Models of Authority in the Catholic Church
A Historical Perspective

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Authority systems and figures, and relations of authority are part and parcel of any human society. Even a cursory glance at world history would show that various models of authority have been at work in different societies – from monarchy and dictatorship to oligarchy and democracy, the authority of one benevolent or malevolent ruler to the authority of a limited group or the whole people. The Church, as a socio-historical reality growing in time and space, also exercised different models of authority in its two thousand years history. These models of authority in the Church existed sometimes side by side and at other times one model of authority took precedence over other models and even staked its claim to be the only viable model of authority.

In this article we shall first describe the different authority figures and the varied ways in which authority has been understood and exercised in the Church. Based on this historical study, we shall come up with the models of authority prevalent in the Catholic Church.

1. Early Christian Communities

The New Testament avoids or rarely uses the words, which signify authority or power in classical Greek (Congar 1962: 120). It mentions particular functions or offices in the Church by different terms which refer to activities of service to the Christian community. In the first place are the apostles. Paul mentions rulers or elders (1 Thes 5:12; Rom 12:8), apostles, prophets, teachers (1 Cor 12:28) overseers and deacons (Phil 1:1), and ministers (Rom 16:1). He also refers to the hosts or heads of house churches (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5; Philomen 2). The letter to the Ephesians refers to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11).

Prophets and teachers are still visible in later books (Acts 13:1; Didache 15:1). Presbyters are then frequently mentioned (James 5:14; Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17; 2 John 1; 3 John 1) or presbyter-bishops (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus; 1 Peter 5:1-4) and deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13; Didache 15:1). But "the basic concept, of which all of the terms are particular expressions, remains diakonia, service or ministry" (Rausch 1989: 47).

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Abstract: Authority systems and figures, and relations of authority are part and parcel of any human society. Even a cursory glance at world history would show that various models of authority have been at work in different societies - from monarchy and dictatorship to oligarchy and democracy, the authority of one benevolent or malevolent ruler to the authority of a limited group or the whole people. The Church, as a socio-histori-cal reality growing in time and space, also exercised different models of authority in its two thousand years history. These models of authority in the Church existed sometimes side by side and at other times one model of authority took precedence over other models and even staked its claim to

1.1 Apostles

Apostles were the most obvious and important authority figures in the early Church. The words and witness of the apostles played a major role in the coming to be of the Church. So they were cherished and remembered and apostolic authority was considered to be fundamental. But there was no single understanding of who the apostle is. Paul and Luke present different conceptions of the apostle. Paul emphasises missionary activity. His concept is developed largely based on his personal experience of having seen the risen Lord (1 Cor 15;7) and having been sent to preach the Gospel (Gal 1:1). He calls the early Christian missionaries like Titus (2 Cor 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), and Junia and Andronicus (Rom 16:7) apostles. But Luke tends to identify the apostles with the twelve. Though he recognises the broader extension of the title apostle in the early Church,[1] yet it is the twelve, chosen by Jesus from within the wider circle of his disciples, who constitute for him the paradigm of the apostle. But what is common to the various notions of apostle in the New Testament is the idea of sending. That fits well with the term apostle, which means the one who has been sent.

Even if the twelve were not the only apostles in the early Church, "the majority of the scholars still find persuasive the evidence that the twelve disciples of Jesus were considered apostles of the church from the beginning," observes Raymond Brown (Brown 1970: 49). The apostles, among whom the Twelve held the pride of place, exercised roles of leadership in the early Church. The proceedings and the decision taken in the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) present the Twelve as having a collective policy-making authority. Other than this the New Testament is rather vague about the kind of authority exercised by the Twelve.

Paul is confident that his authority had been given by the Lord. It was not an authority he had usurped or assumed to himself. It was not human authority, but actually the Lord's authority. He refers to his authority to preach the Gospel and to command and discipline the members of the congregation (1 Cor 4: 21). He does not wish to use his authority to strengthen his hold over the Corinthians, but only to strengthen their grip on the Gospel, their faith. He exercises his apostolic authority and passes judgement on the Christian community even from a distance (1 Cor 5: 3-5). The passage 1 Cor 5: 1-5 is a bold expression of his apostolic authority in the Church, telling them to conform to his ways. The action called for is the excommunication of the one who committed sin. Though Paul as an apostle pronounced the sentence prophetically it must be observed that Paul expects that the action would not be his alone. He wants the action to be a community one. He rebukes the Church at Corinth and not its local leaders. Authority was vested in the Church of Corinth. Paul is very clear that the authority which he had received from the Lord was given him for the building up of the Church (2 Cor 10:8; 12:19).

When some in Corinth in the process of making a claim about their own status called Paul's authority into ques-

tion (2 Cor 10: 7-11), Paul defended his authority. His appeal for obedience included as an essential element a plea that the Corinthian congregation continue to recognise his status as their apostle and continue to be responsive to his pastoral direction.

1.2 Local leaders

As the Church grew and spread to other parts of the world, persons other than the apostles began to play a vital role in founding and leading early churches. There was neither a common way of organising local communities nor an agreed upon term for those who exercised authority. People came together responding in faith to the preaching of the apostles. Local communities of Christians were formed. The existence of such communities especially those outside Jerusalem called for some kind of on-the-spot leadership, because the apostles could visit these communities only occasionally. Therefore, at this juncture authority figures like elders, bishops and deacons came to play a prominent role in the community.

After the death of the apostles and as the Church moved into the next generation an institutionalised order of leadership began to emerge. Increasingly the presbyter-bishops took over the leadership role. The two terms were not at first clearly distinguished (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5-7). These leaders had to play the role of overseers in the community by organising and managing the community and guarding it from false teachings.

1.3 Monarchical episcopate

The first clear expression of a distinction between those who held the of-

fice of bishop and the elder is to be seen in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch around 112 AD. With him we encounter for the first time what since then has remained with some variations the model of authority in the Catholic Church. The head of the community was a single bishop (the institution of monepiscopate) and all authority was ultimately rooted in him (monarchical episcopate). In this period the presbyters probably functioned as a group of elders supporting and giving advice to the bishop. With the growth and extension of communities some of bishop's functions were taken over by the elders. Deacons remained close collaborators of the bishop particularly in regard to charitable and social responsibilities. Thus, with the monarchical episcopate the change from two layer ministry – elder-bishop and deacon – to three layer ministry – bishop, elder and deacon comes to be.

But not all the churches at the time of Ignatius had the same type of structure. From the evidence of Shepherd of Hermas it would seem that the monarchical episcopate was not established in Rome till around 140 AD. But by the middle of the second century the monepiscopate seems to have spread to most churches (Lienhard 1984: 15). Before long, by the end of the third century each local church was presided over by a bishop, assisted by a group of elders and a number of deacons.

Christian converts coming from different cultural and religious backgrounds influenced the interpretation of Christianity. A variety of doctrines arose all claiming to be the correct under-

standing of Christianity. These claims threatened the unity of the Church. At this juncture the office of bishop was exalted as the focal point of unity and orthodoxy. In a special way the struggle against Montanism and Gnosticism strengthened the authority of bishops.

2. Resistance to hierarchical authority

2.1 Church at Corinth

An early example of resistance to the institutionalised offices was in the church at Corinth. There some Christians had rebelled against the elders of their community and forced them out of office. After the community of Christians in Rome wrote a letter to the community at Corinth appealing to them to restore the old order, the Church of Corinth reinstated the elders (see *The First Letter of Clement of Rome*). Around the year 170 AD Dionysius bishop of Corinth wrote to Soter, bishop of Rome, that Clement's letter was still being read in the liturgical assembly (Eusebius *Church History* 4.23.11).

2.2 Montanism

In the second century the Montanist movement arose in Asia Minor, particularly in the region of Phrygia. Montanus and his disciples Prisca and Maximilla were ecstatic prophets who claimed that the Paraclete spoke directly through them and that their utterances represented a direct revelation. They claimed to speak on the authority of the Holy Spirit and demanded absolute obedience to their orders. They denied all ecclesiastical au-

thority. The claim by Montanists that the Spirit was speaking through them in an ongoing way went against the developing consensus that the deposit of revelation had been closed with the passing of the apostles and that the authoritative interpretation of the deposit of faith was entrusted to the leaders of the institutional Church.

2.3 Claims for apostolic authority

The Gnostics claimed that their teaching was handed down in a secret tradition through a series of teachers going back to a particular apostle, who himself had received it as a secret teaching from Jesus. So they claimed to possess apostolic authority.

This claim of the Gnostics was opposed especially by Irenaeus and Tertullian, who insisted that Jesus taught his disciples openly and not in a secret way, and that they in turn taught the same in its totality to their followers, especially to those whom they had appointed leaders of churches. Thus, the local churches founded by the apostles and the leaders appointed by the apostles were presented as having apostolic authority. Other newly founded churches, which were not directly established by the apostles, were presented as also having apostolic authority, because of their fellowship with the churches founded by the apostles. Tertullian wrote that from Rome "there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of the apostles themselves)... See what she has learned, what she has taught, what fellowship she has had with even (our) churches in Africa" (Tertullian *On Prescription against Heresies* 36).

Thus, appeal was made to the true apostolic tradition publicly proclaimed and handed on through the churches with apostolic foundation. Appeal was also made to the common teaching. In his anti-Gnostic polemics Irenaeus wrote: "The church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith." (Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.10.1). He continued: "The church having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points (of doctrine) just as if she had but one soul and one and the same heart and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth." (*AH* 1.10.2).

Hegesippus (Eusebius, *CH* 4.22), Irenaeus (*AH* 3.3.3) and Tertullian (*PAH* 32) used the list of the bishops of the churches to demonstrate their visible continuity with the apostolic period and in this way the authenticity of their doctrinal tradition. Thus, from the second century the bishops were recognised as successors of the apostles, both as leaders of the local churches and as teachers who could authoritatively interpret the apostolic tradition.

2.4 No distinctions

Some Gnostic groups rejected in principle any distinctions within their community based on office or function. The Valentinians, one of the influential groups founded by Valentine in the second century, were egalitarian. Irenaeus referred to a group of Valentinians in Lyons who claimed that each member was directly inspired by the Spirit (*AH* 1.13.3). At their meetings or feasts they drew lots to determine who would prophesy (Irenaeus *AH* 1.13.4). Tertullian criticised another heretical group as being "without authority, without discipline," for among them "it is doubtful who is a catechumen, and who a believer…Their ordinations (too) are carelessly administered, capricious, changeable. At one time they put novices in office; at another time, men who are bound to some secular employment…Nowhere is permission easier than in the camp of rebels, where the mere fact of being there is a foremost service. And so it comes to pass that to-day one man is their bishop, to-morrow another; to-day he is a deacon who tomorrow is a reader; today he is a presbyter who tomorrow is a layman. For even on laymen do they impose the functions of priesthood" (Tertullian *PAH* 41).

It must, however, be noted that among the Gnostic groups there were some who opted for the institutional office model. For example, Marcion and his followers adopted the model of having bishops, elders and deacons in their churches.

3 Authority based on Life

3.1 Suffering as source of authority

The martyrs and the confessors, who had suffered during the time of persecution, possessed authority. Martyrdom was seen as the highest perfection in Christian life. Confessors who remained strong in faith despite hard-

ships caused by persecution were looked upon as having moral authority. Sometimes the views of the confessors clashed with the thinking of those in ecclesiastical authority. For example, in Carthage after the Decien persecution conflict arose between bishop Cyprian of Carthage and the confessors. The issue that sparked off the controversy was about the forgiving of those Christians who had renounced their Christian faith during the time of persecution but who now wanted to come back to Christianity. The Confessors wanted them to be taken back immediately, but Cyprian insisted on due discipline and order and that the decision about taking any person back to the Christian community be left with the bishop. Some of the confessors opposed this view of Cyprian. This resulted in schism. But eventually Cyprian was able to have his way. The Synod which he convened supported his view and excommunicated the schismatics. Strong personalities like Cyprian contributed to the growing strength and authority of the bishops. But the confessors continued to have a following, even when they were excommunicated by the institutional Church.

3.2 Renunciation as source of authority

As the monastic movement spread the holy monks were recognised as having authority on the basis of their holy life. Like the confessors, the monks could also sometimes threaten to develop into rivals to the institutionalised authority. "Their existence and witness brought to the fore a perennial problem – the contrast between the moral authority of men and women who seem to lead the Christian life in a fuller and more committed way versus the institutional and doctrinal authority of men who, as Christians, may well seem less impressive, if not positively scandalous. This problem was at least partially overcome by the growing practice of making monks bishops," observes Robert Eno (1984: 19).

4. Authority based on scholarship

4.1 Teachers

Early Christian teachers such as Justin, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, though not bishops, had considerable authority based on scholarship and erudition. They were the pioneer theologians. They played an important role in the development of Christian doctrine.

4.2 Theologians

When we come to the Middle Ages we see another group of persons, the university theologians (who were clerics) exercising authority based on scholarship. They played a considerable role in deciding whether a position was orthodox or not. Their importance is testified by the fact that doctrinal decrees of several general councils (Lyons I, 1245; Lyons II, 1274; Vienne, 1312) were submitted to universities for approval before being published (Dulles 1987: 109). Thomas Aquinas referred to two types of magisterium,[2] one of the bishops and the other of the theologians. The bishops had a supervisory responsibility and held the magisterium of the pastoral chair and the theologians had their learning and scholarship and held the magisterium of the professor's chair.

The authority of the theologians continued to grow until it came into conflict with that of the bishops. The university faculties of theology dominated the Councils of Constance (1415) and Basel (1439). "Anyone with a doctorate in theology or canon law was given full voting rights, with the astonishing result that at the thirty-fourth session of the Council of Basel (25 June 1439) there were three hundred *doctores* with voting rights, and only seven bishops. This, of course, was an aberration, and the council ended in a fiasco," observes Francis Sullivan (1983: 182).

5.   Conciliarist vs hierarchy

The Councils of Constance and Basel supported the conciliarist theory. This theory claimed that the authority of the universal church resided in general council made up of bishops, abbots, doctors of theology and canon lawyers, and that that authority was distinct from and ultimately superior to that of the Pope. But the Council of Florence (1439-45) rejected this view and emphasised papal authority. From that Council till the end of eighteenth century the Catholic Church continued to emphasise hierarchical authority and especially papal authority.[3] The historical happenings of these years – the decline of the great medieval universities, the outbreak of Protestant Reformation, and the need to resist a variety of nationalist and secular movements within the Catholic community – favoured this development (Dulles 1987: 111).

In the post-Tridentine period the authority of teaching and hierarchical rule tended to become closely identified.

During this period theologians like Thomas Stapleton divided the Church into two compartments – teaching Church which was the hierarchical Church and learning Church which was predominantly lay. The duty of the laity was simply to accept what the hierarchy told them (Dulles 1987: 112). The main stream of Catholic theology of this era was papalist in orientation. Theologians like Bellarmine insisted on the monarchical form of government as necessary for the preservation of unity. Because of such theological positions, "the many aspects of teaching authority recognized in the New Testament and in earlier church history are in effect reduced to one – the hierarchical, which is itself progressively reduced to the single voice of the papacy," observes Avery Dulles (1987: 112-3). Vatican I with its definition of papal primacy and infallibility centralised authority in the papal office.

6.   Collegial authority

With Vatican II, the monarchical understanding of authority began to give way to a more collegial one. One of the major shifts of Vatican II is from papal monarchy to episcopal collegiality. "Among the many insights of the Council on the nature and function of the bishops two are of particular significance for us here – the collegiality of the bishops and the sacramentality of the episcopate," observes Kurien Kunnumpuram (1993: 9). But despite this shift even more than thirty years after the Vatican II we are yet to see changed structures which would further the implications of the teaching on the collegiality of bishops. The renewal of structures and life

which began at the Council has not yet been fully implemented.

7. Models of authority

From what we have seen so far it becomes clear that down the centuries different models of authority have emerged in the Catholic Church. These different and at times contradictory models have been instrumental in shaping the life of the Church in the past centuries.

7.1 Servant model

The first model of authority and in a sense the only paradigm of authority that should envelop all exercise of authority is the servant model. Servant and authority. Paradoxical but true. The concept of authority in the New Testament is that authority must be exercised in a spirit of personal selflessness and service. One can say that the Gospel notion of authority is service. And the inspiration and model for the exercise of any kind of authority in the Church as service is none other than Jesus himself. He understood his vocation as service in the cause of the Reign of God and he brought this understanding to expression in a special way during the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples and asked them to wash one another's feet (Jn 13:3-15). Paradoxically enough the Gospel identifies superiority of rank with the maximum degree of humble and loving service.

This servant model has been insisted even after the New Testament era. Christian writers like Tertullian and Origen promoted the servant model.[4] And in the recent years Pope John XXIII gave expression to it and challenged all those who exercise power to this servant model: "It is the spirit that counts more than the gesture; and this lesson does not apply to the leaders of the Church alone: every position of power, every exercise of authority, is a service. The Pope gladly calls himself *servus servorum Dei*; he is conscious of being, and strives to be, the servant of all. God grant that those who bear the burden of responsibility for the human community may take to heart this last great lesson of Maundy Thursday, and recognize that their authority will be all the more acceptable to their people for being exercised in a spirit of humble service and complete devotion to the welfare of all men."[5]

7.2 Charismatic model

This model stresses all authority as rooted in the Spirit given in baptism. The word charism, generally translated as spiritual gift, comes from St. Paul who in 1 Corinthians stresses the rich variety of gifts (*charismata*) and ministries (*diakonia*) in the early missionary Churches (1 Cor 12: 6-8). Hans Kueng speaks of "the fundamental charismatic structure of the Church" (1967: 190), its original Pauline constitution which was without appointed ministers. He recommends this kind of charismatic structure today. Schillebeeckx stresses the openness to the ministry of both men and women in the early Church: "Every member of the community had de facto authority in the community on the basis of his or her own inspiration by the Spirit" (1985: 39). Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza portrays the Jesus movement as a "discipleship of equals," where

women also had leadership roles to play (1983: 140).

Even up to the beginning of second century, in some parts of the Church, teachers and prophets with chiefly charismatic gifts, functioned side by side with the institutionalised authority figures of the local churches. For example, *Didache* and *Shepherd of Hermas* mention along with bishops and deacons also prophets and teachers. In some of the churches the charismatic prophets and teachers seem to have commanded more respect from people than the institutionalised bishops and deacons (Wilfred 1988: 272). This tendency stressed the special authority of the spiritually gifted. Montanists stressed the charismatic model. The confessors and holy men and women whose authority was based on their life, their counter-cultural life based on the promptings of the Spirit also belong to this group. Waldensians of the Middle Ages who stressed that it is life which determines the minister and not ordination are still a challenge to the Catholic Church.

What emerges from the charismatic model of authority is an egalitarian view of the Church. This model does not reject ordained ministers, but they are understood as doing by profession what others can and should do. What is stressed is competence or charism rather than office or ordination (Rausch 1989: 35). The Basic Christian Communities which are a factor in many parts of the world today bear testimony to this charismatic model of authority in the Church.

7.3 Collegial/Conciliar model

In the history of the Church major decisions have been taken in a council, and the decisions of the council were binding on the Christian community. The Jerusalem council narrated in the Acts is the first example of such a council where apostles and elders gathered together to decide on what should be followed by the Christian community. Later too we see that this structure of authority continued in Christian community. For problems affecting a number of churches the bishops of an area met together in council even before 325. For example, to decide on the day of Easter synods or assemblies of bishops were called (Eusebius *CH* 5.23). With the Council of Nicea in 325 the Christian community entered into a new phase of convoking an ecumenical council, a worldwide council to decide on important theological and other matters. "The most characteristic expression of corporate authority is found in the ecumenical council," says Stephen Duffy (1984: 12). From then onwards the councils authoritatively declared which doctrine was orthodox and what kind of activity was in keeping with the Christian faith system. Until the mid thirteenth century judgements of orthodoxy were generally pronounced by regional bishops' councils, which were sometimes followed by an appeal to Rome. In the most important cases final sentence was passed by a general council convened and confirmed by the Pope (Dulles 1987: 109).

There was a move in the Church to declare the council as the highest authority in the Church. As we have seen

earlier, the Councils of Constance and Basel supported the conciliarist theory, which said that the authority of the universal church resided in general council which was distinct from and ultimately superior to the Pope. This move was rejected by the Council of Florence which emphasised papal authority. Nevertheless, the councils still continued to play an authoritative role in the Church.

Vatican II once again highlighted the role of the council and collegial decisions. With Vatican II the Church committed itself "to collegiality, to a coresponsibility which limits an autocratic papacy and curia, and to the autonomy of the local bishop and his church" (Duffy 1987: 12). Bishops are members of the episcopal college and thus share in the responsibility for the governing and teaching of the Catholic Church. The Collegiality/conciliarity model introduces the dialogical structure in the functioning of the Church.

The councils "are important not only for what they said, but also for their encouragement to consultation and discussion in the Church," observes Norman Tanner (1997: 21). The Second Council of Constantinople (523) underlined the necessity of having conciliar discussions and decisions in the Church: "The holy fathers, who have gathered at intervals in the four holy councils, have followed the examples of antiquity. They dealt with heresies and current problems by debate in common, since it was established as certain that when a disputed question is set out by each side in communal discussions, the light of truth drives out the shadows of lying" (Tanner 1990: 108).

An editorial of *Vidyajyoti*, written just before the Asian Synod, advocated the recovery of the conciliar model of the past as a more evident expression of the catholicity of the Church: "Time there was when the Church was not so centralised and synods had more decisive roles in the life of particular churches. It is legitimate to think that the recovery of that tradition would be beneficial to the life of the Church and a more evident expression of its catholicity. One could even think of new assemblies where representatives of all members of the Church, ordained and not ordained, male or female, rich or poor, could participate in a meaningful way each according to his or her charisms. It is done in other churches; ours could also evolve in this direction" (Editorial 1996: 74-75).

7.4 Hierarchical model

The word hierarchy from the Greek words *hiereus* (priest) and *arche* (rule, principle), means literally priest rule. Thus, the word hierarchy stands for sacred authority. New Testament does not use the word hierarchy. Around 500 AD, Dionysius the Areopagite invented the word hierarchy. The emergence of the monarchical episcopate could be seen as the starting point of hierarchical structure. However, it must be observed that in the beginning the bishops considered themselves fathers of the communities and the word papa was used of all the bishops. The bishops also insisted upon their being one with the people. "For you I am a bishop, but with you I am a Christian," writes St. Augustine.

The Gregorian reform of the eleventh century paved the way for systematically putting into practice the idea of a clerical hierarchy over the laity. After the controversies with the Protestant Reformation the Council of Trent declared: "Whoever says that there is in the Catholic Church no hierarchy established by divine ordinance, consisting of bishops, presbyters and deacons, let him be anathema" (D 966; cf. also 960).

Since the 16th century the tendency in the Roman Catholic Church with regard to the hierarchical model was to identify authority exclusively with the ordained ministry, and thus with the institutional Church (Dulles 1987: 19-40 & 1974: 31-42). Vatican II took steps towards reversing this tendency by complementing its hierarchical understanding, situating it within a less institutional ecclesiology, and by speaking of the hierarchical structure within the people of God.

It recovered the charismatic element, stressing the importance of the charismatic gifts alongside the hierarchical (LG 4; cf. 7, 12). The Council taught that the laity also are "in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ" (*LG* 31). Still the hierarchical model of the Church is stressed by Vatican II. The same document speaks of "the distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God" and describes their ministry as being exercised "by teaching, by sanctifying, and by ruling with the authority of Christ" (*LG* 32).

7.5 *Pluralistic model*

Avery Dulles has proposed another model of authority – pluralistic model of authority. Recognising that authority can only teach what the whole Church believes, he places primary emphasis on the general sense of the faithful. Then he enumerates those who speak with special authority. First, the professional theologians and doctors have an authority based on their competence or scholarship. Secondly, there must always be room for prophetic voices in the Church, men and women who can help the Church to discern the truth through prophetic insight. Finally, the bishops speak with an authority based on their appointment to the Church's pastoral office, assisted by the graces particular to it. In this way according to Dulles the Church today can again recognise the doctoral, prophetic, and pastoral ministries present within it in the biblical times (Dulles 1977: 100-101).

Through this model Avery Dulles aims at creating space for different charisms in the Church to play their active role. It is also true that at many points of its history different models of authority have been exercised by the Church. The difficulty comes, as it happens in the case of doctrines, when one model of authority is extended to its extremity and the others are forced to quit. That tendency is to be avoided if the Church is truly to be the sacrament of Christ. The different charisms and authorities are given to the members of the Church not to dominate but to serve.

Notes

1. See for example Paul and Barnabas are called apostles in Acts 14: 1-4

2. Magisterium comes Latin *magister*, master, which connoted someone with authority but was used particularly of teachers.

3. But even after Florence the theologians continued to play an important role in the field of theolgy. At the Council of Trent theologians served on some of the congregations of bishops and were called upon to speak at the plenary session.

4. Tertullain wanted authority to be exercised "not as a power, but as a service." (Tertullian, *On Modesty*. 21). Origen said: "The man who is called to the episcopate is not called to command, but to the service of the whole Church." (Origen, *Isiah homily*. 6.1)

5. Pope John XXIII's address to representatives of the *Corps Diplomatique* on Maunday Thursday, 11 April 1963 as cited in Y. Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, 11.

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Book Review

In the coming era, third millennium Christians will have to build bridges between the churches and the adherents of other religions, worldviews, and ideologies... In addition: bridgebuilders can also be found outside the church. In the third millennium, there will again be non-Christians who, like Martin Buber and Mahatma Gandhi, will propagate positive attitudes to Jesus Christ... I am convinced that the number of people outside the church who will admire Christ will grow; at the same time, I have the feeling that an even greater number of people will treat him as outdated. Therefore, third millennium Christianity needs thorough theological reflection on both Christ-outside-the gate and Christ's ongoing relevance in the 'Aquarian Age'"(144-145).

Peter Kanyadago (Kampala, Uganda) sees among others the following tasks as needing priority: "There is also the urgent task of reconciling people and finding peaceful means of preventing and solving conflicts. Reconciliation needs to be carried out in areas where people have wronged each other. This is urgently needed even after military and political solutions have been used or found. The healing of wounds and scars takes a long time to effect, and theology cannot afford to be absent in this vital area... Interreligious dialogue which goes beyond the ecumenical one is another urgent theological task. In this regard, the Christians need to find concrete means of dialoguing with Islam to avoid the temptation of putting all Moslems in the bad camp, a temptation which unfortunately has a historical reference in the relations between the West and Moslems" (149-150).

Peter K. H. Lee (Hong Kong, China) sees the following ideas as being essential to the heritage of theology in the twentieth century: "(a) Contextualization, which takes seriously not only the current socio-political realities but inherited cultural patterns and

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which allows for cultural transformation as well as religious interaction. It requires continuous struggling with the hermeneutic problem of bringing the text (in the book/person) to bear on the context (which is ever-changing), (b) The spirituality traditions (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and contemporary, as well as Christianized Asian, African and other religious traditions), (c) The Wisdom traditions (the Old Testament, Intertestament Period, the New Testament as well as Christian openness to Wisdom in other religions), (d) Incarnational theology, (e) Ecological theology, (f) Restatements of the Doctrine of the Trinity" (157-158).

Laurenti Magesa (Tarime, Tanzania) says that "Fundamentalism world-wide and tribalism in Africa have made me deeply aware of the need to listen to the other point of view, even in theology, and to be wary of excessive dogmatism. In other words, they have impressed on me the necessity of constant dialogue as a way to true peace" (164).

José M. de Mesa from the Philippines has the following to say: "This crucial significance of experience and its different aspects led me to understand how theology needed to dialogue with disciplines other than (western) philosophy. Against the background of our experience of western cultural imperialism in the Philippines, cultural anthropology became for me the entry point to understand human experiences better, to adequately distance myself from dominant western theological thought and resist being defined or overwhelmed by it" (176).

John S. Pobee of the World Council of Churches in Geneva speaking of the influences that shaped his theology says: "Anglicanism's commitment to the vernacular paradigm, scripture, tradition and historic episcopate have influenced my style of going about theology. Out of this comes, for example, the quest after an African Anglican hermeneutic for reading scripture. What this had taught me is that while we should be mindful of tradition handed down because it is essential part of one's identity, fidelity to tradition should not mean enslavement to the letter of the law" (215).

Of the four theologians from the USA three have written in Spanish and the fourth C.S. Song believes: "Jesus' reign of God calls for a change in my theological position from the church-centered position to people-centered position, from doctrine-centered position to people's stories-centered position, from redemption centered position to creation-centered position" (252).

Says Archie de Souza of Karachi, Pakistan: "... an Islamic Anthropology has to be appreciated for its own intrinsic value. The relationship of 'man' to 'God' has also to consider the Islamic perspective. We have to harmonize a Christian and Islamic Anthropology to theologize in a meaningful way, in our context" (256).

I shall not quote any of the German, French or Spanish theologians, except Andrés Torres Queiruga (Santiago de Compostela, Spain) who states: "El fenómeno de la secularizatión, el encuentro con los teólogos de la liberatión, el contacto con la religiosidad hindú (sobre todo a través de Tony de Melo) forman igualmente parte importante de mi camino teológico" (270-271).

Though *Theologie im III. Millennium* abounds in grammatical errors (space does not permit me to give the references) it should not detract from the usefulness of the book which is both interesting and valuable. Interesting because of the personal nature of the statements of these great frontier-theologians. And valuable because it highlights differences in approach and accent as well as the common concerns of theologians world-wide.

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