from the word apostolos being derived from shaliach, "our evidence suggests that the term apostolos was earlier than the term shaliach."[58] After indicating further that the shaliach, whatever he was or was able to do, could not commission a successor, he says,

> We are therefore forced to conclude that unless Dr. Kirk abandons Rengstorf's theory that the apostle was the shaliach of Christ he cannot very well maintain the doctrine of the Apostolic succession.[59]

At this point we will examine the views of another representative of the Anglican communion, A. G. Hebert, who published his book Apostle

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[55]Noel Hall, "Apostolic Succession," Scottish Journal of Theology, XI (1958), 117.

[56]Manson, p. 9. See also p. 35.

[57]Arnold Ehrhart, The Apostolic Ministry, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Paper No. 7 (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), p. 48. This is not to be confused with the larger work of the same title edited by Kenneth Kirk.

[58]Arnold Ehrhart, The Apostolic Succession (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p. 18.

[59]Ibid., p. 20.

and Bishop in 1963.[60] His point of departure is Kirk's The Apostolic Ministry, of which he had been the author of Chapter IX. Hebert reaffirms the position of The Apostolic Ministry and upholds the Catholic view of valid orders, but rejects "the negative inference that all non-episcopal sacraments and ministries are simply invalid."[61] In a historical section, Chapters II to IV, he attempts to show the relation of Apostolate and Episcopate to our Lord's Gospel message. He maintains that the term "all the apostles" in I Corinthians 15:7 signifies a closed list of Apostles, "even though we do not know for certain who were included in it," and, while he rejects the view that the Apostles were "the Church-in-embryo," or that they constituted the "Remnant,"[62] he believes that "the Apostles had a definite place of their own within the Church from the beginning."[63] When the apostles were left to carry on Christ's mission, "the Proclaimer now became the Proclaimed One," (a phrase which Hebert acknowledges to have borrowed from Bultmann), and thus there is "a true and essential continuity between the Gospel announced by the Proclaimer and that of the apostles who proclaimed Him as the Messiah and the Son of God."[64] Moreover, this Apostolic Commission "includes not only the proclamation of their

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[60]A. G. Hebert, Apostle and Bishop (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963).

[61]Ibid., p. 9.

[62]This view is defended by A. T. Hanson in The Pioneer Ministry and will be discussed later.

[63]Hebert, pp. 42-43.

[64]Ibid., p. 45. Cf. John 20:21-23; 21:15-17; Matt. 28:16-20; 10:7-8, 17-20; 16:17-19; 18:15-18.

message, but also the ministry of the sacraments and the pastoral and disciplinary care of their converts."[65] Noting that the New Testament "speaks regularly of 'functions' rather than 'offices,'" and then referring to the Preface of the English Ordinal which claims the New Testament establishment of a three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, Hebert states significantly,

> in the New Testament episkopos, as we have seen, nowhere denotes an Order of the Ministry, the word "priest" is nowhere the title of a Christian Minister, and the Deacons of that day were not full-fledged presbyters. On the face of it, scholarship does not support this famous sentence from the Preface to the Ordinal.[66]

The decisive question, however, at this point is whether or not there is real continuity of the episcopal ministry of the Church with the apostolic commission. In other words, was the "authority," which the apostles received from Christ, passed on in some real measure to the episcopate? Or did the monarchical bishop originate by becoming the chairman or president of each local presbyterate? These are, it must be remembered, second-century developments; they form the so-called "tunnel-period," a term applied by scholars to describe that period between the time of the apostles and the later, more organized Church, for which there is very little evidence with regard to established church organization, and particularly with regard to any proof that

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[65]Hebert, p. 48.

[66]Ibid., p. 52. The opposite view, according to which he defends the threefold ministry mentioned in the English Ordinal, is taken by Charles Guilbert, "These Orders of Ministers," Anglical Theological Review, XL (January 1958), 1-13. The article summarizes the various stages of the development of ministerial orders down to the fourth century.

the episcopal line was actually perpetuated by unbroken transmission from the Apostles.

As far as the supporting evidence for the origin of the Episcopacy from the apostolic commission is concerned, Hebert acknowledges that he is on uncertain ground, for "it is not likely," he says,

> that we who live under Episcopacy will be able to demonstrate the truth of our view of the second-century developments, to the satisfaction of those who do not know Episcopacy from within.

He continues:

> Yet . . . it is right for us to use our experiences of life in the Church today to help us in interpreting the evidence of the Church's life in the past.[67]

On this uncertain ground Hebert makes a threefold appeal to the canonical Scriptures, the Apostolic Creed, and the apostolic ministry.[68] He recognizes the fact that the New Testament canon did not reach its final form until the fourth century, nor the Apostles' Creed until the sixth century, and he assumes that an established "episcopate" "existed everywhere in the Church well before the end of the second century,"

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[67]Hebert, p. 53. See also pp. 31-32. Hebert comments further with regard to this view in a footnote on page 54, in which he cites Benedict C. R. Green, "The Apostolic Succession and the Anglican Appeal to History," Church Quarterly Review (London: S.P.C.K.) (July-September 1962), 295: "If a man, on the authority of that body in which he has found the Una Sancta, has accepted a doctrine, institution or practice as belonging to its essence, a challenge to the latter on critico-historical grounds can be sufficiently met by a demonstration that its originality in some sense is not impossible. If he has never accepted it, there will be nothing to determine in its favour, and nothing short of conclusive historical demonstration, of a kind rarely provided in these questions, will serve to convince him. An historical defense of what one has is very different from a historical argument for what one has not."

[68]Hebert, p. 54.

with an authority that was "quite undefined," but in the nature of the case "real." All these eventual developments of Canon and Creed and Episcopate, he says,

> look back to the Apostles and their testimony as setting the norm and standard for the Church's faith and life. The New Testament was the expression of the Apostolic Testimony . . . The Creed was basically the original apostolic preaching. And the Episcopate, especially that of the great churches founded by apostles, witnessed to the authentic tradition of the Christian faith which was preserved there. The great importance of this threefold appeal to the apostles was that the Church was in the midst of its life-and-death struggle with the Gnosticism which sought to interpret the faith in terms of the Greek conception of salvation by right knowledge, and which denied the redemption of the body. . . . this conflict with Gnosticism can have been the thing which made it necessary that each local church should have its bishop.
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> Hence the Apostolic Succession in the second century means in the first place the succession of the bishops in their sees, like the succession of the Roman Popes or of the Archbishops of Canterbury, of which Archbishop Ramsey is the hundredth occupant. . . . The other meaning of Apostolic Succession, through the laying on of hands, received for the time being little emphasis, though, as we shall see, Hippolytus' rite for the consecration of a bishop implies that there had been a continuous succession-by-ordination.[70]

Yet it would seem rather important to point out, as Bishop Hall has done, that the second-century doctrine of apostolic succession, which was later employed in varying degrees by Hippolytus, Hegesippus, Irenaeus and St. Augustine, "is sufficiently equivocal to demand a not inconsiderable degree of ingenuity if it is to be harmonized with the later conceptions."[71] In the light of the Gnostic heresy, this doctrine appears to be concerned in large measure with the bishop's responsibility to act as an authoritative teacher, with the ever-present possibility that, if the bishop departed from apostolic doctrine and

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[70] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[71] Hall, II, 118.

was deposed, the line of succession would be broken. The doctrine may indeed have had a polemical purpose, but the biblical and historical evidence is too sparse to do more than speculate. We must, therefore, reject Hebert's statement that "the Episcopate can claim by right the same degree of authority as the other two [Canon and Creed]."[72] Indeed, this method of arguing back from the second century and beyond to the first century has the disadvantage that it relies too much on the argument from silence.

As far as the question of the emergence of the monarchical bishop is concerned, Hebert frankly admits that we do not know. Thus,

> while in the New Testament there is good evidence for apostolic delegates with authority over groups of local churches, and we know that in the course of the second century bishops emerged as presidents of local churches, what we do not know is just how these two different functions came together in the one office of "bishop."[73]

Already in antiquity there were two theories as to the origin of the monarchical episcopate, the one associated with the name of St. Jerome and the other with that of Theodore of Mopsuestia.[74] According to the former view, the monarchical episcopate evolved "from below" through the emergence of a prominent member of a collegiate episcopacy into a position of authority over his colleagues; in other words, the chairman of the board of presbyters became the "bishop," so that the historic episcopate is the direct descendant of the New Testament presbyters rather than the Apostles.

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[72]Hebert, p. 65.

[73]Ibid., p. 59.

[74]Hall, II, 117.

According to the other theory, the process was directed "from above" by the Apostles by the devolution of the Apostolic Commission to the president of the local presbytery. Because of the paucity of clear evidence, Hebert can only conclude that

> such evidence as we have of the period during which the monarchical episcopate was emerging suggests that the relation between the holders of authority and those subject to them remained equally close.[75]

This, of course, is what we might generally expect, yet that close relationship adds nothing to the claim either of episcopal authority or of apostolic succession.

Despite the lack of clear evidence, however, with regard to the exact emergence of the episcopate, Hebert is nonetheless convinced of the central and vital position of the bishop in the life of the Church, even going so far as to make the claim that the office of the bishop is the only possible basis for a reunited Christendom.[76] His conviction with regard to the indispensable nature of episcopacy in Christendom, which appears to be the result, not of New Testament evidence but of his own personal inclinations and ecclesiastical experiences, is well

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[75]Hebert, p. 60.

[76]This claim has important implications for such problems of the Church as priesthood and sacrifice in the Scriptures, the relation of the ordained ministry to the universal priesthood of all Christians, and the recognition of non-episcopal ministries as valid ministries, all of which Hebert discusses to some extent. Other viewpoints from recent Anglican and Anglo-Catholic writers on these subjects, as well as on apostolic succession and the episcopate, may be gained from the following essays in theological journals: Peter Day, "The Episcopate," Anglican Theological Review, XLVI (1964), 371-389; David Lusk, "What Is The Historic Episcopate?," Scottish Journal of Theology, III (1950), 255-277; G. W. Bromiley, "Anglicanism and the Ministry," Scottish Journal of Theology, VII (March 1954), 73-82.

illustrated by a statement which he makes in connection with his discussion on the way to church unity. He assumes that

> it is agreed on all sides that the Episcopal Ministry is the necessary framework of a united Christendom; and it is coming to be understood more and more widely that Episcopacy is not a mere form of church government, and that it may not be identified with mediaeval prelacy or with modern administrative bureaucracy, but that it is a sacred office, a Mysterion . . . it is not merely that it goes back to the second century when bishops appeared in the Church in succession to the apostles, but that it is in itself a witness to the Gospel.[77]

Another example of the Anglican Church's lively concern with the concept of the Ministry is to be found in Canon Anthony Hanson's The Pioneer Ministry.[78] Hanson approaches the subject on the basis of biblical theology and with careful exegesis. His stance is that of "one who had started out from the Tractarian doctrine of the ministry, and had then been convinced by some years of experience in the Church of South India that such a theory failed to fit the facts of experience."[79] He is more concerned with "the relation of the ministry to the Church than with the actual question of ministerial succession," with "concentrating the debate more on theology of the ministry and less on its pedigree."[80] Hanson sees the true and normative pattern of the ministry in the teaching of the apostle Paul as follows:

> The pattern is Christ--the ministry--the Church, and the task of the ministry is, not to undertake some specialist activity from

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[77]Hebert, p. 149.

[78]His book is really more concerned with the relation of the ministry to the Church than with the actual question of ministerial succession.

[79]Hebert, p. 12.

[80]Ibid., p. 13.

> which the rest of the faithful are excluded, but to pioneer in doing that which the whole Church must do. And the ministry itself is no originator, but receives its task from Christ. The ordained ministers only exercise the ministry which Christ Himself has first exercised, and which He continues to exercise through them, and through their activity in the whole Church also.[81]

Hanson's thesis is that the New Testament doctrine of the ministry is directly related to the Old Testament doctrine of the Remnant, and that the relationship of the Ministry to the Church is paralleled by the relationship of the Remnant to Israel. He begins with a study of the Servant Chapters of Isaiah (40 to 55) and shows that these chapters indicate that the faithful Remnant in Israel was thought of as having a mission and of being a witness.[82] Moreover, other prophecies of the Old Testament, he points out, speak about the role of the Remnant as that of judges or rulers.[83] Then in elaborate detail he takes up this concept of the Remnant and shows, on the basis of I Corinthians 4, 10 and 12 and especially II Corinthians 3 to 6, that it was the core of St. Paul's understanding of his own ministry and that of the other apostles. Thus there is a continuous line of prophetic and apostolic activity passing from the Old Testament prophets through the faithful Remnant and the Messiah to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament. "It seems

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[81] Ibid., p. 72.

[82] Ibid., p. 14.

[83] Cf. Micah 5:5; Dan. 7:13; Hab. 1:12. Commenting on the Habakkuk passage, Hanson suggests that, no doubt in the light of later hierarchical systems, "There is no suggestion whatever that they are to judge themselves, or that leaders or princes are to be appointed to rule over the Remnant. In the light of this it seems very likely that Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30 refer not to the appointment of the Twelve as judges over the Church, but to the appointment of the faithful Remnant, the Church, to judge the rest of the world," p. 28. See also James D. Smart, "The Christian Ministry in the Light of the Old Testament," Review and Expositor, LV (July 1958), 235-252.

therefore," he says, "a clear deduction from Paul's teaching that the first disciples were the faithful Remnant and that their apostolate sprang from this fact. In other words, the apostles were apostles because they were the first Church."[84] He traces this theme of the Remnant through Paul's theology in the Corinthian Epistles, and he bases it on his own conclusion that Paul is not the authoritative individualist that he is frequently represented to be, but that he "very often speaks on behalf of his colleagues when we imagine him to be speaking of himself alone." The many "we" references in the Corinthian Epistles have significance, Hanson says, because it means that what Paul says about his work and that of his colleagues shows what he believed about the apostolate and "provides in fact at least the foundation for a doctrine of the ministry."[85]

Paul's doctrine of the ministry, according to Hanson, is articulated most clearly in I Corinthians 4 and II Corinthians 3 to 6, inasmuch as in these passages Paul shows the relationship of the ministry to the Church. And if, in fact, Paul thought of the essential ministry as a continuation of the function of the Remnant in relation to the New Israel, then the ministry "shows in miniature what the Church should be."[86] The ministry is to pioneer the Church. It does not represent a different order from the Church, nor is it different in essence from what the Church is intended to be, for it is the Church in its pioneering

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[84]Hanson, p. 45.

[85]Ibid., p. 56.

[86]Ibid., p. 60.

form. The minister's task is to uncover God's glory and to show it, with the eventual purpose that all become centers of radiating glory,[87] and thus "all partake in the apostolic function of the Church." Accordingly, Hanson says,

> The movement goes from Christ to the ministry to the Church . . . the ministry does not really do anything that the rest of the Church cannot do or must not do. But it is a pioneer as Christ was a pioneer (see Hebrews 6:20 πρόδρομος). It does not carry out Christ's work instead of the Church; it rather enables the Church to carry out that work in its (the Church's) own life.[88]

Here we have the apostolate of the whole Church implied and an emphasis upon the apostolic character of the whole people of God. "The aim of Paul's apostleship is that his converts should be apostles," and thus "the ordained ministry, carrying out the Messiah's ministry, passes that ministry on to the Church which it founds."[89] In Hanson's view, the special or ordained ministry comes between Christ and the Church membership, not as a hierarchical priesthood or a ruling body, but only as a faithful vanguard, a group of pioneers, providing leadership to all Christians in the exercise of their total ministry. The ministry is charged to represent Christ primarily to the Church in order that the Church may represent Christ to the world. Its task is mainly that of preaching the Gospel but also that of exemplifying the life

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[87]Cf. II Cor. 3:12-18.

[88]Hanson, p. 76. For a Roman Catholic viewpoint on this theme see the article "What Can the Layman Do Without the Priest?," Apostolic Succession: Concilium Theology, edited by Hans Kung (New York: Paulist Press, 1968), XXXIV, 105-114.

[89]Hanson, p. 63. See also Wayne E. Oates, "The Conception of Ministry in the Pastoral Epistles," Review and Expositor, LVI (1959), 388-410.

of Christ, rather than that of administering sacraments. This latter task was entrusted to the local congregation.[90]

The core of Hanson's exposition of the Ministry is its reference to the atoning and reconciling work of Christ.[91] The ministry is responsible to Christ for reproducing His life in the world so that it may show the Church that the Church too is subject to Christ. With his basically biblical approach Hanson has attempted to show that the only "essential ministry" in the Church is the Messianic ministry of Christ. This is the sort of ministry that Paul and his associates envisioned. As the faithful Remnant the earliest apostles were the Christian Church; this is what gave them their authority. Of Paul's position Hanson says,

> Paul does give us a theology of the ministry, especially, though not exclusively, in the Corinthian Epistles. What he tells us is that it is the task of the ministry to live out the life of Christ in the Church and to be pioneers of the Christian life for the sake of the Church. But this is done only in order to enable the Church in its turn to live that life. We thus find the pattern: Christ--the ministry--the Church. But this does not mean that the ministry does nothing that the Church does not do; on the contrary, the purpose of the ordained ministry is to induce the whole Church to do what it does, i.e., what Christ does. We find therefore an apostolic, representative, pioneer ministry. The ministry does not come in between God and man, still less is it a substitute for the laity. It is rather what Christ is to all of us, a pioneer, a leader, an exemplar. It must also be prepared to empty itself and efface itself as Christ did.[92]

When he comes to speak of the relationship between this ministry and the apostolate and of Paul's view of the apostolate, Hanson minimizes the theory of the original ruling authority of the Twelve and believes that Paul nowhere leaves the impression that the apostolate was

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[90]Hanson, p. 85.

[91]Ibid., pp. 59-63.

[92]Ibid., pp. 108-109.

confined to a certain body of people who alone had authority in the Church. Paul's view of the apostolate was a "dynamic" rather than a "static" view.[93] Says Hanson,

> We have therefore found reason to believe that Paul thought of the apostolate as something which was not confined to a body or college, but was passed on from the original apostles to men such as himself and his fellow-workers, who were carrying out the apostolic mission of the faithful Remnant.[94]

The apostolate is a function, not an office. It is a diakonia. "We are both served by the apostolic ministry and must ourselves join in the service;" for the ministry is not something given to the Church from the outside to hold it together, but is rather something given in the Church by Christ, "to be and do that which the Church, following it, must be and do." "All ministry is one."[95]

Citing various writers from the post-apostolic era, Hanson then proceeds to describe how "Paul's dynamic doctrine of the pioneer ministry" began to "harden into the doctrine of the apostolic succession as we find it in Cyprian."[96] By this time Church and Ministry have been distinguished and separated. The ministry now claimed a direct descent from the apostles not by way of the Church, but by way of itself only. It was not until the Reformation, with its rediscovery of biblical doctrine, that the fundamental question was again raised regarding the ministry and its relation to the Church. The answer was first given by Luther, as he

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[93]Cf. A. G. Hebert's reference to these terms in Apostle and Bishop, p. 19.

[94]Hanson, p. 98.

[95]Ibid., p. 105.

[96]Ibid., p. 117.

sought to reassert the priesthood of the whole Church over against the priesthood of the ordained ministry.[97] Hanson discusses Luther's emphasis on the ministry as a "service" of the Word and Sacraments, Calvin's emphasis on "pastors" and "teachers" as the Church's functionaries, then Hooker's view of episcopacy as a remedy against disunity, and finally John Owen's view of the Church as the local congregation only. As a result of the Reformation, Hanson points out, the only place where Reformed Christians still maintained a form of the ministry continuous with that of the medieval Church was in England, and consequently it is in England that the debate about the ministry has been most lively. As far as Hanson is concerned, episcopacy is the most desirable form of the special ministry. While acknowledging that "we cannot concede to any form of the ministry the distinction of having been instituted by our Lord or by the first apostles," nevertheless it seems to him that, if the

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[97]While agreeing generally with Luther's views of the priesthood of all believers, Hanson suggests that Luther's doctrine of the ministry is the least definite of all those of the Reformers, that what we find in Luther is rather a number of profound insights, and that Lutheranism even today does not possess a distinctive doctrine of the ministry. Ibid, p. 120. On this point the following essays may be instructive: Leonhard Goppelt, "The Ministry in the Lutheran Confessions and in the New Testament," Lutheran World, XI (October 1964), 409-426; George A. Lindbeck, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry: Catholic and Reformed," Theological Studies, XXX (December 1969), 588-612; Gösta Hök, "Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry," Scottish Journal of Theology, VII (March 1954), 16-40; Edgar M. Carlson, "The Doctrine of the Ministry in the Confessions," The Lutheran Quarterly, XV (May 1963), 118-131; Lowell C. Green, "Change in Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry," The Lutheran Quarterly, XVIII (May 1966), 173-183; Walter J. Bartling, "A Ministry to Ministers," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIII (June 1962), 325-336; H. G. Bruegge-mann, "The Public Ministry in the Apostolic Age," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXII (February 1951), 81-109.

Church of the future is to attain unity, the best form of the ministry is likely to be some version of episcopacy, and he adds,

> it will be a very personal and pastoral form of episcopacy, very closely related to the presbyterate, and not magnified into an hierarchical body on which the Church depends for its very existence. The office of bishop is quite sufficiently dignified and impressive in itself: it does not need to be buttressed by doubtful historical and theological theories.[98]

We can agree with Hanson in regard to the importance that he attaches to an early formation of a special ministry, and we can commend him for recognizing the unique position of the apostles without condoning at all the eventual rise of a priestly hierarchy. Unlike him, the majority of Anglicans, and of Anglo-Catholics as well, have not established their views on the basis of biblical theology, but on some doubtful implications of history and tradition. This applies especially to the historic episcopate. At the same time we cannot share his view that the Church of the future must agree on some version of episcopacy if it is to attain unity. The real unity that the Church must seek is unity in Christ and the Gospel, and episcopacy can no more guarantee this essential unity in the Church than other forms of ministry and church order. As a matter of fact, there are degrees of divergence even among Anglicans relative to the significance of episcopacy. As Bishop Hall has pointed out, some hold it "to be of the _esse_ of the Church, others of its _bene esse_, and yet others of its _plene esse_." But beyond these divergent views within the Anglican communion, Hall indicates that it would be unthinkable for anyone in the Anglican Church to accept a scheme of union in the united Church of the future which did not "involve the extension of the Historic

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[98]Hanson, p. 168.

Episcopate." To accept a union on any other terms, he believes, "would represent a break with the discipline of the Church in the first centuries tantamount to creating a new ministry." In other words, he argues,

> No school of thought in the Anglican Communion is concerned to deny or even under-estimate either the strength or the importance of the argument from Tradition: all are agreed in regarding the episcopal succession as the normal and appointed means by which the continuity of faith, office and authority has been maintained in the Church and at one in the conviction that there is no method, other than episcopal ordination, by which a ministry unquestioned and accepted throughout the whole Church of Christ, can be secured.[99]

Similarly, and even more confidently, Peter Day, an Episcopalian, observes:

> Whether or not one believes that the episcopate is of the _esse_, the _plene esse_, or the _bene esse_ of the Church, one cannot escape the fact that it is there. It exists, continuing to perform the functions assigned to it in earlier ages of the church's life . . . God has chastened and mortified the episcopate, but He has not abolished it. When separated brethren come together, there will be bishops among them--in actual numbers, undoubtedly more bishops than have ever existed in any past period of Christian history.[100]

In contrast, but in the same context of contemporary attempts to unify the Church, David Lusk of the Church of Scotland takes a more cautious approach when he says that the claim of Anglicans, that the episcopate is the only ministry which can be expected to unify Christendom, would be difficult to establish from history. Citing the Reformation as only one example among others, he points out that

> A fresh apprehension of the immediacy of the Christian life, in its relation to God, made it clear that the unity of the Church must be found at a higher level than in any unity of the ministry. A present Christ needs no "vicar."[101]

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[99]Hall, II, 126.

[100]Day, XLVI, 380.

[101]Lusk, III, 274.

Finally, Dr. G. W. Bromiley, underscoring the divergent views of Anglicans regarding episcopacy, takes a very sober and realistic view of the situation when he points out that

> In the strict and official sense there is no Anglican doctrine of episcopacy or of the apostolic succession which need form an obstacle to fellowship with other Protestant Churches. Individual Anglicans may of course hold such teachings, and it is important that they should be considered and met, but they hold them only as private theologians, not as representatives either of the symbolical Anglican position or of the general tradition of their church. By symbol and tradition the acceptance of episcopacy has been a matter of domestic discipline, not of doctrine and therefore of external relationship.[102]

Roman Catholic Views

We turn our attention now to several representative Roman Catholic interpretations of the ministry and church order, which are also based on the acceptance of apostolic succession as a fundamental doctrine. Our sources for these particular views are all found in recent scholarship, in the writings of men who have expressed their views during the last several decades. Needless to say, not all of these views are in complete agreement with the traditional Roman Catholic position taken and formulated in earlier periods of that Church's history, although the deviations do not indicate a significant change in Roman Catholic stance in general.

In his essay entitled "Notes on the Traditional Teaching on Apostolic Succession" Antonio Javierre, Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Salesian Atheneum in Rome, says, "The article of the Creed 'I believe in

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[102]Bromiley, VII, 81.

one . . . apostolic Church' alludes to a definite derivation from the apostles. This, in Catholic thinking, comes about through succession."[103]

Javierre maintains that

> The apostles were the first disciples of Christ, and the Church perpetuates the attitude of the Twelve, squatting at the feet of their Master. From this point of view it is permissible to assert that it is the whole Church that is the successor of the apostolic college. But the apostles had a particular mission, and apostolic succession, in the strict sense, aspires precisely to perpetuate this mission of being vicars of Christ. So there is, one might say, succession and succession, just as there is the common priesthood of all the faithful and the ministerial priesthood, and they are specifically different from one another.[104]

As he envisions the future of discussion on apostolic succession, the same writer states:

> The simple confrontation of facts suggests the best strategy to be followed. Dialogue, centered on the Bible, should base itself on history and dogmatic theology in order to outline the concept of succession and determine its constituents. . . . Ancient tradition puts the diadoche forward as the means of leveling out the time lag between the deposit and the depositary. When the balance between them is perfect, as in Christ, succession is redundant; but when the depositaries, apostles, are mortal and the deposit,

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[103]Antonio Javierre, "Notes on the Traditional Teaching on Apostolic Succession," Concilium Theology, XXXIV, 16. In another article in the same book, Johannes Remmers, professor of history and theology at Münster University, points out that in Catholic circles the term "apostolic succession" is usually used in a narrow sense: "it is restricted to hierarchical succession in the Church, even though 'apostolicity' is regarded as a note and a hallmark of the whole Church insofar as her origins and her doctrines are concerned. This terminological restriction is tied up with a general tendency of Catholic ecclesiology: laying primary stress on the role and authority of the hierarchy," Johannes Remmers, "Apostolic Succession: An Atrribute of the Whole Church," in Concilium Theology, XXXIV, 37.

[104]Javierre, XXXIV, 22. Vatican II reminds us of this essential difference in Catholic thinking between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of the clergy in "the Dogmatic Constitutionoon the Church," Documents of Vatican II, edited by Walter M. Abbott, translated from the Latin by Joseph Gallagher (New York: Guild Press, 1966), Art. 10, p. 27.

> apostolicity, is permanent, then, in the minds of all the ancient writers, succession is indispensable.[105]

From a less rigid point of view, and also in the light of the present ecumenical debate, Hans Küng, the well-known professor of Dogmatic and Ecumenical Theology at the University of Tübingen, has provided us with a number of theses that express a somewhat different concept of apostolic succession.[106] His basic point is that the whole Church and every individual member shares in the apostolic succession, for "it is the Church as a whole that we believe in when we say: 'I believe in the apostolic Church,'" so that "apostolic succession is therefore primarily a succession in apostolic faith, apostolic service and apostolic life."[107] Yet within this apostolic succession of the whole Church there is a special apostolic succession of the many pastoral services, through which the pastors continue the mission and function of the apostles, which is that of founding and guiding the Church. "They are not a governing class with a one-sided power to command. But there is a superposition and a subordination determined by the kind of service."[108] In the light of the dogma of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon, which had a complex historical development during the post-apostolic

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[105] Javierre, pp. 23-24.

[106] These theses, presented in the article by Hans Küng, "What Is The Essence of Apostolic Succession?," Concilium Theology, XXXIV, 28, are a summary of those elaborated in his book The Church (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1968).

[107] Küng, "What Is The Essence of Apostolic Succession?," pp. 28-29. A remarkably similar view is expressed by Ehrhardt in his essay "The Meaning of 'Apostolic,'" The Apostolic Ministry, p. 1.

[108] Küng, p. 30.

period and is still so prominent in Roman Catholic theology, Küng suggests that "we make an undue presupposition when we draw a simple straight line of succession from the apostles to the bishops."[109] Even assuming that this threefold order of functions is a meaningful and practical development,[110] it is but one possibility and certainly not "a dogmatic necessity." He adds: "The rich beginnings of a Church order in the New Testament leave plenty of room for other possibilities in practice."[111]

Pastoral service, Küng says, is a special kind of succession to the apostles, but there are many other charismatic gifts of leadership which continue the apostolic ministry, especially those of prophets and teachers. But pastoral succession, with the imposition of hands, the ordination, is "neither automatic nor mechanical." It presupposes faith, it does not exclude the possibility of error, and "it needs to be tested by the

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Bernard Dupuy, "The Function of Priests and Bishops," Concilium Theology, XXXIV, 82, goes farther than this and says that the threefold ministry, according to the Roman Catholic view, "continues to have a de jure character. There will always be deacons, a ministry of elders, a ministry of supervision."

[111] Küng, "What Is The Essence of Apostolic Succession?," p. 31. This is certainly a departure from traditional Catholic statements about the priesthood. One modern example of such a traditional Catholic statement, which, however, he admits must now be reexamined, is that made by E. Schillebeekx with regard to the priesthood: "The sacerdotium, which is subdivided into episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate, was instituted by Christ as one of the seven sacraments, and this sacrament of ordination, which is guaranteed by the 'apostolic succession,' imposes--only in the case of a 'valid ordination'--a character. Despite the universal priesthood of all believers, this 'official' priesthood is, in its correlation to the community, nonetheless 'essentially distinct' from the services rendered by the laity, although these are equally of the Church." E. Schillebeekx, "The Catholic Understanding of Office in the Church," Theological Studies, XXX (December 1969), 567.

community of the faithful." While making a distinction between the power of the Christian in the universal priesthood and the special power of the pastor (bishop or priest), Küng also maintains that there must be cohesion between the two, and that, therefore, it is "a false view of ecclesiastical office to see obedience and subordination as a one-way street." "An absolutist government of the Church, at the level of the whole Church, the diocese or the parish, is a contradiction of the Gospel."[112] For this reason he suggests that admission to the apostolic succession in the pastoral line according to the New Testament ought to take place through "the cooperation of those who are already pastors and the community," the latter as the royal priesthood having a voice in all the affairs of the community according to the juridical principal that "what concerns all, must be dealt with by all."[113]

Vatican II addressed itself specifically to the matter of lay participation in the affairs of the Church in the "Dogmatic Constitution on

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[112]Küng, "What Is The Essence of Apostolic Succession?," p. 33.

[113]Ibid. Approval of the idea of lay participation in the affairs of the Church community is developed more elaborately in Hans Küng, "Participation of the Laity in Church Leadership and in Church Elections," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, VI (Fall 1969), 511-533. In a summary statement at the beginning of the article Küng states: "If laity may only work and advise but not participate in decision-making in the Church, they are not the Church in the full sense of the word. . . . A substantive treatment of the problem indicates that while a sociological model of the Church has been influential--e.g, monarchical in the past, democratic today--a theological model taken from the New Testament shows no basic duality between clergy and laity and seems, in fact, to resemble the democratic model. . . . How then can laity be excluded from decision-making? It is not a question of a struggle for supremacy of the laity over the priests, or of the priests over the laity. Both together are the Church, deriving together their positions and their authority from the one Lord of all. . . . Certainly then decision-making is a joint procedure; obedience is always conditional, except to Christ. . . . Representatives of congregations should participate in elections of pastors, bishops, and popes--as in fact in ancient times the bishop was elected by clergy and people," p. 511.

the Church" (Article 37) and in the "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" (Article 26). However, its statements leave the impression of being carefully guarded, deliberately cautious and somewhat paternalistic, when they suggest that the laity is to be encouraged to give its advice and to become involved in the apostolic mission but is not expected to participate in the government of the Church. The following passage provides an example of this:

> Let sacred pastors recognize and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the layman in the Church. Let them willingly make use of his prudent advice. Let them confidently assign duties to him in the service of the Church, allowing him freedom and room for action. Further, let them encourage the layman so that he may undertake tasks on his own initiative. Attentively in Christ, let them consider with fatherly love the projects, suggestions, and desires proposed by the laity. Furthermore, let pastors respectfully acknowledge that just freedom which belongs to everyone in this earthly city.
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> A great many benefits are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their pastors: in the laity, a strengthened sense of personal responsibility, a renewed enthusiasm, a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their pastors. The latter, for their part, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more suitably come to decisions regarding spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, can more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world.[114]

Notwithstanding this encouragement for the laity, a qualifying statement in the same article cautions: "Let it always be done in truth, in courage, and in prudence, with reverence and charity toward those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ"[115] (emphasis mine)

Indeed, Vatican II was very clear and precise in its attitude toward the hierarchy, although, in fact, the authority of the hierarchy is

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[114]"Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," Art. 37, pp. 64-65.

[115]Ibid., p. 64.

explained more in terms of service than of dominion. After speaking of the People of God and the role of the Holy Spirit in Chapter 2, the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" introduces in Chapter 3 the term "succession" with regard to the heirs of the apostles' office and states:

> In order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, He [Christ] placed blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and fellowship. All this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the force and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman pontiff and of his infallible teaching authority, this sacred Synod again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful.
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> Continuing in the same task of clarification begun by Vatican I, this Council has decided to declare and proclaim before all men its teaching concerning bishops, the successors of the apostles, who together with the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ and the visible Head of the whole Church, govern the house of the living God.[116]

Johannes Remmers, however, has a different view and points out that on the basis of the unique characteristics of the original apostles (eyewitnesses of the risen Christ and recipients of a mission from Him), there could be no successors and no apostolic succession, and that in this sense the apostolic office could not go on. Moreover, the mission of the apostles transcends their own person, because "it embraces the 'all' over which Jesus has been placed as Lord--all peoples, all nations, all times right up to the Parousia."[117] In this respect, Remmers, who sees apostolic succession as something enjoyed by the whole Church, agrees with Küng.[118] More specifically, this apostolic succession of

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[116] Ibid., p. 38.

[117] Remmers, XXXIV, 40. Supra, p. 87, fn. 103.

[118] Supra, p. 89, fn. 111.

all the believers becomes operative when the Church confronts the witness of the apostles which comes to it in the Scriptures. But, Remmers adds,

> Legitimate succession in the hierarchy ensures and safeguards the apostolicity of Christian doctrine; it guarantees the authenticity of the tradition being handed down. But the bearer of this tradition is the whole Church, and the agreement of the whole community of believers is the proof and the criterion of its authenticity.[119]

In summary, Remmer's view is expressed in his evaluation of the accomplishment of Vatican II on this point, when he says,

> A basic outlook on Christianity took shape during Vatican Council II, some insights flashing suddenly to light, others taking much time and trouble. This basic outlook was that the community of believers as a whole, not the hierarchy or the ecclesiastical leadership, should have the primary place. We may happily regard this as a rediscovery of the biblical notion that the Church is an adelphotes, a brotherhood of believers; it is a much broader and deeper notion than the juridical concept of collegium.[120]

With the same inclination that is observable in the statements of recent Catholic theologians, Eduard Schillebeekx sees a need, "in view of the present crisis in the priesthood and also in the light of ecumenical concern," for basing future discussions of the ministry and church order on "the office of the Church" rather than on their "actual institution." He fails to find any direct connection between the contemporary offices in the Church (the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate) and an act of institution on the part of Jesus while He was here on earth. From purely historical analysis, he points out, it is apparent that already existing models in the Jewish and Hellenistic world, as well as concrete demands made by the historical situation of the Church, "influenced the factual structure of the leadership of the

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[119]Remmers, XXXIV, 44.

[120]Ibid., 49.

community." Even from a sociological viewpoint, "a social group such as the Church would be unthinkable without official ministries." However, this sociological process within the Church which caused the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate to emerge from an originally greater number of offices in the Church is, according to Schillebeekx, correctly interpreted, on ecclesiological grounds, as the work of the Holy Spirit, for, after all, the Church is "the Temple of the Holy Spirit." Accordingly,

> Even though these offices do not go back to a historical act of foundation by Jesus, they are, by virtue of the pneumatic nature of the apostolically ordered Church, themselves the fruit of the Spirit and not simply the result of a sociological process of growth. In this sense it can be said that these Church offices are based on a ius divinum.[121]

Thus, the "office of the Church" forms an essential part of the "apostolically ordered Church" and, therefore, an essential part of the Church as the "Church of Christ." But the Church herself, he adds, can regulate the concrete forms, divisions and powers of this office. He suggests, further, that there is a need for the leadership of the Church to consult the behavioral sciences, particularly religious sociology, in order to adopt a pastoral policy that is suitable to the changed cultural circumstances and that will enable the Church to function meaningfully in the future. In this effort "the ecclesiological foundation must be borne in mind."[122] One of the results of Vatican II was the implicit acceptance of the validity of the office of the Church in other churches. Schillebeekx evidently agrees with this when he states that

> Even if the universal collegiality and the office of Peter, which could really function in other Church orders, are not taken into

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[121]Schillebeekx, XXX, 569.

[122]Ibid., XXX, 571.

> account, an episcopal or presbyterial Church order should not in itself be regarded as a dogmatic factor leading to division. As such, then, these are not an obstacle to unity, but only different and dogmatically justified Church orders.[123]

This does not yet mean that Schillebeekx regards other Church orders as equal to the Catholic order, for "it can be affirmed," he says, "that they are (from the Roman Catholic point of view) in a situation of emergency as churches with regard to the apostolic succession in the office."[124] In another respect, when Schillebeekx refers to the manner in which (again, according to Roman Catholic practice) a candidate is received into the college of office-bearers with the laying on of hands,[125] with the consequent "mark" or character of such reception, he sees no continuing cause for divisiveness between Catholic and Protestant churches today,[126] although his rationale in this regard does not appear quite as clear as the bare statement.

Another contemporary Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, approaches the problem of the structure of the ministry by attempting to return to the biblical origins of discipleship and authority.[127] The Church today--as the communion of saints and the spotless bride of Christ, on the one hand, and in her conspicuous imperfections before the

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[123] Ibid., XXX, 573.

[124] Ibid., XXX, 576.

[125] A discussion of this doctrine from the ecumenical viewpoint is found in Maurice Villain, "Can There Be Apostolic Succession Outside the Chain of Imposition of Hands?," Concilium Theology, XXXIV, 87-104.

[126] Schillebeekx, XXX, 576.

[127] Hans Urs von Balthasar, Church and World, translated by A. V. Littledale with Alexander Dru (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967).

world, on the other hand--remains, Balthasar believes, an enigma. However, as he sees the problem,

> The answer to the difficulty, which concerns Catholics and non-Catholics alike, can be found only if personal discipleship and authority are seen as intimately connected from the very first, and inseparable both in fact and idea. And this connection must mean not only that the personal practice of the believer is protected and guaranteed externally by an impersonal authority (this may well be true, but it does not dispell all doubts), but also that the very concept of discipleship, which can only be apprehended dialectically, only per excessum, implies that of authority, and is inseparable from it.[128]

The very fact that Jesus personally called twelve disciples, who, according to Balthasar, form a collegium, and that their call involved them in an exclusive identification with Jesus in the mission of salvation is to be explained, not merely in sociological or ethical terms (as in the Greek master-disciple relationship), but as a unique relationship with God in Christ. He calls it "the paradox of following," in which "the more one desires to be a 'master,' the more one must remain a pupil."[129] Further, the call to discipleship presents "the more intense paradox of imitation." The disciples are called to imitate the inimitable,[130] which is "not the exterior act, but the interior sentiment that, as God's attitude and settled disposition, is transfused unreservedly into the faith of the Church."[131] It is at this point that authority in the church comes into being, for "where the paradox of 'following' results for Protestantism in a dialectic is just where

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[128] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[129] Ibid., p. 59.

[130] Cf. Matt. 11:29; 20:26-28; John 13:13-17; Phil. 2:5.

[131] Balthasar, p. 67.

for Catholics, it results in mission and office."[132] God answers the disciples' act of surrender in faith by investing them with "the form of Christ" (Gal. 4:19), so that they, in turn, may become a "form" for others (I Thess. 1:7). This "form" is the soil from which springs authority in the Church, the "pattern for the flock" (I Peter 5:3). Power and authority are thus imparted to the Twelve "without education or preparation, with no period of transition; and then, so endowed, they are sent forth." While there is much of this power and authority that extends to all Christians in their response to Christ, yet, according to Balthasar, it would be a grave error to conclude from this that there is no more than a universal priesthood, or that this authority is simply a universal charismatic quality in the Church, imprinted more strongly on certain individuals. In his view,

> The twelve, chosen out by name from the very beginning and designated apostles in a specific sense, are they who were present from the outset and remained when most of the others left (John 6,66), who "continued with me in my trials" (Luke 22,28), who pronounced the decisive words of the confession and received the keys (Matthew 16,18; 18,18), were given the function and authority to celebrate the Eucharist and to bind and loose sins (Luke 22,19; John 20,23). It was to them as a college that the risen Christ appeared, to them he finally opened the meaning of the Scriptures (Luke 24,45), to them he imparted the final commission and the great apostolic promise (Matthew 28,16-20). Office and power hold fast together, and are never impugned in the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles; St. Paul's whole theology of the apostolate presupposes their recognition.[133]

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[132] Ibid., p. 71.

[133] Ibid., p. 79. See also the "Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church," Documents of Vatican II, pp 396, in which the authority of the bishops and the pope, acting as a college, is defended.

Balthasar's fundamental insight, it appears, is that of "the functional and representative character of the Christian form of existence [the Christian calling] , in which the human opposition between person and function is no longer applicable." Accordingly, any ecclesiology which assigns what is personal to the laity and what is functional to the clergy is based on a false premise, because functionality on the Christian level applies to both.[134] The question, Balthasar believes, is not a matter of alternatives--did Christ train the apostles for the clerical state or for the Christian life in general?--but it is a matter of necessary unity. "Christ trains the disciples (as also the people) in the Christian form, which as such is beyond the distinction of clergy and laity." Yet Balthasar returns to the traditional Catholic position when he declares:

> But this common possession is not to be confused with the Protestant idea that the priesthood of all believers is the foundation of the special state of the clergy, in that the powers inherent, collectively and democratically, in the Church are imparted by it to individuals. The hierarchy, as is clear in the texts, was directly established by Christ, and is not to be referred, for its special commission, casually to anything universal in the Church. This does not rule out that the functional side of this special commission may be a particular expression of the universal function-form of the Church. Consequently, what is special is not something added, externally and positivistically, to what is universal. It is, rather, a special imprinting by Christ on the universal form, whereby it can and should be, in a more special way, typos, model, and pattern of this universal.[135]

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[134]Cf. Bartling, XXXIII, 325. See also Brueggemann, XXII, 81.

[135]Balthasar, p. 109.

It follows quite naturally, Bathasar argues on the basis of I Corinthians 12:21-26, that higher qualifications and personal distinctions directly signify higher types of functions.

One is impressed with Balthasar's thorough and insightful attempt to underscore the sacredness of every Christian's calling and to restore the laity to functional positions in the Church. Yet we must question his assumption that the calling of the Twelve signifies the establishment of a hierarchy of a special class of Christians who derive authority over others by their call to discipleship. Here we would agree with Hanson, that discipleship or the apostolate is simply something that widens out to all Christians in the course of its passing over into the Church.[136] While we would also agree with Joseph Duss-von-Werdt that the "universal priesthood does not mean that everyone can do everything (I Corinthians 12:29),"[137] inasmuch as this would introduce an anarchical element into church order, we would have to insist that all forms of ministry are possible to everyone, provided that the individual has a recognized charism and a mandate from the Christian community to exercise it. As Duss-von Werdt expresses it,

> The universal priesthood betokens this basic charismatic state of every member of the community of Christ. Nor is it abandoned by the person who attains to supreme functions of government in the Church. Any distinction of the various ministries within the whole is therefore secondary and relative. Ministry is such only when it is related to the whole. If it turns into the opposite and becomes a claim to power, making the whole subordinate to itself, it no longer serves the whole and is no longer anecclesial

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[136]Hansen, p. 89.

[137]Jos. Duss-von Werdt, "What Can the Laymen Do Without the Priest?," Concilium Theology, XXXIV, 105.

> ministry. No ministry is exclusive in such a way as to render the others superfluous. None unites in itself the fulness, the pleroma.[138]

The question may well be asked whether, since Vatican II, there is a renewal of Catholic thought regarding the ministry of the Church. Indeed, in his response to the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," Albert C. Outler suggests that the ideas expressed in this document open up "a new era in Roman Catholic conceptions of church order," that "there is much here to ponder, much to recognize as integral in our common history as Christians, much to appropriate in the various parts of divided Christendom."[139] Perhaps only the future will determine whether the ecumenical climate will change the traditional Roman Catholic position or whether the voices of the advance patrol in Catholic theology will be silenced. The prospect appears to exist that the voices of the Catholic laity must be reckoned with in the future.

Jesus Christ--Church--Ministry

The second view of the ministry in its relation to Jesus Christ and the Church is that the Christian community was convoked by the Holy Spirit following Jesus' resurrection, and that Christ as the Lord of the Church then called various members of the Church to particular kinds

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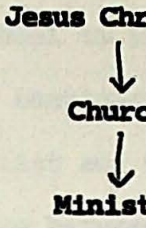
[138] Ibid., XXXIV, 110.

[139] Documents of Vatican II, pp. 104-105. The most recent and comprehensive series of studies on the Church and ministerial orders that has appeared is Eucharist and Ministry, IV, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, published jointly by Representatives of the U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs, 1970.

of ministry, which express the essential ministry of the whole Church.[140] This concept may be illustrated as follows:



This is the pattern that has been favored and defended by Protestants of various denominations, and it is opposed to all priestly, episcopal and hierarchical systems of ministerial order. Those who hold this view of the doctrine of ministry see the Christian Church taking shape after Pentecost as the result of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is the Church, the corporate body of believers in Christ, which has beencommissioned to proclaim the Gospel of God's grace in Christ and by its witness and service to show loving concern for all men and to bring them into the Kingdom of God. The New Testament Church is a fellowship of all believers in which the Spirit of God dwells, in which the concepts of rank and station are excluded, and in which the only authority is the authority of the living Christ and the Holy Spirit. The various kinds of ministry that are exercised are derived from the one ministry of the Word and exist only as diversities of function for the edifying of the Body of Christ and for the extension of the Kingdom of God into all the world. In a word, the Church as instituted by Christ is prior to every form of ministry.

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[140]Nelson, XXII, 90.

This is the pattern, too, that has commended itself to the socalled "Free Churches," in which congregational autonomy has been emphasized and the authority of the ordained ministry minimized. This form of ministerial tradition owed a great deal to the work and teaching of both Luther and Calvin. It came out of continental Anabaptism and English Separatism and found expression in Baptist and Congregational Churches.[141] It deeply distrusts any alliance between Church and State, as well as any sharp distinction between ministry and laity.[142]

From the beginning of their history in England the Free Churches have consistently emphasized the spiritual as against the institutional conception of the ministry, and they strongly maintain that "the primary task of the ministry is to subserve spiritual ends."[143] In this vein Edgar Richards remarks,

> So wherever sinners were being converted, and wherever the Church was being built up in faith and love through the ministrations of Free Churches ministers, the Free Church ministries instrumental in achieving this thought they had every right to regard themselves as true ministries of the Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church. They did so in the conviction that it is more in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel that the reality and

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[141]An excellent summary of the doctrinal positions of the various Protestant denominations on the Church and the ministry is to be found in The Nature of the Church, A Report of the American Theological Committee of the Continuation Committee, World Conference on Faith and Order (New York: Willett, Clark and Co., 1945). See also the brief historical descriptions of the Church and its ministry by Richard R. Caemmerer and Erwin L. Lueker, Church and Ministry in Transition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964).

[142]Ernest A. Payne, "The Ministry in Historical Perspective," The Baptist Quarterly, XVII (April 1958), 263.

[143]Edgar Richards, "Is There a Free Church Doctrine of the Ministry?," The Expository Times, LXXX (May 1969), 242.

> validity of a ministry should be tested by spiritual values rather than by considerations of external order.[144]

Like the great Reformers, Free Church representatives have consistently maintained that the true Head of the Church is not prince or pope or bishop, but Christ. The characteristic Free Church claim is that "the Redeemer has His own Crown Rights, and that the Church should not be subject to any outside rule.[145]

One of the fundamental tenets of the Free Churches is the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Nonetheless they have acknowledged the necessity of a special ministry within the universal priesthood. In the words of Edgar Richards,

> Although at times the Free Churches have been in danger of regarding the ministry as a sort of general manager's job, or as no more than the mouthpiece of the universal priesthood, yet there is a constant emphasis on the need within the Church for a special ordained ministry set apart and commissioned for the task of building up and shepherding the Church.[146]

Theologically and historically the Free Churches have regarded the Church as prior to the ministry, and this view was aimed at repudiating the Roman Catholic doctrine of an exclusive and sacerdotal priesthood. As evidence for this view, Richards cites statements from such prominent Free Church figures as Thomas Cartwright and Robert Browne in the Puritan period; the Congregationalist, R. W. Dale; Presbyterians, Carnegie Simpson and T. W. Manson; and the early Baptist, John Smyth.[147]

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[144] Ibid., LXXX, 242.

[145] Ibid., LXXX, 243.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid., LXXX, 244.

Since they regard the ministry as the servant of the Church, Free Churches stand in clear distinction from the Roman and High Church view, which makes the existence of the Church dependent upon an essential ministry. Accordingly, the inward call of God takes precedence over the official and ceremonial authorization of the Church. "The call of God is what makes a man a minister."[148] Thus, too, while the laying on of hands in ordination is practiced today in some Free Churches, none of them regards this rite as essential to the making of a minister.

With regard to church polity, there is an increasing tendency among Free Churchmen to apply the pragmatic test. Insisting that "life comes before organization, that Faith is prior to Order, that the Church as an institution is only a means to promoting the spiritual ends of the Kingdom of God,"[149] Free Churches hold that no form of church government, not even episcopacy, is to be regarded as indispensable if it becomes apparent that the highest interests in the Church demand a change. Stressing the principle of parity in the ministry, Free Churches regard "Moderators" or "General Superintendents" as useful in an advisory capacity and with nothing more than "moral and persuasive authority." According to Richards, the official Methodist Statement of 1937 declares that "the existence of a threefold ministry has no basis in the New Testament, and the principle of ministerial parity has been demonstrated in the close brotherhood of the Methodist ministry." But

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[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid., LXXX, 242.

he adds significantly, "Even so the willingness since Archbishop Fisher's Cambridge Sermon of 1946 to take episcopacy into the Methodist system may mark the beginning of a breakaway from that tradition."[150]

In summary, there are a number of principles pertaining to the Free Church development of the ministry with which we can agree, some of which even find support in the New Testament. In the view of Free Churchmen ministry is for service rather than for rule; it is to be exercised in the service of the Gospel. Moreover, there is a distinct ministry into which a man may enter through a call from God, with the approval of the Church, and by ordination--a ministry that is to be distinguished from the ministry of the whole Church. Finally, it is a spiritual office which must be conducted in accordance with spiritual and New Testament standards. From this point of view, and in consideration of the blessings of God that have been wrought in human lives over the centuries through this form of ministry, one can hardly ignore or write off its accomplishments in the Christian Church. On the other hand, Nelson reminds us that "the chief difficulty may lie with the understanding of the character and role of the apostles."[151] While there is no universal consensus among New Testament scholars with regard to interpreting the total meaning of the apostles for the Church, there does appear to be a trend, independent of denominational loyalty, in favor of acknowledgeing the New Testament apostles, but virtue of their

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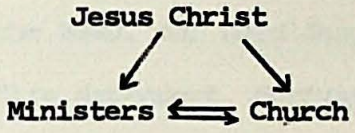
[150] Ibid., LXXX, 245.

[151] Nelson , XXII, 93.

direct appointment by the Lord Himself, as vital links between Christ and the historical Church.[152]

Jesus Christ--Ministers: Church

A third way of designating Christ's relationship to the Church and to the ministry is by a triangular pattern. This represents neither a purely hierarchical nor an exclusively charismatic idea of the Church and of church order, but rather takes both into account. Thus,



This conception sees Christ as being related by the Spirit directly to the whole Church and at the same time indirectly by the ministers. The living Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely prior in both time and authority to the Church and its ministry. Christ sent both the apostles to bear witness to Him and the Holy Spirit to empower individuals hearing that witness to have faith and become the Church. Accordingly, Christ at all times maintains His connection with the Church in two ways. His relationship of judgment, love and sustain power is maintained directly by the Holy Spirit and yet indirectly by the human mediation of the apostolic ministry.

This is the view taken by the late British scholar T. W. Manson.[153] Commenting on the concept of the "essential" ministry of Jesus and the

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[152] Ibid.

[153] The Church's Ministry.

"dependent" ministry, which was emphasized so strongly by Dr. Kirk and his colleagues,[154] Manson says,

> There is one "essential" ministry, the only ministry that is unchallengeably essential. This is the ministry which the Lord Jesus Christ opened in Galilee after John the Baptist had been put in prison, the ministry which He carried on in Galilee and Judea, the ministry which He continues to this day in and through the Church, which is His body. . . . The Church is the Body of Christ; and the life of the Church is the continuation of the Messianic Ministry. It follows that the nature of the Church's task can be defined by reference to the records of the public career of Jesus, His teaching and His acts.[155]

From this Manson concludes that there is "only one essential and constitutive Ministry, that of the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ." All other ministries in the Church "are dependent, derivative, functional."[156]

In its attempt to reflect and to continue the essential ministry of Jesus Christ, the Church, as Manson sees it, has a dual role: "apostolic in relation to those outside, and pastoral in relation to those within."[157] These are but two aspects of the single life of the Church, and both serve the purpose of the building up of the Body of Christ. The apostolic task is that of proclaiming the Gospel (the kerygma), and the pastoral task includes instruction in Christian truth and training in Christian worship (didache). In this light it is possible to see more clearly the implications of Apostleship.[158]

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[154] The Apostolic Ministry, passim.

[155] Manson, pp. 21, 24.

[156] Ibid., p. 30.

[157] Ibid., p. 32.

[158] Manson makes the relevant comment that the word "apostolic" has had its meaning narrowed in the course of the centuries, so that "instead of declaring primarily the Church's commitment to a great missionary task,

During Jesus' ministry, apostleship appears to be a function rather than a status. The Twelve were sent as the representatives of their Master. They had been witnesses of His ministry and also of His resurrection, and this made a vital difference in the lives of the men and in the content of their message. Later on the experience of Pentecost gave them new courage and fervor. But the character of the Ministry had not changed; its pattern had been laid down once and for all by Jesus. This was the ratification that Paul also claimed for his own apostleship.[159]

As far as the future of this apostolic ministry is concerned, and in answer to the specific question, "To what do the successors of the apostles succeed?," Manson replies:

> It is not the special status involved in our Lord's promise to the Twelve. Equally it is not the quality of having been an eye-witness to the foundation facts of the Faith from John's Baptism to the Resurrection. That quality ceased with the first generation Christians: it also was not transmissible. What is left? So far as I can see, three things: the need of the world, the call of Christ, and the tradition of His ministry in the flesh in Galilee and Judea and in the Church which is His Body throughout the world. And, so far as I can see, it is the Church that succeeds to these things. The Church is apostolic because she is called by Christ and empowered and instructed by Christ to go and make disciples of the nations.[160]

Manson is surely right when he says that the Church's ministry today, which, following Paul, we are accustomed to refer to as "the ministry of reconciliation," is a continuation of the essential ministry

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it merely registers a claim on the part of the Eastern and Roman communions to be the lawful successors of the Apostles." Ibid.

[159]Compare I Cor. 15 and also Gal. 1:12, where Paul insists that his Gospel is not from men but by revelation of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, he claims for himself what could be claimed for the Twelve.

[160]Manson, p. 52.

of Jesus; yet a word of caution might well be in place at this point regarding the importance of making a sharp distinction between Christ's ministry and ours. There is an enormous difference between what Christ did for mankind and what the Church tries to do for men. Christ is unique. What He did was cosmic, "once for all time," never to be repeated. His obedience to the Father was absolute, His service perfect. As Balthasar reminds us, we are called to discipleship, to follow Him, to be witnesses to Him. That which He did first we cannot do for ourselves, but as we accept it we are called into His service. While the metaphor of the Church as the Body of Christ expresses the essential relationship as nearly as any other New Testament description, it dare not obscure the fact that the Church remains a human institution. The Church dare not claim the perfection that belongs to its Lord. Its origin is divine, but that is God's gift in Christ. Similarly, when Manson speaks of the Church's ministry as a continuation of the ministry of Jesus, it must be borne in mind that the atoning life and death and resurrection of Christ alone is the Messianic ministry, and the Church merely fulfills that ministry through its obedience to God in Christ and in its service to man in the world. We do not claim the ministry of Jesus as an inheritance of which we are the only executors, but we go to His ministry to receive an unmerited gift of grace which it is our privilege to share with others.[161] Moreover, we go in humility and in penitence and not to seek pedigree and status. The continuation of the ministry of Jesus must be a continuation of it <u>by</u> Jesus through His disciples.

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[161]Cf. Eph. 4:7; I Tim. 1:12.

Again, if we speak of the ministry of the Church as a "redemptive" ministry, it is only because our own ministry must and should witness to our Lord's redemptive ministry. As we have said, ministry is one of the gifts of the Spirit to the Church, and it is characteristic of the Holy Spirit to point away from Himself to Christ.[162] It is this spiritual continuity in Christ which links both the visible Church and the ordained ministry to Christ. Thus, the Church's ministry is one ministry, and all its dependent ministries derive from the messianic Ministry of Christ. This, says Robert Paul, in complete agreement with Manson, "is of the esse of the Church, the one form of apostolic succession that must be maintained if the Church is to be the Church of Jesus Christ."[163]

But what about the practical functioning of the work of ministry in the Church? How does one explain the existence of the various orders of ministry in I Corinthians 12 to 14 and in Ephesians 4:11? Returning to the views of Manson, we find that, while he recognizes a "settled ministry" in the Church of the first century, he also believes that each new emergency that arose in the New Testament Church was met by "an ad hoc arrangement," and that there is no hard and fast system of organization for carrying on the Church's ministry. He says that

> The total picture of congregational life in its worship and organization down to about the middle of the second century is inevitably fragmentary and incomplete. And when we arrange the fragments, joining up those that will join, and placing as best we may the many isolated bits, one thing that immediately emerges is that at

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[162]Compare John 16:13.

[163]Robert Paul, Ministry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmann's Publishing Co., 1965), p. 82.

> this stage it is idle to look for any hard and fast system, for rigid uniformity of worship or organization.[164]

Observing the situation in the twentieth century, and deploring the "unhappy divisions" that exist in Christendom, Manson nonetheless sees God-pleasing accomplishments in the Kingdom of God both on the part of the Churches with a hierarchical ministerial order and by those with non-episcopal ministries as well. This conclusion is drawn in the light of the fact that the kind of church organization that existed in the first century or in any other century is not an ideal but merely the response of the Church to her tasks at any given time. If we take seriously the idea of the Body of Christ and the continuation of the Messianic Ministry, we cannot, according to Manson, regard Church organization simply as if it were on a par with the political organization of a nation or the economic structure of a society--something that can be changed about at the whim of the electors. Says Manson,

> We misconceive the business in hand when we equate Romanism with absolute monarchy, Anglicanism with aristocracy, and the Free Church systems with democracy. These political categories have little or no relevance in this sphere; and what little they have can be expressed in the statement that in so far as Churches become political organizations they all tend in one direction--bureaucratic oligarchy.[165]

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[164]Manson, p. 65. However, W. D. Davies believes that, while there probably was a diversity of form in the structure of the early Church, nevertheless, the primitive Christian communities were not formless. They were subject to order in their organization and worship. See W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp 218. Martin H. Scharlemann has also contrasted the organization and life of the Qumran community and the congregation at Corinth in Qumran and Corinth (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962).

[165]Manson, p. 85.

This is so, he adds, because we are dealing with a living organism, which has grown and developed through the centuries in ways adapted to fulfill its function as the Body of Christ in the changing circumstances of its environment. The various organs that it has grown and the various functions that it has undertaken are to be valued in terms of their fitness for achieving the purpose for which the church exists.

With the same twentieth-century outlook, and recognizing the need for the contemporary Church to adapt itself to fulfilling its function as the Body of Christ in present-day circumstances, Bishop Stephen Neill makes a convincing case for the need for flexible forms of ministry in our time.[166] The Church's task is always an unfinished task by virtue of the fact that, on the one hand, the Church exists in history, which is the scene of perpetual change, and that, on the other hand, we are called to take a hand in the fulfillment of the purposes of God. For centuries, Neill observes, the image of the Church has been that of a respectable Christian congregation, under the leadership of a godly minister, trained "so to pass through the troubles of this transitory world that they may in the end obtain a celestial inheritance." He continues:

> All the emphasis is on that which is fixed, stable, and unchanging; and it is these elements which most naturally find their expression

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[166]Stephen Neill, The Unfinished Task (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), p. 61. Many similar suggestions have been made by others. Among articles in theological journals which offer some practical suggestions for new forms of ministry in our time, the following may be cited: Ralph A. Phelps, Jr., "New Patterns of Non-Church Ministry," Review and Expositor, LXVI (1969), 167-172; G. Willis Bennett, "New Patterns of Church Ministry," Review and Expositor, LXVI (1969), 155-165; G. Willis Bennett, "The Witness of the Serving Church," Review and Expositor, LXVI (1969), 101-114; James I. McCord, "The Theological Dilemma of the Protestant Minister," The Princeton Seminary Bulletin, LIV (November 1960), 3-10.

> in a fixed and unchanging organization. For this reason, controversies between the Churches tend to find their centre in the question of the ministry and the order of the Church, and of the validity of the Sacraments which are dependent on such ministries.[167]

Such inflexibility of the Church's organization has hindered it in the past in meeting the demands and opportunities of the times in rapidly changing situations. Accordingly, he recommends, especially in frontier situations among the younger churches in foreign lands, the development of a genuine lay ministry, in which the farmer or merchant or lawyer is ordained to the ministry of the Sacraments and commissioned to the ministry of the Word, without giving up his secular occupation.[168] Obviously, this implies the genuine application of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation. True to his calling in Christ, the lay member of the Body of Christ thus has the opportunity to function as a royal priest.

In this context of the relationship between Christ, the Church and the ministry, perhaps we need to say a few words about the meaning of the layman as a royal priest, specifically about the meaning of the word "priest." In the usual usage of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches there is a sharp distinction drawn between the priest and the people. Over the centuries tradition has reinforced this distinction with a variety of interpretations of sacramental administration, teaching authority, and the indelible character conferred upon a man by

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[167]Neill, p. 19.

[168]Ibid., p. 64. The challenge of a lay ministry in foreign mission fields is discussed by Maynard Dorow in "Church, Ministry and Mission Fields," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXV (September 1964), 455-469.

ordination. But even as these Churches insist upon their own particular doctrines of priesthood, others fail to find any basis or justification for this distinction between priests and laymen in the New Testament.

The familiar reference to priesthood in the New Testament is made in I Peter 2:9, where the whole community of believers is described as "a royal priesthood." An echo of this is found in Revelation 5:10 and 20:6. There is also the familiar Old Testament reference in Exodus 19:5-6. In addition to other uses of the word "priest," where the term is applied either to the Old Testament Jewish priests or to Christ Himself (Hebrews 7), this is all the New Testament tells us about priesthood. Yet upon this frail foundation, Nelson observes, "have been built two massive theological structures: the doctrine of ministry as a clerical priesthood and the doctrine of the priesthood of every faithful Christian."[169]

As far as Christ's own view and attitude toward the term "priest" is concerned, Manson points out,

> When we turn to the Gospels we find that Jesus makes no use of the ideas of priesthood. He lays no claim to the title of priest for Himself nor does He confer it on His disciples. In His parables the imagery is not taken from the Temple and its ritual, but from ordinary life. Those who came into contact with Him might think

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[169]Nelson, XXII, 96. For a very thorough discussion of the biblical basis of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in relation to the priesthood of Christ, see T. W. Manson, Ministry and Priesthood: Christ's and Ours (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1958), pp. 35-72. In a footnote on p. 37 Manson indicates the various implications that this doctrine had for the theologians of the Reformation. He says: "the Calvinist view leaves no place in the Church for priesthood. To call the Christian community 'a royal priesthood' is no more than to confer on its members an honorary status without any defined function. For Zwingli the Christian as priest offers himself to God: for Luther his function is that of intercession for his fellow members. The main strains of reformation theology are not at one regarding the priesthood of believers."

> of Him as prophet, or rabbi, or even Messiah. They did not think of Him in terms of priesthood.[170]

Moreover, as far as we know, there is no instance in which a New Testament writer ascribes the title of priest to any individual member or order of ministry in the Church. In neither of the listings of special ministries in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 is the name "priest" included. "In a word," Manson says, "while all believers are priests, all believers are not ministers,"[171] and he concludes that it is still proper in the churches to draw a clear distinction between priesthood and ministry, the latter being thought of as a special office or function in the economy of the churches. Yet, says Robert Paul, "the Church's ministry and the particular ministry of Ministers within the Church are not different in kind, for they both find their source and inspiration in the only essential Minister, Jesus Christ."[172] This is why any question of priority of a minister over the Church becomes a denial of the essential ministry of our Lord, and he adds,

> If the question of priority arises at all, it is only in terms of a minister's self-oblation on behalf of Christ's people--an example and an offering which is given to the Church by Christ through His servant, so that all the Church itself may respond in ministry to the world.[173]

A clear solution to the problem of the relationship in the early Church between the ministry of all the believers and the particular ministry of the few is not easy to discover and to articulate. While

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[170]Manson, Ministry and Priesthood, p. 45.

[171]Ibid., p. 69.

[172]Ibid., p. 110.

[173]Ibid., p. 112.

there are no clear-cut patterns to follow as far as the restricted ministries are concerned, neither can we conclude that the early Church had no need for these special ministries. It is clear, however, that the community of Christians in New Testament times accepted the variety of ministries as gifts of God for the ordering, upbuilding and extending of the Church. And this same recognition ought to characterize our thinking about ministry today.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Nature of Ministry

In questions concerning the ministry the churches of today are still uncertain and in disagreement, not only when they are engaged in ecumenical dialogue, but also when they think in terms of the structures of their own ministries. This is true also of the Lutheran Church, inasmuch as the Lutheran Confessions say almost nothing about the form and structure of the Church's ministry. Of even greater significance, neither does the New Testament provide us with a normative pattern of church order, but gives us only a point of departure. Thus, any reconstruction of the ministry of the New Testament must rest upon the mere implications of a very few passages. While the New Testament tells us much about the nature and quality of early Christian life, it tells us little concerning the forms of early Christian organization. Whatever the reason for this, it is undeniable that this silence presents grave difficulties. The problem is further complicated by the fact that, as John Knox points out, "even where an early writer speaks of the ministry, one often cannot be sure what part of the Church he speaks for or what period in its development he represents."[1] There is no doubt that the post-apostolic Church was developing in its organization, but

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[1]John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel Day Williams (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 3.

the direction of this development was not the same in every part of the Church, nor was the progress proceeding everywhere at the same rate.

During the late years of the nineteenth century, about the year 1880, Protestant scholarship and research had arrived at a consensus regarding the ministry and ministerial order. According to this consensus, the Church was not a divinely established institution but rather a necessary social development. The early Christians were influenced by the Jewish and Hellenistic world around them and, as a result, organized a religious society. The officers of this society were originally concerned only with administration, and only later was teaching activity combined with management affairs. Two prominent exponents of the consensus--Edwin Hatch and Adolf Harnack--were in agreement that the Church was a secular creation, and that ministerial orders developed as a result of the impetus of social misery, which in turn provoked deeds of charity. The consensus represented a consistent attempt to interpret early Christian organization, not in religious terms, but in the light of social necessity and mundane activity.

Rudolf Sohm, who disagreed with this particular view, substituted the word "church" for "corporation," and the "Eucharist" for "administration." He rejected the idea of law in the Church and regarded Church organization as charismatic and not judicial. The office of bishop was a teaching office and not an administrative one. While Sohm did not accomplish the downfall of the consensus, he did provide an impetus for further investigations of the evidences. These investigations were no longer centered on the Church's organizational life, but rather concentrated on special problems of the Church. One of these problems was the nature of the apostolic ministry.

It is reasonable to assume that any proper study or discussion of the New Testament ministry must begin with Jesus Christ Himself. The ministry of Christ was something given to the Church, something that the Church receives as a trust from her Lord. This implies that the Church's ministry is not its own; it is Christ's ministry which, while it may change its form or shape, is nevertheless to be carried on by the Church to the end of time. The New Testament, regardless of its varied references to functionaries in the Church, indicates that it is Christ Himself who established the point of departure for the Christian ministry. That point of departure is expressed in Jesus' own words, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27), and it is given direction in His prescription, "Whosoever would be first among you shall be the servant of all" (Mark 10:44). Christ's own word for establishing the Kingdom of God was "to serve," and the whole work of His disciples must also be that of service, of ministry. Our Lord's ministry, then, found its purpose not in status or in earthly authority but in service and in complete self-giving. In this respect all ministry must be derived from the Messianic ministry of Christ. This is of the <u>esse</u> of the Church, the one form of apostolic succession that must be continued if the Church is to be the Church of Jesus Christ. Moreover, this one, essential ministry is given to the whole Church. All of God's people are called to be saints, servants and witnesses.

From this general ministry of all, however, the New Testament distinguishes one specific form of ministry, namely, the ministry of the apostles. It is at this point that problems and disagreements have arisen in the various churches of Christendom. What is the significance of the

"apostle?" Who is he? What is his authority? Is there a succession of the apostles in function and in authority? The consensus of 1880 maintained that no special authority had been given to the apostles, that any authority which they exercised emerged from their personal gifts of leadership and not on the basis of any unique appointment or authorization. Later scholarship insisted that this authority was based on a divine commission which they had received from Christ.

Beyond all the doubt cast upon the origin of the apostolate, there can be no question about the fact that the apostles referred to in the New Testament (whomever their circle included) were the spiritual leaders of the early Church both in point of time and in regard to being responsible and respected. They are the messengers of the Gospel of God's redemptive act in Christ. They derive some authority by virtue of the fact that they are eye-witnesses of the risen Lord, and that they are sent as bearers of the Word of the risen Lord.[2] This is not to imply, however, that the Twelve of Jesus' day were the official representatives to carry on Christ's work. It merely indicates that Jesus prepared His disciples in a convincing way for their work of witnessing to Him, and that He equipped them for a ministry of service in the Gospel that was to continue. In this sense they form a unique group, not with any judicial authority, but as personally called and commissioned servants of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation. The mission of the apostles is to serve as "stewards" of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1; 9:17; Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:2; I Peter 4:10), to lay the foundation of the building of the Church

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[2]Cf. I Cor. 9:1; 11:23; 15:9-11; Gal. 1:15; II Cor. 5:20.

which is Christ's Body (I Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 2:20; Matthew 16: 17-19), to serve as shepherd of the flock of Christ (John 10:11; 21:16; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). From his Letters Paul is certainly aware of having some responsibility and authority from Christ to preach the Gospel, to bear witness to the new creation in Christ, to call men to repentance. He even feels the obligation to exercise supervision. Yet, as Hans von Campenhausen has indicated, Paul performed these duties completely conscious of the freedom and integrity of the various churches and not as lord over them, so that his directions to them were more in the nature of exhortations than commands.[3]

From the very beginning, then, it appears that ministry was also associated with certain specific individuals. These included, not only the Twelve, Paul and "the other apostles" (Galatians 1:19), but also a variety of other ministries--prophets, teachers, rulers, elders, bishops. However, it would certainly seem that the apostolate as such was only temporary and did not continue beyond the first generation of eye-witnesses. For this reason it is difficult to see how the term "apostolate" can be identified with or applied to present-day offices and ministries in the Church. Nevertheless, the commission of Christ to serve in the cause of the Gospel and to build up the Church did continue. For the generation following the apostles, as is indicated by Acts 20:17-38 and by the Pastoral Epistles, it seems that the leaders of the Church were responsible for the ministerial commission to proclaim the Gospel which had been entrusted to them by the apostles (I Timothy 1:18; 6:20). This does not

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[3]Hans von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, translated from the German by J. A. Baker (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 47.

suggest any kind of succession of office-holders in an institutional sense. It merely implies the continuity of Christ's commission to proclaim the Gospel, which was first given to the apostles. In other words, it does seem clear that the New Testament, on the basis of II Corinthians, I Corinthians 12 and Galatians I, speaks in a twofold way about the nature of the Christian ministry. The call to discipleship and service is extended to all believers, yet this does not preclude the call of some to be leaders in the Church. All members of the Church shared a unity of purpose and calling, but in this unity there is a diversity of functions discharged by various members of the Church.

This, of course, raises the crucial question of the relationship between the ministry of all believers and the special ministry of some. While all churches of Christendom are generally agreed that the authority of the ministry rests on the authority of Jesus Christ, not all are agreed on the practical relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the "particular" ministry. Stated from another angle, it is the question of the priority of the Church or of the ministry.[4] Stated in this manner, and implying an alternative, this is a question that has serious implications, as the entire history of the development of church organization from the days of the apostles shows. With regard to this relationship between the general and special ministry, it should be remembered that Christ's commission was given and exercised within the Church, and that its goal was the edification of the Church. The particular ministry is not to be in competition with the priesthood of all believers. Nor

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[4]See Chapter III.

can this relationship be properly explained in terms of the delegation of functions. Rather, there is to be a coordination of the two. They ought to serve one another in a mutual relationship, so that the ministry of Christ, which is essentially a pastoral ministry, can be continued and realized. Leonhard Goppelt expresses well the basis of this mutual relationship between the ministry of all and the special ministry when he says that

> Both the redemptive event and the Church have an eschatological-pneumatic and a historical aspect simultaneously. The former aspect united all members in the "priesthood of the believers," while the latter causes addiversity of service, especially the particular offices whose model was the apostolate. Because of the historical aspect, the message comes through historical tradition and necessitates as a responsibility for the Church as a whole the forming of the mission as well as the correcting pastoral care for the struggling believers. This required offices along the lines of the apostolate.[5]

Thus, the fundamental question is not whether the ministry is prior to the Church, or vice-versa, or who has delegated authority to whom. The fact appears to be that both existed together. "The Church exists for serving as well as from serving since she lives for Christ and from Him," so that in this sense the Church, according to Christ's commission, "is responsible for the realization of this service."

The implications of this for our day soon become apparent. In arriving at a theology of ministry we must place the servant-image of Christ at the center. The most common and favored New Testament term for ministry is διακονία. In relation to the ministry of Christ, this term points in two directions. Through both preaching and teaching

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[5]Leonhard Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, translated by Robert A. Guelich (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 196.

Jesus ministered to His own people, bringing the Word of judgment and condemnation but also of forgiveness and healing. But Christ's ministry also took the form of service beyond the religious community to the world in its need. Neither of these dimensions of ministry are optional; they are essential parts of the pattern for ministry in His name. Moreover, there is also in Christian ministry a service to God, which recognizes the majesty and mercy of God and involves personal and corporate response to Him. This in the biblical term is λειτουργία. So strongly exemplified in Christ's ministry, it also constitutes one of the fundamental elements in the Church's ministry. The ministry of our Lord, then, found its purpose, not in status or in earthly authority, but in service and in complete self-giving. In this respect all ministry must be derived from the Messianic ministry of Christ. And this continuity in Christ links both the total Church of God's people and the "ministers" to Him in a mutual relationship. The dual emphasis on the unity of purpose and calling, on the one hand, and the diversity of services, on the other hand, must be renewed in the Church today, so that the concept of the priesthood of all believers becomes more than a pious slogan and more than a lay reaction to the clericalism of the past. At the same time a renewal of the concept of Christ's ministry is also needed on the part of the Church's leaders, in order that there might be, in the words of Jürgen Roloff,

> the release of the Church's ministry from its present rigidity and from the dangerous spirit of a functionary officialdom, in order to lead it back to the true pastoral office which fulfills the commission of Jesus with authority by letting pastoral care go with the proclamation, by seeking the lost, and by boldly speaking the

word of forgiveness. The Lord of the Church calls the pastoral ministry back to its orders in a changing world.[6]

Forms of Ministry

Very soon after the days of the apostles, however, a development occurred which changed the Christian Church with its "dynamic" ministries into an organization with institutionalized offices. The Christian fellowship was giving way to the ecclesiastical institution, and the dynamic view of the ministry was developing into a "static" view of "office." The New Testament, of course, provides hints that some form, or forms, of ministry are necessary for the sake of an orderly response to the call of service. Thus, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he urged them to submit to their leaders in recognition of their faithful service.[7] And when Clement of Rome wrote to the same congregation toward the end of the first century, he urged them to restore their deposed presbyters inasmuch as they had been properly appointed.[8] The result was that there was a varied development of ministries within the Church, beginning already in the first century. This development is very complex, inasmuch as both geographical and chronological considerations come into play, and the temptation is ever present to generalize and to establish as normative what may only have been temporarily expedient and local. What we may know about the development in one area of the Church may not

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[6]Jürgen Roloff, "The Question of the Church's Ministry in Our Generation," Lutheran World, XI (October 1964), 408.

[7]Cf. I Cor. 16:16.

[8]Cf. von Campenhausen, p. 87.

be true in another area. The New Testament, as well as later Church writings, give us only fragmentary information.

There are other considerations which complicate the problem of trying to discover ministerial order in the primitive Church. That there were many forms of ministry already in the first generation is evident from Paul's list in I Corinthians 12:28: "first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Together with this passage should be placed the reference in Philippians 1:1 to "bishops and deacons" and also what we find in Romans 12:6-8. What are we to make of these statements? Another problem is the distinction that is sometimes made (whether this distinction is valid is questionable) between the "charismatic" ministry in the early Church and the "institutional" ministry. Furthermore, what importance does one attach to the bishop in relation to the presbyters, or to the rise of the threefold local ministry? Are there grades of authority and function? Is there a real distinction between teaching and administrative duties? The later rise of monepiscopacy must also be considered as an important development in the early Church. These and other features of early Church organization indicate a variety of ways in which the ministry of the Church has developed.

The silence of the New Testament regarding any established forms of the ministry and church order, it seems to me, allowed the Church the freedom to establish its own forms of ministry as changing situations demanded. It is not at all surprising, then, that at the end of the apostolic age a many-sided development of church ministries occurred. One of the most significant was the development of the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. With regard to this kind of development,

it must be acknowledged that it has both scriptural and historical sanction. All three offices are mentioned in Paul's Letters, and by the middle of the second century the threefold ministry appears to be an almost universal pattern. The reason for this development is also understandable. If the Church was to continue the ministry of Christ and to grow, it had to safeguard the apostolic message and to witness against the evil influences of a secularized world. It had to deal also with prevalent Gnosticism. This required spiritual leaders, overseers, for the welfare of the Church's doctrine and life. In the light of these concerns, and for the preservation of the Church's unity in the world as well, it is not difficult to see why the threefold ministry developed. One must be careful, however, not to interpret this to mean that the threefold ministry was divinely instituted. While the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Anglican churches have adhered tenaciously to this form of ministry, precisely because it has scriptural and historical sanction, it does not follow that this is the only legitimate form of ministry that the Church can adopt. It may, indeed, have had a stabilizing and unifying effect on the early Church, and it may still well serve the purposes of the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches today, but it is not the prescribed order of the New Testament.

Another development which followed from this, which is purely a historical one, and on which the New Testament is absolutely silent, is that of apostolic succession. This is a phrase which can refer to the succession of the doctrine of the apostles, or to the succession of the authority of one bishop to another, or finally, to that succession which claims that the apostles ordained bishops to succeed them and that the

historic episcopate is essential to the Church. According to the latter view, without such ordination it is impossible to exercise a valid ministry or to celebrate a valid sacrament. As indicated in Chapter III, Kenneth Kirk and his colleagues tried to show that this concept of apostolic succession had scriptural warrant,[9] but they were not successful in their attempt. Nowhere does the New Testament suggest that Jesus, or the Twelve, had instituted the office of bishop, priest and deacon. Rather, the New Testament is quite clear in stating that the Church is to exercise pastoral care, proclaim the Gospel and perform services of all kinds, both to its own members and to the world at large for whom Christ died. To think in terms of apostolic commissioning is really an anachronism, for it was not until early in the third century that the concept of the transmission of office took hold. Furthermore, the New Testament presents to us a picture of ministerial services that are actually dependent on the Church. The whole Church has inherited the apostolic commission because the whole Church has been called and empowered by Christ to serve. Apostolic succession, on the other hand, implies an elite group upon which the welfare of the Church depends. To uphold apostolic succession or any other heirarchical form as a necessary structure of ministerial order is to overlook the fact that in the New Testament there was a diversity of ministerial forms. Uniformity of ministerial order in the New Testament is simply a myth.

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[9]Kenneth Kirk, editor, The Apostolic Ministry (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946).

Valid Ministerial Orders

In view of what we have just said, it seems only proper that the various denominations of Christendom recognize each other's forms of ministry and church order as valid forms. It is a hopeful sign in current discussions on the Christian ministry that the ministries of all Christian denominations are being accorded a new appreciation. Not all of the statements represent official denominational positions, and some of them are expressed with certain reservations, but they do indicate perhaps an avant garde type of thinking that holds promise of further Christian cooperation and of a prior recognition of the essential ministry of Christ. Thus, the Anglican, A. G. Hebert writes,

> If such churches are in error in lacking Episcopacy, that does not mean that they are not within the Church. . . . Therefore the churches which sprang out of the Reformation are to be reckoned as part of the Church, and their ministries to be real ministries, in spite of the fact that a variety of errors which need to be remedied are found within those churches. The remedying of those faults and errors can, however, never be brought about by hostile criticism from without, but always and in each case by the healing action of the Holy Spirit from within.[10]

It was a significant development also in Catholic circles when Vatican II indicated its recognition of the ministries and the Eucharist of other Christian churches as valid.[11] This is a quite different approach, however, from that taken by A. T. Hanson, who, as we indicated in the previous Chapter, writes from his experience with the Church of

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[10]A. G. Hebert, Apostle and Bishop (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 148.

[11]Walter M. Abbott, editor, "Decree on Ecumenism," The Documents of Vatican II, translated from the Latin by Joseph Gallagher (New York: The American Press, 1966), pp. 336-370.

South India. On the premise that in the New Testament there was only one ministry that was universally recognized, he concludes: "it will follow that we should not concern ourselves with authenticating already existing ministries, but with introducing one ministry accepted by all."[12] He, of course, recommends some version of episcopacy. To be sure, in its essence there is only one ministry - the ministry of reconciliation; but to expect the Church of today, with its twenty centuries of history, its branches of development and various traditions, its declines and renewals, to return to the simple structure of the first generation of Christians is difficult to conceive of, and a bit unrealistic. In its devotion to, and implementation of, Christ's ministry in the modern world, this may also be as little desirable as it is possible. If the New Testament says anything at all to us about the ministry and Church order, it speaks of a diversity of form in a unity of purpose under the Lordship of Christ.

Discussions on the Christian ministry today are inescapably ecumenical. All denominations face the same problems of the practical applications of Christian ministry as well as the difficulty of arriving at a clear understanding of the essence of Christian ministry. With reference to continuing discussions among the churches on the nature and form of the ministry, Leonhard Goppelt points in a significant direction when he suggests that the decisive task will be

> to avoid both a pneumatic-kerygmatic evaporation of the ministry and an institutional-historical petrification of it by means of some principle of ordination and succession; and to give equal importance to the pneumatic and historical sides of the ministry. For the ministry, like the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments, is

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12Anthony T. Hanson, The Pioneer Ministry (London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 170.

> intended not for the age of the church's consummation but for the church in time, a church which is being gathered in history as the eschatological people of God, which lives in responsibility for the world, and which still is awaiting her consummation.[13]

On another level there is the common problem of adequately equipping young men--and women--for special ministry in today's world with a theological training that will make them "able ministers of the New Testament." To be a servant of the Word in a relevant manner is the Church's call to ministry in any age.

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[13]Leonhard Goppelt, "The Ministry in the Lutheran Confessions and in the New Testament," Lutheran World, XI (October 1964), 426.

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