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A Comparison of the Ecclesiology of Representatives of the Lutheran and Helvetic Reformers

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A COMPARISON OF THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LUTHERAN AND HELVETIC REFORMERS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Significance of Reformation Ecclesiology

The sixteenth century was an era of religious unrest. The Protestant revolt which dominated this unrest went through a series of struggles and eventually survived through the efforts of numerous leaders.

The struggles involved in the Reformation were many-sided. An important aspect of them was ecclesiology. For those who approached the Reformation from its theological nature, the evangelical understanding of justification by faith has been rightly considered as the central concern of the reformers. However, as all reformers would agree that salvation comes through the church, this soteriological concern was closely related to their understandings of the nature of the church. Different understandings of the church's nature will yield different attitudes toward its function. These will lead, in turn, to different perceptions in how salvation can be secured. Thus a proper understanding of the ecclesiology of the Reformation era is essential to a fuller appreciation of the events during this period.

The doctrine of the church understandably received the attention of the reformers for two practical reasons. First, the Protestant churches were in open revolt. Their break with the Roman church had to

be justified theologically. Second, these new confessional communities were in the very process of construction. Old practices had to be evaluated and substitutions developed where necessary. The reformers of the various reformation traditions had to think through the doctrine of the church so that firm principles could be established for the proper ordering of the church. For these reasons, ecclesiology was an important issue for the reformers.

Within the Protestant movement itself, differences also caused divisions. Amid the divergent interpretations on various issues that separated these individuals and groups, the question of authority emerged as a basic issue. When disputes arise, who is to judge? Should it be a person like the pope of the Roman church, or a council like that of the conciliarists? This question points, once again, to the significance of ecclesiology. How one views the nature of the church determines how the problem of authority would be settled. While there were many doctrinal issues that caused the division within Protestantism the doctrine of the church, as it touches on the question of authority, is basic to them. Different confessional bodies would answer this question from their own perspectives. These answers would, consequently, cause different approaches to other doctrinal issues. It is, therefore, indispensable to understand the ecclesiology of the various reformers.

Apart from doctrines, which divided the reformers into various camps, church discipline was also hotly debated within and among the various confessions of the sixteenth century. While the nature of the church constituted the theoretical aspect of ecclesiology, the disci-

pline exercised within the church forms its practical counterpart. The great reformers were basically churchmen, and they all struggled as shepherds of their flocks to build up the Christian community. Indeed they regarded this as their ultimate aim. How ecclesiastical discipline was introduced and administrated would depend very much on their convictions about the nature of the church and its faith. Ecclesiastical discipline is therefore an integral part of sixteenth century ecclesiology.

The actual implementation of ecclesiastical discipline, however, brought the question of the relationship between the spiritual and secular authorities to the foreground. A protracted struggle between church and state, already evident in the mid Middle Ages, continued throughout the sixteenth century. The right to impose disciplinary actions such as excommunication was a constant issue in this struggle. Both church and state were eager to secure the right to control ecclesiastical discipline because it implies victory in the struggle for power. The church and state relationship, therefore, cannot be ignored as one analyses the ecclesiology of the era.

The Scope of the Study

While these issues--the nature of the church, the question of authority, the role of discipline and the relation between church and state--were crucial to the Reformation era, they are still critical at present, particularly in those areas where the church is still developing into maturity. With the conviction that a proper understanding of these issues in the Reformation era would assist the church today to realize some of the possible approaches in dealing with similar situa-

tions, the present study is undertaken.

To limit the scope of the study, the ecclesiology of selected representatives of the Lutheran and the Helvetic reformers will be studied, since these movements represent two main streams in the Protestant Reformation. Two reformers from each tradition have been selected and their views on ecclesiology will be analysed and compared.

On the Lutheran side, Martin Luther and Johannes Brenz were chosen. Luther, the pioneer of the entire Reformation movement, was the leader of reformers in Germany. Thus, his writings were widely read both by friends as well as foes, in and out of the Lutheran circle. He laid the foundations for subsequent development of the Reformation. An analysis of his view on the church is, therefore, indispensable.

Brenz is chosen for two reasons. He was a reformer in southern Germany, first at Schwabish-Hall, then, at Wurttemberg. Moreover, he differed with Luther in views on discipline and, therefore, a study of his views would indicate the discrepancies which seem to exist between the south and the north of Germany. Brenz was also close to the Reformed influence originating from Switzerland. His reactions to Helvetic teachings while maintaining a Lutheran doctrinal position will illuminate the differences and similarities between the two parties.

On the Helvetic side, John Calvin and Henry Bullinger will be studied. The Reformed movement began in Switzerland and it is thus appropriate to analyse the views of the Helvetic reformers in Geneva and in Zurich--the centers of the Reformed movement. John Calvin, the reformer at Geneva, is a key figure because his teachings formed a tradition bearing his own name which became the main stream of Reformed

theology. His influence was widespread then as well as now. His career in Geneva was so successful that the city virtually became the model of reformation for many adherents to the Reformed tradition.

Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli at Zurich, is chosen because his viewpoints represented an alternative to Calvin's. Although the Genevan model prevailed in the course of time, Bullinger's influence was also long lasting in the European Reformed movement, particularly in the English reformation. The dispute between Zurich and Geneva over the administration of discipline also revealed the theological differences between the two streams within the Helvetic camp which eventually became two different streams of thought inside Reformed Protestantism.

A Survey of Literature in This Area

The Reformation is generally thought of more as a struggle for a correct soteriology rather than for a proper ecclesiology. Ecclesiology is often less extensively examined by Reformation scholars and the available literature on this topic in English is not voluminous. Although the individual reformers have been studied, their theologies are usually analysed in a general and non-comparative manner, as a brief survey of the literature can demonstrate.

Although there are massive works on Reformation studies, very few focus on ecclesiology. The most recent work is The Church in the Theology of the Reformers by Paul D. L. Avis.[1] Published in 1981, the book dealt with the marks of the church in detail and argued that the primacy of the Word of God is a theme common in the ecclesiology of all

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[1]Paul D. L. Avis, The Church in the Theology of the Reformers (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

reformers. While it is helpful in this aspect the book fails to include other aspects of ecclesiology such as the nature and the necessity of the church which were crucial to the sixteenth century context. Other than this, ecclesiology is generally discussed as part of the theology of the various reformers.

George W. Forell, in a book published by himself The Reality of the Church as the Communion of Saints: A Study of Luther's Doctrine of the Church,[2] clearly and forcefully depicted the church in Luther's mind as a concrete community which, by way of the universal priesthood of all believers, expressed itself through the visible signs of the Word and Sacraments. Paul Althaus' work Die Theologie Martin Luthers, originally published in 1963 and translated into English as The Theology of Martin Luther,[3] further argued that the idea of communio sanctorum is central in Luther's ecclesiological thought. Althaus interpreted this communio as the totality of true believers in Christ and pointed out that it was on this basis that Luther rejected the hierarchical conception of the church and developed the idea of universal priesthood.

On the other hand, Gordon Rupp rightly pointed out, first in his book The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies[4] in 1953 and then in an

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[2]George W. Forell, The Reality of the Church as the Communion of Saints: A Study of Luther's Doctrine of the Church (Published by the author, 1943).

[3]Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966).

[4]Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953).

article "Luther and the Doctrine of the Church"[5] in 1956, that Luther was more concerned with the centre of the church than with its circumference and that the church, being built on the Word of God, was visible only through faith. Eugene Klug also argued in two articles, "Luther's Understanding of 'Church' in His Treatise 'On the Councils and the Church' of 1539"[6] in 1980 and "Luther on the Church"[7] in 1983, that Luther viewed the church as the "bride," the spiritual body of Christ which cannot be identified with any visible church body on earth. In this aspect, C. Cyril Eastwood provided valuable insight in his article "Luther's Conception of the Church."[8] He concluded that Luther's invisible church was at the same time a community visible in its functions. However, none of these works analyses how Luther's ecclesiology was related to his views on ecclesiastical discipline.

On the subject of church and state, Lewis W. Spitz's article "Luther's Ecclesiology and His Concept of the Prince as Notbischof"[9] analysed clearly the temporary nature of the state's intervention in church's affairs in Luther's thinking. He rejected any notion of inconsistency in the reformer's teaching on this subject and concluded

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[5]Gordon Rupp, "Luther and the Doctrine of the Church," Scottish Journal of Theology 9 (December 1956):384-92.

[6]Eugene Klug, "Luther's Understanding of 'Church' in His Treatise 'On the Councils and the Church of 1539,'" Concordia Theological Quarterly 44 (January 1980):27-38.

[7]Eugene Klug, "Luther on the Church," Concordia Theological Quarterly 47 (July 1983):193-207.

[8]C. Cyril Eastwood, "Luther's Conception of the Church," Scottish Journal of Theology 11 (March 1958):22-36.

[9]Lewis W. Spitz, "Luther's Ecclesiology and His Concept of the Prince as Notbischof," Church History 22 (June 1953):113-41.

that the eventual emergence of state churches in the Lutheran movement was against Luther's intention, because it is imcompatible with his view of the church.

Calvin's ecclesiology is the focus of the dissertation Calvin's Doctrine of the Church[10] by Benjamin C. Milner published in 1970. The author argued that the correlation of the Spirit and the Word is the governing factor in Calvin's thinking and that the church, in Milner's conclusion, is the result of such a correlation. While it is insightful in pointing out the significance of the Spirit and the Word in Calvin's theology, the work is one-sided in that it omits the other aspects of Calvin's thinking. A typical example is the book The Theology of Calvin[11] of Wilhelm Niesel in 1956. Here, Niesel ably analysed the theme of "the God revealed in flesh" as the guiding principle in Calvin's thought, a theme grossly neglected by Milner. Francois Wendel, in his classic Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought[12] of 1967, rightly warned against any attempt to approach the reformer from a single perspective. He further pointed out that the church is both visible and invisible and that discipline is indispensable in Calvin's mind. E. William Monter's work of 1967, Calvin's Geneva,[13] provided further information on the influence of Calvin in

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[10]Benjamin C. Milner, Jr., Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, vol. 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970).

[11]Wilhelm Niesel The Theology of Calvin (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956).

[12]Francois Wendel, Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

[13]E. William Monter, Calvin's Geneva, New Dimensions in History:

the lives of Genevans. His work is also particularly helpful to this study in its treatment of the implementation of discipline in Geneva during the reformer's lifetime.

For Brenz and Bullinger, very little work has been done in English. Short biographies of their lives are available in David C. Steinmetz's book Reformers in the Wings.[14] Additionally, Robert C. Walton has provided a more up to date account of Bullinger's career in the 1982 book Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland and Poland 1560-1600[15] edited by Jill Raitt.

Brenz's career as a reformer is the focus of the various works of James M. Estes. First in his dissertation "Johannes Brenz and the Problem of Church Order in the German Reformation"[16] in 1964 and then in his book Christian Magistrate and State Church: The Reforming Career of Johannes Brenz[17] in 1982, Estes pointed out that Brenz was the chief architect of the state church in Lutheran Germany. His works are informative with numerous references to primary sources. While a brief comparison with Luther was made by Estes, similarities and differences

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Historical Cities Series (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967).

[14]David C. Steinmetz, Reformers in the Wings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

[15]Jill Raitt, ed., Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland and Poland 1560-1700 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

[16]James M. Estes, "Johannes Brenz and the Problem of Church Order in the German Reformation" (Ph. D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1964).

[17]James M. Estes, Christian Magistrate and State Church: The Reforming Career of Johannes Brenz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

of Brenz's career to the Reformed efforts in this aspect was not included and still need to be investigated.

J. Wayne Baker's book, Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition,[18] is the most up to date work on the Helvetic reformer. Published in 1980, Baker pointed out that the idea of a bilateral covenant was central in Bullinger's thought. He argued that the covenant idea which originated in Zurich in the 1520s formed also the basis of the church there. Baker also contributed an article in Heinrich Bullinger 1504-1575. Gesammeltze Aufsatze zum 400 Todestag[19] which analysed Bullinger's view on excommunication. Again, though informative, these works have not related the ecclesiology of the reformer to the enforcement of discipline and no comparative work has been attempted.

Comparative studies on Reformation are confined mainly to the soteriological and Christological issues and little has been done on ecclesiology and discipline. William A. Mueller wrote the only book in this area: Church and State in Luther and Calvin: A Comparative Study[20] in 1954. Mueller argued that in their thinking the church is spiritual in nature and that the state is divinely ordained. Both reformers approached the subject from a theological viewpoint and failed to per-

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[18]J. Wayne Baker, Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980).

[19]Ulrich Gabler and Erland Herkenrath, ed., Heinrich Bullinger 1504-1575. Gesamelte Aufsatze zum 400. Todestag, vol. 1: Leben und Werk, Zurcher Beitrage zur Reformationsgeschichte, vol. 7 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975).

[20]William A. Mueller, Church and State in Luther and Calvin: A Comparative Study (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954).

ceive the problem from a sociological dimension. The comparisons made, however, are not detailed enough. Although it listed the similarities and differences between the two reformers, it also fails to include their views on ecclesiastical discipline. An earlier article "Church Discipline: A Comparative Study of Luther and Calvin"[21] by James J. Raun published in 1933 dealt with their differences on discipline. He pointed out that Luther's negative attitude towards law caused him to reject discipline while Calvin's view of religion as a moral issue led him to adopt a positive attitude towards law and ecclesiastical discipline. However, studies on the relationship of these differences to their total thinking, in particular their views of the church, are still lacking.

The Focus of This Study

As indicated by the above survey, there are two major areas that still need to be investigated. The first concerns the ecclesiology of the four reformers selected for this study. It must be noted that the Reformation was not the work of isolated individuals, but a movement caused by the joint efforts of various persons and schools of thought. A comparison among these reformers is therefore very much needed in order to gain a better picture of the era. The following study will therefore analyse the various aspects of the ecclesiology of these four reformers and comparisons will be made accordingly.

Secondly, how the reformers' convictions of the nature of the

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[21] James J. Raun, "Church Discipline: A Comparative Study of Luther and Calvin," The Lutheran Church Quarterly 6 (January 1933):61-83.

church affect their practices in ecclesiastical discipline also needs to be studied. Implicit with it will be the reformers' views on the relationship between church and state in the enforcement of discipline and this will be discussed as well. Again, a comparative approach will be adopted so that a broader picture of the issue can be perceived.

These two areas--ecclesiology and discipline--will constitute the body of the present study. The investigation will focus on the major elements of the ecclesiology of the reformers and how these elements influence their understandings of the church and state relationship, especially in the administration of ecclesiastical discipline. As a comparative study, it will also attempt to analyse the factors, from an ecclesiological viewpoint, which caused the split between the Lutheran and the Reformed parties.

Historically, the Reformation was a continuation of the late Middle Ages. The ecclesiology of the late Middle Ages, together with its practices of discipline, will therefore be surveyed first and then the reformers' views will be analysed and compared.

CHAPTER II

ECCLESIOLOGY IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

Since the late Middle Ages preceded the Reformation, it is appropriate to begin the present study with a survey of the church and its ecclesiology during these centuries.

Introduction

Before the outbreak of the Great Schism in 1378, the western church under the Roman papacy was in a general state of steady consolidation viewed from an institutional aspect. After the election decree of the Third Lateran Council in 1179, which required a two-third majority to elect a pope, the church experienced a relatively stable period, virtually free of schism except during the brief period of 1328-1330. The pope, as head of the church, was able to strengthen his influence throughout the Christendom.[1] This influence was exercised in the religious as well as the political realms.

Papal power was at its peak during the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216) when the pope successfully interfered in the imperial election in 1202 and in his humiliation of the king of England in 1213 by compelling the appointment of a new archbishop of Canterbury. It

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[1]John A. Thomson, Popes and Princes 1417-1517: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), p. xiii.

was not without reason to say that "Innocent left behind an example of Peter's preeminence which his successors could neither forget nor repeat."[2]

However, the picture changed by the fourteenth century. The humiliation of Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) by King Philip IV of France over the taxation of clergy marked the beginning of the decline of papal authority. The "Babylonian Captivity" of the pope at Avignon (1309-1377) and the Great Schism (1378-1417) further exposed the delicate nature of the pope's power. The nature of the church and its authority were hotly debated and ecclesiology became a key issue during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.

The Church and State Relationship

The Avignonese Papacy

Since the beginning of the fourteenth century, French affiliation in the papacy emerged as a result of the Boniface-Philip conflict. Subsequently, the papacy moved to Avignon in 1309. French domination in the papacy began as evidenced by the fact that all seven Avignonese popes and most of their cardinals were French.[3]

Two effects significant to this study can be noticed. First, the pope's "Babylonian Captivity" coincided with the period of monarchical papacy together with the rise of various abuses within the papacy. During this period, the papacy and the curia ran into difficulties fi-

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[2]Steven Ozment, The Age of Reform: 1250-1550 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 143-44.

[3]For the French outlook of the Avignonese papacy see Francis Oakley, The Western Church In The Later Middle Ages (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 42.

nancially as the papal states in Italy lapsed into anarchy. In order to support themselves, financial arrangements such as simony on a large scale were introduced. This was followed by other abuses such as accumulation of benefices and non-residence.

Second, the Avignonese papacy also coincided with periods of intermittent Anglo-French conflicts and renewed papal-imperial struggles. As the papacy became more and more French in outlook, it was not eagerly supported by royal courts such as those in England. The loyalty of European crowns towards the pope began to shrink and the outbreak of the Great Schism resulted in a division among the crowns as well as the prelates.

The Great Schism and Its Aftermath

The forty years of division caused by the Great Schism further weakened the pope's power in the political sense. While the trend during the earlier centuries was toward a growing international church where local churches were generally removed from royal and imperial control, the schism provided the opportunity for its reversal. During these years the kings and princes switched their allegiance at will to secure political gains while the rival popes were desperately trying to secure these supports. The previous picture of a unified international church changed. As it has been pointed out,

> the years of the schism . . . marked a critical phase in the disintegration of what had been under papal leadership and government a genuinely international church into a series of what were . . . national and territorial churches dominated by kings, princes and rulers of such city states as Venice and Florence. Those years set

> a pattern that rulers were to follow throughout the fifteenth century in their efforts to gain control of their churches.[4]

Even after the schism, papal power continued to diminish. As a result of the schism, the popes were anxious to suppress the conciliar idea which challenged their absolute authority in ecclesiastical affairs. Consequently, the popes were willing to concede their control of local churches to the local rulers in return for their cooperation. A typical example was Eugenius IV who was

> willing to promote this whole process of establishing rulers as masters of their respective churches so long as those rulers were willing to withdraw support from the conciliar idea and from the threat of reform in head and members that went with it.[5]

Associated with the papacy's concession to the local rulers was the loss of revenue to Rome. The control of the papal states in Italy became all the more vital for the papacy and it became all the more national in outlook as a result. The church and state struggle over authority was thus further sharpened.

On the Eve of the Reformation

By the latter half of the fifteenth century, the trend toward a monarchical state had grown to such a stage that the old regional feelings were replaced with national consciousness throughout Europe. As the local rulers gained military supremacy over internal rivals and the papacy ceased to be a significant power in the international scene, secular power came to its climax.

> The political and administrative unity attained by rulers during the later Middle Ages had transformed Europe into a cluster of dis-

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[4]Ibid., p. 72.

[5]Ibid., p. 73.

> crete, inward-looking sovereign nation-states and territories, each capable of doing more harm to the pope than the pope to any of them.[6]

However, on the theoretical level, papalists in the late Middle Ages still maintained that papal authority was absolute, even in the temporal realm. The medieval thinking that mankind has two distinct ends: those of temporal and supernatural felicity, was still widespread. The pope, as the authority over affairs in the supernatural realm, was, by its divine origin, still the presiding figurehead of late medieval life.[7] The pope thus still interfered with temporal affairs, especially where spiritual interests were also at stake.

The result of this tension was the emergence of a number of national or international churches which, while appearing to be under the papacy, were in reality controlled by their respective kings and princes. By the end of the fifteenth century, rulers throughout Europe, therefore, resented the papal claims to temporal power and intervention in their churches. Even on the local level, the clergy was losing its authority to the secular power on the eve of the Reformation.

> Magistrates and city councils also weakened local church authority by restricting or eliminating altogether traditional ecclesiastical and clerical privileges and assuming direct responsibility for education, welfare, and morals. They taxed local clergy and church property, carefully regulated the church's acquisition of new properties within city walls, and restricted the right of criminal asylum in urban churches and monasteries.[8]

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[6]Ozment, Age of Reform, p. 204.

[7]William D. McCready, "Papal Plenitudo Potestatis and the Source of Temporal Authority in Late Medieval Papal Hierocratic Theory," Speculum 48 (1973):655.

[8]Ozment, Age of Reform, p. 205.

This explains why, in the course of the Reformation, the reformers had to deal with their local rulers for ecclesiastical affairs which properly belonged to the church alone. Also, the relation between church and state became a central issue in the life of the church as the reformers came to deal with the problem of order and discipline in their reconstruction of the church. This task they undertook according to their own convictions of the nature of the church. It is therefore important to understand the development of ecclesiology prior to the Reformation.

Ecclesiology Prior to the Fourteenth Century

To realize the significance of the ecclesiological debates in the late Middle Ages, it is necessary to understand the trends that led to the fourteenth century.

The Augustinian Tradition

Up to the thirteenth century the ecclesiology of Augustine dominated the western church and established itself as the medieval standard of authortiy.[9] An analysis of Augustine's view on the church is therefore essential.

The two major emphases of Augustine's ecclesiology were unity and catholicity. These emphases were prompted by the Donatist schism in

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[9]Augustine never wrote a treatise on the church. His ecclesiology was scattered throughout his voluminous writings. For secondary sources on this subject, see Roy W. Battenhouse, ed., A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); S. J. Grabowski, The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) and Eugene Portalie, A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1960).

his day. To refute the schismatics, Augustine assigned visible unity a primary role in his teachings on the church. The church--a visible unity under the leadership of Rome, was regarded as the mother of souls[10] and the only way to salvation.[11] As the church is one, it is also catholic. By this, Augustine rejected any schismatic church outside this catholic unity. He argued this point by appealing to apostolic succession. According to Augustine, who followed Cyprian at this point, the catholic church which is one is rooted in the authority given to it through the apostles. Such authority now exists in the successors of the apostles, the bishops.[12] Since he recognized Rome as the leader of all apostolic sees, the Roman pontiff enjoys a primary role in this line of apostolic succession. It has been argued that "the transmission of Peter's primacy to his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, is an incontestable doctrine in his writings."[13]

After depicting the church as a visible body, it is only natural for Augustine to formulate the organization of the priesthood. Augustine admitted that he remained in the Christian faith because of the succession of the Bishop of Rome. "The succession of bishops, beginning from the very chair of the Apostle Peter to whom the Lord . . .

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[10]Epistola 34:3. This and most other citations of Augustine are available in A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church First Series, vol. 1, p. 262, edited by Philip Schaff, hereafter cited as NPNF.

[11]Sermo 215:9. This sermon is available in The Fathers of the Church, vol. 38, pp. 149-50, edited by R. J. Deferrari.

[12]Contra Faustum Manichaeum 22, 70, NPNF 4, p. 299; De Moribus Catholicorum 25, NPNF 4, pp. 54-55.

[13]See Portalie, Guide to Augustine, p. 238.

entrusted his flocks to be fed down to the present episcopate is what keeps me in the church."[14] For this reason he placed the Roman episcopate at the centre of this unity and argued that it was to Peter as a representative of the entire church that Jesus said: "On this rock . . ."[15] and that the Roman Church was where the primacy of the Apostolic See always flourished.[16] He also implied that the episcopacy is superior to the priesthood and that Peter was more superior than the other apostles, as he mentioned that "the Apostle Peter, because of the primacy of his apostolate, personified this Church, symbolizing her generality."[17]

Interpreted along these lines, the church of Augustine was identified as a visible hierarchy with Rome as the head and all other members are united around the Roman Pontiff. To this hierarchy is also given the authority to govern the church. Such authority is given by Jesus Christ to an order of clerics distinct from the laity.[18]

This tradition eventually became the main stream of ecclesiological thought. In the course of time, it actually laid the boundaries within which ecclesiological discussions had to be conducted if it aspired to be orthodox.

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[14]Contra Epistolam Manichaei Quam Vocant Fundamenti 4, 5, NPNF 4, p. 130.

[15]Epistola 53:1, 2, NPNF 1, p. 298.

[16]Epistola 43:3, 7, NPNF 1, pp. 276, 278.

[17]Portalie, Guide to Augustine, p. 238; see pp. 237-38 for a full discussion.

[18]Epistola 60:1, NPNF 1, pp. 317-18; In Joanis Evangelium Tractatus 124, 5, NPNF 7, pp. 449-50.

The Consolidation of the Hierarchical View

Although the word "hierarchy" was never used by Augustine in his writings, its reality was clearly asserted. Yet the concept of hierarchy itself was fully developed and consolidated during the thirteenth century. With scholasticism in the thirteenth century came also the hierarchical conception of reality. It provided the necessary framework for the hierarchical conception of the church to be developed into maturity. This could be observed clearly in Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure.

Thomas Aquinas set forth in his writings a generalized view of hierarchy which was based "upon a hierarchical view of reality as proceeding from the divine goodness in orderly and graded fashion."[19] Then he argued that ecclesiastical hierarchy was modeled after the celestial hierarchy because the entire universe was hierarchically ordered. Consequently, there must be one head of the entire church for the sake of unity. For this purpose, Christ made Peter the visible head of His church on earth and provided successors to Peter who are the Roman Pontiffs.[20] Aquinas obviously did not alter any of Augustine's teachings, but rather re-expressed the materials in terms of a much more well defined hierarchical institution.

Bonaventure, a contemporary of Aquinas, also taught that "the pope is the vicar of Christ, the supreme father of all fathers, the

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[19]Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 294.

[20]Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, vol. 4, trans. Charles J. O'Neil (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), p. 290.

chief hierarch of all the faithful, the source and norm of all ecclesiastical authority."[21] Consequently,

> Christ was the principal hierarch. The pope was His vicar. The papacy was the source of whatever power and jurisdiction the lower ecclesiastical order possessed. The influence of Christ reached the humblest members of the church through the mediation of the clerical orders.[22]

This trend toward hierarchical conception strengthened the Augustinian tradition. It also led to the development of monarchical papacy. The church eventually developed into a hierarchy with the pope as an infallible head enjoying full authority throughout the entire Christendom. Such authority met virtually with no challenge until the papacy's decline in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Corpus Mysticum as a Political Body

As a tradition inherited from the patristic fathers, the church during the Middle Ages was commonly described as the body of Christ. With the development of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist, there arose the desire to clarify the organic connection between the Christ in the elements of the sacrament and the church as the body of Christ. Consequently, the two terms corpus Christi verum and corpus Christi mysticum were introduced. When the emphasis on real presence grew as the developing result of transubstantiation, the Eucharist came to be addressed as the corpus verum while the church was accorded the notion of corpus mysticum. This development implies that the church had, in the final analysis, become an

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[21]This is a summary given by Eugene J. Gratsch, Where Peter Is: A Survey of Ecclesiology (New York: Alba House, 1975), p. 84.

[22]Ibid., p. 85.

entity separated from the true body of Christ.

The church as the corpus mysticum underwent a process of secularization during the late Middle Ages, resulting in the church being turned into "a polity like any other secular corporation"[23] and the idea of corpus mysticum itself became almost a synonym for "moral and political body." Its result was the accomodation of political thinkings and legal categories into the ecclesiastical organization under the Roman papacy. The authority championed by the popes during the mid and late Middle Ages was therefore a jurisdiction in the political sense: public, non-sacramental, coercive and politically involved.

This development blurred the distinction between church and state. In the area of discipline, it means confusion in the administration and application of ecclesiastical disciplinary actions. The ecclesiastical courts in the Middle Ages dealt with large number of cases which appeared to be irrelevent to religious causes.[24] The church was involved in civil jurisdiction and measures such as excommunication were often applied for secular purposes. As the national states rose to power in the late Middle Ages, tension between the popes and princes intensified as they struggled for the control of discipline, both inside the church and outside it.

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[23]Oakley, Western Church, p. 163.

[24]See, for instance, the article by Dorothy Owen, "Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in England 1300-1550: The Records and their Interpretation," in The Materials, Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History, ed. Derek Baker (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1975), pp. 199-221.

Ecclesiology in the Late Middle Ages

The identification of the church as a political body also intensified the dichotomy between the sacramental and governmental aspects of the church. In other words, the visible and invisible natures of the church was becoming an issue. Since Augustine's time, the church was already depicted repeatedly as an invisible community of genuine Christians. How these two aspects could be harmonized posed an issue to the theologians in the late Middle Ages.

With the papacy's move to Avignon and the ensuing Great Schism, two contending theories attempted to answer this question. Both of these had roots earlier than the fourteenth century, but both flourished during the late medieval era.

The Continued Thrust of Papalism

Papalism, the more conspicuous of the two, insisted that church unity could only be secured by a total, unconditional and vigorious subordination of all members of the church to a single head. This was the thinking behind the absolute papal monarchy of the Middle Ages.

Originally, papal primacy was designed primarily to offset the widespread concept of episcopalism prevalent during the Investiture Contest between the church and the local princes. As the princes were eager to increase their influence on the local church level, bishops had been accorded more and more independence from papal control.

Papalists, therefore, stressed papal supremacy after the Augustinian tradition. A typical example was the works of Augustinus

Triumphus (d. 1328). He distinguished between the potestas ordinis and the potestas iurisdictionis in the pope's authority and argued that both of these powers were received by the pope as the vicar of Christ directly and immediately from him.[25] Thus the pope's vicariate of Christ was both sacramental and jurisdictional. However, with the bishops, their vicariate of Christ was purely and simply a matter of potestas ordinis.[26] This view which was not uncommon among papalists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries resulted in the growth of papal supremacy. The pope, drawing his power from Christ, became the source of all governmental power exercised in the Christian society.

Coupled with the idea of the corpus mysticum as a legal and political body, the pope was regarded eventually as law itself. The vicar of Christ on earth became the link between the sacramental and governmental aspects of the church. This explains why the document Determinatio compendiosa of 1342 announced that

> Indeed, the pope is the law itself and a living law, to resist which is impermissible. This then is the Catholic and orthodox faith, approved and canonized by the holy fathers of old, from which all justice, religion, sanctity and discipline have emanated. If anyone does not believe it faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved, and without doubt will perish eternally.[27]

Two areas of conflict occurred as a result of papalism. First,

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[25]Augustinus Triumphus and late medieval papal hierocratic theory is the focus of the various articles written by Willmam D. McCready. See, in addition to the one listed in note 7, also "The Problem of the Empire in Augustinus Triumphus and Late Medieval Hierocratic Theory," in Traditio 30 (1974):325-49.

[26]M. J. Wilks, "Papa Est Nomen Iurisdictionis: Augustinus Triumphus and the Papal Vicariate of Christ, part I," Journal of Theological Studies New Series 8 (1957):83.

[27]Oakley, Western Church, p. 165.

there arose a tension between local church authorities and the papacy. Since bishops could derive their own jurisdictional capacity only from the pope, they must look to Rome for guidance on jurisdictional issues. Yet, events like the Great Schism made this impractical and confusion eventually caused tensions. Second, papalism also caused a conflict between the papacy and the local princes who desired to secure as much jurisdictional priviledges as possible. With the papal power declining due to schism and confusion and the national states rising to power, papalism made jurisdictional privileges one of the major factors that contributed towards the church and state struggle for power in the late medieval era.

The Rise of Conciliar Thinking

The doctrine of absolute papal monarchy came under fire in the late Middle Ages. Apart from the rise of national powers who were eager to limit the power of the pope, the Avignonese papacy and the Great Schism also made it necessary to re-evaluate the claims of an absolute papacy.

Opposing the papalism of the canonists, the conciliarists proposed a different ecclesiology. This was applied initially to the single churches and then gradually, to the Roman church as a whole. Conciliarism stressed the corporate association of the church members as the true principle of ecclesiastical unity and that corporate authority can be exercised by the church members even in the absence of an effective head. The conciliar movement can be divided into three phases.

The Early Objections to Papalism

As forerunners of the conciliar movement, Marsilius of Padua (d. 1342) and William of Ockham (d. 1347) represented the early phase of conciliarism in their writings against the papacy.

While the canonists stressed the visible unity of the church under the Roman Pontiff Marsilius of Padua, the rector of the university of Paris, denied the divine institution of the papacy in his treatise "The Defender of Peace" in 1324.[28] He argued that

> neither the Roman bishop called pope, nor any other bishop or priest, or deacon, has or ought to have any rulership or coercive judgement or jurisdiction over any priest or non-priest, ruler, community, group or individual of whatever condition.[29]

The church was a sacramental institution. It had authority and sovereignty, but over a kingdom of the other world. It had its divine laws, yet not to be applied for purposes in this life but to a life in the future. In this world only temporal power could punish heretics as they transgressed human, not divine, laws against such beliefs and conduct.[30] Oakley thus summarized correctly that

> Marsilius denied the divine foundation of papacy and hierarchy, portraying the church as a merely spiritual community of believers linked solely by the common bond of a sacrament and creed, and

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[28]For an English translation of this work, see Alan Gewirth, Marsilius of Padua: The Defender of Peace, vol. 2: Defensor pacis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956). For the influence of Marsilius of Padua, see G. Leff, "Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology," Journal of Theological Studies New Series 18 (April 1967):58-82.

[29]Defensor pacis, book 2, 4:1. The English translation is taken from Gewirth, Marsilius, vol. 2, p. 113.

[30]Ibid., 10:1-9. See also Gewirth, Marsilius, vol. 2, pp. 173-79.

denying to its members, accordingly, the exercise of any coercive jurisdictional power at all.[31]

Marsilius of Padua's denial of the primacy of the pope and the Petrine basis that goes with it is considered as "perhaps the most revolutionary idea in later Medieval ecclesiology"[32] and it became the main source of challenge to the pope and the curia in the course of Medieval and Reformation history.

For William of Ockham, an English Franciscan and a contemporary of Marsilius, the papal office is indeed the highest office in the church because it is instituted by Christ. Yet, the nature of its authority is not absolute as claimed by the papacy. Papal authority was limited by him to "teaching God's word, conducting divine worship and supervising those things necessary for eternal salvation."[33]

Ockham also asserted that "what applies to the whole Church must not be attributed to part of the Church, even to the principal part" and "that which is promised to the whole and to no part should not be attributed to any part, even the more important."[34] Hence, while the papacy had no right over the entire church, the official teaching of the papacy should be subjected to the judgment of the universal church. This universal church alone, in the form of a council, which exercised the collective magisterium from Christ, is infallible.

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[31]Oakley, Western Church, p. 169.

[32]Leff, "Apostolic Ideal," p. 68.

[33]Viewpoint of Ockham summarized by Gratsch, Where Peter Is, p. 96. For the primary sources used, see Ibid., p. 107, note 8.

[34]John J. Ryan, The Nature, Structure and Function of the Church in William of Ockham (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), p. 13.

The claim had been made after the Augustinian tradition that the Roman church alone had the apostolic root and thus could not fail in faith. Ockham replied that every catholic church, whether in Paris or Rome, is apostolic if it has the apostolic doctrine. In other words, it is the apostolic doctrine--the correct faith that makes a church the true church of Christ, not the external apostolic succession.[35]

It can be seen that the church in the minds of Marsilius and Ockham is both divine and human, divine as it is God-instituted and human because it is composed of human beings. The absolutism of a papal monarch finds no place in their thinkings. The Avignonese papacy exposed the weaknesses of the hierarchy that claimed to be wholly divine. These early opponents of papalism, confronted by the abuses of the papacy, laid the foundation for the conciliar fathers of a later age who had to deal with the scandals of the Great Schism.

The High Tide of Conciliarism

Upon the outbreak of the Great Schism, the Augustinian view of papalism was further weakened. With more than one pope claiming the chair of Peter at the same time, the traditional ecclesiology appeared to be inadequate in dealing with such a situation. Since all the claimants were elected legally by a college of cardinals it was obvious that the nature of the church needed to be reinterpreted so that a solution could be designed to end the schism. Such was the background when the conciliar theory was proposed. In its developed form, drawing on the insights of the early opponents of papalism, the theory rested

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[35]Ibid., p. 18.

on the insistence that

> the unity of the church resided ultimately in the association of its members with one another and with Christ, their principal and essential head, rather in its domination by the pope, its subordinate and accidental head.[36]

A whole line of theologians followed this trend of thought. First of all, Conrad of Gelnhausen proposed in 1380 a distinction between the universal church and the Roman church, that the former could not err while the latter could and that a general council representing the universal church should be convened to end the schism.[37] Then, in 1381, Henry of Langenstein of the University of Paris took a similar view and argued that the church represented by a general council has the right to depose an unworthy pope and elect a new one.[38]

While the Council of Pisa in 1409 succeeded only in aggravating the pains of schism by electing a third pope, the conciliar idea continued to grow. Finally, the Council of Constance (1414-1418) successfully ended the schism. In the course of these councils two figures were prominent: Peter d'Ailly (1350-1420) and Jean Gerson (1363-1429).

Peter d'Ailly, chancellor of the University of Paris, argued that the church was built not on Peter, but on Christ and the scriptures. Following an Ockhamistic fashion, he asserted that the pope is inferior

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[36]Oakley, Western Church, p. 65.

[37]Cf. B. Tierney, Foundations of the Conciliar Theory: The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), passim and W. Ullmann, The Origins of the Great Schism: A Study in Fourteenth Century Ecclesiastical History (Hamden: Archon Books, 1967), pp. 176-81.

[38]Cf. Ullmann, Great Schism, pp. 181-82 and F. Jacob, Essays in the Conciliar Epoch (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), passim.

to a general council because the whole church represented by the council is greater than any of its parts and that the papacy is only a part of the church like the head is only a part of the body.[39]

Jean Gerson, a disciple of and successor to d'Ailly at the University of Paris, on the ground of Matthew 18:17, argued that Christ made the universal church a higher authority than the papacy and that a general council representing this universal church should do whatever is necessary to end the intolerable situation of the Great Schism.[40]

In this spirit, the decree Sacrosancta of the Council of Constance announced that

> This holy Council of Constance . . . declares, first, that it is lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit, that it constitutes a General Council, representing the Catholic Church, and that therefore it has its authority immediately from Christ; and that all men, of every rank and condition, including the pope himself, are bound to obey it in matters concerning the faith, the abolition of the schism, and the reformation of the Church of God in its head and its members. Secondly, it declares that anyone . . . who shall contumaciously refuse to obey the orders, decrees, statutes or instructions, made or to be made by this holy council, or by any other lawfully assembled general council . . . shall . . . be subjected to fitting penance and punished appropriately.[41]

However, even in this high spirit of anti-papalism it should be noted that the conciliar fathers during the Great Schism still recognized the divine origin of the papal primacy; only they denied its bestowal upon a particular individual to be of divine institution. The Augustinian tradition was not given up, only its logical conclusion was modified. Typically, Gerson still preserved the hierarchical concep-

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[39]Jacob, Essays, pp. 14-15.

[40]Ibid., pp. 11-14.

[41]Henry Bettenson, ed., Documents of the Christian Church, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 135.

tion of the church as a predominant theme in his ecclesiology by insisting on the divine nature of the institution of the hierarchy.[42] He also objected to the radical thinking of Ockham that the church can exist in a single laity.[43] The major elements of Augustine's ecclesiology were retained and they still constituted the doctrine of the church upon which reforms were supposedly to be carried out.

The Fading Era of The Conciliar Theory

Although the Council of Constance put the schism to an end it was a failure as far as reforms were concerned. The newly elected pope, Martin V (d. 1431), and his successor, Eugenius IV (d. 1449), took every opportunity to frustrate the operation of subsequent councils. The papal desire to regain its supremacy was met with internal disagreements among the council fathers and the conciliar movement gradually lost its impetus.

A typical illustration of the fading tide of conciliarism was the change in attitude of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), a philosopher and canon lawyer who supported the conciliar cause until 1437 when Eugenius IV dissolved the Council of Basel. Before his change, Cusa supported the superiority of a general council because it represents all the faithful of the church. After 1437, Cusa argued that those who remained harmonious with the pope more truly represented the church[44]

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[42]Louis B. Pascoe, Jean Gerson: Principles of Church Reform, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 7 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 22.

[43]Ibid., p. 28.

[44]Gratsch, Where Peter Is, p. 101.

which is the body of the faithful and at that time he became an advocate for papal primacy.

Although conciliarism was no longer a popular topic by the second half of the fifteenth century, Gabriel Biel (1425-1495) of the University of Tubingen still advocated for it. While submitting to the view that the pope, being the vicar of Christ, is the head of the church and, therefore, merits complete obedience, Biel sustained the view that the council is of a higher order than the pope. He argued that

> The fathers (of a council) are convened from all parts of the world to define and discern catholic truth; in this action they represent the true church. In this sense of the word the church is the highest tribunal on earth with authority over every single person . . . , even if he were the pope himself.[45]

However, in the absence of any schism, conciliarism was no more a live issue by the end of the fifteenth century. With the papacy strengthened once again, the focus of church unity turned again to papalism. As a representative of papalism of this age, Cardinal Thomas de Vio (1468-1534), commonly known as Cajetan, was a prominent figure. For him, "a council represents the church which is a body with a head. The head of the council, the pope, represents Christ, the head of the church, and the body of the council represents the body of the church."[46] The pope, though a part of the entire church, is bestowed with the total power of the church as the vicar of Christ. Cajetan was, in fact, revitalizing the scholastic notion of the relationship

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[45]Biel's words quoted by Heiko Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 416.

[46]Summary of Cajetan's viewpoint made by Gratsch, Where Peter Is, p. 104.

between Christ and the pope and between the pope and the church, although the political conception of the corpus mysticum was not particularly emphasized.

Finally, the Fifth Lateran Council was convened between 1512 and 1517 and adopted the papal bull which announced that "only the Roman Pontiff, having authority over all councils, has full authority and power to convoke, transfer and conclude councils."[47] The idea of a constitutional papacy was clearly an illusion and the hope of any of those long-awaited reforms associated with it vanished at the same time.[48]

This situation points to the need of a new ecclesiology that can provide a basis for reform. Leff has pointed out that ever since Marsilius of Padua the ideal of the apostolic church was the motivation behind most of the anti-papalists of the late Middle Ages.[49] Marsilius himself, driven by the purity of the early church, emphasized the spiritual nature of the church. The conciliar fathers also touched on the invisible nature of the church and argued that the 'bride of Christ' was represented not by the pope but by the totality of the faithful. However, the shadow of the Augustinian tradition prevented them from going further, making the reform efforts of the late Middle Ages ineffective.

It was amid such a background that Luther disseminated his

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[47]Papal Bull Pastor aeternus of Leo X quoted by Gratsch, Where Peter Is, p. 105.

[48]Oakley, Western Church, p. 79.

[49]Leff, "Apostolic Ideal," p. 71.

ninety-five theses. Also, against the conflict between papalism and conciliarism, Luther, in anticipation of the papal sentence, appealed in 1518 from the judgement of the pope to that of a future general council.

Discipline in the Late Middle Ages

The Use of Excommunication in Church Courts

Originally, the act of excommunication was part of the penance of repentant sinners.[50] As such, in the Middle Ages, it was part of the satisfaction performed by a repentant member of the church who voluntarily submits to the church's public penitential procedure.

However, from the seventh century onwards, it gradually developed into a canonical disciplinary procedure. As a result, by the High Middle Ages and for centuries afterward, the act of excommunication became an ecclesiastical punishment applied not to repentant but to impenitent sinners. From a voluntary act it became a coercive procedure.

During the Middle Ages, judicial duties were assigned to the bishops who were to function as rulers and pastors of their clergy and people. Ecclesiastical courts were set up for this purpose parallel to those of the civil authority. These courts dealt with offenses against moral laws as well as disputes among individuals. Very often, the church authority had to make judgments in civil cases where agreement could not be reached.[51]

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[50]F. X. Lawlor, "Excommunication," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., vol. 5, p. 704; C. A. Kerin, "Excommunication, Canonical," Ibid., p. 705.

[51]Colin Morris, "Consistory Courts in the Middle Ages," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 14 (October 1963):150-51.

Between ecclesiastical jurisdiction and civil jurisdiction, the medieval man generally preferred the former. It was pointed out that there was often the advantages of quick and wise decision, plus the advantage of its power of execution through excommunication.

> Excommunication was used frequently in the fourteenth and especially in the fifteenth century not just as a punishment but as a means of coercion. Failure to obey a summons to appear before an ecclesiastical court was revenged in this way and the culpit thereby forced to submit. Debtors were also frequently excommunicated so that debtors were prosecuted by preference in ecclesiastical courts.[52]

Thus, church courts eventually became an integral part of medieval jurisdiction. Its focus also steadily drifted away from the original spiritual concerns of the church. It developed to such a degree that a visitor from the apostolic age would have been dismayed and astonished.[53]

The Execution of Discipline

As a coercive disciplinary action, excommunication was often executed with a close cooperation between the church and state authorities, the two working hand in hand to achieve its purpose. Practices were developed throughout Europe where offenders would be punished by both the church and state. The following illustrations helped to demonstrate this phenomenon which became a general practice towards the end of the Middle Ages.

In Swabia, if a person were excommunicated by the ecclesiastical

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[52]Hartmut Zapp, "Diocesan Jurisdiction: An Historical Survey," in Judgment in the Church, ed. William Bassett and Peter Huizing (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p. 15.

[53]Morris, "Consistory Courts," p. 159.

judge and remained in that condition for more than six weeks, he would be outlawed by the secular judge. Likewise, any person outlawed by the secular judge would be subjected to excommunication by the ecclesiastical judge.[54]

In Medieval England, since the tenth century anybody who was excommunicated and who did not adopt measures, within forty days, to obtain absolution from the church would be handed over by the bishops to the royal officers. The state officers would cast him into prison until he had given satisfaction to the church and obtained absolution.

A similar practice was in force in France since the thirteenth century where a secular judge would impose temporal punishments on the excommunicated who remain obstinate for over a year.

This cooperation was smooth as long as the church and state relation was smooth. As national authorities came to power while the papacy was busy with the internal struggles for supremacy, confusion and tension often arose in the late medieval centuries. The power of jurisdiction thus became an integral part of the church and state struggle in this era.

Conclusion

Augustine's emphasis on the visible aspects of the church dominated the medieval ecclesiology, even in the late Middle Ages. With the rise of scholasticism and the outstanding administrative abilities of popes such as Innocent III, the papacy became a dominant power, both

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[54]This and the following examples are listed in M. Gosselin, The Power of the Popes During the Middle Ages, vol. 2 (London: C. Dolman, 1853), pp. 88-92.

in the civil and in the ecclesiastical realms. Its authority was exercised with little opposition until the appearance of conciliarism from the inside and strong national states from the outside.

During the late Middle Ages, the church, in a theological sense, was viewed as a hierarchy. The pope's office was regarded as divine, its authority being given directly by Christ. Papalism, the main stream of medieval ecclesiology, accorded supreme primacy to the papal machinery and regarded the pope as the highest authority. Serious objection appeared with the rise of conciliar thinking which placed primary emphasis on the councils of the universal church as the true and unerring representation of the church of God. Although conciliarism did flourish for a short while during the great schism papalism prevailed. The bull 'Execrabilis' of Pope Pius II[55] in 1460 clearly indicated the decline of conciliarism. This implies the triumph of the Augustinian tradition which emphasized in its ecclesiology the visible aspects of the church.

Politically, the rise of national powers posed a real problem for the papalists who wanted to maintain the pope's authority in temporal affairs as well. However, internal problems had pushed the popes to make concessions to the princes. On the eve of the Reformation the papacy was no longer a political power as in the High Middle Ages.

Religiously, the church also lost its leadership as the spiritual guide for the people. Internal chaos led to the increase of moral abuses. As a result, by the end of the fifteenth century, the church's

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[55]For the text of the bull, see Bettenson, ed., Documents, p. 136.

efficacy as a system of piety was challenged by both the laity and clergy.[56] The under-currents of the Lollards in England and the Hussites in Bohemia were typical examples of the decline of papal authority and religious prestige. These movements, heretical from the Roman point of view, also illustrated the political and religious unrest during the late Middle Ages.

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[56]Ozment, Age of Reform, p. 205.

CHAPTER III

LUTHER'S VIEW ON THE CHURCH

Martin Luther began his career as a reformer within the Holy Roman Catholic Church under the papacy. He was a sincere member of this church which had developed into a hierarchical institution when he rediscovered the meaning of justification by faith. Luther came to master this truth without the help of any popes or councils of that institution. As he moved on to develop his own doctrine of the church, he actually antagonized these recognized pillars of the established church. Before going into the various aspects of his ecclesiology, it is appropriate to discern the two major themes present both in his theology in general and in his ecclesiology in particular. These themes are important because they justified his break from the Roman hierarchy of which he was once a devout member.

The Central Themes of Luther's Ecclesiology

The Centrality of the Word

The word, to Luther, is the very foundation of the church. This he taught as early as 1513 to 1515 in his lectures on the Psalms. "The church is built on the word of the gospel, which is the word of divine wisdom and virtue: just as the world, too, is visible, created from the

beginning in the word and wisdom of God."[1] Therefore, according to Luther's understanding, the church is established chiefly on the basis of the word of God which to him means the gospel of God.

This emphasis on the key role of the word was maintained throughout Luther's entire career. In 1521, in Defensoris Silvestri Prieratis Acerrimi, Luther insisted that

> The Gospel is the one most certain and noble mark of the church, more so than Baptism and the Lord's Supper, since the church is conceived, fashioned, nurtured, born, reared, fed, clothed, graced, strengthened, armed and preserved solely through the Gospel. In short, the entire life and being of the church lie in the Word of God.[2]

In 1534 (Commentary on Isaiah 1-39), Luther reiterated this emphasis.

> Wherever this Gospel is truthfully and purely preached, there is the kingdom of Christ, and this mark of the church or the kingdom of Christ cannot deceive you. For wherever the Word is, there the Holy Spirit is, either in the hearer or in the teacher. . . . For the Word has ever been the one constant and infallible mark of the church.[3]

It is, therefore, the preaching of the word that brings sinners into true fellowship with Christ and this word alone gives believers the common privilege and calling that make them the church of God.

This conviction about the centrality of the Word forced Luther to reevaluate the nature of the church. Although he remained a faithful member of the Roman Church until the turbulent years from 1517-1521 the

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[1]Martin Luther, D. Martin Luther's Works, 58 vols., (Weimar: H. Bohlau, 1883-), 4:189 (hereafter cited as WA); Luther's Works, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-), 11:341 (hereafter cited as LW). This translation taken from H. A. Preus, The Communion of Saints: A Study of the Development of Luther's Doctrine of the Church (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948), p. 47.

[2]WA 7:721.

[3]WA 25:97; LW 16:27.

result of his reflection on the nature of the church, based on the word of God, rendered the divorce with the papacy unavoidable.

The Church as a communio sanctorum

While the word of God provides the basis, the nature of the church as a communion of saints is the issue that directly caused Luther's revolt against the papacy. The medieval discussion between papalism and conciliarism focussed mainly on the church's institutional aspect--the headship of the visible church--whether the church should be under a single head or a corporate head. The church's nature as a communion was totally neglected. Although John Wyclif of England and John Hus of Bohemia advocated the concept of the church as the totality of those predestined to be saved these voices were condemned by the medieval church as heretical. The hierarchically organized church under the pope, assisted by the bishops and priests and obeyed by the people, left no room for the concept of communion to be developed.

During the medieval period the term communio sanctorum was regarded as an objective genitive referring to the act of participating in or sharing of holy things, sanctorum being a neuter noun in this case.[4] Although the church was also termed the corpus Christi mysticum, the domination of the moralistic principle that everyone must first of all take care of himself distorted this body concept of the church.[5] Eventually, the idea of corpus mysticum became meaningful only in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper where it was contrasted to the

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[4]Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 294.

[5]Ibid., pp. 302-3.

corpus verum which signifies the body of Christ present in the elements of the sacrament. The significance of the body of Christ as a communion was thus overlooked. The idea of communio sanctorum as the participation in the benefits of salvation through the offering or the sacrifice of Christ in the sacrament became the standard interpretation and this concept was virtually unchallenged until the emergence of the reformation in the sixteenth century.

As early as 1519, Luther already rejected the idea of the church as a hierarchy. Describing the church as a communio sanctorum in the subjective genitive sense, Luther took sanctorum as masculine to mean a communion of saints.[6]

> This confession of faith firmly stands: "I believe a holy church, the communion of saints," not, as some are now dreaming, "I believe a holy church which consists of prelates or anything else they fabricate." All the world confesses to believe that the holy catholic church is nothing but the communion of saints (De Potestate Papae, 1519).[7]

Luther understood this communion as an organism, not an act of participation. "For the church is an organism, like the union of body and soul, and has members. A hand that has been cut off does not live, does not adhere to the body"[8] (Commentary on John 7 and 8, 1530-1532).

Such a radical change in the understanding of the term was also acknowledged in his dislike of the word Kirche. He used the word Kirche to represent the church only a few times in his translation of the Old Testament. With the New Testament, Luther translated the Greek

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[6]Ibid., pp. 294-95.

[7]WA 2:190.

[8]WA 33:459; LW 23:288.

and Latin ecclesia with the German Gemeinde which expresses strongly the idea of a communion. Similarly, the word Kirche was also absent in the explanation of the Third Article of his Large Catechism of 1529.[9] Replacing the concept of an institution with that of the body Luther focussed on the church's nature as a communion. "The church is the number or the gathering of the baptized and the believers under one pastor, whether this is in one city or in one province or in the whole world"[10] (Propositiones adversus totam Synagogam Sathamae et universas portas inferorum, 1530).

This was also in accord with his conviction of the centrality of the word. As the Holy Spirit works through the same word of God throughout the world, so the church is being gathered into a single communion under the same Christ.

> I believe that throughout the whole wide world there is only one holy, universal, Christian church, which is nothing other than the gathering or congregation of saints--pious believers on earth. This church is gathered, preserved, and governed by the same Holy Spirit and is given daily increase by means of the sacraments and the Word of God (Personal Prayer Book, 1522).[11]

Luther, through the various disputations on the papacy, especially the one in Leizig, realized that if the church were to stand on the word alone, the papal conception of the church as a hierarchy must be replaced with the idea of a communion. This he did in the treatise On the Councils and the Church in 1539.

> If the words, "I believe that there is a holy Christian people," had been used in the children's creed, all the misery connected

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[9]See Althaus, Theology, p. 288 note 8 for details.

[10]WA 30, 2, p. 421.

[11]WA 10, 2, p. 393; LW 43:28.

> with this meaningless and obscure word (church) might easily have been avoided. For the words "Christian holy people" would have brought with them, clearly and powerfully, the proper understanding and judgement of what is, and what is not, church.[12]

Replacing the institutional concept of the church with the communion concept did not mean for Luther the introduction of an abstract idea of the church. On the contrary, the church as a communion is a concrete reality actualized in day to day life situations. This reality is best expressed in the Lord's Supper.

Rejecting the Roman understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice, Luther tied the significance of the sacrament to the nature of the church as a communion of saints. His thesis was well presented in the 1519 treatise on the Blessed Sacrament of the True Body and Blood of Christ. In this document he stated that

> . . . the holy sacrament is just this, a divine sign whereby Christ and all His saints together with all their works, sufferings, merits, graces, and benefits are promised, given, and dedicated for the comfort and strengthening of all who are in anxiety and sorrow.[13]

As Regin Prenter has pointed out, Luther spoke of the sacrament "as one which both illustrates and effects a spiritual reality."[14] This reality, which is the purpose of the Lord's Supper, is the communion of saints.

In Luther's own words, "The significance of this sacrament is the fellowship of all saints. . . . Thus to receive this sacrament in bread and wine is precisely this, to receive an unerring sign of this

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[12] WA 50:625; LW 41:144.

[13] WA 2:749; LW 35:60.

[14] Regin Prenter, "The Lord's Supper," in More About Luther (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1958), p. 105.

fellowship and incorporation with Christ and all saints" (The Blessed Sacrament, 1519).[15] Evidently, the Lord's Supper, in Luther's mind, is an external sign that carries the internal significance of the church as a communion of saints. This communion of saints, in Luther's mind, was thus neither an abstract idea nor the equivalence of localized congregations but rather the sum total of believers gathered together by the word of God to become a communion which manifests itself through concrete signs such as the Lord's Supper.

The communion of saints, grounded on the word of God, is what Luther meant to be the true church of God.

The Various Aspects of Luther's Ecclesiology

The Visible Yet Spiritual Church

How Luther's church fit into the Augustinian tradition is still very much debated. There are those who hold that the medieval church regarded itself as an institutional hierarchy while Luther, in revolt against the papacy, took the true church as the invisible body of Christ. As a typical example, Erwin R. Gane contends that the church of Luther is basically invisible. "It seems to be the consensus of scholarly opinion that Luther viewed the church as a spiritual, invisible communion of believers."[16] Although he supports his statement by quoting J. W. Allen, L. W. Spitz, and E. G. Schwiebert his conclusion is one-sided.

Luther did speak about a church that cannot be seen. "The exist-

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[15]WA 2:743; LW 35:50-51.

[16]Erwin R. Gane, "Luther's View of Church and State," Andrews University Seminary Studies 8 (July 1970):121.

ence of the church is an article of faith, for it is apprehended by faith, not by sight" (Table Talk, 1969).[17] "This article: I believe one holy, Christian Church, is an article of faith as well as the rest. . . . This article must be attained by faith, and faith pertains to that which we do not see" (Preface to the Revelation of St. John, 1530).[18] However, the church, though invisible to human eyes, is visible to faith. In other words, the invisible nature of the church is only caused by its spiritual nature. Luther continued in the previous quote that "God hides the church in astounding ways, now by sins, now by dissensions and errors, now by infirmity, offenses, deaths of the pious" (Table Talk, 1969).[19]

The invisible church of Luther is therefore better called the hidden church. It is invisible because of its nature as a communion and not an institution, but "the community is visible because of its confession of faith" (Disputasio D. Iohannis Machabaei Scoti, 1542).[20] Luther, therefore, is speaking not of an invisible body in distinction from a visible church, but rather that "the one and the same church of Christendom is both invisible and visible, hidden and at the same time revealed--in different dimensions."[21]

Wilhelm Niesel arrives at the same conclusion in analysing Luther's view on the nature of faith. He points out that the true

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[17] WA T 2, no. 1969.

[18] WA DB 7:418; LW 35:410.

[19] WA T 2, no. 1969.

[20] WA 39, 2, p. 161.

[21] Althaus, Theology, p. 293.

church of Luther "is not an idea of the church existing somewhere beyond the phenomenal world, but is here on earth, only we are unable to determine its boundaries because none of us can recognize with certainty the faith of others."[22] C. Cyril Eastwood rightly observes that Luther strongly emphasized the holiness of believers as rooted in the holiness of Christ, the only true head of the church. The invisible nature of the church is thus caused by its hiddenness in Christ, yet

> The church is visible in its functions--in its ministry and sacraments; it is invisible in the sense that the essence of the church (holiness) is never contemplated in believers but in Christ. It is not something to be seen, but to be heard in the Word proclaimed to faith. While the fellowship of believers is real, it is none the less hidden in the world. . . . The true church is present and active in the world, but a veil surrounds it, and this veil is pierced only through faith. Faith recognizes the church as the fellowship of true believers[23]

Thus, Luther was not advocating an invisible church in the Platonic sense. Any interpretation of the invisible church of Luther in this sense is a grave error. His church is a visible communion of saints which is hidden in nature because it is born of the word of God. It is therefore more appropriate to call this communion of saints a spiritual body which is the body of Christ consisting of all believers, a visible reality that can be discerned by faith.[24]

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[22]Wilhelm Niesel, The Gospel and the Churches (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 244.

[23]C. Cyril Eastwood, "Luther's Conception of the Church," Scottish Journal of Theology 11 (March 1958):26.

[24]Eugene F. Klug, "Luther's Understanding of 'Church' in His Treatise 'On the Councils and the Church of 1539,'" Concordia Theological Quarterly 44 (January 1980):29.

The Marks of the Church

Since the church of Luther is a concrete reality that can be recognized, Luther was very emphatic in the doctrine of the notae ecclesiae. The 1539 treatise On the Councils and the Church[25] is important in this aspect as it dealt with the nature of the church and its marks in great detail.

According to Luther, the church of God is genuine but not because of the councils and the church fathers. Councils are good in protecting the church from error, yet they have no authority to create new articles of faith.[26] Thus, the church of God depends on the word alone and because of this he listed in the 1539 treatise seven marks of the church: possession of the holy word of God; the holy sacrament of baptism; the holy sacrament of the altar; the office of the keys which, to Luther, means the forgiveness of sins; the public ministry; the offering of prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God; and the sacred cross which means the suffering of Christians for the sake of the gospel.[27]

Primarily, in these seven marks the word and the sacraments occupy a significant role. In a sermon of the same year (1539) Luther insisted that

> The church is recognized not by external peace but by the Word and the sacraments. For wherever you see a small group that has the true Word and the sacrament, there the church is if only the pulpit and the baptismal font are pure. The church does not stand on the

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[25] WA 50:509-663; LW 41:3-178.

[26] Klug, "Luther's 'Church'," p. 34. Klug analyses Luther's arguments in his 1539 treatise where he concluded that it is the scripture rightly understood that makes the councils meaningful so that none of the councils was as reliable as the word of God.

[27] WA 50:628-30; LW 41:148-50.

> holiness of any one person but solely on the holiness and righteousness of the Lord Christ, for He has sanctified her by Word and Sacrament.[28]

In an earlier treatise of 1520 (On the Papacy in Rome, against the Most Celebrated Romanist in Leipzig), Luther already asserted that "the external marks by which we can know where the church is in the world are baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the gospel."[29] His lectures on Genesis (1541-1542) expressed the same attitude.

> The Word of God makes the church; it is lord over all places. Wherever it is heard, wherever Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution are administered, you should certainly believe and conclude: Here assuredly is the house of God, here Heaven stands open. But as the Word is not bound to any place, neither is the church.[30]

Luther's seven signs are thus an expansion of the word and the sacraments, both being pillars in his thought, maintained consistently throughout his career. Luther also commented on the external signs of holy seasons, pulpits, altars and so on in the 1539 treatise and concluded that these can never be sure signs of the church.

Luther also omitted the performance of believers as a sign of the church. It is noteworthy that the mission of the church was not stressed at all in the 1539 treatise. He was fully devoted to the identification of the church as God's people, a communion of believers which is the body of Christ. This body identifies itself through the word and sacraments. As the believers submit themselves regularly to the word and sacraments they will eventually carry out the will of God.

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[28] WA 47:556.

[29] WA 6:301; LW 39:75.

[30] WA 43:596; LW 5:244.

This confidence in the positive function of the word of God explains his omission of the performance of Christians in the doctrine of the notae ecclesiae.

The Necessity of the Church

While Luther was radical in his understanding of the nature of the church, he was catholic in his recognition of its necessity.

As the church is a faith community and justification comes only through faith, Luther naturally concluded that there is no salvation outside this communion of saints. In the Personal Prayer Book of 1522, he proclaimed that "I believe that no one can be saved who is not in this gathering or community. . . . I believe that there is forgiveness of sin nowhere else than this community and that beyond it nothing can help to gain it."[31] In defending his view on Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper, he again asserted in the 1528 treatise Confession Concerning Christ's Supper that

> In this Christian church, wherever it exists, is to be found the forgiveness of sins, that is, a kingdom of grace and of true pardon. For in it are found the Gospel, baptism, and the sacrament of the altar, in which the forgiveness of sins is offered, obtained, and received. Moreover, Christ and His Spirit are there. Outside this Christian church there is no salvation, or forgiveness of sins, but everlasting death and damnation.[32]

As the reality of the communion of saints was to be expressed in the Lord's Supper, so the forgiveness of sins that comes with the sacrament was also available only in this communion. He even followed the Augustinian tradition by calling the church the mother of souls and whoever

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[31] WA 10, 2, p. 394; LW 43:28.

[32] WA 26:507; LW 37:368.

wants to obtain salvation must obtain it through the church that bears the marks listed above (Sermon on the Creed, 1528).[33]

> Therefore he who wants to find Christ must find the church. . . . The church is not the wood and stone but the assembly of people who believe in Christ. With this church one should be connected and see how the people believe, live and teach. They certainly have Christ in their midst, for outside the Christian church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation (Gospel for the Early Christmas Service, 1522).[34]

For Luther, the church is a necessity because "the reality of the church is an essential part of man's relationship to Christ."[35] In other words, personal faith cannot be separated from the reality of the church. The church as a communion of saints is essential to one's faith and it is in such a community that truth, Christ and salvation exist.

The Ministry and the Laity

Luther declared that "through baptism we have all been ordained as priests" (To the Christian Nobility, 1520)[36] because of Christ. "Since he is a priest and we are his brethren, all Christians have the power and must fulfill the commandment to preach and to come before God with our intercessions for one another and to sacrifice ourselves to God" (Commentary on I Peter, 1523).[37] In another word, all Christians

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[33] WA 30, 1, p. 91; LW 51:166.

[34] WA 10, 1, p. 140; LW 52:39-40.

[35] Althaus, Theology, p. 287.

[36] WA 6:407; The Works of Martin Luther, 6 vols., The Philadelphia Edition (Reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), 2:66 (hereafter cited as Phil. Ed.); LW 44:127.

[37] WA 12:308; LW 30:54.

are made priests with Christ. It is a universal priesthood that requires no additional ordination. Referring to the role of a Christian, Luther asserted that

> He must be born a priest and bring it with him as the inheritance with which he has been born. The birth of which I am speaking is the birth of water and the Spirit. Through this all Christians become priests of a great high priest, children of Christ and fellow heirs with him (Concerning the Ministry, 1523).[38]

Since the church consists of all believers and all believers are priests after Christ, it follows that the reality of the church as a community of priests can properly be expressed through the universal priesthood of all believers.[39]

Luther also enumerated the seven rights of the universal priesthood in the 1523 treatise Concerning the Ministry.[40] These rights confirm Luther's conviction of the church as a reality of the communion of saints and that the universal priesthood enabled all Christians to come before God for their brethren.

However, Luther, in the same treatise, also emphasized a specific ministry in addition to the universal priesthood.

> For it is one thing to exercise the right publicly; another to use it in time of emergency. Publicly one may not exercise a right without the consent of the whole body of the church. In time of emergency each may use it as he deems best.[41]

On the public preaching of the word Luther limited it to those who were

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[38] WA 12:178-79; LW 40:19-20.

[39] Althaus, Theology, p. 314.

[40] WA 12:169-96; LW 40:3-44. These are: to preach the word of God, to baptize, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to minister the office of the keys, to pray for others, to sacrifice, to judge doctrine and distinguish spirits.

[41] WA 12:189; LW 40:34.

called by the community to preach and only in special cases was an uncalled individual allowed to preach publicly.[42] While all believers are virtually priests the ministry is still a specific office to be filled only with a proper call. This is understandable in view of the many sectarian enthusiasts who gathered around themselves small groups of people who refused to identify with the conception of a true church such as Luther's.

This called ministry was a prominent feature in Luther's ecclesiology as it preserves his conviction of the universal priesthood of all believers and yet maintains the esteemed role of the ministry apart from the hierarchical concept of the papacy. "The ministry of the word is the highest office in the church, it is unique and belongs to all who are Christians, not only by right but by command" (Concerning the Ministry, 1523).[43] He was able to differentiate between these two in his 1520 treatise The Babylonian Captivity of the Church:

> Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the power of the community or by the call of the superior. For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.[44]

The ministry was also a necessity according to Luther's understanding of the nature of the church. Since the communion of saints exists as a result of the proclamation of the word, this communion,

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[42] To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (1520); WA 6:408; Phil. Ed. 2:68; LW 44:130.

[43] WA 12:181; LW 40:23.

[44] WA 6:566; LW 36:116.

therefore, cannot exist without the exterior word which must be preached. Hence the communion of saints cannot exist without the ministry. However, the ministry, according to Luther, was never elevated above the body, but 'in' it. It is an office instituted by God, yet, set up through the call of the communion of saints. Thus, while the papacy places the hierarchy above the congregation and regards it as a special class, Luther sets the ministry in the congregation as a special office and not a class, thus abolishing any idea of a hierarchical structure within the church. Eastwood rightly concludes that

> The Gospel is the gracious will of God in relation to man. It is the task of the Ministry to make that gracious will known by proclaiming it. It does this not outside the congregation but within it, and in this way the Gospel is mediated through the congregation. So the Ministry becomes a function of the priesthood of all believers and not a hierarchical caste.[45]

The reality of the communion of saints becomes concrete, as a result, through the priesthood of all believers as well as through the called ministry. The former is universal while the latter is particular.

Ecclesiastical Discipline

Significantly, Luther's life in the monastery and his experience of failure in discipline during those days were crucial to his understanding of the role of discipline in the life of Christians. In his despair, he turned to faith rather than discipline as the basis of a right relation with God. James Raun notes that "outside discipline therefore lost its great appeal in the life of Luther. Authority or outward compulsion of any kind was not especially favoured by him."[46]

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[45]Eastwood, "Luther's Conception of the Church," pp. 24-25.

[46]James J. Raun, "Church Discipline: A Comparative Study of

As he found himself freed by the word of God the liberty which he then enjoyed became the sustaining factor in his life. Luther, therefore, viewed this liberty as the consequence of the preaching of the word which was far more important than discipline.[47]

Luther's Emphasis on Discipline

Yet, the negative tone assigned by Luther toward discipline does not mean that it has no place in the reformer's mind. In practical terms, Luther was very much concerned about discipline. Illustrating this concern, the 1523 Formula of Mass and Communion stated that

> Those who are about to commune are to announce to the bishop or the minister in charge that they want to partake of the Lord's Supper, so that he may know their names and their life [emphasis mine]. Then let him not admit the petitioners unless they give an account of their faith and reply to the question whether they know what the Lord's Supper is . . . then, when the minister in charge sees that they understand all these things, he should also note whether they prove this faith and knowledge by their life and conduct [emphasis mine]; that is, if he should see some gross sinner, let him absolutely exclude him from this Supper unless by some clear proof he has testified that his life is changed.[48]

Discipline was thus Luther's concern also, although it was never elevated above the gospel which remained throughout his life the most fundamental issue in his understanding of the Christian faith.

The Nature of the Ban

As a result of this concern, Luther still retained ecclesiastical discipline as a spiritual sword of the church. After dealing with the positive meaning of the Eucharist in 1519, Luther immediately touched

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Luther and Calvin," The Lutheran Church Quarterly 6 (January 1933):62.

[47]Ibid., p. 76.

[48]WA 12:205-7; Phil. Ed. 6:83-85; LW 53:19-21.

on the question of excommunication (in Sermon on the Ban, 1520) which is the negative counterpart of the doctrine. After affirming the sacrament as fellowship, Luther differentiated in this sermon between two kinds of fellowship.

> The first is an internal, spiritual and invisible fellowship of the heart, by which one is incorporated by true faith, hope and love in the fellowship of Christ and all the saints. . . . This fellowship can neither be given nor taken away by any one, be he bishop, pope, angel or any creature. . . . This fellowship no ban can touch or affect.[49]

In addition to this is another one.

> The second kind of fellowship is an outward, bodily and visible fellowship, by which one is admitted to the Holy Sacrament and receives and partakes of it together with others. From this fellowship or communion bishop and pope can exclude one, and forbide it to him on account of his sin, and that is called putting him under the ban.[50]

Generally, when Luther spoke of excommunication, he referred to this external ban. He even accepted the lesser and the greater ban, the former referring to the ban from the sacrament, the latter, the total prohibition from all kinds of associations in everyday life. On the purposes of excommunication, he continued that

> First, we should seek neither vengence nor our own profit . . . but only the correction of our neighbor. Second, the penalty should stop short of his death or destruction. . . . Since the ban is and can be nothing else than exclusion from the external sacrament or from association with men.[51]

Therefore, excommunication properly speaking

> is a sign, an admonition and a chastisement, whereby the one under the ban should recognize that he himself has delivered his soul unto Satan by his transgression and sin, and has deprived himself

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[49] WA 6:64; Phil. Ed. 2:37-38; LW 39:7.

[50] Ibid., LW 39:8.

[51] WA 6:65; Phil. Ed. 2:39; LW 39:9.

> of the fellowship of all the saints and of Christ. For by the penalty of the ban our mother, the holy Church, would show her dear son the awful consequence of sin and thereby bring him back from the devil to God.[52]

As such, excommunication could only affect the external fellowship. As far as discipline was concerned, the admission and exclusion from the Lord's Supper belonged to the external aspect of fellowship only and not the internal.

> Now no creature is able either to place a soul into the communion of the first, the spiritual sort, or to reconcile it when it has been excommunicated. Only God can do this. Just so no creature is able to take this communion from any soul or to excommunicate it. Only man can do this through his own sin (Sermo de virtue excommunicationis, 1518).[53]

Aa a result, Luther recommended in the 1520 sermon On the Ban that excommunication, the external ban, should be taken up with patience as it "is beneficial and salutary, and never injurious, if one endures it and does not despise it."[54]

The Execution of the Ban in the Church

When a person's adherence to the church was purely external and, at heart that person was no longer a Christian, Luther insisted on the exercise of church discipline and, where necessary, the use of excommunication. In the ten theses on excommunication submitted for disputation in 1521, Luther reaffirmed that only one's own sin can cut himself away from the church. However, the external sign of the ban acted as a sign which confirmed the internal reality of the loss of communion with

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[52] WA 6:66; Phil. Ed. 2:40-41; LW 39:10.

[53] WA 1:639.

[54] WA 6:71; Phil. Ed. 2:47; LW 39:17.

God. "A person who must be excommunicated because of the wickedness of his heart and public crimes is already cut off before he is visibly excommunicated" (Disputatio de excommunicationis, 1520).[55]

On the other hand, an excommunication wrongly executed can never destroy a Christian's faith which is always secure in the word of God. In this case, "An unjust excommunication does not harm him who is outwardly excommunicated but only him who has pronounced the excommunication."[56]

Luther was thus able to maintain his conviction of the church as the communion of saints while keeping the ban as a spiritual sword. The ban, being purely external can never interrupt the reality of the communion unless the person deliberately dissociated himself from it. His differentiation between the internal and external aspects of fellowship enabled him to preserve the centrality of faith in Christian life even though excommunication was being imposed upon an offender due to his life and conduct.

Faith, to Luther, is something indestructible. The church as a communion is created by this faith. By the same faith, the communion is able to share the grace of God in the Lord's Supper through which the entire church enjoys the reality of the body of Christ. The ban, when applied, only stopped a Christian from the benefits of the sacrament, not the reality of his Christian life.

This was a significant departure from the Roman understanding of the church's nature which, being headed by the pope as the vicar of

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[55] WA 7:236.

[56] Ibid.

Christ, actually controlled the reservation or distribution of salvation. While Luther also exercised the ban, he was able to preserve the fact of one's faith relationship to Christ. Such faith, because of his convictions in the nature of the church and the ban, is beyond any ban or excommunication.

Church and State

The Different Roles of the Church and the State

Since the church is a faith community, Luther accordingly limited the authority of the church to spiritual affairs only. In constrast, the state was responsible for temporal affairs.

> It is the work and the glory of the ministry to make real saints out of sinners, living souls out of the dead, saved souls out of the damned, children of God out of the servants of the devil. Just so it is the work and the glory of temporal government to make human beings out of wild beasts and to keep human beings from turning into wild beasts (Sermon on Keeping Children in School, 1530).[57]

The two should operate in different spheres and should never interfere with each other.

> The spiritual power is to reign only over the soul, seeing to it that it comes to baptism and the sacrament of the altar, to the Gospel and true faith, over which matters emperors and kings have no jurisdiction. They have no power to thrust my soul into hell or to raise it to heaven. Just so we clergymen have no command to take people by the neck if they will not listen to us. . . . We should learn to separate spiritual and temporal power from each other as far as heaven and earth, for the pope has greatly obscured this matter and has mixed the two powers (Commentary on Matthew 18:17).[58]

The medieval struggle for power between the church and state was a negative example for Luther who insisted on the separation of the two.

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[57] WA 30, 2, p. 555; LW 46:237.

[58] WA 47:284.

Two things are obvious from these words of Luther. Since these statements were made in the 1530s, they indicated that the medieval trend of local princes' domination in the church was still a live issue in those days. The principle of cuius regio, eius religio adopted by the Diet of Speyer in 1526 showed the state's influence on religious affairs. Luther had to fight constantly against this trend to maintain his ideal of the separation of church and state. The reformer, however, was unsuccessful as the German reformation eventually resulted in a state church.

Secondly, Luther obviously attached a negative tone toward the government's function. It has been pointed out that Luther had a tendency to regard law, state and other similar institutions as merely restraining forces.[59] Thus, the state, to Luther, was only an agency for preserving order and not a positive means to gain progress. While the church had the goal to turn sinners into saints, the state was assigned the task to keep citizens from becoming beasts. "This preoccupation with the negative function of the state led Luther to over emphasize . . . the necessary harshness of all political action. As a result Luther understood law one-sidedly as penal law."[60] While this conclusion may have overstated the matter, Luther's negative attitude toward discipline is somehow related to his attitude of the state.

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[59]H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 188.

[60]L. H. Weems, Jr., "Martin Luther's Thought and Contemporary Church-State Relations," Perkins Journal 31 (Summer 1978):24.

The State's Involvement in the Church

Although Luther insisted on the separation of church and state, he did not mean the latter's autonomy from the sovereignty of God. Luther was convinced that God causes everything through His word and the state is no exception.[61]

The state, therefore, carried with it a religious obligation in that it was always under the sovereign authority of God. Since the church is the body of Christ that has inherited the word of God, it follows that the state has a moral responsibility to the spiritual body of Christ. "The separation of the church and state . . . in such a way that the state and politics are released from any obligation to the church and the spiritual regime is at odds with the total structure of Luther's thought."[62]

This was also the underlying principle behind Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms. His doctrine was directed towards the question of the relation between God and the two regimes, not between man and the two realities. It is important to see both regimes as subordinate to the same God revealed in Jesus Christ and His word.

> He realistically accepts the fact that there are two seemingly contradictory forces for good in the world. The one functions in the interests of peace and order, the other converts and redeems men. One uses coercive means to attain its ends, the other renounces all force save the force of love. Neither can dispense with the other.[63]

However, this ideal did not develop into reality. As the theo-

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[61]See, for instance, WA 31, 1, p. 78; LW 14:52.

[62]Edgar M. Carlson, "Luther's Conception of Government," Church History 15 (December 1946):268.

[63]Ibid., p. 260-61.

logical and administrative differences and difficulties grew to a point beyond control, Luther felt the need to involve the state to maintain peace and order in the church. The decision of the Diet of Speyer of 1526 also provided the impetus for the state's involvement in ecclesisiastical affairs. These were the factors that led to the Saxon Visitations in 1527-1528.[64] It marked the first clear step toward permiting princes and magistrates to wield final authority in the regulation of church life in sixteenth century German Lutheranism and this soon became the standard model of reform in other Lutheran lands.

Two factors are important in this development. First, Luther did not desire such a solution to the problem. He always insisted that the state had no special rights in spiritual matters. The initiating role of the prince was intended to be temporary--the prince was merely a Notbischof.[65] Yet this did not change the fact of state dominance of the church.

Secondly, the political situation in Germany greatly assisted this developing trend. The local princes were already having an increasingly greater degree of power and control in their churches prior to the reformation. Assistance from the political regime to restore the church back to the right course was a natural measure. The princes were also eager to secure their influence in ecclesiastical affairs. This was the background when Luther advised Philip of Hesse to abandon

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[64]For further details about the visitation, see Harold J. Grimm, The Reformation Era 1500-1650 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1973), pp. 127-29.

[65]See WA 26:196-98; LW 40:263-65. See also the discussions by L. W. Spitz, "Luther 's Ecclesiology and His Concept of the Prince as Notbischof," Church History 22 (June 1953):113-41.

the proposed democratic model of church government and to adopt the visitation model. It was necessary in view of the actual situations,[66] both inside the church and outside.

Why Luther permitted this trend of church polity to develop in a direction against his choice is of more significance. Wentz points out that it is not enough to say that Luther was powerless to change the matter, because he was bold enough to resist the Roman Church a decade previously when it then seemed all-powerful. He observes rightly that the difference lies in the nature of the matter as Luther saw it.

> He did not feel that faith and doctrine were involved. Organization belonged rather to that area of life wherein Christians must primarily show obedience and suffer whatever befalls, so long as the pure Word is unhindered in its expression.[67]

As long as the princes acted as Christian laymen exercising the common right of believers and that state involvement was temporary, Luther was willing to accept this arrangement as an earthly and not divine prerogative.

State control of the church, therefore, was not Luther's intention. Grimm rightly points out that "if Luther could have carried out his conception of the Church as a spiritual communion . . . there would have been no state control of the church in Saxony or the other Lutheran lands."[68] Luther even consistently attacked the attempt of state control of the church.[69] Although he did not live to see a

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[66] See Grimm, Reformation Era, pp. 128-29.

[67] F. K. Wentz, "The Development of Luther's Views on Church Organization," The Lutheran Quarterly 7 (August 1955):230.

[68] Grimm, Reformation Era, p. 127.

[69] See, for instance, WA 28:295.

reversal of this trend, Luther was amazingly consistent in his approach to the entire problem of church and state.

Some Observations on Luther's Ecclesiology

A Catholic as well as Radical Approach

It would be unfair to see Luther merely as a revolutionary. This is because he had retained many catholic elements in his thought. While his conviction of the church as a communion of saints represents a departure from the medieval viewpoint, this was nevertheless already implied in the creeds of the apostolic church. What Luther did was to remove those traditions that had obscured the word of God so that the pure, undistorted tradition of the apostles could be readily comprehended by the faithful Christians.

Apart from his insistence on the church as the mother of souls outside which there is no salvation, Luther also followed the catholic way of defining the church as one, holy catholic church. Yet, Luther was eager to refute the false identification of this true church of Christ with the church at Rome. Thus he stated in 1520 (A Brief Explanation of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer) that

> I believe that there is no more than one holy catholic Christian church upon earth anywhere in the world; and this is nothing else than the community or gathering (Gemeinde) of the saints, the righteous and believing men upon the earth.[70]

and, in The Papacy at Rome of the same year, that "The holy church is not bound to Rome, but is gathered in one faith throughout the whole world."[71]

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[70] WA 7:219; Phil. Ed. 2:373.

[71] WA 6:300; Phil. Ed. 1:361; LW 39:75.

As a reformer, radical or otherwise, Luther cautiously proceeded with the necessary reforms, taking the word of God as the guide. This explains why he kept repeating the importance of the word in his doctrine of the church. "The most important holy possession of the Christian people, because of which it is called holy, is the holy word of God" (On the Councils and the Church, 1539).[72] This word of God enables him to become a radical and yet catholic reformer and his view on the nature of the church is a typical illustration of it.

A Christocentric Church

Emphasizing the word and sacraments as the true signs of the church, Luther also expressed his concern for the work of God in instituting the communion of saints. In the 1539 treatise On the Councils and the Church, Luther contended that

> Therefore the ecclesia, the holy Christian people, does not have mere external words, sacraments or offices, . . . but it has these as commanded, instituted, and ordained by God, so that he himself and not any angel will work through them with the Holy Spirit.[73]

And God works through his son Jesus Christ to effect this ecclesia. The result is a corpus Christi mysticum in which the believers and Christ are joined together in a mystical union.

> Just so Christ and we are now also become one flesh and blood, which we cannot separate. His flesh is in us and our flesh is in Him. He also dwells in us essentially. . . . It consists in this that Christ the Lord becomes one body with us through His flesh and blood, that I belong to Him as all the members of my body belong together (Commentary on John 6, 1530).[74]

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[72] WA 50:629; Phil. Ed. 5:270; LW 41:149.

[73] WA 50:647; LW 41:171.

[74] WA 33:232; LW 23:149.

The product of this union with Christ is the church and this also confirms his conviction of the nature of the church as a communion of saints and not a hierarchical institution.

The Significance of Faith

The ecclesiology of Augustine was the dominating thought in the medieval church until the fourteenth century when it appeared insufficient to resolve the situations created by the Great Schism. While Augustine also taught the co-existence of the visible and the invisible churches, he failed to account satisfactorily for the relation between the two.

Luther's ecclesiology reaffirmed the invisible nature of the church while retaining the visible aspect of it. He discovered the relation between the two in "faith." The church is at the same time visible and invisible. It is invisible because of its spiritual nature and yet visible through faith. Faith, therefore, becomes the connecting link between these two aspects of the church.[75] The problem left over from Augustine is thus resolved. It could be resolved because Luther discarded the traditional approach to ecclesiology from an institutional view and rediscovered its nature as a communion.

This is most obvious in Luther's view on the Lord's Supper. Since a visible sign as well as an invisible significance are involved in the sacrament, faith becomes the necessary link between the two. "The sacrament must be exterior and visible, in a material shape or figure. The significance must be interior and spiritual, . . . faith

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[75]See the discussion in Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), pp. 316-18.

must bring the two together for their purpose and use" (The Blessed Sacrament, 1519).[76]

Conclusion

Luther's ecclesiology represented a major breakthrough from the medieval understanding of the nature of the church. With the word and sacraments he restored the simple truth of the church as a communion of saints. This communion is, at the same time, visible and invisible. It is not an abstract idea void of reality. The Lord's Supper expresses this reality in that, through faith, all believers are joined together with Christ.

The doctrine of the universal priesthood and the insistence on a properly called ministry also maintain a balance within the church. The office of the ministry is still an esteemed role while it has no more connection with a dominating hierarchy.

The church and the state should operate in their own respective realms. The doctrine of the two kingdoms places both of them under the sovereignty of God. Where the princes were called to restore order within their churches, they were to function as temporary bishops in times of emergency only.

Church discipline is important because of its indispensable role in Christian life. Yet it cannot be a sure sign of the true church because the church rests on the word of God alone and not on human merits. Yet, this does not replace the need of ecclesiastical discipline in his thinking. Where necessary, excommunication would still be

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[76] WA 2:742; LW 35:45.

pronounced. However, it is only regarded as an external measure for the purpose of correction while the internal fellowship enjoyed by true believers is virtually unaffected by it.

These convictions caused him to proclaim the simple and yet important truth: "I believe that there is one holy Christian church on earth, that is the community or number or assembly of all Christians . . . , the one bride of Christ, and his spiritual body of which he is the only head" (Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, 1528).[77]

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[77] WA 26:506; LW 37:367.

CHAPTER IV

JOHANNES BRENZ AND THE STATE CHURCH

The Career of Johannes Brenz

Despite the preference of Luther to the contrary the German Protestantism subsequently developed into a state church. As one of the major founders of the state church in Germany, Johannes Brenz was important because he was the chief architect of the Lutheran church in the Duchy of Wurttemberg which eventually emerged as the model for German Lutheranism. As very few materials on the life of Brenz are available in English, a brief survey of his career is given here.[1]

The Early Years of Brenz

Brenz was born into a family that belonged to the governing elite of Weil der Stadt, a town near Stuttgart, on June 24, 1499. After attending schools at Weil der Stadt, Heidelberg and Vaihingen, he attended the University of Heidelberg where he earned his Master of Arts degree in 1518. During his years at Heidelberg, he was in close contact with a group of humanistically minded teachers and students, including Johannes Oecolampadius and Martin Bucer.

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[1]For a short biography of Brenz in English, see David C. Steinmetz, Reformers in the Wings (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), pp. 109-70 and James M. Estes, Christian Magistrate and State Church (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 3-17.

Confronted and deeply impressed by the teachings of Luther in the Heidelberg Disputation in April 1518, Brenz became an enthusiastic supporter of his cause. From then on Brenz began to lecture on the New Testament according to his newly acquired Lutheran understanding. So Lutheran were these lectures that Elector Ludwig V decided in 1522 to institute an investigation of Brenz and it was the call to serve as town pastor in Schwabisch Hall that enabled Brenz to escape the heresy trial that would have taken place if he had remained in Heidelberg.

Brenz's Ministry at Schwabisch Hall

Schwabisch Hall was an imperial city situated between Wurttemberg and Brandenburg-Ansbach. Here Brenz served as pastor at St. Michael's Church from 1522 to 1548 and introduced various reforms in a gradual yet decided manner. St. Michael's was under the patronage of the city council which was sympathetic to the new Lutheran doctrines and Brenz was thus able to proceed on his career as a reformer.

By 1527 Brenz was ready to introduce reforms to the entire city and rural territories and submitted to the city council a proposal entitled "Reformation of the Church in the Hall Territory." This proposal outlined Brenz's ideals concerning the reformation of the church. However, the city council was reluctant to introduce full scale reforms due to financial and political difficulties. Not until 1540 was the council able to stop the celebration of the mass in the rural churches and force all the pastors to observe the practices of the city churches. Brenz's efforts at Hall was virtually complete in 1543 when a new church order was published for the entire Hall city and territory.

The Later Years at Wurttemberg

With the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League and the enforcement of the Augsburg Interim, Brenz had to flee Hall in 1548 and lived in disguise under the protection of the Protestant princes until the Interim was abolished. In 1553 he was called by Duke Christopher of Wurttemberg to serve as the provost of the cathedral in Stuttgart. This appointment enabled Brenz to serve as the Duke's chief counsellor in ecclesiastical matters and he, therefore, became virtually the head of the Lutheran church in the entire duchy of Wurttemberg. From this time onward until his death in 1570, Brenz was able to introduce his version of the reformation in co-operation with the Duke.

The famous Great Church Order of 1559 summarized his convictions of the type of reform that was needed and this order actually molded ecclesiastical life in Wurttemberg for years to come after the reformer's death. In addition to the sections on Confessio Virtembergica and other ordinances dealing with worship, schools, marriages and welfare, the 1559 order also included a section on church government. This system devised by Brenz was his main contribution towards German Lutheranism, particularly in South Germany. By the time of his death, his system had already been adopted by several other German churches. These practices proposed by Brenz, together with his thinking behind them, expressed agreement as well as disagreement with Luther.

The Ecclesiology of Johannes Brenz

Basic Elements of Brenz's Ecclesiology

Basically, Brenz's view on the nature of the church was very much in agreement with that of Luther. As early as 1528, Brenz composed

both a Smaller and a Larger Catechism, one year before Luther's Small Catechism was published. The ninth article of the Larger Catechism intended for adults dealt with the church and manifested clearly Luther's influences.

Rejecting the notion of the church as the hierarchy, Brenz contended that the holy Christian church

> is a common congregation of the elect of God, who, although they are dispersed in various regions and in many dominions throughout the world, nevertheless are united with one another in one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.[2]

Such a statement displayed all the basic elements of Luther's ecclesiology. The communion aspect of the church was further spelled out in the following statement which explained the meaning of the word "church" in the German tongue as "an assembly, not of stone and wood, but of the people of God."[3] The nature of this assembly was spiritual because communio sanctorum meant to Brenz that "the saints have their divine possessions together and hold their inheritance in common as coheirs of a heavenly Father."[4] The medieval understanding of the church as participation in the holy things was entirely absent in Brenz's thinking.

In 1535 Brenz also composed a catechism for use at the Wurttemberg church. Apart from the article that reaffirmed his conviction of

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[2]This is quoted from the Catechismus maior of Johannes Brenz in E. V. Wills, "Johann Brenz's Large Catechism of 1528," Lutheran Quarterly 7 (May 1955):121-22. The original is available in F. Cohrs, "Die Evangelischen Katechismusversuche vor Luthers Enchiridion," Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica 22 (Berlin: A. Hoffmann & Co., 1901), pp. 159-85.

[3]Ibid., p. 122.

[4]Ibid.

the church as a communion of saints, Brenz also emphasized the central role of the word of God, understood by him as the "Holy Gospel," in the church. The "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" was regarded as the preaching of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ while the "ministry" was established by God primarily for the preaching of this holy gospel--the word of God as actualized in the promise of the forgiveness of sins.[5]

Although Brenz never systematically expounded on the doctrine of the church, his ecclesiology was in basic agreement with the teachings of Luther who, as the pioneer in the reformation movement, wrote far more extensively on the nature of the church.

Ecclesiastical Discipline

However, as an organizer of the church, first in the city of Schwabisch Hall and then in the entire duchy of Wurttemberg, Brenz contributed a lot in the actual working of the evangelical doctrines, particularly in the area of the administration of the church.

As pastor of the church, Brenz was concerned with the discipline of the church members. He realized that there were always some scandalous practices which the government did not punish and never had punished, and, yet, these the church could not ignore. Brenz described this situation in his own words as follows.

> The way of life among the people is so dissolute and undisciplined that a person who one night gets himself so full of wine that he has to be carried home, comes the very next morning, alleging that he will never do it again as long as he lives, and demands the sac-

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[5]See the Catechismus minor of Johannes Brenz for details. The original is available in Cohrs, "Katechismusversuche," pp. 146-58. An English translation is available in E. V. Wills, "Johann Brenz's Smaller Catechism of 1528," Lutheran Church Quarterly 19 (July 1946): 271-80.

> rament. If one withholds the sacrament from him for a week or so, he complains before God and man that he is being denied the sacrament. If one gives him the sacrament, he goes out that very night and gets just as drunk as he was the night before, but returns once more, promising never to do it again, until finally he is once again given the sacrament. So he lives perpetually in his intemperance . [6] . perpetually demanding grace and forgiveness without sincerity.

Obviously, the high view of the sacrament and the desire for proper administration of it forced Brenz to tackle the problem of discipline seriously.

Modelling on Matthew 18:15-17 Brenz proposed during his Schwabisch Hall ministry that a church court be set up to ensure that the congregation was regularly provided with the word of God and the sacraments, and that misconduct by any member of the congregation be dealt with accordingly.[7] Where necessary excommunication from the Lord's Supper must be exercised after private admonitions had failed to secure any improvement. As explained before, Brenz's ideals of church government at Hall were not fully implemented due to the prevailing political and social situations. However, he never gave up the emphasis on the need of discipline. In the Brandenburg-Nuremberg church order which Brenz composed in 1533 while still at Hall, he again insisted that "Those are to be excluded from the Communion who live in wilful error

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[6]Cited in James M. Estes, "Johannes Brenz and the Problem of Ecclesiastical Discipline," Church History 41 (December 1972):468. The original is in Theodor Pressel, ed., Anecdota Brentiana: Ungedruckte Briefe und Bedenken (Tubingen: Verlag von J. J. Heckenhauer, 1868), p. 117.

[7]This church order is available in A. L. Richter, ed., Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts, vol. 1 (Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Jndustriecomptoirs, 1846), pp. 40-49.

and heresy, or in open undeniable vice, or scorn the express Word of God."[8] His ideals of church government reappeared in the proposal for the Wurttemberg church order published in 1559 in a more well defined manner.

The 1559 order called for the provision of a consistory (Kirchenrat), which formed part of the chancery of the duke.[9] Throughout the territory superintendents were appointed to conduct visitations of all the parishes and to report the results to four general superintendents who would meet with the consistory to deliberate on the findings. As far as ecclesiastical discipline was concerned, the individual parish pastors were to admonish individual offenders on moral issues. If this failed, the case would be reported to the superintendent. If the superintendent was unable to achieve any improvement on the part of the offender, the matter would be reported to the consistory through the general superintendent and excommunication exercised where warranted.

It can be concluded that the ecclesiology of Brenz was developed after the teachings of Luther and included, however, a far more detailed elaboration on the aspect of discipline. While Brenz agreed with Luther on the nature of the church and the key role played by the

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[8]Cited in Edward T. Horn, "Liturgical Work of John Brenz," Lutheran Church Review 1 (1882):283. The Brandenburg-Nuremberg church order (1533) is available with an introduction in Richter, Kirchenordnungen 1, pp. 176-211.

[9]The 1559 church order for Wurttemberg is also known as the Great Church Order. For details of the arrangements under this order, see August Ludwig Reyscher, ed., Vollstandige, historisch und kristisch bearbeitete sammlungder wurttembergischen geseze, vol. 8 (Stuggart and Tubingen, 1828-1851), pp. 100-5, 245-56, 269-70 & 273-82. A brief summary of it is available in English in Estes, "Ecclesiastical Discipline," p. 472.

word of God, he was more aware of the need of discipline even though the word and sacraments were faithfully administered. Though both of them were concerned with the discipline of the church members, Brenz was the more precise of the two on how disciplinary actions were to be arranged.

The Emergence of the State Church

As Brenz explained how discipline was to be administered in the church, his divergence from Luther's teachings was all the more obvious. An unmistakable feature of Brenz's system of church government was the active role of the secular magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs. This is the major point of Brenz's departure from Luther.

The Role of the Christian Magistrate

While Brenz distinguished between spiritual and secular swords, he did remind the Christian princes that the secular sword was now in the hands of Christians and therefore they should use it properly according to the purposes intended by God.

The maintenance of Peace and Morality

First of all, Brenz pointed out that the nature of the authority exercised by the princes was that of a father over his children. The consequence was that the princes should seek to provide spiritual and material welfare for their subjects above everything else.[10] Further-

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[10]Johannes Brenz, Fruhschriften, vol. 1 (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1970), pp. 52-53. It has been pointed out that this paternalistic view of the state is the assumption behind all utterances of Brenz on the exercise of political authority; see Estes, State Church, p. 156 note 4 for further details.

more, the Christian princes were now ruling over God's people in their lands. It was only natural, therefore, that they should rule with spiritual as well as secular laws. In the spiritual realm, as a result, the Christian magistrate should rule with the word, law and command of God in an effective way[11] that was pleasing to God. Violation of this requirement was the reason behind the absence of peace and order in their territories.

Brenz substantiated this argument by pointing to the Peasants' Revolt. To him, at least in the early phase of his career, the peasants were rebellious because of the influence of false teachings. Had they understood the gospel properly, the uprising could have been avoided.[12] He used this example as God's judgment for punishing secular rulers who neglected the spiritual welfare of their subjects. The city council of Hall, therefore, should avoid similar judgments by implementing full scale reforms focussed on the gospel of God.[13]

Apart from the maintenance of peace and order, Brenz also pointed out that it was the duty of the civil magistrates to upkeep a respectable standard of public morality. Following from this, he argued that true preaching and worship was the necessary means towards this end.[14] Brenz quoted the New Testament (Romans 1:21-32) as support for this argument that false worship was the major cause of immoral behaviour and

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[11]Brenz, Fruhschriften 1, pp. 42, 50 & 59-60. See also Pressel, Anecdota, p. 40.

[12]Brenz, Fruhschriften 1, pp. 140-43.

[13]Richter, Kirchenordnungen 1, p. 49.

[14]Pressel, Anecdota, p. 42.

thus Christian magistrates should promote true divine worship in their lands.[15]

Thus the God-given nature of the magistrate's authority necessarily required them to promote true worship because false teachings about the gospel were the main source of disorder and immorality.

Secular Authority Established for True Worship

Brenz's argument came under fire while he was involved in the Anabaptist crisis in Nuremberg in 1530.[16] In the midst of the controversy, Brenz realized that there was no necessary connection between false preaching and civil disorder. The fact that disorder was caused by evil men who may be adherents of any faith, plus the example in Bohemia where peace was maintained with conflicting faiths existing side by side, pushed Brenz to abandon his previous argument. This explained why Brenz did not mention the previous argument in his later writings.

The 1530 controversy also assisted Brenz to reevaluate the role of Christian magistrates in ecclesiastical affairs. The issue at stake was the right of secular authority to interfere with spiritual affairs which could be argued to be outside its scope of influence. An important argument for state intervention was given by an unknown Nuremberger. The proposition was

Although things which pertain directly and of necessity to the

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[15]Ibid.

[16]For details of this crisis and the significance of the controversy, see James M. Estes, "Whether Secular Government Has the Right to Wield the Sword in Matters of Faith," The Mennonite Quarterly Review 49 (January 1975):22-37.

> spiritual realm should be dealt with in a spiritual manner and entrusted to the clergy, who have the ministry of the word: nevertheless, to the extent that such things are external or temporal and can be separated from the spiritual realm, a Christian magistrate may and should deal with them in the defence of truth.[17]

In other words, a Christian magistrate who promotes true worship by establishing rules and ceremonies is not violating the spiritual authority of the ministry.

In fact, such intervention was considered desirable because secular authority was instituted by God for such a purpose. It has also been pointed out that, on this point, Melanchthon influenced Brenz's thinking decisively.[18] Melanchthon's argument that secular authority had been established for the sake of the church so that the gospel may be preached freely[19] formed the basis of Brenz's later thinking on the role of the Christian magistrate in the church.

Brenz's thinking in its mature form stressed that secular authority was established in order that man might live after God's own image through a proper understanding of the gospel. Peace and order were the results and not the reasons for the state's intervention in ecclesiastical affairs. Thus, the church order of 1553 written by Brenz affirmed that

> Whereas we dutifully acknowledge . . . that we should to the best of our ability support the holy Christian church . . . and whereas we firmly believe that all secular authority . . . has been established, ordained, and given primarily for the purpose of upholding and furthering the true Christian church of God; therefore, we wish

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[17]This is quoted from an anonymous document sent out from Nuremberg. The English translation is taken from Estes, State Church, p. 48.

[18]See Estes, State Church, pp. 52-53.

[19]Philosophiae Morals Epitome, CR 16, 86-87 & 94.

> to leave nothing undone whereby we might give proof of our zeal and service to the son of God . . . and his church, in the office and authority entrusted to us.[20]

and, in the Great Church Order of 1559, that

> We acknowledge (notwithstanding the false opinion of some that only secular rule pertains to secular authority) that it is our duty to God . . . before all else to provide the subjects entrusted to us with the pure teaching of the holy gospel . . . and thus zealously and earnestly to support the true church of Christ. Only then and in addition to this [are we] to establish and maintain in temporal rule useful ordinances to secure that temporal peace . . . and prosperity which God gives for the sake of the foregoing [support of the church] . . . .[21]

Viewing the Christian magistrate as a sponsor and guardian of the true faith, Brenz proceeded to organize the Wurttemberg church into a state church which became the model for other German Lutherans.

The Justification of the State Church

There were several reasons behind Brenz's thinking which he utilized to justify the state-church. First of all, the reformer was eager to involve the civil authorities to support the reformation cause. As a general rule, the magistrates in the early sixteenth century were already involved in ecclesiastical as well as civil affairs. However, it was necessary that these magistrates supported the evangelical faith which, at that time, appeared to be dangerous. Brenz proceeded, especially in the early phase of his ministry, by appealing to the need for peace and order in their territories. He argued that peace and order was the natural result of the promotion of true faith and worship.[22]

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[20]Cited in Estes, State Church, pp. 57-58. The original is contained in Reyscher, Vollstandige 8, p. 167.

[21]Ibid., p. 58; Reyscher, Vollstandige 8, p. 100.

[22]Brenz, Fruhschriften 1, p. 144.

The Peasants' Revolt and the rise of Anabaptists were viewed by Brenz as God's judgement upon those rulers who neglected the preaching of the true, evangelical faith.[23]

Secondly, Brenz justified the state-church by appealing to the two-fold nature of the church. While the church was regarded as the communion of saints, the same word also applied to the external ceremonies and practices of the visible organization. In this case the external arrangements of the visible church were not part of the spiritual realm.[24] Since the church was also the earthly institution of the elect as well as the hypocrites, a portion of the church necessarily falls outside the community of true believers. On this ground, Brenz argued that Christian magistrates should involve themselves in church affairs. This explained his statement in the church order of 1526 that

> since God our Saviour has graciously permitted Christians to secure secular power over their own territories, cities and villages, the secular rulers, as members of Christ and children of God, both for their souls's salvation and by virtue of their office, are responsible for regulating and ordering all those things which Christ commanded to be observed in a Christian community.[25]

It should be noted that, by this statement, the authority of the secular ruler was extended beyond the secular realm and included the "regulating and ordering" of spiritual affairs.

One would object here that the magistrate's authority was extended into an area which belonged to the minister's duty. Brenz's

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[23]Ibid., pp. 140-43.

[24]This is a summary made by James M. Estes, "The Two Kingdoms and the State Church according to Johannes Brenz and an Anonymous Colleague," Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte 61 (1970):40.

[25]Estes, State Church, p. 40; Richter, Kirchenordnungen 1, p. 40.

argument, which was the third reason that justified the state-church, was that the "regulating and ordering" belonged to the external realm and did not constitute any intervention into the faith of individuals. In the church order of 1526, Brenz concluded by pointing out the difference between external order and discipline and internal piety. In other words, ceremonies and orders were designed for external discipline which had nothing to do with the piety of Christians. As long as the word was preached and the sacraments administered rightly according to the word of God, the city council could change the order freely according to the needs and benefits of the church.[26] This implies that while faith itself is a personal spiritual affair, the pursuit of that faith is not. The state's involvement in ecclesiastical affairs was therefore justified by Brenz, as long as actual preaching and execution of the sacraments were in the minister's hand.

Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers also provided an impetus for Brenz's justification of the state-church. The very concept of a universal priesthood provided the ground for taking the ecclesiastical authority away from the Roman hierarchy. Brenz, on this ground, urged the magistrates to assume this responsibility as representatives of the community. Since their role as rulers was a trust from God, it was natural that civil rulers, as part of the universal priesthood, should look after the spiritual welfare of their subjects.

> It is not cowls, tonsures, or anointing by a bishop that empower one to perform the priestly offices in the community, but rather

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[26]This was indicated by the archives of Schwabisch Hall; see Estes, State Church, p. 157 note 33 for details.

> the command and election of that Christian community or whoever is, as secular government, authorized to act for the community.[27]

The priesthood of all believers, coupled with the role of Christian magistrates as Christians and as rulers, obligated these secular rulers to promote the preaching of the true faith.[28] For this reason, a state-church was not merely a temporary measure in Brenz's mind, but rather the desired form of church government.

Observations on Brenz's Career

Although Brenz was not original in many aspects of his theology his contributions in the organisation of the church in an era of unrest were still significant. Two of these are relevent to the present study.

The Upkeeping of Discipline

It is true that the means of discipline employed by most of the reformers were persuasive in nature. The problem, however, is that inevitably there would be someone who persisted in publicly scandalous conduct despite the application of these disciplinary actions. Some of these vices, such as drunkenness, would not even be dealt with by civil authorities. Amid this situation, often times, reformers of the sixteenth century had to adopt more drastic measures such as the use of excommunication. It is precisely in this area that Brenz contributed toward the reformation heritage. His system successfully safeguarded the proper execution of discipline inside the church by involving the

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[27]Brenz, Fruhschriften 1, p. 69.

[28]Ibid., p. 144.

civil magistrates in external ecclesiastical affairs while reserving the spiritual dimensions of the ministry to the hands of the clergy.

Brenz had to overcome two kinds of fear to achieve his ideal in this aspect. There was the fear of the public regarding the use of discipline. Unavoidably, the consistorial court proposed by Brenz was very similar in outlook to the previous papal courts. The vivid picture of papal tyranny led to the fear of the misuse of excommunication, making the idea unpopular. This accounted for the failure of Brenz[29] during his career at Schwabisch Hall.

On the other side, there were also the civil magistrates who feared that the church court might eventually strip away their control of ecclesiastical affairs which they had enjoyed increasingly since the late Middle Ages. This explained why the church order at Wurttemberg placed the church theologians under the civil magistrates. Without the support of the magistrates, the church order could not be introduced and it would be introduced only if the magistrates were satisfied with the security of their previous rights in jurisdiction.

Achievement of Stability

It must be remembered that sixteenth century Europe was in a state of unrest, both religiously and politically. The reformation had to proceed under hostile opposition from the papacy which was determined to crush it with every means available. It was, therefore, dangerous to support the reformation, particularly during its initial phase. The emergence of radicals also caused chaos within the Protes-

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[29]Estes, "Ecclesiastical Discipline," p. 465 explains the failures of Brenz at Hall.

tant camp. This was the situation where the various visitations were necessary. In the midst of these tensions and pressures, the reformation had to be institutionalized in order to survive.

Brenz's church order came as a solution to this problem. He organized the Wurttemberg church into a model which earned him the fame of being the chief architect of the Lutheran state-church in Germany. Thus, Estes observes rightly that

> the state church was not something which Brenz or any other reformer chose from among the available alternatives. On the contrary, a powerful combination of historical precedent and current circumstance made it the only available means whereby the reformed faith could organize itself to withstand the assaults of its enemies.[30]

Subsequent developments in the Lutheran reformation showed that Brenz was insightful in his organization of the state church as he won firmly the support of the magistrates who assisted the church through the turbulent years.

Conclusion

Brenz was a follower of Luther in many aspects. However, they approached the problem of church order in different manners. They agreed on the nature of the church as the communion of saints which manifests itself in a form of tares mixed with wheat here on earth. Yet, they diverged sharply in the actual operation of the church.

With his own humanistic background and particular political situation to face, Brenz came to realize that state church was the logical solution to the problems surrounding the Lutheran reformation in south Germany. He proceeded to organize the church according to his convic-

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[30]Estes, "Church Order," p. 23.

tions, resulting in the success at Wurttemberg with the assistance of the duke.

Both Luther and Brenz viewed the state's intervention in the church as unavoidable. Yet, Luther was hoping for a better future when the magistrates could be dispensed with in the church while Brenz was convinced that it was the proper way of church government.

Interestingly, Brenz agreed with Luther on the doctrines of the two kingdoms and the universal priesthood of all believers. Yet, his a priori commitment to the special role of Christian magistrates in the church[31] led to conclusions radically different from those of Luther. Brenz's understandings of these doctrines fortified his convictions and motivated him towards the organization of the state church in Wurttemberg, even though he failed previously at Schwabisch Hall.

While Brenz could be blamed for the subsequent development which reduced the church to becoming a servile hand-maiden of the absolutism and particularism of the German princes this was not his original intention. In Brenz's mind, the state was no more than a custodian of the Christian faith in their territories. Yet, the magistrates eventually gained the control of the church, making use of Brenz's teachings. Even so, the positive contributions of Brenz still made him a significant reformer in the entangled sixteenth century.

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[31]Estes points out that Brenz's commitment to the role of Christian magistrates was the key factor in this context, see State Church, p. 39 for details.

CHAPTER V

JOHN CALVIN ON THE CHURCH

The success of Calvin at Geneva during a period of chaos makes the study of his ecclesiology indispensable. Since the final edition of the Institutes of Christian Religion in 1559 represents the definitive statements of Calvin's teachings, the present study will focus on it as the basic source. The other works of Calvin, however, provides us with valuable insights into his thought. Calvin's commentaries, letters, sermons and other treatises, therefore, will also be used to augment his Institutes.

Basic Elements in Calvin's Doctrine of the Church

The Theological Context

A proper understanding of Calvin's doctrine of the church requires a proper understanding of his thought as structured in the Institutes.

Although Calvin claimed to have followed the order of the Apostles' Creed,[1] it is interesting to note the way he organized the various subjects. The church is dealt with in Book IV of the Institutes

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[1]John Calvin, Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. F. L. Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) 2. 16. 18, p. 527 (hereafter cited as Inst.).

under the title "The External Means or Aid by Which God Invites Us Into the Society of Christ and Hold Us Therein." This immediately suggests that participation in Christ is an important issue in Calvin's ecclesiology; however, this actually forms the substance of the discussions in Book III. As Calvin concluded his discussion on being in Christ with chapters on election and final resurrection, he clearly assigned an eschatological thrust to this participation in Christ. Eschatology as well as Christology, therefore, constitute the context of Calvin's doctrine of the church.

This is further confirmed by Calvin's view on the culmination of history in terms of a dialectical tension, not between earthly and spiritual kingdoms, but between the present and the future states of the kingdom of Christ. Calvin more or less equated this kingdom with the church and asserted that

> the nature of the kingdom of Christ is that it every day grows and improves, but perfection is not yet attained, nor will be until the final day of judgment. Thus both are true--that all things are now subject to Christ, and yet that this subjection will not be complete until the day of the resurrection, because that which is now begun will then be completed.[2]

Thus, agreeing with John Tonkin,[3] one may conclude that, in Calvin's understanding, Christian life viewed as participation in Christ is a primary concept in his doctrine of the church. Also, such a participation must be perceived backwards and forwards from an eschatological

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[2]Commentary on Philippians 2:10-11, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, 12 vols., ed. T. F. Torrence and D. W. Torrence (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959-), 11:252 (hereafter cited as CNTC).

[3]See John Tonkin, The Church and the Secular Order in Reformation Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 111 for a full exposition of this theme.

perspective.

The Church as a Covenant Community

Prior to the discussions in Book IV, Calvin had already delineated his ecclesiology in earlier portions of the Institutes in terms of creation, providence, and covenant. The Old and New Testaments were regarded as a single unity constituting a covenant between God and man. Such a covenant was based purely on grace with immortality as its goal and Christ as the sole foundation.[4] History to Calvin was a "steady unfolding of God's providential purposes for the Church and the whole created order."[5] The church of Calvin could therefore be regarded as a covenant community in essence, functioning as the instrument of God's purposes, with Christ as its source and foundation.

The community aspect of the church is also evident from Calvin's regular use of the term corpus Christi in describing the church.[6] Its consistent use signifies a corporate body under the headship of Christ. Such a community, binding all believers together in Christ, is the subject of the ecclesiology discussed in Book IV of the Institutes.

The Church as a God-Instituted Order

Order is a significant concern in Calvin's ecclesiology. This is best illustrated in his well-known emphasis on discipline. His view on order is closely connected to his positive attitude towards the nature

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[4]See, for instance, Inst. 2.10.2, p. 429; 2.10.4 & 5, pp. 431-32.

[5]Tonkin, Church, p. 100.

[6]See, for example, the repeated use in Inst. 4.1.5, 8 & 9. Calvin often called the church the body of Christ or simply the body.

and function of "law". Calvin asserted that

> the third and principal use, which pertains more closely to the proper purpose of the laws, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns. . . . The law is to the flesh like a whip to an idle and balky ass, to arouse it to work.[7]

and that "God has delineated His own character in it (the Law), that anyone exhibiting in action what is commanded could exhibit in his own life, as it were, an image of God."[8] The law, positively speaking, could be viewed as a description of the intended relationship between God and man. Discipline unavoidably becomes, therefore, God's requirement of man.

The concept of order related to discipline is also equated by Calvin to God's creation which is intended to be "so arranged and regulated that nothing deviates from its appointed course."[9] Creation reflects the image of God and the destruction of this image in the fall represents the introduction of disorder into creation.[10] At this point, Calvin tied together order with Christology because Jesus Christ was considered as the perfect image of God who restored creation to its original integrity, bringing a new creation out of the original one,

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[7]Inst. 2.7.12, pp. 360-61.

[8]Inst. 2.8.2, p. 369.

[9]Commentary on Jeremiah 31:35-36, Commentaries on the Old Testament, 47 vols., Calvin Translation Society series (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint ed., 1948-1981), 20:143 (hereafter cited as COTC).

[10]Commentary on Genesis 3:3-5, COTC 1:146.

thus renewing the previous confusion and disorder into a "most perfect image of God".[11]

The church, functioning properly, is therefore the instrument of God to restore order, without which "the whole order of nature will be thrown into confusion and creation will be annihilated."[12] Similar expressions are also present in his commentaries.

> Paul wants to teach that outside Christ all things were upset, but that through Him they have been reduced to order. And truly, outside Christ, what can we perceive in the world but mere ruins? . . . Such an ἀνακεφαλαίωσις as would bring us back to regular order, the apostle tells us, has been made in Christ. Formed into one body, we are united to God, and mutually conjoined with one another.[13]

The church basically is, therefore, the order lost in Adam. It is instituted for the purpose of restoring the proper relationship between God and man lost in the fall.

The Various Aspects of Calvin's Ecclesiology

The Church Visible, Yet Invisible

Calvin contended that the Bible speaks of the church in a twofold sense.

> Sometimes by the term Church it means that which is actually in God's presence, in which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the Church includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all the elect from the beginning of the world. Often, however, the name church designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth

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[11] Inst. 1.15.4, p. 190.

[12] In Ieremiam 31, Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia, 59 vols., ed. Wilhelm Baum, Eduard Cunitz, and Eduard Reuss, Corpus Reformatorum 38 (66) (Brunswick and Berlin: N.p., 1863-1900), p. 699 (hereafter cited as CR). Compare Wilhelm Niesel, The Theology of Calvin (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p. 64.

[13] Commentary on Ephesians 1:8-10, CNTC 11:129.

> who profess to worship one God and Christ. . . . In this Church are mingled many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance. . . .[14]

Although the church consists of these two facets it is still the same one church to Calvin who continued, "Just as we must believe, therefore, that the former church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commanded to revere and keep communion with the latter, which is called church in respect of men."[15] It is the same one church because the body of the elect is invisible "not in that it cannot be seen in the world or in the ranks of the visible church, but only in that its corporate identity is known to God alone."[16]

This visible church is not identical to the visible hierarchy as claimed by Rome. In the "Prefatory Address" of the Institutes, Calvin, defending the spiritual nature of the visibility of the church, attacked the Roman view that

> First, they contend that the form of the church is always apparent and observable. Secondly, they set this form in the see of the Roman Church and its hierarchy. We, on the contrary, affirm that the church can exist without any visible appearance and that its appearance is not contained within that outward magnificance which they foolishly admire. Rather, it has quite another mark: namely, the pure preaching of God's Word and the lawful administration of the sacraments.[17]

The church is therefore visible, not in its physical structure

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[14]Inst. 4.1.7, pp. 1021-22.

[15]Ibid.

[16]David E. Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), p. 141.

[17]Inst., The Prefactory Address 6, p. 24.

but spiritually in its possession of the word and sacraments. However, as the visible and invisible natures of the church are defined by the word and sacraments and by the company of elect respectively, there appears an apparent dichotomy between the two which are built on different principles. To resolve this dilemma, one has to return to Calvin's view of the church as a restoration of order. From the perspective of order, the visible church represents the order in this world while the invisible church the order in its perfected mode which is to be fully realized in the future. Bearing in mind the eschatological context of his ecclesiology, the visible church can be regarded as a process, moving towards the final goal in an eschatological sense. As Tonkin observes,

> The Church is called to re-ordering his creation and bringing his kingdom to fruition. But it can never claim to represent that kingdom in an unqualified way. It is always in a state of "becoming" and stands under the trancendent judgment of God.[18]

Calvin's emphasis on order therefore provides the key to the continuity between the church visible and invisible in his thinking.

The Marks of the Church

Calvin firmly maintained that it is the word of God and the proper adminstration of the sacraments that make a church the true church of God. Repeating his views in the "Prefatory Address," he asserted in Book IV of the Institutes that "wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered accord-

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[18]Tonkin, Church, p. 130.

ing to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists."[19] These marks are important because

> by baptism we are invited into faith in Him; by partaking in the Lord's Supper we attest our unity in true doctrine and love; in the Word of the Lord we have agreement, and for the preaching of the Word the ministry instituted by Christ is preserved.[20]

Calvin held to these marks long before 1559. The Genevan Confession of 1536 states that

> the proper mark by which rightly to discern the Church of Jesus Christ is that His holy gospel be purely and faithfully preached, proclaimed, heard and kept, that His sacraments be properly administered, even if there be some imperfections and faults, as there always will be among men.[21]

And again in 1544 he states in the famous treatise of The Necessity of Reforming the Church that "the uniform characteristics of a well-ordered Church are the preaching of sound doctrine and the pure administration of the sacraments."[22]

Two things are immediately obvious in Calvin's doctrine on the notae ecclesiae. Firstly, despite all his emphasis on discipline, he never identifies the church by the quality of the members. Discipline is not included consistently as a mark of the church in his thought. In other words, the quality of the members of the church is not the essence of the church. As Francois Wendel has pointed out, discipline is

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[19]Inst. 4.1.7, p. 1022.

[20]Ibid., p. 1021.

[21]"The Genevan Confession," in John Calvin, Calvin: Theological Treatises, ed. J. K. S. Reid, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 31.

[22]"The Necessity of Reforming the Church," in Tracts and Treatises, 3 vols., ed. T. F. Torrence (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), 1:213-14 (hereafter cited as TT).

important to Calvin, yet it has nothing to do with the definition of the church, but rather the organization of it.[23] With the word of God properly preached and the sacraments properly administered, proper behavior would be the natural result.

Secondly, the Christological emphasis of Calvin's ecclesiology is very prominent. By the word, Calvin took it to mean the gospel of Jesus Christ. Calvin regarded the sacrament as "a visible form of the invisible grace"[24] of Jesus Christ. Sacraments are therefore inseparable from the source of grace: Jesus Christ. Commenting on 1 Cor. 3: 11, he asserted "that the fundamental doctrine on which it is never allowable to compromise is that we should learn Christ, for Christ is the one single foundation of the Church."[25] The essence of the church is therefore inseparable from Christ and hence Christology plays an important role in Calvin's ecclesiology. This christological emphasis enables Calvin, as is the case for other reformers, to define the church. Gordon Rupp has pointed out that the first reformers are not concerned with defining the circumference of the church, but with proclaiming its Christological center.[26] Hence, as authentic marks of the presence of Christ, the word and sacraments constitute the true church. They are

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[23]See Francois Wendel, Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 297 for details of the role of discipline in relation to the marks of the church.

[24]Inst. 4.14.1, p. 1277.

[25]Commentary on 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, CNTC 9:73-74.

[26]Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1953), p. 310. See also Paul D. L. Avis, The Church in the Theology of the Reformers (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 1-9 for a fuller discussion.

not mere descriptions of the church, but its very constituents.

The Necessity and Authority of the Church

Calvin regarded the church as an external means instituted by God to assist believers to grow in faith.

> Since, however, in our ignorance and sloth (to which I add fickleness of disposition) we need outward helps to beget and increase faith within us, and advance it to its goals, God has also added these aids that He may provide for our weakness.[27]

For this purpose, the church carries the authority necessary to fulfill the goals of growth and order.

> And in order that the preaching of the gospel might flourish, he deposited this treasure in the church. He instituted pastors and teachers through whose lips he might teach his own: he furnished them with authority; finally, he omitted nothing that might make for holy agreement of faith and for right order.[28]

Calvin regarded the church as the only proper channel to arrive at these goals and thus, in accord with the general tradition, he viewed the visible church as the mother of believers and identified with the patristic tradition that extra ecclesiam nulla salus.

> For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceives us in her womb, gives us birth, nourishes us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keeps us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels. Our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives. Furthermore, away from her bosom we cannot hope for any forgiveness of sin or any salvation.[29]

This mother of souls carries with her the spiritual power of defining and explaining the doctrine, the legislation and the jurisdiction of church affairs. Calvin warned strongly that this spiritual

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[27]Inst. 4.1.1, p. 1011.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Inst. 4.1.4, p. 1016.

power is for upbuilding and not for destruction or tyranny, and that in this aspect, the ministers merely serve as the servants of God and that Christ alone is the schoolmaster of the church.[30]

On the authority regarding doctrines, Calvin contended that

> We must remember that whatever authority and dignity the Spirit in Scripture accords to either priests or prophets, or apostles, or successors of apostles, it is wholly given not to the men personally, but to the ministry to which they have been appointed, or (to speak more briefly) to the Word, whose ministry is entrusted to them. For if we examine them all in order, we shall not find that they have been endowed with an authority to teach or to answer, except in the name and Word of the Lord.[31]

The right to define and explain the doctrine therefore does not belong to the church as such, but to the word of God alone. Calvin obviously had the Roman Church in mind here and argued that it is the scripture that is infallible in matters of doctrine; the church is infallible only to the extent that it conforms strictly to the Scriptural data. Calvin stated explicitly that

> Let this be a firm principle: no other word is to be held as the Word of God, and given a place as such in the Church, than what is contained first in the Law and the Prophets, then in the writings of the apostles; and the only authorized way of teaching in the Church is by the prescription and standard of his Word.[32]

With authority regarding legislation and jurisdiction, Calvin argued upon the church's sociological reality that some form of organization is required so that the church could be well ordered.

> We see that some form of organization is necessary in all human society to foster the common peace and maintain concord. We further see that in human transactions some procedure is always in effect which is to be respected in the interest of public decency. . . .

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[30]Inst. 4.8.1, pp. 1149-50.

[31]Inst. 4.8.2, p. 1150.

[32]Inst. 4.8.8, p. 1155.

> This ought especially to be observed in churches, which are best sustained when all things are under a well-ordered constitution, and which without concord became no church at all.[33]

Obviously, Calvin was advocating for a legislation parallel to that of the state. The same applies to jurisdiction where he defended the need of a separately organised establishment to maintain the spiritual polity of the church. "For as no city or township can function without magistrate and polity so the church of God . . . needs a spiritual polity."[34] On the nature of this polity and its jurisdiction, Calvin stated that it is

> quite distinct from the civil polity, yet does not hinder or threaten it but rather greatly helps and furthers it. Therefore this power of jurisdiction will be nothing . . . but an order framed for the preservation of the spiritual polity.[35]

Regarding it as the most important part of the ecclesiastical power, Calvin called for the establishment of courts of judgment in the church "to deal with the censure of morals, to investigate vices and to be charged with the exercise of the office of the keys."[36]

The Ministry and The Laity

As long as the church operates with the word of God, "the authority of the Church is nothing less than the authority of Christ Himself, and obedience to Christ involves obedience to the Church."[37] This

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[33]Inst. 4.10.27, p. 1205.

[34]Inst. 4.11.1, p. 1211.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 235.

leads to Calvin's understanding of the ministry as a representative of Christ. In order that the church could express the rule of Christ through His word and that the achievement of order can be assured so that "everything be done decently and in order"[38] Calvin placed an important emphasis on the mediating role of the church's ecclesiological ministry and regarded it as an order instituted by Christ. Ministers were called to give the word and sacraments and to pronounce the forgiveness of sins as representatives of Christ. "Those who refuse to hear ministers . . . are not insulting men but Himself and God the Father."[39]

Commenting on Galatians 4:13-15, he repeated that "He commands them to declare in his name the forgiveness of sins that he may reconcile men to God through them. In short, he alone, properly speaking, forgives sins through his apostles."[40] Consequently, Christ alone is the shepherd and bishop of the church and the ministers are only administrators of the one bishopric of Christ. This leads to the conclusion that the ministers of Christ are together joint trustees of God rather than individual agents and as joint trustees they cannot be formed into any kind of hierarchy.[41]

Yet, this view does not exclude the assignment of special offices

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[38]Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France in TT 2:150.

[39]Commentary on Luke 10:16 in Harmony of the Gospels, CNTC 2:18.

[40]Commentary on Galatians 4:13-15, CNTC 11:80.

[41]Compare Commentary on I Peter 2:24-25, CNTC 12:279 and Commentary on Ephesians 4:11, CNTC 11:178-79. See also Geddes MacGregor, Corpus Christi: The Nature of the Church According to the Reformed Tradition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 56.

to individuals. The ministry is still a gift of God for his church so that some kind of a "constitutional papacy"[42] is legitimate. On the offices of the ministry, Calvin displayed some discrepancy. In the ecclesiastical ordinance of 1541, Calvin mentioned the four offices of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons. They correspond to the four kinds of ministry in the church: the preaching and administering of sacraments, the teaching of the members, the discipline to all and charity to those in need. Throughout Calvin's writings, these four ministries are vividly depicted. However, throughout the various editions of the Institutes, he consistently mentioned three offices, combining the pastor and the doctor into a single office. The 1559 edition affirmed that "Scripture sets before us three kinds of ministers. Similarly, whatever ministers the ancient church had it divided into three orders."[43] He assigned the functions of pastors and teachers to the pastor, that of censure and correction of morals to the elders and that of caring for the poor and distribution of alms to the deacons. This discrepancy may be caused by the fact that Calvin himself functioned both as a pastor and as a doctor at Geneva.

Calvin's view of the ministry inevitably undermines the significance of the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. By universal priesthood Calvin took it to mean the freedom of each believer to come to God directly.

> For Calvin, the universal priesthood is understood as expressing the relation between the believer and his God. It refers to the freedom of the Christians to come to God through Christ without

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[42]This is the term used by MacGregor in Corpus Christi, p. 56.

[43]Inst. 4.4.1, pp. 1068-69.

> human mediation; no third party need or may come between the individual and his maker.[44]

In Calvin's own words

> Now Christ plays the priestly role . . . to receive us as his companions in this great office. For we who are defiled in ourselves, yet are priests in him, offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary.[45]

However, it is noteworthy that Calvin did not exclude the lay people from the operation of the church. They played an important role in his system of discipline. The Genevan church consistory was composed of the pastors and twelve lay people from the city and was chaired by a civil magistrate. Though he laid heavy emphasis on the role of ministers, lay people still played an indispensable role in his system.

Church Order and Discipline

With his view on order and his emphasis on the authority of the church through the ministry one would naturally expect Calvin to have a high regard for discipline and this is actually the case.

As the church to Calvin "is that sphere where God's work of reordering his creation, begun in Christ, is extended until the time when Christ will come again to establish his kingdom, the state of perfect order,"[46] church order, to Calvin, was not just a structure, a code or a system, but the will of God that must be carried on ceaselessly. Basing the rationale in God's work of bringing order out of confusion,

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[44]Avis, Church, p. 45.

[45]Inst. 2.15.6, p. 502; see also Inst. 2.7.1, pp. 348-50.

[46]Tonkin, Church, p. 120.

church order must be thoroughly maintained in the community of believers.

> As early as 1543 Calvin writes in a letter that the order which our Lord has once delivered to us ought to be forever inviolable. Thus, when it has been forsaken for a while, it ought to be renewed and set up again, even should heaven and earth commingle. There is no antiquity, no custom which can be set up or pleaded in prejudice of this doctrine, that the government of the church established by the authority of God should be perpetual even to the end of the world, since he has willed and determined that it should be so.[47]

Even though Calvin agreed on the word and sacraments as the essence of the church his idea of order pushed him to adopt a much more rigid view toward the institutional form of the church. Since church order is an integral part of the community of believers, discipline, which safeguards the order, is also integral to the Reformed tradition under Calvin.

Church discipline is advocated by Calvin as early as 1541 in the ecclesiastical ordinance of that year upon his return to Geneva. As the church, with the word and sacrament, aims to help the members to grow in faith, it must practise constant self-examination to avoid any possible error so that the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments will not be hindered. Calvin considered discipline to be positive as it helps to purge the church of any scandal or disorder, in either doctrine or behaviour. Thus, he explained in the 1541 Ordinance the roles of the four offices and how these work together to secure proper discipline within the church. E. William Monter has ob-

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[47] Letters of John Calvin, 4 vols., ed. Jules Bonnet (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1958), 1:364-65 (hereafter cited as Letters).

served correctly that "the document remained as the great charter of the Church of Geneva"[48] although the document was only preliminary in nature and incomplete in defining the exact boundaries between the offices. It was particularly unclear on the precise connection between civil and ecclesiastical powers. Yet, it proved to be good enough to guide the church of Geneva through those difficult days.

What was brief in the 1541 Ordinance Calvin expanded in detail in the Institutes of 1559. Realizing the fear of the general public of the tyranny of medieval papal jurisdiction, he carefully explained that the nature of discipline by the church is spiritual in nature, that

> the holy bishops did not exercise their powers through fines or prisons or other civil penalties but used the Lord's Word alone, as was fitting. For the severest punishment of the Church . . . is excommunication, which is used only in necessity.[49]

On the actual practices of discipline, Calvin was very much open-minded as he declared

> Consequently, it behooves me to declare that I approve only those human constitutions which are founded upon God's authority, drawn from Scripture, and therefore, wholly divine. . . . But because he did not will in outward discipline and ceremonies to prescribe in detail what we ought to do (because he foresaw that this depended upon the state of the times, and he did not deem one form suitable for all ages), here we must take refuge in those general rules which he has given. . . . Because he has taught nothing specifically, and because these things are not necessary to salvation, and for the upbuilding of the church ought to be variously accommodated to the customs of each nation and age, it will be fitting . . . to change and abrogate traditional practices and to establish new ones.[50]

From these words, it is clear that Calvin was far more concerned

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[48]E. William Monter, Calvin's Geneva (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), p. 127.

[49]Inst. 4.11.5, p. 1217.

[50]Inst. 4.10.30, pp. 1207-08.

for the aims of discipline than their actual mode of execution. Three different yet complimentary aims need to be achieved. Firstly, discipline should be executed for the honour of God. The church, as the body of Christ, could not be corrupted by such members without some disgrace thereby upon its head: Christ. Secondly, Calvin was eager to stop the spreading of corruption. The third aim was to gain through discipline the repentance of those overcome by these corruptions.[51]

It must be remembered that, to Calvin, discipline is not a necessity for salvation. Hence, it "does not belong to the _esse_ of the Church, but to its _bene esse_, not to its being, but to its well-being."[52] Consequently, unlike some of his successors, it is not incorporated by him as a mark of the church. This is also one of the main differences between Calvin and Bucer who influenced his theology at various points. Calvin was also misrepresented by some such as Geddes MacGreggor[53] who sees Calvin as adopting discipline as one of the _notae ecclesiae_. Calvin did hint at this point in the first edition of the _Institutes_ in 1536,[54] yet it was omitted in the 1559 edition which represents his mature thought.

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[51]See Inst. 4.12.5, pp. 1232-33 for full details.

[52]Avis, _Church_, p. 35.

[53]MacGregor interprets Calvin's view as treating discipline as a mark of the church. See MacGregor, _Corpus Christi_, pp. 46 & 155-57.

[54]Chapter 2 of the 1536 edition of the _Institutes_ mentioned that the true church is to be recognized by example of life as a mark. See the translation of the 1536 edition of the _Institutes_ by F. L. Battles, p. 82.

Church and State

In the sixteenth century, the state was not a purely secular body. Instead, it was subject to immutable divine laws of which the clergy were the authorized interpreters.[55] For this reason, the state was never totally separated from the church. Calvin, as the pastor of the church, also frequently commented on the responsibility of the state.

This responsibility, to him, was two-fold: to maintain morals and proper order as well as to secure the protection and maintenance of true religion. Thus, the duty of the state was to foster and maintain the external worship of God, to defend sound doctrine and the condition of the church, to adapt human conduct to society, to provide civil justice, to conciliate one to another and to secure common peace and tranquility and ensure that no blasphemy against the name of God, no calamities against the truth, nor other offences to religion break out and that these be disseminated among the people.[56]

On the relation between church and state, particularly in their powers of jurisdiction, Calvin stated that

> The church does not have the right of the sword to punish or compel, not the authority to force; not imprisonment, nor the other punishments which the magistrate commonly inflicts. Then, it is not a question of punishing the sinner against his will, but of the sinner professing his repentance in a voluntary chastisement. . . . The church does not assume what is proper to the magistrate; nor can the magistrate execute what is carried out by the church. . . . For there are Christian magistrates who ought to correct these things by laws and sword. And as the magistrate ought by punishment and physical restraint to cleanse the church of offenses, so

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[55] Avis, Church, p. 148.

[56] Inst. 4. 20 discusses the role of the civil government in detail.

> the minister of the Word in turn ought to help the magistrate in order that not so many may sin. Their functions ought to be so joined that each serves to help, not hinder, the other.[57]

This text showed that Calvin supported the complimentality of the two powers, civil and ecclesiastical. Wendel concludes rightly that "there was no question, as is so commonly supposed, of a theocratic regime in which the temporal power would be subject to the spiritual power."[58] Calvin never demanded a theocratic system at Geneva. Monter's account of Geneva during Calvin's lifetime indicates a number of struggles between the two.[59] Within these conflicts, Calvin tried very hard with his system of polity to achieve a smooth and close collaboration between the two. In this system,

> the ministers of the Church were obliged by their function to contribute to the moral education of the citizens, and to explain to the members of the Magistracy the requirements of the Word of God, to which the civil legislation had to conform itself. The Magistrates . . . were in duty bound to protect the Church and promote respect for the open preaching of the Gospel.[60]

If Geneva were a theocracy, it would be theocracy of a different kind. As Monter has concluded:

> Calvin's Geneva was indeed a theocracy. This does not imply that she was governed by her clergy; it means rather that Geneva was in theory governed by God through a balance of spiritual and secular powers, through clergy and magistrates acting in harmony.[61]

In fact, Calvin's effort to secure a totally independent church

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[57]Inst. 4.11.3, pp. 1215-16.

[58]Wendel, Calvin, p. 309.

[59]Monter, Geneva, p. 73 mentions the struggle on the adoption of the ecclesiastical ordinances and p. 138 mentions the struggle for the power of excommunication.

[60]Wendel, Calvin, p. 310.

[61]Monter, Geneva, p. 144.

legislation and jurisdiction was only partially successful. The consistory of Calvin, an ecclesiastical body in nature, consisted partly of lay people nominated by the city council.[62] All through the years, the council retained the control of these nominations, making the consistory a civil agency in outlook. However, the consistory, no doubt, generally functioned in accordance with the rules and principles defined by the clergy of Geneva.

Observations on Calvin's Ecclesiology

The Interpretation of Calvin

The foregoing analysis shows the profoundity of Calvin's view on the church. With different aspects of ecclesiology, he introduced different themes into his system. Consequently, one must be fully aware of the presence of this plurality of themes in his treatment of doctrines. As Wendel has rightly perceived that the majority of historians who failed to do justice to Calvin failed because they "have tried to reconstruct the Calvinist dogmatic from the standpoint of one central idea supposed to dominate it as a whole."[63] Predestination, glory of God, sovereignty of God, eschatology and so on had been proposed and they all failed to account sufficiently for Calvin's thought.

The attempt by B. C. Milner is a typical example.[64] He concluded

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[62]Ibid., p. 137 explains the structure of the Genevan consistory which consisted of twelve laymen from the councils of the city and was chaired by a syndic who was a civil magistrate.

[63]Wendel, Calvin, p. 357.

[64]B. C. Milner, Jr., Calvin's Doctrine of the Church (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970).

that the governing principle in Calvin's ecclesiology and his thought as a whole is the correlation of the Spirit with the word. His study is helpful in that it explains Calvin's view on the mutual dependence of the Spirit and the word in working out the order of God in the church. Yet it fails to see that making this the central idea undermines others in Calvin's profound structure, particularly in his Institutes which elaborates on a whole series of ideas one after another.

The Church as a Corporate Body

Among the various interpretations of Calvin, it is interesting to note that Emil Brunner has regarded Calvin's position as fundamentally individualistic in outlook.[65] This is because Calvin, according to Brunner, discussed the church in Book IV of the Institutes after an independent treatment of justification and the Christian life in Book III. The Institutes is therefore both a cause and an expression of the individualism that plagued protestantism since that time. Brunner asserts in his Dogmatics that

> faith is essentially regarded as something individual, the fellowship of faith being added to it as something which does not belong to its nature . . . he makes an individualistic separation of faith from the Church.[66]

This is, however, contrary to Calvin's own understanding. Tonkin points out correctly that this is a gross misunderstanding.[67] Calvin

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[65]Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 9.

[66]Emil Brunner, Dogmatics, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 19.

[67]Tonkin, Church, pp. 107-8.

regularly called the church the body of Christ and unreservedly regarded the church as the mother of believers, signifying a union with Christ for all believers in a corporate sense. In Calvin's exposition of the church, "in Christ" and "in the body of Christ" were interchangeable terms. At least in one of his commentaries he wrote, "For if we are split into different bodies we also break away from Him. . . . He reigns in our midst only when He is the means of binding us together in an inviolable union."[68]

Thus, individualism is foreign to Calvin. The church is rightly speaking a corporate body united in Christ.

On Church Unity

Calvin's stress on the corporate nature of the church inevitably led to his emphasis on the need of unity. After discussing the Word and the Sacraments as the notae ecclesiae, Calvin points out that these marks are

> sufficient pledge and guarantee that we may safely embrace as church any society in which both these marks exist. The principle extends to the point that we must not reject it so long as it retains them, even if it otherwise swarms with many faults.
>
> What is more, some fault may creep into the administration of either doctrine or sacraments, but this ought not estrange us from communion with the church. For not all the articles of true doctrine are of the same sort. . . . Among the churches there are other articles of doctrine disputed which still do not break the unity of faith.[69]

These words expose Calvin's irenic aspect clearly. This is also the mentality behind his letter to Cranmer of England in 1552 which condemned the disunity of the church that "it is to be ranked among the

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[68]Commentary on 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, CNTC 9:28.

[69]Inst. 4.1.12, pp. 1025-26.

chief evils of our time, viz., that the Churches are so divided."[70] It is noteworthy that Calvin was not discussing the unity of the church on the invisible level, but on the visible level. He was insisting on unity for the visible church on earth while the church invisible provides the basis of it.

In the same letters to Cranmer, Calvin also supported the idea of having theologians from each party to "discuss the main points of belief one by one" and "form their united judgments, hand down to prosperity the true doctrine of Scripture."[71] This is necessary because the church is a corporate unity built upon the word of God.

The same principle applies to Calvin's view on schism. Although the visible church as a reality is not the glorious and unspotted bride of Christ, but a mixed body in which hypocrites are present, no one has the right to break away from it. Schisms were always created out of pride and arrogance and they damaged the lawful order of the church as much as the wicked.[72] Calvin obviously has the Anabaptists in mind here. His view on the church as the order instituted by God, with its eschatological perfection in future, ran in direct conflict with those of the schismatics of his day.

Discipline as a Unique Feature of Calvin

Although Calvin's teachings in many aspects are in agreement with those of other reformers of his day, his particular understanding of

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[70] Letters 2:347.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Inst. 4.1.15, pp. 1029-30.

the positive nature of law and order leads to his emphasis on discipline. This unique feature of discipline is well demonstrated by the Genevan consistory.

While there were many other consistories or church courts in those days, Calvin's consistory was unique in one vital point. As Monter has put it, "the originality of Calvin's Consistory lay in its power of excommunication, which was definitively confirmed in 1555. Elsewhere in Protestant Europe, this remained the prerogative of the civil government."[73]

Calvin struggled vigorously to gain this triumph. It was noted that once in 1543, Calvin had to threaten resignation in order to prevent the Small Council of the Genevan magistrates from claiming full power to excommunicate. The fact that this ecclesiastical power is not fully recognized until 1555, fourteen years after Calvin's return to Geneva,[74] confirms this struggle. Calvin's insistence on discipline and his success at Geneva won fame for the reformer. Eventually, the system at Geneva was regarded by many as a model in reformation Europe.

Conclusion

The above analysis shows that Calvin, as the founder of a new tradition in theology, has maintained a large number of catholic elements in his ecclesiology.

One can discern clearly his emphasis on the church as a visible community. This emphasis, coupled with the fact of his insistence on

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[73]Monter, Geneva, p. 138.

[74]See Ibid., pp. 137-39 for details.

the unity of the church on earth, reveals the fact that the organization of a separate church body apart from the medieval institution is not his primary purpose. Rather, Calvin is basically concerned about the restoration of the body of Christ to its proper foundation so that this body can be cured of the disease that is destroying it.

This is verified by his willingness to be identified with the church fathers whose church has not been encumbered with such diseases. As a result, Calvin can truly echo with Cyprian that extra ecclesiam nulla salus. In fact his teaching on the church as a mother shows that he has been very much influenced by both Cyprian and Augustine. Elsewhere, Calvin also identifies, as does Luther, the church as the communion of saints. He also addresses the church as the numerus electorum and coetus fidelium. As far as the nature of the church is concerned, Calvin is certainly not radical.

The factor that caused his rebellion against Rome is his high view of the word. Since "God wills to make here His sovereign power by means of the Spiritual sword of His Word wherever it is preached by the paster"[75] and that this has been grossly neglected in the preceeding decades Calvin sees it as a must to reform the church. In other words, the church cannot by itself be a church without the word.

Even though Calvin stresses the importance of the sacraments as well, it is still the word of God that makes the sacraments meaningful. Talking about the corporate worship as a eucharistic fellowship, Calvin

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[75]Epistola 1085, CR 13 (41), p. 72.

points out that "without the preaching of the Word that leads us to the sacred Feast, the latter is vain."[76] Apart from the word, the eucharist by itself, again, is nothing.

The eagerness to preserve and expose the word in the communion of the saints is also behind Calvin's concern for ecclesiastical discipline. Calvin regards Christian life as a struggle towards the fullness of Christ so that believers require the assistance to "effect a real sanctification to transform the sinners into a growing conformity with Christ."[77] He regards this as the primary purpose of God for man and here again the primacy of the word controls his thinking. To him, the church is founded on Christ by the preaching of the doctrine: the word. Christian life must therefore be regulated by this word and where necessary, discipline must be applied.

Advocating the corporate nature of the church, Calvin is successful at Geneva by rebuilding the church on the basis of the word. As a cornerstone, the word also enabled his church to be identified as the Holy Catholic Church which is instituted by God for the nurture and fellowship of the saints.

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[76]Doctrinae de Sacraments, CR 9 (37), p. 21.

[77]Tonkin, Church, p. 112.

CHAPTER VI

HENRY BULLINGER AND MAGISTERIAL DISCIPLINE

Among the Helvetic reformers, Henry Bullinger represented those who adopted a different approach to the question of church and state relationship. Again, as it was the case with the other reformers, convictions about the natures of the church and state played a decisive role in Bullinger's practices in this aspect. However, as Bullinger's background affected seriously his thinking, his life and career[1] will be dealt with first before his theology is analysed.

The Life and Career of Bullinger

The Early Years

Bullinger was born in 1504 at Bremgarten, a small town near

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[1]For a short biography of Bullinger, see David J. Keep, "Henry Bullinger, 1504-1575. A Sketch of His Life and Works, with Special Reference to Recent Literature," London Quarterly & Holburn Review 191 (1966):136-45; David C. Steinmetz, Reformers in the Wings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971, reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), pp. 133-42; Robert C. Walton, "Heinrich Bullinger," in Shapers of Religious Traditions in Germany, Switzerland, and Poland, 1560-1600, ed. Jill Raitt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 69-73. Decades 5, p. vii-xxxi contains a "Biographical Notice" by the editor which, besides the life of Bullinger, lists all his major works. The original of the Decades, Sermonum Decades quinque, published in Zurich in 1552, has been translated into English in Thomas Harding, ed., The Decades of Henry Bullinger: Minister of the Church of Zurich (Cambridge: The University Press, 1849-1852) and published as volumes 7-10 of the Parker Society series of "Publication of the Works of the Fathers and Early Writers of the Reformed English Church."

Zurich. His father was a priest. Elements of piety and devotion to the church were distilled into his life through the family during the early years of his boyhood.

After studying at Bremgarten, Bullinger was sent to a Latin school in Italy. Besides the new curriculum in humanities which molded his thinking, he also came into contact with the influence of the Brethren of the Common Life. He matriculated at the University of Cologne in 1519 and began his study of arts. Cologne was one of the major centers of scholasticism in those days and yet, Bullinger was not convinced by it. It is important to note that had Bullinger studied theology instead of arts at Cologne he would have been turned into a defender of Roman Catholicism by the different presuppositions of scholastic thinking.

While studying classics and humanities at Cologne, Bullinger came across the writings of Luther and concluded that these writings were more in harmony with the patristic fathers than those of the scholastics. This led him to study the New Testament itself. Finally, Bullinger was completely convinced by Melanchthon's Loci Communes in 1521 that salvation was the result of God's grace. From then on, the young scholar embraced the new faith without reservation. This conviction made it necessary for him to drop his original plan to join the Carthusian cloister. Embracing Protestantism, Bullinger left Cologne in 1522 with his Master of Arts degree and returned home as a humanist scholar.

Initial Successes

Some months after his return to Bremgarten, Bullinger found em-

ployment in Zurich's territories at the Abbey of Kappel where he taught New Testament at the abbey school. He accepted the post with the condition that he could be excused from the mass. It was obvious that Bullinger had already rejected the Roman mass at this point of time. His anti-Roman position influenced the abbey to such an extent that in 1527 it was dissolved as a monastic establishment and reformed into a Protestant parish with Bullinger as the pastor.

Bullinger met Zwingli in 1523. The two men became friends and as colleagues from then on worked hand in hand in the course of the reformation in Zurich. Bullinger assisted Zwingli in the controversy with the anabaptists in 1525. The latter treasured his new friend with high regard and invited him to participate in the 1528 disputation in Bern.

In 1529, Bullinger was able to return to his hometown to assist the reform of the area which had recently turned Protestant. Bullinger was so successful that the Bremgarten council refused to release him when Zwingli requested his companionship in the Marburg Colloquy of 1529.

The Career at Zurich

The Second Kappel War (October 1531) ended Bullinger's career at Bremgarten. Though he preached in favour of peace, Bullinger had to flee to Zurich after the defeat of the Protestants by the Catholics. With the death of Zwingli himself in the war, the Zurich council had to look for a substitute to lead the church. After hearing a sermon by Bullinger they extended an offer to him who was regarded as a pacifist and patriot. Declining other calls to Basel and Bern, Bullinger accepted the offer and succeeded Zwingli as the leader of the church at

Zurich--an office which he held for forty-four years until his death in 1575.

As the head of the church at Zurich, Bullinger was able to continue the Helvetic reformation begun by Zwingli. Apart from building up the church locally, Bullinger also promoted harmony with the Genevan church over doctrinal issues. His irenic Second Helvetic Confession was accepted by both Zurich and Geneva. Outside Switzerland it was also accepted by most Reformed churches and became the most widely adopted confession in the Reformed tradition.

In addition, Bullinger was able to influence other parts of Europe through his voluminous writings and correspondence. His Decades--a presentation of theology composed between 1549-1551 in the form of sermons that paralleled Calvin's Institutes--was also well accepted. As it represents Bullinger's thought in an orderly manner, it is the main source of the present study.

The Main Themes in Bullinger's Theology

There are two major emphases in Bullinger's thinking. They were present in the entire spectrum of his thought and provided the key to his theology. To understand his ecclesiology it is imperative to comprehend these themes.

The Sovereignty of God

The first theme of Bullinger was the emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of God. It has been pointed out that even a cursory glance at Bullinger's major theological works would confirm this judgment.[2]

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[2]Walton, "Bullinger," p. 75.

The idea of an all sovereign God penetrated throughout Bullinger's writings. As a result he was able to declare that "the power of the almighty and everlasting God is unspeakable; therefore no man can fully declare what the power of Holy Ghost is."[3]

The only means to know this sovereign Lord and creator was through His word. "God cannot be rightly known but by his word; and that God is to be received and believed to be such an one as he revealeth himself unto us in his holy word."[4] In fact, the word of God was the only basis of true faith to Bullinger. He stated in the beginning of the Decades that "all the decrees of Christian faith, with every way how to live rightly, well, and holily . . . have always been fetched out . . . of the word of God."[5] This repeated statement showed that the word of God was really the beginning of faith to Bullinger.[6] It was on this word of God that Bullinger based his conviction about the sovereignty of God.

Within this context, Bullinger explained the formation of the church of God.

> For otherwise the Father by the Spirit worketh all things: by him he createth, sustaineth, moveth, giveth life, strengtheneth, and preserveth all things: by the selfsame he regenerateth his faithful people, sanctifieth, and endueth them with divers kinds of graces.[7]

The sovereignty of God, therefore, gave birth to the church. The same

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[3]Decades 4, 8 (the eighth sermon in the fourth decade); p. 311.

[4]Decades 4, 3; p. 125.

[5]Decades 1, 1; p. 36.

[6]This was repeated in Decades 1, 2; p. 61.

[7]Decades 4, 8; pp. 311-12.

power also sustained this community of believers. The church of Bullinger was thus inseparable from the all powerful sovereign God.

The Significance of Covenant

The sovereignty of God was also displayed in his covenant with man. Throughout human history God has instituted a covenant with his people. Within this covenant, God, as the omnipotent governor of all things, inaugurated a league with "Abraham and all his seeds, that is, with all the faithful, of what nation or country soever they be."[8] This covenant, which was without end,[9] was bilateral in that God promised to be all things to his people while they were required to be upright before him.[10]

Obviously, Bullinger was trying to encompass every faithful person into this single covenant with God. Consequently, there was only one covenant in history though there were different phases of its manifestation. Eventually, the covenant was fulfilled in Christ who was the antitype promised in the Old Testament.[11]

The church was, therefore, instituted by God as part of this covenant. Bullinger asserted that "true religion is none other thing than a friendship, a knitting, and an unity (or league) with the true, living, and everlasting God."[12] Here, "religion" was used by Bullinger

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[8] *Decades* 3, 6; p. 170.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., pp. 170-71.

[11] Ibid., p. 178.

[12] *Decades* 4, 5; p. 232.

loosely to mean the covenant between God and the faithful in Christ.

The covenant was thus a unifying principle employed by Bullinger to provide the framework of his theology, particularly the doctrine of the church. With the covenant came also his insistence on the unity of the Old and New Testament. Both pointed to the same redemption in Christ because they were, in their essence, the same covenant of God and expressed the same salvation for man.

This unity in history, in turn, led to his conviction in the indispensable role of Christian magistrates in the discipline of the church. The way magistrates in Old Testament times operated in the kingdom of Israel provided a model for his advocation for magisterial discipline in the church. Bullinger substantiated this argument on the basis of the unity of the two testaments which rested on his covenant theology.

Within the framework of these emphases, the church, according to Bullinger, was, therefore, a body instituted in the covenant of God whose power and sovereignty guaranteed its unity. In Bullinger's own words,

> The Holy Ghost . . . coupleth . . . Christ with her spouse with a knot that cannot be loosed, and joineth together between themselves all the members of his mystical body in an everlasting covenant. For as the members of our body are joined together . . . so the mystical body of Christ is united together by the Holy Ghost.[13]

The Ecclesiology of Bullinger

The Nature of the Church

Rejecting the hierarchical concept of the church, Bullinger

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[13] Decades 4, 8; p. 319.

asserted that "Ecclesia is properly an assembly . . . where the people are called out, or gathered together. . . . It is the company, communion, congregation, multitude, or fellowship of all that profess the name of Christ."[14] The church was therefore a communion in Bullinger's mind. "We believe the church to be nothing else but the company of all those saints that are, have been, and shall be, as well in this present age, as in the world to come."[15] This communion was also universal and scattered.

> This universal church hath her particular churches; I mean, the church of Adam and of the patriarchs, the church of Moses and of the prophets before the birth of Christ, the Christian church, which is so named of Christ himself, and the apostolic church gathered together by the apostle's doctrine in the name of Christ. And finally it containeth these particular churches, as the church of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Alexandria, of Rome, ...[16]

Bullinger also differentiated between the church militant and the church triumphant. "There is a Church militant on earth struggling against the flesh, the world, and the devil, and a Church triumphant in heaven rejoicing in the presence of the Lord."[17] The church militant consisted of the wheat as well as the tares who were outward Christians only.[18] Following Augustine, Bullinger also called the true believers

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[14] Decades 1, 9; p. 161.

[15] Decades 5, 1; p. 8.

[16] Decades 1, 9; p. 161.

[17] Bullinger's Second Helvetic Confession in Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, vol. 1, 6th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1931; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 409. (Hereafter cited as Schaff).

[18] Decades 5, 1; pp. 5 & 7.

the invisible church which existed among the visible church that included false believers as well.[19]

The Marks of the Church

Bullinger agreed with the Protestant emphasis on the word and sacraments as marks of the true church of God. He declared that "there are two special and principal marks, the sincere preaching of the word of God, and the lawful partaking of the sacraments of Christ."[20] However, he called these marks of the church "outward." They were outward because by these marks the church was identified and made known to the world.[21] He also rejected the performance of Christians such as godliness and unity as marks of the church, arguing that these were merely results of the word and sacraments.[22]

In addition to the outward marks, Bullinger also advocated for three "inward" marks: the fellowship of God's Spirit, sincere faith and mutual love.[23] These marks were inward because they were invisible and belonged to the inward church only. He contended that

> Besides those outward marks of the church which the true believers have in common with hypocrites, there are certain inward marks specially belonging only to the godly. . . . These do make the outward marks to be fruitful, and . . . do make men worthy or acceptable in the sight of God.[24]

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[19]Ibid., p. 17.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[23]Ibid., p. 23.

[24]Ibid.

In other words, the possession of the word and sacraments did not necessarily make anyone a true Christian. To Bullinger, a true Christian was one that displayed the fruits of these outward marks and it was the inward marks made these fruits possible.

It must be noted, however, that Bullinger was not providing a loophole to man's performance as one of the notae ecclesiae. He insisted clearly that these inward marks were the special gifts of God that made the outward marks meaningful for the true Christians only.[25]

Adding inward marks to the outward, Bullinger was able to explain the difference in the effects of the word and sacraments on different members in the church. While hypocrites shared the same word and sacraments with true Christians, they can never become part of the true communion of believers in Christ. It was not because they did not bear the fruits of good performance as such, but because they did not bear the fruits as a result of the inward marks. Although external good works could be claimed by false believers who already shared the visible outward marks, the invisible factors of God's Spirit, faith and love still excluded these hypocrites from the true church of God.

The Ministry

Bullinger also shared a high view of the ministry. To him, the ministry was instituted by God so that "we may both be strengthened and blessed in him; and may understand his will to us-ward, and finally our duty whereby we be bound unto him."[26]

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[25]Ibid., "special" translates "peculiaria" in the original.

[26]Decades 5, 3; p. 93.

The duty of the ministry was invariably the preaching of the word of God. The keys of the church, to Bullinger, "are nothing else but the ministry of preaching the gospel or the word of God,"[27] and that God spoke to his people in the church through this ministry because preaching was essentially the word of God.[28] Also, he insisted in the Second Helvetic Confession that "the chief duties of ministers are the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the care of souls, and the maintenance of discipline."[29]

However, there was a unmistakable emphasis on the role of the minister to "govern" the church with the word of God. The third sermon of the fifth decade began by pointing out the purpose of the ministry as an order "wherewith God governeth his church."[30] The next sermon, while explaining the ministry of the word, mentioned the office of the ministry as to "govern the church of God on earth."[31]

The Second Helvetic Confession also tied together the ministry of the word to the governing of the church. "God always used ministers for gathering and governing the church."[32] "Christ chose the Apostles, and these ordained pastors in all the churches, whose successors have taught and governed the church to this day."[33]

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[27] Decades 5, 4; p. 146.

[28] Decades 4, 3; p. 95.

[29] Schaff, p. 412.

[30] Decades 5, 3; p. 93.

[31] Decades 5, 4; p. 128.

[32] Schaff, p. 411.

[33] Ibid.

According to Bullinger, the ministry of the word, was, therefore, more than merely the preaching of the word and administration of sacraments. It also contained the vigorous duty to maintain order within the church. The emphasis on "governing" pointed to Bullinger's conviction that everything related to the church came under the sole jurisdiction of the minister who was to function on the basis of the word of God, independent of the state's intervention.

The Authority of the Church

It has been pointed out that Bullinger's discussion of the authority of the visible church was mainly a refutation of the pope's claim of plenitudo potestatis.[34] This he did by rejecting the validity of apostolic succession. Explaining the nature of the church, Bullinger argued that

> It is called prophetical and apostolical, because by the travail of the prophets and apostles it was first built, and by their doctrine is preserved even at this time . . . . The succession of doctors or pastors of the church doth prove nothing of itself without the word of God.[35]

Bullinger agreed with the traditional description of the church as apostolic. Yet apostolicity was not judged by physical succession but by doctrinal succession. A church is apostolic only if it preserves the faith handed down by the apostles and patristic fathers.

Hence, the authority of the church lies in its possession of the word of God which made it the apostolic church of God. "It is the same

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[34]Walton, "Bullinger," p. 82.

[35]Decades 5, 1; p. 28.

Spirit therefore, which spake unto the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and which at this day speaketh to us in the church."[36] The word of God given through the Spirit made the church apostolic and thus authoritative. This explained his statement in the Second Helvetic Confession: "As there was no salvation out of the ark of Noah, so there is no certain salvation out of Christ, who exhibits himself to the elect in the Church for their nourishment."[37]

Because of its authority the church is a necessity for believers. This high view of the church reflects the catholic proposition of Cyprian that there is no salvation outside the church. Yet, the church's authority was derived not from the chair of Rome, but from the word of God.

Ecclesiastical Discipline

Bullinger's view in this aspect was based on his understanding of the natures of law and the Lord's Supper.

The Law as a Positive Tool

Regarding the Decalogue as the basis for all good works and the guide for man's life in the world, Bullinger treated the law represented by the ten commandments as the eternal mind and will of God.[38] This resulted in his positive attitude towards the function of law.

> And verily the law is nothing but a declaration of God's will, appointing what thou hast to do, and what thou oughtest to leave

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[36] *Decades* 4, 8; p. 310.

[37] Schaff, p. 410.

[38] *Decades* 2, 7; p. 342; 3, 7; p. 220; 3, 9; p. 353.

> undone. The beginning and cause of laws is God himself, who is the fountain of all goodness, equity, truth, and righteousness.[39]

Since law was a positive tool, ecclesiastical laws were naturally desirable to Bullinger. "Ecclesiastical laws are those which, being taken out of the word of God, and applied to the state of men, times, and places, are received, and have authority in the church among the people of God."[40] Bullinger continued to explain the purpose of these laws,

> ecclesiastical laws have their measure . . . that nothing be done or received contrary or differing in any jot from the word of God, . . . that lastly this rule of the apostle may be effectually observed, "Let all things be done decently according unto order, and to the edification of the church."[41]

Thus, it can be concluded that the maintenance of order was the concern behind Bullinger's view on ecclesiastical laws which functioned positively in the lives of Christians.

The Lord's Supper as a Joyous Occasion

The Second Helvetic Confession stated clearly that "the Lord's Supper . . . is a grateful commemoration of the benefits of redemption, and a spiritual feast of believers instituted by Christ."[42] The Decades asserted that

> The supper of the Lord is an holy action instituted unto the church from God, wherein the Lord, by the setting of bread and wine before us at the banquet, doth certify unto us his promise and communion,

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[39] Decades 2, 1; p. 193.

[40] Ibid., p. 207.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Schaff, p. 414.

> and sheweth unto us his gifts, and layeth them before our senses; gathereth them together into one body visibly. . . .[43]

These sayings pointed to Bullinger's conviction of the Lord's Supper as a joyous public expression of the redemption of Christ for sinners and an indication of the unity of believers in Christ.

As a result, he was unwilling to bar anyone from the sacrament because it would have implied that Christ's blood was shed in vain. Excommunication was thus not favoured by Bullinger as it was contrary to the unity signified by the Lord's Supper. Baker has observed rightly that in Bullinger's thinking "the Supper was not meant to separate the tares from the wheat--it was not a means for the purification of the church. Rather, it was meant to give the sinner the support, to give thanks to the Lord."[44] Barring sinners from the sacrament would deprive them of the opportunity to receive the word of God and that was absurd to him.

Therefore, ecclesiastical discipline was preferable to Bullinger. The ministers, as servants instituted by God, should govern the church with the word of God. However, the use of excommunication was considered inappropriate in the church because it was contrary to the nature of the Lord's Supper.

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[43] Decades 5, 9; p. 403.

[44] J. Wayne Baker, "In Defense of Magisterial Discipline: Bullinger's Tractatus de Excommunicatione of 1568," in Ulrich Gabler and Erland Herkenrath, ed., Heinrich Bullinger 1504-1575. Gesamelte Aufsatze zum 400. Todestag, vol. 1: Leben und Werk (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975), p. 149.

Church and State: Magisterial Discipline

While Bullinger accepted the need for discipline in the church he always assigned this responsibility to Christian magistrates. This was the result of his view on the role of these magistrates in the church.

The Role of Christian Magistrates

Bullinger recognized the divine origin of the office of magistrates. He stated that "The magistrate is ordained by God for the safeguard of good, and punishment of the evil,"[45] and that "The civil magistrate is appointed by God himself (Rom. xiii.) for the peace and tranquillity of the human race."[46] They were to be treated as ministers of God who were no subject of the priests.[47] Thus, quoting Titus 3:1, Romans 13:1 and I Timothy 2:1, these magistrates were to be obeyed.[48]

On the duty of this office, Bullinger contended that

> The duty of the magistrate is to preserve peace and public order; to promote and protect religion and good morals; to govern the people by righteous laws; to punish the offenders against society, such as thieves[49] murderers, oppressors, blasphemers, and incorrigible heretics.

Consequently, the office of magistrates carried with it the duty to judge and punish, in secular as well as religious affairs. Bullinger argued that as the Old Testament had commanded the kings to kill false

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[45] Decades 2, 6; p. 313.

[46] Schaff, p. 420.

[47] Decades 2, 7; p. 328.

[48] Decades 2, 6; p. 311.

[49] Schaff, p. 420.

prophets, so should the magistrates of his day protect true religion by punishing false brethren.[50] "The Lord commandeth the magistrate to make trial of doctrines, and to kill those that do stubbornly teach against the scriptures, and drew people from the true God."[51]

It followed from this line of argument that the magistrate was the proper person to order, to judge and to punish because "the care of religion doth especially belong to the magistrate; and this is not in his power only, but his office and duty also, to dispose and advance religion."[52]

The Execution of Discipline

Since the magistrate was a minister of God like the pastor, Bullinger proposed a close cooperation between the two in the actual government of the church. The pastor's office was to preach, to baptize, and to administer the Lord's Supper while the magistrate's was to judge and punish offenders in the church. Both the pastor and the magistrate were under the word of God and owe their obedience to God alone.[53]

Bullinger realized that the church of the New Testament and patristic fathers administered their own discipline apart from the magistrates. However, he argued that it was only a temporary measure due to the absence of Christian magistrates. As secular power was now in the

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[50] Decades 2, 8; p. 358.

[51] Decades 2, 7; pp. 324-25.

[52] Ibid., pp. 323-24.

[53] Ibid., p. 329.

hands of Christians, now, these Christian kings and princes should utilize their authorities to guarantee the observation of God's commandments among their subjects.[54]

In practical terms, the church at Zurich was under the pastoral guidance of the clergy while church discipline was totally under the civil magistrates. Magistrates at Zurich acted like those of the Jewish kingdom of the Old Testament in enforcing the conditions of piety required by the covenant of God.

This arrangement reinforced Bullinger's view on the impropriety of excommunication in the church. Since discipline was under the official power of the civil magistrate, it could never be justified for a civil magistrate to stop people from attending the Lord's Supper which was under the administration of the pastor. Whenever punishment was needed it must always be public and physical in nature so that it could be properly executed by the civil authorities.

When challenged with the text of Matthew 18:17, Bullinger argued that it was not exclusion from the sacrament that was intended by Christ, but rather the exclusion from ordinary course of life. This logically belonged to the authority of the secular realm.[55] However, Bullinger was also free from the charge of compromising ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the secular authority. Apart from punishment for the sake of discipline, the minister was still in complete control of the government of the church. Bullinger insisted that "ceremonies are holy

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[54]Decades 2, 8; p. 367.

[55]Decades 5, 10; pp. 507-8.

rites belonging to the ministers of religion, and also to the place, time, and holy worship exhibited to God."[56]

With his system of magisterial discipline, Bullinger handled successfully the situation throughout his career at Zurich. He was even able to export his view to other parts of Europe. In 1566, Bullinger advised the English reformers that the king, by the power of his office, had the right to prescribe ecclesiastical laws of a ceremonial nature to the church without the consent and concurrence of the clergy.[57] Again, in 1574, he wrote to the English bishops to accuse the presbyterial system that excluded civil magistrates from ecclesiastical affairs as an error of the papists. To Bullinger, magisterial discipline in the church was the only correct form of church government under the covenant of God.[58]

Conclusion

The ecclesiology of Bullinger was certainly not radical. His stress on the nature of the church as a communion was in line with the reformation theology which rejected the medieval understanding of the church as a hierarchy. The distinction between the visible and invisible church was also catholic. He also followed Luther in assigning a primary role to the word of God and, like Luther, that pushed him to

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[56] Decades 3, 5; p. 125.

[57] Letter of Bullinger to Laurence Humphrey and Thomas Sampson dated May 1 1566 in Hastings Robinson, ed., The Zurich Letters Comprising the Correspondence of Several English Bishops and Others with Some of the Helvetian Reformers Parker Society Series, vol. 50 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1842), p. 354.

[58] Letter of Bullinger to Bishop Sandys dated March 10 1574. Ibid., vol. 51, pp. 241-42.

divorce from the Roman conception of the church.

As a successor to Zwingli, Bullinger had to deal with the church and state at Zurich. As the leader of Zwinglianism after the death of its leader, he also had to deal with the other forms of Protestantism, both in and out of the Reformed circle. With all these demands he proved himself to be a capable churchman by his successful career at Zurich.

His convictions played an important role in his success. Apart from the word of God which was the starting point in theology to him, Bullinger's belief in an almighty God who instituted an everlasting covenant with man controlled his entire thinking. To him, history was a unified entity. There was only one single covenant between God and man.

With this conviction, Bullinger arrived at the unity of the Old and New Testaments which formed the basis of his teaching on magisterial discipline. To be fair to Bullinger, it must be noted that he did not advocate state sovereignty and held that the state and church were intended to be equal tools of God in His covenant with man.[59] Through this covenant, Bullinger also was able to emphasize the constancy and reliability of God's commitment to man. With the bilateral nature of the covenant, he also reminded man of his obligation to serve God according to His commandmants given in His word.[60]

The two major issues in his career centered around the validity of the use of excommunication and on whom should control discipline.

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[59]Baker, "Magisterial Discipline," p. 156.

[60]An observation in Walton, "Bullinger," p. 80.

With his convictions, he firmly rejected the former and willingly welcomed the Christian magistrates to participate in the government of the church with the pastors. Magisterial discipline, therefore, represented his major contribution to the church and state problem of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER VII

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The religious turbulence of the sixteenth century resulted in division among the contending parties. Within each party differences also exist among its leaders, even though agreements are apparent.

Comparison between Brenz and Luther

Between Luther and Brenz it was clear that they were in agreement on the nature of the church but differed in the role of magistrates in the church. The idea of Notbischof was entirely absent in Brenz's thinking. Even though Brenz followed Luther in subscribing to the doctrines of universal priesthood and two kingdoms Brenz had opted for a state-church. While Luther also realized the necessity of the princes' intervention in ecclesiastical affairs, he consistently made it a temporary measure. There are several reasons that contributed towards this difference.

Differences in Background

While Luther began his theology with the word of God and remained firmly in it Brenz was more susceptible to the political and intellectual atmosphere of his day.

Political Influences

The city councils and local princes in Germany developed during the fifteenth century various sovereign rights which increasingly allowed them control of ecclesiastical affairs in their territories.[1] These rights permitted them to become the patrons of ecclesiastical posts, thus giving them jurisdiction over the monasteries and churches in their territories. Additionally, civil power was considered a privilege derived from God. These factors made it a matter of fact that secular rulers were obliged to take positive actions to promote the spiritual welfare of their subjects.[2]

Brenz also experienced personally the importance of the power of secular government in ecclesiastical affairs. His career at Schwabisch Hall was possible because the city council acquired the patronage of the city's main church where he introduced reforms without any interference from the Roman bishop. Later, at Wurttemberg, Brenz's reforms were successful because the duke owned a large portion of the patronage rights of the churches in his area. Without the support of these political heads, reforms would be difficult, if not impossible. The dreadful experience of the Peasants' Revolt during which Hall escaped narrowly being occupied by a peasant army also added to Brenz's conviction that secular rulers' involvement in the church was both natural and desirable.

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[1]For details of the patronage system and the associated advocatio ecclesiae, see James M. Estes, "Church Order and the Christian Magistrate according to Johannes Brenz," Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte 59 (1968):7.

[2]Ibid., p. 8.

Intellectual Formation

During the sixteenth century, it was generally accepted that the duty of a Christian prince was to secure both the religious and social welfare of his subjects. This idea was the result of Christian humanism which propagated widely to various universities throughout Europe. As it has been pointed out, "it was through the influence of Erasmus, not Luther, that the idea of the Christian magistrate entered the thought of a great many Protestant reformers."[3] Brenz was naturally conversant with the thought of this Christian humanism while he studied at the university in Heildelberg. His preference towards the state's involvement in the church was a reflection of this humanistic articulation.

While church patronage and Christian humanism were common also in other parts of Germany, Luther, based on the primacy of the word, insisted on the temporary nature of the state's involvement in the church. Brenz, on the other hand, with a different political situation and a deeper commitment to humanistic principles, viewed the state's intervention as normal and vital. These differences in background led to the divergence in their understandings of the natures of the two kingdoms and the universal priesthood.

The Doctrines of Two Kingdoms and Universal Priesthood

On the nature of the two kingdoms, Luther's views were clearly

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[3]Ibid., p. 9.

set out in the 1523 treatise Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed.[4] Brenz basically agreed with these views. However, the fact of the mixed nature of wheat and tares in the church and the distinction between the performing of the ministry and the external ordering of the ministry led Brenz to argue that the externals of church order could rightly be assigned to the secular authority while the church retained the spiritual sword that dealt with the internals of Christian faith.

It should be noted that Luther agreed to the idea that the externals of church order were outside personal faith. Yet, these externals were part of the Christian freedom possessed by all Christians, not just the magistrates, though the latter could intervene as Notbischof in cases of emergency. What was temporary in Luther, however, was permanent in Brenz, although they agreed with each other on the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

On the doctrine of universal priesthood, Brenz again had no objection to what Luther taught. However, he refused to draw the same conclusion which Luther had drawn--that secular government had no right to monopolize the ordering of the church. Failing to distinguish between the prince as prince and the prince as merely one of the members of the church, Brenz stressed the identification of the two roles in one single person. Hence, in Brenz's view, Christian magistrates should participate in the church's government, both because of his Christian faith and by right of his office of government.[5] As a re-

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[4]WA 11:245-80; LW 45:75-129.

[5]See, for instance, Pressel, Anecdota, p. 40. Estes points out

sult, Brenz was able to further his arguments for state church by emphasizing the right of civil magistrates as members of the universal priesthood.

On Ecclesiastical Discipline

These differences logically caused a two-fold disagreement in the area of discipline.

Firstly, there was a noticeable discrepancy in their views on the role of governmental control in discipline. In appearance, there was little difference between the visitation proposed by Luther in Saxony and the ones by Brenz in Hall and Wurttemberg. However, Luther repeatedly reminded his followers that the princes were merely emergency bishops and that the visitation officers, once appointed by the state, were to function as ministers of the church.[6] On the other hand, Brenz, regarding the state's execution of discipline as an integral part of its duty, made the consistory an instrument of the state[7] in preserving order in the state church. The members of the visitation were naturally state officials in this case.

Secondly, there was dissimilarity in their understandings of the

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in "Church Order," p. 12 note 23 that a number of Brenz's church orders and related documents contained similar statements on this idea.

[6]The Instruction for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony (1528) asserted that these officers were to be "called" and "ordained" for this office. See WA 26:195-97; LW 40:271.

[7]Estes, State Church, pp. 73-75 listed the various provisions of the Great Church Order of 1559. The consistory comprised of four members from the civil magistrates and three theologians from the church. It is noted that this body operated as part of the duke's machinery of government and that within the body, the theologians occupied a position lower than that of the civil magistrates.

nature of excommunication. Luther consistently regarded the ban as an external measure that could not destroy faith under whatever circumstances. Consequently, discipline with the ban was considered a purely outward persuasive measure. With Brenz, discipline was part of the church order under the coercive authority of the state. Although the coercive nature of excommunication was not emphasized it was inherently part of the church order which aimed at the enforcement of true piety and proper worship.

Comparison between Bullinger and Calvin

It must be noted that, generally speaking, the ecclesiology of Bullinger was very much in agreement with that of Calvin. They agreed with each other on the nature of the church, its authority and necessity. They even agreed on the need of discipline.

However, discrepancy arose over the nature of the Lord's Supper, its role in discipline and the role of magistrates in the execution of discipline. Bullinger's view of magisterial discipline represented a different approach to that of Calvin at Geneva. Walton points out that this difference was, for a long time, the underlying cause of the friction that existed between Zurich and Geneva.[8]

On Excommunication

Calvin stressed that the Lord's Supper, as a mark of the church, must be administered properly so that order in the church could be achieved. The presence of offenders in the Supper was therefore incompatible with this order and they must be excluded from the sacrament.

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[8]Walton, "Bullinger," p. 83.

However, Bullinger argued that Jesus Christ himself had excluded no one from the Supper, not even Judas. While the idea of exclusion itself represented a wrong understanding of the sacrament it also reflected the papal usage for tyrannical purposes.[9]

The conflict became more acute in the late 1560's at Heildelberg where the Calvinists' intention to introduce the Genevan form of church government met with the opposition of Bullinger. Calvinists insisted that the visible church was united by the same doctrine, the same faith and the use of the same sacraments. To bar anyone from the doctrine or the faith would alienate the sinner from the truth of God and the only alternative left would be exclusion from the Lord's Supper.[10] On the other hand, Bullinger objected by insisting on the Lord's Supper as a sign of Christian unity and that excommunication would destroy this significance. The dispute was only settled with a compromise[11] where a presbytery was appointed with limited authority and excommunication controlled by the magistrates.

On Magisterial Discipline

The role of the magistrate represented a deeper discrepancy between the two camps. In Geneva, discipline was controlled by the consistory in which the church participated actively. The underlying principle was that Christian magistrates, as members of the church,

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[9]Summary of Bullinger's Tractatus de Excommunicatione made by Baker, "Magisterial Discipline," p. 147.

[10]Ibid.

[11]See Ibid., p. 143 for the details of the dispute and its settlement.

were also under the guidance of the pastors in spiritual affairs.

In Zurich, however, discipline was directed by the Ehegericht, a body under the control of the civil magistrates. Also, the use of excommunication was absent in the church under Bullinger. The idea of electing a separate presbytery to handle ecclesiastical discipline independently from the magistracy was opposed by the church at Zurich. The controlling principle was that Christian magistrates were ministers of God and they carried the power to enforce the piety required by the covenant of God. As it has been pointed out correctly, "the crux of the whole matter"[12] was the magistrate's role to rule and punish and the pastor's role to preach and teach. The pastor at Zurich was to control the discipline of offenders by private and public admonition. Beyond that, unrepentant sinners would be handled by the civil authorities.[13]

The Political Factor

The difference in the political atmosphere between the two cities also contributed towards the discrepancy. Walton points out that

> Calvin's Consistory at Geneva was the result of a compromise with a city government whose real independence was of recent origins and represents a thwarted attempt to establish a separate government for the church, while such organs as the Zurich Ehegericht (1525) or the Synod of 1528 represent institutions founded by the authority of a long established Christian magistracy for the proper government of a res publica christiana.[14]

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[12] An observation made by Baker in "Magisterial Discipline," p. 150.

[13] See Walton, "Bullinger," p. 72 for details.

[14] Robert C. Walton, "The Institutionalization of the Reformation at Zurich," in Zwingliana 13 (1972):505.

The political situation in Zurich was firmly established well before Bullinger took up the ministry left behind by Zwingli. While Calvin's situation allowed the church to be involved in discipline Bullinger's did not. The latter had to cope with an existing situation while the former was able to negotiate his own. It happened that Bullinger's convictions in this area were in harmony with the political atmosphere at Zurich and his career was thus successful.

Even with the differences between Zurich and Geneva, Bullinger was eager to preserve unity within the Reformed Protestantism. This explained the absence of radical statements on magisterial discipline in the Second Helvetic Confession which would made it unacceptable to Calvinists. However, the question of church discipline was not settled during the lifetime of Bullinger and his "old age was soured by the on-going and ever more bitter conflict with Geneva"[15] over this issue.

Comparison between the Helvetic and the Lutheran Representatives

Within Protestantism the hope for unity between the Reformed and Lutheran parties waned as their differences became conspicuous. However, it does not mean that there was a lack of unity within the diversity. The fact that both the Reformed and Lutheran groups broke away from the papacy points to their agreement in rejecting the papal claims of authority. This unity within diversity is most apparent in the areas of ecclesiology and discipline.

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[15]Walton, "Bullinger," p. 73.

Formulations in Ecclesiology

As it has been pointed out, any attempt to search for a neat formula to sum up the thought of all the reformers would lead to a lowest common denominator which is empty of meaning.[16] Yet, dominant themes are readily recognizable in the reformation heritage. The ecclesiology of the four reformers analysed displayed striking similiarities, though their differences should also be noted.

The Nature of the Church

One element common to all four reformers is their conception of the nature of the church. They rejected the medieval understanding of the church as an institutional hierarchy and replaced it with a strong emphasis in the popular aspect. Luther, whose views were mostly followed by Brenz, regarded the church as a communio sanctorum. Calvin, on the other hand, viewed it as the corpus Christi while Bullinger saw it as a covenant community. The emphasis on the personal nature of the church is obvious. Reformation ecclesiology is therefore a reaction to the papal view that the church is essentially the institution dispensing salvation through the priests.

It should be noted, however, that the reformers were not opposing the creedal formulations of the ancient church which were also accepted by the Roman Church in the Middle Ages. It was also the reformers' belief that the church, both visible and invisible in nature, is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. However, impurities had been introduced into these formulations by the papacy and their task was to purge it of

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[16]Tonkin, Church, p. 159.

these misconceptions. Accepting the Augustinian tradition, they employed the same terminology as the medieval church did and reintroduced the forgotten elements into its meaning.

Emphasis on Word and Christ

The reformers, interestingly, started at the same point and adhered to the same guiding principle. To all of them, the word of God was the proper basis of the church. While Luther and Brenz took the church to be the communion of saints instituted by the word of God, Calvin and Bullinger also regarded the church as being built and preserved by the word. Avis concludes rightly that, in reformation ecclesiology, "the gospel brings the church into being, the gospel alone constitutes and creates the church."[17]

Tonkin also points out that the reformers, in their affirmation of the classical formulation of the church, shifted their emphasis from the "abstract categories of divine and human nature to a dynamic description of Christ in relationship to his people."[18] Christology, hence, became the guiding principle of reformation ecclesiology.

This applies most clearly to both Luther and Calvin. In Luther, the word was understood as God's address to man in Christ which called forth the response of faith and resulted in the communio sanctorum. With Calvin, union with Christ understood as participation in his death and resurrection led to the institution of the corpus Christi by which

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[17]Avis, Church, p. 1.

[18]Tonkin, Church, pp. 160-61.

Christians were nurtured in Christ. Thus, it is "Christology conceived in terms of personal relationship"[19] that guided the reformers' reflection on the nature of the church.

This emphasis on a dynamic Christology is also significant in itself. As Rupp points out,[20] it represents a return from the circumference of the church to the center of the church in ecclesiological discussions. Instead of the medieval practice of providing defining statements that identify the boundary of the church, reformation thinking broke through the tradition by restoring the church to its Christological center.

Faith versus Order

While the starting point and the guiding principle of their views on the church were identical, the reformers differed in their motivations of these ecclesiological formulations.

The word of God, to Luther, being an address from God, required faith as a response on the believer's part. Faith, therefore, became the motivating factor in Luther's statements on the church. The communion of saints of Luther is distinctively a faith community. The church is the vehicle for the gospel of God so that faith is the only access into it. The invisibility of the church became visible through faith. Hence, faith controlled Luther's formulation of the doctrine of the church.

For Calvin, the word of God pointed toward the significance of

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[19]Tonkin, Church, p. 161.

[20]Rupp, Righteousness, p. 310.

order instead of faith. The church is indispensable because it represents the order lost in Adam. The visible and invisible church constituted a unity to Calvin as he treated them in the light of the order of God. This also explained Calvin's concern for discipline in the church. Bullinger, representing the other Reformed tradition, also manifested a similar concern for order in his thinking. His differentiation between the inward and outward marks of the church led to his emphasis on the ethical life of Christians. This is the reason behind his inclusion of faith and love as marks of the church in addition to the word and sacraments. Order, therefore, became the characteristic of the Reformed doctrine of the church.

Ecclesiastical Discipline

The concern for order caused Calvin and Bullinger to view the church as the tool of God to train the members in holiness and godliness. For Luther, however, the gospel remained the central theme of Christian faith and, thus, the church is always a vehicle for the saving grace of God.[21] Yet, even with this basic divergency, similar systems of church discipline were still being developed in both the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

Administration of Discipline

Since the reformers agreed on the need of discipline, church court was a common practice in their churches. For those cases where pastoral admonition and persuasion failed to achieve any results, these

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[21]Similar conclusions is also found in Randall, The Making of the Modern Mind, p. 152, cited by Raun, "Church Discipline," p. 65.

church courts would handle the offenders accordingly. Although the practices were similar their attitudes toward discipline were not.

For Luther, the church as a communion of saints should convince the members through the power of the word of God which is her only proper weapon. Coercive power belonged to the state and only the state could enforce outward discipline.[22] In other words, the church should concentrate on the preaching of the word and administration of the sacraments so that eventually, good works could flow from the Christian's free will. Following Luther in many aspects of his theology, Brenz also shared similar views on the need of discipline but carried further the state's role in discipline.

Calvin, on the other hand, assigned a permanent value to law in Christian life. This caused him to set up church consistories in Geneva which allowed the pastors and elders to enforce discipline in the entire church. Under Calvin's scheme, "every detail and trifle of life was scrutinized with greatest care by the Genevan authorities."[23] At Zurich, similar practices were introduced by Bullinger, though not as vigorous as in Geneva. It should be noted that Bullinger's stress on the bilateral covenant between God and man actually made discipline a necessity in the church. Their difference, if any, lies only in the state's involvement in ecclesiastical discipline.

Church and State in Discipline

The role of magistrates in the church is the central issue that

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[22]Raun, "Church Discipline," p. 67.

[23]Ibid., p. 74.

marked the difference between the reformers. It must be noted that magistrates were already involved in ecclesiastical affairs since the late medieval period. In fact, the reformation would have failed had these magistrates stayed away from the Protestant church. The question that confronted the reformers was how much should these magistrates control the church.

For Luther, the church and state should operate in different realms altogether. The magistrate's role in the church was only temporary. While both offices of the minister and the magistrates were instituted by God they should work hand in hand in the spiritual and secular areas respectively. Interestingly, Calvin also held similar views. The church should operate by itself, free from the state's interference. The magistrates were only members of the church under the spiritual authority of the pastor. This is the reason behind Calvin's struggle for the church's right in excommunication at Geneva.

On the other hand, both Bullinger and Brenz stood for the state's involvement in ecclesiastical discipline. For both of them, the office of the Christian magistrates was divine and their participation in ecclesiastical discipline was legitimate and desirable. However, the degree of such participation was different in their respective thinkings.

For Bullinger, the pastor and the magistrate were equal ministers of God and only the discipline of church members was under the jurisdiction of the state. Everything else associated with the word and the sacraments was still under the church's authority. With Brenz, the state enjoyed a much deeper involvement in ecclesiastical affairs. Anything apart from the actual performing of sacraments and preaching

was under the state's authority. Bullinger saw the Christian magistrate as an enforcer of the conditions of piety while Brenz viewed him as a sponsor and guardian of the Christian faith.

Bullinger advocated discipline by the state because of the model of Old Testament theocracy while Brenz regarded it as an external operation that, having no connection with spiritual affairs, belonged properly to the state. These differences gave rise to different concepts regarding the nature and scope of church discipline. Bullinger restricted discipline to physical punishments only while Brenz viewed the use of excommunication as mandatory. Although the courts dealing with church discipline were under the state in both of these cases, the courts of Brenz's state church enjoyed a greater authority than that of Bullinger.

Conclusions

As it has been pointed out by John McNeill, it was the sixteenth century reformers' "unfaltering belief that the Holy Catholic Church had been instituted by God for the nurture and fellowship of souls and that out of it there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."[24] This conviction prompted the reformers to reflect on the nature and function of the church and construct the community according to their convictions. For this reason, ecclesiology is a significant part of reformation theology.

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[24]John T. McNeill, "The Church in Sixteenth Century Reformed Theology," The Journal of Religion 22 (July 1942):251.

The Nature of the Church

This study had come to identify, despite their different accents in theology, a common core of belief regarding the nature of the church among the four reformers. Unanimously, they all define the church from a relational aspect, calling it communion of saints, body of Christ and covenant community respectively. This is a major and radical departure from the medieval description of the church from an institutional aspect.

The reformers also exhibited catholic elements in their ecclesiology. They were eager to identify themselves with the patristic church which, other than the word of God, was their source of authority. The Apostles' Creed, for instance, actually provided the structure of many of their writings.[25] Their doctrine of the church testified to their eagerness to restore the purity of Christian faith as taught in the scriptures and practised by the ancient church. In this aspect, their efforts were successful. The emphases on the word of God and on the Christological center represented a significant breakthrough from the medieval ecclesiological formulations.

Church Discipline

Although the reformers succeeded in a new formulation of the church they failed to divorce themselves from the medieval practice of magisterial control of ecclesiastical discipline. As they realized the necessity of church discipline, they also perceived the need for the

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[25]Luther, Brenz and Bullinger devoted individual treatises on the Apostles' Creed. Calvin claimed to have followed the Apostles' Creed in his Institutes.

magistrate's participation in any program of discipline.

While Luther reluctantly permitted the princes to straighten out misconducts in the church he was unable to reverse the trend. Brenz went further by formulating church orders that made Christian magistrates permanently responsible for discipline in the church. While Calvin's consistory was a church body it was never free from the magistrate's influence which continued to exert considerable influence in ecclesiastical discipline. Bullinger was more than willing to admit the magistrate's involvement in the church. His system of magisterial discipline, in reality, made the state accountable for discipline perpetually.

However, the difference between the Lutheran and the Reformed practices in church discipline was obvious. The princes in the Lutheran lands enjoyed a greater influence in the church than their counterparts in the Reformed areas. In addition to the theological differences between the two parties, the political situations also contributed toward this diversity. German princes had already been exercising their controls in church affairs before the reformation. This was also aided by the popes of the late medieval era who conceded many ecclesiastical rights to these princes in return for their support of the papacy.

Even though Luther insisted on the separation of church and state, state control of the church continued to develop in the Protestant Germany in the direction of Brenz's ideals. As Calvin's teaching became dominating in the Reformed circle, however, the Reformed church generally followed the Genevan style of ecclesiastical discipline by

the presbytery. Bullinger's magisterial discipline became eventually a sidetrack in the Reformed wing of Protestantism.

In conclusion, between the Roman teaching of the late medieval and the Protestant thinking of the reformation, ecclesiology underwent a crucial change. The visible aspect of the institution was replaced by the emphasis on the spiritual dimension of the relationship between God and man. However, this did not alter essentially the pattern of discipline where the state was still prominent in the picture. Between the Lutheran and the Reformed, it is true that the respective stresses on faith and order led to different developments in ecclesiology. Yet, one must still acknowledge the treasure of the reformation heritage--the foundation of the word and the centrality of Christ--which is as significant in the contemporary scene as it was in the sixteenth century.

APPENDIX

Summary of Comparisons

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>M. Luther</th><th>J. Brenz</th><th>J. Calvin</th><th>H. Bullinger</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">SIMILARITIES</td><td colspan="2">nature of church
as
communion of saints</td><td colspan="2">nature of church
as
body of Christ</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">1. rejection of the church as a hierarchy
2. church as a community, visible and invisible
3. center of the church: Christology
4. basis of the church: word of God</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">DIFFERENCES</td><td>magistrate
as <u>Notbischof</u>

church and
state separate
yet
discipline by
state as a
temporary
measure</td><td>state church
desirable

church and
state together
and
state held
responsible
for all
matters other
than faith,
including
discipline</td><td>ecclesiastical
discipline

church and
state separate
and
discipline by
church</td><td>magisterial
discipline

church and
state separate
yet
discipline by
state</td></tr>
<tr><td>Church to act
as vehicle for
salvation

hence

Faith as the
controlling
factor</td><td></td><td>Church to
train members
in holiness

hence

Order as the
controlling
factor</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNTC	Calvin's New Testament Commentaries. (Edited by T. F. Torrance and D. W. Torrance)
COTC	Commentaries on the Old Testament by Calvin. (Eerdmans edition)
CR	Iohannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia. (Corpus Reformatorum)
Decades	The Decades of Sermons of Henry Bullinger. (Parker Society edition, vols. 7-10)
Inst.	Institutes of the Christian Religion. (Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20-21)
Letters	Letters of John Calvin. (Edited by Jules Bonnet)
LW	Luther's Works. The American Edition.
TT	Calvin's Tracts and Treatises. (Edited by T. F. Torrance)
Phil. Ed.	The Works of Martin Luther. The Philadelphia Edition.
WA	D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. (Weimar, 1883-)