

SACRAMENTS, CHURCH ORDER, AND SECULAR RESPONSIBILITY

FRANS JOZEF VAN BEECK, S.J.

Boston College

IF TODAY is a bad day for people in positions of authority, it is so, too, for the scholar, whether he happens to be a theologian or a professional expert in any other field. Professional expertise has become strangely unbelievable. It sometimes seems as if the assurance with which authorities ecclesiastical and civil make it known that there is no need for anybody to worry, since "we have the experts working on the problem," usually achieves the opposite of reassurance; for the popular and public response is invariably a funny kind of irritated suspicion. And this feeling of irritation gets decidedly worse when people are more or less outspokenly reminded by the authorities that only the experts can safely discuss these particular problems, since "they have the training" and "know the facts." The suspicion of a kind of giant alliance between knowledge and power, whose sole purpose is to keep the common man uninformed, is a reality that can be observed every day, much to the distress of those authorities who are genuinely concerned to come up with the best possible answers, only to find themselves accused by innuendo of wheeling and dealing, paternalism, feudalism, and lack of democratic spirit.

Yet I believe that the experts had better face the facts. And the facts are: a communications explosion, an education explosion, and a liberty explosion. For the expert, this means that the academic Valhalla has been broken open. Recognition is no longer proportioned to his academic and scholarly standing among his fellow experts, but to his ability, in terms of his discipline, to interpret creatively what everybody is vaguely aware of as happening in society or in the church, as the case may be. Never very much at home in the role of the lunatic, the lover, and the poet, today's scholar will often painfully realize that the very absence of the prophet's mantle around his drooping shoulders is only barely excused by people who have no idea of the painstaking efforts involved in the slow process of research. Yet the demand is there: by popular vote the scholar is no longer allowed to express himself just on his own terms and in his own terminology. All forms of authority and expertise are to an increasing extent being based on the ability to empathize with society in all its stratifications; power of interpretation, articulation, and hermeneutic with regard to the past and the present (if not the future)—in other words, power of mass

communication—have become the conditions of acceptance, by church and society, of authority, scholarly as well as executive.

NECESSARY BACKGROUND: SOCIAL, "SECULAR" CHANGE

It is not without purpose that I have been using the expression "church and society" in my introduction. I have, in fact, done so because any discussion of church order is precarious in the sense that today perhaps more than ever it is liable to degenerate into a kind of ecclesiastical self-gratification. There seems to be a certain psychosomatic connection between nearsightedness and paranoia, and there is no reason to believe that the churches, with their tradition of suspicion with regard to what is happening in the world, should miraculously escape nearsightedness, mistaking intrachurch renewal for the most powerful perspective the world has to offer today. But if it is not understood that adaptation, updating, *aggiornamento*, and promotion of freedom must be a service of the church to the *world* and not in the first place a service of the church to itself, then we run the risk, in the words of Bishop Robinson, of "a premature closing of the ecclesiastical ranks at the cost of maintaining or widening the gulf between the church and the world."¹ Going back to the vivid language of the patristic period or even to Scripture, a more generous application of *epikeia*, endeavors to draft reunion *symbola* and exploring the forms and possibilities of intercommunion, experiments to arrive at a liturgy that conveys meaning, curial reform both in Rome and at the diocesan level, revision of ecclesiastical administrative and judicial procedures, revision of canon law—in short, every form of concern with church order and church doctrine, with "faith and order," runs the risk of suffering from fundamental shortsightedness, fear and suspicion; in other words, it runs the risk of failing in faith and hope.

For the fact of the matter is that there is a connection between the opening of the closed church-windows and the heightened civic and social awareness of millions of citizens inside and outside the church. All these people insist on perceiving in, or demanding from, church structures whatever they perceive in, and demand from, secular society in the way of goodness, justice, wisdom, and humanity. If at the time of the First Vatican Council the Roman Catholic Church was challenged to take account of the aspirations of a very thin, rationally developed upper layer in society, which forced her to articulate the reasonableness of faith and the coherence of ecclesiastical structures of belief and governance, today she stands exposed in the middle of a democratic

¹ David L. Edwards (ed.), *The Honest to God Debate* (London, 1963) p. 250, n. 3.

cosmopolitan world of free citizens—or at least citizens who consider themselves on the way to freedom—so that the challenge has become to articulate the relevance of the message of salvation to the world. A new conception of church order must, therefore, take cognizance of what is happening in the Secular City, and it may not succumb to the temptation to take the way of least resistance, and refine the church order only within the framework of intraecclesiastical assumptions, which are no longer understood, let alone considered saving, by people who are aware of the developments of society.

CHURCH ORDER AND SACRAMENTS: TENDENCIES IN CLASSICAL SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY²

All sacraments except baptism are hedged in by a network of provisions regarding validity. That baptism has remained such a simple proposition is probably due to the fact that the big questions regarding baptism had been asked and answered in the controversy between Pope Stephen and Bishop Cyprian, and in Augustine's debates with the Donatists—in other words, long before the body of canon law as we know it began to develop. As a result, the validity of baptism, with the exception of the Arian controversy in the West and a few marginal cases involving isolated sects, has never been a real problem either theologically or even at the level of church order. The abolition of conditional baptism *ad cautelam* in the case of a Christian first joining the Roman Catholic Church is, therefore, hardly a serious problem today, no matter how many emotional and administrative barriers have to be overcome on this score.³

The other sacraments, however, are in quite a different position. The question that needs asking seems to be this: What made it possible for the sacraments to become encrusted by so many canonical provisions regarding validity and liceity? In what way did it become possible for confirmation to be only valid if administered by a bishop, at least in the

² After what has just been said, it may seem incongruous that this article sets out to treat the problem of church order by means of a treatment of aspects of sacramental theology and practice. Yet this is not very strange; taken at their "lowest" level, sacraments are indeed juridical acts: participation in them shows that a person is a church member in good standing. Only, the juridical level is not the most typically sacramental aspect, let alone the only one. Cf. P. Smulders, "Sacramenten en Kerk," *Bijdragen* 18 (1956) 391–418; summary in French: "Sacraments et église: Droit-culte-pneuma," p. 418.

³ Cf. *DS* 3874. In view of this sharing of baptism, stressed again by *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 22, it may be asked whether not only conditional baptism *ad cautelam* must be abolished, but whether it would not be desirable to qualify the rules determining in what denominational or ecclesiastical setting baptism must be received. In other words: Christians are not baptized in a church, but in *the* Church.

Latin Church, except in cases provided for by canon 782, §2 of the Code of Canon Law as reinterpreted by later instructions? What are the key ideas behind the provisions regarding the Eucharist and its ministers, regarding faculties to absolve in confession, regarding marital canon law, especially the invalidating impediments? How has it been possible for the church order as expressed in canon law to arrive at such a meticulous definition of the minimal requirements for a valid sacrament? In what way has church order succeeded in getting such a tight grip on those rites which after all are traditionally called "the means of *grace*"?

It has been fashionable lately to blame canon law for this development—which seems at least doubtful in view of the fact that, taken by itself, any legal system will tend towards refinement of definition, dictated by the need for legal security. Yet it must be said that it is precisely this need for refined definition and security that has led to such a degree of ossification in sacramental church order that many Christians fail to see or experience the kind of saving significance the sacraments are supposed to have. It would seem, therefore, that *sacramental theology* has been responsible for the tight hold which canonical church order has managed to gain on the sacraments. Canon law would not have succeeded in doing this if the road to it had not been leveled by theology itself.

In this context three typical features of classical sacramental theology deserve to be mentioned, viz., the tendency towards core-isolation and symbol-diminishment, the tendency to reduction as a method in theology, and tutiorism and minimalism in sacramental practice.

Ritualism, Core-Isolation and Symbol-Diminishment

It is, of course, unthinkable that for the apostolic church's awareness the celebrations which we now call the seven sacraments were already isolated rituals. It has indeed been pointed out by studies like Oscar Cullmann's *Les sacrements dans l'évangile johannique*⁴ that there are a number of passages in the fourth Gospel with clear Eucharistic and baptismal overtones; others have pointed to marriage symbolism in the same Gospel, especially in the words of Jesus on the Cross, addressed to His mother and the beloved disciple. These observations, however, are not meant to convey the impression that any sort of entirely defined and fully ritualized baptismal or Eucharistic or marriage celebrations should have occasioned the dialogues between Jesus and Nicodemus,

⁴O. Cullmann, *Les sacrements dans l'évangile johannique: La vie de Jésus et le culte de l'église primitive* (Paris, 1951).

the Samaritan woman, the disciples, and Mary. The same can be said for the account of the meeting of Jesus with the disciples on the way to Emmaus and of the multiplication of loaves: if these pericopes had been short stories derived from ritually isolated Eucharistic celebrations, how account for the fact that the wine symbolism is lacking, whereas the latter is present in the account of the sign at Cana and in the catechesis of the Letter to the Hebrews, but without any reference to the bread? Rather, we have to visualize these and numerous other pericopes as a reflection of the vital atmosphere of the community meetings of the first-generation Christians, in which tradition and experience, authority and creative talent, liturgy and life, order and charisma were not yet distinguished, let alone separated. A clear suggestion in this direction is contained in the close relationship between the formulas found in the Gospels to express the power to forgive sins communicated to the Twelve and those conveying the commission given to all Christians to forgive each other; the existence of a special, "separate" sacrament of penance would seem to be excluded by these literary data.⁵

As early as the first half of the second century, represented by writings such as the *Didache*, Ignatius of Antioch's letters, and Justin Martyr's first *Apologia*, we can discern a clear delimitation of baptism, the Eucharist, holy orders, and even, to a certain extent, marriage.⁶ And a generation later, against the end of the second century, Hippolytus' *Traditio apostolica* presents us with a picture of clearly ritualized Roman ceremonials for baptism, the Eucharist, and holy orders.⁷ Thus a slow process of definition and delimitation can be seen to take shape, until the Scholastic doctrine of sacramental matter and form led to a

⁵ It would be possible, though not feasible, to multiply the examples here. For the Eucharist, the reader may be referred to, e.g., Johannes Betz, *Die Eucharistie in der Zeit der griechischen Väter 2/1: Die Realpräsenz des Leibes und Blutes Jesu im Abendmahl nach dem neuen Testament* (Freiburg, 1961).

⁶ No matter how floating the type of church represented by the *Didache*, there is a distinct concern with order. This is borne out by the distinction between the true prophet and the false (11, 3-12), the rules for baptism, even with a beginning of casuistry (7, 1-4), and the rules for the Eucharist (9, 1-10, 6), with, typically, leeway to the prophets (10, 7). The specificity of sacraments in the writings of Ignatius is, of course, immediately related to the fact that in the community nothing can be done without the bishop, as Ignatius insists in numerous passages. Thus, the bishop and those authorized by him are the presiding officers of the Eucharistic celebration (e.g., *Phil.* 4; 8), and marriages are contracted before the bishop (*Polyc.* 5). For baptism in Justin's first *Apology*, cf. chap. 61; for the Eucharist on Sundays, cf. 65-67.

⁷ Consecration of bishops: 2-3; Eucharistic prayer: 4; ordination of presbyters: 8; ordination of deacons: 9; baptism: 20-23.

final definition of the sacraments.⁸ How tortuous the road could be is shown by the development of the sacrament of penance. The forgiveness of sins, preached by Jesus as a condition to partake of the Father's mercy, and communicated by Jesus to the Twelve, moves, via the spiritual direction given by the charismatic monks in the East, Western canonical penance and episcopal exomologesis, the deathbed confession of Isidore of Seville, and the new-style confessions of the Irish monks, to the auricular confession of the Middle Ages and Trent: isolated, ritualized, delimited.

It is only natural that this ritual isolation of the sacraments had its influence on the shape of the liturgical celebrations of them: once the sacraments had drifted apart from the rest of Christian life, the celebration of them had to be emphatically something special. Questions began to be asked about the real essence, not of *agapē* or of the forgiveness of sins, but of the Eucharist and of confession. The minimal shape of the sacraments was eventually laid down, and with it the sign was gradually "clarified" and "purified" of all that was too ordinary, too humdrum, too crude, so that there arose the sacrament in its "purest" form: the ritual gesture of anointing, the immaculately white wafer, the quiet hand that gives a blessing with a formalized formula.⁹

"The end of this tradition is hopefully formed by Pius XII's definition of the matter and form of the sacrament of order in 1947 (*DS* 3857-61). The decree of the Holy Office of 1957 regarding the rite of concelebration (*DS* 3928) is nothing but an application of a long-standing norm, although its enforcement is here somewhat ruthless and dogmatically overstated. Both because it fails to acknowledge the collegial nature of concelebration, and because it sins by overdefinition ("ex institutione Christi ille solus valide consecrat, qui verba consecratoria pronuntiat"), it becomes less believable. This becomes all the more true if it is remembered that some pre-Nicene Eucharistic rites very probably did not even contain the institution narrative. According to Gregory Dix (*The Shape of the Liturgy* [Westminster, 1945] pp. 239-40), the use of our Lord's words of institution as "consecratory" came to be accepted slowly by the church, according as they were felt to be the prime public articulation of what the congregation was *doing* in the Eucharist. At one time it must have been felt sufficient if the rite was held after the manner of the Last Supper. The precise verbalization of the "consecration" was a process of "drawing out and expounding" meaning, not of meaning being "added to" a *per se* meaningless rite.

⁹It is tempting at this point to write a whole article about the ambiguities and crises fostered by the style in which the sacraments are celebrated today. A few rough outlines may suffice to convey the present writer's opinions in this respect. Because of the emphatic, nonpractical and in that sense abstract, formal nature of the symbol, a certain amount of ambiguity is inherent in sacramental celebrations as such, since they have to move in that narrow area where the precarious balance between evocative quality and expressiveness on the one hand, and stylization on the other hand, is maintained. Overemphasis on the former (e.g., in the interests of "relevance") may prevent the celebration from reaching out beyond what is heard and seen; overemphasis on the latter may turn it into magic. The history of the liturgy provides instances of both, but the bane of a lot of official present-day liturgy is mostly the latter. And if people then stay away from the sacraments, the correct diagnosis is not "The people don't believe in the Mass any more," but "The Mass does not seem to lead people to believe in the *invisibilia* any more."

This somewhat tendentious survey of a development does not pretend to be a plea in favor of a return to the primitive church. Ritualization, refinement, and stylistic emphasis are normal products of the development of symbolic activity. The fact that the sacraments, especially baptism and the Eucharist, began to be somewhat dissociated within the first sixty to seventy years after the death and the glorification of Jesus contributed much to the exploration and the deepening of the Christian awareness. The sacraments were indeed a vital, creative catechesis, a repeated introduction of the faithful to the depths and demands of the Christian way of life.

But it is also true that a real danger gradually became a fact as a result of this isolation: the sacramental nature of Christian life as a whole was slowly lost sight of—*this* was a sacrament and *that* was not, and within the celebration called a sacrament *this* was essential and *that* was not. But clear-cut distinctions like these give, of course, a large scope to the development of a legal system, which will then set itself the task of elaborating with the help of casuistry when and on what conditions a rite can or cannot be a sacrament.

Reduction as a Method in Theology

A second handle offered by traditional sacramental theology to canon law is what may be called reduction as a method in theology. By this is meant the apparently ineradicable tendency in Latin theology to moor everything that lives and moves to an anchor at the level of substance, in which is then located the essential core of the sacrament.

This tendency towards reduction shows up, not only in sacramental theology, but also in several other areas. Thus, the traditional doctrine of the "inclusion" of mankind in the humanity of Jesus Christ¹⁰ is a typical example of a reduction of the acceptance of redemption by faith to the level of the hypostatic, ontological structure of the God-man. The reasoning is: Whoever is saved is saved in Christ; this is potentially true for all mankind; therefore all mankind must have been included, prior to everything, in the God-man, otherwise the redemption of all mankind would have been impossible; for "what has not been assumed cannot be restored."¹¹ Similar reductions have led to too strongly hypostaticized conceptions of, e.g., original sin and the

¹⁰For a full and competent discussion of this doctrine, the reader is referred to F. Malmberg, *Ein Leib, Ein Geist* (Freiburg, 1960) pp. 223–73.

¹¹Gregory Nazianzen's famous phrase in his letter to Cledonius: cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (4th ed.; London, 1968) p. 297. Gregory's point was to assert that Christ had a human soul; so the application of the maxim to the problem of the inclusion of mankind in the person of Jesus Christ is an adaptation which owes more than a little to Scholasticism and Neo-Scholasticism.

substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist.¹² But the question is whether this reduction to substantiality is as necessary for disciplined, "objective" theological thinking as has often been maintained, and indeed whether it is not little more (or indeed less) than a very particular thinking pattern, which therefore has no more authority than any other methodological model.¹³

An example from sacramental theology. In the Donatist controversy Augustine resisted the idea of Catholic reordination of clergy who had been ordained by Donatist bishops or who for a while had served in the Donatist Church, in the same way as he resisted the idea of rebaptism for those baptized by Donatist ministers. If it is Christ who justifies, Christ who seals, Christ who acts through the sacramental ministry, how can any man interfere and repeat baptism or ordination? Latin theologies read this Augustinian doctrine in terms which remind one of substance and accident: if ordination to the ministry cannot be repeated, then there must be an enduring reality at the level of "soul" or

¹² It is not without reason that a theologian like Schoonenberg did some of his most significant work precisely on these points, with the intention of *relating* original sin and transubstantiation again to the total reality of sin and the Eucharist respectively. The fact that a bygone age could afford to conceive of "realities" mainly in terms of hypostatized entities is no reason why our era might not attempt a new approach, in which the notion of relationship would play an extremely important part.

¹³ This problem involves, of course, the question of hermeneutics. I for one have a hunch that such doctrines as the inclusion of mankind in the humanity of Jesus, the indelible character conferred by some sacraments, the reality of original sin, transubstantiation, and other similar "objective," "hypostatized" notions, even in their most formal Hellenic-scholastic attire, were a great deal more "existential," "related," "symbolic," and even "metaphorical" in their heyday than we are inclined to believe or even capable of believing. It was said of Thomas Aquinas that he spoke *formalissime*, but that need not mean that his ability to work with clear, well-defined ideas implied that he was unaware of the existential relationships between the realities so very formally defined. I would not be in the least surprised if the present-day need for a new theological language (which I endorse) were not to a large extent caused by the rise of the scientific world view, by the process of dissociation of sensibility in Western civilization (T. S. Eliot), by the (comparatively recently) acquired habit of isolating, objectifying observation, analysis, and definition. Thomas Aquinas (not the Neo-Scholastics), after all, lived in an age in which the physical world, from which speculative thought borrowed most of its metaphors, was still a vital environment rather than a collection of objects. Incomprehensible though it may seem, even Kant's critical questions had not been asked. To blame the speculative impasse entirely on the "Hellenization of dogma" seems to me a bit too pat to be true, unless one were to endorse Heidegger's view that the *entire* tradition of inauthentic thought goes back to the hypostatizing, thing-ifying conceptualization tendencies which lie at the basis of Western culture. But even there I hesitate: Does this tendency to analyze, formalize, and objectify not go back to the (Phoenician?) invention of alphabetic spelling? But whatever the reasons for the impasse may be, I agree with Dewart *et al.* when they give up on "metaphysical" theological conceptualizations in favor of a more vital, synthetic, ontic articulation of the experience of faith.

"substance"¹⁴ in spite of all the "superficial" changes. Sacramental practice and its interpretation in terms of relationship to Christ and the Church are in this way reduced to something objective, *en soi*, and ontological: the indelible character, which is then identified (and here the reduction becomes really dangerous) as the *sacramentum et res*. The next step is obvious: the objectified character is used in its turn as a premise—for instance, by arguing that, since the sacrament of order confers this character, someone who has been once ordained *cannot* be reordained, because he is a priest for eternity,¹⁵ quite apart from the question whether it will occur to him to leave the ministry for a while or for good. To sum up: a living, functional sacramental practice has been reduced to an objective and ontological prerequisite, which is subsequently described as the *essence* of the sacrament, which in this way is placed *in indivisibili*. Once this has occurred, it is again up to the canon lawyers' ingenuity to decide with juridical impartiality when and on what conditions a sacrament is valid or invalid.

Sacramental Tutorism and Minimalism

The two above-mentioned characteristics naturally lead to the third trend to be briefly discussed, viz., the connection between tutorism and minimalism in matters sacramental, tendencies which have become so important in ecclesiastical discipline since late Scholasticism.

A strongly isolated celebration, whose essence is almost exclusively defined in objective, ontological terms (so often giving the impression that sacramental grace is a possession, not a gift, as the Reformation has not tired of pointing out to the Roman Catholic Church), is incapable in advance of having *epikeia*, *oikonomia*, or even probabilism applied to itself. If the fixed essence of the sacrament is not realized, there is no sacrament, and if it is, then there is a sacrament. There is no room for assumptions and probable opinions here, but only an absolute tutorism: imminent danger of death is, according to many textbooks of moral theology, the only reason that can justify exposing a sacrament to the risk of vacuity.

On the other hand, it is also true that, in a way, no more is needed than the essence for a sacrament to be a sacrament. Traditional theology knows, of course, the difference between a merely valid sacrament and a fruitful sacrament; but the overriding impression is very often

¹⁴I am assured, moreover, that in Augustine's theology the indelible character still has the full, related meaning of "relationship to Christ and to the church."

¹⁵An interesting misapprehension. The fact that the sacraments are part of the *status viae* of the church is disregarded, with the result that it takes but one step to regard the character of holy orders first and foremost as the "private property" of the priest, who then goes on, *accidentaliter*, to put his priestly "powers" at the disposal of the faithful.

that classical theology hardly considers fruitfulness to be part of the sacrament. The minimal sacrament being the real *cause*, what remains to be said of the fruit of the sacrament is that it is the effect, indeed required for salvation, but essentially accidental. Thus, in many older catechisms the minimal conditions for a valid confession were enumerated, especially with regard to attrition, whereas even Thomas Aquinas had taught (clearly assuming that contrition is the normal state of a penitent) that there can be no justification without love of God and a penitential rejection of sin.¹⁶

Sacramental minimalism on the one hand and tutorism on the other have resulted in a dangerous tendency to equate the maximal and the minimal status of the sacraments, in complete opposition to all human and Christian experience and tradition. A very clear example is marriage. According to the current provisions of canon law, the marriage service witnessed by an authorized priest plus the physical consummation constitute the indissoluble sacrament of marriage for Roman Catholics. It would seem that these are pretty minimal conditions for an indissoluble sacrament, but the church order does not seem to be aware of any other conditions for a Christian marriage. On the other hand, an almost absolute tutorism is practiced on these very points, with regard to both the ceremony and the consummation: it is not just a theoretical possibility that the reality or indissolubility of the sacrament in a few cases has to be ascertained in the land registry office or under the microscope. In any case, it must be said that canon law has acquired a disproportionate hold over the sacraments, after they had become hardened and objectified in this fashion.

The three tendencies discussed above present, of course, a very incomplete picture, to which many backgrounds could be given. One of the principal background phenomena is the fact that with the rise of the popular church after 313 A.D., and to a still larger extent with the conversion of the Germanic tribes, a very profound change in sacramental sensibility set in. The Christian sacraments and the Christian feasts gradually took over the function of the pagan festivals. They became not so much the cultic interpretations and realizations of a deeply-rooted Christian life as the *means* of grace for the benefit of semipagan church members, whose conversion was mainly associated with political motives and in any case consisted of little more than the sign of the cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the profession of the one God in three Persons, the incarnation and death of God the

¹⁶ Cf. 1-2, q. 112, a. 2; q. 113, a. 3. With regard to the minimalistic approach to the sacrament of penance, one is reminded of Pascal's outcry, in the tenth letter of the *Provinciales*: "Le prix du sang de Jésus-Christ sera de nous obtenir la dispense de l'aimer."

Son, and the promise of divine reward and punishment. This led to an increasing clericalization of sacramental practice, a phenomenon already protested against by the Albigensians and the Waldensians. The clergy, wrongly appealing to Paul's phrase *dispensatores mysteriorum Dei*, became the body of the initiated, who from time to time put the mysteries at the disposal of the masses also. No wonder that under these circumstances sacramental symbolism became more and more the overrefined liturgical etiquette of a professional elite isolated from the body of the faithful. And to mention another, and last, fact: sacramental theology was deeply influenced by the individualization of the *usus (!) sacramentorum*: the isolation tendencies in sacramental practice are in this respect only the faithful mirror of the dissociation tendencies in the Christian sensibility with regard to salvation in the Church as a whole: the Christian's chief concern becomes the salvation of his own soul.¹⁷

SACRAMENTS AND CHURCH ORDER: TOWARDS A NEW RELATIONSHIP

It seemed illuminating to survey some aspects of the past history of the sacraments at some length, because it would appear to be difficult to develop a fresh conception of church order without going to the root causes of the present connection, or lack of connection, between church order and sacramental life. A new-style church order could not content itself with an adaptation of the existing type of canon law; in the light both of social developments¹⁸ and of recent ecclesiology and sacramental theology, it must be said that the very foundations and assumptions of current canon law are no longer verified. This does not

¹⁷ I have sometimes wondered whether it would not be possible to show a connection between the factors enumerated in these last few lines. I for one would not be surprised if there were a real psychological consistency in the pattern consisting of facts like the following: the officially celibate clergy of the Early Middle Ages; the development of the highly refined, elaborate rubrical etiquette in the (mostly private) Mass; expressions such as *hostia immaculata* used to refer to the pure, white, thin wafer; the restriction of the notion "church" to the (literate) clergy; the countless apologies in the liturgy of the Mass with their strong emphasis on purification of the individual, and similar phenomena.

¹⁸ The insights of Harvey Cox and others have helped to articulate some of these developments. To score only one point here: for the citizen of modern rational *Gesellschaft*, it is no use pining for the return of the security of the kind of ready-made *Gemeinschaft* of which the village and the clan are the prototypes; the course of Western civilization cannot be reversed. This means that what *Gemeinschaft* will be shaped in the future will have to be of man's own choosing, including the *communio sanctorum*. As the law-and-order relationships of society are continually challenged by the personal relationships of the human family *in statu nascendi*, so the church as *Gesellschaft* will only make sense if justice is done to the free choice of the person. One is reminded in this context of Karl Rahner's prophetic insights, almost twenty years ago, about the church in diaspora, and, even farther back, of Max Scheler's *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*.

mean that church order and canon law will themselves become past history. The fact that there has been such a thing as church order from the very beginning of Christianity—witness, e.g., Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and Matthew's Gospel—is enough warrant that there will be church order in the future, too. But church order need not be identified with any given historical form of church order; it can adopt new orientations that are as radically different as times may differ from each other.

In the present context it would seem to be profitable to consider three aspects of what could possibly become the new-style church order: the notion of validity, the essential function of church order, and the relationship between the church and the modern world.

The Notion of Validity

"Valid" originally means "powerful." In that sense something is valid when the power, the creativity, the strength of life shows itself in it. This is true also of the sacraments: they are valid in so far as the power of the redemption, the power of the kingdom, breaks through in them. Seen *within* the framework of the church, the validity of a sacrament fundamentally means the recognition that a rite or a ministry or a state of life in virtue of its inner relationship with Christ's institution in the past and Christ's presence now is an effectual sign and a pledge of the kingdom of God, the new heaven and the new earth.¹⁹

If recent sacramental theology prefers to call the sacraments "signs" (or "symbols") rather than "causes," it precisely emphasizes this: sacraments make visible what the Christian way of life contains in the way of faith, and what it is challenged by in the way of expectation. In this way, theology—and, it should be added, countless present-day liturgical experiments, aboveground as well as underground—are trying to bridge the gaps which traditional sacramental doctrine and practice would seem to have left open: those between sacraments and life (the isolation trends), between sacraments and the faithful (the over-emphasis on the ontological, objective aspects of the sacraments, or, to speak in the style of the Reformation, the sacrament as a datum of nature), and between the faithful themselves (the absence of community dimension, resulting in individualization). A sacrament is a

¹⁹ For a discussion of validity, cf. F. J. van Beeck, "Towards an Ecumenical Understanding of the Sacraments," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3 (1966) 61-64, 84-90, 111-12; reprint in Nicholas Lash (ed.), *Until He Comes* (Dayton, 1968) pp. 146-51, 179-90, 220-21. John Coventry, S.J., has taken up some of the points made in this article in *Faith and Unity* 12 (1968) 91-93; he points out that, given the variety of meanings of "validity" over the centuries, it is now probably best to say that the validity of a sacrament precisely means that one's church recognizes it.

meaningful gesture, a *signum datum inter viventia*, as Augustine expressed it. Participation in a sacrament, therefore, always implies an option, a choice, a free acceptance of the grace²⁰ and the evangelical mission implied in the gift of grace. This means that a sacrament is *per se* an existential gesture of a free person. This liberty, this option, is part of the essence of the sacrament and will therefore have to be respected by the church order. This has its consequences for the evaluation of the validity of those sacraments which are, or were, administered without an adequate choice on the part of the recipient. If and when at a later date the recipient would be morally incapable of recognizing the option implied in the sacrament as really his, the church order must not view the fact that he has received the sacrament as a kind of datum of nature, a bare fact of history, which it is his destiny to be saddled with. It will be understood that in this view the status of the traditional *ab acatholicis nati* as well as all sorts of other baptized and ordained and married Christians who for some time withdraw from the Christian scene and return to it later is in bad need of revision.²¹

The consideration that a sacrament implies an option leads to a second point: the difference between church order and civil order, or, in other words, the function of church order.

The Function of Church Order

When Paul, especially in his first letter to the Corinthians, describes the function of church order in the context of *gnōsis* and *agapē*, his leitmotiv is: the Christian has been set free from the slavery of the law, but he will not use that liberty as a pretext for self-will and self-love. This is the fundamental law that determines all church order, viz., that its operation is based on free choice: nobody has a duty to be in the church, but if someone does choose to be in the church, a binding appeal can be made for him to abide by the church order for the sake of *agapē*.

This has far-reaching consequences. If it is the free obedience of faith of those who respond to the gospel with a personal act of faith that lies at the basis of the church order, then church order has no strictly objective claim to human allegiance. In this respect there is an essential distinction between church order and civil order: the latter holds good for every citizen, which implies that it has to be more objective.

²⁰ Cf. DS 1528: "per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum"; cf. 1526: "libere moventur in Deum."

²¹ The change of status of the *ab acatholicis nati* introduced under Pius XII in 1948 may have been cleaner and juridically more consistent, it was hardly calculated to do justice to reality, since it failed to take into account that a baptism in no way endorsed by later Christian practice cannot be taken to imply any choice at all.

For even though in many instances civil law successfully appeals to the good will and the sense of responsibility of the individual citizen, yet no sooner does the individual fail to respond than the law is enforced by means of sanctions in the interest of public order.²²

Canon law as we have it, however, especially in relation to the sacraments of baptism, marriage, order, and (in regard to censures) penance, betrays far too strongly its civil origin. This is certainly not to deny that the church rendered an enormous service to the world when she jumped to the defense of civil order during the Iron Ages, which also saw the origin and growth of the basic *corpora* of canon law. Neither is this article the place to call in doubt the merits of the close ties between church order and civil order in, e.g., the Holy Roman Empire, and in the sovereign states with their established churches afterwards. So much is certain today that the order of the church in the middle of the Secular City will unconditionally have to abandon these close associations with the exercise of civil law, especially by resolutely disposing of every kind of "automatic" jurisdiction. If the civil order can afford to disregard on certain occasions the fact that the justice and equity of a particular law are not appreciated by some citizens, the church order can never do this, since its claim to obedience is never wholly objective. This has a few consequences.

The first is that the church order *as such* may not seek to keep people in the church. When in 1 Cor 5 Paul is treating the case of the man who is living with his father's wife, he orders the Christian community to excommunicate this person, but he concludes: "For what business is it of mine to judge those who are outside? Do not you yourselves judge those who are inside? And those who are outside God will judge." In view of 1 Cor 4:5: "Do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes," this text must be understood to uphold the validity of church order without, however, its being identified with God's judgment. Church order is discipline, and as such it is the way in which the church concretizes mutual responsibility and, indeed,

²²The distinction between church order and civil order here proposed tries to be a bit milder than the one proposed by John L. McKenzie in *Authority in the Church* (New York, 1966), which takes a surprisingly dim view of authority in civil society and a disappointingly unrealistic view of authority in the Church. Love and service (the latter of which notions is distorted by the biased translation of *diakonos* by "lackey") are made to sound a bit too rosy to suit my taste. After all, excommunication is a possibility in the New Testament, both in Matthew (18:15-18) and Paul (1 Cor 5). The question is only whether an ecclesiastical excommunication is the reply to a purely objective transgression of a purely objective law.

agapē.²³ But although love is in a very real way a judgment of all that is against love,²⁴ the judgment of the church is provisional and may never create the impression of finality, of replacing God's judgment. Church order may never drive consciences into a tight corner; if it does, people will stay in the church out of fear of damnation, and thus in a spirit of slavery.²⁵ Neither may church order capitalize on the lack of sophistication of the so-called "simple faithful" in this respect.

This leads to the conclusion that leaving the church for reasons of failure or refusal to comply with the church order must be presented as a real and conscientious possibility. This would seem to be a necessary complement of the doctrine of the gratuity of grace and the principle of the liberty from the spirit of slavery; for if church order must be so proclaimed as to make it impossible for those who comply with it to think that they have vested interests in the church or a safe grip on salvation, that same church order must be so applied that it is clear that free obedience of faith is the only basis on which one can stay in the church or return to it.²⁶

If the church order may not let itself be cajoled into keeping people under tutelage, neither may it let itself be tempted to excommunicate them with a blessing. In other words, if it seemed in what has just been said that excommunication accompanied by a pointer to conscience and God's mercy would be an easy way to enforce a clear and general church order, yet it must be added that precisely because church order is based on free obedience of faith it must itself be as pliant, as spa-

²³ C. K. Barrett (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [London, 1968] p. 132) rightly points out that Paul's reaction is not one of censoriousness but of church discipline, nor does he "claim that he judges the church members." It might be added, however, that Paul *does* act as an authoritative spokesman.

²⁴ Tillich's treatment of excommunication is illuminating; cf. *Systematic Theology* 3 (Chicago, 1967) 179-80.

²⁵ And that is *not* what Trent means when it realistically but moderately says of the the believers that they "a divinae iustitiae timore...utiliter concutiuntur" (DS 1526). There is a world of difference between the protectiveness of the Grand Inquisitor and the spiritual realism ("peccatores se esse intelligentes") of the Decree on Justification (*ibid.*).

²⁶ If it is true, as the present writer thinks it is, that "the end of conventional Christianity" (cf. the book so entitled by W. H. van de Pol [New York, 1968]) has come, it may well turn out to be a paramount pastoral duty to teach people how to live outside the visible church and without the sacraments in peace of mind and conscience. This does not mean that the limits of the church are going to be as clearly demarcated in the future as they used to be in conventional Christianity. On the contrary, if the relationship between the church and the world is really going to change, the odds are that a vital margin will develop as a traffic area between the church as a visible society and the world.

cious, and as trust-inspiring as possible. No matter how much scandal was given by the eating of meat that had been offered to idols, Paul does not lay down an absolute law, although he does make a few rules as an expression of the community's responsibility for the consciences of the weaker brethren. The church order, therefore, should also be such as to give the faithful scope for, and to educate them to, *personal* responsibilities *within* the framework of the church order.²⁷ Would it not be possible, e.g., to have the nullity of a marriage declared on the basis of conscientious statements? Must the *favor iuris* in marriage law be abolished? A marriage is, after all, sacramental only if it is an enactment of the unity of Christ and the Church, but it so happens that this cannot be ascertained with absolute objectivity, owing to the fact that choices can be objectified only to a limited extent.

This leads to a third consequence. If everything goes well, a legal order, and therefore also a church order, does not function at all; the point is that in most cases the provisions of church order add nothing to the ordinary course of events.²⁸ This means that a number of provisions which are no longer practiced should be abolished. Let me enumerate a number of them. The demand that infants should be baptized as soon as possible after birth and the entire concept of Eucharistic fast should be dropped. There should be a major effort, before the sacrament of penance falls into complete disuse, to free it from all the mechanistic associations it has acquired; this would seem to mean that a form of common celebration of the sacrament of penance should be introduced quickly, and with regard to private confession the practice of granting faculties should be drastically simplified and extended. The provisions with regard to Sunday observance should be changed so as to allow for personal choice, not only with regard to time, but also with regard to the nature of the celebration, which should not necessarily *have* to be the Eucharist. With regard to choice of marriage partner and type of marriage service, a number of personal decisions have already been taking shape for a long time and should be recognized, especially with respect to so-called mixed marriages, whose situation is changing so rapidly. In general, the liturgical freedom that

²⁷ So that we would finally see the end of what the Dutch comedian Fons Janssen described as follows: "In the Catholic Church everything is forbidden, except what is permitted, and that is mandatory."

²⁸ The law "does not function at all, in the sense that it does not act as a separate extra factor, in normal circumstances, in which the community spontaneously turns to its ministerial officials for the ministry of the sacraments. In stating this we are only restating . . . that normally the validity of a sacrament does not play a part in the awareness of those who celebrate it" (van Beeck, *art. cit.* [n. 19 above] p. 85; *Until He Comes*, pp. 181-82).

is practiced both aboveground and underground should be recognized as desirable and fruitful. Marriage should be made possible for secular clergy. These and similar changes would seem to be necessary to prevent the church order from dropping behind the facts to such an extent that contempt of law would be the result.

*Church Order and the Fading Margin*²⁹

The problem of church order, however, is not just a problem of how to do justice to the need for responsibility and freedom in the church; it has over the last ten years become increasingly clear that the issue has to be raised in a totally new way. As the clear distinctions between the (institutional) church and the world have become relative, and as the dynamism of the faithful approach to the mystery of Christ has been rediscovered, a number of marginal cases have come to be part of the ordinary life of the church. From the point of view of the prevailing church order these cases can hardly, if at all, be "placed" within the framework of the ecclesiastical institutions; yet in very many cases they are so obviously evangelical in inspiration and tone that it would be foolish, theologically, to write them off as irrelevant to a renewed ecclesiology.

One of the most interesting and disturbing features of the last few decades is the development of a "marginal church" which claims for itself loyalty to the inspiration without an equal degree of loyalty to the institution. For those who, in the wake of *Mystici corporis*,³⁰ deny the possibility of an opposition between the institution and the inspiration, this margin is bound to represent a direct onslaught on the unity of the church and its orthodoxy. In their eyes the margin is not a margin but a fringe. They plead for clear identity by means of clear definition.

But the fact is that the marginal church is not a fringe phenomenon, but one that penetrates the entire church and, for that matter, all the Christian churches. It is found in the shape of the "third man" described by François Roustang,³¹ who is neither the fully committed, classical church member nor the person who leaves the faith and the

²⁹ With a bow to Francis X. Shea, S.J., of Boston College, to whom I owe the expression.

³⁰ Cf. DS 3800-3822. H. Küng has noted that the new edition of Denzinger, edited by Schönmetzer, omits the passage from the Encyclical *Humani generis* which in the old Denzinger was included as no. 2319, where Pius XII identifies the Mystical Body with the Roman Catholic Church (*Truthfulness: The Future of the Church* [New York, 1968] p. 154). *Lumen gentium*, no. 8, has the interesting expression "subsistit in," which replaces the "est" of the draft constitution; thus the Second Vatican Council teaches that the church founded by Christ "has actuality in" the Catholic Church.

³¹ *Christus* 13 (1966) 561-67.

church, but the person who is no longer really interested in creeds and church order, who is irritated by the institution but who lives with it, or bypasses it, because he wants to stay in the church to be inspired by the gospel and to celebrate the sacraments. The margin is also found in radical and often very experimental theologizing by very committed Christians; in fargoing ecumenical experiments, both outgoing in the form of social action for underprivileged and introvert in the form of joint sacramental worship; in the liturgical and evangelical ventures of the underground church or floating-parish type; in the increasing number of Christians—not just partners in mixed marriages—who consider themselves “Christians” with close ties to more than one church.³²

By way of an example it might be good to analyze the impasse of the church order as it appears with regard to Eucharistically-inspired *agapē*-celebrations, practiced mostly by Christians who, without giving up their loyalty to their several churches, come together on an interdenominational basis to have a meal in which they prayerfully share bread and wine as a re-enactment of Jesus’ suffering and death and resurrection, and with an express appeal to His institution. Meals like these are clearly gestures that imply a profession of faith, not only in so far as they point to, and even to some extent realize, the union of all Christians, but also in so far as they are an expression of a very specific concern with the world and its problems thematized by a gesture of faith in the life and death of Jesus.

It is interesting to see that the prevailing church order does not know what to do with this simple fact. The church order is accustomed to asking questions such as “Is this a Catholic or Protestant service?” “Is the man who says the words of the institution validly ordained?” “Do all those people believe in the Real Presence?” “Do they believe that the Eucharist is a sacrifice?” It is clear what all these questions assume, viz., that the reality of a sacrament can be completely defined and

³² It would be unrealistic to suggest that all these events and experiments are always and everywhere the fruit of the purest Christian inspiration; but what, for that matter, is? There is no doubt a serious amount of reaction against authority and structure in all this, a fair amount of freakishness and impatience, and—worst of all, in my view—a good deal of self-gratification, sacramental and otherwise. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to make three points. (1) It is always unwise to disregard a phenomenon that is so widespread. (2) Not everything need be the work of saints to be theologically relevant. (3) The way in which the “official” church either condemns or, worse still, ignores these phenomena is very harmful to the unity of the church; better to take a risk and deal with embarrassing problems of this kind than create the impression that nothing’s the matter and let the institution and the inspiration drift further and further apart. In this sense also “truthfulness” is “the future of the church.”

legislated for. The members of our little group, however, even when pressed for an answer, refuse to go beyond saying "We do what Jesus Christ told us to do"—without (and this is important) denying or affirming any specific tenets of the traditional deposit of faith with regard to the Eucharist.³³ Neither do the numbers of our group insist on taking a polemic or propagandistic stand with regard to prevailing church orders as such, nor do they take sides for or against particular church doctrines, for they are only moderately interested in them. Their sacraments, however, do agree with the perspectives of an up-to-date, more personalistic sacramental theology: they are meaningful gestures rather than instrumental causes; they are based on a real Christian commitment and add to its inspiration; they are celebrations rather than "means"; they are experienced as true only in so far as the participants interpret them in terms of a mission in Jesus' name.³⁴

The question, of course, is this: If these blurred and hazy and fugitive practices and beliefs are to be considered part of the ecclesial reality, is there any point in maintaining the idea that there should, or even can, be a church order? It would seem that the question is largely one of assumptions: in terms of the prevailing church order it is naturally rather difficult to conceive of a different one. But it does seem possible to give a few indications of a new-style church order. Thus, the church order of the future will have to indulge less that lawyers' yearning for an ever-increasing legal refinement. If no legal system can hope to provide for all eventualities, an ecclesiastical legal system that wants to be evangelical as well will have to be particularly careful not to quench the Spirit, who blows where He wills. This means that *in concreto* the church order will be considered relative in the sense that it can never be identified with the full ecclesial and sacramental reality, not only qualitatively, but also extensively: there will be things *outside* the church order. In other words, initiatives *praeter ius*,³⁵ no matter how ambiguous they may seem, must be respected as

³³ This raises the question of the possibility of a "return" to the "antepredicative situation." Cf. van Beeck, *art. cit.*, pp. 73-77; *Until He Comes*, pp. 164-71.

³⁴ Again, this is *not* an uncritical eulogy of the so-called underground church, in which all too many churchy hangups of the institutional church are found to be alive and kicking, only turned inside out, so to speak, sacramental self-gratification being perhaps the most dubious of them. However, stating this is not a plea to consider the underground church as unimportant. Rather, I think, it should be considered the laboratory of the church of the future, somewhat primitive only because the authorities decline to show an interest and do not provide it with theological funds.

³⁵ At the risk of becoming repetitious, cf. van Beeck, *art. cit.*, pp. 84-90; *Until He Comes*, pp. 179-90.

a matter of course,³⁶ and the notion of *consuetudo contra ius* needs to be elaborated. This is the same as saying that personal and communal choice will have to be protected by the *favor iuris* in the future,³⁷ and those who abide by the church order and rightly advocate its blessings should be reminded by that same order that salvation is not identical with orthodoxy and church order.

The above considerations are, it will be realized, based on an *option*, and the option is one in favor of a "confessional church" and *in that sense* against a popular church.³⁸ This article may not end without at least a brief outline of an explanation of this option.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, of the Second Vatican Council has, as a matter of principle, abandoned the conception of the church and civil society as two *societates perfectae*. The categories by which the relationship between the church and world society are described have become more dynamic and more evangelical, too; they go back to the idea that God has chosen to reconcile *the world* to himself *in dilecto*, in the Son of His mercy, and that therefore the Christian confession of the church and of each Christian is a *way*, an *exodus*, a process of growth through testing, a dynamism. Terms like "the servant church," "the church as the sacrament of the kingdom," and "God's people on the way" place the church and the Christian fundamentally outside the dilemma of the double allegiance. The church is the voice of one crying in the world: while being continually called together and assembling on the basis of free obedience of faith, the church may never present its own order as a counterpart of civil order. Church order should be funda-

³⁶ The insufficiency of the present situation is perhaps nowhere more clearly demonstrated than at this point. The notion of "experiment," e.g., is only verbally recognized by the Roman and most diocesan Curias; experiments are by definition at least *praeter ordinem*, no matter how much they may seem to be expressly *contra ius* (but that is not necessarily evil either) to those observers whose imagination and capacity for surrender has ceased to exceed the bounds of law.

³⁷ Cf. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York, 1965) pp. 41-49, esp. 47.

³⁸ It hardly needs emphasizing that the words "in that sense" are essential in this sentence. An "option against the popular church" in the form of a highhanded and callous imposition, on the broad masses of the faithful, of the duty to make a completely personal choice would be entirely contrary to what I mean. But the prospect of a church that exists in diaspora makes it impossible to go on repeating *ad nauseam* the phrase that "the simple faithful" must not be "disturbed." The Grand Inquisitor may not find a hearing, today less than ever; a patient but resolute effort must be made to make nothing less than the truth available to the faithful at large. I have tried to state my views on this transition from popular church to confessional church under cover of an article on "The Practice of Obedience and Authority in the Dutch Catholic Church," in J. Dalrymple *et al.*, *Authority in a Changing Church* (London, 1968) pp. 138-61.

mentally preaching and not forcing, challenging and not patronizing, making free and not numbing. The order the church is still living with is in many ways still the legal system of the *societas perfecta*, which has no way of dealing with, let alone welcoming, the broadening two-way traffic area between the church(es) and the world, which is the vital development of the last, let us say, twenty years. It is no longer the fringe that is tugging at the center, but the air from the outside that is felt throughout the church. In a very real way, the tables are turned: canon law and order are no longer judging the world, but they themselves are being subjected to criticism arising from the fact that the civil order wants to be taken seriously before it wants to be taught.

It would seem to be in order, incidentally, for the church to remind herself at this point that it would be a caricature of reality if she were to think that civil legal order were exclusively based on the power of the letter and tradition and convention, and that church order should be of a totally different nature, having nothing in common with civil legal order. In the spirit of *Gaudium et spes*, the ideal would seem to be for the church order to be the paradigm of a truly redeemed civil order. But in view of documents such as the Declaration of Human Rights, in view of actions in favor of more effective freedom of expression and demonstration and against the idea that institutional authority must always be presumed to act legitimately, in view of protests against secrecy and censorship, against rigoristic divorce laws, against an absolute ban on homosexual practices and on contraceptives—in view of all this, there seem to be forces at work in civil society which tend to give more leeway to the freedom of the citizen, trusting, apparently, that the democratization of the social institutions has set free the personal responsibility of the citizen to a larger extent than the law was prepared to make allowances for so far. If civil law makes it possible for the citizen of the Secular City to make more conscientious decisions of his own without fear of jeopardizing the common good, how much more urgent a need is there for the church order to respect the “freedom of a Christian”! It is sometimes frightening to watch the civil legal order trying to take the citizen’s heightened sense of social responsibility and identity more and more seriously, whereas the church order seems to go on protecting, patronizing, clarifying, refining, defining, and prescribing. Should not the church order be the prototype of the most fully redeemed legal order rather than the civil order?

This is, then, also the reason why this essay started with a reference to the demands made on the church order by society today and, even more so, by society tomorrow. If the renewal of the church order does not base itself firmly and unequivocally on the social awareness and the

sense of identity of the free citizen in the making, then the church will become more and more the haven of the socially retarded, spellbound by the power of the establishment and the vested interests advocating law and order, content to live under an anesthesia that is disguised as safety and security. A church that fails to challenge will develop into an accomplice of the world. Its God is nothing but the warrant for a stable, unchanging social order, and its members are the slaves of the great powers and conventions: status-seeking, yearning for respectability, advertising, law and order—the patronizers of the enslaved consumer. This may sound dangerously yippy, but it does at least convey that faith is not a consumer-good. The church in the city of the future will have to appeal to the awakening desire of countless people to seek deliverance from these powers, which Paul would certainly have called “the elements of this world.” And the church will only be able to do this if the church order does not even give the semblance of being an ecclesiastical version of an established civil order. Nothing but the free acceptance of man’s rescue, by Christ, from the powers, kept alive in the church and her holy celebrations, will be able to make church membership meaningful to the enslaved but inwardly rebelling consumer.