CONTINUITY IN THE CHURCH AMID STRUCTURAL CHANGES

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M Y CONCERN here is to discuss the complex and difficult question of Church structures and continuity in the Church from one era to another. What I envision is not a thorough historical survey on the question of Church structures, a task which others have already begun in recent years[1] and which would require from me a far more ambitious project. Rather, I am attempting to analyze from a pastoral perspective what impact increased structural changes have had upon the Church's ordained ministers and upon Christian believers in general, men and women often untrained professionally in theology, yet whose thought-patterns have been conditioned through previous catechetical instruction and present-day preaching. Although this analysis reflects principally my personal experience within Roman Catholicism, I believe that much the same situation prevails today in Orthodoxy and in the Reformed tradition. In addition to describing the situation and seeking out some of the underlying causes, I would like to offer, by way of example, certain possible adjustments which, I feel, could ease today's malaise.

[1] A brief account of changing Church structures is provided in the excellent overview by Heinrich Fries, "Wandel des Kirchenbilds und dogmengeschichtliche Entfaltung," in J. Feiner and M. Löhrer, eds., *Mysterium salutis* 4/1: *Das Heilsgeschehen in der Gemeinde* (Einsiedeln, 1972) 223–85. With greater historical detail, Wilhelm de Vries, S.J., of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, has described Church structures in a series of remarkable but unfortunately little-known studies: "Der Episkopat auf den Synoden vor Nicäa," *Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift* [Linz] 111 (1963) 263–77; "Die Struktur der Kirche gemäss dem ersten Konzil von Nikaia und seiner Zeit," in E. C. Suttner and C. Patock, eds., *Wegzeichen: Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag von...H. M. Biedermann* (Würzburg; 1971) pp. 55–81; "Die Struktur der Kirche gemäss dem Konzil von Ephesos (431)," *Annuarium historiae conciliorum* 2 (1970) 22–55; "Die Struktur der Kirche gemäss dem Konzil von Chalkedon (451)," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 35 (1969) 63–122; "Das zweite Konzil von Konstantinopel (553) und das Lehramt von Papst und Kirche," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 38 (1972) 331–66; "Die Struktur der Kirche gemäss dem III. Konzil von Konstantinopel (680–681)," in R. Bäumer and H. Dolch, eds., *Volk Gottes: Festgabe für J. Höfer* (Freiburg, 1967) pp. 262–85; "Die Struktur der Kirche gemäss dem II. Konzil von Nicäa (787)," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 33 (1967) 47–71; "Die Struktur der Kirche gemäss dem IV. Konzil von Konstantinopel (869–870)," *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 6 (1968) 7–42. A general summary of de Vries's views can be read in "Die kollegiale Struktur der Kirche in den ersten Jahrhunderten," *Una sancta* 19 (1964) 296–317. A French translation of de Vries's historical studies is in progress for publication in the series *Unam sanctam.*

ISOLATING THE PROBLEM

Any discussion about Church today must include as indispensable prerequisite a careful sorting out of the various terminologies that are used to explain an obvious dimension of Church structure. The Christian often has to wade through terms borrowed from sociology. What precisely is meant in theology when one speaks of structuration, systems, institution, models, relationship patterns, functions? Frederick Shippey has remarked that no single set of terms even about structures has won wide acceptance among scholars, since we hear of "primary and secondary; visible and invisible; *esse* and *bene esse;* permanent and temporary; instrumental and essential; and finally, order and organization."[2] Even the professional theologian is uncertain how to order this dismaying array of terminology. Just as the heated discussions of the 50's and early 60's about "tradition" and its relationship to Scripture eventually subsided (or at least were placed in proper perspective) once terminological clarity had emerged, thanks in great measure to Yves Congar and those who dialogued with him and others about Tradition and traditions, so we too can look forward now to progressive clarification about Church structures.

The confusion about the word "structure" has not, of course, been restricted simply to theological quarters. In January 1959, under UNESCO sponsorship, the *Dictionnaire terminologique des sciences sociales* convoked a colloquium in Paris which grappled precisely with the problem of how to establish interdisciplinary understanding in the scientific use of the term "structure."[3] No formal definition was drafted at the congress, but a distinct consensus gradually emerged. It was noted first that *structura* (from *exstruere*, to construct) was originally employed, largely in architectural usage, to describe the plan according to which a building was organized. About the seventeenth century the term was extended to the human body, to indicate, for example, the arrangement of physical organs. Soon after, the word began to refer to man's works, especially his language and the arrangement of words, as in a poem or speech. Because of this linguistic development, structure, it was noted, could now refer either to a totality (*un ensemble*), or the parts of this totality, or indeed the relationships of these parts to one another. Any reality could be said to have structure if it forms a whole in which each part and each particular function performs a task for the whole.

[2] Frederick A. Shippey, "Institution and Church in the North American Situation," in N. Ehrenstrom and W. Muelder, eds., *Institutionalism and Church Unity* (New York, 1963) p. 70.

[3] Roger Bastide, ed., *Sens et usages du terme Structure dans les sciences humaines et sociales* (Gravenhague, 1962).

Structure often refers, then, to "objective reality" of a molecule, a body, a society, a landscape.

In Roman Catholic ecclesiology, seen either as Body-of-Christ ecclesiology or People-of-God ecclesiology, the principal concern has been with structure understood in this fashion, viz., with objective reality, with what is called the *structurell*. As scholars at the Paris symposium were quick to point out, "structure" has come, largely under the influence of M. Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist movement, to refer not to an empirical reality as such, but to a theoretical model, to the *structural*, which is less concerned with empirical realities than with models built up in the human consciousness.[4] Lévi-Strauss has stressed that structures are mental, temporal modalities of universal laws in which the unconscious activity of the mind surfaces.[5] In the perspective of Lévi-Strauss, structure would be understood not as the core of the object (*le noyau de l'objet*) but as the relational system latent in the object. Unfortunately, lack of clarity in Catholic theological writing often reflects the neglect of this important distinction. For this reason one must welcome the pertinent distinction proposed by Richard McCormick, in a somewhat different context, where he suggests distinguishing in society and Church between "operational structures" (which would correspond largely to our *structurell*) and "ideological structures" (the cognitional or *structural* dimension) which are implicit in the former and which can either organize or dominate structures.[6]

Throughout my discussion I employ the word "structure" in its double sense: (a) the *structurell*, institutionalized relationship built up within the Church especially with regard to the hierarchical organization, or the concrete patterns of organization which have reflected and continue to reflect the Catholic understanding of office; (b) the cognitional, ideological complexus of attitudes and presuppositions, partly theological and partly cultural, the *structural*, which inevitably accompanies the first.[7]

[4] Günther Schiwy, *Structuralism and Christianity* (Pittsburgh, 1971) pp. 21 ff. See also E. Leach and S. H. Udy, Jr., "Social Structure," in *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* 14, 482-89, 489-95.

[5] Bastide, *op. cit.*, p. 39: "La doctrine structuraliste enseigne la prédominance du système sur les éléments, vise à dégager la structure du système à travers les relations des éléments, aussi bien dans la chaîne parlée que dans les paradigmes formels, et montre le caractère organique des changements auxquels la langue est soumise." See also Gilles Granger, "Objet, structures et significations," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 19 (1965) 251-90.

[6] "Notes on Moral Theology: April–September, 1972," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 34 (1973) 100.

[7] One may find a parallel linguistic usage for the distinction between *structurell* and *structural* in the attempt to distinguish between *existentiell* and *existential*, or more recently in the distinction proposed by L. Boff between *sacramentell* (relating to the seven

In settling upon the word "structure" to the exclusion of other terms
—system, model, pattern, etc.—I am simply admitting the basic fluid
character of these words. The term "function," however, is used
technically in distinction from structure to indicate a "structure in
action."

Some of the earliest theological writing about Church structure was
undertaken by Yves Congar in his *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'église*
(1950), where he distinguished between "structure" and "life," and
separated "structure" from "structures."[8] In his more recent contribu-
tion, "Ministères et structuration de l'église," he continues much in the
same vein, noting that "structure" is indeed a poorly defined term which
has been used successively in economy, in sociology, and in the exact
sciences. "Structure," he says, should indicate what gives the Church
its identity in the area of belief, sacraments, and hierarchical function.[9]
By "structures" Congar understands exterior forms, stable for a rela-
tively brief time span, but open to transformation over a longer period of
time. He notes in this recent study that he has used the term somewhat
differently from Hans Küng's usage in *Strukturen der Kirche* (1962).
Küng, without actually defining what he means by the term in the
plural, seemed, according to Congar, to be implying that these are
elements acquired in the course of history and in diverse geocultural
area. Küng was stating that one had to oppose identification of structure
as such with hierarchical institutions; he stressed the importance, for the

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sacraments) and *sacramental* (relating to the basic sacral, instrumental character of the
Church and Christian living). See Leonardo Boff, *Die Kirche als Sakrament im Horizont
der Welterfahrung: Versuch einer Legitimation und einer struktur-funktionalistischen
Grundlegung der Kirche im Anschluss an das II. Vatikanische Konzil* (Paderborn, 1972).

[8] Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'église* (Paris, 1950) p. 57.

[9] Yves Congar, "Ministères et structuration de l'église," in *Ministerès et communion
ecclésiale* (Paris, 1970) pp. 31-49, at 46-47. The development of Congar's theology about
church structures has been carefully studied by Paul Guilmot, S.J., *Fin d'une église
cléricale? Le débat en France de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris, 1969) esp. pp. 159-250. The role of
structure in dogma as such, which is not formally treated in this paper, has been amply
treated in J. P. Jossua, "Immutabilité, progrès, ou structurations multiples des doctrines
chrétiennes," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 52 (1968) 173-200. His
useful distinction between *le cadre structurant* and *l'élément structuré* which leads to *la
structure* has been analyzed by Paul Misner, "A Note on the Critique of Dogmas,"
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 34 (1973) 690-700. Jossua also avoids the pitfall of suggesting that
there is continuous progress in dogma, against which Max Seckler has warned in "Der
Fortschrittsgedanke in der Theologie," in J. Ratzinger and J. Neumann, eds., *Theologie im
Wandel* (Tübingen, 1967) pp. 41-67. A useful survey of papal attitudes to this aspect of
structuration is found in Ph. Delhaye, "Unité de la foi et pluralisme des théologies dans les
récents documents pontificaux," *Espirit et vie* 82 (1972) 561-69, 593-600. See also L.
Malevez, "L'Invariant et le divers dans le langage de la foi," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 95
(1973) 353-66.

structure or essential form of the Church's existence, of major ecclesial realities such as the laity, charisms, councils, etc.—aspects which Congar admits he has tended to list under the "life" of the Church understood in a somewhat clerical fashion. Both Congar and Küng witness to the difficulty (by their avoidance of the issue) of determining what *is* the "esssential structure" of the Church. Both theologians would perhaps have been aided by a sharp distinction between *structurell* and *structural*.

The individual Christian and the Church at large need to re-evaluate their attitudes toward structures. Colin Williams has written tellingly about our need for personal *metanoia* in the way we conceive Church structure. There are, he feels, many who envision Church structures as something God-given belonging to the world of order rather than to factors shaped by the Church itself, the world of organization. Amid institutional change, we would argue, there exists an overarching continuity which is the Church's basic shape. This basic continuity in the shape of the Church is dependent primarily upon the Holy Spirit's fidelity to the Church, but it requires too a believing response by the believers to revelation in Christ, so that the Church could never exist without responding to the kerygma, without celebrating in the Eucharist the radical ongoing presence of Christ, or without some exercise of the public ministry of unity within the *Catholica*. Williams notes in particular: "The secret to the faithful discovery of the structural forms of obedience lies then in a radical institutional freedom combined with a radical faithfulness to the apostolic shape of the Christian life and mission."[10]

It is not clear that Christians, especially clerics, are open to the notion that ecclesial structures are "worldly" in the sense that the Church decides upon certain patterns of common life provided by its social milieus, in an attempt to respond to the "signs of the times" (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 4). The need for reform in the Church today is not based simply on the fact that the Church is sinful, but also on the fact that it is burdened with *structurell* and *structural* patterns which poorly mirror its own fundamental self-image. One of the leading spokesmen for the Canon Law Society of America, William Bassett, has noted that the increase of theological consensus which has been achieved through dialogue at the international bilateral conversations underlines the fact that Church order emerges as *the* serious obstacle to Christian unity. "Catholic Church order in the practical polity of its procedures and life enshrines many of the structures of a social ideology that are no longer

[10] Colin Williams, *The Church* (*New Directions in Theology Today* 4; Philadelphia, 1968) p. 150. See in particular "The Structures of the Church," pp. 150–69.

compatible with the self-understanding of civilized men."[11] These
structures, when clung to *mordicus*, often menace Church life in three
ways: as a risk of internal oppression, or a risk of collective imperialism,
or finally the risk of transferring finalities or goals.[12]

Just as within the last two decades Catholics have progressed in
appreciating the human dimension of the biblical message through
openness to historico-critical methods, and just as they have recognized
an over-all development in dogma and doctrine, now what churchmen
and other believers need is a hermeneutic appropriate to *structurell* and
structural shapes in the Church. This need for such a hermeneutic was
recognized as early as 1966 by a Western European working group of the
Department of Studies in Evangelism appointed under the auspices of
the World Council of Churches. Their conviction was that the churches
were seriously hampered by what they labeled "morphological funda-
mentalism," defined as "a rigid and inflexible attitude toward the
morphē or structure of the congregation, similar to the attitude prevalent
in biblical fundamentalism."[13] An unquestioning acceptance of the way,
for instance, dioceses or parish systems are organized, or uncritical
acceptance of the present distribution of roles and responsibilities within
the ordained ministry, can seriously restrict the freedom of the Church to
respond to the mission of the Holy Spirit in today's world. The members
of this same working commission distinguished between "come-struc-
tures" and "go-structures." The churches, they maintained, had often
developed into "waiting churches" into which people were expected to
come (hence "come-structures") rather than being themselves dedicated
to crossing frontiers, leaving the "Church" area to enter into the
"world."[14] This needed hermeneutical shift from envisioning the Church
as the simple, total product of the historical Jesus or the risen Christ
before his ascension to viewing rather the Church as also a later
production of the community responding to the Holy Spirit of Christ
presents a challenge to those who teach and try to unify in love the
members of the Church.

[11] William Bassett, "Subsidiarity, Order and Freedom in the Church," in James A.
Coriden, ed., *The Once and Future Church* (Staten Island, N.Y., 1971) p. 231.
[12] Pierre Eyt, "L'Elément 'politique' dans les structures ecclésiales," *Nouvelle revue
théologique* 92 (1972) 3-25, at 10. See also, by the same author, "Vers une église
démocratique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 91 (1969) 597-613. Although Eyt is at times
overly cautious about some proposed structural changes, his analysis is highly useful.
[13] "The Church for Others: A Quest for Structures for Missionary Congregations," in
The Church for Others and the Church for the World (Geneva, 1967) p. 19.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19. This question has been carefully studied for the Catholic Church in
England by Michael Winter, *Mission or Maintenance: A Study in New Pastoral Structures*
(London, 1973); American ed., *Blueprint for a Working Church: A Study in New Pastoral
Structures* (St. Meinrad, Ind., 1973).

An openness to recognize the contingency in Church structures does not imply, as Andrew Greeley wisely observed in an issue of *Concilium* devoted to "structures of the Church," a "sociologically and theologically naïve" plea for a structureless church.

Men create structures precisely because they wish to routinize procedural behavior in order that they might concentrate on substantive issues. Every human community, however small, does establish certain routine patterns of behavior. . . . The critical question for all human communities is not whether they can survive without human structures, but whether they can develop structures that do not convert themselves from means to ends.[15]

Greeley's comment that "men create structures" even in Church life would, if I am not mistaken, come as a surprise to many Christians, especially Roman Catholics, who tend to conceive of Church structures as something made in heaven. A growing number of theoreticians about Church models, ecclesiologists and sociologists alike, are stressing that we are not given a prepackaged Church nor can we deduce from revelation what must be the ongoing ecclesial forms of social organization. Typical of the views of contemporary American theologians would be these of Max Stackhouse, who argues in the same vein as Greeley:

Especially important in ecclesiology is the question of polity, of how such groups structure themselves, for how they organize themselves and pattern their distribution of power and authority gives evidence both of what they conceive the shape of the future to be, and how they think it *ought* to be under the vision of the future.[16]

Roman Catholics find it difficult to recognize that sinfulness in the Church extends beyond moral failings to include the possibility of sinfulness in the structural dimensions of the Church, wherever structures do not reflect the true nature of the Church as it should be.

[15] Andrew Greeley, "Sociology and Church Structure," *Concilium* 58 (1970) 26. Greeley continues by noting: "There are certain relationships in the Church that are immutable, of course (and we will leave to the theologians to determine which ones); but the greatest problem the Church as an organization faces is the pervasive human temptation to canonize as essential relationship patterns that evolved to meet the needs of one era but no longer respond to the needs of the present era" (p. 27). This viewpoint is also suggested by the provocative title of the work by Maurice Meigne, *L'Eglise invente ses structures* (Paris, 1970), in which he notes: "Dans chaque Eglise on s'interroge sur l'adaptation des structures au temps présent, sur l'origine, la nature et l'exercice du pouvoir, tout en convenant qu'une communauté ne peut se passer ni d'institutions ni d'autorité" (p. 5). Despite the author's ambitious title and goal of highlighting the relativity of church structures in the early centuries, his work unfortunately adds little to the theological dimensions of our problem.

[16] Max L. Stackhouse, *Ethics and the Urban Ethos: An Essay in Social Theory and Theological Reconstruction* (Boston, 1972) p. 143.

Besides the need for terminological clarity and the need for radical conversion of heart vis-à-vis structures, a number of theologians have stressed the fact that one must recognize various *levels* of structures, each with different degrees of importance. One can welcome this attempt at distinguishing "levels" or "areas" of structure, provided that these levels are not hermetically sealed off one from the other and that the close interaction of one level upon the other is not ignored.

One attempt at distinguishing areas of Church structures is that proposed by William Bassett. He isolates three fundamental levels: (1) the *doctrinal* level (the basic rudiments of the faith, the nature of the Church and its ministries); (2) the level of *pastoral* and *liturgical* practice (the Church's role in preaching and healing); (3) the level related to polities or internal *administrative* systems of churches (procedural question of management, planning, etc.).[17] Congar also speaks of three orders in connection with Church structure, but because of his particular preference for *structure* vs. *vie* he neglects Bassett's third level, the internal and administrative. His threefold distinction is simply "l'ordre de la croyance, des sacrements, et de fonctions hiérarchiques,"[18] a division which also seems inadequate from my point of view because it fails to take into account the everyday structures of Church life. Perhaps a more useful identification of levels of structure has been proposed by the Tübingen pastoral theologian Norbert Greinacher. He notes that according to sound religious sociology one can recognize in institutional religious structures four levels: dogmatic truths (*Glaubenswahrheiten*), ethical judgments (*Ethik*), liturgical practices (*Kult*), and social organization (*innerkirchliche Strukturen*).[19] The last category, social organization, reflects the inner framework of the institution which facilitates the practical attainment in everyday life of goals implied in the other three levels. My concern here is precisely with these "inner-church structures" of social organization, which are seen as certain empirical models (the *structurell*) and are accompanied by ideological attitudes (the *structural*).

Within this fourth category Greinacher isolates in Roman Catholicism five relevant structures. Although he may seem to be indulging in picayune subdividing, actually he is providing a long-needed terminological clarification. He isolates among inner-church structures the following five areas: authority structures (hierarchy and magisterium), territorial structures (e.g., divisions into episcopal conferences, dioceses, parishes), cultic structures (forms and rituals of sacramental administra-

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[17] Bassett, *art. cit.*, p. 206.

[18] Congar, *Ministères et communion ecclésiale*, p. 46.

[19] Norbert Greinacher, "Soziologische Aspekte des Selbstvollzugs der Kirche," *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie* 1 (Freiburg, 1964) 440–43.

tion), class structures (distinctions such as clerics, religious, laity), and missionary structures (forms of preaching to believers and nonbelievers).

Whenever any inner-church structural form is not adapted to the contemporary situation, the result is dysfunction. In contemporary Catholicism, despite some obvious successes in *aggiornamento*, stratification and paralysis of structures have led at certain levels to a state of relative dysfunctioning. Within official Vatican sources the notion of dysfunction of structures has been recognized. Typical of this insight would be the statement by Paul VI at a general audience in 1969:

We must distinguish the constitutional structures of the Church to which we must remain firmly attached, and not just out of resignation, from the ones derived by historical tradition or development from the original and essential root of the evangelical and apostolic message.[20]

Also, the *General Catechetical Directory*, a document not noted for its venturesomeness or breadth of vision in matters theological, admits of "changeable structures" and "dysfunction" of structures not adapted to the times. "The Holy Spirit's presence brings it about that the Church strives for continual purification and renewal in its members and for the sake of its members and in its changeable structures (*in suis contingentibus structuris*)."[21] In a subsequent section (no. 67) the *Directory* states the motivation for structural adaptation: "[the Church] takes pains to be understood and recognized by the world, striving to divest itself of those external forms which seem less Gospel-like, and in which traces of eras already ended appear all too clearly."

Vatican II and subsequent developments have already initiated changes in the area of the five inner-church structures mentioned by Greinacher: authority, territorial, cultic, class, and missionary structures. First, authority structures, because of teaching on collegiality of bishops and because of an upgraded status assigned to local churches and to the laity, have fostered a more "polycentric" idea of authority which has left many uneasy. This polycentric conception "proceeds from the recognition of diverse centers of initiative within the system for which it acts as a framework."[22] A polycentric distribution of authority means a polymorphic Church wherein divisions between Christian communions appear far more problematic than they have been previously. Absolute

[20] Address to General Audience, May 7, 1969; text in *Osservatore romano* (English edition), May 15, 1969, p. 12.
[21] *Directorium catechisticum generale*, Sacra Congregatio pro Clericis (Vatican City, 1971) no. 65. See also nos. 66, 67.
[22] Robert Markus and Eric John, *Pastors or Princes: A New Look at the Papacy and Hierarchy* (Washington, 1969) p. 136. The title of this book in England is *Papacy and Hierarchy* (London: Sheed and Ward).

conformity of belief and practice is seen to be compatible with a variety of form. This shift leads many to ask, however, how much polymorphism is tolerable in the world-wide *oikoumenē*, the Church of Christ.

A similar shift is noticeable in assessing the functioning of territorial structures (especially the diocese and parish) which have come increasingly under fire and criticism as being modeled on the agrarian community of the Middle Ages or on a concept of a cohesive urban-neighborhood idea already outgrown in many parts of the world because of new social patterns and easier forms of transportation.[23] Criticism of existing territorial structures does not aim at phasing out existing parochial structures, as was stressed by the North American Working Group in the World Council of Churches, which called rather for an increase in pluralism of parish concepts that would respect four basic "typologies of structures": (1) the "family-type structure" (not residential congregations as such but small house churches where home liturgies and prayer groups are possible, somewhat along the lines of charismatic prayer groups or "underground churches" found in many countries); (2) "permanent availability structure" (where long-termed tasks could be undertaken and where regular public services of worship are available for the believer who for reasons of time or location cannot be committed to a smaller group); (3) "permanent community structure" (as, e.g., Eucharistic communities associated with religious orders, secular institutes, the Taizé Community, etc.); and (4) "task-force structure" (*ad hoc* groups of worshipers and believers gathered for particular purposes such as civil rights, peace demonstrations, etc.).[24]

We have commented on two of Greinacher's areas of inner-church structures: the development of authority structures and territorial structures. Similar comments could be made in the other three areas he mentions: the cultic, class (*ständische*) structure, or missionary structure. But instead of expatiating on these, it would seem more appropriate to take note of yet another dimension of inner-church structural reform which does not easily fit into his five points. It is an area that has been singularly neglected by European and North American ecclesiologists, yet is in the core of much of Latin American theological writing today: the relationship of the inner-church structure to the political milieu. A

[23] Robert Rodes, "Structures of the Church's Presence in the World Today—Through the Church's Own Institutions," *Concilium* 58 (1970) 56. On the reform of parishes, see also Wolfgang Grichting, *Parish Structure and Climate in an Era of Change* (Washington, 1969); Ruud Huysmans, "The Diocese as an Administrative Unit," *Concilium* 71 (1972) 89–98. For French-speaking Canada, an excellent study on this question has been prepared by the Commission d'étude sur les laïcs et l'église, *L'Eglise du Québec: Un héritage, un projet* (Montreal, 1971) Part 6, pp. 255–89.

[24] *The Church for Others and the Church for the World*, WCC, p. 84.

group of Bolivian priests has coherently articulated this problem area crucial for the Church's credibility in the Third World. "The very structure in which we operate often prevents us from acting in a manner that accords with the Gospel.... The church does not have the right to talk against others when she herself is a cause of scandal in her interpersonal relations and her *internal structures*."[25] What is criticized here is the Church's silence and apparent disinterest in the face of political and economic injustice. Because the Church is a sacramental community, the Church needs to signify even in its internal structures the salvation whose fulfilment it announces. Latin America has been sensitive to the demands placed on the Church for "conscienticizing evangelisation of the oppressed,"[26] which points out this other dimension of updating obsolete Church structures. In South America in particular, the stress then is not simply on internal ecclesial structures but on the need for the Church to participate in the reform of demographic structures, international economic structures, social structures (particularly in education, labor organization), political and cultural reforms.[27] This direction, which the Latin American Episcopal Conference blessed at its famous Medellín conference, has therefore widened the concern for structural reform.[28] If concern about structural reform in the Church is to be viewed credibly in the international community and therefore in the Church which includes Latin America, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia, then this concern must reflect more than tolerant curiosity for the concepts of Church structural reform as articulated in the Third World.

[25] Quoted in Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1973) pp. 117–18.

[26] Gutiérrez, p. 117. Besides the work of Gutiérrez, consult for Latin American theology of liberation: J. Comblin, *Théologie de la révolution* (Paris, 1960); Michel Schooyans, *Chrétienté en contestation: L'Amérique latine. Essai de perspective pastorale* (Paris, 1969) esp. pp. 125–44; J. L. Segundo, *Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, 5 vols. (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1973 ff.); R. Alves, *Theology of Human Hope* (New York, 1970); F. Houtart & E. Pin, *The Church and the Latin American Revolution* (New York, 1965); P. Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, 1970). The roots of "liberation theology" are clearly evident in French theology even prior to Vatican II. Two excellent theological presentations of the relationship between the Church and the temporal can be found in G. Martelet, "L'Eglise et le temporel vers une nouvelle conception," in G. Baraúna, ed., *L'Eglise de Vatican II* 2 (Paris, 1967) 517–39; and K. Rahner, "Die gesellschaftskritische Funktion der Kirche," *Schriften zur Theologie* 9 (Einsiedeln, 1970) 569–90.

[27] *Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America*. Issued at Lima by the Peruvian Bishops' Commission for Social Action; tr. J. Drury (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1970) p. 21.

[28] Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM), *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council* (English ed.) 1: *Position Papers*; 2: *Conclusions* (Bogotá, 1970).

Some will feel, of course, that such a concern broadens structural reform beyond the level of inter-church dialogue into something unmanageable: wider concern for structural improvements in the areas of justice, development, and peace throughout the entire *oikoumenē*.[29] But this dimension cannot go unnoticed if international is to be more than a term of extrinsic denomination.

In all discussions about structural reform it seems important not simply to stress the notion of "removing" archaic structures, but to lay greater emphasis on the notion of "innovating" new ones. Much greater stress must be placed on the notion of initiative in the Church today if real adaptation to local church is to be effected. And yet, innovation and initiative have been notably stunted in the Catholic Church, which has perhaps unduly stressed the relationships with the Roman See. Amid this hesitancy among so many of our priests and leaders, we have to face the fact that we are dealing less with the phenomenon of "future shock" than with "future fear". A greater exposure to sociology and economics would perhaps help our priests, but what is needed more than anything else, it seems, is an ecclesial climate which encourages initiative, creativity and pluriformity, and far wider participation especially of younger clerics and laity in the decision-making process of the Church. Such a real change would offer concrete assurance that the Church is not simply abstractly a *signum elevatum in nationes* but is indeed a real community of creative fidelity.[30]

CONTINUITY: FACT OR FICTION?

After this general discussion about structure(s), about structural changes upon Church and societal life, and about the possibility of innovation in new structural forms, my task in this second section is to confront two specific problems, partly theological, partly psychological, which need fuller consideration in order that the Church might more fully achieve its self-realization, or what Karl Rahner has called its *Selbstvollzug*. In a third and final section I will suggest concretely some practical reforms. The two pastoral problems evisioned here are: (1) an inadequate concept of continuity among large portions of our Church constituency, and (2) a general unfamiliarity among Church leaders with the effects of change on the personal religious lives of Christians.

[29] See Yves Congar, "Do the New Problems of our Secular World Make Ecumenism Irrelevant?" *Concilium* 54 (1970) 11–21.

[30] Hans Küng, *Structures of the Church*, tr. S. Attanasio (New York, 1964) p. 28. See also Johannes Neumann, "Strukturprobleme der nachkonziliaren Kirche," *Stimmen der Zeit* 98 (1973) 185–201.

Continuity

Continuity in the Church is not based on structural sameness or similarities with the past, but on the fidelity of God's mission toward humanity which culminates in His covenant in Christ. The Church's continuity or identity which remains throughout the course of its history does not rest upon obvious empirical verifiability; in the last analysis it rests upon faith inspired with hope and upon trust anchored in hope, not upon any absolute assurance which could be empirically established.[31] Operational structures which reflect the Church's share in the ongoing mission of the Holy Spirit are largely *ad hoc* structures which eventually call for adjustment in the light of new situations. This acculturation process may be seen as continuous fidelity to the Spirit, who inspires persons (not necessarily the *Amtsträger*, public leaders in the Church) to reform or innovate structures. Inner Church structures are basically experimental and need to be assessed pragmatically in terms of their suitability. But to regard them as experimental is really to argue for a decrease in the exercise of power in the Church as practiced by many churchmen—at least power in the sense of social control. The history of the Church over long periods of time leads one to question whether in fact its leaders have always been willing to forgo this power control. The Church can only manifest its being and mission by inserting itself into social milieus. Yet this implies an inevitable social conditioning of its life and also the creating of new social forms.

For many believers, the perception of "continuity" has been affected by a faulty concept of salvation history. To say that the Church is a pilgrim Church implies that it walks in history. Its history, however, is not one ready-made and programmed in heaven, but the concrete history (albeit salvation history) of a particular group of women and men and of distinct social groupings. The nonhistorical, nonchanging factor of Church existence is God's fidelity through the grace of Christ's Spirit. Those responsible for unity and order in the Church need to assist believers far more than they have done in the past to be able to recognize the contingency of structures. Just as biblical scholars have helped our people read the Scriptures with proper demythologization, so too will Church leaders and theologians at today's critical juncture need to help the faithful demythologize certain Church structures and appreciate the basic fidelity in the ongoing Church amid change.

The frequent use of the word "instituted" or "founded"[32] (e.g., Christ

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[31] Karl Rahner, "Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen zum Thema: Wandelbares und Unwandelbares in der Kirche," *Schriften zur Theologie* 10 (Einsiedeln, 1973) 241-61, at 245.

[32] On the question see A. Cody, "The Foundation of the Church: Biblical Criticism for Ecumenical Discussion," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 34 (1973) 3-18.

instituted or founded the Church, Christ instituted seven sacraments, Christ instituted the episcopate) may indeed do a disservice to our people if by this popular catechetical language one instils in them a faulty notion of continuity. Recently John O'Malley clearly analyzed and criticized this exclusivistic emphasis on continuity in Catholic thought.[33] By way of example, the popular explanations of apostolic succession that are often expressed in writing or described in sermons can be a real disservice to understanding Church continuity.

Precisely to help the Church desacralize the structures in which it took shape, Roger Mehl of the University of Strasbourg has argued tellingly and convincingly about the need for ecclesiology to dialogue with sociology.[34] He notes that it is often in sociological changes that the Church is able to re-evaluate its ecclesiology and preaching to see what elements of the kerygma have been understressed, neglected, or even forgotten.

Effect of Change

The second area that presents a serious pastoral problem today is that of the effect of change upon the Christian.[35] Cardinal Newman wisely remarked: "In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."[35a] This aspect of Church life needs to be more a part of the preaching of the Church, especially by attempting to develop, in an age which is antipathetic to history, a sense of the differences throughout the past. Otherwise, the unhistorically-minded will, without knowing it, be enslaved to the forms of a fairly recent past.

One significant factor operative in resistance to change is an imagined threat to one's security in faith. It is not surprising that in religious questions persons tend to be basically "conservative" because of the

[33] "Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's Aggiornamento," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 32 (1971) 573–601, esp. 598 ff.

[34] "Ecclésiologie et sociologie," *Revue théologique de Louvain* 3 (1972) 385–401, at 400. See also P. Eyt, "Sociologies de l'institution religieuse et théologie de l'église," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 95 (1973) 527–38.

[35] Credit must be given to the hierarchy of Ireland, the only national episcopate to have addressed their church on this difficult question in a pastoral letter: "Change in the Church" (dated Sept. 14, 1972). Text in *Catholic Mind* 71 (1973) 49–64; also *Furrow* 23 (1972) 612–27. The letter has certain shortcomings and oversimplifies some complex issues, but has many penetrating insights. See the evaluation of this pastoral letter by Nicolas Lash, "Personal Reflections on a Public Letter: The Irish Hierarchy on Change," *Doctrine and Life* 23 (1973) 197–202. Some other useful remarks on the psychological and pedagogical implications of change in the Church can be found in D. Emeis, "Didaktische Aspekte der kirchlichen Erneuerung," *Diakonia* (Vienna) 4 (1973) 4–18, and in R. Bohren and N. Greinacher, eds., *Angst in der Kirche verstehen und überwinden* (Grünewald, 1972).

[35a] *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (3rd ed.; London, 1878) p. 40.

importance of the matters in question: communion with God, fellowship in a saving community, future fulfilment.[36] This resistance can be manifested in different ways, as has been illustrated by Congar in his study *Au milieu des orages*. Some Catholics will respond favorably to change and the contestation it occasions. There may be disinterest on the part of some, anxious resentment by traditionalists, aspiration for change by those who perceive an adjustment to the present-day situation, confusion among those who are already shaky in faith, or interior withdrawal—that phenomenon described as the "third man" syndrome.[37] Each of these groups presents a particular pastoral challenge.

Those who have in connection with catechetical programs worked closely with parents of Catholic children or with pastors are familiar with the strong resistance to shifting emphases and methodologies in catechesis. If, however, the Church is not simply to tolerate superficial structural changes but is to recognize the urgency of encouraging broad changes more reflective of the Church's nature, there must be an increased sensitivity toward the problems of those who discover that what they considered to be the "pristine" practice of the Church is actually a rather recent and limited, often limiting, practice. No amount of progress on official levels, such as bilateral conversations or international synodal pronouncements, can ever hope to affect the grass-roots level in such sensitive areas as intercommunion, recognition of ministries, etc., until thought-patterns, created in our faithful precisely by the literature they have had presented to them or reflecting the instruction they receive from pulpit or classroom, are updated. In other words, organizational adjustments (*structurell* changes) will be useless without the effort to adjust mental outlooks (the *structural*).

Mehl, once again, is helpful here with his suggestions for closer co-operation between ecclesiology and sociology. He notes what he terms an "illusion volontariste"[38] operative even at Vatican II whereby Church leaders were mistaken in thinking that constitutions or decrees would lead the faithful to remove old thought-patterns by an act of the will. One example would be to expect the concept of collegiality to be effectively operative simply on the basis of conciliar texts. In fact, the

[36] On craving for clarity and security as a temptation in Church life, cf. Ladislas Orsy, "Quantity and Quality of Laws after Vatican II," *Jurist* 27 (1967) 385–412, esp. 404.

[37] Yves Congar, *Au milieu des orages* (Paris, 1969) pp. 10–12. The expression "Le troisième homme" was created and described by F. Roustang in *Christus* 13 (1966) 561–67. On the difficulties which the individual believer experiences with the Church, see K. Rahner, "Über das Ja zur konkreten Kirche," *Schriften zur Theologie* 9 (Einsiedeln, 1970) 479–97.

[38] Mehl, *art. cit.*, p. 387.

"concept" finds opposition because it coexists *pari passu* with a resistant paternalistic model of the priest, bishop, or pope in the collective psychology of cleric and layman alike. The need for a "change of consciousness," to use Adolf Exeler's term,[39] is closely allied to what we mentioned earlier as the need for personal *metanoia*.

Within the framework of Church-and-state relations in Latin America, Ivan Vallier has written on the theory of religious change. He discovers that with any shift in consciousness in Church life there emerges a basic pattern of "extraction–insulation–and re-entry." This pattern will be present no matter what typology is operative in the attitudes of the local church: the monopoly church, the political church, the ghetto church, the servant church, or the pastoral church. The point he underlines, however, is that capacity for openness to change is directly proportionate to the level of the Church at the time:

According to this model the church's basic mechanisms of religious and social control undergo decisive changes as it passes from one stage to another. Similarly its tolerance of the role in the processes of wider social change undergoes modifications. At stage five—the cultural-pastoral stage—the church exhibits a high tolerance for change and plays a dual role in change: an imitator of changes at the level of values and symbol systems and a legitimator of institutional changes in secular spheres.[40]

Central to this facilitation of acceptance of change in Church life is the emergence of a group of persons who have internalized their church life to the point where change becomes less threatening. In other to produce a type of Christian who is not defensive to change, far more is needed than simply conceptual theoretical statements; psychological and sociological processes must be shaped that would make this adjustment possible. We will return to this point in our final section when we suggest that the Church reallocate decision-making powers into a wider area of ecclesial life. In the meantime, however, those who have responsibility of leadership in the Church must be far more sensitive to the fact that, as Vallier suggests, individuals or local churches, when they pull away from certain traditional bases of Church life (extraction), undergo a phase of internal consolidation and fortification in relative aloofness (insulation), and then only slowly begin to operate on nontraditional levels of

[39] Adolf Exeler, "Change of Consciousness and Church Reform," *Concilium* 73 (1972) 78–86. See also Cahal B. Daly, "Change and Continuity in the Church," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 39 (1972) 60–78.

[40] Ivan Vallier, "Extraction, Insulation, and Re-Entry: Toward a Theory of Religious Change," in H. A. Landsberger, ed., *The Church and Social Change in Latin America* (Notre Dame, 1970) pp. 9–35, at 24. Another useful work on the practical problems of change is Julien Freund, "Changement et religion," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 52 (1972) 255–66.

socioecclesial patterns (re-entry). Often what is seen to be defensiveness, closedness to change, or regressive, reactionary moments are actually stages in problem-solving and an increase in one's degree of tolerance for change. At any rate, the pace for change varies enormously from country to country, and the local church needs to be sensitive to this fact. Therefore, to urge world-wide uniformity, as Roman officials seem prone to do, is dangerous, because it prescinds from the level of independence and uniqueness of each local or national church.

Not all will find appealing the radical call to change as proposed by the venerable 74-year-old French mathematician and humanist Marcel Légaut. But in considering the impact of change and its impact on the structures of the Church, we must take into account that in fact his two major works have struck a resonant chord far beyond the boundaries of France.[41] Distinguishing between a *religion d'autorité* and a *religion d'appel* and separating *foi* (personal vibrant faith in God) from *croyance* (learnt ideas and concepts about religion), he foretells the gradual disappearance in our midst of *religion d'autorité*. In what is a radical call to decentralization, he insists on interiorization among Christians, who will experience and appropriate the message of Jesus in a thoroughly personal religious way, analogous to the personal impact of the Messiah on the original disciples. They will be Christians, to be sure, thanks to the Church, but they will carry the Church instead of being carried by it. Perhaps this is the message implicit in the widespread charismatic renewal within the Church which is opening up considerably avenues of change within Catholic and Protestant churches today. If the position of Légaut and neo-Pentecostalism can be blended with a sensitivity for dialogue with the wider Christian community and with an openness to sharing the experiences of prayer and creative structurings in other national and local churches (a task particularly incumbent on the person or persons whose function is that of being the "successor of Peter"), then surely the putative elements of isolation thought to be present in Légaut's and the so-called charismatic approach to the Christian community will be eliminated.

[41] Marcel Légaut, *Introduction à l'intelligence du passé et de l'avenir du christianisme* (Paris, 1970); *L'homme à la recherche de son humanité* (Paris, 1971). A brief essay by Légaut in English translation is available: "A Glimpse of Tomorrow's Church," *Lumen vitae* (English ed.) 27 (1972) 185–216; also available in *Cross Currents* 23 (1973) 1–29. See also the appreciation by G. Vallquist, "Introducing Marcel Légaut," *Month*, n.s. 5 (1972) 232–36. For a similar proposal tailored to the North American scene, see the work of the Canadian Jesuit Placide Gaboury, *L'Homme inchangé: Une Vision du monde et de l'homme* (Montreal, 1972) esp. pp. 169–207. A markedly different view from that of Légaut and Gaboury is seen, e.g., in Jean de Fabrèques, *L'Eglise, esclave ou espoir du monde?* (Paris, 1971).

DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATION IN TODAY'S CHURCH

Practical suggestions for increasing opportunities for dialogue and participation in the Church already exist in abundance. The sense of frustration felt by many in the Church today is not based on a dearth of proposed changes. Of plans there are a plethora, some highly imaginative and creative, as for instance those proposed by F. Klostermann,[42] the thirty-five proposals of W. Bassett, or most recently the thirteen-point agenda for reform suggested by Richard P. McBrien.[43] The question is, why have these plans been realized only sporadically and at such a painfully slow pace?

One fundamental reason for the snail's pace in structural reform is perhaps a general expectation that movements and suggestions must be co-ordinated from Vatican City. Practically speaking, therefore, what seems needed is an increased willingness on the part of local, particular churches to bear responsibility.[44] The genius of Catholicism should be its ability to provide a delicate balance between local church and universal communion. Yet, if local churches feel an exaggerated responsibility toward approbation by the world-wide Church, surely the emergence of an *ecclesia ecclesiarum* will be hindered. One conclusion which may well surface in the coming years is that, paradoxically, the local church will have to provide leadership for the world-wide Church. Such a shift of focus would necessitate a shift in thought-patterns among many bishops and members of religious orders, especially those with special allegiance to the bishop of Rome, such as the Society of Jesus. Largely because of the historical junctures at which the Jesuit order was founded and restored, Jesuits have often tended to be somewhat aloof from the particular concerns of the local or particular church. Historically and ideologically (because of mobility), they have been associated with the universal Church, symbolized in service to the successor of Peter. However, one of the creative ways in which Jesuits and other religious

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[42] Ferdinand Klostermann, "Reform of Church Structures," in M. Cuminetti and F. V. Johannes, eds., *Rethinking the Church (La fine della Chiesa come società perfetta)* (Dublin, 1970) pp. 142–93.

[43] The proposals of Bassett are found in *The Once and Future Church* (n. 11 above) pp. 260–65. For the reforms outlined by McBrien, see his *The Remaking of the Church* (New York, 1973) 86–108.

[44] On the relationship of local to universal Church, see Emmanuel Lanne, "L'Eglise locale: Sa catholicité et son apostolicité," *Istina* 14 (1969) 46–66 (English version in *One in Christ* 6 [1970] 288–313); "L'Eglise locale et l'église universelle: Actualité et portée du thème," *Irénikon* 43 (1970) 481–511; "Pluralisme et unité: Possibilité d'une diversité de typologies dans une même adhésion ecclésiale," *Istina* 14 (1969) 171–90 (English version in *One in Christ* 6 [1970] 430–51); Klaus Zapotoczky, "Strukturen einer Kirche der Zukunft," *Una sancta* 25 (1970) 36–47; J. Schreiner, ed., *Die Kirche im Wandel der Gesellschaft* (Würzburg, 1970).

orders could increase their effectiveness in the Church of Christ (and it is the Church which they serve, not a particular office within the Church) would be to foster actively a sense of local church with sharp synodal characteristics. Already in response to circumstances, the Society of Jesus has made dramatic shifts in attitudes, as witnessed especially in its fostering co-operation between Roman Catholics and Reformation churches. What took place between Peter Canisius, the "Hammer of Heretics," and Augustin Cardinal Bea represents a paradigmatic shift of considerable proportions. Clearly, this shift should not be interpreted as a rejection of the Petrine office or of the papacy, but simply as a realistic appraisal of the fact that, to revitalize structures in the Church, religious orders need to contribute far more to *koinonia* within the local church. The sensitive issues connected with the "exemption" of religious orders as an alternative to diocesan incardination must ultimately be faced.

Jacques von Allmen has written that "Une Eglise locale est entière-ment Eglise, mais elle n'est pas toute l'Eglise."[45] Cannot one who has profoundly experienced this on the local level make important contribu-tions to the universalist, centralizing aspects of Church life? Of course, the theology of local church needs fuller exploration. De Lubac has pleaded for terminological clarification of the difference between "partic-ular" church and "local" church.[46] A particular church would not necessarily be local or territorial nor need it refer to a single episcopal community; it could refer to a collection of churches grouped regionally, nationally, or according to another criterion such as rite. Greater involvement in fostering local church would help ecumenists in the Latin church understand the resistance among the Orthodox toward collegial-ity at Vatican II, which still seems to them juxtaposed with a stress on primacy poorly consonant with *sobornost*.[47] What is being proposed is that greater attention be given to the teaching of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "Haec Christi ecclesia *vere* adest in omnibus legitimis fidelium congregationibus localibus, quae, pastoribus suis adhaerentes, et ipsae in Novo Testamento ecclesiae vocantur."[48]

For purposes of discussion, I wish to propose six practical ways, seemingly disparate but in fact closely connected, in which the local church could be brought to a fuller realization of its responsibilities: (1)

[45] J. J. von Allmen, "L'Eglise locale parmi les autres églises locales," *Irénikon* 43 (1970) 512–37, at 512.

[46] Henri de Lubac, *Les églises particulières dans l'église universelle* (Paris, 1971). See also the review by G. Chantraine in *Nouvelle revue théologique* 94 (1972) 520–36.

[47] Pierre Duprey, "La structure synodale de l'église dans la théologie orientale," *Proche orient chrétien* 29 (1970) 123–45 (English version in *One in Christ* 7 [1971] 152–82).

[48] *Lumen gentium*, no. 26. For an appreciation of this text, see Karl Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* 10 (New York, 1973) 3–29.

greater participation of the Church in church decisions, especially in nondoctrinal areas; (2) further development of the notion of "accountability" in relation to leaders chosen by the local church; (3) encouragement of greater freedom by official adherence to the principle of "due process"; (4) investigation and correction of antifeminist elements in the Church; (5) active encouragement of national pastoral synods; and (6) preparation for the convocation of a truly ecumenical council composed of particular churches from differing Christian traditions.

1) *Local coresponsibility.* At a symposium under the sponsorship of the Canon Law Society of America, part of the Society's recommendations neatly summarize our view of the need for increased input into decision-making:

Because all authority in the church, as exercised by such individuals or groups, is for the service of the Church in the fulfillment of her threefold mission [of *kerygma, diakonia,* and *koinonia*], then there must be some means whereby those in authority are to be held accountable and responsible to those whom they are supposed to serve. The institutions which are most relevant here are the following: (1) the electoral process; (2) freedom of information, whereby the exercise of official power is a matter of public record; and (3) freedom of discussion and debate regarding the policy and performance of office holders as well as the ultimate assumptions of the community itself.[49]

These suggestions are not simply means to increase the efficiency of the Church, but are motivated by the desire to have structures reflect the nature of the Church as the People of God.[50] A priori it is not possible to know what the forms would be by which participation should evolve. But the haphazard way in which parish councils, priests' senates, diocesan councils, provincial synods, etc. are organized certainly points to a real need. Information would be gathered from groupings in the Church regarded not simply as consultative bodies but as real collaborative agencies. The new science of synectics, the study of how to integrate diverse individuals into the problem-stating, problem-solving group, would here bear careful consideration.[51]

2) *Election of accountable leaders.* For real dialogue, of course, participation must be available even in the selection of local bishops.[52]

[49] James A. Coriden, ed., *We, the People of God . . . A Study of Constitutional Government for the Church* (Huntington, Ind., 1967) p. 8.

[50] James A. Coriden, ed., *Who Decides for the Church? Studies in Co-Responsibility* (Hartford, 1970) p. 8.

[51] William J. J. Gordon, *Synectics* (New York, 1963).

[52] W. Bassett, ed., *The Choosing of Bishops: Historical and Theological Studies* (Canon Law Society of America; Hartford, 1971). See also the special issue of *Tübinger theologische Quartalschrift* translated by Leonard and Arlene Swidler, *Bishops and People* (Philadelphia, 1970); see also the issue of *America*, Sept. 2, 1972, and response, Oct. 14, 1972.

The faithful of the particular church share in the responsibility for the mission of the Church and should have considerable voice in evaluating potential leadership in the faith. This notion of accountability of those whom the local church chooses for public office is gaining considerable ground in the North American scene. The size of dioceses, however, often militates against useful assessment. Accountability in the local church should also extend beyond the episcopal office to include the presbyterate. Although the liturgical rite of ordination includes a ceremony of approbation whereby the faithful are invited to ratify by applause their recognition of a charism in the candidate for public office, still this action remains a hollow formality when the faithful have little opportunity to assess those proposed for orders or little voice in how they are trained in the seminary. Congar notes that we have so stressed the liberty of the consecrating minister that the community remains unconsulted. "Is vocation a controlled, personal *attraction*, verified by superiors and then consecrated, or is it not rather the recognition, by the community and its head, of gifts which mark someone out for the receipt of a *mission* by consecration at the hands of the bishop?"[53] *Lumen gentium* wisely remarked: "Pastors also know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of Christ toward the world."[54] Would this not also apply to bishops, and in particular the bishop of Rome, who view themselves as Atlas figures bearing the Church upon their shoulders without sharing the weight with the rest of the Church?

3) *Freedom through "due process."* One particular North American contribution to the area of structural reform in the Church which has significant implications for the autonomy of the local church is sensitivity to due process. Remarking on this peculiar Anglo-Saxon concept taken from jurisprudence, Fr. Robert Kennedy, in a commentary on a text prepared for the American hierarchy, explains that due process "has to do with rights, with the protection of rights, but more particularly with insuring the availability of structures to protect rights should they be threatened, and to vindicate rights when in fact they have been impaired."[55] He notes that a considerable amount of governmental activity of the Catholic Church is administrative and largely unstructured. Scant and inadequate are the procedures for resolving disputes

[53] Yves Congar, "My Path-Findings in the Theology of Laity and Ministries," *Jurist* 32 (1972) 179. Original French version, "Mon cheminement dans la théologie du laïcat et des ministères," in *Ministères et communion ecclésiale*, p. 20.

[54] *Lumen gentium*, no. 30.

[55] National Conference of [U.S.] Catholic Bishops, *A Summary of Actions taken . . . on the Subject of Due Process* (Washington, 1969) p. 39. Also useful in this regard is the collected work, J. A. Coriden, ed., *The Case for Freedom: Human Rights in the Church* (Washington, 1969).

arising out of the exercise of administrative authority in the Church. Actions taken recently by the National Conference of U.S. Catholic Bishops led to agreement on the manner of protecting rights and resolving disputes by conciliation, arbitration, and (in the rare cases where it might be necessary) judicial process. This overdue sensitivity to protection of human rights and freedom within the Church is an important step toward updating structures. As is well known, these norms were worked out precisely to avoid harsh measures taken in some parts of the world against those priests who dissented from some of the practical conclusions of *Humanae vitae.* If these procedures of due process, already adopted experimentally in parts of the American church, are implemented widely and correctly, then the particular churches may again become a source of responsible creativity. Those who wish to devote themselves to revivifying the local church will have to encourage these safeguards. Passivity and noninvolvement in the U.S. clergy are said to be often traceable to a fear that venturesomeness will be suspected and curbed. The findings of the national investigation on the American priest which was financed by the American hierarchy need to be studied carefully in order to see what structural weaknesses in the Church with regard to due process actually contribute to hindering the proper exercise of responsibility among potential Church leaders.[56]

4) *Elimination of antifeminist sentiment in the Church.* Another area of previous neglect which has had serious negative repercussions on the local church and about which theologians have been notably unconcerned is that of discrimination of women in the Church, especially by exclusion from the ordained diaconate and presbyterate. It is difficult for the Church to project itself as a truly open, free society when it systematically excludes women from meaningful participation in its public official ministry long after most societies have dramatically altered their understanding of the role of women.[57] Women's liberation is

[56] National Opinion Research Center Study, University of Chicago, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations* (Washington, 1972); E. Kennedy and V. J. Heckler, eds., *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Psychological Investigations* (Washington, 1972); John Tracy Ellis, ed., *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Historical Investigations* (Washington, 1971); Eugene Maly, ed., *The Priest and Sacred Scripture* (Washington, 1972); G. T. Broccolo, ed., *Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood* (Washington, 1973). The theological study on priesthood commissioned by the American hierarchy and prepared under Carl J. Armbruster has, to date, not been approved for publication by the U.S. Bishops' Conference.

[57] On the role of women in the Church, see Kathleen Bliss, *The Service and Status of Women in the Churches* (London, 1952); D. S. Bailey, *The Man-Woman Relationship in Christian Thought* (London, 1959); Rosemary Ruether, "The Becoming of Women in Church and Society," *Cross Currents* 17 (1967) 415-26; Sarah B. Doely, *Women's Liberation and the Church* (New York, 1970); Margaret Sittler Ermath, *Adam's Fractured Rib: Observations on Women in the Church* (Philadelphia, 1970). Other recent works which

neither a fad nor a stage eventually to be outgrown, despite what male chauvinist churchmen might like to wish. Together with the civil-rights movement, the peace movement, or the theology of liberation extending from Mexico to Argentina, the movement for women's liberation has been an extremely important factor in raising the moral level of consciousness in the Western hemisphere. Those in the Church who fail to take a strong stand on this issue within the particular churches in which they pray and work will increasingly be viewed as incredible and irrelevant. Clearly, the delicate differences which vary from country to country in this matter need to be respected, but this only serves as an argument for greater initiative on the local level.

5) *Encouragement of national pastoral councils or synods.* Few proposals connected with contemporary Church polity are likely to evoke more mixed reactions in the United States than the suggestion to convoke a national synod or pastoral council.[58] Such a synod, which should not be confused with the international synod of Catholic bishops meeting in Rome, would be a national pastoral council, the convocation of representative elements within a national Church or neighboring churches to assist bishops in assessing contemporary problems, establishing priorities, and proposing needed structural reform. The question of such an eventual convocation still remains under consideration, even though in October 1973 the Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) announced that it has decided to "suspend, at least for now, efforts to bring a national pastoral council into being." Among the reasons given for the postponement was first "lack of evidence of significant public support for the idea." A similar line of reasoning might have led to a decision not to convoke Vatican II. This reason also overlooks the need of the American Church to be educated by its leaders about the desirability of such a synod before there is any notable ground swell. The preparation for a national pastoral council would be a significant learning experience for Americans, as it has been for Europeans. A second reason for the postponement was that the Congregation for the Clergy had noted that pastoral councils "would not be opportune structures in the Church at the present time." The

are highly pertinent to this topic include Haye van der Meer, S.J., *Women Priests in the Catholic Church? A Theological-Historical Investigation,* tr. A. and L. Swidler (Philadelphia, 1973); R. Gryson, *Le ministère des femmes dans l'église ancienne* (Gembloux, 1972); H. Cancik *et al., Zum Thema: Frau in Kirche und Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1972); Joan Morris, *The Lady Was a Bishop* (New York, 1973); Ida Raming, *Der Ausschluss der Frau vom priesterlichen Amt: Gottgewollte Tradition oder Diskriminierung?* (Cologne, 1973).

[58] See especially Avery Dulles, "The Idea of a National Pastoral Council," and Thomas O'Meara, "The National Pastoral Council of a Christian Church: Ecclesiastical Accessory or Communal Voice?" both in *A National Pastoral Council Pro and Con,* Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary Consultation, Aug. 28–30, 1970 (Washington, 1971) pp. 3–20, 21–34.

historical background of the Congregation statement, the ecclesial weight of this caveat, the reasons for nonconformity with this suggestion in parts of Europe, and the relationship of the American bishops' responsibilities for the national church vis à vis a Roman congregation, are all questions that need fuller exploration before any definitive decision can be reached about an American pastoral council.

Surprisingly, the experiences and achievements of other national pastoral councils have been largely neglected in North America. Comparatively little was published in this country about the genesis and accomplishments of the Dutch National Synod[59] or about the planning and continuation of the Pastoral Synod under progress in the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD),[60] the German Democratic Republic (DDR),[61] or, in somewhat different formats, in Switzerland[62] and

[59] The Dutch Pastoral Council ended after two years and four months and after six full assemblies. It was officially opened Nov. 27, 1966, although the first working session was not held until January 1968. The Synod ended in the spring of 1970. The idea of setting up a permanent national synod in Holland was opposed by three Roman congregations led by Cardinals Seper (Faith), Confalonieri (Bishops), and Wright (Clerics) on July 21, 1972. The reason offered was that the time was not ripe for such a permanent structure. See the recent evaluation of the Dutch Pastoral Council: M. Schmaus, L. Scheffczyk, J. Giers, eds., *Exempel Hollands: Theologische Analyse und Kritik des niederländischen Pastoralkonzils* (Berlin, 1973).

[60] In their meeting from Feb. 24-27, 1969, the West Deutsche Bischofskonferenz announced at Bad Honnef through Cardinal Döpfner their intention of convoking a synod. In 1969 proposed statutes were published (text in *Herder Korrespondenz* 23 [1969] 472-76, with commentary on 545-50) and were later revised (*ibid.* 25 [1971] 39-45). A letter from the bishops announcing the synod to all parishes appeared in 1970 (text *ibid.* 24 [1970] 172-73). Some 21 million questionnaires were sent out to the West German Catholics from May 1 to June 30, 1970, and the results were tabulated by computer. Although opened officially Jan. 3, 1971, the first working session met from May 10-13, 1972, in Würzburg, followed by a second meeting from June 3-7, 1973. (Regular reports or *Sonderberichterstattung* are provided in *Herder Korrespondenz;* a special periodical is published about eight times a year, giving reports and decisions, *Synode: Amtliche Mitteilungen der gemeinsamen Synode der Bistümer in der BRD.*) Besides the rich documentation it has provided, the West German synod also occasioned some fine theological publications about the nature and mission of the local church. See especially the critical remarks by Karl Rahner in his *Strukturwandel der Kirche als Aufgabe und Chance* (Freiburg, 1972) and his "Zur Theologie einer 'Pastoralsynode,'" in *Schriften zur Theologie* 10 (Einsiedeln, 1973) 358-73. See also the historical essay by Regensburg professor Raymond Kottje, "Probleme der deutschen Synode in historischer Sicht," *Stimmen der Zeit* 185 (1970) 27-34, with valuable remarks on the history of lay participation and voting in councils and synods of the past.

[61] The East German Synod, which first met in working session March 23-25, 1973, has also published an impressive set of statutes which would be of help in the preparation of other national synods (text: *Herder Korrespondenz* 26 [1972] 254-56).

[62] The Swiss began meeting on Sept. 23, 1972, to approve the statutes for its own model, which reflects the linguistic make-up and the particular history of federalism in Switzerland. The plan calls for a simultaneous meeting of diocesan synods in seven locations. For a report of the Swiss meetings, see *Herder Korrespondenz* 25 (1971) 37-39; a

Austria.[63] It is a pity that many Catholics have a vague sense only that the Dutch National Synod labored under a cloud or that it increased polarities in Holland. Likewise, it is regrettable that the useful planning sessions, the working topics based often on national surveys, the statutes or present resolutions of the West German synod have been so little studied and appreciated outside its own borders. Despite the difficulties, especially in countries large and pluriform, the goal of fostering a national council seems a highly desirable method for revitalizing local church. The purpose of such synods is not to receive a list of contradictory "advice," but to have distinct spheres of the Christian community properly represented in these critical days, so that the *sensus fidelium* is not simply a *sensus clericorum*. As the American Dominican theologian Thomas O'Meara has observed, "Many Catholics would believe that by divine decree only bishops and their vicars, territorial pastors, have any *de jure* voice in their Christian communities."[64] The difficulties which face the local churches in regard to planning and conducting a pastoral synod should not tempt them to eliminate a vast majority of the Church from voicing their views.

6) *Preparation for the convocation of a truly ecumenical council.* Even on the assumption that a real ecumenical council representative of local churches from all the major traditions of Christianity could not be convened until A.D. 2000 or 2500, we must keep this long-range goal clear in inter-church dialogue. In Church structures which for centuries frowned upon pluralism and attempted to produce a monolithic product, the task of achieving such an ecumenical council will be gargantuan. But this is certainly the finality implicit in the bilateral conversations,

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list of themes to be discussed, *ibid.* 25 (1971) 154–56; a preliminary report, *ibid.* 26 (1972) 250–54.

[63] The Austrian model is heavily influenced by the diocesan synod of Vienna. See *Herder Korrespondenz* 23 (1969) 101–3; 24 (1970) 291–92. Despite its national features, there are several elements in the structure of this model which would be helpful for the world-wide Church; cf. *ibid.* 25 (1971) 34–37.

[64] Thomas O'Meara, "Theological Reflections on Institutional Renewal in the Church," *Proceedings of the Canon Law Society of America*, 1971, p. 2. On the theological question whether the decisions of such a synod would be binding upon an episcopal conference or would simply be recommendations, see J. G. Gerhartz, S.J., "Keine Mitentscheidung von Laien auf der Synode? Erwägungen zum Beschluss der gemeinsamen Synode der deutschen Bistümer," *Stimmen der Zeit* 184 (1969) 145–59. Although Gerhartz addresses the West German scene, he provides valuable historical background to previous nonepiscopal participation in councils and synods. See also Adolf Lumpe, "Zur Geschichte der Wörter *concilium* und *synodus* in der antiken christlichen Latinität, *Annuarium historiae conciliorum* 2 (1970) 1–21; Winfried Aymans, *Das synodale Element in der Kirchenverfassung* (Munich, 1970); J. Neumann, *Synodales Prinzip: Der grössere Spielraum im Kirchenrecht* (Freiburg, 1973).

international and national:[65] that ultimately new positions on intercom-munion, recognition of public ministry, and acceptance of polymorphic polities will some day be blessed and ratified in a formal and public way. At that point the Church could begin a new era, one less characterized by the ecclesiocentric concerns, more directed toward goals outside itself. As the four assemblies of the World Council of Churches have consist-ently emphasized, especially at the Fourth Assembly at Uppsala in 1968, and as the Faith and Order Commission, particularly at its 1971 meeting in Louvain, has underscored, the gifts of grace which the Church receives from the Spirit orient it by nature toward all those for whom the Son of God became incarnate to reunite them in God.[66] The Church cannot live for itself, precisely because it lives in the Spirit, who urges it to transcend itself and to find its fulness in creation, where Christ is at work.

I have written of structures, the effects of structural changes upon believers, and I have proposed, by way of exemplification, some practical models of consciousness-raising in the local church and the world-wide Church. I recognize that some within the Church would claim that theologians today talk so much about structures that they are neglecting the basic "hierarchy of truths" inherent in the Christian message. Their caveat is an important one. The core of preaching is clearly Christ crucified but raised from the dead by the Father, Christ who is present today through his Holy Spirit. But this trinitarian faith cannot be preached in a vacuum. Structural reform, although it is not the entire Christian enterprise, does represent an important propaedeutical stage in sharing our faith with one another and with those who do not believe.

[65] For a full treatment of the theological dimensions concerning the bilateral conversa-tions in the U.S., see the report by a study commission of the Catholic Theological Society of America, in *Proceedings of the CTSA* 26 (1972) 179-232.

[66] *The Uppsala Report 1968*, ed. Norman Goodall (Geneva, 1968), especially the report of Commission I. See also Harold E. Fey, ed., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* 2: *1948-1968* (Philadelphia, 1970) 29-62, 413-45. On the Faith and Order Commission, see John E. Skoglund, *Fifty Years of Faith and Order* (St. Louis, 1964); L. Vischer, ed., *A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement* (St. Louis, 1963); Avery Dulles, "Faith and Order at Louvain," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 33 (1972) 35-67.

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