

RENEWAL OF CHURCH STRUCTURES

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1. Composite Structure of the Church

It is proverbial that the Church is comprised of a divine and a human element. Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states: "It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and invisibly endowed ..." (N.2). These two dimensions "form one interlocked reality" (LG 8). Hence the importance of the visible element in the Church is not diminished by the fact that "in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible" (SC 2). The Church's episcopal structure very much participates in this composite nature of the Church. At the same time we must bear in mind, that "the pilgrim Church in her sacraments and institutions, which pertain to this present time, takes on the appearance of this passing world" (LG 48; 1 Cor 15:24) and is therefore in need of "continual reformation" (UR 6). This explains why we see such a vast range of changes in church structures during her two thousand year history. These variations have reflected not only her inner nature, but also changing social-cultural contexts. The following observation of Pope John Paul II, regarding the context in which Christ lived, is equally applicable to the Church in its structures: "That context exercised an important influence on the life and mission of the Redeemer as man" (EA 5). So we cannot evade accountability for the reformation of church structures, with the claim

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that they are unimportant, or that being of divine origin they are unchangeable.

My contention in this essay is, that many of the Church's internal problems today are the *symptoms of a deeper malaise*, which has to do with current church structures. Therefore a remedy must be sought in a reformation of these structures. Most people complain against the symptoms, but fail to analyse their cause. Any attempt to circumvent this responsibility, by maintaining that prayer and holiness of life are sufficient, would fly in the face of the opening comments above. Also, an emotional, knee-jerk reaction to the symptoms will not do. What is required is a sober analysis.

2. Critique of the Office Holders

One comes across a lot of criticism of the official church, covering a gamut of feelings from dissatisfaction to bitterness and disillusionment. Some of this criticism is justified; even where it is not, it can be greatly reduced or better handled by a renewal of church structures. Public expression of views, when offered in the right spirit, falls within the ambit of Pius XII's statement that "something should be lacking in her life if she had no public opinion. Both pastors... and lay people would be to blame for this."¹ In an address to members of the Roman Curia in 1963, Pope Paul VI said that criticism of the Curia is "understandable and providential. It is... an invitation to reform... We must accept the criticisms that surround us, with humility, with reflection, and even with gratitude... especially if these are the voices of friends and of brothers."² The comments offered here respond to the desire of Pope John Paul II, that "Church leaders and their theologians engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject."³ What then are some of the criticisms, hurts, concerns, which are being expressed nowadays? They extend over a wide range of issues. It is beyond the scope of this essay to detail all the issues; suffice it to list a few, by way of example.

In 2007 Pope Benedict XVI issued an Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio*, entitled "Summorum Pontificum," by which he promulgated a universal law for the Church, intended to establish new regulations

¹*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, (1950) 256.

²*The Pope Speaks*, 9 (1964) No. 2, page 154.

³Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*, 1995, No. 96.

for the use of the Roman Liturgy which was in effect from 1962. It evoked consternation in many quarters.⁴ The problem of the new English translation of the Roman Missal discussed in copious publications, is well summarized by the lapidary statement of the editorial in *The Tablet*: "It is beyond argument that the new translation is a flawed product of a flawed process" (20/8/2011, p 2). R. Mickens describes the "heavy-handedness" and 'politics' of papal bureaucrats to change the rules for translating liturgical texts.⁵ In India we wonder why so much is done to accommodate the Tridentine Mass, while the Indian Anaphora and Order of the Mass for India continue to be proscribed, with no reason ascribed. Yet in 2009 Rome created an Ordinariate for Anglicans received into the Catholic Church; they were allowed to retain parts of their liturgy and heritage.

In a statement in Japan on 12/1/2011 Archbishop Leo Jun Ikenaga, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, complained about the negative effect which the Neo-catechumenal Way was having in the country. It has spread "rampant confusion, conflict, division, and chaos," he said. Nevertheless Pope Benedict XVI refused a request from him and three other Japanese bishops to suspend the Neo-catechumenal Way for five years. "The fact is, it's very difficult for the real state of affairs to be conveyed to a place as far away as Rome," he wrote.⁶ So it is understandable, that the founding of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in 1972, had to contend with mistrust and opposition from the Roman Curia.⁷

Loyalty to the Pope is misunderstood as meaning agreeing with everything the Pope says and does. One sees almost a cult of the Pope being fostered. But the Church has a long history contrary to this.⁸ When a letter written by Archbishop C.M. Vign exposing corruption and infighting in the Vatican came to light, he was shunted to Washington in Oct 2011. He had served as deputy governor of Vatican City State for more than two years, till Sept 2011. Vatican II

⁴See the severe critique by A. Grillo and A. Melloni, in *Concilium*, 2009, No. 2, pages 91-108.

⁵*The Tablet*, 18/6/2011, 11 (3-part series).

⁶*Jivan*, February 2011, 22.

⁷Thomas Fox, *Pentecost in Asia*, Orbis Books, 2003, 20-21, 134-135.

⁸This is detailed in González Faus, *Where the Spirit Breathes: Prophetic Dissent in the Church*, Orbis Books, 1989 (18th ed.). Great saints and mystics rank among those who have contributed to constructive, healthy criticism.

stated: "Since the Church has a visible and social structure as a sign of her unity in Christ, she can and ought to be enriched by the development of human social life" (GS 44). So the Curia and Papacy should know how to benefit from those wholesome developments which occur in the world. This would, for example, include the integration of sound psychology and management into the Curia's style of functioning. Oftentimes one experiences a unilateral and insensitive style of functioning, which proceeds from a tremendous sense of power. A case in point is Y. Congar, who was hounded for his views on ecumenism, church reform and the worker-priest movement; he suffered a sort of exile. He notes in his diary, that he feels "crushed, destroyed, excommunicated by a pitiless system which can neither emend itself nor even recognise its errors, but which is run by men who are disarming in their goodness and piety."⁹ Then again, from time to time, even bishops feel compelled to complain about the manner in which certain documents are issued by the Roman Congregations. Thus Cardinal Walter Kasper of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, referred to "Dominus Iesus" issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "Because of the document's tone and style, many people, including many of my friends in some of the other churches, have been hurt and offended, as have I."¹⁰ Some from Asia have pointed out that this document has an air of aloofness and academic dogmatism due to a lack of lived experience with non-Christian traditions; they could have collaborated with the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in drafting the document.¹¹ As a member of ten Curial bodies, also Cardinal O'Connor of New York felt frustration with them, while conceding that they try to improve things. We have also the comments of Cardinal König (†2004), who attended six synods of bishops in Rome and had been President of the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers. He was of the view that the Episcopal college should not be merely advisory, but take part in decision-making. He criticized the "inflated centralism" of the Roman Curia. Against this he proposed a gradual decentralisation and subsidiarity; this is also needed for a world Church of diversity. He complained, that the Curia "in conjunction with the Pope have

⁹*The Tablet*, 28/4/2001, 605. He was made a Cardinal eight months before his death, in 1994.

¹⁰*Theology Digest*, No. 3 (2002) 204.

¹¹*Jeevadhara*, N. 183 (2001) 191.

appropriated the tasks of the episcopal college." Such actions, he felt, were caused by fear, because every administrative organisation was always open to the temptation of developing a life of its own and, in this case, of using the Pope's authority for its own purposes.¹²

As mentioned earlier, these problems arise in large measure from some of the current structures of the church. It is necessary to distinguish the basic structure of the church from unessential additions or modifications.

3. Basic Structure of the Church

The continuation of the apostolic ministry, or apostolic succession, belongs to the essential, basic structure of the church. It exists in the Church by the institution of Christ. The body of bishops is meant to continue the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Apostles. Accordingly "in their turn they have legitimately handed on to different individuals in the Church various degrees of participation in this ministry" (LG 28). The college of bishops, together with the head whom they elect, constitutes what may be termed the supreme governing body of the church, which is not the Roman Curia. The Curia should in fact reflect the thinking of the universal episcopate. This is not ensured merely by internationalizing the Curia through papal selection. The bishops who serve there should be elected by the regional bishops' conferences. Suggestions in this line were made at Vatican II by 30 bishops of Indonesia and by Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh. This, he said, would reflect the cooperation of Peter with the apostles in the government of the universal Church.¹³

The Roman Congregations, the Cardinalate, the Nunciatures, Vatican City State, and much of Canon Law do not pertain to the basic constitution of the church, and may be abolished or modified according to circumstances of time and place.¹⁴ The sub-diaconate was abolished for the Latin Church in 1972; its functions were

¹²*The Tablet*, 3/8/1996, 1029; 27/3/'99, 424-'6; 6/5/2000, 617. Similar calls have come from the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (*Mission Today*, N.2 (2000) 187-188) and from C. Macisse who had been Superior General of the Order of Discalced Carmelites and President of the Union of Superior Generals (*The Tablet*, 22/11/2003, 8-9).

¹³Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. 2, Burns & Oates, 1968, 172.

¹⁴K. RAHNER, "Basic Observations on the Subject of Changeable and Unchangeable Factors in the Church," *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 14, 3-24.

assigned to lectors and acolytes, who are generally lay persons. This is in keeping with the practice of the Apostles, who made decisions about church structures as the need arose: Acts 6:1-6.

The Pope enjoys the same authority as the college of bishops, in so far as he acts as head of this college. It cannot be said, that the Pope is 'accountable only to God.' The Theological Commission at Vatican II clarified, that he is "bound to observe revelation itself, the basic structure of the Church, the sacraments, the definitions of the first councils, and other things too numerous to mention." He is certainly bound by the ethical norms of the gospel, justice, fairness. He has the jurisdiction necessary to maintain *unity* of faith and communion of all the churches. The Pope may *reserve* certain matters to himself; he *cannot concede powers* which the bishops already have in virtue of their ordination and membership in the episcopal college. This reservation should be for special, unusual circumstances. So the general rule is: bishops can do all that is required, except what is reserved.

The jurisdiction of bishops is also "ordinary and immediate" (CD 8), "supreme and full" (LG 22). They are vicars of Christ, not of the Pope (LG 27; ND 841). Their function determines their power of jurisdiction. The Council "solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, fully enjoy the right, and are in duty bound, to rule themselves" (OE 5). The Church is not one diocese (of the Pope). "There is no bishop of bishops" (St Augustine). Pope Pius IX gave special approval to the following collective declaration of the German bishops (1875): the Pope is "bishop of Rome, not of any other diocese," and Bishops are not officials, tools of the Pope or mere executors of Roman directives (ND 841; DS 3115); unfortunately, many bishops today do behave as if they are. The General Council of Constance decreed (1417), that the new pope (Martin V) must reform the Church by stating, among other things, "for what reasons and how a pope can be corrected or deposed" (Session 40). I have discussed this point elsewhere.¹⁵ The bishops are required on occasion, to imitate St. Paul who "opposed Cephas to his face, because he stood condemned" (Gal 2:11). This is part of their responsibility towards the universal Church and its central offices.

¹⁵Jeevadhara, N. 161 (1997) 414-415.

4. Re-structuring

4.1. Patriarchates and Episcopal Conferences

Bishops' Conferences are the expression of communion and collegiality and of the mission entrusted to the Apostles. Vatican II acknowledged the right of bishops to establish bishops' conferences (CD 37, 38 #5). It was a retrograde step when the 1983 Code of Canon Law reserved this right to "the supreme authority of the Church alone, after consultation with the bishops concerned, to establish, suppress, or alter Episcopal Conferences" (C. 449 #1). The Apostolic Letter "Apostolos Suos" is another example of the 'creeping centralization' which has reached unsurpassed levels in the history of the Church.¹⁶ This Letter was issued "Motu Proprio" by Pope John Paul II in 1998. According to Art. 1 of the "Complementary Norms" at the end of the Letter: In order that the doctrinal declarations of the Conference of Bishops "may constitute authentic magisterium and be published in the name of the Conference itself, they must be *unanimously* approved by the Bishops who are members, or receive the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See if approved in plenary assembly by at least two thirds of the Bishops belonging to the Conference and having a deliberative vote" (emphasis added). However, the Church is not monolithic in its theology or thinking. "Apostolos Suos" does not do justice to the fact that bishops in Episcopal conferences "are authentic doctors and teachers of faith" (Canon 753). Some examples of the important contribution which Episcopal conferences have made in modern times to the universal church, by their teaching, may be cited: the Conferences which took place in Medellin (1969) and Puebla (1979) in South America; the Pastoral teachings of the U.S. bishops on war and peace (1983) and on economic justice; the teachings of the FABC on the triple dialogue with cultures, religions and the poor (1974). As in the case of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the decrees of Episcopal conferences should not be considered as mere proposals submitted for approbation to Rome.

Speaking of Eastern Catholic Churches, Vatican II "earnestly desires that where needed, new patriarchates should be erected" (OE 11). Given the vastness and great diversity in the Latin Church, it is a moot question whether the Bishops' Conferences in the 'South' (Asia, Africa and Latin America) should not be constituted into

¹⁶See a detailed description of this process, by A. Thannikot, in *Jeevadhara* N. 28 (1975) 276-290.

patriarchates analogous to those of the East. LG 23 likens Bishops' Conferences to Patriarchates; they express the *catholicity* of the Church, which is 'united variety' ("in unum conspirans varietas"). This catholicity shines particularly in the Patriarchates that have come into being "by divine Providence" (LG 23); they are not a concession of the Roman See. This variety does not harm unity, but manifests it (OE 2). Accordingly, Ratzinger wanted new patriarchates, separate from the Latin church. He criticized the fact that the Primacy has become a "universal patriarchate".¹⁷ Unfortunately, in the course of history the Roman See came to treat particular churches outside her patriarchal zone in the same way as those within it. A truly "Catholic" Church fosters a legitimate diversity in theology, law, liturgy, custom, piety. We know that the holding of synods and frequent consultations through exchanges of letters and visits are very ancient practices in the Church. Greater interaction between bishops' conferences of different nations will foster communion, as recommended by the Council (CD 38/5). In this way the local churches will "make their necessities known to one another, and keep one another mutually informed regarding their affairs" (AG 38). No important document should be issued by the Roman Congregations without consulting the bishops' conferences. A move in this direction was made by Paul VI in his Apostolic Constitution "Regimini Ecclesiae Universae" (1967), when he ruled that "diocesan bishops named by the Supreme Pontiff will participate as members in the plenary sessions (of the Curia) in which questions of major import and those dealing with general principles are to be treated."¹⁸ The criticism of some Curial documents today, indicates that they would face drastic criticism in a General Council of the Church. We may recall, that in the very first session of Vatican II, the bishops rejected the Curia's organization of the conciliar commissions and the Curia's draft document on the Church.¹⁹

4.2. Cardinals

As head of the college of bishops, the Pope should normally be elected by them. In the present scenario we would have to say that

¹⁷H.J. Pottmeyer, *Towards a Papacy in Communion*, Crossroad Publishing Co., N. York, 1998, 134-135.

¹⁸Part I, Cp. 1, N. 2 #2 in: *The Pope Speaks*, Vol. 12, 1967, 397. Unfortunately the Pope does not bind himself to choosing from a terna proposed by the bishops' conferences.

¹⁹McBrien, *The Church*, Harper One, 2008, 152, 161.

the college of bishops tacitly cede this right to the cardinal electors. The cardinals were made sole electors of the Pope in 1179. However, they are not selected by the bishops, but by the Pope! There is indeed an anomaly here, which highlights the 'inbreeding' in the Roman Curia. Internationalizing the Curia is inadequate, if the choice of persons does not stem from the international episcopate. For this reason, the cardinal electors should be selected by the bishops' conferences, as long as the cardinalate remains in existence. The cardinalate itself should not be a reward or the crowning of a career. This would particularly be the case where persons who are retired or above 80 are 'elevated' to the 'dignity' of the cardinalate. As for the election of the Pope, the bishops themselves could suggest ways which are practical and at the same time more representative. For example, he could be elected by the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences or by a Synod of bishops, as proposed by archbishop Quinn.²⁰ The college of cardinals should be abolished. It may be dated to the 12th century and is a creation of the bishop of Rome. How does it stand in relation to the Patriarchs, acknowledged by the earliest ecumenical councils (OE 7)?

4.3 Bishops

The office of auxiliary bishop does not belong to the essential structure of the Church and his tasks may be assigned to the Vicar General; some of these tasks could also be entrusted to "episcopal vicars". Incidentally, this would obviate the problem of removing an auxiliary, where required, before he reaches retirement age. Even where auxiliary bishops are retained, as many of their tasks (e.g. sacrament of Confirmation) as may be required could be distributed, to leave them time to meet priests, religious and people in a regular and extended manner; to plan and to benefit from on-going formation.

Canon 4 of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325) states: "It is by all means desirable that a bishop should be appointed by all the bishops of the Province." Contrariwise, C. 329 #2 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law was the first legislative text in which the Pope claimed a universal right to appoint bishops; this is confirmed in C. 377 of the new Code. In the light of church history, this is a novelty contrary to

²⁰Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy*, Crossroad Publishing Co., N. York, 1999, 147-153. Also G.H. Tavard, in *The Jurist*, 1999, 403.

the practice of the church. G. O'Connell tells us, that as late as 1829, "of the 646 diocesan bishops in the Latin Church, only 24 were directly appointed by Rome - if one excludes those in the papal states - and these appointments were made due to difficulties in the local churches in Albania, Greece and the Russian territories."²¹ In his scholarly study on the primacy, K. Schatz notes: "A systematic policy for the nomination of bishops in the sense of promoting specific trends... has only manifested itself in our time."²² The appointment of bishops should be left to the local churches, regional or national bishops' conferences. The intervention of the Pope should be exceptional. In this matter it is advisable that the Latin church retain the millennial practice of the Church, as the Eastern Catholic churches have done. Vatican II reaffirmed the right of their patriarchs with their synods "to establish new eparchies and to nominate bishops of their rite within the territorial bounds of the patriarchate, without prejudice to the inalienable right of the Roman Pontiff to intervene in individual cases" (OE 9; also C. 182 of the Oriental Code). In India the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara churches continue to follow this practice. This would ensure that the bishops of the Latin church better reflect the thinking and desires of their churches. In this way the 'united variety', i.e. the catholicity of the Church will be enhanced. This will also impact the choice of cardinals by the bishops' conferences, as long as the institution of cardinal continues. Unity must not be equated with uniformity. Not without reason, therefore, González Faus considers the present practice in the Latin Church "an infringement of the rights of the local church."²³

Archbishop Weakland of Milwaukee commented, that the periodic synod of bishops in Rome had proved to be "a useful, but limited, symposium of restricted topics with no governance role." Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco said, that the bishops cannot place on the agenda all the issues they would like to discuss. These synods end with some Propositions which are presented to the Pope, who uses them to make his own statement, usually an "Apostolic Exhortation." These Exhortations often contain rich material drawn from the Synod discussions. However, a close observer of the Synod has concluded: "The fact is that the Synod, in its various forms, instead of being an

²¹"Last among Equals," *The Tablet*, 6/7/1996, 887.

²²*Papal Primacy: from Its Origins to the Present*, Liturgical Press, 1996, 168.

²³*Papal Primacy: from Its Origins to the Present*, 125.

effective expression of diversity in unity, and of true ecclesial communion and co-responsibility, is increasingly becoming a potent instrument of centralization and uniformity.”²⁴

4.4. Concentration of functions

R. Huysmans relates that the general council of Lateran IV (1215) laid down that no one may be prosecutor and judge.²⁵ However, this is often the case in the church. Furthermore, canons 1718 & 1720 speak of “extra-judicial” or administrative criminal procedures. This, it would seem, only doubtfully guarantees the right to self-defence: “the bishop can easily manipulate the proceedings.” He is prosecutor, judge and imposes punishment. The importance of proper checks and balances in the exercise of authority is seen in the fact, that bishops have sometimes taken unjust decisions in conflicts with particular religious or priests, which had to be subsequently overturned by Rome.

5. Manner of Functioning

Not mysterious remoteness, but transparency should characterise the functioning of church structures. Pope John Paul II told journalists in 1984: “The Church strives and will always strive more to be a ‘glass house’ where everyone can see what is happening and how she fulfils her mission in fidelity to Christ and to the Gospel message.”²⁶ In a Statement in 2012, the CBCI pledged: “We will set in place systems to ensure transparency and accountability” (N. 8.1).

It is important that the principles of subsidiarity and collegiality be vigorously practised.

5.1. Subsidiarity

The principle was set down by Pius XI in his encyclical “Quadragesimo Anno” (1931). Borrowing from social philosophy, he referred to “that most weighty principle, which cannot be set aside or changed ...: Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a

²⁴P.R. Divarkar, “What Really is the Synod?”, *Vidyajyoti*, Jan 1991, 3-6. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy*, 111-113.

²⁵“The Inquisition for which the Pope did not ask for forgiveness”, *The Jurist*, 2006, N. 2, pp 469-482

²⁶*L'Osservatore Romano*, 13/2/1984, 3.

grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do." The former must "never destroy and absorb" the latter (N. 79). In 1946 Pius XII declared, in an allocution to newly created cardinals, that "these truly brilliant words are valid ... also for the life of the Church."²⁷ Among the forty faculties, which Paul VI "conceded" to bishops in 1963, through his *Motu Proprio* "Pastorale Munus," were the right to dispense blind priests from the breviary and to authorize nuns to wash altar linens the first time (I/6, 28; see also nn. 8, 10, 18, 34, 38, 40).²⁸ These faculties cannot be delegated, except to the coadjutor and auxiliary bishops and to the Vicar General. It required a Patriarch (Maximos IV of Antioch) in Vat. II to criticize the spirit behind this action. He said: "Really, if a successor of the Apostles cannot on his authority allow nuns to wash purificators, what can he do? The length to which the theory of the Pope as the source of all authority has gone shows how much it needs drastic revision if we are ever to get a sound ecclesiology."²⁹ Among the eight "privileges" which the Pope granted to bishops in the same *Motu Proprio*, was the right to preach the word of God anywhere in the world and to hear the confessions of the faithful, including nuns, anywhere in the world; also to say Mass for a good reason at any time of the day and to keep the Blessed Sacrament in a private oratory (II/1, 2, 5, 6). How deeply entrenched centralization continues to be, may be gauged from the following Report of the 47th Executive Committee meeting of the Latin Bishops' Conference of India, held in February 2006: "Bishops voted that CCBI will get permission from Rome for the bishops to permit the giving of Holy Communion in the hand."

The rule should be: as much freedom as possible, as much restraint as necessary. This implies *decentralization*, e.g. in the appointment of bishops. Decentralization will enable the Pope to give greater attention to his role as bishop of Rome. Subsidiarity expresses interdependent mutual support. All this is required for a world Church of *diversity*. The "Synod of Bishops" has not succeeded in placing the Roman Curia fully at the service of the bishops' ministry. Thomas Reese presents a balanced view of the Curia in the following

²⁷ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1946, 145.

²⁸ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1964, 5-12.

²⁹ P. Granfield, *The Limits of the Papacy*, Crossroad Publishing Co., N. York, 1987, 118.

summary: "Arrogance, ambition, cronyism, legalism, and politics are all alive and well in the Vatican... one also finds humor, courtesy, hospitality to visitors, and a dedication to the service of the church and the Holy Father."³⁰ He quotes an Italian serving in the Vatican since the time of Pius XII: 'Careerism is one of the main sicknesses in the curia.' It involves "getting to know the right people... saying the right things." The atmosphere does not appear conducive for innovative, forward-looking, creative persons. An International Commission for the reform of the Curia is required; it should include management experts, besides canonists and theologians. This reform, demanded by Vatican II (CD 9), was not taken far enough by Paul VI's *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* (1967).

5.2. Collegiality

Vatican II reminded us of this and that God's gifts are given to all the People of God. The Pope's acts "must always be done in communion," wrote John Paul II ("Ut Unum Sint," 1995, N. 95). The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (1999) posed some questions to Catholics, which deserve thorough discussion:

Is there at all levels effective participation of clergy as well as lay people in emerging synodal bodies? Do the actions of bishops reflect sufficient awareness of the extent of the authority they receive through ordination for governing the local Church? Has enough provision been made to ensure consultation between the Bishop of Rome and the local Churches prior to the making of important decisions affecting either a local or the whole Church? How is the variety of theological opinion taken into account when such decisions are made? Do the structures and procedures of the Roman Curia adequately respect the exercise of episcopé at other levels?³¹

The archbishop of Edinburgh gave a good example by preparing his *ad limina* visit through wide consultation.³² Though the words "brother bishops," "communion," "service" are used in papal discourse, the papacy is widely perceived as *acting* contrary to the principles of diversity, collegiality, subsidiarity.³³ This is not healthy, either for the universal Church or for the local life of the churches.

³⁰*Inside the Vatican*, Harvard University Press, London, 1998, 170; see 158-172.

³¹*Tablet*, 22/5/'99, 725.

³²*Tablet*, 15/4/2000, 517.

³³C.E. Braaten, ed., *Church Unity and the Papal Office*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001, 71, 109.

6. Women in Church Structures

We can certainly speak of greater participation of women in administration and decision making in the Church. However, at a certain point we come up against a wall. Namely, that the ultimate authority in the Church resides in the apostolic ministry represented by the Episcopal college, which is all-male. This means that the final say cannot be with women. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the question of women in the official apostolic ministry.

Conclusion

Many of the problems in the Church today are only symptoms of a deeper malaise. They arise out of serious structural defects. Hence of crucial importance for the renewal of the Church and for ecumenism are: a) the appointment of bishops; b) reform of the College of Cardinals; c) reform of the Roman Curia. This in no way detracts from the primacy of spiritual renewal.